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Illuminating the Commedia:  
an early Bolognese manuscript  
with gloss by Jacopo della Lana

DUGALD MCLELLAN

In his reflections on the durability of worldly fame on the Terrace of the Proud, Dante accords the miniaturists Oderisi da Gubbio and Franco Bolognese an equal standing with the panel and fresco painters Cimabue and Giotto. That Oderisi and Franco Bolognese are now known solely from this reference in Purgatorio XI, and Cimabue and Giotto enjoy an unassailable position in the history of Western art, is an interesting reflection both on the relative importance accorded to the two artistic forms— the private, intimate, illuminated book, and the public, monumental art of mural and panel painting—and on the durability of fame, in a way that Dante would not, perhaps, have anticipated.

In Dante's time many more people were involved in the manuscript trade than in fresco and panel painting, and there is no doubt that the best illuminators then were as highly esteemed as the best of their painter cousins. Sometimes they belonged to the same guild; more often they had separate trade organisations. Some artists practised in both mediums, but for the most part the two professions ran separately. But it is perhaps misleading to refer to them as professions—they were regarded and regarded themselves as craftsmen, which goes a long way towards explaining the anonymity that pervades the artistic culture of Italy during the Duecento and first half of the Trecento. A few scribes—and these belonged to a further guild with its own rules—signed their work, but it was rare for miniaturists or painters to sign theirs. Their names coupled with their mestiere were recorded in work contracts (a few of which have survived) and, more commonly, in those public and private documents dealing with the transfer of land or testamentary dispositions that enable historians, very partially and imperfectly, to reconstruct their lives. From time to time, miniaturists are identified in these documents, but rarely is it possible to make a link between the named miniaturist and any of the thousands of manuscripts that have survived.

From the twelfth century, manuscripts were in the first instance practical records of learning and information, for use by clerics, lawyers, doctors, teachers and public functionaries. Semi-literate members of society were, within the authorial tradition of ordering of human affairs, frequently they were also, much valued by the craftsmen by whom they provided a living and enjoyment. Such was the role of the miniaturi among the Seven Librarians who were and are destined to be the connoisseurs.

The manuscript I want to consider here is a book; it is the texts it contains; the art, the structure, and authority of the author; the scribes, theMiniaturists, and the illuminators who represent him, setting up a suggestion is that the earliest surviving manuscript of the Divine Comedy, that the second quarter of the century was the foremost authority on Dante and to the decade after the year 1300, was paramount; perhaps we can surmise that capitals were intended to focus attention. The Poem that it, in turn, so the ornamental and function of these manuscripts produced are the manuscript are of examination of the intertextual reasons of space, I shall not dwell on. Of Riccardiana MS 1005.

The manuscript is a psalter with a littera bononiensis, that is to say, a single column in a columnar version of the same script. Each canto and its accompanying gloss—typically, the capitals
and public functionaries, and, from the thirteenth century, by the literate and semi-literate members of the rising urban middle class. Those manuscripts within the authorial tradition were repositories of wisdom fundamental to the ordering of human affairs, and of philosophical, theological and poetic truth: frequently they were also objects of great beauty. Clearly, illuminated manuscripts were much valued by the small, relatively affluent, literate section of society, for whom they provided a source of both intellectual satisfaction and aesthetic enjoyment. Such was the obsession of some collectors for the more richly decorated of these books that Bernard of Clairvaux included ‘l'orgoglio per libri miniati’ among the Seven Capital Sins. Because of their nature, however, they were and are destined to be the concern of a small group of specialists and connoisseurs.

The manuscript I want to look at in this paper is of fundamental importance for the texts it contains; it is also an object of beauty in which the word is complemented by decorative and historiated illuminations that give form, structure and authority to the texts, and act as a somewhat spasmodic gloss on them, setting up a suggestive mediation between text and reader. Riccardiana MS 1005, containing the first two canticles of Dante’s Commedia, is part of the rich manuscript collection of the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence; the third canticle, Paradiso, is held at the Biblioteca Bracislense in Milan (MS AG XII 2). One of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Commedia, and of Jacopo della Lana’s Commentary that frames it, the Riccardiana’s canticles are dated in its own records to the second quarter of the fourteenth century, although Alessandro Conti, the foremost authority on Bolognese manuscripts, has dated them to 1330–35, that is, to the decade after the death of Dante. There is no question that the word is paramount; perhaps we can never know exactly what role the 199 historiated capitals were intended to play in the understanding of the Commentary and the Poem that it, in turn, sought to elucidate. This paper sets out to explore the nature and function of these illuminations by reference to the Bolognese context that produced the manuscript and for which it was produced, and by a close examination of the images and their physical location in the manuscript. For reasons of space, I shall confine my analysis to the Inferno, that is, to the first part of Riccardiana MS 1005.

The manuscript is on parchment in folio format (38 x 25 cm). Written in littera bononiensis, that is Bolognese script, the text of the Poem is contained in a single column in the centre of the page, framed by the Commentary, in a smaller version of the same script, in two columns surrounding the Poem (see Figure 1). Each canto and its accompanying Commentary begin with an historiated capital – typically, the capitals are square to the height of three lines, making those for the
with gilded disks, all types of pictures and gilded borders. The captions provide further details about the participants and their relationship to the textual content, and they cover not only the fictional characters but also relevant historical events and figures.

The physical format of the manuscript has been established over time, and it is characterized by its high quality and attention to detail. The opening pages are marked with decorative elements such as the Panders and Seducers, Canto XVIII, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms Ricc. 1005, f.52v.

Commentary of smaller dimensions. The Commentary to each canto begins with a quotation from the first line of the canto, so that the initial letter is always the same for Poem and Commentary. The historiated scenes are contained within elaborate foliate decorations in pink, red, green, grey and blue, and ornamented with gilded disks, all types of pictures and gilded borders. The captions provide further details about the participants and their relationship to the textual content, and they cover not only the fictional characters but also relevant historical events and figures.

To understand the illustrated codex in the context of its material culture, the genesis of the manuscript must be considered. All the participants in the production of this manuscript were focused on the study of the Dante's Divina Commedia, which had been the main centre of literary activity in the twelfth century when it was written. The physical format of the manuscript has been established over time, and it is characterized by its high quality and attention to detail. The opening pages are marked with decorative elements such as the Panders and Seducers, Canto XVIII, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms Ricc. 1005, f.52v.

Events in Bologna often provided the setting for the production of the manuscript, and the material presented in the commentary is based on some of the characters and events in the Divina Commedia. The Biblioteca Riccardiana has strong connections with the family of Guido Novello da Polenta, who was a patron of the arts and a supporter of Dante, and who had been commanding the commune of Bologna since 1286 and had yet achieved canonical status. The manuscript was presented to the Studium, and was also distributed to other Bolognese, Grazioso Bolognese, and to Guido Novello da Polenta.

