

DANTE FIFTY BOOKS

DANTE

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A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A BOOK COLLECTOR AND A BOOKSELLER

FR: May I call you Livio ?

LA: Of course, after all we've been friends for a long time now

FR: Anyway, once again I've persuaded you to sell! And this time nothing less than your Dante collection!

LA: Hang on, don't rush things - you persuaded me to show some nice books to a few friends in the New World...

FR: What has collecting Dante meant for you?

LA: It's been one – the greatest – of the collections I've formed since I was six.

FR: The exhibition of your collection which took place in Rome in 2011, celebrating 150 years since Italy's reunification, do you see that as a kind of culmination?

LA: Certainly, it was a very comprehensive presentation. Let's just say it was like the forty-kilometre point in a marathon – not the conclusion (such a thing doesn't exist) but you've gone a good part of the way...

FR: But since then we've gone even further... And this exhibition in New York?

LA: New York will reveal the progress of a life-long disease of collecting ... and, who knows, it might also be the beginnings of something else, the seed of a great tree – a giant sequoia? – in the future.

FR: What do you think of the catalogue? Do you find it a bit excessive?

LA: Well, after all, it's not just another catalogue it's 'the' catalogue and a very beautiful one at that. Excessive? If it were on another subject and came from another bookseller it might seem rather presumptuous, but this is on Dante, the greatest poet of all time, and it's from you, Filippo, the leading bookseller of the age. It owes much to your hard work – especially your 'miracle' finds.

FR: Tell us about the first edition of Dante you bought.

LA: It was the second Rouillé edition, in an unattractive copy which I paid one of your colleagues well over the odds for but which I carried about in my backpack in Nepal up to the base of Mount Everest.

FR: And what about the edition – or editions – which caused you the most emotion on finding them?

LA: There's more than one but in any case your question is a bit disingenuous: every discovery has always been – go on, admit it – more exciting for you than for me. Anyway, I'll mention one to stand for all the rest, above the rest, which is part of my soul: the 1502 Aldine *Terze rime* on vellum.

FR: Do you remember the remark you made to me when we first met?

LA: It seems like yesterday but it's fifteen years ago! I hadn't bought anything on Dante for some time and I said to you "I doubt you'll be able to find anything new and exceptional to add to my collection". But, luckily, I was wrong, and how! It's as if you ushered in the New Age of antiquarian bookselling.

FR: There's been a lot of water under the bridge since then...

LA: That's a rather sybilline remark – I'm not sure what you're referring to – but I think it's true that since then a new generation of collectors and booksellers has emerged.

FR: Your tastes in book collecting have changed over the years. Would it be right to say that if at first you wanted to build up as large and as comprehensive a collection as possible, now you concentrate more on the qualities of individual copies?

LA: It doesn't happen in such conscious stages. Collecting evolves over time. As a kid and then as a teenager, I collected postcards and stamps. Before the internet, that was the way to discover the world. Growing up, collecting comes more to be about creating something lasting and meaningful. "*Exegi monumentum aere perennius*" wrote Horace. Later in life you come to a point when you must make a choice between looking back or looking ahead. You wonder what the future will bring, who's coming next and if your enthusiasms and passions will be shared. You also worry about a collection, by virtue of what it's become, turning into a monument – a word that for me conjures up the idea of a tomb... Then comes the time when it's too late to embark on building up a new collection – that requires too much time – but, being amazed by a beautiful book – well, that can happen any day right up until the end.

FR: Where would you like your Dante collection to go?

LA: Whatever and wherever its destiny, I'd like it to continue to excite passionate interest, to stay alive either all together or in part. Obviously, there are many possibilities. Forty years ago, I couldn't in my wildest dreams have foreseen what it would become. To paraphrase Ungaretti, "*La morte si sconta vivendo*" - living your life is the price you pay for your passions...

FR: Will you ever stop collecting books?

LA: Now, *that* is a silly question! Never, jamais, niemals, nunca, giammai.

READING AND COLLECTING DANTE

Prior to our electronic age, one needed physical access to a text in order to read it—an obvious fact, yet vital to keep in mind while perusing the pages of this catalogue. For a text to be read, to be recited, to perhaps be committed to memory and become in time a classic, it had to be reproduced, whether painstakingly copied by hand, or with equally painstaking care, set into type and printed.

The revolution wrought by Gutenberg and his followers answered a simple, practical need while at the same time creating new possibilities not only for the widespread distribution of texts but also their physical and therefore aesthetic embodiment. That, too, is important to bear in mind: a physical copy of a text, whether created entirely by hand or with the aid of a mechanical press, offers abundant possibilities for design, beginning with the selection of materials. Parchment or paper, wooden boards or pasteboards, calf or goatskin, and any number of other elemental decisions disclose an array of tactile resources preempted by the uniformly pixelated palette of today's digital media platforms.

When we consider the choice of materials and their orchestration into a codex, which is to say a bound volume that can be taken into hand and read, we begin to appreciate how the form of the book itself can shape the way the readers encountered a text. Sumptuous and elegant presentation volumes as well as more economical and popular editions speak to the desire to possess works of literature, the diverse audiences that consume them, and the complex cultural processes through which a work enters a literary canon and emerges as a classic.

Measured by any standard, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is unquestionably one of the world's great literary classics, and quickly became so. During Dante's own lifetime, even before it was finished, there is evidence that cantos of *Inferno* were copied and circulated widely. Several hundred complete manuscripts produced during the first two centuries after Dante's death still survive, along with fragments from hundreds more. This catalogue brings examples of codices and leaves, both decorated and unadorned, back into circulation today.

During the Renaissance, an age defined as much by advances in technology as artistic and literary achievement, printing presses across Europe produced dozens of editions of Dante's works. Presented here are copies from two of the three editions from 1472 that marked Dante's first appearance in print—the *editio princeps* produced in Foligno by one of Gutenberg's former associates, Johann Neumeister, and the still rarer Mantuan edition. The copy of the latter includes annotations by Filippo Nuvoloni, the foremost humanist of that city to whom the volume was dedicated. In the sixteenth century, enterprising printer-publishers like Aldus Manutius, Guillaume Rouillé, and Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari engaged notable scholars such as Pietro Bembo and Lodovico Dolce to produce

vernacular editions with fresh attention to linguistic nuances and apparatuses to support philological study.

Take as an example one of the six recorded copies of the revolutionary small-format Aldine edition of the *Commedia* printed on vellum. It is all the more rare and important due to its distinguished provenance, having once belonged to the one of the greatest Aldine and Dante collectors of any age, George John, the 2nd Earl Spencer. Sometime after Spencer had become Knight of the Garter, he had it bound in straight-grain olive morocco, his crest emblazoned on the front cover, and fitted with a blue roan slipcase. Along with other precious books from Spencer's library, otherwise preserved at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, it was sold in 1988. Having examined the paper slip that still holds its place in Spencer's famous "sheaf" catalog at the Rylands (a forerunner of "modern" library card catalogs), the prospect of seeing the actual volume and following its future fortunes frankly make the hairs on the back of my neck tingle. Bibliophilia, and its more severe manifestation, bibliomania, are human ailments transmitted by delicate nerves, not copper wire or fiber optic cable.

Book and manuscript collecting and the allied science of bibliography arose in the seventeenth century and flourished in the eighteenth and especially nineteenth centuries. Spencer, who bridged them both, was a prime specimen of a species that has continued to thrive and propagate throughout Europe and beyond. In Italy, successive generations of the Trivulzio family assembled some of the most extensive and valuable libraries on the continent. In the early nineteenth century, Gian Giacomo Trivulzio focused his collecting energies on Dante with fabulous results. Some of the most significant early manuscripts and printed editions of Dante's works were bequeathed by his heirs to the city of Milan in the early twentieth century and housed in Castello Sforzesco, where they have since been available to scholars. A few items, however, were sold as "duplicates," including a remarkable copy of the 1757 Antonio Zatta edition of the *Commedia* printed on blue paper—in fact, the only known example to have been issued thus. More remarkably, its fine copperplate engravings, the first series of illustrations for Dante's epic work to have been devised in more than two hundred years, were inked in numerous shades of red, blue, and green, making it a truly unique volume. And more remarkably still, a collector from our present generation may now step forward to claim and cherish and share the prize—yet another tantalizing prospect that quivers the nerves.

Last year, an extensive exhibition of Dante-related works from the Biblioteca Trivulziana was mounted in Castello Sforzesco in celebration of the 750th anniversary of Dante's birth. It reprised a tradition of anniversary exhibitions inaugurated by the international exposition organized in Florence in 1865 when Italians from all parts of the peninsula rallied around Dante as a symbol of cultural unity as they strove to establish a politically independent nation. Their fervor stimulated the production of numerous scholarly and commemorative editions of Dante's oeuvre and new waves of collectors. Corrado Ricci and Giuseppe Lando Passerini helped to establish a Dante collection in the Biblioteca Classense in Ravenna that would be substantially augmented in 1905 with the comprehensive series of Dante editions assembled by the great Florentine publisher and antiquarian bookseller Leo Olschki.

Yet Italians were not alone in such passionate pursuits. The eccentric English expatriate Seymour Kirkup likewise became infected with Dantemania, filling the house he occupied

next to the Ponte Vecchio in Florence with a collection of manuscripts and printed editions of the poet's works that became the envy of many, including Charles Eliot Norton. Norton eventually bought a number of them for Harvard University at auction upon Kirkup's death—although not the *Dantino* printed on vellum offered here, which was purchased instead by Norton's London agent, Thomas W. Boone. Boone then sold it to Pre-Raphaelite connoisseur Charles Fairfax Murray, through whom it eventually made its way back on to the market.

During those same years, an American expatriate in Tuscany, Daniel Willard Fiske, engaged his extensive network of European dealers and his inherited wealth to ship thousands of editions of Dante's work to the newly erected library on the campus of Cornell University in upstate New York. His endeavor, like Norton's, was made easier because collections formed during the height of nationalist fervor and grand celebrations of Dante in the 1860s were being broken up and dispersed through the book trade a generation later. Some collections were sold *en bloc*, such as the extensive Dante library of a provincial Italian collector from the Marches, Giulio Acquaticci. In 1902, Acquaticci's nearly complete series of Renaissance editions of the *Commedia* was purchased by an ambitious young priest and administrator at the University of Notre Dame, John A. Zahm, C.S.C., through a Vatican intermediary. Zahm reasoned that a great university must have a great library, and so to be a great Catholic university, like Heidelberg or Salamanca, Notre Dame must have a great library of the great Catholic poet. Zahm's thinking reflected a different manner of reading Dante that had developed in the aftermath of Italian unification.

And now as we stand on other side of the millenium and approach the 700th anniversary of Dante's death in 2021, our minds may run ahead to imagine where the extraordinary items described in this catalogue will then be held. We may hope that they will be acquired by a library, or perhaps a private collector who will share the impetus to display them for the enrichment of all lovers of Dante, and indeed everyone who is inspired by classical works of literature that have been handed down through the centuries from scribe to scholar, printer to purchaser, reader to collector.

— Christian Y. Dupont, Burns Librarian, Boston College

Christian Y. Dupont directs the John J. Burns Library for rare books, special collections, and archives at Boston College. He has published numerous essays on the reception and collecting of Dante in America, including studies of the formation of the Dante Society and the Dante collection in Harvard College Library, and the historic Dante collections at the University of Notre Dame and Cornell University. He presently serves as secretary and librarian for the Dante Society of America.

INTRODUCTION

The present catalogue consists of a selection of fifty books, almost all of which come from the collection of Livio Ambrogio, without any doubt the most important and comprehensive collection on Dante today in private ownership, and well known to Dante scholars, collectors, librarians, and booksellers. The collection comprises over three hundred books together with important engravings, portraits, and other antique objects; taken as a whole, it illustrates not only the manuscript transmission of Dante's works and their subsequent printing history but also the vast literature of commentary and interpretation the *Commedia* has attracted over the centuries. A detailed description of the entire collection can be found online at www.dantecollection.com: here it is possible to navigate through the collection and carry out advanced searches on dates of publication, names of publishers, artists and illustrators, former owners, etc. The collection is being shown for the first time in the United States, with a selection of some of the most outstanding manuscripts, printed books and engravings included in it.

The criteria which have guided the selection are the same as those which have guided Livio Ambrogio throughout his long, passionate, and unceasing quest for books to add to his collection, in which the anxious search for completeness goes together with a refined taste for the distinctive features of individual copies. Special attention is paid to the rarity of editions, illustrations, provenance and binding and the material make-up of the book. The catalogue is divided into four sections: *The Guide*; *The Commedia*; *The Minor and Apocryphal Works*; *Dante's Reputation*.

The first section, *The Guide*, introduces us, by way of a manuscript of humanist production and a copy of the renowned Aldine Virgil of 1501 – a bibliographical Holy Grail – to the great Mantuan poet who is Dante's teacher and guide on his journey through Hell and the greater part of Purgatory. Thus Virgil stands at the threshold of our bibliographical journey in the second section of the catalogue which is entirely dedicated to the *Commedia*. It is subdivided into four parts – *Manuscripts*, *Printed Editions*, *Translations* and *Bibliographical Rarities relating to the Commedia* – and offers a wide-ranging survey of how Dante's masterpiece has been transmitted, read, re-interpreted, printed, translated and illustrated over the course of seven centuries. Included in the manuscripts are two fourteenth-century fragments belonging to the famous group of copies known as the *Dante del Cento*, together with a precious late fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Commedia*, and a fifteenth-century *Dante zibaldone*, i.e. a composite codex containing the text of the *Commedia* supplemented with earlier encomiastic and exegetical works. The selection of printed editions begins with the two editions which appeared in 1472

in Foligno and Mantua (the copy of the latter shown here perhaps reopens the debate over which one constitutes the true *editio princeps*) and continues with fifteenth-century editions which – from the *Vindeliniana* (1477) onwards – contain commentaries on Dante’s poem, composed by the work’s authoritative exegetes from the late fourteenth century – Iacomo della Lana and Benvenuto da Imola – and later by Nidobeato (1478) and Cristoforo Landino (1481). There follows an outstanding series of sixteenth-century editions, from the *Terze rime* edited by Pietro Bembo for Aldus Manutius in 1502 to the *Commedia* of 1544 with its ‘new’ commentary by Alessandro Vellutello and the 1595 edition produced by the Accademici della Crusca; to illustrate the work’s subsequent publishing history, there is the *Commedia* of 1613, the rarest of the only three editions published in the seventeenth century, and a choice selection of editions from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Also included in this section is the rare Roman Lactantius of 1468, which contains two tercets from the *Inferno*, the earliest appearance of Dante’s work in print. Another rarity relating to the *Commedia* is the first book published in Foligno – *De bello Italico adversus Gothos gesto* by Leonardo Bruni (1470) – printed in the same type used for the *Commedia* which appeared two years later.

But, as Giovanni Boccaccio reminds us in his biography of Dante, “the glorious poet composed many works in his time” besides the *Commedia*. A selection from these works, usually classified as ‘minor’, forms the third section of the catalogue: manuscript and printed editions of the lyric poems, the *Vita Nuova* above all; the *Convivio*; the *De vulgari eloquentia*, in the Italian translation by Gian Giorgio Trissino, while a rare Venetian edition of the so-called *Credo* represents the group of texts spuriously attributed to the Florentine poet. The fourth and last section opens with the manuscripts of the *Trattatello in laude di Dante* by Giovanni Boccaccio and the *Vita di Dante* by Leonardo Bruni, both works which laid the foundations for the subsequent fame and reputation of both Dante the man and his works. From the vast secondary literature on Dante, very largely present in Livio Ambrogio’s collection, three highly significant works have been chosen to illustrate the theme of Dante’s fame over the centuries: the collection of sermons by Paolo Attavanti known as *Quadragesimale Dantesco* (1479), bound in its contemporary portfolio binding; an unpublished letter written in 1665 by the Florentine scientist Lorenzo Magalotti, which reveals how interest in Dante remained alive despite the relative absence of printed editions of the poem during the seventeenth century; the original autograph text, dating to ca. 1948, of one of the most famous essays dedicated by Jorge Luis Borges to the poet, *La última sonrisa de Beatriz*.

If the catalogue as a whole takes us on a journey through Dante’s works and then his subsequent critical reputation, other itineraries or digressions within it remain possible. We can follow the extraordinary development of illustrated printed editions of the poem, beginning with the engravings after the magnificent drawings by Sandro Botticelli which were included in the Florentine edition of 1481 – in a copy which quite exceptionally contains the first two engravings coloured by a contemporary hand, and the same vignettes in their original uncoloured form tipped in alongside; the striking woodcuts designed for the Brescia *Commedia* of 1487, presented here in two copies, one including the suppressed woodcut to the Canto of the Simoniacs; the first fully illustrated edition printed in Venice in 1491, the vignettes of which were often imitated or copied until the appearance of the new cycle of woodcuts designed for the Marcolini Dante of 1544, also

part of the Ambrogio collection and shown here. Especially noteworthy is the first edition of the *Commedia*, from the Florentine press of Filippo Giunta (1506), to be illustrated by woodcut topographical diagrams of Hell, and equally of interest is the *Convivio* of 1521, justly celebrated for its title-page portrait of Dante, the first one ever printed and the finest likeness of the poet produced in the sixteenth century. We find also the refined engravings produced to illustrate the edition published in 1757 by Zatta, here in a marvellous copy printed on blue paper with the plates also issued in blue, red and green; the spectacular engravings designed for the *Inferno* by Gustave Doré (1861); the visionary images created as a series of separate plates by William Blake at the end of his life; the *Commedia* published by the Fratelli Alinari, shown here in a unique copy which belonged to Vittorio Alinari, containing many original sketches and drawings mostly produced on the occasion of the competition held in 1900 to create new illustrations for Dante’s poem.

This quite extraordinary copy of the Alinari *Commedia* as well as the copy of the Zatta edition mentioned above suggest another possible journey through the riches of this catalogue. Like all great collectors, Livio Ambrogio has always paid particular attention to and sought out copies of exceptional value in some way, either as deluxe editions, or because of their precious bindings or the quality of their material manufacture, or their significant provenance. So here we can find sumptuous copies printed on vellum, all of extreme rarity: the Aldine Dante of 1502 from the library of George John, 2nd Earl Spencer, and its nearly contemporary Lyonesse counterfeit; the unique recorded copy on vellum of the *Dantino* published by Paganini in about 1516, and the *Vita Nuova* finely printed by Giovanni Mardersteig in 1925. In addition to these, there is the superb edition of Dante’s works published by the Ashendene Press in 1909, one of the so-called ‘Triple Crowns’, i.e. the three greatest fine-press books of all time, present here in one of the only four recorded copies bound in linen-backed Holland, from the collection owned by the founder and owner of the press, Charles Harold St John Hornby himself.

There are many highly interesting and intriguing provenances in the books included in this selection, which enable us to trace a fascinating itinerary in the history of Dante collecting, from the end of the fifteenth to the twentieth century. A manuscript of the *Commedia* which was owned in the sixteenth century by a Florentine silk weaver and *tintore*, extraordinary evidence for the way Dante’s poem was read by merchants and skilled artisans, who often learned to read and write using Dante’s poem. The *editio princeps Mantuana* owned by the dedicatee and possible financial backer of the edition itself, the Mantuan humanist Filippo Nuvoloni. The copy of the Brescia *Commedia* which belonged at the end of the fifteenth century to Sigismondo Golfi, the tutor of Isabella d’Este. Then there is the Venetian *Commedia* of 1477, owned and annotated by the sixteenth-century Dante scholar Vincenzo Buonanni; the copy of the Marcolini *Commedia* signed by Marcus Fugger; the edition prepared by the Accademia della Crusca in a copy which belonged to Bastiano de’ Rossi, the secretary of the Accademia; the Italian translation of the *De Vulgari eloquentia*, bound in a volume annotated by the Venetian humanist Giovanni Brevio. Other distinguished sixteenth-century provenances are shown by exquisite bindings, specially created for, for example, St Charles Borromeo, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, and Pietro Duodo. There are two quite outstanding association copies: the edition of the *Commedia* edited by Ludovico Dolce in 1554-1555 and presented as a gift by the Roman abbot Orazio Morandi to Galilei Galileo, and the *Commedia* which was published in Lucca in 1732, and

sent by William Wordsworth to his friend and fellow-poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a striking testimony of Dante's popularity in English romantic circles.

Other manuscripts and printed editions come from the libraries of some of the most famous book collectors and bibliophiles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: among others, Horace de Landau, John Rylands, Charles Fairfax Murray, Thomas David Gibson-Carmichael, Charles Harold St John Hornby, John Roland Abbey. The catalogue also includes copies from four celebrated Dante collections, those assembled by Giovanni Giacomo Trivulzio, Seymour Kirkup, John Warren Vernon and Sydney Costantino Sonnino. Among more recent collectors, the copy of the *Enfer* illustrated by Doré owned by the great Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev is highly significant in showing the enduring influence of the inexhaustible textual imagery found in Dante's great masterpiece, a source of inspiration over the centuries for poets, writers and artists, as well as for later filmmakers and set designers.

This catalogue is thus intended as a tribute – with a view to the approaching 700th anniversary of Dante's death in 2021 – to the poet whom Borges used to call “*the writer*” and “*the poet*”: Dante Alighieri. But at the same time, it also pays homage to the great book collectors – and the great booksellers. In effect, many of the splendid books included here have passed through the hands of Bernard Quaritch, Ulrico Hoepli, Leo S. Olschki, Giuseppe Martini, Tammaro De Marinis, Hans Peter Kraus, Martin Breslauer and Bernard M. Rosenthal, outstanding figures in the history of antiquarian bookselling (in fact they *are* the history of antiquarian bookselling) who also stand behind the creation and development of so many of the most important European and American private collections.

Margherita Palumbo
Filippo Rotundo

Note

The entries have been written by Margherita Palumbo and Filippo Rotundo. In the bibliographical descriptions, signature collations are given for editions printed between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. For manuscripts the quire collation generally takes account of missing leaves; only in the case of a composite, and recently re-sewn, manuscript (no. 39), was it found to be impossible to reconstruct its original structure and, as a consequence, reference is made to the actual number of quires and of leaves contained in each quire.

The description of each item is accompanied by one or more illustrations, usually reduced in size. A note indicates when the image replicates the measurements of the original. No image has been enlarged. The catalogue is accompanied by a selective bibliography on Dante and an index of provenances.

Finally, the quotations in English from the *Commedia* and the *Vitae* of Dante by Giovanni Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni are taken from the translations, respectively, by Henry Francis Cary (*The Vision; or, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise of Dante Alighieri*, London 1814) and Philip Henry Wicksteed (*The Earliest Lives of Dante*, London 1904).

I. VIRGIL, THE GUIDE

I-2



*... My master thou and guide!
Thou he from whom alone I have deriv'd
That style, which for its beauty into fame
Exalts me...*

Inferno, 185-88

I PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO (70-19 B.C.)

Georgica. Aeneis. With argumenta. Illuminated manuscript on vellum. Florence, ca. 1460-1470.

275x180 mm. I+238+II leaves. COMPLETE (with the replacement leaves, see below) but the volume evidently originally included at the beginning sixteen leaves with the *Eclogues* (an erasure on fol. 1r was probably the end of the *Eclogues*). Twenty-five quires (one quire of 10 leaves presumably lost). Collation: 1¹⁰ (1-6 lost), 2-8¹⁰, 9¹⁰ (1-2 and 9 missing, replaced and numbered 74^A, 74^B, 80^A), 10-23¹⁰, 24^s, 25^s (most of 6, blank except for the colophon, cut away; 7-8 canc.). Blanks: 1r, 44v, 235v. Text block: 170x90 mm, one column, 26 lines. Ruled with dry point. Catchwords written vertically from top to bottom in the inner margin of the last page of each quire (a system of catchwords which the scribe Nicolaus Riccius used in his earliest manuscripts). Text written in brown ink in a formal humanist script, signed in the colophon on fol. 238r 'Nicolaus riccius spinosus vocatus scripsit'. At the beginning of each work titles in red capitals (fols. 1v, 45r). Fols. 74^A, 74^B, 80^A written in 1925 in a skilful imitation of Florentine humanist script by the English calligrapher William Graelly Hewitt (1864-1952). On fols. 1v and 45r large gold and vinestem initials with small borders to the left, with clusters of gold-rayed discs and penwork at bottom; vinestem washed in yellow, grounds in brownish red, blue-green and darkish blue, dotted in white or yellow. Thirteen smaller gold initials on square panels of vinestem decoration, and (for the *argumenta*) fifteen three-line gold initials on blue, green and pink grounds patterned with white and yellow, and with curly outside edges in ink. On the replacement fol. 74^A two initials – a vinestem initial and a smaller one on a blue and green ground – copied from the originals. Contemporary Florentine dark brown goatskin over wooden boards, panelled in blind with fillets and borders of small knotwork tools and roundels, star-shaped central panel of intersecting squares. Spine cross-hatched; four original metal clasps, leather straps replaced; edges with traces of gilding and gauffering. Some skilful repairs. A fine manuscript, wide-margined. Outer blank margin of fol. 18 cut away, the ink slightly rubbed on a few pages. Some cursive page headings, additions and corrections written by the scribe, a few notes in a later humanistic hand (e.g. fols. 3r, 54r, 54v, 89r). On fol. 70v the first line of the Helen episode 'Iamque adeo super unus eram, cum limina veste' (*Aen.*, II 567) was first written, then cancelled by the scribe with 'va-cat'.

Provenance: Leo S. Olschki (*Le livre en Italie à travers les siècles*, Firenze 1914, no. 108; "[on fol. 235] la marge blanche au-dessous de ces 2 lignes surnommées a été decoupée"); Tammara De Marinis (*Vendita all'asta della preziosa collezione proveniente dalla cessata Libreria De Marinis*, Milano 1925, no. 211, pl. XLIV, "Magnifico codice fiorentino"); bought for 30,000 lire by Sir Sidney Carlyle Cockerell (1867-1962; in his hand the note dated 27 June 1925, regarding the scribe and the replacement leaves written for him by Graelly Hewitt); Charles Harold St John Hornby (1867-1946); John Roland Abbey (1896-1969; ex-libris dated 1933; A. Graham – A. de la Mare, *The Italian Manuscripts in the Library of Major J. R. Abbey*, New York 1969, no. 15; *The Italian Manuscripts in the Library of Major J. R. Abbey*, New York 1969, no. 15; Sotheby's, *Catalogue of the Celebrated Library of the late Major J. R. Abbey. The Eighth Portion: The Hornby Manuscripts, Part 1*, London 1974, lot 2930); William Salloch, *Catalogue 353. The Classical Heritage*, Ossining NY 1978, no. 39.

A fine illuminated manuscript of the works of Virgil, Dante's master and guide in Hell and the greater part of Purgatory. It contains the four books of the *Georgica*, with the four-line *argumenta* to each book, and the twelve books of the *Aeneis* with an *argumentum* consisting of ten to twelve lines before each book except the first.



Ce Manuscrit est écrit sur beau vélin,
à très grandes marges...
— Leo S. Olschki (1914) —

The codex was written by the scribe who in the colophon signs himself 'Nicolaus Riccius spinosus vocatus' (the epithet 'spinosus' means 'prickly' in English; 'Riccio' is the Italian for hedgehog), i.e. Nicolò di Antonio di Pardo de Ricci (1434/1435 - ca. 1490), active in Florence in the second half of the fifteenth century; according to Albinia de la Mare, sixty-four manuscripts are attributable to him, and a number of them are signed with the same formula as here. Riccius was one of the humanist scribes most closely associated with the pre-eminent bookseller or *cartolaio* Vespasiano da Bisticci (ca. 1422-1498), by 1460 the main provider of books to princes, popes, cardinals, and scholars across Europe. Riccius's hand is found in several classical manuscripts transcribed for the Medici – among them the famous, and almost contemporary *Vergilius Riccardianus* 492 – and for Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino. The quality of the parchment used for the present Vergilius and the exquisite white-vine initials decorating the volume – closely resembling those executed in the Florentine workshop of Apollonio di Giovanni for the *ms Riccardianus* – indicate that this manuscript was commissioned by an important patron. The handsome blind-tooled binding is characteristically Florentine, and very similar to some of those made by Vespasiano da Bisticci for the the Duke of Urbino.

In 1914 this volume – one of the only two manuscripts included, as “preuves de ressemblance des caractères des premiers livres imprimés avec l'écriture des manuscrits” – was chosen by the renowned bookseller Leo Olschki to represent Italian humanistic manuscript production in the Leipzig exhibition *Le livre en Italie à travers les siècles*.



