

REVIEWS

Justin Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante: Urban Writers and Readers in Late Medieval Italy*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante Studies, 8. 248 pp. \$30.00. ISBN-13 978-0-268-04122-9.

Justin Steinberg's excellent new book expands the field of Dante studies with a close examination of Due and Trecento lyric culture, its material expression in manuscript form, and its historic readerships. As such, it is a very welcome contribution not only to Dante studies but also to the interface between book history and early literary studies. Stripping away the accretion of centuries of literary historiography, he re-presents Dante within his historical publishing context, showing how Dante responds to and attempts to direct the way in which his works circulated and were transmitted in the wider public sphere. The critical focus to date on intertextual links between Dante and fellow poets has tended to neglect the actuality of Dante as a historically specific reader and author interacting with a range of vernacular literary communities; Steinberg demonstrates, however, that Dante's moments of self-reflexivity in his writings should also be understood as symptomatic of historic external conditions of publication, reception, and readerships.

Steinberg's argument is built via the analysis of three overlapping and interrelated groups of texts: the mini-anthology of vernacular *rime* added into the Bologna notarial registers between the end of the Duecento and the early Trecento, the *Memoriali bolognesi*; the Duecento Florentine lyric anthology, MS Vatican Latino 3793, and Dante's own 'self-anthologies' (p. 8), the *Vita Nuova*, *De vulgari eloquentia*, and *Commedia*, which are tied together by their inclusion of the *canzone* 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore'. Dante's self-positioning within the lyric tradition therefore cannot be separated from the way in which he himself is anthologized and inserted into the external reading community. Close attention is given throughout to the physical and visual form of the manuscript books, which are shown to reveal important evidence about the way in which lyric poetry was read and contested in the period under discussion.

The book begins with a useful introduction reviewing critical work to date on Dante and the early lyric, and presenting Steinberg's central thesis on the intersection of materiality and textuality. Chapter 1, 'Dante's First Editors: The Memoriali bolognesi and the Politics of Vernacular Transcription' reconstructs one specific community of urban readers, those Bolognese notaries who inserted vernacular poems into the official records of the communal government. By analysing the graphic forms of these poems, the choice of poems anthologized, and the way they change over time, Steinberg suggests that the notary-editors made manifest the ideological perspectives of various lyric communities to which they belonged. In Chapter 2, "Appresso che questa canzone fue alquanto divulgata tra le genti": Vaticano 3793 and the *donne* of "Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore", Steinberg shows how the 'staged reading' (p. 82) of the *canzone* in the VN is freighted with Dante's own concerns about transmission, readerships, and reception. Contrasting this authorized re-presentation of the poem with its appearance in the Vatican ms. alongside a female-voiced responding *canzone*, 'Ben aggia', he argues that Dante uses his self-anthologizing text to critique the way it was received by the municipal mercantile Florentine public. Chapter 3, "A terrigenis mediocribus": The *De vulgari eloquentia* and the Babel of Vaticano 3793' develops this analysis of Dante's attempts to control the reception of his works, this time through the

writing of his own literary historiography. Steinberg reads the *DVE* specifically through the prism of the Vatican ms., noting the similarity in their geographical vision of the evolution of the Italian lyric, and more importantly, noting their ideological divergences. Where the Vatican ms. culminates in the example of the Florentine banker poet Monte Andrea, Dante instead rejects this municipal, localized aesthetic in favour of a transhistorical narrative of the illustrious vernacular, which culminates logically in himself and his poetry. Chapter 4, 'Merchant Bookkeeping and Lyric Anthologizing: Codicological Aspects of Vaticano 3793' focuses on the physical page as a meaningful text in itself, and as such makes an exciting new contribution to new revisionist approaches to Dante's cultural contexts. Through analysis of features such as scribal hands, the presence of graphic flourishes, and absence of ornamentation, Steinberg shows that the ms. is more akin to an accounting 'register-book' than the more prestigious 'courtly-reading' book, copied by professional scribes in high-quality scripts (p. 127). The final chapter, 'Bankers in Hell: The Poetry of Monte Andrea in Dante's *Inferno* between Historicism and Historicity' argues that Dante's concealed allusions to Monte Andrea serve to express a class-based polemic against the merchant-banker poet and his readers. In this way, the exiled Dante seeks to counteract his exclusion from the poetic canon proposed in the Vatican anthology. The volume concludes with a brief discussion of Beatrice's act of naming of Dante-*personaggio* in *Purg.* xxx, arguing that Dante deliberately adopts the conventions of contemporary dialogic lyric forms to produce his metaliterary critique '*in voce di donna*' (p. 175). Steinberg's book, like the best studies, remakes the critical landscape in its wake, and should become essential reading for all concerned with textual production in medieval Italy.

GUYDA ARMSTRONG

Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso: secondo la princeps del 1516*. Ed. by Marco Dorigatti. Florence: Olschki, 2006. clxxxii + 1074 pp. €88. ISBN 978 88 222 5576 1.