Of more immediate interest, after Dante's death, the manuscript was presented to Guido Novello da Polenta, who was a patron of the arts and a supporter of Dante, and who had been commanding the commune of Bologna since 1286 and had yet achieved canonical status. The manuscript was presented to the Studium, and was also distributed to other Bolognese, Grazioso Bolognese, and to Guido Novello da Polenta.
with gilded disks, all typical of the Bolognese school of the first half of the fourteenth century. The capitals provide the only illustrations; they are necessarily subject to the restrictions of their format, but there are almost two hundred of them,\textsuperscript{15} and they cover the entire Poem.\textsuperscript{15} The coupling of the two initials for each canto is frequently dynamically exploited in animated interaction; sometimes they form a sequence, but few of the pairs simply repeat each other. Sometimes they combine allegorical and narrative modes, sometimes they act as a pointer or emphasise the voice of the Poem, sometimes they contain personifications, and at other times they illustrate an anecdote that apparently refers to the illuminator’s own experience.

To understand the illustrated matter in the manuscript, it is necessary to look at the context of its material production and the context of its use. The Bolognese genesis of the manuscript should not be understated. Apart from Dante himself, all the participants in the preparation, production and, presumably, distribution of this manuscript were effectively of the cultural milieu of that city. Bologna had been the main centre in Italy for the production of university books since the mid-twelfth century when its university assumed pre-eminence in Italy and Europe. The physical format of these \textit{auctores} that made up the university curriculum had been established over this period, and was synonymous with the authority of the texts themselves; form proclaimed legitimacy and status.

Events in Bologna over the period of the writing of the Commentary and the production of the manuscript did not affect either the operation of the book trade or the material presentation of the authorial text, though they may help to explain some of the characteristic features of our manuscript. Both Dante and the \textit{Commedia} had strong links with Bologna.\textsuperscript{14} Towards the end of his life he had been invited by the grammarian Giovanni del Virgilio to the city to be crowned with laurel at the \textit{Stadium}.\textsuperscript{15} Already before the Poet died in 1321 his great epic had been commanding the attention of the Bolognese academy, even if it had not yet achieved canonical status. Before Jacopo had started his Commentary, another Bolognese, Grazio Bambaglioli, in 1324 had already begun his own.\textsuperscript{16}

Of more immediate significance in the current context is the presentation, soon after Dante’s death, of the first copy of Jacopo Alighieri’s edition of the \textit{Commedia} to Guido Novello da Polenta, Capitano del Popolo. This presentation highlights the political implications of the \textit{Commedia}. In the course of della Lana’s writing his Commentary, in 1327, the government of Bologna moved from being a factious commune dominated by various Signori to a subject territory firmly under the autocratic control of the papal legate Cardinal Bertrandello del Poggetto, who regarded Dante’s \textit{Monarchia} sufficiently subversive to have it publicly burned and banned.\textsuperscript{17} This is the political context within which Jacopo’s gloss was being
prepared for presentation. On a political level, his exegesis was in total accord with Dante; in Mazzoni’s words, there was ‘una totale adesione e personale partecipazione del chiosatore alle posizioni dantesche, in qualche caso addirittura valicata in senso decisamente “ghibellino” e nella direzione di una ben precisa polemica antiecclesiastica e antierocratica’. 18

Within these contexts, therefore, what are the major elements of, and who were the major actors in, the production of our manuscript? The scribe identifies himself at the end of the last canticle: ‘Maestro Galvano scrisse ’il testo e la ghiorsa / mercè de quella Vergene gloriosa.’ 19 In 1986, Mirella Levi d’Ancona identified him with Maestro Galvano di Maso or Mascio miniatore whom she was able to fit into a whole family of miniaturists. 20 The construction of the family is convincing, but the identification of this maestro Galvano miniatore with our maestro Galvano scription is not at all certain. Although this identification has been widely accepted, 21 I find Elly Cassee’s proposition more attractive, that he is more likely to be the ‘Magister Galvanus condam Raynaldi de Vigo scription’ whose will was made in Bologna on 28 March 1347. 22 There is evidence of a number of Galvanos in Bologna over this period and it cannot be assumed that miniaturist and scribe are interchangeable.

The question of the identification of the miniaturist or miniaturists, since it is generally accepted that the Riccardiana manuscript and the Braidense manuscript are illustrated by different hands, is even more complex. 23 Levi d’Ancona confirms Roberto Longhi’s identification of the illuminator of our manuscript as l’Illustratore (also known as the Pseudo-Niccolo), whom she in turn identifies more precisely as Tommaso, the son of Galvano miniatore (and scription) of the complete manuscript, though in none of the documents she has discovered is he described as such, despite the greater prestige it implies, since it was the scribe who controlled and managed the material production of a manuscript). 24

Levi d’Ancona attributes the ‘più arcaico[he]’ illustrations of the Braidense manuscript to Galvano the scribe (aka Galvano the miniaturist), apparently on the sole basis that he signed that manuscript (ibid.). Yet, since Galvano of the manuscript is careful to note that he wrote the text and the gloss, would he not have added the illuminations to the list he had done those too, particularly as he is the one, according to Levi d’Ancona, who describes himself as ‘miniatore’ rather than ‘scription’? The illustrations to the Riccardiana manuscript she attributes to Galvano’s son Tommaso; yet is it likely that the son would have done the bulk of the illustrations leaving the last part to the father? The reality is that the diversity of invention and of execution inevitably lead to the conclusion that more than one hand has contributed to the illuminations of our manuscript, and that the illustrations would have been the work of a studio or atelier, though it cannot be established whether this was the workshop of an illuminator, or part of the extended workshop of Galvano the scribe. 25

The identity of the commentator is left in no doubt, however. Mastro Galvano scription had a sort of hoary, balanced, and final equilibrium, he wrote the commentaries and often Galvano concluded them with a pious dedication. These ‘signatures’ appear either as a form of giving the imprimatur or, in the case of the pages with some variations. Jacopo della Lana was a benefactor, and this manuscript was clearly a dedicated work of Commentary, though Mazzoni’s references to important manuscripts and to different flesh out a personaggio. Mazzoni’s statement of the context of Jacopo’s Commentatio de theologia’, which Mazzoni refers to in the introduction to the text of Commentary (ibid.), seems to have been materialised; and a subsequent proposal for a glossed text. short provenance and the gradual emergence of Jacopo’s position as an author and his role in the process of legitimisation of the manuscript was to have profound implications for the practice of the work.

