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***MATERIALITY AND TEXTUALITY:
EDITING AND REWRITING THE LYRIC DANTE IN HISTORY***

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The paper presents the MaTeLDa project (Materiality and Textuality: Editing and Rewriting the Lyric Dante in History, Università degli Studi di Padova, 2018-2020), which offers an interdisciplinary study of how Dante was received and ‘canonized’ in late medieval and early modern Italy. MaTeLDa envisages the analysis of a selection of Dante’s texts in material contexts, and of specific instances of the circulation and reception of his lyric poetry, thereby laying the basis for a better understanding of medieval and early modern authoriality; the qualities of books as ‘textual objects’; and the ways in which context, form, and annotation in single books may bestow cultural authority upon authors and works. The essay then investigates a case-study in order to illustrate some key aspects of the circulation of Dante’s lyric poetry and the construction of his figure as an Author between the thirteenth and the late fourteenth century: the peculiar case of the transmission of Dante’s experimental *canzone* in three languages (French, Latin, and Italian) “*Ai faus ris.*”

Keywords: Dante, Lyric Poetry, Cultural Authority, Manuscript, Medieval Italian Literature

Dante founds his ultimate authority on the unique status of himself as *poeta*, one whose providentially ordained journey is intertwined with his writing of the *Commedia*. In the construction of his own intellectual figure as Author, as *auctor* and *auctoritas* (that is, both author as ‘creator’ and ‘cultural authority’), his already preeminent position as *rimatore*, as writer of vernacular lyric poems, plays a fundamental role. Indeed, in one of the crucial episodes, Dante has Bonagiunta identify him as “*colui che fòre / trasse le nove rime, cominciando | Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore*” (*Purg.* 24.49-51).¹

Defined as the ‘most magnificent collection of scattered rhymes’ where his desire for experimenting and acquiring

¹ See Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante’s Poets. Textuality and Truth in the ‘Comedy’* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Mirko Tavoni, *Qualche idea su Dante* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015).

knowledge unfolds in diverse poetic forms,² Dante's lyric poetry is an essential part of his identity as a writer and an intellectual. But throughout the centuries it has also helped to define Dante's overall fortune, both in line and at odds with the reception of the *Commedia*. With hundreds of codices and dozens of printed editions, mostly independent of the *Commedia*, Dante's lyric poems became one of the most successful corpora in the history of literature. The *MaTeLDa* project (*Materiality and Textuality: Editing and Rewriting the Lyric Dante in History*, Università degli Studi di Padova, 2018–2020) offers an interdisciplinary study of how Dante was received and 'canonized' in late medieval and early modern Italy. It does so through an analysis of manuscripts and printed editions that is underpinned by a series of pressing theoretical concerns: medieval and early modern authoriality; the notion of books, and especially of manuscripts, as 'textual objects'; and the potential for context, form, paratext, and annotation in single books to bestow cultural authority upon authors and works. By concentrating on a less widely known but still crucially important facet of Dante's oeuvre, – his lyric poetry – the overall aim is to extend and refine our understanding of the cultural heritage bequeathed by Dante and in his name.³

Two major critical discourses emerge from the study of Dante's reception as a lyric writer: the advent of the Author as a distinct cultural figure and the birth of the songbook as a literary genre.⁴ While my own research focuses on the earliest phase and, in particular, on three case-studies located between the thirteenth and the early fifteenth century, the project as a whole has aimed at

² Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, ed. Gianfranco Contini (Turin: Einaudi, 1939).

³ Cf. Simon Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); *Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy. Florence, Venice and the 'Divine Poet'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁴ On the emergence of Authors as self-aware intellectual figures in medieval times, see at least Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) and, with focus on Dante, Albert Russel Ascoli, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); on medieval lyric series see at least Teodolinda Barolini, "The Making of a Lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*," *MLN* 104/1, Italian Issue (1989): 1–38 and Teodolinda Barolini, "Editing Dante's *Rime* and Italian cultural history: Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca ... Barbi, Contini, Foster-Boyde, De Robertis," in *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 245–79; Valeria Bertolucci-Pizzorusso, "Libri e canzonieri d'autore nel Medioevo: prospettive di ricerca," in *Morfologie del testo medievale*. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), 125–146; Silvio D'Arco Avalle, "I canzonieri: definizione di genere e problemi di edizione," in *La critica del testo. Problemi di metodo e esperienze di lavoro. Atti del convegno di Lecce, 22-26 ottobre 1984* (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1985); Marisa Galvez, *Songbook: How Lyrics Became Poetry in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

encompassing the multifarious ways in which Dante's lyric poetry has circulated and, thus, permeated Italian literature, from its origins to the twentieth century. A conference held in May 2019 hosted papers on the reception of Dante's rhymes from the Duecento to the Cinquecento and, to the surprise of some, also in the Seicento and in the Ottocento.⁵ We are now focusing on the Renaissance and we aim to explore the reception of Dante's lyric poetry (that is not only his lyric poems but also the *Vita nuova* and the *Convivio*) in Italy and across Europe up to the age of Tasso. The research will focus both on how poets used Dante's rhymes as a model along with Petrarch, and on the circulation of Dante's lyric poetry in manuscripts and printed editions.

The present essay will illustrate a case-study at the core of the *MaTeLDA* project: the earliest reception of Dante's *canzone* in three languages "Aï faus ris," in connection with the redefinition of the meaning embedded in its transgressive form. It will contribute to a better understanding of the central literary and historical relevance of Dante's so-called 'minor writings', both for his oeuvre and for Italian cultural history, and will demonstrate how compilers and editors, through selection and organization criteria, may exercise a powerful and abiding influence on the literary scenario.