2 PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO (70-19 B.C.)

Vergilius. Venice, Aldus Manutius, April 1501.

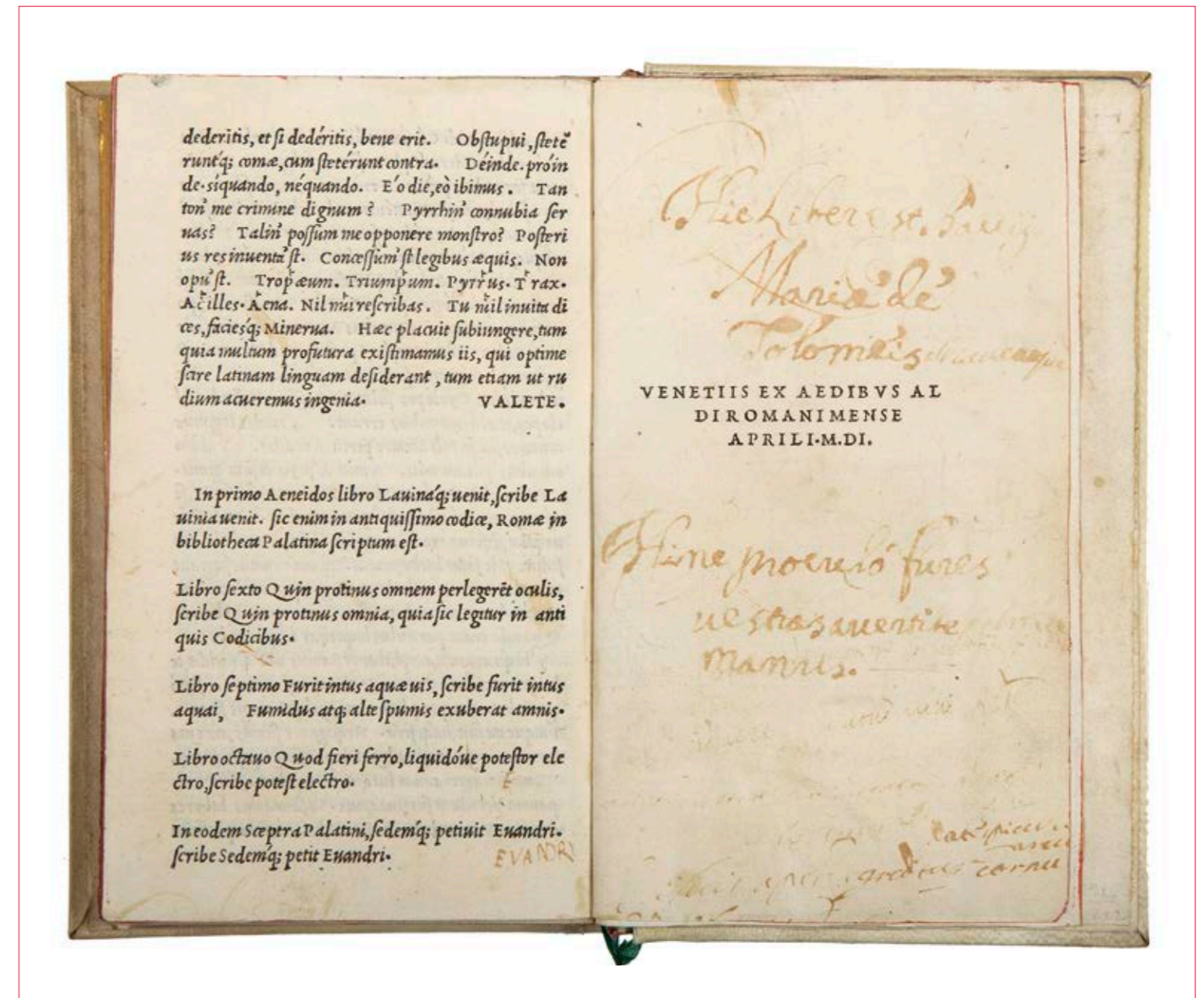
8° (143x89 mm). Collation: a-g⁸, A-X⁸, Y⁴. [228] leaves. Italic and roman type. Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters. Nineteenth-century ivory vellum, over pasteboards. Smooth spine, title in gilt lettering. Green silk bookmark, gilt edges, formerly red. In a brown morocco box, made in 1982 by James Brockman. A good copy, slightly browned in places, repairs to the upper margin of fol. b4, a few marginalia lightly faded and trimmed. Underlinings and copious Latin and Italian marginal and interlinear notes in two minute humanistic hands. On the rear pastedown a cutting taken from the sale catalogue of Sotheby's (London, 11 January 1886, lot 2694), describing Michael Wodhull's copy, which states that "to procure the first Aldine Virgil in perfect condition is almost hopeless".

Provenance: Baccio Maria di Neri de' Tolomei (1646-1694; Florentine senator in 1689, his ownership inscription on the recto of the last leaf, 'Iste Liber est Baccij Mariae de' Tolomeis'); H. P. Kraus, August 1981 (see also *Fifty Years. An Anniversary Catalogue of 120 Outstanding Books printed before 1700 and sold by H. P. Kraus from 1932 to 1982*, New York 1982, no. 73); Garden Library (ex-libris on the front pastedown; Sotheby's, *The Collection of the Garden Ltd. Magnificent Books and Manuscripts, conceived and formed by Haven O'More*, New York 1989, lot 35); Pierre Berès (Pierre Bergé & Associés, *Alde Manuce 1450-1515. Une collection*, Genève, 19 November 2004, lot 29); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The celebrated and exceedingly rare Vergilius of 1501, the first book in octavo format Aldus printed, as well as the first to be printed in italic type, based on the Italian cursive humanist script. To borrow the well-chosen phrase of H. George Fletcher, "the quintessential Aldine".

The new small italic type first used here was designed and cut for Aldus Manutius by the Bolognese punchcutter and typefounder Francesco Griffo, and was highly praised by Erasmus of Rotterdam for its clarity and legibility. Aldus's verses announcing his typographical invention to the learned world, and commending Griffo's technical skill, are printed on the verso of the first leaf. The legend arose that the font was very similar to Petrarch's handwriting. It was also attributed to other 'distinguished' humanistic hands, for example that of Pomponio Leto, the scribe Bartolomeo di Sanvito, and Aldus himself. A prototype of the italic font was first used by Aldus in 1500, to set the five words which appear in the woodcut frontispiece to St Catherine's *Epistole*. The Vergilius is the first book in the revolutionary series of Aldine classical texts issued in the easily portable octavo size, the *libri portatiles in formam enchiridii* immediately imitated, and often counterfeited by other printers in Italy as well as in France. The edition's italic type was also immediately imitated or counterfeited, despite the ten-year privilege granted by the Venetian Senate giving Aldus exclusive right to its use.

An outstanding copy, included by H. P. Kraus in the catalogue issued to celebrate the printed masterpieces which he sold as a bookseller during a career lasting over five decades.



A previously unrecorded copy of the first book to be printed in Aldus' famous italic type and the first in the series of Aldine "pocket classics"

— H. P. Kraus (1982) —

II. THE COMMEDIA

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Manuscripts

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Translations

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*Bibliographical Rarities relating
to the Commedia*



*... he called the whole the Comedy...
he composed it in vernacular rhyme, with so
great art, and such marvellous and beauteous
arrangement, that there hath not yet been any who
might reprehend it justly in any point...*

— Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* —

3 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Commedia. Paradiso, xxx 139 - xxxi 45. Fragment on vellum. Florence, mid-fourteenth century.

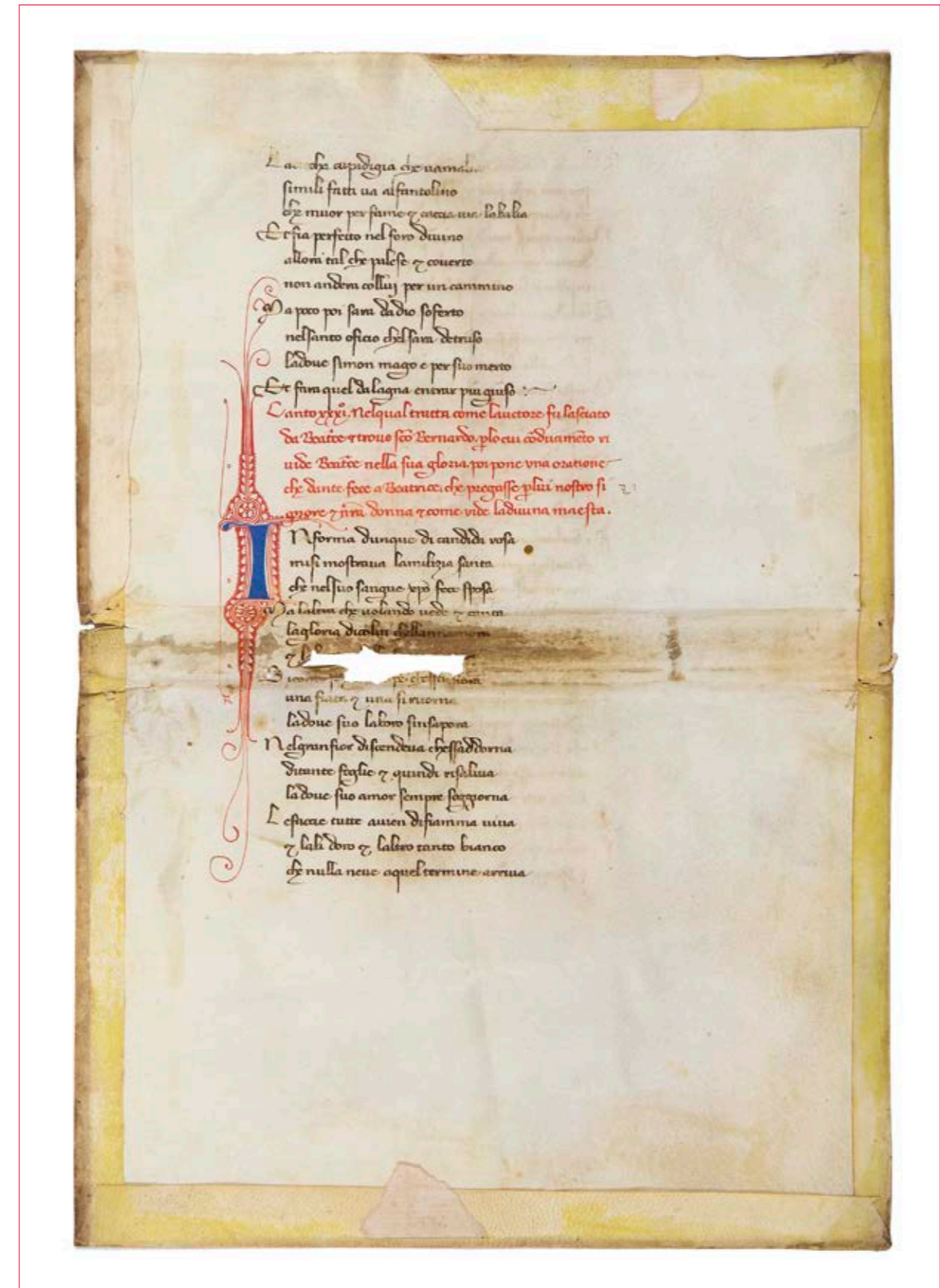
317x240 mm ca. A single leaf, folded in half, used as a binding cover for a book in quarto format. Text block: 195x93 mm, one column, 30-31 lines. Probably ruled with dry point. Text written in dark brown ink in a Florentine chancery hand. Vernacular rubric prefacing Canto xxxi written in red. On the recto three-line initial in blue with extensive flourishes in red penwork. The first capital letter of each *terzina* set out and touched with yellow. The verses transcribed on the recto in fine condition; writing on the verso erased, but legible under UV lamp. A tear along the central fold, with loss of line 21 on the recto, and line 22 on the verso. Traces of its re-use as binding cover can be seen in the sewings and the almost illegible inked title on the verso.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

A precious mid-fourteenth-century unrecorded vellum fragment of the *Commedia*, recently discovered. It contains portions of two cantos of the *Paradiso*, and on the recto includes the beginning, with its vernacular rubric, of Canto xxxi, in which Dante introduces the description of Paradise with the famous metaphor 'in forma di candida rosa', i.e. 'as a snow white rose', the symbol of his vision of the supreme Beauty.

The fragment comes from a dismembered manuscript belonging to the 'Cento' group, an early large-scale Florentine production of codices containing the *vulgata* text, uniform in physical format, layout, decoration and script (Florentine chancery). The expression *Dante del Cento* derives from an anecdote recounted by the sixteenth-century philologist Vincenzo Borghini in his *Lettera intorno a' manoscritti antichi* (1573), in which he reported that a Florentine scribe – later erroneously identified as Francesco di ser Nardo da Barberino, who signed the famous codex Trivulziano 1080 – was forced to copy for a fee one hundred manuscripts of the *Commedia* in order to provide his daughters with a dowry. The production of these manuscripts is now ascribed not to a single scribe, but rather to several copyists active in the same *scriptorium* in Florence, probably established and led by Francesco di ser Nardo himself.

About sixty manuscripts of the Florentine 'Cento' group have survived, mostly written in a two-column format; only three manuscripts among them are written in one column, like the present fragment. The scribe is identifiable with the copyist who wrote the fragment II.IV.587a in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, which has identical layout and decoration, and contains *Inferno* xx 64-93, xxv 10-69, xxx 145-xxxI 21. Probably both fragments had once belonged to the same codex.



*In fashion, as a snow white rose, lay then
Before my view the saintly multitude,
Which in his own blood Christ espoused...*

— *Paradiso*, xxxI 1-3 —

4 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Commedia. Inferno, XII 19 - XXII 114. Fragment on paper. Florence, third quarter of the fourteenth century.

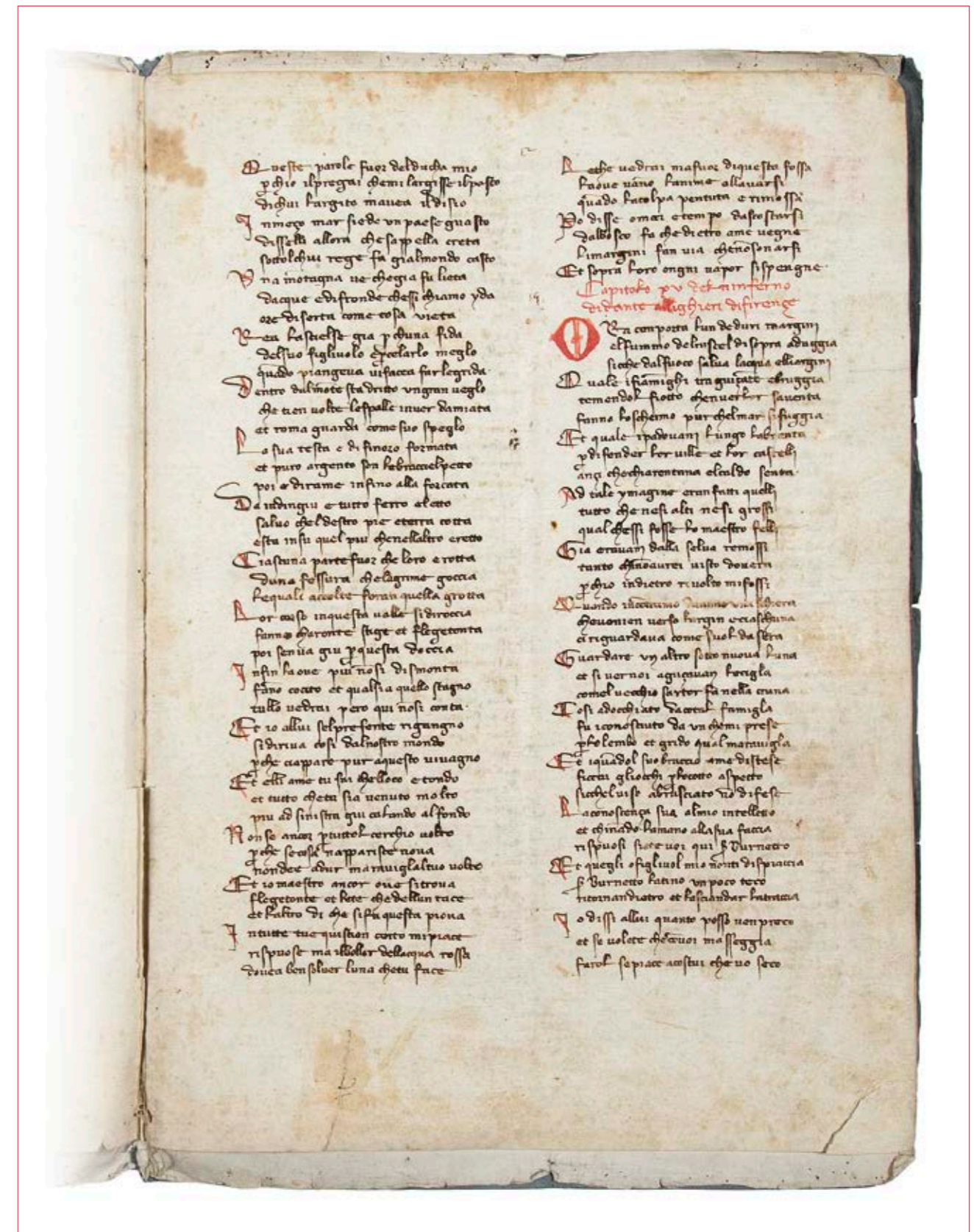
390x280 mm. 1+8+1 leaves. Collation: one quire of eight leaves. Text block: 320x210 mm, two columns, 45 lines. Unruled. Text written in dark brown ink in a Florentine chancery hand. Vernacular rubrics prefacing the cantos written in red. Three-line initials in red penwork at the beginning of each canto, probably by the same scribe who copied the text. The first capital letter of each *terzina* set out and touched with red. Mounted on vellum strips from a Latin manuscript in semi-gothic hand. Bound in late eighteenth-century blue wrappers. The lower inner margins of fols. 3v and 6r are reinforced. Lightly waterstained at the upper margin. A few notes in a fourteenth-century chancery; other annotations by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century hands.

Provenance: Carlo de Negis Vecchiarelli (late eighteenth century; he ran a school in Matelica, near Macerata in the Marche); gifted by him to Francesco Rutoli ('Al Chiarissimo Sig. Canonico D. Francesco Rutoli Carlo de Negis Vecchiarelli Dono'); Livio Ambrogio collection (in accordance with the Italian *Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage* (2004) the manuscript is declared an item of 'cultural interest' for the Italian State).

A substantial portion of the *Inferno*, from a manuscript written in an elegant Florentine *cancelleresca*, belonging to the renowned group of manuscripts known as the *Dante del Cento*, a series produced in Florence which was standardised in layout, script and style of decoration. This large fragment includes eleven cantos: among them, the famous Canto XIII, with the description of the Forest of the Suicides and the striking story of Pier delle Vigne; Canto XV, with the moving encounter between Dante and his old teacher Brunetto Latini; Canto XIX, devoted to the Simoniacs punished in the Third Bolgia and introduced by Dante's celebrated invective against Simon Magus.

The paleographic examination of the fragment reveals that the skilled scribe who was responsible is the same as the one who copied three well-known manuscripts: the famous ms 2137 in the Biblioteca Riccardiana (in the past wrongly ascribed to Boccaccio), ms Frullani 7 in the Biblioteca Moreniana in Florence, and ms Borg. Lat. 168 in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

An important piece of evidence of the high demand for copies of this poetic masterpiece in Dante's native city during the 1370s.



But I remember'd him; and toward his face
My head inclining, answer'd: "Ser Brunetto!
And are ye here?" He thus to me: "My son...

5 DANTE ALIGHIERI

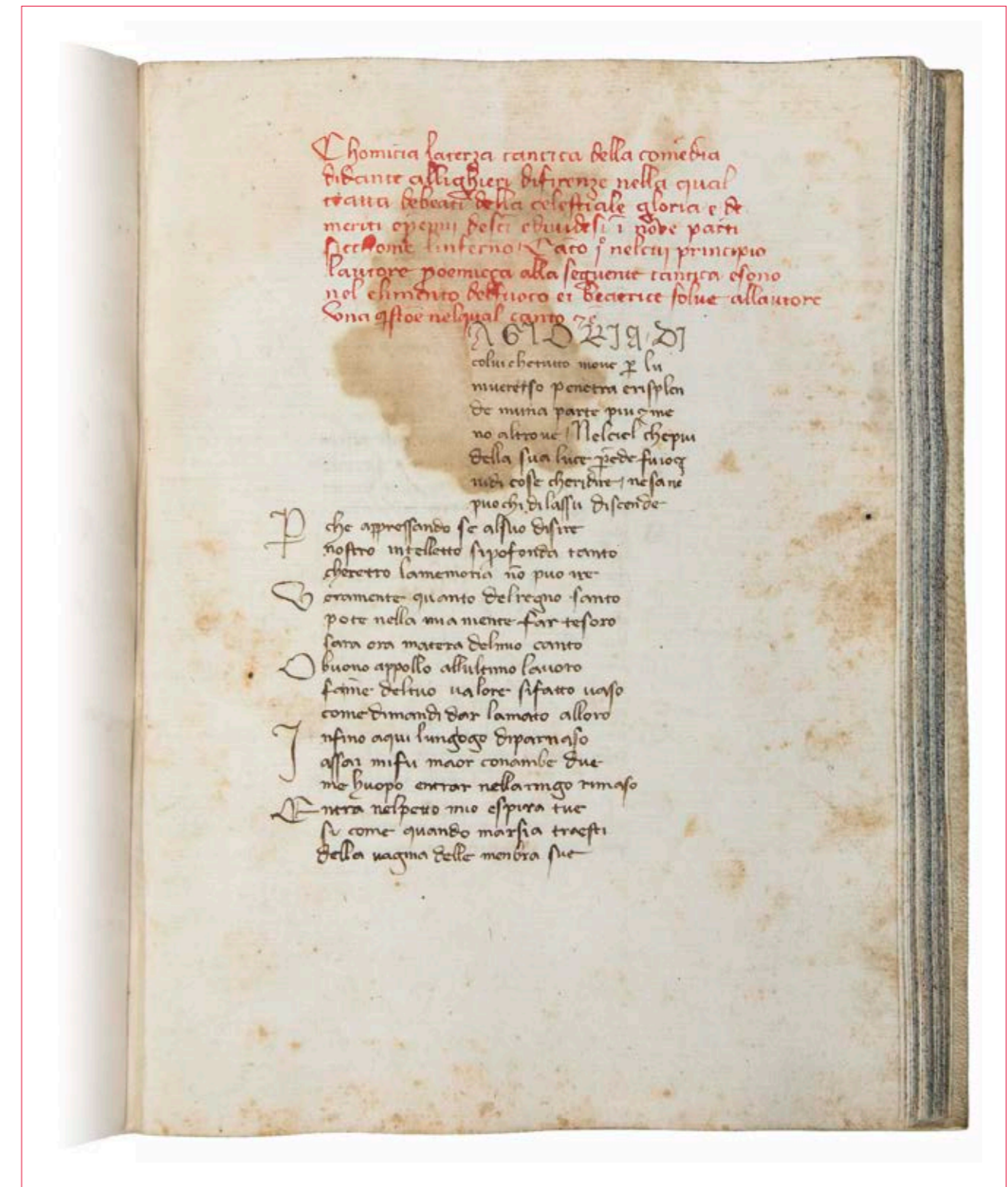
Commedia. Manuscript on paper. Tuscany (Florence?), late fourteenth century.

282x205 mm. III + 199 + IV leaves. Fourteen quires. Collation: r¹⁴⁻³⁷ (1/1-2 probably blanks lacking; 1/13 originally blank lacking; 1/14 originally blank, later re-used by hand B for textual additions), 2¹⁶, 3⁸⁻¹ (only 3/1 written by hand A; 3/2-7 originally blanks, subsequently re-used by hand B for textual additions; 3/8 lacking), 4-7¹⁶, 8²⁰ (18/19-20 blanks), 9-13¹⁶, 14²⁻¹ (14/2 lacking). Two blank leaves inserted in the eighteenth century to facilitate arrangement during binding (respectively between fols. 10-11 and fols. 34-35), uncounted in the foliation and collation. Text block: ca. 180x108 mm, one column, 30 lines (for the principal scribe, copying in the fourteenth-century); one column, 36 lines (for the fifteenth-century scribe; only fol. 11v in two columns). Ruled in coloured ink. In the second and third *cantiche* fourteenth-century quire signatures, in arabic numerals, at the bottom of the final verso of each quire and the first recto of the following. The sequence of the signatures runs in reverse: the number signed on the recto of the first leaf of each quire matches the number found on the verso of the last leaf of the preceding quire. Written in a minuscule chancery script datable to the last decade of the fourteenth century. A different hand, datable to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, is responsible for fols. 11r-v, 28v (line 13)-34v, written in a small *mercantesca* script. A third hand, datable to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, is responsible for adding the six verses lacking on fol. 10v, written in *mercantesca* with a half-cursive *ductus*. Red ink captions only in the third *cantica*, added by the main scribe. Blank spaces for capitals, in the first and third *cantiche* with guide letters, and arabic numerals indicating the running numeration of each canto (partly trimmed). Eighteenth-century vellum, over pasteboards. Smooth spine, inscribed in capital letters at top 'Dante M[anoscritt]o'. Edges speckled green. The first ten leaves mounted, with old repairs; a few stains and a pale waterstain to the upper margin, not affecting the legibility of text. In the third *cantica* a few captions in red ink somewhat faded or smudged. A cut in the gutter of fol. 35, a hole in the lower portion of fol. 128. Marginalia in four different hands, datable from fifteenth to nineteenth century. Rough ink drawings datable to the sixteenth century on the lower margin of fol. 16r (a coat of arms with cross and Florentine fleur-de-lys) and fol. 167r (a long-haired figure wearing a hat); a few *maniculae*.

Provenance: the silk weaver Giovanni di Bartolomeo d'Antonio dall'Ancisa (sixteenth-century ownership inscription on the recto of the first leaf of the text, 'Questo libro si è di Giovani di Bartolomeo d'Antonio dall'Incisa, tintore di seta in su la piazza ad Arno, in Firenze'; in the same hand the annotation "Dante Aldigieri, figlolo non so di cui, | mia madre sa di cu' figlolo i' fui", on a paper strip pasted in the upper margin of fol. IIIr); Cioni-Carrega family; Livio Ambrogio collection.

A truly remarkable late fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Commedia*, possibly produced in Florence but certainly belonging from a textual point of view to the Tuscan tradition of the transmission of Dante's poem. Although there are some contaminations from other branches of textual transmission, it is most closely related to the group of codices derived from the so-called Cortonese (the famous ms 88 of the Biblioteca dell'Accademia Etrusca in Cortona, copied not later than 1350).