The unusual insistence of Galvano’s account suggests more than a wish to distinguish between scribe and commentator, more than a professional connectivity between the two. The scribe and commentator, who both scribes and who illustrated the fundamental manuscripts. The function of the manuscript was to ensure that while the text replicated the detail of the source, the scribe was considered to have written it. Particularly at the end of each quire.

The identification of the miniaturists will necessarily remain problematic, but the role of the miniaturist in the production of the manuscript is certainly significant, but by then
scriptor had a sort of horror vacui, and never left a column hanging. To restore the equilibrium, he wrote the name of the commentator in a whole range of fanciful variations. The fullest appears at the foot of folio 15r: ‘Jacomo de çon del fra philippo de bolog[n]a,’26 more frequently, it is simply ‘Ja co mo.’ (see Figure 1); often Galvano concludes a line of exegesis with the signature ‘Ja.’ (see Figure 1). These ‘signatures’ appear almost exclusively on the right hand folio, as though giving the imprimatur to a double-page spread. In the *Inferno*, 61 of the 101 recto pages have some variation of Jacopo’s name at the end of the second column.27

Jacopo della Lana was the first of the commentators to cover all three canticles, and this manuscript may well be the earliest surviving version of that Commentary, though Mazzoni describes it simply as ‘uno dei più antichi e importanti manoscritti del commento’.28 There is insufficient documentary evidence to flesh out a personaggio for Jacopo. For his educational standing we have only the statement of the contemporary jurist Alberico da Rosciano in his Latin translation of Jacopo’s Commentary: ‘Iacobus de la lana bononiensis, licentiatus in arribus et theologiarum’, which Mazzoni confirms is consistent with ‘il pensiero e gli orientamenti dello Studio bolognese’ that characterise the language and treatment of the Commentary (ibid.). Within a decade of his death Dante’s epic poem had apparently acquired the status of those much more venerable and well-tried texts that provided the core of the schools curriculum. A critical school had materialised; and a succession of commentaries had appeared in the approved format of a glossed auctor, apparently evidence of the Poem’s authority despite its short provenance and its vernacular expression.29 At least, that is what would seem to be the case, but as Deborah Parker has demonstrated: ‘Dante’s eventual position as an authority was by no means automatic; it was the result of a gradual process of legitimation.’30 There can be no doubt that one of the objectives of our manuscript was to hasten that legitimation by anticipating the ultimate canonisation of the work.

The unusual insistence on the name of the commentator at every opportunity suggests more than a tidy mind – there was in all probability a direct contact between scribe and commentator, perhaps a tie of friendship, or at the very least a professional connection. It is tempting to speculate that Jacopo worked closely with both scribe and miniaturist in the execution of this prestigious, possibly fundamental, manuscript of his most important work, that this close collaboration was to ensure that the manuscript embodied his ideas and accurately replicated the detail and spirit of his exegesis, and that the signature appearing at the end of each quire represented his imprimatur.

The identification and role of the patron and commissioner of the manuscript will necessarily remain elusive, but some attention needs to be given to this vital actor in the production of the manuscript. Whether the Commedia was part of the university curriculum when Jacopo was working on his Commentary is not certain, but by then the epic poem was widely known in both academe and in
intelligent society. The addition of the Commentary suggests a specialised reader or perhaps a special owner. As Deborah Parker has shown, the Commentary had become a favoured literary genre by the late Middle Ages, and Jacopo's Commentary was the fourth of five on the *Commedia* to appear in the first decade after Dante's death. On the basis of the manuscript alone, the anonymous patron would have been a serious scholar, at least a member of the intellectual elite of Bologna; he would already have had a fine library by the standards of the time, since he was commissioning a decorated version of what was essentially a scholarly volume; he was presumably an enthusiast of Dante's work, since he was seeking such an authoritative version so soon after the Poet's death. All this assumes that the commissioner and the owner of the manuscript were the same person.

The fact that the Commentary was in Italian rather than Latin (the language of most of the early commentaries, even though the *Commedia* itself was in the vernacular) has not been widely remarked on, yet it must provide a crucial factor in the search for a patron. Given the aim of the early commentators to secure the *Commedia* as part of the canon, and in the light of the presentation copy made by Dante's son Jacopo to the Capitano del Popolo a decade or so earlier, it is possible that this special copy was also intended as a gift to a powerful figure in Bologna's society, especially one whose political views were unsympathetic to the temporal powers of the papacy and whose education had prepared his mind for intellectual engagement. It is conceivable that such a person would have been Taddeo Pepoli: he was educated, having taken out his doctorate in civil law from the *Stadium* in 1320; he was a moderating force in communal politics; and, as Signore of Bologna after the fall of the hated Dal Poggetto in 1334, he was a wise ruler. The marriage in him of the active and contemplative life might well have encouraged the idea that his approval would have furthered the establishment of the *Commedia* as part of the canon.

It was no coincidence that both Oderisi and Franco, the two leading miniaturists of Dante's time, were based in Bologna. We must assume that Dante's choice of two miniaturists from the Bolognese school was for the same reason that he chose Cimabue and Giotto: that they were the leading exponents of their craft. Just as Florence was the centre in Italy for fresco painting and, at least for a Florentine like Dante, also for panel painting, so Bologna was the centre of the illuminator's craft. This concentration of the manuscript industry was largely a consequence of the prestige of Bologna's *Stadium*, in particular of the law school, which generated a heavy demand for manuscripts of the great legal texts such as the *Decretals* of Justinian and Gratian, which were lavishly illustrated with allegorical scenes and illustrations of legal causes. These tomes took as their models the volumes of Sacred Writ—the great works of the Scriptures and Theology, also produced by the manuscript workshops of Bologna.

Our manuscript is the earliest surviving example of the Bolognese response to the challenges of illustrating the very first attempts at a comprehensive series of commentaries on the Afterworld in question. What this poetry, provided few direct guidelines. It was to make the textual content and the resulting illustrations reflect the miniaturist trade, a practical craft that require inventiveness inspired by the text.
the challenges of illustrating the Commedia in the miniature format, and one of
the very first attempts to illustrate Dante's revolutionary epic in an extended,
comprehensive series of images. The journey of a living human being through
the Afterworld in quest of salvation, in which a whole range of theological, poetic
and philosophical propositions is explored through the medium of vernacular
poetry, provided few direct visual points of reference for an illustrator whose job
it was to make the text more engaging and manageable to a literate audience. The
resulting illustrations reflect at the same time a conservatism inherent in the
miniaturist trade, a pragmatism born of the practical nature of the craft, and an
inventiveness inspired by the new and unfamiliar.