Dante's Lyric Poetry from his Desk to Late Fourteenth-Century Florence: A Case Study

The physical act of rewriting Dante's lyric poems has shaped the perception of their author and thereby consecrated Dante as an Author from the Middle Ages to modernity. My research explores the ways in which the Dante *rimatore*, writer of lyric poems, backed the construction of Dante the Poet, the *Commedia's poeta-theologus*, particularly when the perception of *auctores* and *auctoritates* was changing, along with the position of the vernacular relative to Latin. Such research raises questions regarding the role of editors, cultural hegemonies, 'canonization' of intellectual figures, and canon-making as a structure of power. Indeed, Dante's figure and his works have been appropriated, rewritten, and repurposed by various literary, political, and ideological movements

⁵ *Scrivere e riscrivere Dante lirico: prospettive sul 'Dante minore' dal XIII al XIX secolo*, Convegno Internazionale, Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari - DiSLL, 20-21 maggio 2019 (proceedings are forthcoming as a special issue of *Medioevo Letterario d'Italia*).

across centuries. The particular case of the transmission of Dante's experimental *canzone* in three languages (French, Latin, and Italian) "Ai faus ris" may illustrate some key aspects of the circulation of Dante's lyric poetry and the construction of his figure as an Author between the thirteenth and the late fourteenth century, especially when compared to modern editions.⁶

"Raphèl mai amècche zabì almi" shouts Nembroth in his obscure language (*Inf.* 31.67), just as Pluto, upon seeing Dante, cries out equally unintelligible words (*Inf.* 7.1). But, in the *Commedia*, demons using unknown tongues are not alone in diverting from its standard Tuscan. In the Dantean afterworld, others also express themselves in their own languages: Arnaut Daniel speaks Provençal (*Purg.* 26.136-148); Cacciaguیدا's first words are in Latin (*Par.* 15.28-30); while Virgil evokes Lucifer saying "Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni" (*Inf.* 34.1). The idea of Dante writing in multiple languages and handling multiple styles and genres is a truism, even outside Gianfranco Contini's critical paradigm of *expressionism*, of which plurilingualism was a key aspect.⁷ But, as is well-known, it is precisely in Contini's 1939 introduction to Dante's *Rime* that first surfaces an idea that would later flourish in his introduction to Carlo Emilio Gadda's *La cognizione del dolore*. This is the idea of the division of the history of Italian literature into two main functions, the 'monolingual' one, inaugurated by Petrarch, and the 'experimentalist and plurilingual' one, originated by Dante and reaching Gadda himself.⁸

⁶ The present study will be published in full as the first chapter of my book, Laura Banella, «... Pour quoi traï aves oculos meos?». *Rime e libri delle rime di Dante tra Medioevo e primo Rinascimento* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, forthcoming in 2020). The other case-studies on which my research has focused are the fascinating MS C 152 from the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence, written at the turn of the fifteenth century by a singer and musician of the *Ars Nova*, Andrea Stefani, who copied there his own religious and secular poetry, along with a selection of authors from the early Trecento to his contemporary era; and the fortunes of Dante's lyric poetry as they are witnessed and materialized in the books circulating in the Veneto region and especially in Padua, the city of Albertino Mussato and the so-called pre-humanists, from the last decade of the thirteenth century up to 1425 ca.

⁷ Carlo Emilio Gadda, *La cognizione del dolore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963). Cf. Antonelli, Roberto. "Esercizi di lettura di Gianfranco Contini," in *Letteratura italiana. Le Opere, 4, Il Novecento, 2. La ricerca letteraria* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 347-50, 363-67.

⁸ Gianfranco Contini, "Dante oggi" in *Un'idea di Dante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), 63-68 and "Preliminari sulla lingua del Petrarca," in *Varianti e altra linguistica. Una raccolta di saggi (1938-1968)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), 169-99. Cf. *Dante's Plurilingualism*, eds. Sara Fortuna, Manuele Gragnolati and Jürgen Trabant (Oxford: Legenda, 2010), 1-14 and Zygmunt Barański, "The Roots of Dante Plurilingualism: 'Hybridity' and Language in the *Vita Nova*," in *Dante's Plurilingualism*, eds. Sara Fortuna, Manuele Gragnolati and Jürgen Trabant (Oxford: Legenda, 2010), 98-121.

As one of the fundamental qualities of Dante's writing, experimentation has enjoyed the favorable opinion of critics, so much as to become cliché. The use of polysemy, stylistic and linguistic hybridism, as they appear primarily in the *Commedia*, is among its most evident traits. Experimentation (or experimentalism) supports the notion of Dante as anti-classical. Although the existence of an original medieval expressionism is all but a given, and the Middle Ages as a whole may be considered an anti-classical era,⁹ the experimental peculiarity of Dante's *forma mentis* is manifest. Yet, this general consensus on Dante as the great experimenter is surprisingly suspended for some texts, which, according to some critics, Dante could never have written. The case of "Aï faus ris" is exemplary for exploring Dante's 'canonization' as *Il Poeta* and significant episodes of the earliest circulation of his lyric poetry. In the fourteenth century "Aï faus ris" circulated independently, and it reunited with the canonical *canzoni* during the following century. It then suffered from the nineteenth-century nationalistic appropriation of Dante as the ethical father of Italian literature;¹⁰ even in reading Michele Barbi's note to the *canzone* (1921), the subject matter for the attribution is not solely philological but also deals with ideological residue.¹¹

Fracicelli's edition (1836, 1854²) discloses a common idea of Dante: that he would have never written a poem in three languages like "Aï faus ris." Instead, the claim goes, he always strived to "dar lustro all'italiano idioma" ("add prestige to the Italian idiom").¹²

⁹ Claudio Giunta, "Espressionismo medievale?" in *Cecco Angiolieri e la poesia satirica medievale. Atti del Convegno internazionale (Siena, 26-27 ottobre 2002)*, eds. Stefano Carrai and Giuseppe Marrani, (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2005), 123-39. Cf. Hans Robert Jauss, "Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters," in *Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1956-1976*, (München: Verlag, 1977), 327-58; and "Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres," *Poétique* 1 (1970): 79-101.

¹⁰ See the essays collected in *Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Aida Audeh and Nick Havely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹¹ The manuscripts "che la attribuiscono a Dante non sono tali da ispirare una grande fiducia; e neppure la poesia in se stessa vale a confortare tale attribuzione." Dante Alighieri, *Le opere: testo critico della Società dantesca italiana*, eds. Michele Barbi et al. (Florence: Bemporad, 1921), 140.