The manuscript was written by a single fourteenth-century scribe, supplemented with later additions by two hands datable to the fifteenth century. It contains an almost complete text of the *Commedia*; the second and third *cantiche* are complete (except for the last verses 91-145 of Canto xxxiii of the *Paradiso*, which were written on the last leaf of the manuscript, now lost). The *lacunae* relate to the *Inferno* and were in all likelihood



Questo libro si è di Giovani di Bartolomeo d'Antonio dall'Incisa,
tintore di seta in su la piazza ad Arno, in Firenze

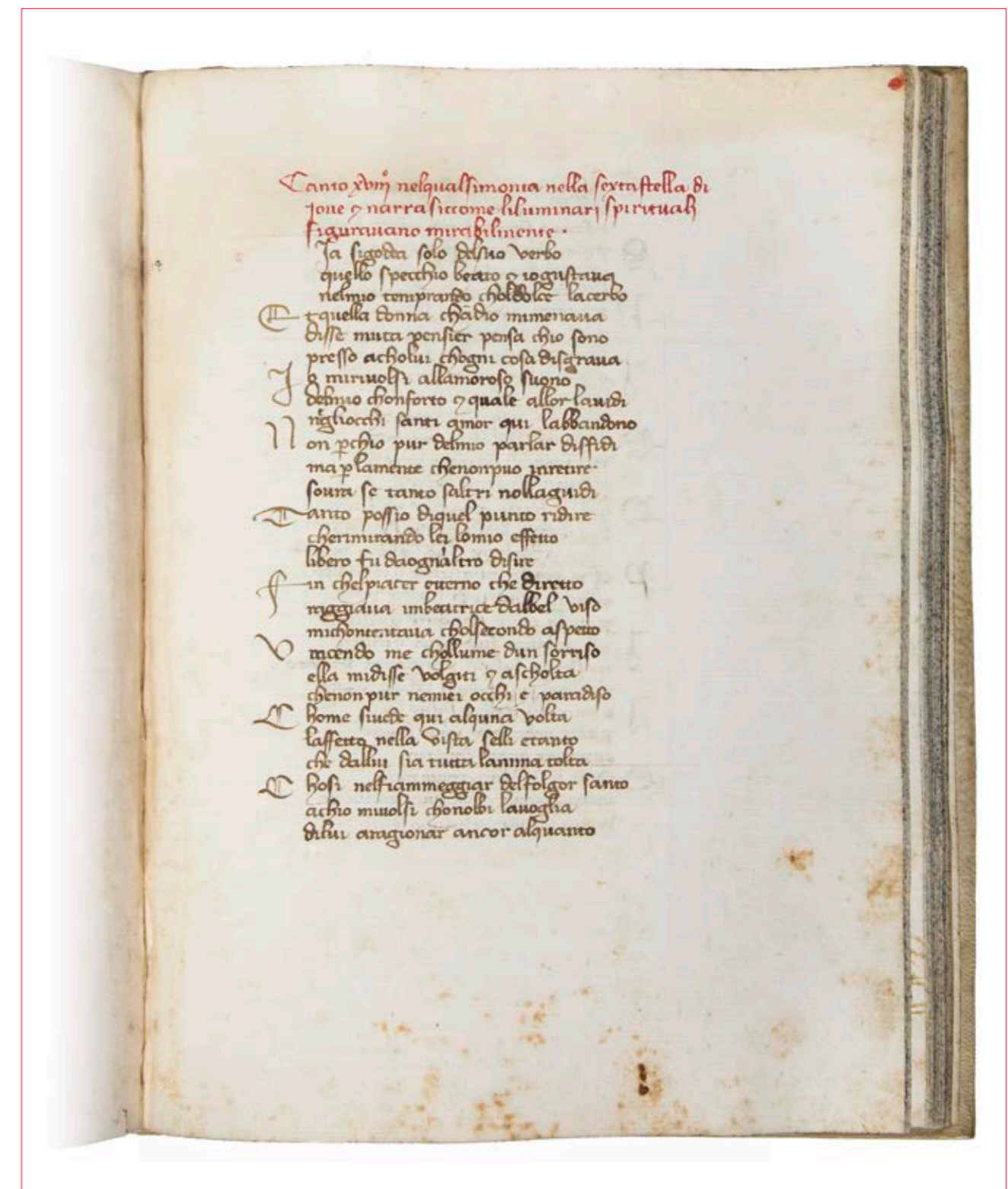
An unrecorded late fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Commedia*

missing from the antigraph used by the principal copyist of the volume, writing in the fourteenth century. This is evident from the way the scribe copied the text with extreme regularity, filling each page with ten *terzine* (thirty lines), only to come to a sudden halt at the first of the two gaps, leaving the rest of the page blank. Taking into account both that the *Paradiso* and *Purgatorio* are complete (the *Paradiso* also includes the rubrics in Italian which precede each canto) and that the quires containing these two *cantiche* are, as described above, signed beginning with the final quire revealing that the fourteenth-century scribe copied *backwards* from the last canto of the *Paradiso*, it seems logical to suppose that in the antigraph he was using the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* were complete but the *Inferno* was possibly missing certain portions of the text. Thus he took the decision to start copying from the end of the work in the hope that in the meantime he would find another manuscript edition of the *Commedia* which would enable him to fill in the gaps in his copy of the *Inferno*. Indeed, the *Inferno* in the present manuscript has only one regular quire of sixteen leaves entirely filled in the hand of the fourteenth-century scribe A; the other quires were left with blanks which the later scribe B has partially filled in with the missing portions of text.

The *lacunae* relate to the last four verses of Canto iv, the whole of Canto v, the first eight *terzine* of Canto vi, the last nineteen *terzine* of Canto xiii, and the following twenty-one cantos of the *Inferno*. On the leaf 11 left blank by the main copyist, the second scribe (hand B) added the verses 64-142 from Canto v and the first eight *terzine* of Canto vi; he also copied the verses 94-151 of Canto xiii, the cantos xiv-xv, and the first thirty-seven *terzine* of Canto xvi, on leaves left blank on purpose. At the end of Canto xvi a note in a nineteenth-century hand has pointed out the lack of the following cantos of the *Inferno*: 'mancano otto *terzine* di questo canto decimo sesto e gl'altri diciotto dell'Inferno per intiero'. A third scribe (hand C) was responsible for the addition of the six verses lacking from Canto iv (fol. 10v).

Therefore, in this manuscript, quite exceptionally in the context of the manuscript tradition of the *Commedia* in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, the third *cantica* is complete. Furthermore, the only *cantica* in this manuscript to have vernacular rubrics is the *Paradiso*, for each of the thirty-three *cantos* and copied by the fourteenth-century scribe in red ink. It is especially noteworthy that these vernacular rubrics belong to the earliest type found in the Florentine manuscript tradition, of which the first witness is ms 1080 of the Biblioteca Trivulziana in Milan, produced in Florence and dated 1337. According to Petrocchi this type of rubric is characteristic of the earliest circulation of Dante's great poem. It is known that the *Paradiso* was composed between 1318 and 1321, and these very early rubrics could have been written by contemporaries while Dante was still living.

The manuscript was owned in the sixteenth century by the Florentine silk weaver and *tintore* (dyer) Giovanni di Bartolomeo d'Antonio dall'Ancisa, as attested by his ownership inscription on the recto of the first leaf. The Florence State Archives hold several documents which provide biographical details on this owner. Giovanni dall'Ancisa belonged to the Florentine mercantile class. His father Bartolomeo lived in the district of Santa Croce near the 'Gonfalone Bue', and he too was a weaver, or *tintore* of silk. He managed a small shop, and his clientele included Cosimo de' Medici the Elder. In 1458 Giovanni is not yet listed in the so-called *Boche*, i.e. the list of the family members economically dependent on

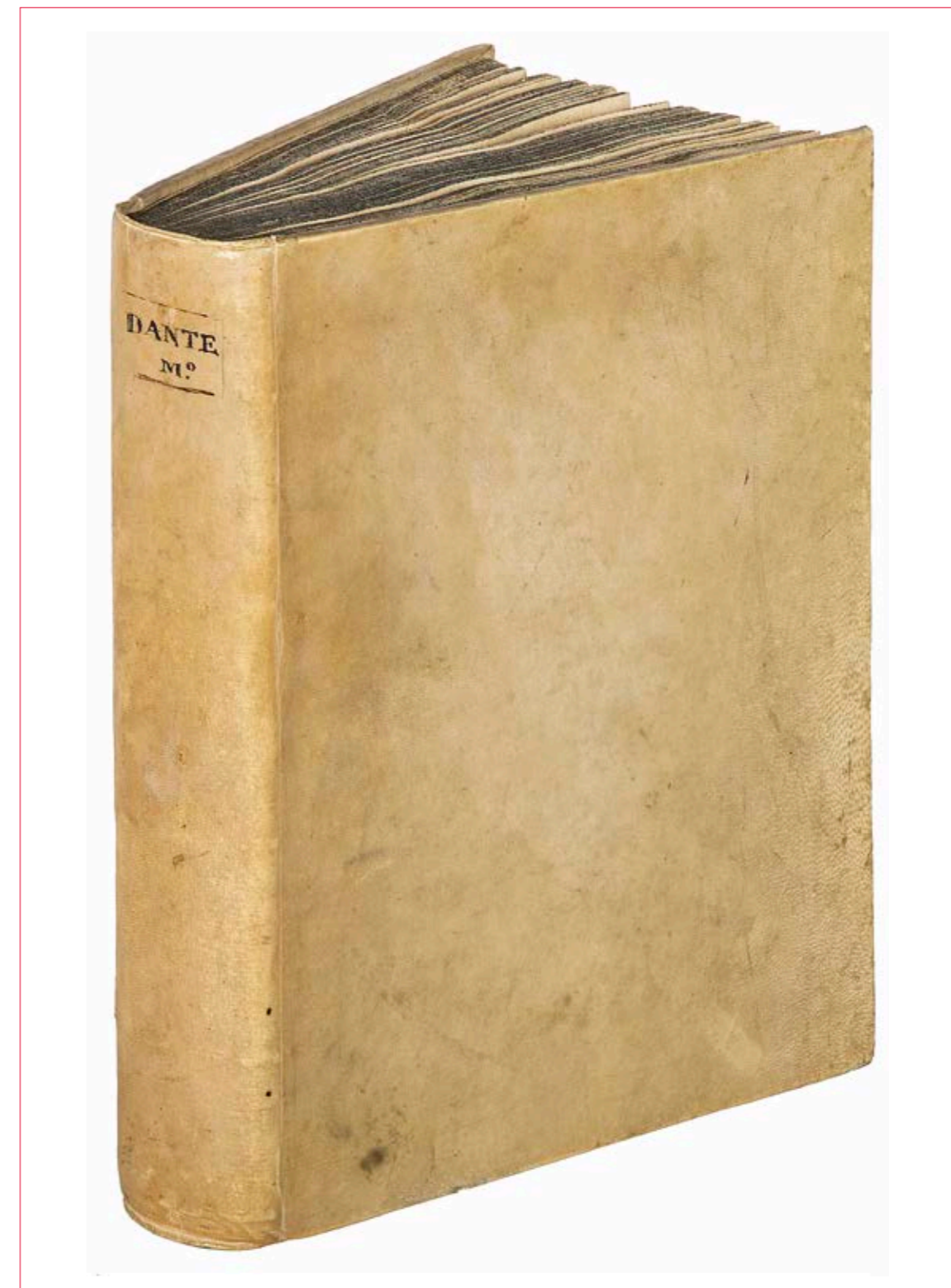


Bartolomeo. His name appears for the first time in 1480, after his father's death, in a land registry document. In 1480 Giovanni was only seven years old: therefore he was born in 1473. This fiscal declaration was written by Francesco di Paganello Filipetri, another *tintore di seta*, who also exercised the profession of *copista a prezzo* (i.e. a jobbing copyist). Manuscript copies of the *Commedia* have been attributed to Paganello's hand (e.g. Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms 1047; and Biblioteca Laurenziana, ms Plut. 40.33), as well as copies of Boccaccio's works (e.g. Biblioteca Laurenziana, ms 107). This manuscript is an outstanding example of the circulation of the works of the great Italian authors in the milieu of the Florentine *setaioli*. Francesco di Paganello Filipetri might also have had a part in the transmission of the present manuscript to Giovanni dall'Ancisa. An additional noteworthy feature in this manuscript is the paper slip, which was probably cut from one of the original first blank leaves and is now pasted on one of the preliminary leaves, on which the sixteenth-century owner has annotated the following couplet:

Dante Aldigieri, figlolo non so di cui,
mia madre sa di cu' figlolo i' fui.

These verses accuse Dante of being an illegitimate child, and are related to the famous *Tenzone* between him and Forese Donati. This lively poetic exchange was made up of three sonnets from Dante to Forese, and three from Forese in response. This remarkable annotation reveals the enduring popularity of the *Tenzone* in Florence at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

This manuscript is extraordinary evidence for the way Dante's poem was read by the wider public of merchants and skilled artisans, who were literate in Italian (but not Latin) and who often learned to read and write using the *Commedia*.



6 DANTE ALIGHIERI

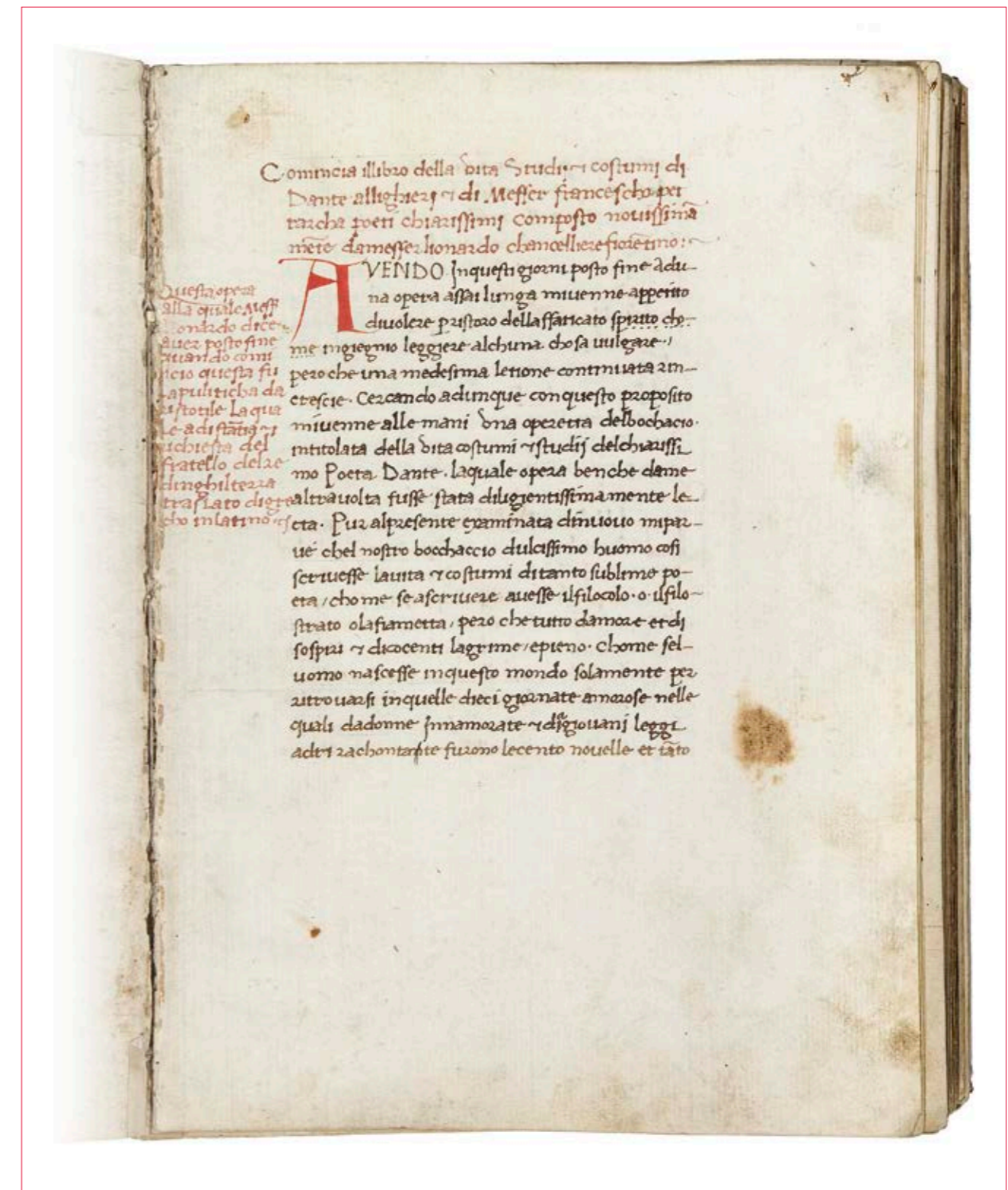
Commedia. With encomiastic and exegetical works relating to Dante. Decorated manuscript on paper. Italy (probably Florence), second half of the fifteenth century (after 15 May 1456).

276x195 mm. II+294+III leaves. Twenty-four quires, plus a single leaf at the end. Collation: 1-5^o, 6-12^o, 13^o, 14-18^o, 19^o, 20-23^o, 24^o (probably lacking the blank conjugate leaf). Blanks: fols. 8v, 9, 10, 47v-50, 62v, 144-146, 155, 166-168, 251-252. Early inked foliation on the upper right corner, partly trimmed. Text block: single column with variable number of lines and text space measures. Blind ruled, fols. 51r-72r ruled in plummet. Catchwords written in the inner lower margin. Text written in a humanist script, with *littera textualis* features, hand and ink the same throughout. Six-line pen-flourished initials at the beginning of each *cantica*; two, three or four line pen-flourished initials alternately in red or blue, traces of guide letters. In the text of the *Commedia* the first capital letter of the first verse of every *terzina* set out. Eighteenth-century écaillé half-leather, pasteboards covered with blue paper (abraded in places). Smooth spine, at the top 'Dante Codice', inked on paper label. Spine partly detached; quires 4-6 slightly loose; some leaves mounted on reinforcing paper strips.

Provenance: the Jesuit theologian Girolamo Fioravanti (1555-1603; ownership inscription on the front pastedown, 'Di Girolamo Fioravanti'); the Dante scholar from Verona Giovanni Jacopo Dionisi (1724-1808; in his hand the description of this manuscript and some notes written about 1794 on loose leaves inserted in the volume; on a slip 'Questo codice va d'accordo con quello della Laurenz. Pl. LXXX. sup. Cod. CXXXI. '); his nephew Giovanni Francesco Dionisi (nineteenth century; see the letter preserved in the volume, written to him by the count Francesco Ravignani, dated 27 June 1817, in which Ravignani thanks him for the loan of this codex); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A precious composite manuscript or *zibaldone*, probably produced in the milieu of the *Studio Fiorentino*, containing an almost complete text of the *Commedia* (the first two *cantiche* are complete but the compiler suddenly broke off, in the middle of the verso of the last leaf, the transcription of the *Paradiso* at verse 192 of Canto xvii) and supplemented with earlier encomiastic and exegetical texts, reflecting how Dante's poem circulated, and was read and re-interpreted in the fifteenth century. It represents an attempt to create, in a kind of personal notebook, an introductory 'manual' to the *Commedia*, and is a striking example of the lasting influence of the earlier fourteenth-century works relating to Dante. The miscellany opens with the *sermo* or *protestatio de iustitia* held on 15 May 1456 by Pandolfo de' Pandolfini, a friend of Leonardo Bruni and Giannozzo Manetti. In the first half of the fifteenth century the *protestatio de iustitia* was a traditional Florentine public ceremony, held – as stipulated in the 1415 Statutes – on the installation of the city's new Priors, who undertook in rhetorical declarations to perform their duties with impartiality and equity. Texts of *protestationes* are often to be found in the *zibaldoni* assembled and transcribed by Florentine students, as standard pedagogical practice. This manuscript, written in a single hand in humanistic script, could have been produced after 15 May 1456 in the milieu of the *Studio Fiorentino*. The group of codices of the *Commedia* transcribed in humanistic script between 1425 and ca. 1450 is limited, increasing the importance of the manuscript presented here.

The *miscellanea dantesca* in the strict sense begins on fol. 11r with the *Libro della vita, studii costumi di Dante Allighieri [et] di messer Francescho Petrarca*, the text of the *Vitae* of Dante



A Dantean compilation from the fifteenth century.
The Biographies, the Commentaries, and the *Commedia*

and Petrarch composed in 1436 by Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444). The version included in this manuscript is especially noteworthy: it presents vernacular marginal glosses in red ink, identical in content to those extant in a manuscript of Bruni's *Vita di Dante* copied in 1440 by the Florentine notary and reader of Dante, Piero Bonaccorsi, or Bonaccorso da Montemagno (1410-1477), preserved in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence (ms Plut. 90 sup. 131, fols. 81v-86v).

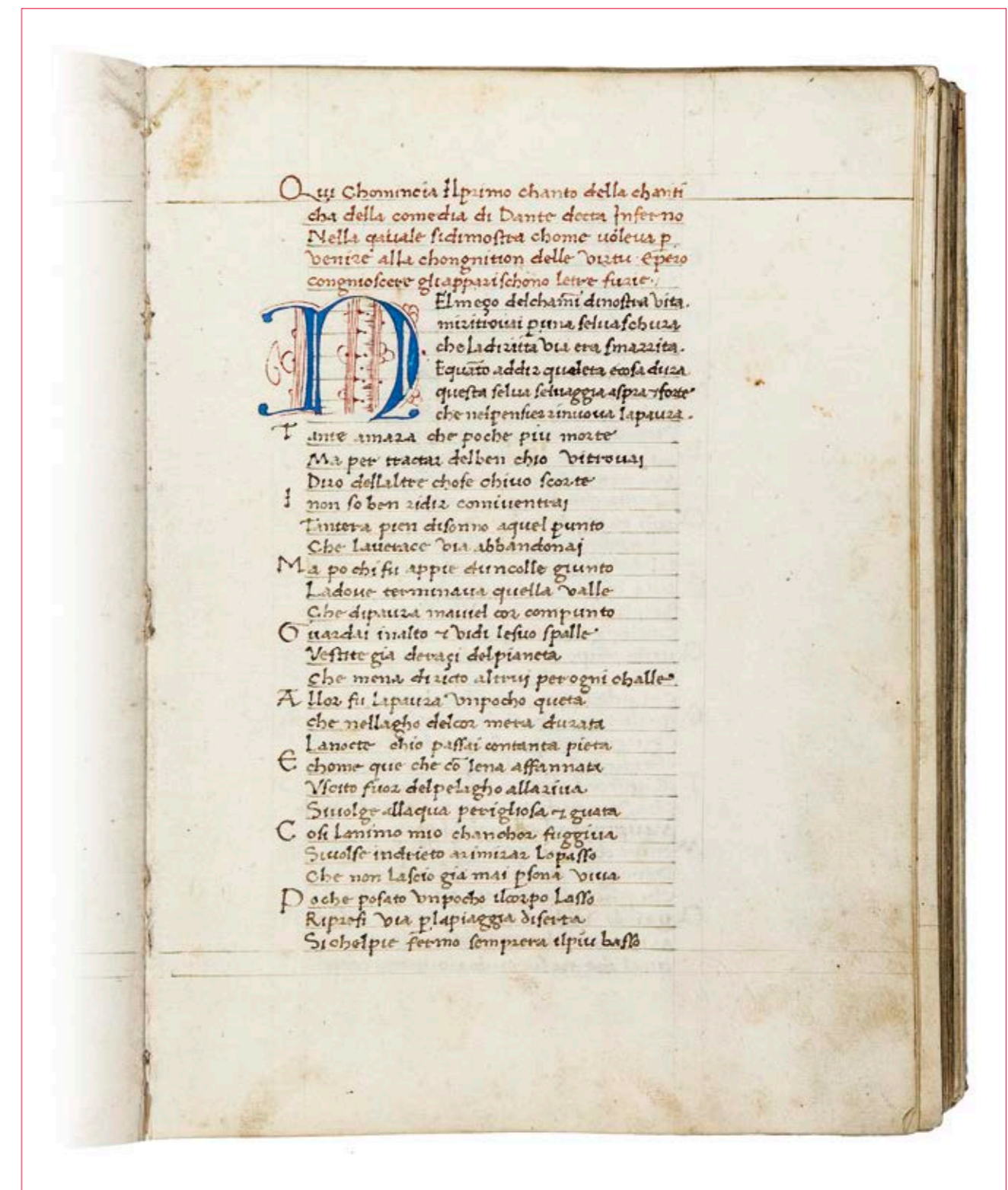
Bruni had carefully read Boccaccio's *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, and in the *proemio* comments critically on numerous details of this earlier work. It is no coincidence that, following Bruni's account, the unknown compiler of this *zibaldone* copied an excerpt from the first redaction of the *Trattatello* (dated between 1351 and 1355; Boccaccio's autograph is preserved in the Biblioteca Capitolare in Toledo, ms Zelada 104.6), containing the famous description of Dante's appearance: a choice that mirrors the popularity of Boccaccio's work in Florence in the fifteenth century.

The *cantiche* of the *Commedia* are introduced by the prologue known as *Dante poeta sovrano*, a summary of the *Expositiones et glose super Comediam Dantis* by the Carmelite monk Guido da Pisa (1333-1340), surviving in just seven manuscripts and first published in the 1478 Milanese edition of the *Commedia*, edited by Martino Paolo Nibia of Novara (known as Nidobeato). The prologue is here followed by the very well-known *capitoli* on the first *cantica* composed in the fourteenth century by Jacopo Alighieri – one of Dante's own sons, and the first commentator of the *Inferno* – and Bosone da Gubbio, both included in many fifteenth-century codices of the *Commedia*, and printed for the first time in the Venetian edition of Dante of 1477.

The last exegetical text transcribed is the topographical work *Cammino di Dante* composed ca. 1440 – surviving in a very restricted number of manuscripts – by the aforementioned Piero Bonaccorsi, introduced by Bonaccorsi's letter to the friar Romolo de' Medici, and revealing the peculiarly Florentine interest in geographical and cosmographical questions arising from the *Commedia*, and particularly in calculating the physical dimensions of Dante's Hell.

The section of the *Cammino di Dante* devoted to the *Inferno* ends with the note: "Seguita questo tractato over chamino nel purgatorio et poi nel paradiso. Et se tu lettore disideri vederlo in perfectione cerchalo altrove che qui non lo seguito perché questo volume non contiene più che lo inferno chome vedi pel testo", i.e. "This treatise called *Cammino* goes on to describe the journey through Purgatory and Paradise. And if you, my reader, wish to read the complete work, you will need to look for it elsewhere as I haven't transcribed the rest. The volume I'm copying from contains only the *Inferno* as you see from the text". Thus the *Purgatorio* and part of the *Paradiso* (cantos I-XVII 192) were added from other sources by the anonymous copyist/compiler.

The *lacuna*, starting in the middle of the verso of the last leaf, of the last cantos of the *Paradiso* shows that this manuscript is unfinished rather than imperfect, either because these cantos were missing in the antigraph the copyist used or for other unknown reasons. This *zibaldone dantesco* belonged in the eighteenth century to the renowned Dante scholar from Verona Giovanni Jacopo Dionisi. He was responsible for the edition of the *Commedia* published by Bodoni (1795), and assembled a vast Dante collection, also including the superb copy of the 1472 Mantuan edition of the *Commedia*, owned by the dedicatee of the edition Filippo Nuvoloni himself, one of the fifty books presented in this catalogue.



7 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Comincia la Comedia di dante alleghieri di fiorenze... Foligno, Johann Neumeister and Evangelista Angelini, 11 April 1472.

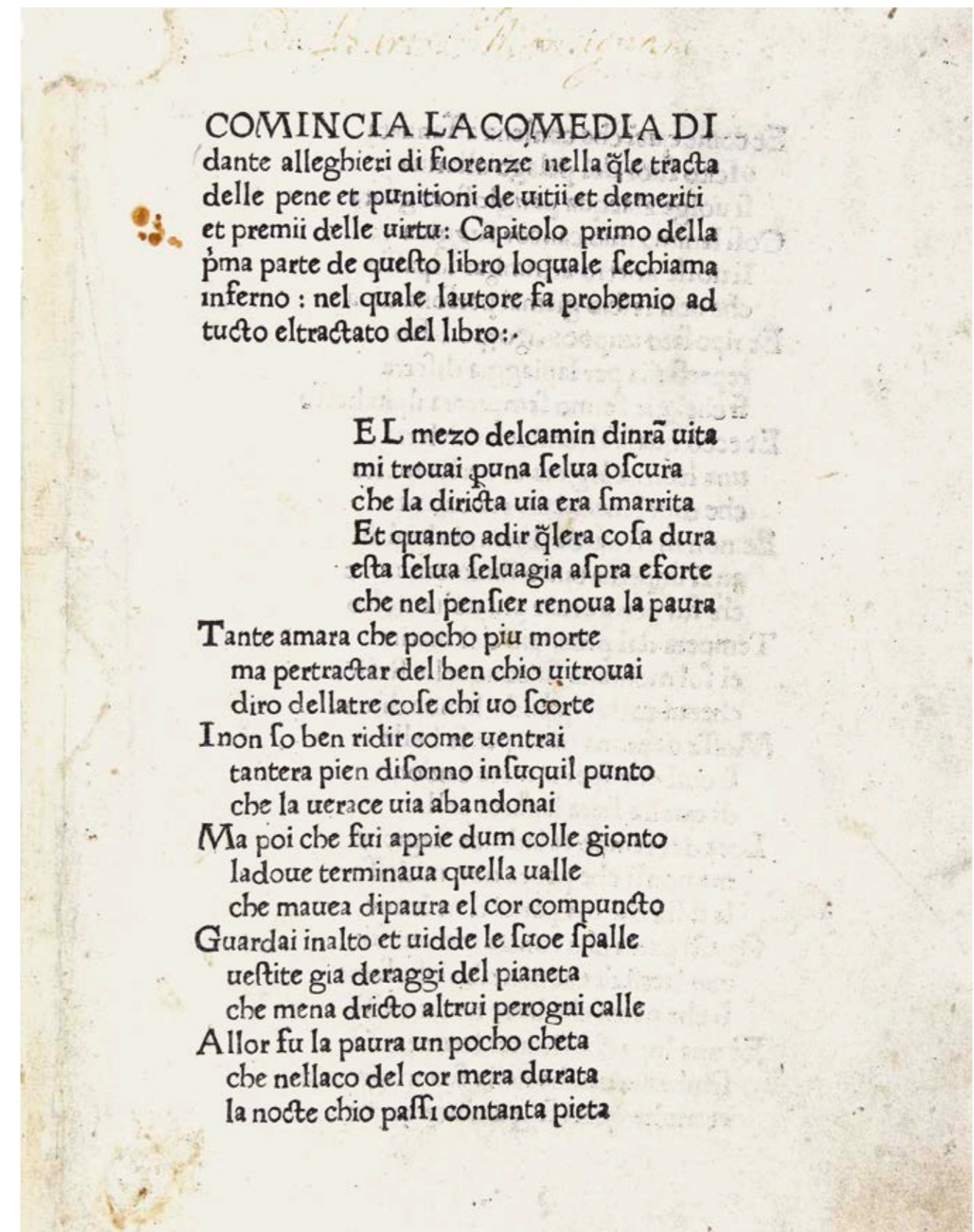
Folio (282x200 mm). Collation [a-b¹⁰, c¹², d-f¹⁰, g¹², h¹⁰, i-m¹⁰, n¹², o¹⁰, p¹², q¹⁰, r¹⁰, s¹², t-u¹⁰, x¹², y-z¹⁰, &¹⁰]. [248] of [252] leaves, lacking the blanks a1 and &10, and the text leaves a10 and &9, supplied in facsimile on old paper. Text in one column, 30 lines. Type: 1:124R. Inked foliation in a seventeenth-century hand in the upper margin. Later binding in antique vellum. A fine wide-margined copy. Old repairs to the inner margin of the first leaf of text; a few pale finger-marks. Numerous marginal notes in a contemporary hand, referring to leaves misbound in this copy; some annotations in a seventeenth-century hand.