Strangely, considering its ground-breaking nature, our manuscript has only fairly
recently been systematically analysed, presumably because the images that adorn
its pages do not fit a conventional, coherent programme, and are therefore con-
sidered to be essentially decorative and thematically meaningless. Francesca
d'Arcais, who has conducted the most extended analysis of the Riccardiana
manuscript to date, would not agree with that assessment. On the contrary, she
says that 'vediamo che nelle tre canti che la scelta dei soggetti è del tutto analoga,
assai simili sono le scelte tematiche [...] anche se non si può rintracciare un unico
schema iconografico, la scelta dei motivi appare dettata da un’unica e unitaria
concezione, che personalmente ritengo dovuta allo scrittore Galvano, quale capo
della bottega cui affrivarono anche i miniatori.' Moving very selectively through
the Inferno illustrations, I propose to look at the range of imagery to see if there
are indeed threads that run through them that can be identified and that give the
whole some coherence. The conservative nature of the manuscript tradition,
indeed the whole artistic tradition of the Trecento, encouraged artists to reuse the
established lexicon of visual representations of the subjects of the texts they
adorned. At the same time, the absence of direct models forced illustrators to
adapt and creatively use images from existing pictorial traditions.

In addition, the Commentary by itself, or with the participation of the com-
mentator, provided some direction for what should be highlighted and also, it will
be shown, gave clues on what visual form the illuminations might take. Francesco
Mazzoni has characterised the della Lana Commentary as: analytical and didactic
(‘una Summa dottrinale’); allegorical (reflecting an interest in ‘le favole, antiche e
moderne, nell'intrecciarsi fitto di mitologia e di cronaca a erudizione e diletto di
chi legge’); rhetorical (that is, concerned with the language of the Poem); and,
finally, political (that is, both Ghiselline and, more particularly, against the
temporal rule of the Church).

Given the richness, and often uniqueness, of the material he was to illustrate
(an over-abundance of which was increased by the lengthy Commentary that set
out to elucidate the text) and the very restricted pictorial possibilities of the initial capital, what resources could the illuminator have drawn on? It perhaps needs to be restated that the text was of primary importance in this manuscript: the fact that the *scriptor* Galvano was the only one identified affirms both the primacy of the text and the importance of his own role in the execution of the manuscript. He established the structure and transcribed the two texts, making provision for the historiated capitals to be inserted at a later date by the illuminator. The smallness of the area for the capitals (3 x 2 cm and 2 x 1.7 cm respectively) necessarily limited the extent to which a narrative scene could be contained, and, typically, the scenes contain only two or three figures. For the most part the illustrator did not attempt the narrative scenes, it was the task of the illuminator. The creative adaptation of the foliate decoration serves as a complement to the historiated scenes; it draws attention to the text – in Meiss's words, the miniature appears as a flower stemming from [the text]41 – as well as delineating its parts for easier reading. If the actual execution of certain scenes is sometimes crude and unsophisticated, there is often considerable virtuosity in the exploration of the dynamics and possibilities of the historiated capital form.

The usual procedure for manuscript production was that the scribe would rule up the text layout of each page and then transcribe the text, leaving room, perhaps even some instructions, for the historiated capitals. It cannot be established whether the scribe left instructions for the subject matter of the capitals in this case, or whether, as has been suggested, Jacopo himself had a role in the selection and treatment of the scenes to be included, as would be understandable for a project that was breaking new ground. It is unlikely that the illuminator would have had total freedom, or indeed would have wanted it. Because of the unevenness of execution of the historiated scenes, it is probable that the master miniaturist would have discussed with the scribe, or even the commentator, the subject of the initials, and that he would have done underdrawings that, from time to time, would have been left to his assistants to complete.52

The writing of the script would have taken much longer than the execution of the illustrations, and had necessarily to be done in a concentrated and systematic way: the *Inferno* (Poem and Commentary) is contained in 100 folios, of which something more than 34 pages contain illuminated capitals. The manuscript gives some clues as to the working arrangement: gatherings or quires of ten leaves provided convenient working sections for both scribe and illustrator; each quire was checked, indicated by a 'cor' [= corretto] at the end of both Commentary and Poem for each gathering, though it is not clear who checked the texts – it may have been the *scriptor* himself, but it is more likely to have been another scribe in the workshop (I will later raise the possibility of its being Jacopo della Lana himself). There are a number of notes written on our manuscript that have survived: unfortunately they all relate to texts rather than illustrations (there are general annotations at the margins, quotations from earlier manuscripts, and, of course, the later canticles what are passed down from one scribe to another (since they appeared adjacent to the text).

We can only speculate about what the interaction of Jacopo and the illuminator was. Sometimes the illustrator seems to have a natural relationship between text and image, sometimes it seems to have been a fill-in. Was there a greater amount of images made on a more or less ad hoc basis in the visual culture of the period than there was in our post-Enlightenment culture? Sometimes it seems as if it were as it were the text itself that sometimes it seems as if the artist almost seem to be a freestyler.

What resources did the artist have?

First, there was his own experience as an illuminated manuscript artist. There was also the dynamic power of the text, part of the page composition, as well as the illustration itself. Sometimes it seems as if the illustrator, as in the case of Otto Pacht, 'it became his job' and transferred to his own compositions. He would sometimes be the one to occupy an author's ideas.

A number of the illuminations in the *Trasgressione* are in one sense cartoons: it is no coincidence that the companion manuscript for the *Trasgressione* was the *Caccianemico*, because Jacopo was a consistently higher artist than Malebolge than there was any need for the model. The illuminator is of a man (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a convention or a pandering) offering a woman (possibly a conventio...
general annotations at the head of each canto, but they shed no light on the illustrations, and were probably written afterwards as descriptive headings). In the later canticles what may well have been instructions or notes to the illustrator (since they appeared adjacent to the capitals) have been effectively erased.

We can only speculate on how the pictorial programme was worked out, and what the interaction was between scriptor and/or adviser, and illustrator. Sometimes the illustrations suggest that there was a careful working out of the relationship between text and image, but other times the image seems to have been a fill-in. Was there an overall programme, or was the selection and treatment of images made on a much less linear basis that reflected the intellectual and visual culture of the period, and that ran according to a set of rules not based on our post-Enlightenment expectations, or was it something that was worked out more or less as it went along? At times the image responds to the Poem, sometimes it seems to be directly inspired by the Commentary, and other times it almost seems to be a free-wheeling gloss on its own terms unrelated to either text. What resources did the illustrator have to draw on and how did he treat them?