¹² "Avvenutoci più volte di riscontrare nelle opere di Dante, com'egli fosse noiato delle meschine cantilene de' suoi contemporanei, e come amasse scrivere la lingua italiana a preferenza d'ogni altra, siamo stati indotti a dubitare, se a questo grande italiano scrittore appartenga la Canzone presente. In essa non si rinverranno né quella gravità di sentenze, né quell'armonica disposizione di versi, né quella scelta di vocaboli, né quell'eccellenza di costruzioni, le quali, mediante acume d'ingegno, assiduità d'arte ed abito di scienza, debbono insieme riunirsi, secondo il giudizio di Dante medesimo, in una Canzone. In essa, per essere i suoi versi alternativamente dettati in tre lingue, non ravviserassi il fine voluto dall'Alighieri di dar lustro all'italiano

Another illustrious victim of such interpretation is Dante's *tenzone* with Forese Donati: Fraticelli filed it among the apocrypha and offered a note for the first sonnet where he explicitly claims that manuscripts' attributions should never be trusted, implying that the modern critic knows better, especially when it comes to Dante.¹³ As Massimiliano Chiamenti writes, Fraticelli's opinion is valuable precisely because it influenced Barbi,¹⁴ who in 1921 restored the *tenzone* to Dante but kept "Ai faus ris" among the poems of uncertain attribution, where it remained until Domenico De Robertis's edition in 2002, in spite of the fact that there is no definite reason not to attribute it to Dante.¹⁵ Nonetheless, from the point of view of the Ottocento, the Italian national Poet, father of Italian language, who foresaw the Italian linguistic and even political unity in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*,¹⁶ could not have written a poem in which Italian was not the unique, nor even the principal, medium of expression. Barbi's reluctance can certainly be explained by his understanding of Dante, which did not embrace the composition of a virtuoso trilingual *canzone*, especially when one of the languages was French. On the other hand, other authoritative scholars –Witte, Mahn, Boehmer, D'Ovidio, Zingarelli, Scherillo– continued to consider the *canzone* authentic, and it also seems that Pernicone and Contini would have included it in the canon.¹⁷

"Ai faus ris" is written in three languages: French, Latin and Italian. This *canzone*, as Dante himself calls it, stands out in his corpus for its experimental qualities. At first, it echoes a *descort*, and in particular the famous one by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras in five

idioma. Onde potremo conchiudere, che la Canzone o non sia di Dante, o che al più possa essere uno de' primi suoi giovanili, e forse rifiutati, componimenti." Il Canzoniere di Dante Alighieri, *annotato e illustrato da Pietro Fraticelli aggiuntovi le rime sacre e le poesie latine dello stesso autore* (Florence: Barbèra, Bianchi e comp., 1856), 231.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 291–92.

¹⁴ Massimiliano Chiamenti, "Attorno alla canzone trilingue *Ai faus ris* finalmente recuperata a Dante." *Dante Studies* 116 (1998): 189–207.

¹⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, ed. Domenico De Robertis (Florence: Le Lettere, 2002), 1026–40.

¹⁶ Cf. Francesco Bruni, *Italia. Vita e avventure di un'idea*. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 75 et seq.; Mirko Tavoni, "Il concetto dantesco di "unità" linguistica e le prime intuizioni di una "nazione" italiana," in *Pre-sentimenti dell'Unità d'Italia nella tradizione culturale dal Due all'Ottocento*. Atti del convegno (Roma, 24–27 ottobre 2011) (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2012), 23–48.

¹⁷ Cf. Giancarlo, Breschi, "Ai faus ris, pour quoi traï avés," in Dante Alighieri, *Le quindici canzoni lette da diversi* (Lecce: Pensa Multimedia, 2012) 2: 313. Chiamenti notices that, in a sort of *lapsus*, Contini treats Dante as the author of the poem [Chiamenti, "Attorno alla canzone trilingue," 199]. See below n. 32.

languages (*Eras quan vey verdeyar*). But Dante makes the three languages work together in a syntactic continuum. In other words, they do not just answer each other, which does not make it, as Furio Brugnolo pointed out, a *descort*, since there is no real conflict among the languages, nor any metrical or rhyming discordance.¹⁸ The three languages are alternated following the pattern of the *retrogradatio cruciata*, the “backward crossing” of the rhymes in a *sestina*: each language always rhymes with itself, while each one never occupies the same place in the stanza, instead filling, in turn, all possible positions. The recursive placement system of the three languages and its metrical scheme (ABCBAC cDEeDFF, with a five-line *congedo* ABbCC), make this *canzone* unique,¹⁹ and especially the use of the *retrogradatio cruciata* is considered the principal argument to confirm the attribution to Dante, since, as Brugnolo writes, only a poet obsessed with the perfect combinatory scheme, with the virtually endless circular movement of the *sestina*, could have written this *canzone*. In Italy, at the beginning of the Trecento, this poet could only be Dante, the author who not only wrote *sestine*, but who invented the *terzina incatenata*.²⁰ Many critics, however, have argued that this poem would not be worthy of Dante due to its style, considered low or popular, not well-suited for the ethical father of Italian language.

In the evaluation of “*Aï faus ris*,” the prejudice against multilingual texts has played a major role. Indeed, critics have considered multilingualism an aberration, not worthy of aesthetic appreciation. Also, there is a shared, implicit belief, which seems particularly strong with regards to Dante, that literature achieves perfection only when it is the expression of the author’s mother tongue.²¹ Nevertheless, the use of three languages, its *lingua trina* is a masterful element of style and, since the distinction between form and content is never clean-cut, and form is always meaningful per se and in the Middle Ages especially, it is necessary to further analyze the reasons behind the poem’s multilingualism, in order to appreciate its early circulation, in contrast to those critical trends

¹⁸ Furio Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone trilingue *Aï faux ris* attribuita a Dante,” in *Plurilinguismo e lirica medievale da Raimbaut de Vaqueiras a Dante* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1983), 111–15. Cf. Breschi, “*Aï faus ris*,” 317.