Provenance: a seventeenth-century ownership inscription on fol. a2r, barely legible ('Barth' ?); Baron Horace de Landau (1824-1903; ex-libris on the front pastedown; *Catalogue des livres manuscrits et imprimés composant la bibliothèque de M. Horace de Landau. Première partie*, Florence 1885, p. 154, "2 ff. refaits"); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A fine wide-margined copy of the Foligno Dante, one of the three editions of the *Commedia* printed in 1472 (besides this one, there were also Mantuan and Venetian editions). The edition is commonly regarded as the first *Commedia* in print; in effect the volume printed by Johann Neumeister and Evangelista Angelini is the first to have a precise date in the colophon: the colophon of the Mantuan publication has only the year, and the Venetian one was printed later than Foligno, on 18 July.

This masterpiece of early typography, of great historical and philological importance, was produced in the thriving commercial ambience of late fifteenth-century Foligno (in Umbria) by Johann Neumeister, a former employee of Gutenberg. He had arrived from Germany in 1463-1464 to work as a scribe and in around 1470 had established the first printing press in the city, in partnership with Evangelista Angelini from Trevi. The neat types employed – an *antiqua* similar to the font used for the Subiaco Lactantius printed in 1465 by Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz – were designed and cut by the goldsmith and official in the Papal Mint Emiliano di Piermatteo degli Orfini. After printing only three books – *De bello Italico adversus Gothos gesto* by Leonardo Bruni (1470), the *Epistolae ad familiares* by Cicero (about 1471) and the Dante – the partnership dissolved, and Neumeister returned to Mainz. No other edition was published in Foligno during the rest of the fifteenth century and the early decades of the following.

The text of the *Commedia* is given here without commentary. It was prepared by Neumeister's partner Angelini, on the basis of a manuscript belonging to the renowned Florentine series known as the *Dante del Cento*, identified as ms Lolliniano 35 of the Biblioteca del Seminario in Belluno, which has identical vernacular rubrics prefacing each canto, and the same *lacunae* in the third *cantica* (*Paradiso*, xx 49-54 and XXI, 46-48). The copy presents, among others, the variant 'puro et disposto a salire alle stelle | SOLI DEO GLORIA' in the final verse of the *Purgatorio*. The variants are also pointed out in the catalogue, published in 1885, of the outstanding library of the great bibliophile Horace de Landau, to whom this handsome copy then belonged: "Probablement on corrigea le texte dans le cours du tirage, car il y a des variantes entre l'un et l'autre exempl. Le premier vers du 8^e f. p.e. contient dans le nôtre la forme *mercede*, tandis que dans d'autres il y a *mercedi*".



Cette édition de Dante passe pour la première...

— *Catalogue des livres... composant la bibliothèque de M. Horace de Landau* (1885) —

8 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Dante Aligerii poetae florentini inferni capitulum primum incipit. Mantua, Georgius de Augusta and Paulus de Butzbach, for Columbinus Veronensis, 1472.

Folio (320x240 mm). Collation: [a¹²⁻¹, b-f⁸, g¹⁰, h-k⁸, l⁶]. [91] leaves. Complete, including Colombino's *Capitulum* printed on an extra leaf in the first quire, and often lacking. Text in two columns, 41 lines. Type: 106R. At the beginning of each *cantica* fourteen-line illuminated initial in gold, with white vinework on red, blue, and green ground (identical in style to those present in the two copies respectively in Cambridge University Library and the Biblioteca Capitolare in Padua, suggesting that they were produced in the same workshop, possibly in Mantua). Initials alternately of red or blue, traces of guide letters. On fol. [a]2r a painted coat of arms, within a laurel wreath. Nineteenth-century half-leather binding. Spine with five raised bands, title in gilt lettering. Corners on rear cover lightly worn. A fine wide-margined copy, old restorations to the lower and outer blank margins of the first two leaves, without any loss. Some leaves browned and spotted; small tears at the lower blank margin of some leaves, a few thin wormholes. Copious Latin interlinear and marginal annotations in Filippo Nuvoloni's own hand. Numerous *maniculae* in the same hand.

Provenance: Filippo Nuvoloni (1441-1478); the Dante scholar Giovanni Jacopo Dionisi (1724-1808); Sir Thomas David Gibson-Carmichael of Skirling (1859-1926; ex-libris on the front pastedown; Sotheby's, *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of Books and Manuscripts of Sir Thomas David Gibson Carmichael, bart.* (removed from Castle Craig, Peeblesshire), London 1903, lot 268); purchased for £245 by Bernard Quaritch for Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919; *A List of Printed Books in the Library of Charles Fairfax Murray*, [London] 1907, p. 70, "[Divina Commedia] Mantuae, 1472. Folio. hf. bd. in morocco case"); the Italian politician Sydney Costantino Sonnino (1847-1922); Casa di Dante, Rome (ownership label on the front pastedown and spine; small stamps on some leaves); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The exceedingly rare *Commedia* printed in Mantua in 1472, competing for priority as the *editio princeps* of the poem with the Foligno Dante. An extraordinary copy, including the *Capitulum* by Colombino Veronese, frequently missing in surviving copies, and owned by the dedicatee and possible financial backer of the edition: the Mantuan humanist Filippo Nuvoloni (1441-1478), a friend of Andrea Mantegna.

The text was carefully prepared by the 'maestro da scola' Colombino (1440 ca. - 1482), who based his edition on the authoritative mid-fourteenth-century manuscript which Boccaccio had sent as a gift to Petrarch between 1351 and 1353 (Biblioteca Vaticana, ms Vat. lat. 3199, or a copy of it), and which would often be used throughout the sixteenth century, above all by Pietro Bembo for the Aldine edition of 1502. Colombino collated this reading with other manuscripts, probably in the Gonzaga library. The text – printed in two columns, without numbering or catchwords – is introduced by the *Capitulum di Colombino Veronese*, an encomiastic composition in fifty-two tercets printed on a leaf added during the printing, and addressed to Filippo Nuvoloni. The book was printed by Georg de Augusta and Paul Butzbach in 1472: the colophon on the verso of the final leaf mentions only their partnership and the year of printing, and there is as yet no documentary proof of the actual month of its publication. Therefore, the question of which town first printed the *Commedia* – Foligno or Mantua? – remains open.

Georg de Augusta and Paul Butzbach began their activity in Verona in 1471, establishing the first printing house in the city. They worked in collaboration with the *grammaticus*



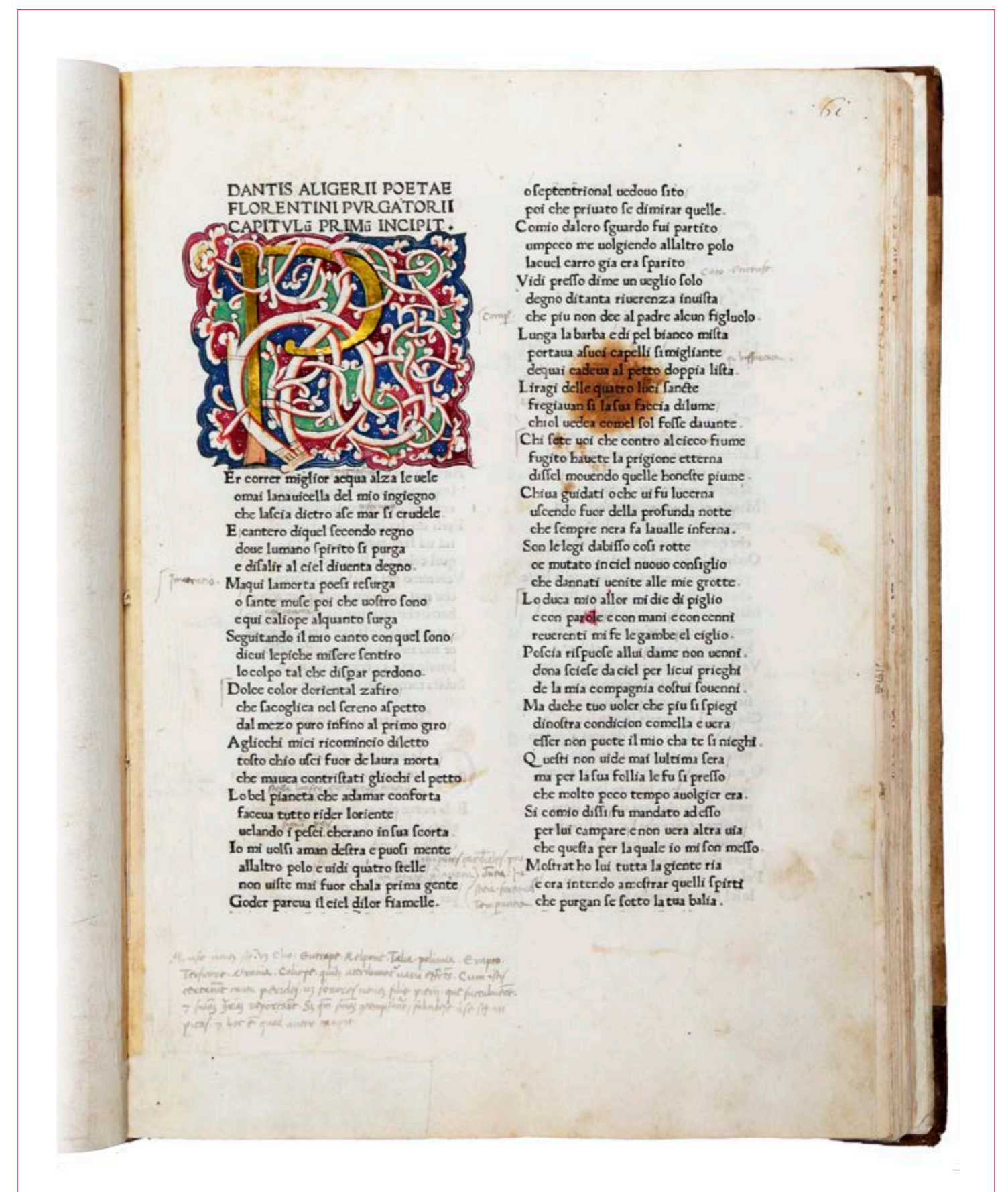
The presentation copy of the *editio princeps* Mantuana

Cosma Bogioni and started by producing those texts which were most in demand as schoolbooks. After printing six books (according to ISTC datable to the years 1471-1472), they left Verona and moved – stopping first in Ferrara – to Mantua. A letter written by the Mantuan law student Pietro Adamo de’ Micheli on 25 November 1471 to Ludovico Gonzaga allows us to antedate their arrival in the city to this date. He announces to the Marquis that he has founded a partnership with certain printers for introducing printing to Mantua, mainly of law books. However, the first product of the press will not be a voluminous legal treatise, but rather an “operetta de mediocre grandezza, vendibile et grata universalmente”, the *Decamerone* by Giovanni Boccaccio, a work that was frequently one of the first books printed by a newly established press. The *Decamerone* was printed – probably at the beginning of 1472 – “in una bellissima littera”, the type 106R newly cut for Georg de Augusta and Paul Butzbach by ‘Niccolò tedesco’, a *compositore* from Lendinara (the equipment, punches and matrices that they had used previously remained in Verona). This font was employed also for printing the *Commedia*, together with the only other book – according to ISTC – produced by Georg de Augusta and Paul Butzbach before the dissolution of their Mantuan partnership: the *Ortographia* by Cristoforo Scarpa, also datable to 1472. To these editions we can add the further three assigned by ISTC to de’ Micheli in the period 1471-1472: the *Aesopus moralisatus*, the *Tractatus de maleficiis* by Angelo Gambigliani, and the *Orologio* by de’ Micheli himself. These books are printed with the identical type 106R on paper with the same watermark: a stag’s head, commonly found in the earliest Mantuan editions. De’ Micheli’s involvement with printing was over by the end of 1472 because of financial difficulties, Georg moved to Venice, whereas Butzbach continued printing on his own in Mantua until 1481.

In the colophon to the edition of the *Decameron* the intent to flatter is clear. The formula adopted by de’ Micheli – *Mantuae impressum Cum ejus florentiss. urbis principatum foeliciss. ageret diuus Lodouicus gonzaga secundus* – is part of a strategy to ingratiate himself with the Marquis and gain his patronage. The printing of the *Commedia* may reflect an identical strategy to win patronage on the part of the newly established press. A book edited by the esteemed grammarian Colombino; a book offering an edition of Dante’s famous poem: could a printing house have a more auspicious start? Therefore, the printing might be datable to earlier in 1472, i.e. when Georg de Augusta and Paul Butzbach began their activity in Mantua: perhaps before 11 April, the date of the Foligno edition.

The identity of the first owner of the present copy might confirm this hypothesis, since an examination of sources and related references would suggest that this was none other than the dedicatee himself and possible financial backer of the edition: the Mantuan humanist, poet and diplomat Filippo Nuvoloni.

The crucial reference is to be found in the *Albo dantesco veronese* published in 1865, in which the then librarian of the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona Giambattista Giuliani records the past presence in the city of three copies of the Mantua Dante, including a remarkable copy once owned by the Nuvoloni family, with three illuminated initials, marginalia in a fifteenth-century hand and a coat of arms painted at the bottom of the first leaf: the identical features found in the present copy. A further significant reference, suggesting strongly that this was the actual copy in the Nuvoloni library, dates from 1776, when the Dante scholar Bartolomeo Pierazzini argued that the marginalia in the volume could be attributed to Nuvoloni himself.

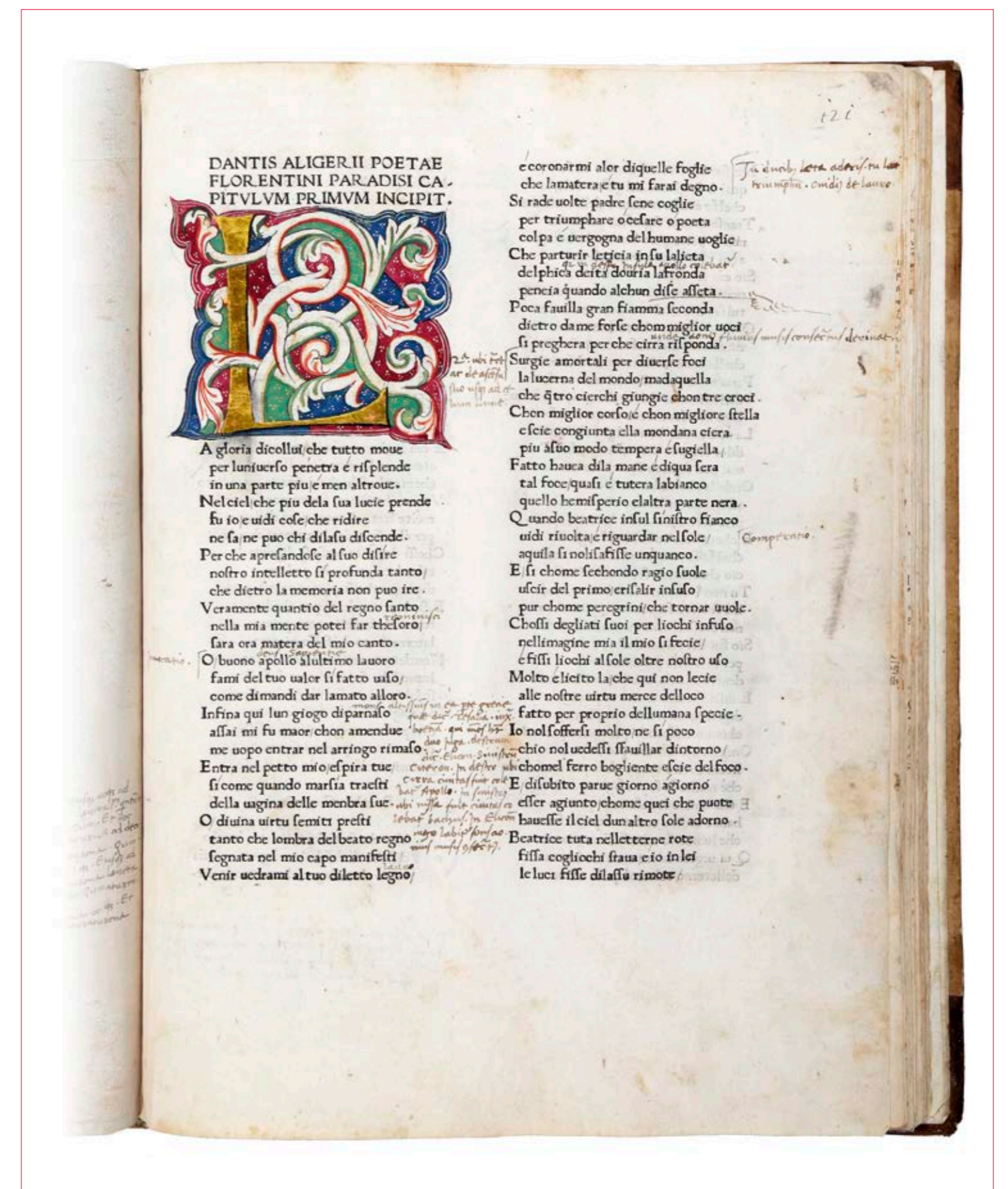


Filippo Nuvoloni was born in 1441 in Mantua, to a distinguished family belonging to the political and literary elite of the city. In 1468 Filippo moved to Ferrara to attend the lessons of Battista Guarini and Lodovico Carbone, and on 8 October he wrote to Lodovico Gonzaga with a request to borrow some Greek books from the Ducal Library, a detail that confirms Colombino's praise of Nuvoloni's mastery of different languages. In March 1471 he was in the entourage which accompanied Borso d'Este on his trip to Rome for his ducal investiture. The unexpected death of the Duke in August interrupted his career in the service of the Estense: Nuvoloni was forced to abandon Ferrara, and in November he moved back to Mantua. His return to his native city coincided therefore with the arrival of the two German printers. The printing of the *Commedia*, probably financed by Nuvoloni himself and accompanied by Colombino's *encomium* presenting him as the 'imitator of Virgil', the Mantuan poet *par excellence*, may also be read as a courtly homage. Just as such an edition could not have been a more auspicious beginning for the German printers newly arrived in Mantua, could Nuvoloni, with such an undertaking, have had a more triumphal re-entry to the Gonzaga court?

Furthermore, the comparison between the marginalia in this copy and Nuvoloni's letters to Borso d'Este (Modena State Archives) and the autograph manuscript of his work *Dyalogo de Amore* (Biblioteca Universitaria in Padua, MS 243) reveals evident similarities, allowing us to attribute these annotations – one of them, in the margin of fol. [h]5v of the *Commedia*, is datable to 1473 – to his hand. He annotates words, phrases and passages taken mainly from the definitive redaction of the *Comento* by Benvenuto da Imola, a late fourteenth-century Latin commentary which had a wide manuscript circulation especially in Bologna, Ferrara, and Mantua. Nuvoloni also drew extensively on Dante's poem and Benvenuto's commentary in his *Dyalogo d'amore*.

In the last decades of the eighteenth century the copy of the *Commedia* was still in the Nuvoloni library in Verona. Probably at the end of the century the volume was bought by the well-known Dante scholar Giovanni Jacopo Dionisi, who in his *Aneddoti Danteschi* describes the copy now in his possession, mentioning its original provenance and transcribing some marginalia written in the volume. The larger part of Dionisi's collection was bequeathed to the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona, except for the editions of Foligno and Mantua, which were both in his possession. Both – as Giuliani states in the *Albo dantesco veronese* – were acquired by a still unidentified 'straniero Librajo'. This 'foreign bookseller' may have later offered the Mantua Dante to the collector Thomas David Gibson-Carmichael, a great admirer of the Florentine poet. Carmichael sold his outstanding collection in 1903 by auction at Sotheby's, and the present copy is accurately described in the catalogue: "the editor was Colombino Veronese who dedicates it to Filippo Nuvoloni; the Arms of the latter are painted upon the lower margin of the first page of text".

The Mantua *Commedia* is extremely rare, even rarer than the Foligno edition. Only sixteen copies are listed in ISTC (including this copy), often wanting the first leaf with the *Capitolo* by Colombino Veronese. The present copy is also the last and only copy to have come onto the market since the early twentieth century.



9 DANTE ALIGHIERI

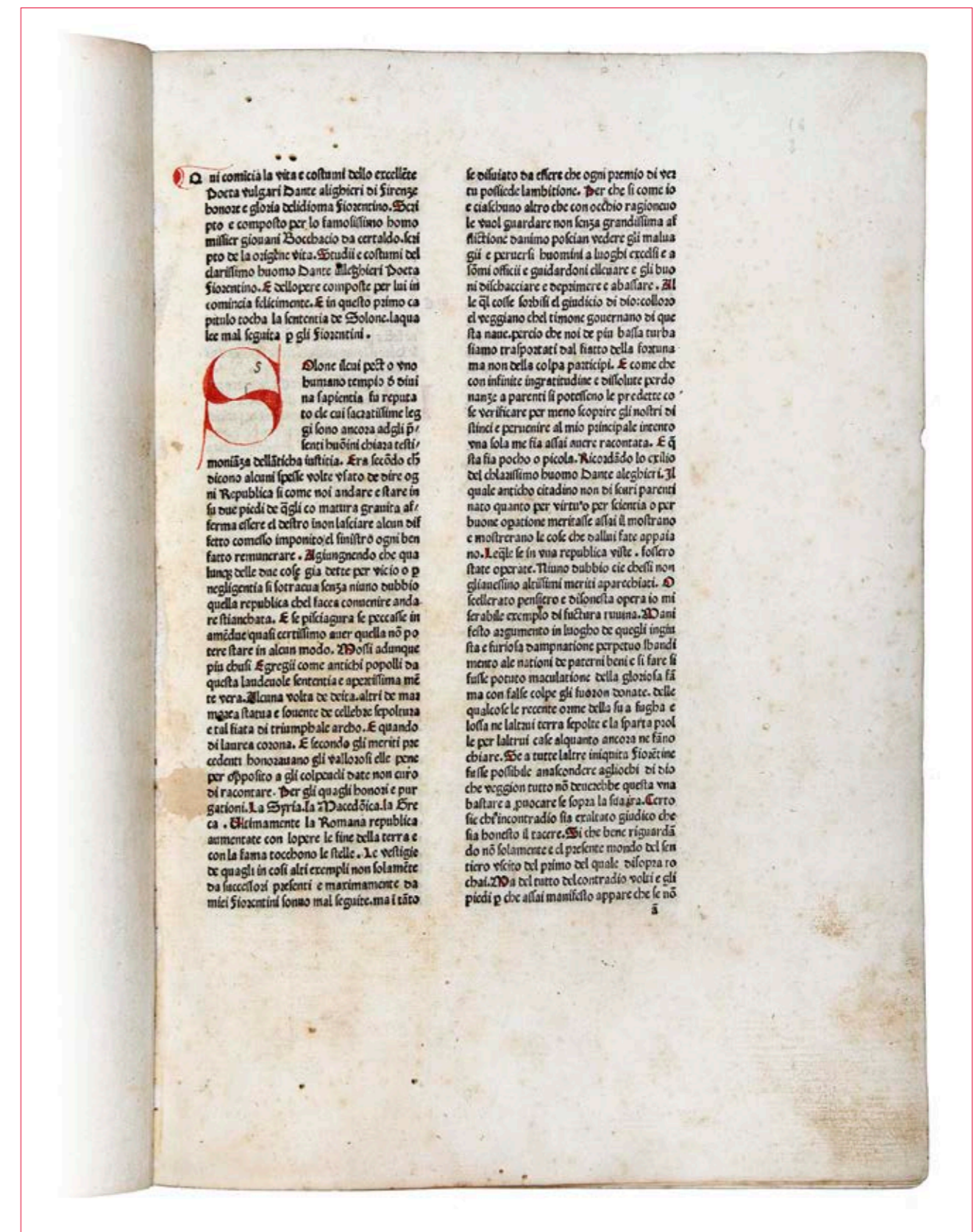
Qui comincia la vita e costumi dello eccellente Poeta vulgari Dante alighieri di Firenze honore e gloria del idioma Fiorentino... [Venice], Vindelinus de Spira, 1477.

Folio (327x230 mm). Collation: a⁸, e⁸, a-k¹⁰, l-m⁸, n-s¹⁰, t-u⁸, x-y¹⁰, aa-ff⁰, hh-ii⁸, kk-oo¹⁰, pp¹². [373] of [376] leaves, without the blanks a1, a1 and pp12. Complete, including the first two quires containing the *Vita Dantis* by Boccaccio, often lacking. Text in two columns, 46-49 lines. Type: 5:89G. In the commentary blank spaces of different shapes and sizes for woodcuts, never printed. Initials painted alternately in red and blue, capitals touched with red. Nineteenth-century English hazel diced calf, over pasteboards. Spine with six raised bands, compartments underlined by gilt fillets and narrow frieze; title in gilt lettering. Marbled pastedowns and flyleaves, inside *dentelles*. Edges green speckled. The lower cover slightly scuffed. A very fine, wide-margined copy. A few small wormholes in the first and final leaves, with the partial loss of a few letters. Old repairs to the margins of the last leaf, a short tear at the gutter. A few *maniculae*, marginal markings, and numerous glosses in a contemporary hand. Bibliographical notes in Italian and English on the recto of the rear flyleaf.

Provenance: 'Iste liber ad usum magistri Jacobi pazzi et fratris mattei costaforti' (contemporary ownership inscription on fol. pp11r); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A beautiful copy of the first edition of the *Commedia* to contain a commentary and other earlier encomiastic and exegetical texts: a publishing initiative which testifies to the common practice in the fifteenth century of reading Dante with the assistance of summaries, biographies, and commentaries. The volume was prepared by the humanist Cristoforo Berardi from Pesaro, and it is one of the few books produced by the second Venetian press established by Vindelinus in 1476. In contrast with other fifteenth-century editions of the *Commedia*, and possibly as a consequence of the particular manuscript used as copy-text, in setting the volume Vindelinus employed not a roman type, but a gothic one. The vernacular commentary accompanying the poem is the *Comento* by Iacomo della Lana, one of the most authoritative Dante commentators of the late fourteenth century, though in this edition it is wrongly ascribed to Benvenuto da Imola. By way of introduction the *Vindeliniana* presents the first edition of the *Trattatello in laude di Dante* by Giovanni Boccaccio, the text of which was probably only added at the end of printing, since it is missing from many of the surviving copies. The other works included are the so-called *Credo piccolo* by Iacomo della Lana, the well-known *capitoli* on the first *cantica* composed in the fourteenth century by Jacopo Alighieri – one of Dante's sons – and Bosone da Gubbio, the *Credo* at the time ascribed to Dante, and the famous sonnet *Dante Alighieri son, Minerva oscura*, sometimes credited to Boccaccio himself. Except for the *Credo*, these works are all printed here for the first time.