First, there was his experience, his familiarity with the pictorial form of the illuminated manuscript in general, and the historiated capital in particular; there was also the dynamic potential of the initial itself in relation to the text, and as part of the page composition. The initial was introduced in antiquity to divide up the text (indicating the beginning of a paragraph), but it came into its own in the medieval period when the aesthetic took over from the practical and, in the words of Otto Pächt, 'it became a fruitful formal motif for the artistic imagination [and came] to occupy an autonomous sphere midway between script and picture'.

A number of the images seem to engage or mediate with the text itself. Canto XVIII is in one sense conventional, but it has a special reference to Bologna, and it is no coincidence that the images actively lead the Bolognese reader to Dante's uncompromising assessment of his compatriots: according to Venedico Caccianemico, because of 'il nostro avaro seno', there were more Bolognese in Malebolge than there were living in the city itself (XVIII, 59-63). The Poem image is of a man (possibly Caccianemico, himself from Bologna, and an egregious pander) offering a woman what appears to be a jewel box (Figure 2a); she seems to be rejecting his offer, but in doing so she gestures with her right hand outside the confines of the letter towards the first line of the canto 'Luogo è in inferno detto Malebolge' (XVIII, 1), which is where the panders end up. This is reaffirmed in the capital for the Commentary where a devil runs up the foliage decoration outside the letter 'L', which contains a couple of tiny naked souls who are being urged forward to the same 'Luogo' (Figure 2b).

Secondly, there was his mastery of a whole repertory of forms and pictorial conventions, which had been developed over a long period and which had become accepted as the method of representing an incident or concept of sacred history or theology, the law or civic ideology. The most obvious source of imagery
to be adapted to the new demands of the Commedia were works that dealt with the other world, Apocalyptic works such as the Revelation of St John, liturgical books that dealt with the Last Judgement, though works depicting the Passion of Christ or the martyrdom of saints also provided images of the human form in violent physical and emotional stress.

Legal manuscripts presented images of human friction and human failings, and of the exercise of authority as a social and theological given. They also provided images of human types that could be reused in the context of the Commedia: thus Dante easily becomes a notary, the medieval professional as everyman; and Virgil slips into the guise and the costume of a judge straight from the Decretals of Gratian – he is the embodiment of worldly wisdom and of authority, the fitting guide for the neophyte Dante (see Figure 11).

Sources were not of course confined to miniatures, and included both monumental and panel painting, as well as sculpture. For example, Giotto's frescoes in nearby Padua had an important influence: the tiny figures of the initial illuminations have a volume and realism that has its origin in the developments pioneered by the Florentine earlier in the century. There are also specific references. The initial for Canto XXI, the canto of the barrators or politically corrupt, shows a large, crowned, female figure in red, which is an inversion of Giotto's allegorical figure of Justice in the Arena Chapel; instead of holding figurines representing associated virtues, however, our figure seems to be presiding over the sale of public offices, as two very much smaller figures, occupying the position of Giotto's figurines, exchange gifts and pursue their nefarious business before the very eyes of the tainted allegorical figure of Justice (Figure 3). The left-hand figure seems to be reaching up to block the ears of the central figure, who may be political corruption.

A common, but by no means original, Poem capital) and the present, 11 are in this case: Canto XII, the Poem of killing what appears to be the official of Azzolino or Opizzo) (Figure 2, initial 'E', a naked soul, letter shape of the 'rivius'.

Figure 2: The Panders and Seducers, Canto XVIII, Florence, © Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms Ricc. 1005, f.52v

Figure 3: The Barrators
central figure, who may or may not be implicated in the whole activity.

A common, but by no means universal, coupling is between the sin (usually Poem capital) and the punishment for it that Dante witnesses in inferno: of the 34 cantos, 11 are in this category. The longest sequence is in Cantos XII-XV. In Canto XII, the Poem capital shows an armed figure in contemporary costume killing what appears to be a child, presumably a contemporary illustration of tyranny (possibly intended to refer to tyrants mentioned in the Poem like Azzolino or Opizzo) (Figure 4); the Commentary capital contains, within the initial ‘E’, a naked soul in a cauldron of boiling blood, in a neat adaptation to the letter shape of the ‘riviera del sangue in la qual bolle / qual che per violenza in
altrui noccia' (XII, 47-48). In the initials for Canto XV a contemporary example of the unnatural offence of sodomy is shown in the Poem capital (a man has his left arm around a boy who is trying to escape through the boundaries of the letter 'O'; in his other hand the man is offering a money bag) (Figure 5b); the Commentary capital contains two naked souls who are captured in movement across the burning desert while flakes of fire rain from above (the punishment of sodomites: XIV, 13-42; XV, 37-39) (Figure 5a).

The images of Canto VII show an old man grasping a money-bag in his left hand; in the Commentary initial he looks gloatingly at the money while his right arm, with fist clenched, extends outside the letter 'P' (Figure 6a): 'questi resurgeranno del sepulcro / col pugno chiuso' (VII, 56-57); and Jacopo della Lana: 'quando risurgeranno al die del giudicio, li avanti risurgeranno coi pugni chiusi a dimostrare ch'hanno tenuto lo soperchio'. The Poem illustration (Figure 6b) shows the same man but with his head thrust back, and this time the clenched fist is even more prominent, appearing in front rather than behind the down stroke of the 'P'. Perhaps he, too, is crying 'Papà Satà, papà Satà apleppè!' (VII, 1), first in marvel at his wealth, and secondly in dismay when he realises 'la corta buffa / di ben che son commessi a la fortuna, / per che l'umanà gente si rabuffa; / ché tutto l'oro ch'è sotto la luna / e che gia fu, di quest'anime stanche / non poterebbe farne posare una.' (VII, 61-66), or as Jacopo puts it: 'le mondane ricchezze hanno poco o corto stato'.