¹⁹ Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone trilingue,” 153–56.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

²¹ See Willhelm Theodor Elwert, “L’emploi des langues étrangères comme procédé stylistique,” *Revue de littérature comparée* 34 (1960): 410.

that see it only as a stylistically unsophisticated and unrefined poem.²²

Dante created his works following three main patterns: 1) renovating a lively tradition; 2) inventing texts without any tradition; 3) creating a new object by merging different traditions.²³ “*Ai faus ris*” falls in the third category, it fuses together what Antonio da Tempo, in his 1332 metrical *Summa*, defines the *semiliteratus* sonnet, in Latin and vernacular, and the *bilinguis*, in Italian and French. Interestingly, none of these is characterized as being in a lower style than any monolingual poem.²⁴ This *canzone* merges the ‘horizontal’ tradition of writing in multiple languages, that is writing in multiple vernaculars; and the ‘vertical’ one, consisting in the writing in vernacular and Latin. Before “*Ai faus ris*”, in Italy there is no evidence of literary poems written in both French and Italian, nor more generally, in multiple vernaculars. The genre is, however, well-represented in the *poesia per musica*, musical poetry. Also, even if it is definitely a literary text, “*Ai faus ris*” shares some of the peculiarities of this genre.²⁵ Hence, “*Ai faus ris*” not only merges two literary ways of mixing languages, but also includes music in the discourse. Moreover, it is the earliest systematic poem in three languages of Romance literature.²⁶

The *congedo* of “*Ai faus ris*” declaims that, speaking in a triune language, the *canzone* may wing herself anywhere in this world: “*Chanson, or puez aler par tout le monde, / namque locutus sum in lingua trina*” (ll. 40-41, “*Song, now you can go anywhere around the world, since I have been speaking with a triple tongue*”).²⁷ This seemingly simple explanation for the poem’s trilingualism, however, belies the complexities of this linguistic choice. In “*Ai faus ris*” there is no metrical or syntactic contrast,

²² See for instance Pasquale Stoppelli, “Le opere di dubbia attribuzione,” in *Dante fra il settecentocinquantesimo della nascita (2015) e il settecentesimo della morte (2021). Atti del Convegno internazionale di Roma (Centro Pio Rajna, 28/9-1/10/2015)* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2016), 421–39.

²³ Dante Alighieri, *Opere*, eds. Marco Santagata et al., vol. 1 (Milan: Mondadori, 2011). Cf. Jauss, “*Theorie der Gattungen*,” Jauss, “*Littérature médiévale*.”

²⁴ Antonio da Tempo, *Summa*, 34–38. See Maria Elena Duso, *Il sonetto latino e semilattino in Italia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento* (Rome-Padua: Editrice Antenore, 2004), XVI–XVII, and *passim*.

²⁵ See in particular Giunta’s commentary in Alighieri, *Opere I*, 632–40, and Claudio Galderisi, “*Cianson poves aler pour tout le monde: le chant entre diffraction linguistique et empreinte mémorielle*,” in “*Chanson pouvez aller pour tout le monde: recherches sur la mémoire et l’oubli dans le chant médiéval: en hommage à Michel Zink*,” eds. Anna Maria Babbi and Claudio Galderisi, (Orléans: Paradigme, 2001), 43–65.

²⁶ Brugnolo, “*Sulla canzone*,” 116–121 and *passim*.

²⁷ Trans. by Massimiliano Chiamenti (Chiamenti, “*Ai faus ris. L’unicità*,” 4).

yet the effect of contrast caused by the whirlwind of languages is undeniable. Merging languages and traditions is meaningful, just as verbal virtuosity is meaningful. Structural inventiveness is in itself meaning, and it might in itself pursue cultural objectives. Indeed, it does not really seem possible that the author of such an elaborate literary object did not reflect on the implications of his creation. We are definitely not confronting the *Commedia*, but still, since there cannot be any Romantic utopia of an immediate writing, its author, certainly not another Coleridge, must have pondered his three-language Kubla Khan, happily for us without being interrupted by a person from Porlock. The author clearly undertook a thoughtful conceptualization, and then production of the poem, in a process that would have caused an inevitable reflection on expressive means, their function and purpose.

The choice of three languages, then, can be considered as a possible symbol for expressing some of the themes developed in the *canzone*: its body, made of three languages may, indeed, hint to specific ideas purported in its words. From the very first lines, the woman of “*Ai faus ris*” is represented as false, as the Greeks are false and full of pride. The keyword is *fraude* (fraud, l. 3) that, along with *faus* (false, l. 1) and *'ngannator* (deceiver, l. 6), frames the central theme of the *canzone*: the deceitfulness of the beloved woman. Fraud is a common concept, and the term *frode* is well documented. Yet, the representation of *fraude* that can be found in the *Commedia* may be enlightening. In *Inf.* 17 Geryon appears in front of Dante, referred to as “*quella sozza imagine di froda*” (“that filthy image of fraud”). Dante here illuminates how the beast fits the logic of the *Commedia*, the image of fraud is placed at the entrance of the circles where it is punished. The mythological monster-king in Hercules’s stories, mentioned by Virgil in the *Aeneid*, is the source for the name of the beast, while its body is derived mainly from biblical sources, such as the snake of Genesis, which, as Beda writes, has the face of a virgin. In classical literature Geryon has a triple nature, as both Virgil and Ovid emphasize (*Aen.* 6.289 and 8.202; *Her.* 9.92).²⁸ Dante’s beast, instead of having three bodies, has a tripartite body: the face of a man, the paws of a lion, and the body of a dragon. This three-in-one nature of fraud may be connected to the trilingual *canzone*, whose central theme is indeed fraud. Just as Geryon first appears to be a man, and then unexpectedly changes nature, the *canzone* begins in French, but then languages swap places, modifying the nature of the poem, and

²⁸ Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, ed. Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (Milan: Mondadori, 1991-1997, 3 vols.) 1: 515 n. 12, 534.

representing through the signifier the very nature of the woman's false smile. Fraud is a colorful monster, a hybrid beast made of different animals, and the *canzone* representing the lover's fraud is a hybrid poem made up of different languages.