The colophon is in the form of a sonnet composed by Cristoforo Berardi, who calls Dante "inclito et diuo dante alleghieri Fiorentin poeta" (i.e. "illustrious and divine Dante Alighieri Florentine poet"). It has been suggested that the use of the epithet 'divine' here led to the poem later – beginning with Ludovico Dolce's edition printed by Giolito in 1555 – being called the *Divina Commedia*, whereas in the fifteenth century and earlier it was simply known as the *Commedia*.



*Finita e lopra delinclito et diuo
dante alleghieri Fiorentin poeta...
De spiera vendelin fu il stampatore
del mille quattrocento e settantasetti.*

IO DANTE ALIGHIERI

Qui comincia la vita e costumi dello eccellente Poeta vulgari Dante alighieri di Firenze honore e gloria del idioma Fiorentino... [Venice], Vindelinus de Spira, 1477.

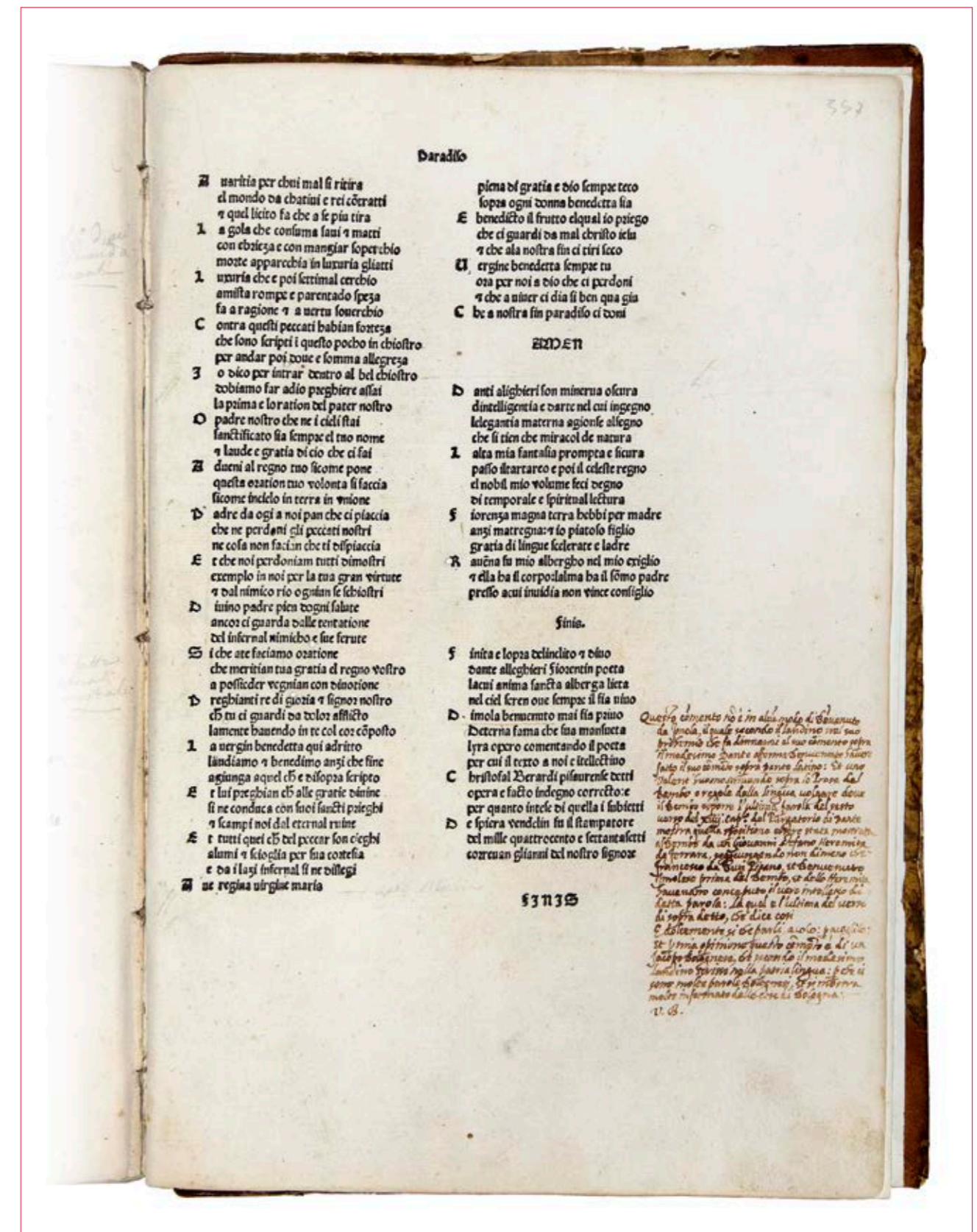
Folio (324x223 mm). See the previous item for the bibliographical description. [357] of [376] leaves, wanting – as in many recorded copies – the first two quires containing Boccaccio *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, fol. a2 with the *Tabula*, and the blanks a1 and pp12. Pencilled foliation on the outer upper corner. Nineteenth-century hazel half-leather over pasteboards, boards covered with marbled paper. Smooth blind-tooled spine, title and imprint in blind lettering, with 'Venezia 1477' in dark ink. On tail-edge, the inked title 'Dante col Commento'. An excellent copy, slightly stained and browned, a few pale finger-marks. A single small wormhole in the blank margins of the last quires. Marginal annotations in Vincenzo Buonanni's own hand.

Provenance: Vincenzo Buonanni (sixteenth century; marginal notes in his own hand); the Italian Dante scholar Alessandro Torri (1780-1861; see his letter included in *Studi inediti su Dante Alighieri*, 1846); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A remarkable copy of the *Vindeliniana* annotated by the nobleman, poet and member of the Florentine Academy Vincenzo Buonanni, one of the leading figures among sixteenth-century Dante scholars. He was the author of the commentary *Discorso di V. B. sopra la prima cantica della Commedia* (Florence 1572), which also includes a revised text of the *Inferno* on the basis of early manuscripts which belonged to Buonanni himself.

The attribution of the marginal notes to Buonanni – based on the comparison with autograph manuscripts held in various Florentine libraries – was first made by the nineteenth-century Dante scholar Alessandro Torri, who owned this particular copy and who in a letter published in the miscellany *Studi inediti su Dante Alighieri* (1846) refers to the presence of this annotated volume in his own library.

Furthermore, in the same letter Torri also gave a transcription of the lines which Buonanni wrote next to the colophon, signing them, as was his wont, with his initials V. B. In this lengthy note Buonanni challenges the editor Cristoforo Berardi's attribution of the commentary to Benvenuto da Imola ("Questo commento non è in alcun modo di Benvenuto da Imola"), and suggests that the actual author was "Jacopo Bolognese", i.e. Iacopo della Lana. According to Batines, the antiquarian Gian Vincenzo Pinelli was the first person to make this correct attribution for the authorship of the commentary, in a letter written on 18 April 1583 to Jacopo Contarini. This copy therefore of the 1477 *Commedia* adds a new and significant piece of information to the history of Dante criticism in the Italian Renaissance.



Questo commento non è in alcun modo di Benvenuto da Imola... Et per mia opinione questo commento è di un Jacopo Bolognese...

— Vincenzo Buonanni, from his annotated copy of the *Vindeliniana* edition of the *Commedia* —

II DANTE ALIGHIERI

Divo Guilielmo Marchioni Montisferrati... Martinus Paulus Nidobeatus Novariensis P.F.D. Dantis aldigerii clarissimi poetate florentini comediam cum nuper accepissem in manus. Milan, Ludovicus and Albertus Pedemontani, for Guido Terzagus, 27 September 1477 - 1 March 1478.

Three parts in one volume in folio (336x243 mm). Collation: [a⁶, b¹⁰, c-e⁸, f-g⁶, h-k⁸, l⁶; a⁴, b-c⁸, d-e⁶, f-i⁸, k¹⁰; a-f⁸, g-h⁶, i⁸, k-m⁶, n⁸]. [82], [74], [94] leaves. Complete, including the fol. a6 blank. Text in one column, 47-48 lines, surrounded by the commentary, 66 lines. Type: 1:83G (commentary), 2:115R (text). Colophon at the end of each *cantica*, on fols. 16v, 2k10v and n8v. Blank spaces for capitals, mostly with printed guide letters. The first capital letter of every *terzina* set out. Early twentieth-century gilt tooled granata morocco, boards framed within gilt fillets. Spine with six raised bands, compartments gilt-tooled with floral motifs, title in gilt lettering. Gilt board edges, marbled pastedowns and flyleaves, inside *dentelles*. Gilt and gaufered edges. A fine wide-margined copy, skilfully washed. The first and last leaves slightly browned.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

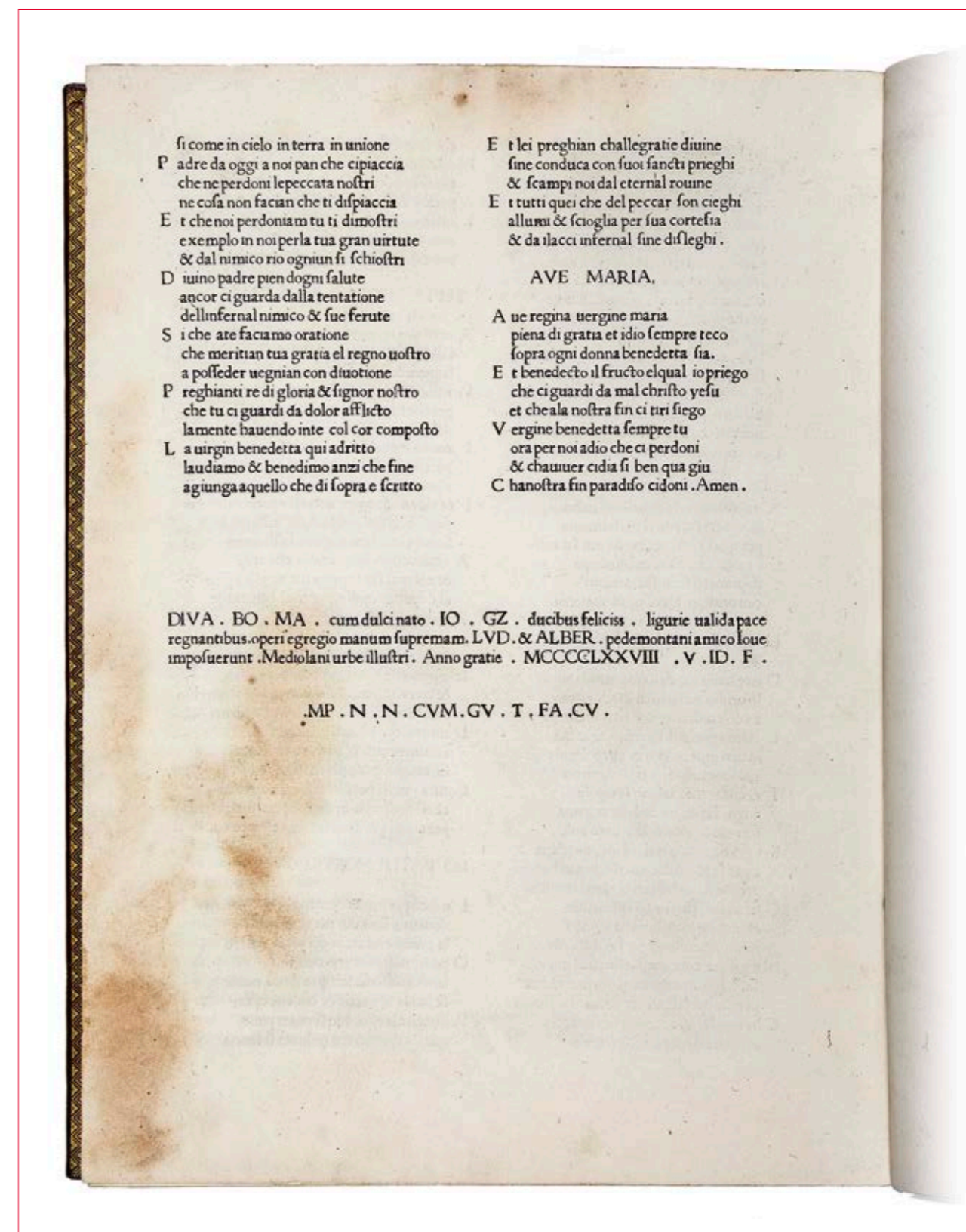
The famous and rare *Commedia Nidobeatina*, so called after the name of its editor, the humanist and courtier at the Sforza court Martino Paolo Nibia from Novara, more commonly known as Nidobeato.

This Milanese edition of the *Commedia* is mainly based on the text edited by Colombino Veronese for the *editio princeps Mantuana* of 1472.

The commentary surrounding Dante's *terzine* is the one by the Bolognese Iacomo della Lana, but Nidobeato made such a large number of changes, added so many biblical passages, quotations from classical sources, and allusions to contemporary history that it would not be wrong to affirm that the result represents the first fifteenth-century printed commentary, in other words the first modern *commento* written specifically for a printed edition.

The initiative was financed by another nobleman active in the Sforza court, Guido da Terzago, who on 9 June 1477 drew up a contract for the printing of the edition with Ludovico and Alberto Piemontesi. The Milanese *Commedia* is the only book known to contain the name of both printers. The preliminary six-leaf quire would appear to have been the last part of the text to be printed, and contains Nidobeato's prefatory letter dated 1 March 1478 to his former pupil with ambitions to become a humanist Guglielmo Marquis of Monferrat, together with the first edition of the prologue *Dante poeta sovrano*, a summary of the *Expositiones* by the Carmelite Guido da Pisa. The *Nidobeatina* edition was very influential in promoting, especially in northern Italy, the new vernacular literature; it has always been highly praised for its harmonious *mise-en-page*, with a fine balance between the text of the poem in roman font and the surrounding commentary, printed in a smaller but very legible gothic type. Despite the success of the *Nidobeatina* the *Commedia* would not be printed again in Milan for more than three centuries.

This edition is celebrated for two curious peculiarities found at the end. The third colophon ends with a long acrostic – .MP.N.N.CVM.GV.T.FA.CV. – which reveals in cryptic form the names of the editor Paolo Beato Nibbia and his munificent patron Guido da Terzago. On the following page a meticulous table is printed, which indicates the first word of each quire, as a guide to the correct binding of the volume. This feature clearly reflects the contemporary practice of selling books in unbound quires, which made it necessary to give precise and comprehensible instructions for binders and owners, “se questo volume di Dante fosse tutto disperso e dissipato” (i.e. “in the eventuality the separate parts of this volume become dispersed”).



.MP.N.N.CVM.GV.T.FA.CV.
*Martinus Paulus Nidobeatus Novariensis
 cum Guidone Terzago faciendum curavit*

I2 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Comento di Cristophoro Landino Fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Danthe Alighieri poeta Fiorentino. Florence, Nicolaus Laurentii, Alamanus, 30 August 1481.

Folio (391x265 mm). Collation: (r-iii)⁸, [*]⁶, a¹⁰, b⁸, c-e¹⁰, f⁸, g¹⁰, h-i⁸, l¹⁰, m-n⁸, o-r¹⁰, s⁶, aa-gg¹⁰, hh¹², ll-mm¹⁰, oo⁶, A⁸, B-H¹⁰, I⁶, L¹². 368 of [372] leaves, wanting four blank leaves (fols. (r-iii)1, [*]6, a1, aa1). Text in one column, 45-48 lines, surrounded by commentary, 57-60 lines. Type: 4:114R (text), 5:91R (commentary). Early inked foliation in the upper right corner. On fol. a1r large illuminated initial in gold on blue, green and red ground, decorated with fine floral motifs in gold and white. Initials supplied in blue. On fols. a1r and b1v two copper engravings with contemporary colouring, with the same vignettes in their original uncoloured form tipped in alongside. Hazel calf binding in antique style, blind tooled, two metal clasps. An excellent copy. The lower margin of fol. a1r restored; small repair in the lower portion of fol. a8. Light foxing and finger-marks, occasional pale waterstains. Notes and marginal marks in different early hands. On fols. L10v and L11r vernacular poems in a sixteenth-century hand, including a sonnet by Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406) against Gian Galeazzo Visconti, and the reply in favour of the Visconti composed by Antonio Loschi (1365-1441). A loose leaf is inserted, with on its recto the first 78 verses of the *Inferno*, in two columns, copied in a fifteenth-century hand.

Provenance: Florence, the Camaldolese monastery of San Benedetto a Porta Pinti (sixteenth-century ownership inscription on the verso of the last leaf, 'Questo libro e dello monastero di Sancto Benedetto. sito fuori della porta appi[n]ti della cipta [sic] di Firenze. dell']ordine delle [re]mo di camaldoli. sotto la regola di sancto Benedetto. Chi lla in prentanza lo re[n]da e guardilo daffanciugli, e da lucerna'); Marchese Francesco Maria Riccardi del Vernaccia (b. 1794; ex-libris on the front pastedown); Gustavo Camillo Galletti (1805-1868; stamp on the recto of the first leaf); Baron Horace de Landau (1824-1903; ex-libris on the front pastedown); *Catalogue des livres manuscrits et imprimés composant la bibliothèque de M. Horace de Landau. Première partie*, Florence 1885, p. 156); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The first Florentine edition of the *Commedia*, the first to be illustrated – with engravings after the magnificent drawings by Sandro Botticelli – and the first appearance of Cristoforo Landino's *Comento*, the first vernacular commentary on the entire poem, the most authoritative achievement of fifteenth-century Dante scholarship.

What makes the 1481 Dante a milestone in the history of the printed book is the series of engravings designed to provide a coherent figurative commentary to each of the cantos in the poem. Blank spaces are left throughout the volume for this purpose (except in *Purgatorio*, Cantos xiv and xxv, and *Paradiso*, Canto xxx), but only nineteen scenes in the *Inferno* are known to have been completed. Almost all copies of the 1481 *Commedia* contain the first two engravings only, attributed to the Florentine engraver Baccio Baldini, a pupil of Maso Finiguerra. They are printed directly onto the page of text, at the beginning of the first two cantos. Only a very few copies include the complete series of nineteen engravings, printed – with the exception of the first two plates – on separate sheets, and later pasted into the volumes, as a result of the difficulties in printing the engravings exactly in the spaces left blank on purpose by the compositor. This edition was one of the last attempts in Italy to use copper engravings as illustrations for a long time.

This copy includes an exceptional and possibly unique feature, containing the first two engravings coloured by a contemporary hand, and the same vignettes in their original uncoloured form tipped in alongside.



Notre exemplaire est fort beau. Il contient deux fig. très-finement coloriées, et en regard on a ajouté les mêmes gravures en noir.

— Catalogue des livres... composant la bibliothèque de M. Horace de Landau (1885) —

I3 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Comento di Christophoro Landino Fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Dante Alighieri poeta Fiorentino... Brescia, Boninus de Boninis, de Ragusia, 1487.

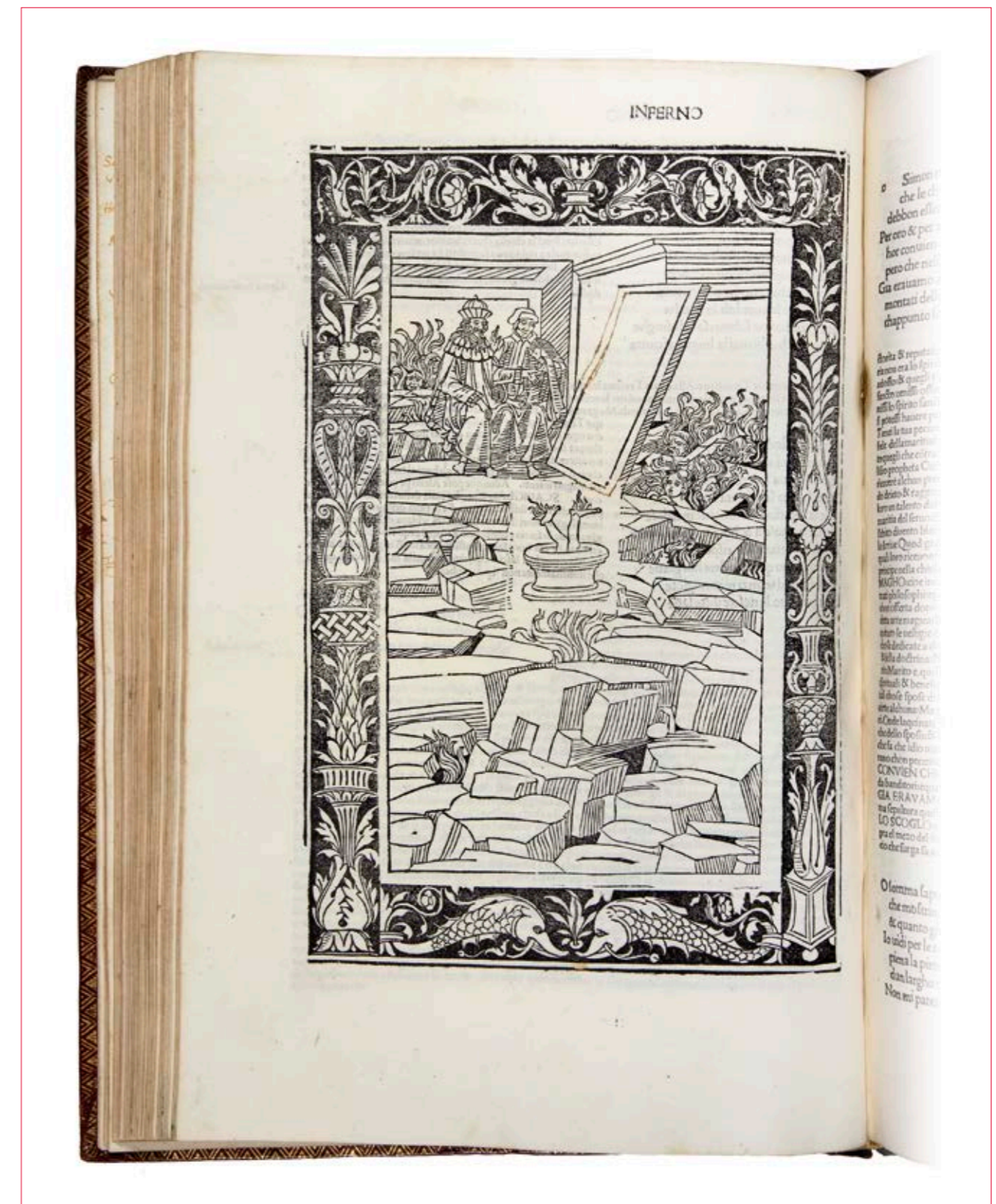
Folio (354x238 mm). Collation: &², a-i⁸, k⁶, l-r⁸, aa-mm⁸, nn⁴, A⁶, B⁸, C-L⁶. [309] of [310] leaves, wanting the last blank. Text in one column, 50 lines, surrounded by commentary, 69 lines. Type: 3:111R (text), 4:81R (commentary). On the verso of fol. L5 woodcut printer's device. Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters. Sixty-eight full-page woodcuts by at least two different artists (sixty blocks, eight repeats), all but one (fol. h8r) framed in one of two white-on-black *candelabra* borders (from two blocks). Some woodcuts with partial contemporary red colouring. Eighteenth-century red morocco, over pasteboards. Covers framed within gilt fillet border. Spine with six raised bands, with elaborate gilt tooling; title and imprint on double lettering-pieces. Marbled pastedowns and flyleaves; inside *dentelles*. Gilt edges. A very fine wide-margined copy, slight browning and finger-marks. Numerous marginal notes and marks in different contemporary hands, including that of the earliest owner Sigismondo Golfi.

Provenance: Sigismondo Golfi dalla Pergola (fifteenth/sixteenth century), secretary to Francesco Gonzaga II Marquis of Mantua, ownership inscription in red ink on fol. L5v, partly readable under UV lamp 'Sigismondi Golphi cod [?]' ; Livio Ambrogio collection.

The 'true' first illustrated edition of the *Commedia*, the first containing woodcuts, the third edition to include the commentary by Cristoforo Landino. The greatest achievement of Brescian printing in the fifteenth century, in a superb wide-margined copy. The printer Boninus was born in Dalmatia; he came to Brescia between 1482-1483, and until 1491 was one of the leading printers in the Lombard city, combining excellent technical skills, a remarkable flair for typographical design, and a highly developed sense of business acumen.

The Brescia Dante – as this volume in folio is commonly known – is famous for its fine woodcuts illustrating each canto of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, and the first canto only of the *Paradiso*. All but one of the woodcuts are full-page, and are variously framed by two different refined *candelabra* white-on-black borders, displaying decorative motifs from classical antiquity. The engravings which had been executed, after Botticelli's designs, for the 1481 Florence edition clearly influenced the first woodcuts in the Brescia *Commedia*. The stylistic quality of the illustrations for the first *cantica* is particularly noteworthy: a Milanese artist trained in the school of Mantegna – especially as regards the treatment of rocks and bodies – may have been responsible, though the overall style of the woodcuts is less refined.

This copy belongs to the group with the following variants in the illustrative apparatus: in the woodcut on fol. h1r the inscription 'ANASTASIO PAPA GVARDO' has been removed from the raised headstone, and placed in the centre of the cut from which the design has been excised; on fol. h8r the text has been recomposed and the woodcut depicting the wood of the Harpies does not have the border; on fol. l5v the woodcut of fol. h1r is re-used without the inscription and with an image of a round open tomb inserted in the centre. Copies of the Brescia Dante in fine condition and with full margins, like the present copy, are rare. A further point of interest lies in this copy's contemporary provenance: it first belonged to Sigismondo Golfi, secretary and librarian at the court of Francesco Gonzaga II (1466-1519), tutor of Isabella d'Este (1474-1539), and of her daughter Eleonora. Some marginal notes in Golfi's own hand are visible in the volume; some refer to his 'maestro' Cristoforo Landino, suggesting that Golfi may have been Landino's pupil.



A masterpiece of fifteenth-century printing:
the first illustrated *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*

I4 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Comento di Christophoro Landino Fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Dante Alighieri poeta Fiorentino... Brescia, Boninus de Boninis, de Ragusia, 1487.

Folio (337x239 mm). See the previous item for the bibliographical description. [298] of [310] leaves, wanting fols. &1-8, a1, a7, D2 and the blank L6. On fol. a2 seventeen-line capital initial 'N' supplied in brown ink Eighteenth-century half-vellum, boards covered with decorated paper (stained and abraded in places). Smooth spine, with inked title and imprint. Wear to the lower corner of the front cover. Some leaves browned and waterstained. The first leaves mounted on reinforcing paper strips, with old repairs; on fol. a2 a tear without any loss. A few leaves slightly loose. Contemporary marginal notes (partly trimmed), in at least two different early hands.