Thirdly, there was a spirit of inventiveness that characterised manuscript illustration in the busy workshops of Bologna. Elly Cassee, in her study on

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**Figure 5: The Sodomites, Canto XV, Florence, © Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms Ricc. 1005, f.42’**

**Figure 6: The Ava**
Bolognese miniature painting in the fourteenth century, links this inventiveness to the process of illuminating legal and guild statutes, through which the Bolognese gradually developed a wholly individual and original iconography, in which predominantly secular subjects were presented in an increasingly colourful and lively manner [...] In the course of the Trecento, the Bolognese miniature [took] on an increasingly individual manner [with the miniaturists doing] their utmost to display their ability to depict the incidental and to accentuate the commonplace of everyday life.53

More common than the sin/punishment dyad is the coupling of two images that are part of the same scene (there are 19 such sets; in 6 of them the image is
essentially identical). Often they show a temporal sequence. The Poem initial for the Thieves in Canto XXIV shows a thief removing a piece of cloth from a window while a woman is sleeping underneath (Figure 7b); the Commentary capital shows the sequel where the thief leaves the scene behind him with the cloth over his shoulder (Figure 7a). There is no direct link with the canto text, but this is provided in the next canto, which shows two more or less identical scenes of the naked soul of Vanni Fucci, the robber/desecrator of the treasury of San Jacopo in Pistoia: in the Poem capital his leg is being consumed by a dragon that seems to come from the foliate decoration at the left of the letter 'A'. A snake-like creature with a human head twists around the cross-stroke of the letter and comes from behind to maul Fucci's head (repeating the sense of enmeshed movement of the foliate decoration) ('Da indi in qua mi fuor le serpi amiche,/perch'una li s'avvolse allora al collo,/...e un'altra a le braccia,e rilegollo,ribadendo se stessa si dinanzi, / che non potea con esse dare un crollo', XXV, 4-9) (Figure 8a); the Commentary illumination shows a slight variation, like a successive frame in an animated film, as Fucci seems to be even more firmly gripped by the snake ('Ellera abbarbicata mai non fue / ad alber si, come l'orribil fiera / per l'altrui membra avvitichio le sue', XXV, 58-60) (Figure 8b). In those two scenes the illustrator has managed to create a sense of the endless transformations of the soul in perpetual torment.

An example of the creation of a sense of forward movement is to be found in the illustrations to Canto VIII. In the left-hand Commentary capital, the figure

Phlegyas is shown in a corner of the foliate decoration that contains figures of naked souls. In front is the figure of Fede in brato', VIII, 50) (Figure 9a); in the letter area: the text is followed off to the right, in illustrations to Canto XIX, they are practically identical to the first (Commentary) and the monster rests ('Com- e parte in terra', XVII, 77): he has just become sette the groppa del fiero anima, firmly ahead, his knees on the letter, and there is a

The two images for Dante in profile before
Phlegyas is shown in a boat on water, which seems to take up the flowing sweep of the foliate decoration from below: the boat is outside the letter area, which contains figures of naked souls before the walls of the city of Dis; prominent in front is the figure of Filippo Argenti on all fours (one of the wrathful, 'come porci in brago', VIII, 50) (Figure 9a). In the Poem capital the whole scene is contained in the letter area: the boat is now on the right hand side and the souls are following it off to the right as it moves out of their grip (Figure 9b). The illustrations to Canto XVII (Figure 10) show Virgil alone on the back of Geryon; they are practically identical, but with the subtlest variations suggesting flight. In the first (Commentary), there is a mound outside the letter 'E' where the tail of the monster rests ('Come talvolta stanno a riva i burchi, / che parte sono in acqua e parte in terra', XVII, 19-20); Virgil looks towards the reader (Dante?) as though he has just become settled on his mount ('Trova' il duca mio ch'era salito / gia su la groppa del fiero animale', XVII, 79-80). The Poem image shows Virgil facing firmly ahead, his knees are more acutely angled, Geryon's ears protrude beyond the letter, and there is an unmistakable sense of take-off.

The two images for Canto IX are virtually identical (Figure 11). They show Dante in profile before Virgil who is facing three-quarter front; both are wearing
Figure 9: Phlegyas and the Wrathful, Canto VIII, Florence,
© Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms Ricc. 1005, f.18v

their conventional clothing and the first canto, that is, Dante and Virgil, with ermine cape and cowl, which figures is not found in any other, yet it is a logical one at the end of the text. Dante and Virgil, even more horrifying, st
their conventional clothes for this manuscript, established in the illustration to the first canto, that is, Dante in green robe with a red bonnet, and Virgil in red with ermine cape and ermine-finished hat. The encounter between these two figures is not found in any of the manuscripts that Brieger and Meiss survey, and yet it is a logical one at this stage of the journey, suggesting a close knowledge of the text. Dante and Virgil are thrown together in fear as they approach the next, even more horrifying, stage of their journey – 'l piú basso loco e l piú oscuro, /
e 'l più lontan dal ciel che tutto gira' (IX, 28-29) — whose entrance is presided over by Medusa and the Furies. The canto sets the scene: 'Quel color che viltà di fuor mi pinse / vegendo il duca mio tornare in volta, / più tosto dentro il suo novo ristirinse' (IX, 1-3). It is here that Dante addresses the reader: 'O voi ch'avete li 'ntelletti sani, / mirate la dottrina che s'asconde / sotto 'l velame de li versi strani' (IX, 61-63). Jacopo prefaches the ninth canto with a lengthy proemio, largely on the subject of heresy (no doubt a matter of some sensitivity for a man claiming to have journeyed through the al di là). On the encounter with Virgil at this point, Jacopo has this to say: 'Qui mostra Dante poesianto lo salutifero consiglio, pronto e maturò di Virgilio dicendo come sotto tali versi è sentenzia affettiva; quasi a dire che chi si lascia a tali vizii vincere si disumanà e diventa insensibile pietra.'

The concentration on Dante and Virgil at this crucial stage of the journey indicates a more than superficial understanding of the Poem/Commentary, and is one of a number of aspects of the pictorial programme that suggest the involvement of someone with an intimate knowledge of the detail and the shape of the Commedia. It is tempting to give Jacopo himself a role in the development of that programme: he was evidently in Bologna at the time, the manuscript is one of the earliest to contain his Commentary; it was destined for a scholar of the Commedia (if not for Jacopo himself, either directly or to be presented as a gift), it was substantially experimental (as it turned out, a unique experiment that does not appear to have been followed, for whatever reason). Although the texts were

Our manuscript is an example of how, according to one scholar, the Italiana — which no doubt played a role in the authoritative catalysis of the commedia — was disseminated. Meiss. The illustration of the Commedia itself (nor in the sense of the canto they 'illustrate') make it into this category, the result for the art of sin types that are the precisely linked to it).

The final question states: Riccardiana MS 1005 in the prolix exegesis of Jacopo, glosses on the texts and reading them? Are they to give shape to the page, or...
of primary importance, the images were more than simply decorative, and as scholar and teacher dependent on written texts, Jacopo is likely to have been on familiar terms with the trade that produced those texts in material form (and he is likely to have been interested to see that such an early record of his major scholarly work should be a true reflection of that work).