But there may be more. Pluto's outburst, like Nembroth's unintelligible words in the *Commedia*, have caused much discussion and many have searched intensely for a meaning hidden behind those speeches. Lorenzo Renzi and Peter Dronke productively interpret these lines by considering them a form of *glossolalia* ('speaking in tongues'), a voluntary creation of nonexistent words. The invented languages of Pluto and Nembroth are untranslatable into any rational, human language. Instead, as any glossolalic speech, they attempt to reach the deeper meaning of things by forcing language. They represent the moral essence of the demons, whose irrationality and rage is conveyed through phonemes combined to create words that do not exist in any human language. Thus, it is not true that those words do not signify anything; instead, their meaning resides in their phonic materiality and in the sensation provoked in Dante and consequently in the reader. Pluto is angered by Dante's presence, and probably is speaking to Lucifer, voicing his disdain; while Nembroth, as Virgil says, speaks in a language known only to him.²⁹ These languages may be, thus, considered the ultimate form of Dante's plurilingualism in the *Commedia*, where not only do different registers coexist, but Tuscan is enriched by other vernaculars, Latin, and invented languages, too.

"Aï faus ris" is written in three existing human languages, providing a definite content. Nevertheless, I contend that, when considered as a whole, its *lingua trina*, obtained through the regular alternation of French, Latin, and Italian, is in a certain sense nonexistent, an invented language, although it conveys an intelligible meaning throughout. By drawing from the symbolic function of language and blurring the lines between signifier and signified, *glossolalia* reveals the tension intrinsic to languages that may be both unintelligible and universal, an extreme form of phonosymbolism. Dante's *canzone* in three languages is only theoretically similar to a glossolalic phenomenon when considered as a whole. Yet, the explicit declaration of the poet of writing in a triune tongue, along with the systematic pattern of language

²⁹ Lorenzo Renzi, "Un aspetto del plurilinguismo medievale: dalla lingua dei re magi a 'Papé satan aleppe'," in *Omaggio a Gianfranco Folena*, ed. Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo (Padua: Editoriale Programma, 1993), 71–73.; Peter Dronke, *Dante and Medieval Latin Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 46–49.

switching, pushes the boundaries of language as a system of communication and makes “Aï faus ris” comparable to *glossolalia*. Moreover, Jakobson points out that glossolalic expressions share an “irresistible perseverance on *a*” and a “*penchant* for unusual phonemes” in the speaker’s original language.³⁰ In its first verse, “Aï faus ris, pour quoi traï aves,” there is, indeed, a predominance of the vowel *a*; while the three words (out of seven) ending in *s*, a phonic configuration that does not exist in Italian, make this line sound exotic. So, even if this first verse is understandable French, it also sounds chanting and enchanting to an Italian ear, preparing the ground for the following language switching.

Creating new forms of language is an essential cognitive state for developing new theories. As Howard Gardner points out, at a certain point creative minds necessarily change the symbolic system in which they operate.³¹ From this perspective “Aï faus ris,” a sort of glossolalic experiment pushing the limits of the division between vernaculars as well as between Latin and vernacular, which may be interpreted as a reflection of the poem’s representation of the woman’s deceitful nature, appears as a critical step in Dante’s plurilinguism.

From the socio-political point of view, Dante’s *canzone* might be considered a sort of manifesto of the multilingual culture permeating the Late Middle Ages, with –in Dante’s perspective– the goal of giving Italian the same relevance as the two real European languages of the time, Latin and French. French was not only a literary language, widely used also in Italy, but it was also the *lingua franca* of European markets, a global language, while Latin was the language of the classics and of University culture.³² By granting the rising Tuscan vernacular an equal status with the two most important languages of the time, “Aï faus ris” proves Italian to be as noble and powerful, as the other culture languages par excellence. It seems to open the way for Dante’s future

³⁰ Roman Jakobson, “Retrospect. I,” in *Selected Writings. IV. Slavic Epic Studies* (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1966), 637-44. Cf. Renzi, “Plurilinguismo medievale,” 68-69.

³¹ Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds. An Anatomy of Creativity Seen Through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 35, 262-63.

³² See at least Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante’s Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); *French Global: A New Approach to Literary History*, eds. Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) and in particular the introduction by Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman (*Ibid.*, x-xxi); Ronald Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: the Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2000), 174-229.

reflections on languages, and it would be among the first steps to lead to the composition of the *Commedia*, before or even simultaneously with the wide-ranging theory of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, where Italian as the *vulgare illustre* comes to occupy a preeminent position.

With these premises in mind, it is now necessary to analyze the books in which “*Aï faus ris*” circulated within the first century of its history. Looking at the manuscripts provides thought-provoking perspectives on Dante’s reception, and in particular it gives concrete evidence of how our contemporary (or almost contemporary) organization of the cultural field differs from the late medieval and early modern period. In “*Aï faus ris*”’s large tradition, only four manuscripts can be dated to the fourteenth century: the oldest is MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 3953, a book owned and partially copied by Nicolò de’ Rossi, a poet from Treviso, between 1325–1329. The other three date to the second half of the century: MSS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 41.15; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 69 [ex Pal. 180]; Perugia, Biblioteca Augusta, I 20. These four codices represent the circulation and reception of “*Aï faus ris*” before its ‘canonization’ as an appendix to Dante’s *canzoni* in Boccaccio’s order: in the fifteenth century “*Aï faus ris*” regularly circulates along with the ballad “*I’ mi son pargoletta*,” or by itself, but mostly at the end of the series of the fifteen *canzoni distese*. But fourteenth-century books look rather different.³³

Nicolò de’ Rossi’s codex, MS Barb. Lat. 3953, is famous for preserving an anthology of early Italian lyric poetry, encompassing also Nicolò’s own poems. Significantly, it does not just contain lyric texts. It is composed of two main sections. The first includes a retelling on the epic theme of the Trojan War, in Latin, with major insertions in French; a French letter by Iseult to Tristan; an Occitan *sirventes*; a series of Italian lyrics, mostly *canzoni*, among which there are some with Latin commentary. This first section is closed by Francesco da Barberino’s *cobbole* and drawing of the *Trionfo d’Amore* (*Triumph of Love*). The second section contains an