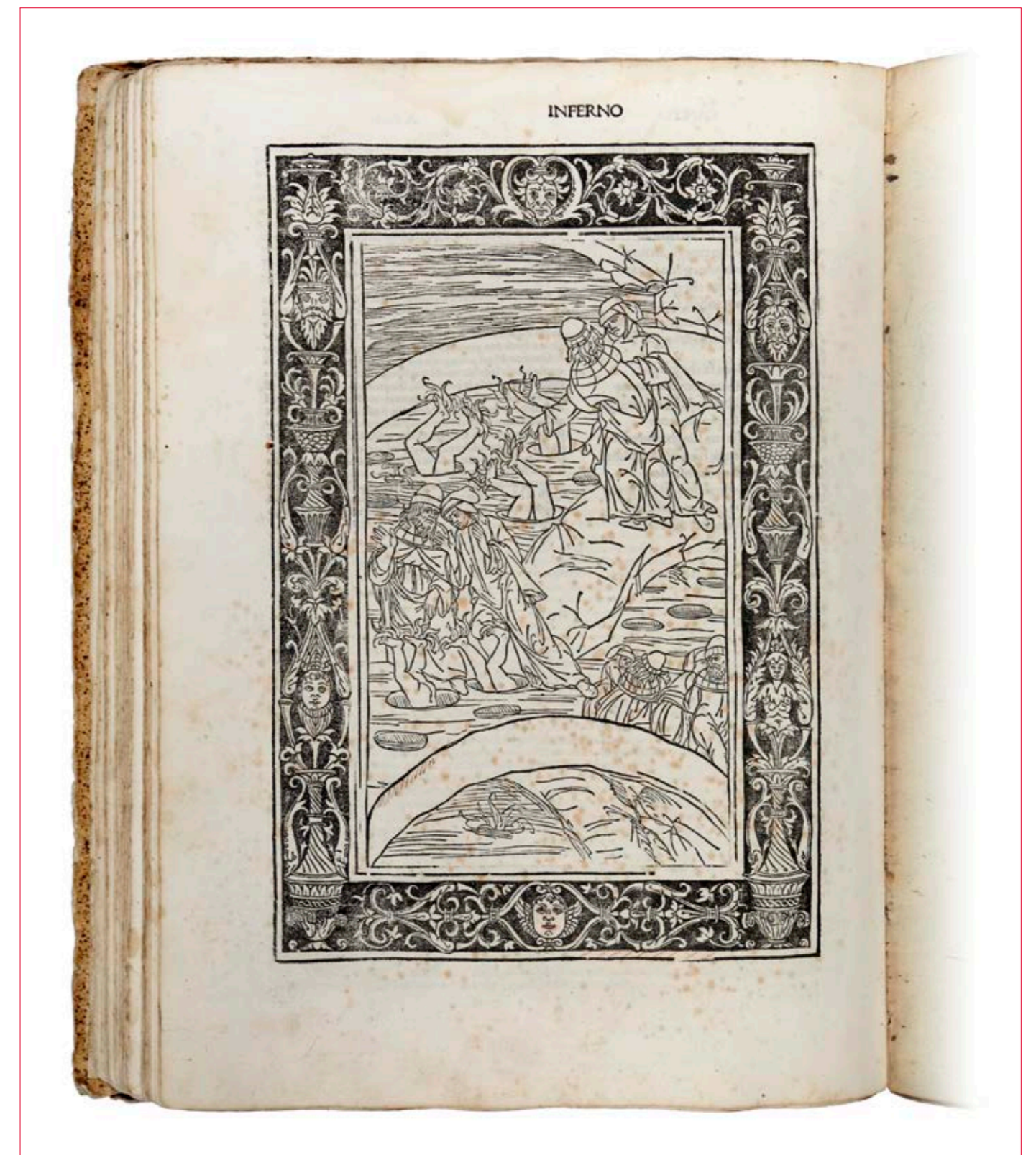
Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

One of the extremely few copies – they can be counted on one hand – of the Brescia Dante containing on fol. 15v (Canto XIX) the woodcut depicting Dante and Virgil looking at the Simoniacs, from the first state of the edition, later replaced – as seen in the preceding description of the other copy in this catalogue – by a repeated and partly modified block depicting the sepulchres of the heretics and Pope Anastasius II.

This woodcut shows the Simoniacs – the name comes from Simon Magus, who attempted to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit with money – who are punished in the Third Bolgia. The unknown artist employed by Boninus shows the sinners guilty of simony fixed head downwards in holes in the ground of the bolgia; only their legs are visible. One of the Simoniacs attracts Dante's attention by waving his legs: he is Pope Nicholas III, who 'predicts' the wickedness and death of Nicholas V. This is followed by Dante's invective against simoniac popes. The reasons why this illustration was removed to be replaced by a re-used block with some similarities (above all, the round apertures in the ground) are not clear. The original block used for illustrating Canto XIX might have been damaged or broken, or the printer himself might prudently have decided to suppress it, following the publication on 17 November 1487 of Innocent VIII's bull regulating printing, commonly regarded as the first official papal act of censorship. Similarly mysterious are the reasons that forced Boninus to discontinue the illustrations after the first Canto of the *Paradiso*: perhaps there were technical problems, misunderstandings with the artists or the money ran out. In any case, the replacement and re-use of some blocks in the different states of the Brescia *Commedia* are evidence of Boninus's increasing problems: in the last cantos of the *Purgatorio* the same block was used three times, and the woodcut illustrating the first canto of the *Paradiso* has very little relevance to the content of the canto, revealing the difficulty of devising, canto by canto, adequate pictorial representations for a work which contained an exceptional wealth of new iconographical ideas.

Nevertheless the edition was extraordinary in its scope, and provided a visual model for all subsequent fifteenth-century illustrated editions of Dante's masterpiece.

Despite lacking the first quire and a few other leaves, the copy described here is of the greatest importance and value for its inclusion of the later suppressed woodcut. The Brescia Dante, in its different states, is not only a fascinating case study for bibliographers and historians, but also a very attractive book for collectors.



The suppressed woodcut to the Canto of the Simoniacs, of the greatest rarity

15 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Comento di Christophoro Landino fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Dante Alighieri Poeta fiorentino. Venice, Bernardinus Benalius and Matteo Capcasa (di Codeca), 3 March 1491.

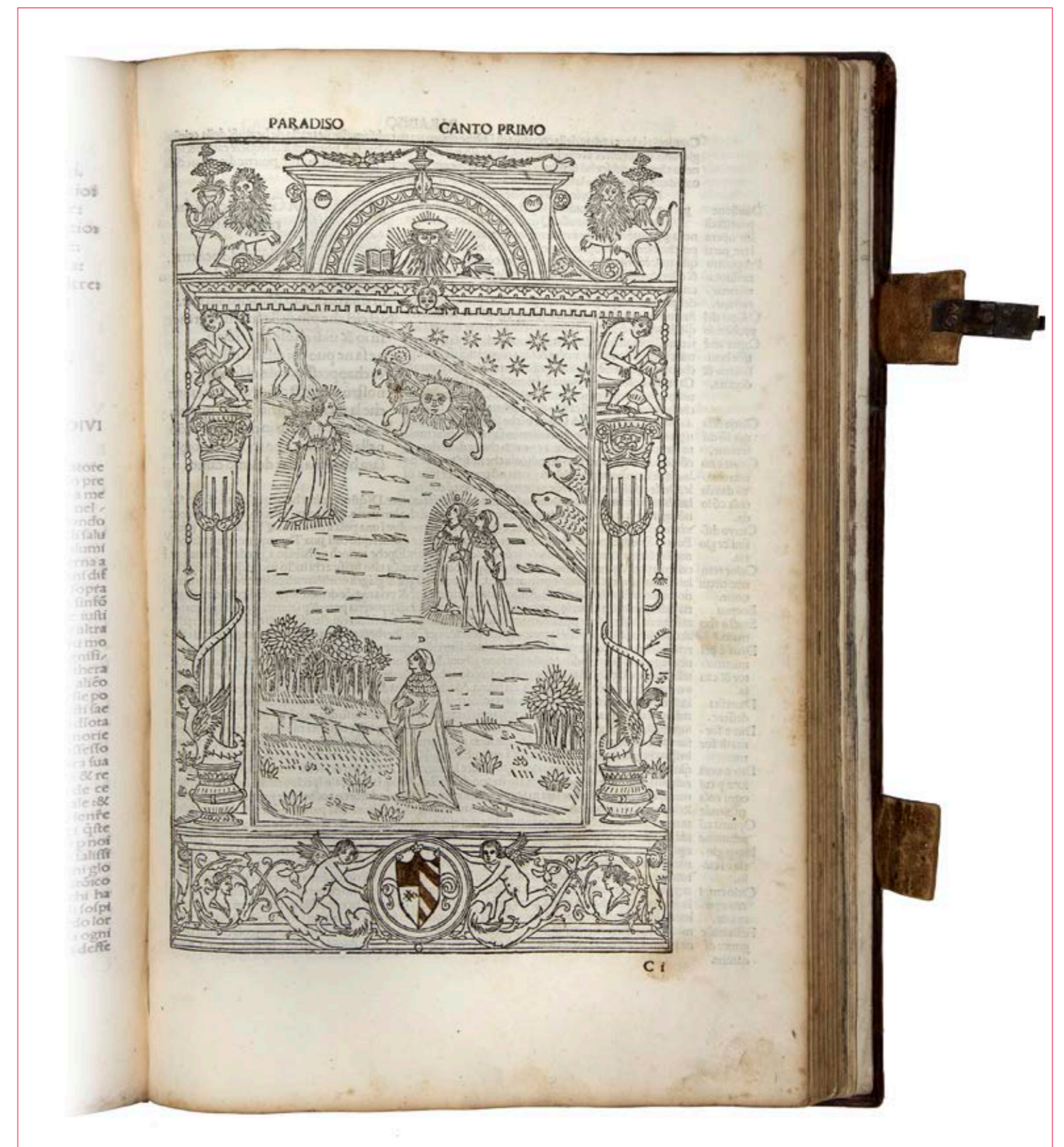
Folio (314x210 mm). Collation: [I]^s, a-z^s, &^s, cum^s, rum^s, A^s, B^s, C-F^s, K^s, L^s. [10], cclxxxxi, [1] leaves. Text in one column, surrounded by commentary on 61 lines. Type: 108R (text), 80R (commentary). Woodcut printer's device on fol. L8r. Four full-page woodcuts, within a richly historiated border (fols. a1v, s1v, C1r; the woodcut opening the *Purgatorio* is repeated also on fol. s2v; the shield included in the lower panel of the borders filled in in ink in an early hand). Ninety-seven woodcut vignettes, illustrating all the others cantos. Six nine-line decorated initials; numerous smaller initials on black ground. Blind-tooled brown leather binding, over pasteboards (probably a previous remboitage). Covers framed within floral roll, with a centre medallion with the inscription 'FRATRVN MINORVM CAPVCINORVM'. Two metal clasps (the upper one entirely preserved), dark edges. A beautiful, wide-margined copy. Occasionally browned and stained, pale finger-marks, a short tear at the lower blank margin of fol. e5, a few thin wormholes at the upper blank margin of some leaves. Some marginal notes in a later hand.

Provenance: 'Questo libro sie demj aluixe m de m. zuan stasino .1499.' (contemporary ownership inscription on the verso of the last leaf, probably one Alvise, a member of the Stasino family, originally from Morea); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The rare first fully illustrated *Commedia*, printed in Venice; an edition of considerable importance in the history of printing as being the first edition to contain a complete cycle of images for each *cantica*, and the first edition to include Landino's commentary as revised by Pietro da Figino, recently identified as Pietro Mazzanti da Figline, a Tuscan theologian who preached in Venice in 1489-1490.

What gives this edition a special interest is its illustrative apparatus, which goes far beyond all previous illustrated editions: there are one hundred woodcuts, one for each of the poem's cantos, including the three full-page illustrations at the beginning of each *cantica*. For the images the printers Bernardino Benali and Matthio da Parma employed the 'popular artist' who illustrated the 1490 Malermi Bible, identified by Lilian Armstrong as the Master of the Pliny of Pico della Mirandola. The small 'b' visible in some woodcuts probably indicates the cutter, rather than the artist. For the first two *cantiche* – *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* – the illustrator used earlier cycles, when available, as models, above all the woodcuts designed for the Brescia Dante. For the *Paradiso* there were no previous woodcut illustrations and the Pico Master therefore created an entirely new sequence of images, basing himself not on the manuscript tradition (the *Paradiso* is less frequently illustrated in the illuminated codices of the *Commedia*), but essentially on Landino's commentary and on his own reading of the poem.

The edition is one of the finest examples from the golden age of Venetian book illustration. The woodcuts were often imitated, adapted or simply copied by other illustrators in subsequent editions of the *Commedia*, until the appearance of the new woodcut cycle designed for the Marcolini Dante of 1544.



A woodcut for each canto.
The first fully illustrated edition of the *Commedia*

I6 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Le terze rime di Dante. Venice, Aldus Manutius, August 1502.

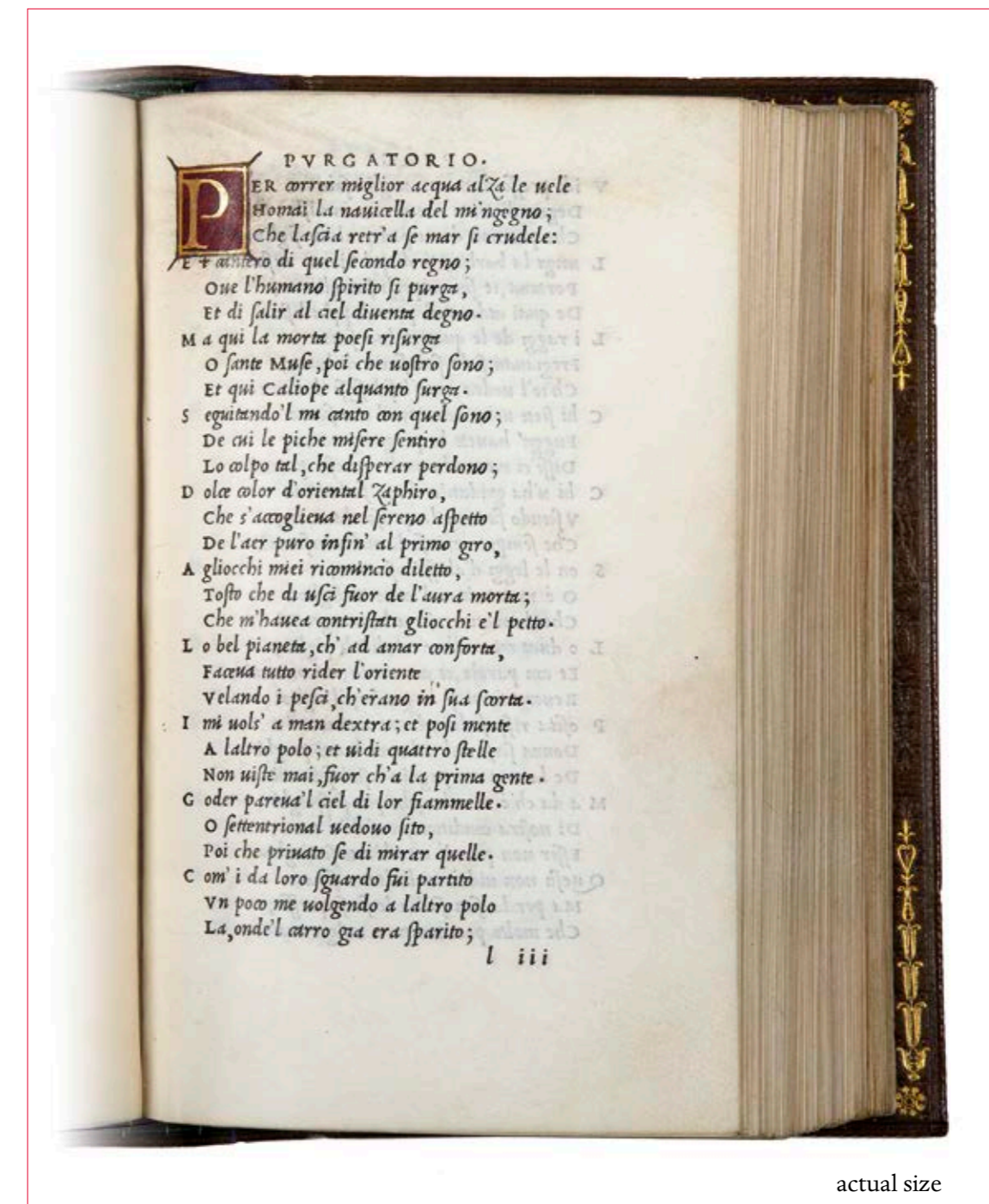
8° (157x91 mm). PRINTED ON VELLUM. Collation: a-z⁸, A-G⁸, H⁴. [242] of [244] leaves, the first original leaf lacking and supplied in facsimile with the inked one-line title on the recto and the two-line one on the verso; the blank leaf l2 supplied in later vellum. Italic and roman type. At the beginning of each *cantica* illuminated initials in gold on black, maroon or blue ground. On the verso of the last leaf the Aldine device. Fine armorial binding, straight-grain olive morocco over thin wooden boards, unsigned but made for George John, 2nd Earl Spencer by Charles Hering after 1799, when Spencer was made a Knight of the Garter. Boards stamped in blind with sixteen-side plaque enclosing the Spencer crest in gilt (a ducal coronet, a gryphon's head and wings, gorged with a bar gemelle, and coronet of an Earl of the Order of the Garter). Spine with five raised bands, gilt and blind-tooled; title, imprint and 'super membranis' in gilt lettering. Pastedowns and flyleaves lined with olive watered silk, inside *dentelles* and corner fleurons. Blue silk bookmark, gilt edges. Original blue roan slipcase. A very fine copy.

Provenance: erased contemporary ownership inscription on fol. H4v; small monogram in red ink combining the letters 'A' and 'S' on fol. a2r; George John, 2nd Earl Spencer (1758-1834; armorial binding); John Rylands (1801-1888); John Rylands Library, later University Library, Manchester (label dated 1894 on the verso of the front flyleaf, and small red stamp on fol. a1r; copy sold in 1988); Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam (label on the front vellum flyleaf); Livio Ambrogio collection.

One of only six recorded copies printed on vellum of the first Aldine edition of Dante's *Commedia*, in the issue containing the first appearance of the Aldine device – a dolphin wrapped around an anchor – used thereafter in all Aldine publications. The edition – in contrast to tradition entitled by Manutius simply *Le terze rime* – signals a linguistic restoration of the work and an important advance in the recovery of the original text. It was carefully prepared by the Venetian patrician and humanist Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), who used as his primary source an authoritative mid-fourteenth-century manuscript taken from the library of his father Bernardo, which Boccaccio had sent as a gift to Petrarch between 1351 and 1353 (Biblioteca Vaticana, ms Vat. lat. 3199). The second identified source is the Landino edition of 1481, which had become the standard text of the *Commedia* by the end of the fifteenth century. According to Bembo's own notes in the copy-text – now in the Vatican Library – the editorial work began on 6 July 1501 and was finished on 26 July 1502. Aldus published the text in August 1502; it is assumed that Bembo sent the quires in sequence to the printer as he finished work on them.

The Aldine Dante is quite different to all previous editions of the poem. For the first time the *Commedia* is set in italic type and printed in the easily portable octavo format, unencumbered by the extensive commentary which, from the *Vindeliniana* onwards, had always accompanied Dante's *cantiche* in the earlier and larger format editions. The colophon is followed by Aldus's warning against counterfeited editions, "Cautum est ne quis hunc impune imprimat, uendat ue librum nobis inuitis".

From the library of George John, 2nd Earl Spencer, who amassed one of the most prominent Aldine collections of all time. His librarian Thomas Frognall Dibdin mentions this 'resplendent' vellum copy in various of his writings, including his well-known *Bibliographical Decameron* (1817).



*The present is what may be called, upon the whole,
a resplendent copy and the binding of it, by Hering, in olive colour morocco,
such as suits well with the condition of such a treasure...*

— Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1817) —

I7 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Le terze rime di Dante. [Lyon, Balthazar de Gabiano and Barthélemy Troth, ca. 1502-1503].

8° (161x90 mm). PRINTED ON VELLUM. Collation: a-z⁸, A-F⁸, G¹². [244] leaves, including the blank leaf l2. Italic and roman type. Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters. Green morocco binding dated 1947 and made by Emilio Brugalla. Covers with elaborate gilt tooling, with fillet border enclosing a strapwork lozenge. Spine with five raised bands tooled in gold, title and imprint in gilt lettering. Pastedowns in red silk, flyleaves in red silk and vellum. Board edges with double gold-tooled lines; inside *dentelles*. Gilt edges. An exceptional wide-margined copy, printed on thick vellum. Two inquisitorial inscriptions on the recto of the last leaf, 'ex commiſſ. DD. Inquisitorum vidi et expurgavi hunc librum ad indicem nouum, anno d. ni 1613. Fr Michael Guevara Hieronymianus' and 'Ano 1709 Fr. Ber. dus Cortes'; in line with the Spanish Index of 1612 three short passages in the text have been censored, *Inf.*, xi 7-9 (fol. c8v), *Inf.*, xix 106-117 (fol. f4v), and *Par.*, ix 136-142 (fol. A1v).

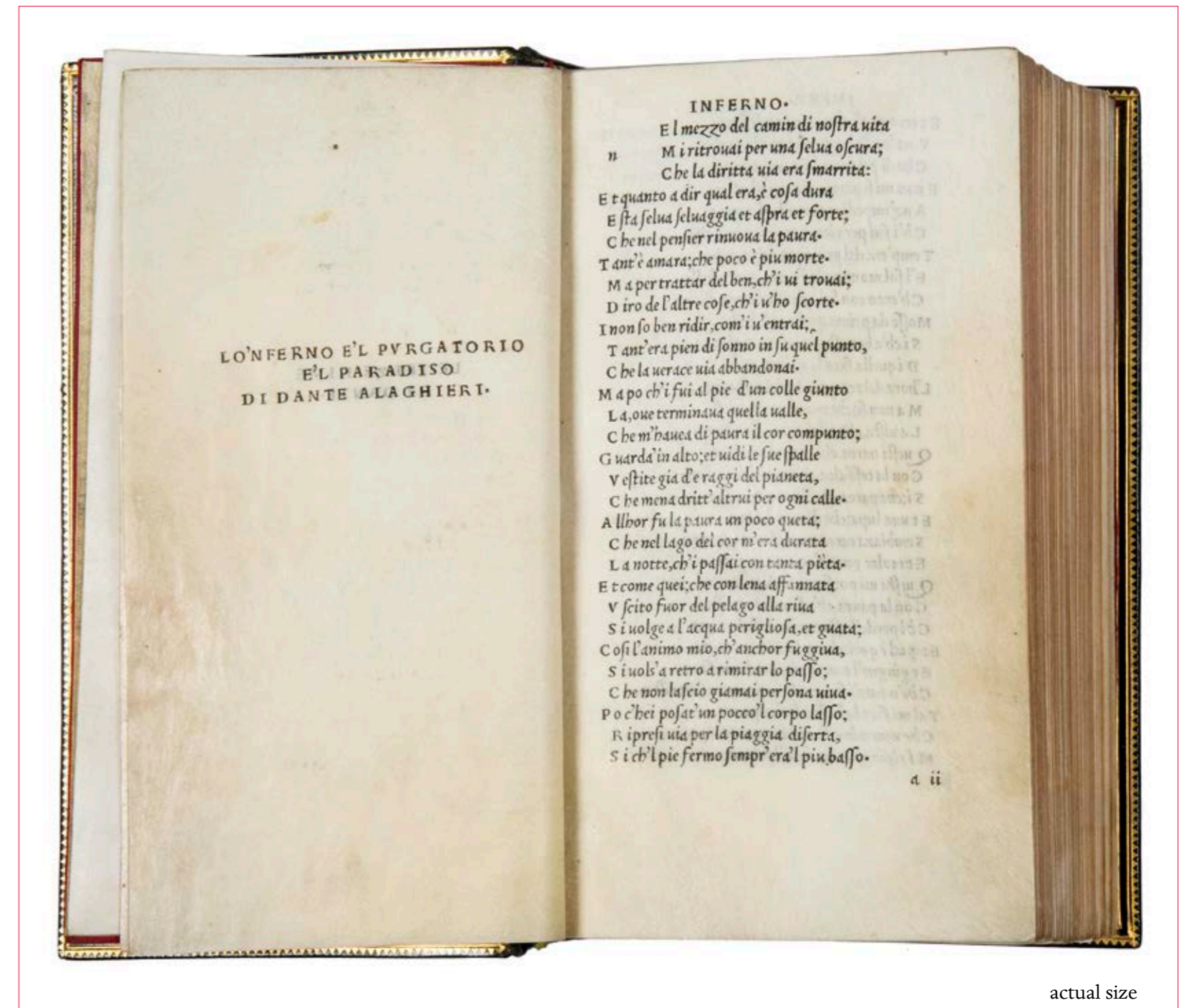
Provenance: Andrés Roure Gili (ex-libris on the recto of the front vellum flyleaf); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A sumptuous copy printed on vellum of the Lyonese Dante, one of the rarest Lyon counterfeits of Aldus's octavo italic texts, which appeared only a few months after the original Aldine edition, in spite of his warning against unauthorized reprinting in the colophon of his *Commedia*. It is the first *Commedia* printed outside Italy, and perhaps the scarcest sixteenth-century edition of the poem. The volume was issued entirely anonymously and without date, but the printing is attributed to Balthazar de Gabiano from Asti (Piedmont) – according to Baudrier the originator of the Lyonese italic type – and Barthélemy Troth, a dealer working in Lyon for various Italian printers who probably financed the publication. The volume closely copies both the text and the layout of the Aldine Dante, except for the last quire signed 'G', consisting here of twelve leaves, while in the Aldine it contains eight leaves and is followed by another four-leaf quire.

On the last leaf inquisitorial inscriptions by two Spanish monks dated 1613 and 1709 are visible; in accordance with the *Index librorum prohibitorum* issued in 1612 by the Grand Inquisitor of Spain Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas some verses from the *Inferno* and *Paradiso* have been inked out in this copy, namely, Pope Anastasius' denial of the divine birth of Christ (*Inferno* xi, 7-9), Dante's criticism of the Donation of Constantine and its consequences (*Inferno* xix, 106-117), and lastly Folco da Marsigli's denunciation of the corruption of the Church and his 'prophecy' that the Papacy would return from Avignon in 1305 (*Paradiso* ix, 136-142).

This distinctive feature – together with the excellent condition of the copy, and the bookplate of the great bibliophile from Barcelona Andrés Roure Gili – might suggest that this precious copy of the *Commedia* on vellum has from very early on always been held in distinguished Spanish private libraries.

Van Praet wrongly lists two copies on vellum of this Lyonese counterfeit, the first preserved at the time in the "Bibliothèque du Roy d'Angleterre", the second in the "Museum Britannicum"; but at present the only vellum copy of this edition that can be traced is in the Houghton Library of Harvard University (this copy is lacking the blank leaf). William Kemp records the Harvard Dante and suggests that there may be another copy on vellum, hitherto unidentified, elsewhere. Perhaps the present copy?



actual size

Now from Lyon (as far as I know) editions have been printed with lettering very similar to our own... But on all of these you will find neither the name of the printer, nor the place... nor the date...

— Aldus Manutius to his readers. Venice, 16 March 1503 —

I8 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Commedia di Dante insieme con uno dialogo circa el sito forma et misure dello Inferno. Florence, Filippo Giunta, 20 August 1506.

8° (167x99 mm). Collation: a⁶, b-z⁸, &⁸, A-F⁸, G¹⁰, H-P⁸. [312] leaves. Complete, including the bifolium signed Gy inserted in the middle of the eight-leaf quire G, often lacking. Italic and roman type. Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters. Eight woodcuts, the first one depicting Dante and the three wild beasts (fol. a6v), the other ones showing cross-sections and maps of Hell (fols. L2r, O5r, O6r, O7r, O7v, O8v), and a map of the Earth, with the position of Hell and Purgatory (fol. O4r). Nineteenth-century vellum, over pasteboards. Smooth spine, divided in compartments by gilt fillets. Title and imprint on double lettering-pieces. Multicolour silk bookmark, blue edges. A very fine wide-margined copy, slight spotting and foxing. A short tear at fol. O2 repaired, without any loss. On the verso of the front endpaper an early shelfmark 'B.7.40'.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

The first edition of the *Commedia* from the Florentine press of Filippo Giunta, printed – like the Aldine of 1502 – in octavo format and in italic type, containing the first topographical woodcuts of Hell, which for Dante was a real place, shaped in the form of a funnel and situated underneath the city of Jerusalem. The text was edited by the Florentine humanist Girolamo Benivieni (1453-1542), introduced by the *Cantico in laude di Dante*, composed by Benivieni himself in imitation of a Dantean canto. The 'Giuntina' – the second Florentine edition of the *Commedia*, following the 1481 Landino edition – represents a veritable milestone in the printing of Dante's poem for its inclusion, in an appendix, of the *Dialogo circa el sito, forma et misure dello Inferno di Dante Alighieri* by the Florentine mathematician, architect, and member of the Accademia Fiorentina Antonio di Tuccio Manetti (1423-1497), posthumously edited from Manetti's notes by Benivieni, and presenting for the first time in the iconographical tradition of the *Commedia* woodcut cross-sections and maps of Hell. The images illustrating the position, structure, and dimensions of Hell are based on Manetti's unpublished calculations and designs, which had been one of the sources employed – in addition to Nardo di Cione's fresco in Santa Maria Novella in Florence – by Sandro Botticelli for his famous *La Mappa dell'Inferno* (Biblioteca Vaticana, ms Vat. Lat. 1896). A synopsis of Manetti's calculations had already been included by Landino in his commentary to the *Commedia* of 1481, but only after the 1506 Giuntina did the vogue for measuring and mapping Hell become widespread. During the sixteenth century much theological and scientific debate focused on the cartography of Hell; the young Galileo Galilei lectured on this topic in 1587-1588 to the Florentine Academy.