At least two of the illustrations bear no direct relationship to the cantos they find themselves heading. This may be because of a mistake or misunderstanding or even convenience; it may, however, reflect a non-linear approach to pictorial programming. Canto V (Figure 12a & b), for example, deals with what appears to be bribery of a public official, that is barter, which has no place among the carnal sinners of this canto but is punished among the Fraudulent in Bolgia 5 of Malebolge in Cantos XXI and XXII. Is the intention to signal corruption in public affairs as a dominant theme of the Canticle? Is it a reference to Dante's own condemnation of the Bolognese as greedy for money and careless about how they obtain it (as seen above, pandering was specifically linked with Bologna in Canto XVIII, but the implication was that in their pursuit of money they allowed themselves no moral constraint)?

In confronting a completely new and complex set of images such as those conjured up in Canto V, most dramatically the story of Paolo and Francesca, it is understandable that illuminators, used to depicting criminal acts and their punishments in their usual work of illuminating juridical texts, would draw from what was familiar, and that they would pursue themes reflecting either their own or the adviser's preoccupations.

Our manuscript is an anomaly in the corpus of illustrated Dante codices – according to one scholar it is 'un unicum nel genere dell'illustrazione dantesca italiana' – which no doubt helps to explain why it has been given little attention in the authoritative catalogue of illuminated manuscripts compiled by Brieger and Meiss. The illustrations are not confined to incidents or generic scenes from the Commedia itself (nor indeed are those scenes necessarily the most representative of the canto they 'illustrate'); in the Inferno about half of the historiated initials fit into this category, the remainder could be described as contemporary explorations of sin types that are the subject of the Poem (though, again, not always very precisely linked to it). There are occasional references to the Commentary, but, like those to the Poem itself, these are neither systematic, nor always very synthetic.

The final question should perhaps be how successful was the illustrator of Riccardiana MS 1005 in giving visual form to the complex poetry of Dante and the profuse exegesis of Jacopo? Did he manage to create images that were themselves glosses on the texts and that provided insights and aides-mémoires for those reading them? Are they simply ornamental decorations that prettify the text and give shape to the page, or do they reflect some broader and more profound truths,
or provide a meaningful counterpoint to the architectural plan of Dante's great epic? They do not satisfy the modern mind's expectation of logical sequence and consistent programmatic treatment, but they may have set up a productive interaction between reader and text that is at the same time true to the texts and meaningful within the greater process of enlightenment and understanding.

The encyclopaedic range of images and the variety in treatment of the subjects reflect something of the linguistic, affective, philosophical, anecdotal range that Dante employs in the *Commedia*. They also respond in a concrete and often literal way to Jacopo's exegetical method. Deborah Parker contends that Jacopo's use of 'different stylistic registers' is part of a concerted plan to hold his audience. For example, a lengthy discussion on the nature of angels in *Paradiso* XXIX, 110 is suddenly interrupted by the recounting of examples of long-winded sermons of contemporary clerics. Such abrupt shifts 'from scholastic expositions to narratives about mythical and historical figures' are, according to Parker, common in Jacopo's Commentary (as well as other Trecento commentators such as Boccaccio) and reflect a medieval process of intellectual engagement.

The interrelationship between image and text in our manuscript, unique among the surviving illustrated manuscripts of the *Commedia*, requires us to examine its pictorial programme as part of the commentary tradition, that is, as an extension of a literary and critical genre rather than as a painted narrative sequence. A manuscript like ours was intended for constant use, and the reader was expected to enter into an active dialogue with a text that was itself encyclopaedic and multi-experiential in its range and in its treatment. One of the great skills of Dante was to create a text that would engage the reader's memory, intellect and experience in a total and sustained way; Jacopo's Commentary and our illustrated initials add further layers of interconnectedness.

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**Notes**


7. A more comprehensive survey of the Riccardiana manuscript can be found in the entire collection of the Commedia is a frontispiece existed and patron. The surviving copy is the more reasonable to assume that the missing are lines 6-13.

8. In addition to the historical paragraph signs are also found in the tradition of ecclesiastics, in our own manuscript, the one with a historiated initial with a large letter (volta), delicate, red filigree pre-

3. Perhaps because the scribe, dealing with words, was more likely to be literate than the miniaturist, whose business was images.


5. Petrucci has reminded us that ‘literacy’ was not an absolute category and that between the most highly literate and the totally illiterate there was a whole range of functionally literate individuals whose skills were adapted to their particular needs, what he calls the semi-literate. Relevant to this paper is his proposition that the capacity of scribes to write did not necessarily involve the skill of reading. See Armando Petrucci, Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy. Studies in the History of Written Culture, ed. & trans. C. M. Radding, New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1995, pp. 77ff.


8. Biblioteche Riccardiana e Moreniana, p. 68; Alessandro Conti, La miniatura Bolognese, Scuole e botteghe, 1270-1340, Bologna: Alfa, 1981, p. 87. On the basis of termini ante post quem of 1328 (completion of the Commentary by Jacopo) and 1347 (Galvano scriptor made his last will and testament) respectively, Nadia Lazze Balzarini accepts Conti’s dating of 1330-35 (Balzarini, pp. 166-67). Petrocchi locates the manuscript ‘in linea di sicurezza tra il 1330 e il 1340, non dovendosi arrischiar l’ipotesi che Rb sia il più antico codice conosciuto della Commedia’ (Giorgio Petrocchi [ed.], La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata, 4 vols, Milan: Mondadori, 1966, 1, p. 83).

9. A more comprehensive examination of all the canticles is planned by the author.

10. The Riccardiana manuscript starts with the first Canto on f.1r, but it is clear that the Commentary had already begun on the previous page. It is possible that as much as an entire quire is missing as, from what we know of other manuscripts of the Jacopo edition of the Commedia, there was a lengthy proemio to the text. It is also possible that a frontispiece existed that would have cast some light on such crucial matters as date and patron. The surviving manuscript is made up in sets of ten-folio quires, and it is reasonable to assume that the missing section consisted of that number of folios. Also missing are lines 3-139 of Canto XXXIV and the accompanying Commentary.

11. In addition to the historiated capitals, the rubrics at the head of each canto are in red; paragraph signs are alternately in red and blue. All these conventions are within the tradition of ecclesiastical manuscripts and are confirmation of the canonical status of our own manuscript. Where there is a proemio before a canto, the proemio typically starts with an historiated initial and the itemised notes to the text of the canto begin with a large letter (two lines high) in red and blue respectively, contained within a delicate, red filigreed ground.
The first hand illuminated manuscript to have survived is the Inferno, fol. 1r-127v. This manuscript was completed in the second quarter of the 14th century, and its illustrations were executed by a leading artist of the time, known as the Master of the Pala d'Oro (active in the 1370s). The manuscript is housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, Italy.

The illustrations in this manuscript are highly detailed and depict scenes from the Inferno, including the various circles of Hell and the punishments of the damned. The manuscript is notable for its use of gold leaf, which adds a level of richness and elegance to the illustrations.