³³ “*Aï faus ris*” appears in more than seventy codices, to which early printed editions may be added. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 2.1: 424 et seq., 2.2: 869–77, 1026–38: 1034, 1036, 3: 243–45. Cf. De Robertis, “*Dati sull’attribuzione*,” list of the codices on 125–27. Of the more than sixty useful witnesses for the constitution of the text, 2/3 belong to the same family of those by Boccaccio and those derived from them, the b family. “*Aï faus ris*” and the ballad “*I’ mi son pargoletta*” are identified by De Robertis as the appendix A, usually added at the end of the series of fifteen *canzoni distese* (De Robertis, “*Dati sull’attribuzione*,” 129; Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 2.2: 870). A is linked to b, while the *canzone*, when it is alone, might be with other *canzoni*, but usually outside b (*Ibid.*, 877).

anthology of sonnets.³⁴ Dante's *canzone* in three languages is not close to his other *canzoni*, and here it is anonymous.³⁵ This circumstance has raised doubts concerning its attribution to Dante, especially because the Barberini is the earliest manuscript in which it appears.³⁶

MS Barb. Lat. 3953

1. hand α : *De excidio et bello troiano* [Latin with French quotes]; Iseult's letter to Tristan [French/ Franco-veneto?]; Guilhelm de Montanhagol, *Nus hom non val nen doi esser presatz* [Occitan].

hands β & γ [Nicolò de' Rossi]: *canzoni* by Nicolò de' Rossi (*Color di perla* with Latin explanation), Bindo Bonichi [with interlinear Latin prose version], Guido Guinizzelli, Cino da Pistoia, Zoanne de Bonandrea, *Ai faus ris*, *canzone di Auliver*, Folgòre da San Gimignano [sonnet], Stefano Protonotaro, Dante, *Nomina virtutum*; Bindo Bonichi, Nicolò de' Rossi, Nicolò Quirini e fra Guittone d'Arezzo, (pseudo)Aristotle's letter to Alexander; *Secretum secretorum*; Guido Cavalcanti [*Donna me prega* with pseudo-Egidio Colonna's vernacular commentary]; Francesco da Barberino, *canzone* and *Trionfo d'Amore* (*cobbole* with drawing).

2. hand α : sonnets.

The first unit of the Barberini codex is absolutely its most interesting part. *Virtus*, explored in different ways in each text, has been recognized as a unifying theme, in line with Nicolò's interests in philosophy, represented here by the letter of the pseudo-Aristotle and the *Secretum Secretorum*.³⁷ Moreover, it has been hypothesized that this first part would have been compiled for an intellectual and politician from Treviso, Gucello Tempesta, to be a sort of *speculum morale* of sentimental education and civil ethics. Most of the lyric poems concern the 'doctrine of Love', alternating with moral and ethical-civic *canzoni*. Significantly, the Dantean section ends with the apocryphal *canzone* praising Henry VII,

³⁴ Alighieri, *Rime*, vol. 1.2 715–20; Arianna Punzi, "Le metamorfosi di Darete Frigio: la materia troiana in Italia (con un'appendice sul ms. Vat. Barb. lat. 3953)," *Critica del testo* 7 n° 1 (2004): 201–11. Cf. Leonardo Granata, "Niccolò de' Rossi," in *Autografi dei letterati italiani. Le origini e il Trecento*. 1, eds. Giuseppina Brunetti, Maurizio Fiorilla, Marco Petoletti (Roma: Salerno editrice, 2013), 157–69.

³⁵ Its rubric has been erased. De Robertis hypothesizes that someone must have shown opposition to the attribution to Dante, censorship that would have been enforced not by the collector or the copyist, but by a subsequent reader. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 2.2: 1036.

³⁶ Nicolò's codex constitutes a textual group by itself. According to De Robertis, for the other *canzoni* by Dante it would descend from earlier materials, probably coming from Florence (the lost intermediate MS g, Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 2.1: 95–96). In this MS "Ai faus ris" lacks the third stanza and Viel sees in this copy a shorter first redaction of the poem, while also suggesting that it has been written when Dante, in exile, was in the Veneto (Riccardo Viel, "Ai faus ris: tracce del francese di Dante e del suo pubblico" *Stufj Romanzi* 12 n.s. (2016): 91–136).

³⁷ Punzi, "Le metamorfosi," 208–10.

“Vertù che ’l ciel movesti.” But this book was never given to Guecello, so Nicolò would have then added the second section made of sonnets.³⁸ In Nicolò’s anthology “Aï faus ris” would be connected by the theme of vision to the previous *canzone* by Giovanni di Bonandrea, “Scende da monte mirabel altezza,” while the eyes leading to death recall Iseult’s letter. Lastly, it shares the concern of finding the right words to express suffering with Auliver’s *canzone*, which follows it. This later poem is written in the language of Treviso, and it might also be connected to “Aï faus ris” for its experimental qualities.³⁹ In turn, the poem preceding it, “Scende da monte mirabel altezza,” is an experimental *canzone* in *ottava rima*. The *canzone* in three languages is, indeed, enclosed in a group of poems that are not written in Tuscan and have no common metrical schemes. The Barberini codex is not organized by author, but it tends to group the lyrics mostly by topic. In fact, in the first section, made mostly of *canzoni*, we find other genres, such as a sonnet, and also the drawing from Francesco da Barberino’s *Triumph of Love*. Thus, that the three-language *canzone* is separated from the other poems by Dante is not suspicious, since it is put in a group of poems with which it shares form and language peculiarities.⁴⁰

Experimentation, taking the form of multiple styles and multiple languages, but also different *mises en page* each one fitting the quality of the text or of the text-commentary, is a peculiarity of the Barberini manuscript. In Nicolò’s book there are multiple languages and dialects interacting with each other, at the same level –such as in the Trojan narrative and in “Aï faus ris”– or with different functions, as in the Latin commentary of Nicolò’s vernacular *canzone*, making it the perfect environment for a poem like “Aï faus ris.” Yet, it is not the only manuscript containing Dante’s *rime* with these characteristics. MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Martelli 12, which was copied in Gubbio probably in the second decade of the Trecento,⁴¹ contains Dante’s

³⁸ Furio Brugnolo, “Ancora sui canzonieri di Nicolò de’ Rossi (e sul destinatario del Barberiniano),” in *Letteratura e filologia fra Svizzera e Italia. Studi in onore di Guglielmo Gorni*, eds. M.A. Terzoli, Alberto Asor Rosa and Giorgio Inglese. 2: *La tradizione letteraria dal Duecento al Settecento* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2010), 75 and *passim*.