The present copy includes the bifolium signed Gy, inserted by Giunta during the printing of the quire G owing to a mistake made by the compositor, and containing the verses 121-142 from Canto xxxi of the *Paradiso*, and the verse 1-96 from Canto xxxii. These extra leaves are often lacking in the recorded copies.



Perché a simili cose serue assai meglio l'occhio che l'orecchio...

— Girolamo Benivieni —

The first woodcut illustrations to Hell

I9 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Dante col sito, et forma dell'Inferno tratta dalla istessa descrizione del Poeta.
Venice, Aldus Manutius, August 1515.

8° (159x95 mm). Collation: [*]², a-z⁸, A-H⁸. [2], 244, [4] leaves (the leaf 142 misnumbered 128). Complete, including the blank l2, often lacking; in this copy fol. H8 is bound before the blank H7. Italic and roman type. Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters, at the beginning of each *cantica*. The Aldine device on fols. [*]1r, a1r, and H8v. One double-page woodcut depicting the *Sito et forma della valle inferna* (fols. H4v-H5r), two full-page woodcut diagrams showing the categories of sins punished in Hell (fols. H5v-H6r), and in Purgatory (fol. H6v). Milanese binding dating from the second half of the sixteenth century, hazel morocco over pasteboards, made for cardinal Carlo Borromeo. Covers with frame of blind fillets enclosing an elaborate gilt roll and floral tools at the corners. At centre small Aldine-style tools, fleuron and inscriptions in gold: on the front cover 'LIBERALITATE' lettered above and 'CARD. BORRH.' below; on the rear cover 'PRAEMIVM' lettered above and 'SOLV. CRAT.' below. Traces of straps. Spine with four raised bands, underlined by gilt diagonal fillets and decorated with small floral tools. Edges mottled red. Small repairs to the spine. A fine copy, some foxing in places, the erasure of an early ownership inscription on the title-page has caused the loss of a few letters on the verso.

Provenance: cardinal Carlo Borromeo (1538-1584); 'Dom. Prof. Soc. J.' (erased ownership inscription on the title-page, only partly readable under UV lamp); 'MB' (twentieth-century ex-libris designed by Giulio Cisari, on the recto of the front flyleaf); Livio Ambrogio collection.

An exceptional copy of the second Aldine Dante, the first to be illustrated, bound for the cardinal and archbishop of Milan Carlo Borromeo (later San Carlo), and presented by him as a prize to a student in the Collegium Braidense, an educational establishment founded in 1564 on the model of the Collegium Romanum, and from 1572 run by the Jesuits. Borromeo paid frequent visits and on these occasions dramatic, rhetorical and poetic performances or competitions were organized. The most meritworthy *chierici* were awarded with books given personally by the future Saint (Borromeo was canonised in 1610); the present copy of the 1515 Aldine Dante is an example of a prize book awarded to a student of rhetoric, probably a pupil of Lelio Bisciola.

The custom of 'prize bindings' – i.e. special bindings commissioned by colleges and schools for books awarded to students for winning academic competitions – began to spread in the late sixteenth century, and was still common in the nineteenth century. The books, in general literary editions, were usually bound modestly, in plain vellum or bazzana leather, and the name of the binders employed by the institutions are generally unknown. The bindings commissioned by Borromeo, on the contrary, are – as here – finely executed, and are also distinguished for being produced with good-quality materials and attractive decorations.

The present binding is very similar to other ones preserved in the Biblioteca Braidense and in the Trivulziana in Milan; the Roman-style decorative patterns and the tools bear a resemblance to those used by Pietro Martire Locarno, a renowned bookseller and binder active in Milan until 1610. On the title-page there is a contemporary and today only partly readable ownership inscription, probably relating to the Brera student who received the volume as a *praemium* for winning the contest.



actual size

A fine prize binding, awarded
by cardinal Carlo Borromeo
later St Charles Borromeo

20 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Dante col sito, et forma dell'Inferno. [Venice, Alessandro Paganini, ca. 1516].

24° (99x47 mm). PRINTED ON VELLUM. Collation: A-X⁸, AA-DD⁸, EE⁴. cclii, [2] leaves. Italic and gothic type. Blank spaces for capitals at the beginning of each *cantica*. One double-page woodcut plan of Hell (fols. EE2v-EE3r) woodcut diagrams of categories of sins punished in Hell (fols. EE3v-EE4r), and in Purgatory (fol. EE4v). Roman red morocco binding from the late sixteenth century, covers gilt tooled and framed in a border of fillets, with a centre fleuron. Smooth spine, richly decorated in gilt. Gilt edges. A very fine copy.

Provenance: on fol. A1v ownership inscription erased and partly readable under UV lamp 'henrico' (?); 'f.H' (monogram on the front pastedown in red ink, repeated in the variant form 'H.F.' on the rear pastedown); Guglielmo Libri (1803-1869; *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque de M L*****, Paris 1847, lot 582; sold for 1110 francs); Seymour Kirkup (1788-1880; ownership inscription on the front pastedown 'Seymour Stocker Kirkup'; *Catalogue of the Celebrated Library of Baron Seymour Kirkup at Florence, Dec. 6, 1871*, London 1871, lot 1189); purchased by the London bookseller Thomas Boone for £30; Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1907; *A List of Printed Books in the Library of Charles Fairfax Murray*, [London] 1907, p. 71, "Dante col sito, et forma dell'Inferno. s.n. [Paganino, s.a.] 32mo. PRINTED ON VELLUM. old red mor."); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The exceedingly rare Paganino edition of the *Commedia*, the first in 24° format, and the only known copy printed on vellum, in the scarcest state with all leaves numbered in roman. It is the smallest *Commedia* of the Renaissance, known as the *Dantino*, published in the compact 'long 24mo' format invented by Alessandro Paganini. This edition was dedicated by him to cardinal Giulio de' Medici, later Clement VII. The volume is part of the series begun by Paganini in the same year, which opens with Petrarch's *Rime*, Bembo's *Asolani*, and Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, all dedicated by the printer to pre-eminent contemporaries and patrons, such as Isabella d'Este.

The printing on vellum indicates that this copy was destined for a very distinguished recipient. It has not been possible to discover the identity of its earliest owner, but its subsequent provenance has also been highly distinguished. It has passed through the hands of some of the most famous book collectors and bibliophiles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, allowing us to trace a fascinating itinerary in the history of Dante collecting. In the first half of the nineteenth century the small volume can be traced back to the collection assembled by the well-known bibliophile (or bibliomane) Guglielmo Libri, and in the 1847 sale catalogue of his library the copy is described as a "précieux exemplaire imprimé su peau vélin d'une édition rare [...] la relieure de ce petit bijou a du être exécutée en Italie au xvie siècle, elle est aussi bien conservée que l'intérieur du volume". The extraordinary features of this *Dantino* caught the attention of collectors, and it was sold for the very high sum of 1110 francs, almost the same price paid in the same sale for a beautiful and complete copy of the Foligno edition of the *Commedia* (lot 577, sold for 1325 francs). This 'small jewel' came into the possession of one of the greatest Dante collectors of the age, the English painter Seymour Kirkup, who – like many other English artists and intellectuals of the time – spent several years in Florence and is well-known for having discovered in 1840 Giotto's portrait of Dante in the Bargello. His vast collection was sold in 1871 by Sotheby's, and the *Dantino* was purchased for £30 – by far the highest price in that sale for printed books – by the London bookseller Thomas Boone. The copy later belonged to the library of the artist, dealer and great art collector Charles Fairfax Murray, friend of William Morris, the Rossettis and John Ruskin.



actual size

*Printed on vellum, and believed to be unique, in old red morocco...
Excessively rare, and unknown to Van Praet. This copy was purchased
in the Libri sale for 1110 francs in 1847.*

— *Catalogue of the Celebrated Library of Baron Seymour Kirkup (1871)* —

21 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Dante col sito, et forma dell'Inferno. [Toscolano], Alessandro Paganini, [between 1527/1533].

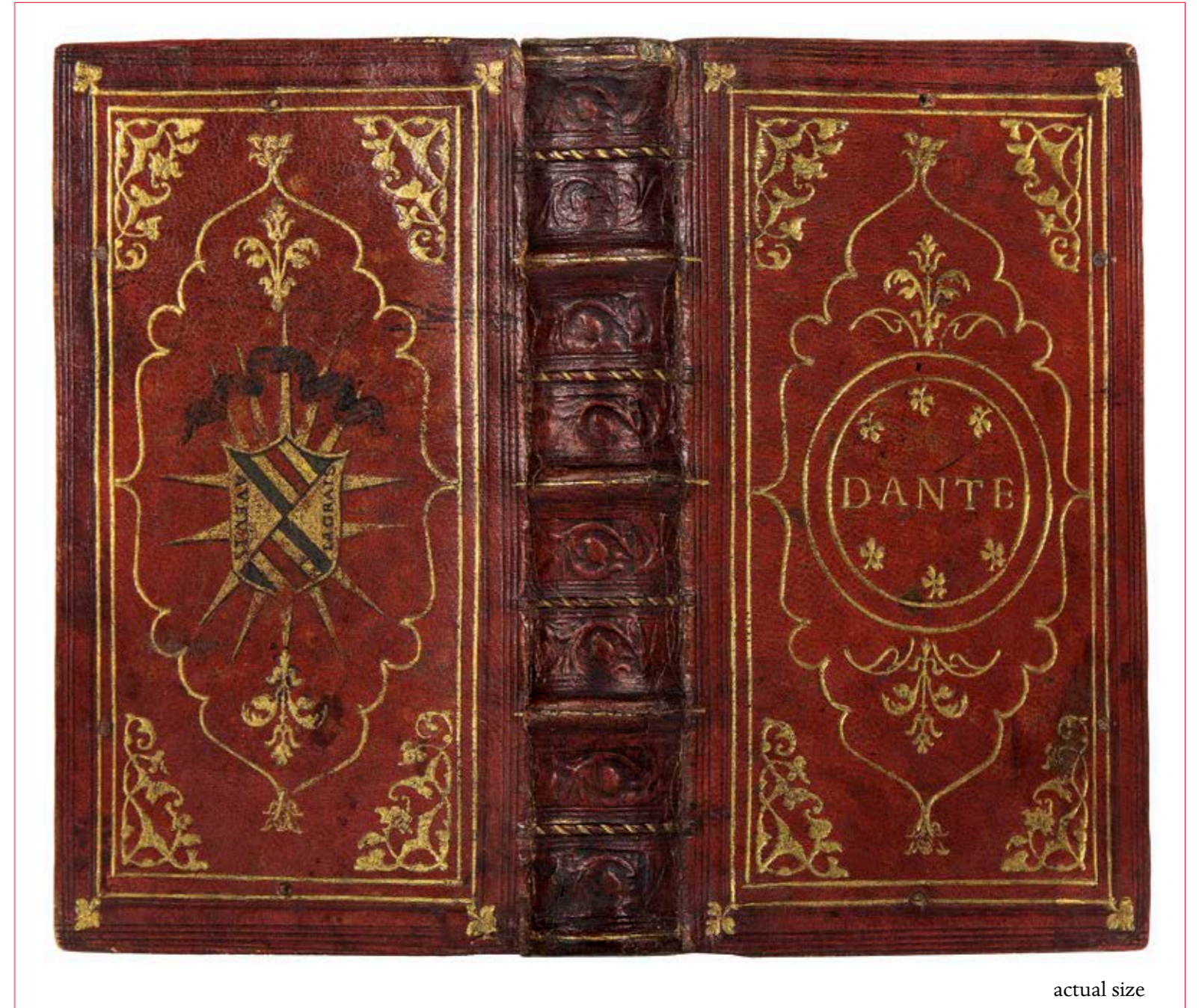
8° (156x89 mm). Collation: a-z^s, A-H^s. [248] leaves. Complete, including the blanks l2 and H7. Italic and roman type. Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters, at the beginning of each *cantica*. One double-page woodcut Hell's topography (fols. H4v-H5r), two full-page woodcut diagrams showing the categories of sins punished in Hell (fols. H5v and H6r), and Purgatory (fol. H6v). Contemporary Venetian red morocco over thin pasteboards, bound ca. 1540 by the 'Fugger Binder' for Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. Covers tooled in gilt with open and solid foliate tools, both with gilt undulating lozenge-shaped cartouche; on the upper cover the gilt title 'DANTE' in a roundel, on the lower cover the painted arms of Hurtado de Mendoza, and his motto (lettering slightly different, probably as result of later repair). Spine with three double and four single bands tooled in gilt, compartments with blind foliate decoration. Gilt and gauffered edges; manuscript horizontal title in black 'el inferno' on the fore-edge, on top edge 'Dante no. 61'. Missing 4 pairs of ties, head of spine with light cracking and small loss, tiny restorations at corners, small loss of paint. Modern morocco box. An excellent copy. Censor's note dated 7 July 1585, on the verso of the first leaf, 'visto & approuado a 7 de Julio de 1585 a[ñ] o. & se puede de tener e leer El Bispo de medinaceli'. On the front pastedown the pencilled shelfmark 'Italien. Lit. T IV', on the recto of the front flyleaf the inked one 'E.36.A'. On the rear pastedown the pencilled shelfmark 'M Ms.IV.1'. Some verses inked out in accordance with the stipulations of the Spanish Index: *Inf.*, xi 7-9 (fol. c8v), *Inf.*, xix 106-117 (fol. f4v), and *Par.*, ix 136-142 (fol. A1v).

Provenance: Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-1575; armorial binding); Juan de La Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli (1544-1594); Librarie Gumuchian, *Catalogue* xii, Paris 1930, no. 54; Martin Breslauer, *Books, Manuscripts, Fine Bindings, Autograph Letters from the Ninth to the Present Century, Catalogue* 102, London 1971, no. 41; Livio Ambrogio collection.

An outstanding copy from the library of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, of the rare Dante in octavo printed by Paganini. The poet, historian, Greek scholar and important collector Hurtado de Mendoza belonged to one of the greatest families in Castile. In 1539 he was sent to Venice as the ambassador of Charles v, and during the seven years of his Venetian embassy his library grew significantly, coming to rival the collection assembled by Jean Grolier, the 'Prince of Bibliophiles'. Don Diego collected printed books as well as Greek manuscripts; he made his library in Venice available to friends and scholars, encouraged their studies, and lent his precious manuscripts to printers. He paid great attention to the bindings of his volumes, and employed the best and most sought after Venetian bookbinders. The binding for this *Commedia* was commissioned from the excellent craftsman known as the Fugger Binder, so named after his principal client Johann Jakob Fugger, of the Augsburg banking family. This binder received commissions from many other private clients, and his business seems to have started in the mid-1530s. This binding was made in about 1540, and the Spanish title horizontally displayed on the book's fore-edge – 'el inferno' – possibly reflects Mendoza's early adoption of a vertical storage system for his volumes. The present copy is included by Hobson in his census of the bindings made by the Fugger Binder.

After Mendoza's death in 1575, most of his books became part of the Escorial Library, founded by Philip II in the monastery of San Lorenzo. The present volume evidently never went the Escorial, and in 1585 was in the hands of Juan de La Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli and Grandee of Spain, as shown by the dated inquisitorial note on the verso of the first leaf granting a licence to possess and read the work.

Books with Mendoza's provenance are very scarce outside the Escorial Library, and rarely appear on the market.



actual size

From the Renaissance library of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza,
one of the greatest bibliophiles of his age

22 DANTE ALIGHIERI

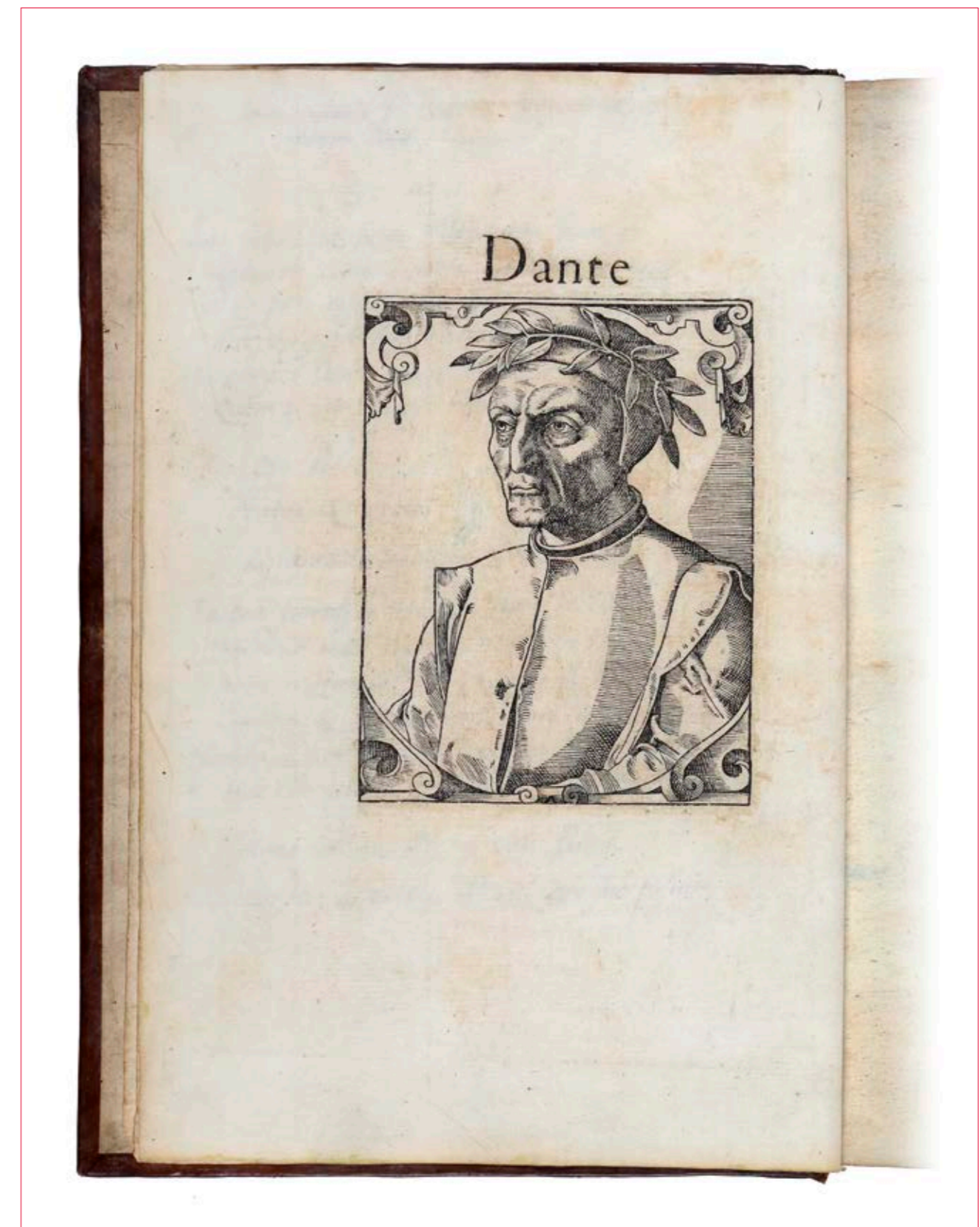
La Comedia di Dante Aligieri con la nova espositione di Alessandro Vellutello...
Venice, Francesco Marcolini, June 1544.

4° (236x153 mm). Collation: AA-BB⁸, CC¹⁰, A-Z⁸, AB-AZ⁸, BC-BI⁸. [442] leaves. Italic and roman type. Three full-page woodcuts at the beginning of each *cantica*; eighty-four woodcut vignettes in text. With an extra leaf, bound before the title-page, not originally in the volume when issued, showing Dante's woodcut portrait from the *Elogia virorum literis illustrium* by Paolo Giovio (Basel 1577), here issued with some variants as a single sheet. Contemporary French calf, covers within gilt fillets, decorated with an elaborate strapwork on *pointillé* ground and floral tools; title lettered at the centre of the front cover, author's name at the centre of the rear cover. Later smooth spine gilt-tooled into a diaper pattern. Edges gilt and gauffered with floral design. Covers restored and inlaid. On the verso of the front flyleaf an early hand – in all likelihood Fugger himself – has copied the words of Dante's epitaph in Ravenna, restored by Bernardo Bembo in 1483. A very good copy, occasionally browned and stained.

Provenance: Marcus Fugger (1529-1597; his autograph signature on the front pastedown); Paul Harth (ex-libris on the front pastedown).

The first *Commedia* to contain the new and important commentary by the Lucchese Alessandro Vellutello (b. 1473), in a copy which belonged to the great bibliophile Marcus Fugger, a member of the celebrated Augsburg banking dynasty. This copy is the first state of the Marcolini edition, in which the *terzina* 64-66 is missing in the text of the second canto of the *Purgatorio* due to an oversight of the printer (fol. V7r). The book is justly famous for its illustrations, all newly designed for this edition. Each woodcut records one or more scenes from the cantos illustrated, and is closely related to Vellutello's glosses. The vignettes were possibly designed by Giovanni Britto, who worked as an engraver for Marcolini and probably cut by Marcolini himself.

The volume is in a strapwork gilt-tooled and now extensively restored binding, produced for Fugger in Grolier's ateliers, probably by Gommar Estienne. A notable addition in the present copy is an extra leaf not originally in the volume as published, bound for Fugger as a frontispiece, with Dante's woodcut portrait taken from the *Elogia virorum literis illustrium* by Paolo Giovio (Basel, Perna, 1577). The *Elogia* woodcuts were designed by the Swiss painter and printmaker Tobias Stimmer (1539-1584), who in 1569-1570 was sent by Perna to Lake Como to make copies as drawings from the famous portrait collection assembled by Giovio. In 1577 Perna published the woodcut portrait of Dante, cut after Stimmer's designs, in the *Elogia virorum literis illustrium*, together with sixty-seven other portraits of illustrious men of letters, each surrounded by a strapwork frame. In the leaf bound into the present copy, however, the portrait of Dante is lacking the border found in the original edition, and the name of the poet is spelt in the variant form 'Dante' instead of the 'Danthes' in the Basel publication, although the identical font is used, perhaps stamped separately letter by letter, rather than printed as a single word. An unrecorded issue of the woodcut portrait, therefore, that might suggest the Stimmer series was issued individually as single-sheet prints.



The Marcolini *Commedia* belonged to Marcus Fugger, with Dante's portrait by Stimmer as unrecorded single sheet

23

DANTE ALIGHIERI

La Divina Comedia di Dante, di nuovo alla sua vera lettione ridotta con lo aiuto di molti antichissimi esemplari... Venice, Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari and brothers, 1554-1555.

12° (125x70 mm). Collation: *¹², **⁶, A-Z¹², AA-BB¹². [36], 598, [2] pages. Italic and roman type. On the title-page and on the verso of the last leaf woodcut printer's device. Woodcut medallion portrait of Dante on fol. *3v; twelve woodcuts in text, mostly smaller copies of the woodcuts in the Marcolini edition of 1544. Woodcut initials and headpieces. Fine early seventeenth-century Roman binding executed in the Soresini workshop, red morocco over pasteboards. Covers with elaborate gilt tooling, with fillets, arabesques and volutes, each panel displaying Orazio Morandi's coat of arms. Spine with three raised bands, compartments gilt tooled. On the turn-ins the inscription lettered in gilt 'DON HOR MORANDII ROM MON VALL' (words separated from each other by a small floral tool). A very fine copy, some printed shoulder notes slightly trimmed. Two underlinings, in two different hands, on fols. *4v and H6r.

Provenance: the Vallombrosan abbot Orazio Morandi (1570-1630; armorial binding); given by Morandi to Galileo Galilei (1564-1642; on the verso of the second front flyleaf 'Al molto Ill.^{re} S.^r mio oss.^{mo} Il Sig.^r Galilei di s.^{ta} Prassedia 1624 Obbligatiss.^o Serv.^{re} Don Orazio Morandi'); 'Abb: de Nigris Canon. Patauini' (ownership inscription on the title-page; probably the Paduan canon Giovanni Giacomo Negri, d. 1739); Livio Ambrogio collection.

An exceptional association copy of Lodovico Dolce's Dante – the first edition to apply the adjective 'Divina' to the *Commedia* – given in 1624 as a gift to Galileo Galilei by his personal friend and correspondent Orazio Morandi.

The friendship between Galileo and the future Vallombrosan abbot of Santa Prassede in Rome – in 1630 accused of practising judicial astrology and imprisoned – must have begun before 1613, perhaps they even got to know each other as children, when they were both being educated at the Camaldolese monastery in Vallombrosa. Only five of Morandi's letters to Galileo have survived, written in 1613, 1626, and 1630 (Galileo's side of the correspondence is entirely lost): the book was in all likelihood given to him between 23 April and 16 June 1624, when the Florentine scientist was in Rome for an audience with Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini) to discuss the theory of Copernicus. The Giolito Dante is not among the volumes owned by Galileo listed by Antonio Favaro, who identified three Dante editions belonging to the scientist: the Venetian *Commedia* printed by Ottaviano Scoto in 1484, the Giuntina of 1506 and the Marcolini edition of 1544. This copy of the 1555 *Commedia* is thus a significant contribution to our still fragmentary knowledge of the books which Morandi and Galileo exchanged. In April 1626 Morandi sent his illustrious friend his copy of Kepler's *Hyperaspites*, while a copy of the celebrated *Saggiatore* of 1623, inscribed by Galileo to Morandi, is today in University College London. In the *Saggiatore* Galileo recalls Dante and his 'scientific speculations': Morandi's gift of an edition of the *Commedia* could therefore be related to Galileo's interest in Dante, and especially the topography of Hell. During the winter of 1587-1588 the twenty-three-year old Galileo gave two lectures to the Florentine Academy on the structure, position and dimensions of Dante's Hell or, in his own words, on the description of the 'infernal theatre', defending



actual size

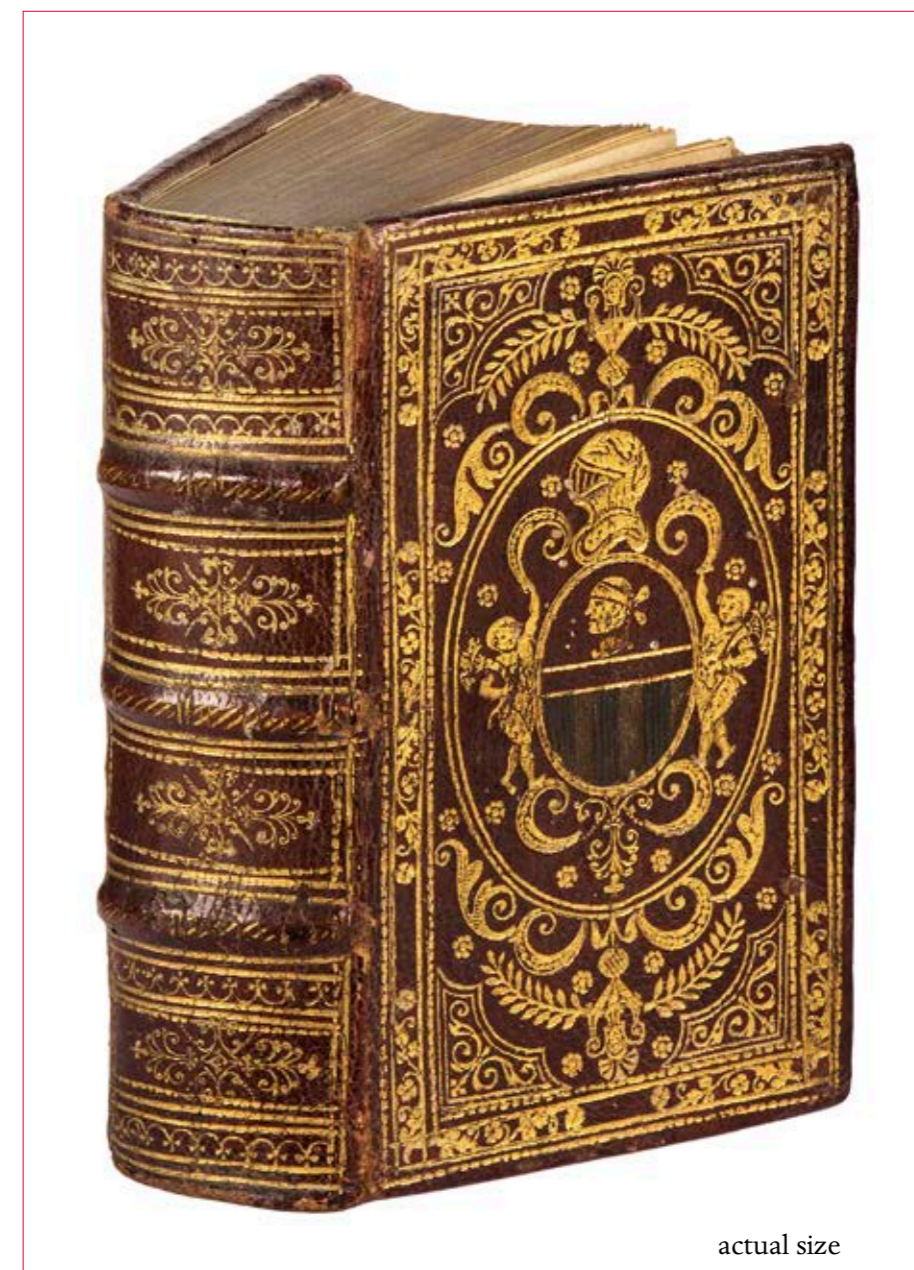
The celebrated Dolce's *Divina Commedia* presented as a gift at the Court of Urban VIII. From Orazio Morandi to Galileo Galilei

the calculations made by Antonio Manetti against the criticisms of Alessandro Vellutello in his commentary on the *Commedia* published by Marcolini in 1544. The first lecture examines in detail Manetti's description, while the second is dedicated to Vellutello's opinions. Galileo defends the 'ingenious Manetti' against the calumnies unjustly spread by Vellutello, and demonstrates the accuracy of Manetti's map of the underworld and the scientific validity of his calculations and arguments, qualities which induced Galileo – as he concludes in the first lecture – “not without astonishment, to believe that the opinion of Manetti conforms in everything to the idea of this theatre as conceived by Dante”. In this copy a *terzina* (verses 55-57) from Canto xxxi of the *Inferno* is underlined in an early hand:

*ché dove l'argomento de la mente
s'aggiugne al mal volere e la possa,
nessun riparo vi può far la gente.*

It is not possible to identify with any certainty the hand which marked this *terzina* as Galileo's or Morandi's, but it is undeniable that the lines can be read as an assertion of the freedom of thought, and the difficulties encountered when this freedom confronts a blind power (“al mal volere e la possa”, i.e. “ill will and naked force”), both religious and political. On 7 November 1630 the astrologer Orazio Morandi died in obscure circumstances in the Roman prisons of the Inquisition, and it was widely believed he had been poisoned by the authorities; in April 1631 Pope Urban VIII promulgated the bull *Inscrutabilis* against astrology. On 22 June 1633 Galileo Galilei recited his solemn abjuration before the Inquisition, and in 1634 his *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi* was included in the Index of forbidden books, for supporting the theory of Nicolaus Copernicus and discrediting the Ptolemaic model which the Roman Church had maintained over centuries. Even if neither Morandi nor Galileo had personally underlined the *terzina*, but another early owner instead, nonetheless this feature is both evocative and intriguing, and can be read, possibly, as a homage to a friendship that, for more than thirty years, united – through meetings and conversations, letters and exchanged books – two men who were both persecuted for their opinions.