In the preface to the manuscript, Dante provides a brief overview of his work and his intentions. He explains that the purpose of the poem is to depict the afterlife and the fate of the souls who have fallen from grace. The poem is divided into three parts: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso.

The manuscript was copied by a scribe named Giovanni di Nardo, who wrote the text in a highly decorative form known as the Dianese script. The manuscript also includes a series of annotations and marginalia, which provide additional insights into the text and its interpretation.

Overall, the Inferno manuscript is a remarkable example of medieval art and literature, and it continues to be studied and admired by scholars and art lovers alike.
26. Also the first occasion on which the scribe uses this device to resolve a hanging column (the two signatures of 'Ja.' that appear on f.3' were clearly added later). It is as though he has suddenly come on the idea, which he then exploits tirelessly throughout the rest of the manuscript -- or was the presence of the commentator weighing heavily on him? Until this time the scribe had resolved the problem by filling the line and a half left hanging with a line of 'Ts in a decorative pattern (f.9'), and on a couple of occasions he adds some stanzas from unrelated poems of Dante (e.g. f.11'). The first page of the Purgatorio has another, very full, variation (f.105') -- 'Jacomo decone del fra phylippo dalla lana Jacomo' -- again suggesting a conscious announcement of the commentator. Similarly, in the Braildene codex the commentator's full name -- 'Jacomo de çon del fra phylipo dalla lana. Bolognese' -- is displayed at the earliest opportunity in the text (f.2').

27. There are some rare instances of 'Ja.' appearing on some verso pages.


30. See Parker, 30.

31. The reading, as opposed to the listening, audience, however, would have been more circumscribed.


34. It is often thought that Dante knew either or both of these artists; he was certainly familiar with the terminology of their craft. For example, his use of the word illuminare, derived from the French meaning to illuminate or to give light to, rather than the Italian miniare from the red pigment minium used in the rubrics, is surely intended to accentuate the serious nature of the miniaturist craft. See Millard Meiss, 'The Smiling Pages' in Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss & Charles Singleton (eds), Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy, 2 vols, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970, I, pp. 31-80, at pp. 34-38; Mario Rotili, 'Miniatura', ED, Vol. III; and Cassee, The Missal, pp. 12-13. As a prolific writer himself, Dante would have had a very practical understanding of the book trade in all its aspects.

35. The removal by Pope Benedict XII of the privileges of the Studium in 1337 and the consequent decline in the importance of the manuscript trade in the city coincided with the rise in the importance of the painter-illuminator in Florence and Siena (see Laurence Kanter, 'The Illuminators of Early Renaissance Florence' in Laurence Kanter, Barbara Drake Boehm et al [eds], Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450, New York: Abrams, 1994, pp. 3-6).

36. The Bolognese inflection of the text of the poem -- according to Petrochii 'il colorito Bolognese del testo è evidentissimo' and he gives many examples (Petrochii, Commedia, 1. p. 83) -- confirms even more conclusively the comprehensively Bolognese character of the manuscript.
37. Although MS Egerton 943 (see note 13 above) is clearly of Bolognese origin, it was apparently executed largely in Padua, possibly after the break-up of workshops that followed the decrees of Benedict XII relating to the Studium made in 1337.


42. Cf. the underdrawing for the manuscript of the *Commedia* held by the University Library, Budapest.

43. They bear little direct relationship to the images that were executed, and they are in any case written in Latin, which the illuminator and probably the scribe would not have understood.


45. Cf. De Winter's example, 319.

46. For example, the dragon, which was a familiar image from Apocalypse illustrations, is the inspiration for the figure of Geryon in Canto XVII (see Figure 10).

47. The figure in the cauldron of boiling blood in the Commentary capital of Canto XII (see Figure 4) is clearly derived from the iconography of St John the Evangelist; on the same page, the Poem image refers to the Massacre of the Innocents (cf. historiated initial reproduced in Conti, Figure 154).

48. See also D'Arcais, 'Le Miniature', 107.

49. On the influence of Giotto on miniaturists in Bologna, see Meiss, 42-43; Conti, passim; and De Winter, 323-32.

50. D'Arcais, 'Le Miniature', 105-106.


53. Cassee, 10, 14.

54. Curiously this image appears on the page before. It is rare for this sort of dislocation in the narrative to occur.

55. Scarabelli, I, p. 203, V.35.

56. The later commentator, Benvenuto da Imola, expands on Bolognese avarice: 'Note here the author means avarice in the wide sense. Generally, and by nature, the Bolognese are not avaricious about keeping things, but only in acquiring them. In fact those subject to this vice very often spend prodigally, far beyond their earnings and their possibilities. For that reason they earn money in shameful ways - by gambling, stealing, or pimping, subjecting their own daughters, sisters and wives to the lust of others, just to satisfy their own gluttony and their own pleasures.' (C. Singleton, *Inferno 2. Commentary*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970, pp. 320-21).

57. The illustration to Canto XVIII (see Figure 2) reinforces Benvenuto's claims.


59. Peter Brierie & Millard 339 at p. 249, where one made to describe the illus.

60. In his article on Bernardi, engagingly captures the modern expectations of to their peculiar accord with critical polyphony offered by its contemporaries. Commentaries on Dante.

61. Parker, see generally, ch. 13.


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59. Peter Brieger & Millard Meiss, 'Catalogue', in Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, pp. 209-339 at p. 249, where only the most basic catalogue entry is given and no attempt is made to describe the illustrations or even to indicate the nature of the treatment.

60. In his article on Bernard of Clairvaux and Trecento commentaries, Steven Botterill engagingly captures the wilful refusal of the commentators to conform at any level to modern expectations of order: 'Taken as a whole, and listened to with an ear attuned to their peculiar accords and discords with later ways of responding to the poem, their critical polyphony offers a uniquely variegated document of a medieval text's reception by its contemporaries.' Steven Botterill, 'Bernard of Clairvaux in the Trecento Commentaries on Dante's Commedia', *Dante Studies*, 109 (1991), 89-118 at 90.

61. Parker, see generally, ch. 2. 'The Medieval Roots of Commentary in the Renaissance'.

62. Ibid., 41.

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Toward a new Beatific Vision

In the Commedia, Dante begins his journey not at the beginning but at the end, not at the beginning of his days as a simple cobbler, but at the end of his very long life (that of himself as fictitious character). It is our journey he is describing, di nostra vita. It is a long journey whose end is not immediately apparent. His aim is to see Gods face, to know God, to liberate mortal coils, but rather to know the meaning of our lives.

Dante's description of the journey to God is

The article wishes to explore the concept of Beatific Vision and how Dante's own...