³⁹ Punzi, “Le metamorfosi,” 208. This *canzone* is considered an example of medieval expressionism in the classic commentary by Contini, in his *Poeti del Duecento* (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1960) t. I 509–11.

⁴⁰ De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione,” 144.

⁴¹ Sandro Bertelli, *I manoscritti della letteratura italiana delle origini. Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*. (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011), 120–22.

Vita Nuova and a selection of his *canzoni*, along with prose texts in vernacular and in Latin: *Conti di antichi cavalieri*, *Proverbia Salamonis*, *Liber Filosoforum (Fiori di Filosofi)*, *Nomina lapidum et virtutum*, and the *Esposizione dei sogni*; it is also supposed to have included a quire in Catalan or Provençal, now lost. Although it does not have “Aï faus ris,” I argue that it demonstrates a similar reception of Dante, whose poetry is immersed in a plurilingual and multi-style context, where different languages but also diverse writing registers coexist. In a moment when Italian vernacular tradition was already autonomous, these multilingual miscellanies exhibit that cosmopolitanism of the Late Middle Ages from which “Aï faus ris” itself seems to have emerged. The fact that these books were copied in peripheral areas, Treviso and Gubbio, is certainly significant, highlighting a less canonical way of receiving Dante’s poetry.

One of the most famous early Italian lyric anthologies serves as a counterexample. The Florentine *canzoniere* Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi L VIII 305, which must be slightly more recent,⁴² already reflects the ‘canonization’ of Dante as an authority that Dante himself envisioned. It contains a large collection of early Italian lyrics, comprised of those poets who wrote right before Dante, or better, whom Dante ‘authorized’, along with his contemporaries. Dante is not the first author, he is preceded by Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti, while Cino and other minor authors follow him. In his works, Dante places himself at the summit of the literary canon, building on Guinizzelli’s poetic revolution, accompanied by his fellow poets, the first friend Cavalcanti and Cino: the Chigi exactly represents this cultural genealogy.

In a previous article, I have explored the ‘Dante canon’ purported by this book, emphasizing that it is one of the few early manuscripts containing the *Vita Nuova* that also has a section of

⁴² Giovanni Borriero, «Intavolare». *Tavole di canzonieri romanzi*. iii. *Canzonieri italiani*. 1. *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Ch (Chig. L.VIII. 305)*, (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2006), 133–34; Maddalena Signorini, “Il Canzoniere chigiano L.VIII.305: scrittura e storia,” in *Segni. Per Armando Petrucci*, eds. Luisa Miglio and Paola Supino (Rome: Bagatto Libri, 2002), 224. Pomaro in particular attributes it to the scribe known as “the principal hand of the Cento” (Gabriella Pomaro, “Ricerche d’archivio per il «copista di Parm» e la mano principale del Cento (in margine ai «frammenti di un discorso dantesco»)” in *Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della ‘Commedia’*. *Una guida filologico-linguistica al poema dantesco*, ed. Paolo Trovato, (Florence: Cesati, 2007), 273–74. On its canon, Giovanni Borriero, “*Quantum illos proximius imitemur, tantum rectius poetemur*. Note sul Chigiano L. VIII. 305 e sulle ‘antologie d’autore’, *Anticomoderno* 3 (1997): 259–86, on pp. 275–78, 284.

poems in the lower, *comico-realistico* style.⁴³ Yet, even though it contains a wide array of genres of poetry, it only contains lyric texts in Italian, mostly Tuscan, vernacular. No plurilingualism or multistylism is left. The comparison of these three famous books, MSS Barberini, Chigi, and Martelli, highlights how the perception of Dante as a lyric writer may differ, how his near contemporaries read his works, and consequently, how they portrayed him as a cultural authority: in the early phases of his success, Dante's portrait as a rounded, stylistically and thematically diverse lyric poet working across a range of genres and modes may derive from different canons and his poetry can be located in diverse environments.

The other Trecento manuscripts of "Aï faus ris" are more traditional anthologies of vernacular poetry. MS Banco Rari 69 is the earliest book in which "Aï faus ris" is grouped with Dante's other poems, being thus associated with his work: it follows the anonymous series of Dante's *rime* (among which there are also two *canzoni* by Fazio degli Uberti), while a rubric after it counts all the *canzoni* in the manuscript ("cantiones xxxij" f. 9v), encompassing the poem as the final piece.⁴⁴ Yet within such series of *canzoni* it has been copied by a second hand only after two poems by Petrarch, a *madrigale* and a *canzone* (RVF 121 and 359). So, its two earliest codices –the Barberini and the Banco Rari– transmit "Aï faus ris" anonymously. Along with the fact that the poem is associated with the canonical series of fifteen *canzoni* only later in the Quattrocento, this circumstance serves as the basis for the strongest philological argument that "Aï faus ris" was not written by Dante. Still, there is never a competing attribution and, interestingly, a number of other poems with comparable circulation (e.g., the ballad "I mi son pargoletta") are attributed to Dante without question.

MS Banco Rari 69 is mainly organized by meter: *canzoni* come first, then there are single stanzas and ballads, and then sonnets. In the nineteenth century, the book was believed to be an autograph manuscript by Petrarch. While this hypothesis has been disproven, it is indeed written in a *semigotica* script that has something in common with Boccaccio's and Petrarch's handwriting, thus sharing a similar cultural sphere. In particular, the

⁴³ Laura Banella, "The 'Dante Canon': Collecting Dante's Lyric Poetry in the Fourteenth Century," *Dante Studies* 134 (2016): 169–94.