The first edition of the *Orlando Furioso* (40 canti) published by the poet in 1516, has remained largely inaccessible to modern readers, having been eclipsed by the revised and enlarged edition brought out by Ariosto in 1532, a year before his death, and now accepted as the definitive form of his poem. Apart from a commemorative volume which appeared in 1875 and the worthy but defective 1909–11 edition of the three texts of 1516, 1521 and 1532 by Filippo Ermini, we have had to rely for the text of the first edition on the variants provided by Debenedetti and Segre in the footnotes to their edition of the 1532 poem published by the Commissione per i Testi di Lingua in 1960. Valuable as this has been, it is of course no substitute for the continuous text enjoyed by Ariosto's first readers and which has now been restored to us by Marco Dorigatti.

Given the popularity of the poem from the beginning it seems remarkable that we have had to wait so long, but the 'superiority' of the 1532 text has generally seemed indisputable to generations of readers or been taken for granted by them, thanks largely to the quality of the additional episodes and the revisions made substantially to bring the language into line with the theories of Pietro Bembo, which have had so lasting an influence on the Italian literary language. Critical opinion has changed in recent years, however, and a number of eminent scholars have emerged to champion the earlier poem. Dionisotti insisted that the 1516 poem is itself a masterpiece, a judgement repeated by Caretti and Segre who called for a modern edition, as did Conor Fahy in his pioneering study of the 1532 edition.

Dorigatti has risen to the challenge and shown us that the 1516 poem is indeed a masterpiece, albeit of a different style to the one we are accustomed to read — the product of another moment in the poet's inspiration, closer to Pulci and Boiardo, and reflecting an era

not yet beset by the crises and delusions of the 1520s, written in an engaging pre-Bembesque comparative freshness and spontaneity of language.

Dorigatti prides himself that this is the first edition of Ariosto 'condotta secondo i principi della moderna bibliografia oltreche della filologia tradizionale'; he acknowledges the exceptional qualities of the 1516 edition, the only one of the three 'esspressamente voluta dall'Ariosto', and in the absence of an autograph or other manuscript evidence he has followed Fahy's example in undertaking a thorough collation of all the known surviving copies of the printed work, in this case only 12 — among which he has not been able to identify an *esemplare ideale* such as Segre established for the later poem. He concludes that Ariosto maintained no less vigilant a supervision of the printing process for the first edition than he did for the third, correcting not only typographical mistakes but introducing frequent stylistic revisions aimed at improving the literary quality of his poem. In respecting these, Dorigatti can justly claim that he has done everything possible to provide a text in accordance with the poet's wishes, including the original spelling — the frequent '*h* etimologica', for example, which Giraldi tells us Ariosto insisted on, saying 'chi leva la .H. all' huomo non si conosce huomo' (these forms are not given in Segre-Debenedetti's variants — nor the forms *tygre* (I, 40,6), *lachryme* (I, 45,2)).

The book is provided with a substantial critical apparatus, clearly defining the editorial principles adopted, with detailed tables of variants, liberal cross-referencing, explanations for particular judgements, etc. It has been beautifully produced thanks to the generous financial assistance of the Commune of Ferrara and it will become an indispensable tool for future Ariosto scholars. It is gratifying to think that such important work has been undertaken in Britain, continuing a long tradition of textual and bibliographical scholarship on the Italian romances dating back to Panizzi's pioneering editions in the 19th century, now kept alive in this country by Fahy's work on the *Furioso*, Neil Harris on Boiardo, and Jane Everson on the *Mambriano*. If at last this edition succeeds in persuading readers that there is another, possibly better *Furioso* that has been lurking under our noses all this time, it may well prove to be a landmark in Italian studies.

PETER BRAND

Gabriele Rossetti, *Carteggi*, v: 1841–1847 and vi: 1848–54. Ed. by Alfonso Caprio, Philip Horne, Sergio Minichini and John Woodhouse. Naples: Loffredo, 2001, xlii + 558 pp. €22.72. ISBN-13 978 88 8096 816 0; 2006, lx + 435 pp. €23.00. ISBN-13 978 88 7564 164 1.

With these two volumes the important Neapolitan edition of Rossetti's correspondence projected and directed by Pompeo Giannantonio, which began to appear in 1984 and was already discussed in volumes 46, 49, and 53 of *Italian Studies*, has finally been completed: in six as opposed to the four volumes originally planned, each of those envisaged for 1832–40 and 1841–54 having been divided into two.

In vol. v, Rossetti's correspondence with his Scots patron Charles Lyell continues to predominate, though less overwhelmingly (with 'only' 163 out of 291 letters as against 160 out of 210 in the previous volume) after the non-publication of *Il mistero dell'amor platonico*, Lyell having declined the dedication and the necessary funding for further printing. Notable among the other 55 correspondents (none, however, represented by more than a handful of letters) are Rossetti's first British patron, John Hookham Frere (who had secured his Royal Navy passage from Malta to England in 1824 and who now stepped into the financial breach left by Lyell) and the Anglo-Florentine Seymour Stocker Kirkup (to whom the dedication was transferred), such fellow refugees as Antonio Gallenga, Giuseppe Mazzini, Filippo Pistrucci, and Pietro Rolandi, and such other political figures as Gino Capponi, John Temple Leader, and Guglielmo Pepe.