⁴⁴ Cf. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 1.1: 195–97. The MS also contains a fragment of the *Commedia* by the main hand, with marginal notes, which follows the *rime* after a blank page in a new quire (*Par.* 10.31–31.15, 32.90–end).

layout of the manuscript recalls Petrarch's visual poetics, as demonstrated by Dante's *sestina* "Al poco giorno" (f. 6v) that, most likely for metrical reasons, is separated from the other *canzoni distese*, and whose lines are put in column form, just as Petrarch did in his autograph in order to emphasize his *sestine*. The other *canzoni*, meanwhile, are copied as if they were prose. Since it dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century, this book is among the earliest ones, if not the earliest one, in which Petrarch's way of copying the *sestina* is adopted.⁴⁵

In its last two fourteenth-century manuscripts, "Aï faus ris" is anonymous and also accompanied by works by Petrarch: in MS Pluteo 41.15 it is copied without any apparent break after an anthology of Petrarch's poems,⁴⁶ while in the Perugia codex it precedes the *Triumphs*.⁴⁷ The texts in the Pluteo and in the Banco Rari manuscripts constitute a corpus of *adespota*, there is no name of any author, so the fact that Dante's poem is anonymous is not particularly significant per se. Also, all three codices lack any ornamentation and consequently the lack of rubrics bearing the attribution becomes less significant. The Pluteo centers on Petrarch, deemed as the authority, thus being at the antipodes of the early Trecento *canzonieri*, such as the above-mentioned MS Chigi L VIII 305. In three out of the four fourteenth-century codices, "Aï faus ris" finds itself associated with Petrarch's works. In a sense, the fact that in the Pluteo and in the Perugia manuscripts it appears anonymously and alongside other works by Petrarch, may hide an implicit attribution to Petrarch, something that has never been recognized. Also, in MS Banco Rari 69 it is copied by the second hand that copies Petrarch's poems, thus its position remains in-between Dante and Petrarch, and in a recently recovered manuscript, a miscellaneous *memoriale* dating 1395-1425 copied in Provence by the poor Florentine Francesco Bentaccordi, "Aï

⁴⁵ Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 2.2: 1157; Carlo Pulsoni, "Petarcarca e la codificazione del genere sestina," *Anticomoderno* 2 (1996): 63. On Petrarch's visual poetics in his autograph copy of the *RVF*, see at least Wayne Storey, *Transcription and Visual Poetics in the Early Italian Lyric* (New York: Garland Press, 1993); Furio Brugnolo, "Libro d'autore e forma canzoniere: implicazioni petrarchesche," *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere e Arti-Classe di Scienze morali, Lettere e Arti* 103 (1990-91), [*Lectura Petrarce* XI] 1991: 259-90.

⁴⁶ Carlo Pulsoni and Marco Cursi, "Intorno alla precoce fortuna trecentesca del *Canzoniere*: il ms. 41.15 della Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana di Firenze e il suo copista," *Studi Petrarqueschi* 26 (2013): 171-202; on Antonio da Cortona, its scribe, 193-99, on its dating, 181, 199-201, on its contents, 171-92. Cf. Marco Cursi, "Per la prima circolazione dei *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*: i manoscritti *antiquiores*," in *Storia della scrittura e altre storie*, ed. D. Bianconi (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2014), 238.

⁴⁷ Cf. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 1.2: 590-91.

faus ris” is attributed to Petrarch explicitly.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that such an experimental text gets associated with Petrarch, who is, in a widely shared opinion, considered the classic writer par excellence. Noticeably, Petrarch did not carry such a reputation according to the late medieval perspective. The three-language madrigal “La fiera testa che d’uman si ciba,” put into music by Nicolò del Preposto, sustains such claim: it is indeed attributed to Petrarch in a fourteenth-century manuscript (MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 1081), an attribution that Davide Checchi and Maria Sofia Lannutti have proposed as trustworthy.⁴⁹ In any case, it is remarkable that such attribution of the madrigal had never been really taken into consideration before these studies –all the more so considering that Petrarch wrote a *canzone cum auctoritate*, “Lasso me” (RVF 70), in whose first stanza a Provençal line allegedly by Arnaut Daniel is quoted (l. 10).

Codices suggest that Petrarch and Dante, through the lens of writing in three languages, may be closer than usually imagined, at least for the public of the second half of the Trecento. Dante’s plurilingualism is constitutive of his creative mind and, although there have been major shifts in its evaluation (and also appreciation), it has nevertheless always been acknowledged. As for Petrarch, his ‘monolingualism’ has been among the major reasons behind his success, especially in the Renaissance. Yet, the early circulation of his works along with Dante, and in particular with a peculiar text like “Aï faus ris,” points to a necessary re-evaluation of the reception of Petrarch along with Dante, and vice versa.

“Aï faus ris” permits us to re-assess the construction of prejudice, how the immanent multiculturalism of the Late Middle Ages has at times been hard to acknowledge, and the ways in which cultural hybridism is still an uncomfortable matter, especially when related to an author that has borne an ideological, nationalistic burden like Dante. The history of “Aï faus ris” and the relations it establishes with Dante’s oeuvre and contemporary traditions is just one of the multiple points of view through which I explore the shaping of Dante’s figure as an intellectual and a cultural authority,

⁴⁸ Simona Brambilla, *Due “corone fiorentine”*: Dante e Petrarca tra le carte del Memoriale, in *Il tesoro di un povero. Il Memoriale di Francesco Bentaccordi, fiorentino in Provenza (1400 ca)*, eds. Simona Brambilla and Jérôme Hayez (Rome: Viella, 2016), 197–202, 268–69.

⁴⁹ Maria Sofia Lannutti, “Polifonie verbali in un madrigale araldico trilingue attribuito e attribuibile a Petrarca: *La fiera testa che d’uman si ciba*,” and Davide Checchi, “I versi della musica: il problema dell’autorialità letteraria nel repertorio dell’*Ars nova* italiana,” in *Musica e poesia nel Trecento italiano*, eds. Antonio Calvia and Maria Sofia Lannutti (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015), 19–44, 45–92. Cf. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, 1.2: 578–81.

and the reception of his works. Given the material extent of the corpus and its pervasiveness, using a single point of entry would mean disregarding the multifaceted complexity of the phenomenon. Texts, books, prominent and less-prominent historical figures have participated in the ‘canonization’ of Dante as the father of Italian literature in a *longue durée* process, started by Dante himself and corroborated by his lyric poetry before and independent of the *Commedia*. As L.P. Hartley wrote, “the past is a foreign country” and each time we edit, read, interpret, adapt authors like Dante, we mirror ourselves and define our identity by relating to or contrasting their views. And so did many others before us, whom we must also confront.