Books which belonged to Galileo are generally of extraordinary rarity and value. Moreover, this copy is in a handsome gilt tooled morocco binding commissioned by Orazio Morandi himself from the Soresini binders, who worked for the papal court and other high-profile clients from the 1590s to ca. 1630. The covers display the coat of arms of the Vallombrosan abbot, with a Moor's head in profile, and the inscription in gilt lettering on the turn-ins – ‘DON HOR MORANDII ROM MON VALL’ – clearly revealing Morandi's intention to offer this copy as a gift, in a binding executed for the occasion by one of the most renowned workshops in the papal city.



actual size

24

DANTE ALIGHIERI

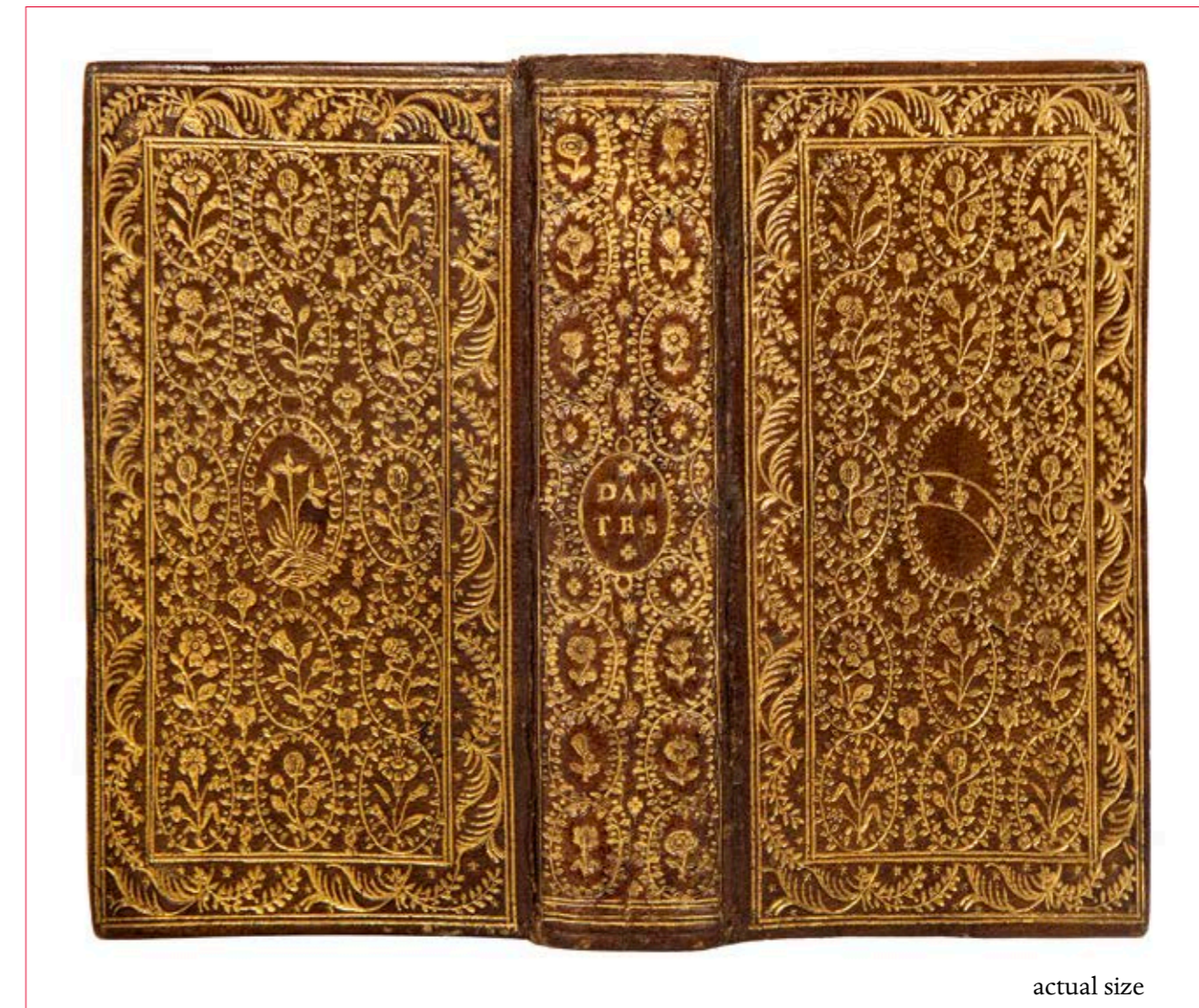
Dante con nuove, et utili ispositioni... Lyon, Guillaume Rouillé, 1571.

16° (120x71 mm). Collation: A-Z⁸, Aa-Rr⁸. 627, [13] pages. Italic and roman type. Woodcut printer's device on the title-page. Dante's woodcut portrait on fol. A3v; three full-page woodcuts on fols. A5v, P1r and Dd7v, illustrating the beginning of each *cantica*, already used in the Lyon edition of 1551; the title of each *cantica* within an architectural woodcut frame. Woodcut decorated initials. Parisian late sixteenth-century olive green morocco, with elaborate gilt tooling. Different flowers interspersed with smaller flower tools, enclosed within borders of leafy sprays, front board with gilt armorial of Pietro Duodo, rear cover with plant device enclosed by his motto 'EXPECTATA ELVDET'. Smooth spine decorated with variants of the floral tools, central title cartouche lettered 'DANTES'. Gilt edges. Modern red half leather box. An excellent copy, ruled in red. Light spotting on the title-page, a few leaves slightly browned.

Provenance: the Venetian ambassador Pietro Duodo (1554-1611); Edouard Rahir (1862-1924); Livio Ambrogio collection.

An outstanding copy finely bound for the Venetian diplomat Pietro Duodo of the reprint of the 1551 Rouillé edition. From 1594 to 1597, Duodo served as ambassador to King Henry IV in Paris, and collected a small but select 'travelling' library composed mostly of volumes in 12° and 16° format. He commissioned a single Parisian workshop, probably run at that time by the pre-eminent Royal binder Clovis Ève – famous for using the tool *à la deuxième palmette* – to produce richly decorated bindings for his books. The volumes on different subjects were classified, according to the fashion of the time, by the colour of the morocco used for the binding: red for theology, philosophy, history and law; citron for medicine and botany; olive green for literature, as with the present copy. Literary works were predominant in his library, with seventy-two volumes listed by Raphaël Esmerian in his census of Duodo's books.

Duodo was recalled to Venice in 1597 and his library remained in Paris, untouched for two centuries. Rediscovered during the French Revolution it did not remain intact and was widely dispersed. The volumes were erroneously ascribed to the collection of Marguerite de Valois (1554-1611), possibly as a consequence of the exquisite daisies stamped on the boards. Only in 1920 did the bibliographer Ludovic Bouland identify Duodo as their true owner, and his books immediately began to be sought after by collectors for their rarity (only 133 volumes from this library have been recorded up to now), their distinguished provenance, and the gilded floral pattern – *à ovals floraux* – bindings made specially for him.



actual size

*Handsomely bound books from a famous collection
have a high rate of survival...*

— Anthony Hobson, *Renaissance Book Collecting* (1999) —

25 DANTE ALIGHIERI

La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri Nobile Fiorentino ridotta a miglior lezione dagli Accademici della Crusca... Florence, Domenico Manzani, 1595.

8° (157x102 mm). Collation: †⁸, A-F⁸, G⁶, H-Z⁸, Aa-Mm⁸, Nn⁴. [16], 493 [i.e. 511], [53] pages, wanting fol. †8 blank. Roman and italic type. Woodcut device of the Accademia della Crusca on the title-page; on the verso of the last leaf a different Crusca device. Fine woodcut initials, depicting the devices of various members of the Accademia della Crusca; head- and tailpieces. A woodcut map of Hell on fol. †7, based on Antonio Manetti's iconographical diagram but now in a new design (backed and mounted, bound here as frontispiece). Eighteenth-century vellum, over pasteboards. Smooth spine, divided in compartments by gilt fillets, author's name on painted label. Blue edges. A good copy, slight browning and spotting. An insignificant burn hole in the outer blank margin of fols. Z4-Aa1. Numerous corrections, underlinings and *marginalia* in Bastiano de' Rossi's own hand.

Provenance: Bastiano de' Rossi (inked inscription on the title-page 'Allo 'nferigno dall'Accad'); Libreria Antiquaria Dotti, Roma (small label on the front pastedown); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The first edition of the *Commedia* edited by the renowned Florentine Accademia della Crusca – the first language academy in the world, founded in 1582 – in a precious presentation copy to its first secretary Bastiano de' Rossi, as attested by the manuscript note on the title-page 'Allo 'nferigno dall'Accad'. As is well-known, each member of the Accademia had to adopt an academic name, motto and emblem related to 'crusca' (bran), and de' Rossi adopted the nickname, or *nome di Crusca*, of 'Inferigno' – the 'branny one', denoting a sort of bread baked with meal and bran ('cruschello') – and the motto 'per cominciare' ('to begin'). He was among the editors of the 1595 *Commedia*, the result of the painstaking collation of about one hundred earlier manuscripts in order to improve the Aldine *vulgata* of 1502; 465 new readings were proposed, and variants were printed in the margin of the leaves. The aim of the Accademia was to promote Tuscan as a linguistic model, and a particular emphasis was placed on Dante and his vernacular poetry, in polemical opposition to the classicism professed by Pietro Bembo. This edition of the *Commedia* was undertaken in order to provide a source for the examples of correct usage which were to be inserted in the entries for the proposed *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, which first appeared in 1612.

This copy of the so-called *Commedia della Crusca* is an example of the rare first state, distinguished by a different layout, the title 'La Divina Commedia' instead of 'La Divina Comedia', and the last quire with the *errata* consisting of just two pages instead of the six found in later issues. Furthermore, the volume contains numerous corrections of misprints and emendations in de' Rossi's hand, some of them referring to the fourteenth-century commentary by Francesco da Buti.

The title-page displays the famous device of the Accademia della Crusca, showing a flour bolter with the motto 'il più bel fior ne coglie' (i.e. 'it picks the fairest flower'). The editorial revision of each canto was entrusted to different members of the Crusca itself, whose devices and mottoes are depicted in woodcut initials at the beginning of each canto. Bastiano was given the fifth canto of the *Inferno* to edit, and therefore it is the only one in this copy that does not have marginal and interlinear emendations in his own hand. The copy presented here is a striking testimony to the laborious work undertaken by the Accademia della Crusca to restore a correct reading of Dante's text, providing what is in effect the first modern critical edition of the *Commedia*.



actual size

Corretto dalla Accademia della Crusca... il diuin poema di Dante, e da essa di molte postille ornato, ed in correggendolo dichiaratone di molti luoghi difficili...

The copy which belonged to the Secretary of the Accademia della Crusca, Bastiano de' Rossi

26 DANTE ALIGHIERI

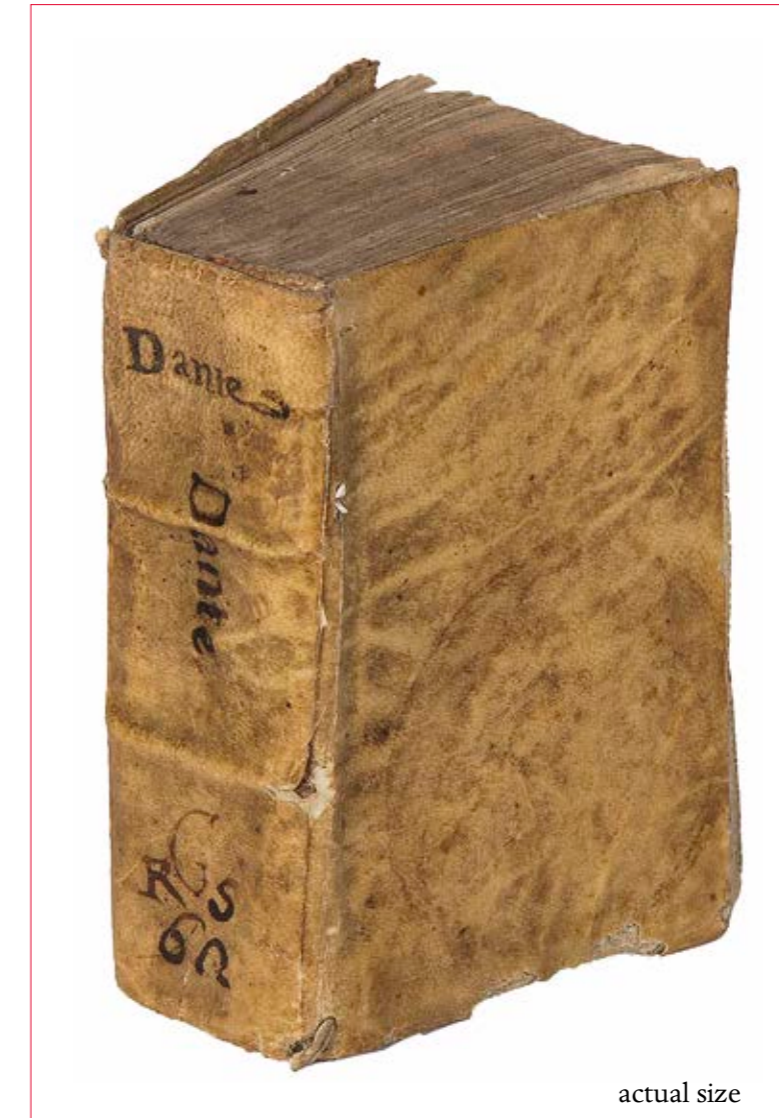
La Visione. Poema di Dante Alighieri Diuiso In Inferno, Purgatorio, & Paradiso. Di nouo con ogni diligenza ristampato. Vicenza, Francesco Leni, 1613.

16° (105x72 mm). Collation: A-Z⁸, Aa-Rr⁸. 608, [32] pages. Roman and italic type. Title-page within a woodcut border; woodcut printer's device on the title-page. Woodcut headpieces introducing each *cantica*, and the final tables. Contemporary limp vellum. Smooth spine with Dante's name inked both horizontally and vertically in an early hand, at the bottom a shelfmark 'G.R 5 [?] 62', written in brown ink. A beautiful and unsophisticated copy; browning in places, slight wear to the outer lower corner of fol. L8, with loss of a few letters on the verso. The last quire resewn.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

The first of only three editions of the *Commedia* published in the seventeenth century, and of the greatest rarity, presented here in its original vellum binding. The small volume is dedicated by the printer Francesco Leni to Giovanni Battista Minardi, whom he describes as a lover of poetry. The plainness of the 1613 edition of the *Commedia*, without any commentary – apart from the final tables of the *capitoli* and the *argomenti*, containing summaries of the content of each canto – or encomiastic texts or woodcuts reflects Dante's unpopularity in the Mannerist and Baroque period. Stylistically Dante was regarded as too archaic or old-fashioned and the medieval roots of his poetry were considered to be irremediable obstacles to its appreciation. Moreover, as the result of some controversial *terzine* on both the doctrine and the hierarchy of the Roman Church, in 1612 Dante's poem was included in the Spanish *Index* published by the Grand Inquisitor Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, and two years later in the *Index* issued in Venice, with the injunction that the incriminating verses – mainly concerning simoniac popes, and other vices of the ecclesiastical hierarchy – had to be expurgated.

For the first time in this Vicenza edition Dante's poem appears under the different title of *La Visione*, focusing on the mystical aspects of his journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, a spiritual itinerary in quest of the vision of supreme Truth and Beauty, embodied by the beloved Beatrice. The new title, reflecting the Counter-Reformation reading of Dante, was also adopted for the second edition of the *Commedia* which appeared in the seventeenth century, the one published in 1629 by the Paduan printer Donato Pasquardi, whereas in the third edition, which likewise appeared in 1629 from the Venetian press of Niccolò Misserini, the traditional title of *Divina Commedia* was used. In Italy Leni's new title was never used again, but it enjoyed a wide and enduring popularity in Britain, being adopted by Henry F. Cary for the first complete translation into English of the *Commedia*, published in 1804-1805 as *The Vision of Dante Alighieri*.



actual size

The first and rarest of the three editions published in the seventeenth century of the *Commedia*

27 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Dante con una breve E sufficiente dichiarazione del senso letterale diversa in più luoghi da quella degli antichi Comentatori... Lucca, Sebastiano Domenico Cappuri, 1732.

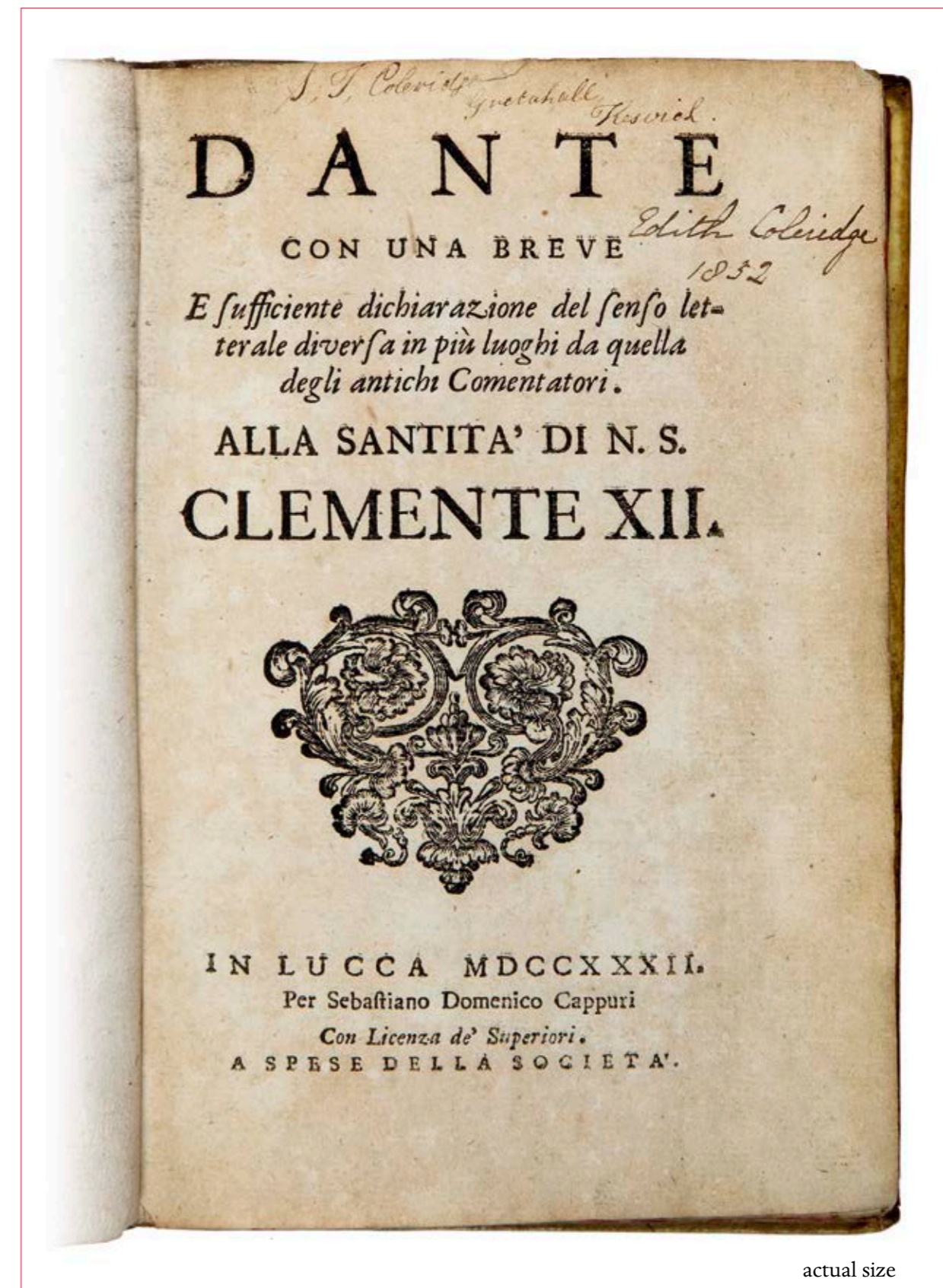
Three volumes in 8° (200x130 mm). [20], 261, [7]; [4], 273, [11]; [4], 294, [10] pages. Printer's ornaments and decorated initials. Uniformly bound in contemporary vellum. Smooth spines, title gilt on painted lettering-pieces. Edges speckled red. On the front pastedown of the volume containing the *Purgatorio* an inked note in Coleridge's own hand 'Pachianetti', referring to the Spanish wine *Pajereite*. This Italian form Pachianetti also occurs in Coleridge's notebooks, and in other manuscripts by him. The Coleridge expert George Whalley has argued that "the word had some secret personal meaning for him". In Edith Coleridge's hand the pencilled notes 'Nov 5th 1887' at the end of the *Purgatorio* (vol. 1, p. 273), and 'Dec 22nd 1887 Eldon Lodge Torquay' at the end of the *Paradiso* (vol. 3, p. 294), showing the progress of her reading of the *Commedia*. On the front flyleaf of the second volume a rough drawing in pencil of a crowned figure, possibly a king (probably in Edith's hand).

Provenance: William Wordsworth (1770-1850); Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834; signed on the title-page of the first volume, 'S. T. Coleridge Gretahall Keswick'; see *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge. Marginalia II*. Ed. by G. Whalley, London-Princeton 1984, pp. 131-132); his nephew and executor Henry Nelson Coleridge (1798-1843); his grand-daughter Edith Coleridge (1832-1911; ownership inscription on the title-page, 'Edith Coleridge 1852'); Sotheby's, *English Literature, History, Children's Books and Illustrations*, London, 13 December 2007, lot 49; Livio Ambrogio collection.

A precious association copy: the Lucca edition of the *Commedia* from the library of the famous poet and writer Samuel Taylor Coleridge, one of the founders of the English romantic movement, presented to him as a gift in 1804 by his friend and fellow-poet William Wordsworth.

In his reading Coleridge had come across Dante, at the time almost forgotten in Italy, and in March 1819 lectured on the Florentine poet at the Royal Institution. He had a very high opinion of Henry F. Cary's 'incomparable' translation of the *Commedia*, but already in February 1804, before his departure in April for Italy and Malta, expressed a wish to read Dante's poem in the original Italian. He asked Wordsworth to send "Dante & a Dictionary" to Greta Hall in Keswick, in the Lake District, where he was living at the time, and according to the Coleridge expert George Whalley, the 1732 edition of the *Commedia*, with a commentary by Pompeo Venturi, appears to have been the copy Wordsworth sent in response to Coleridge's request. On his return, the poet stayed with the Wordsworths at Allan Bank, where in 1810 he left his books. This copy of Dante was included in Wordsworth's list of the volumes to be sent in 1829-1830 to Highgate, Coleridge's last London residence.

In his copy of the 1819 edition of Cary's translation (today in the British Library), there are some marginalia which reveal Coleridge's careful study of the Lucca edition. Furthermore, the ownership inscription by his grand-daughter Edith is dated '1852', the year of the death of her mother Sarah, the only daughter of Coleridge, a brilliant essayist and in her turn an ardent admirer of Dante: the copy presented here offers therefore a striking testimony of Dante's popularity in English romantic circles and later in the Victorian age.



*So shall Dante, Ariosto, Giordano Bruno
be my Italy...*

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Note-book*, May 1805 —

Coleridge's personal copy of the *Commedia*, gifted to him by William Wordsworth

DANTE ALIGHIERI *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri Con varie Annotazioni, e copiosi Rami adornata...* Venice, Antonio Zatta, 1757. (Bound with:)

GASPARO GOZZI (1713-1786) *Giudizio degli antichi Poeti sopra la moderna censura di Dante, attribuita ingiustamente a Virgilio...* Venice, Antonio Zatta, 1758.

Two works in three volumes in large 4° (301x210 mm). PRINTED ON BLUE PAPER. I. [16], XLVIII, CCCCVIII; CCCCXIII, [3]; CCCCLII, [8], 103, [1] pages. Title-page printed in red and black, with an engraved vignette. The volumes contain in total 107 engraved plates, issued in blue, red, green and black. The first volume contains 41 plates, including the frontispiece engraved by G. Giampiccoli after F. Fontebasso, the portrait of Empress Elisabeth of Russia drawn and engraved by G. Magnini, the engraved dedicatory letter to the Empress, and four unsigned plates showing respectively some medals owned at the time by the count Gianmaria Mazzucchelli in Brescia, the portrait of Dante, the tomb of the Florentine poet, and the map of Hell after Antonio Manetti (17 are in red, 13 in black, 11 in green or blue). The second volume contains 33 plates (8 are in red, 15 in black, 10 in green or blue). The third one also contains 33 plates (12 are in red, 12 in black, 9 in green or blue). Engraved initials, numerous head- and tailpieces. Each canto introduced by an engraved *argomento*, within a rocaille frame.

II. 18, [2], 55, [1], 72 pages. Title-page printed in red and black, with an engraved vignette. Frontispiece engraved by A. Baratti after F. Scagiario. Engraved initials, large head- and tailpieces.

Uniformly bound in contemporary Italian marbled calf over pasteboards, richly gilt-tooled. Spines with five raised bands, title and volume numbering on double lettering-pieces. Marbled pastedowns, red edges. An excellent copy.

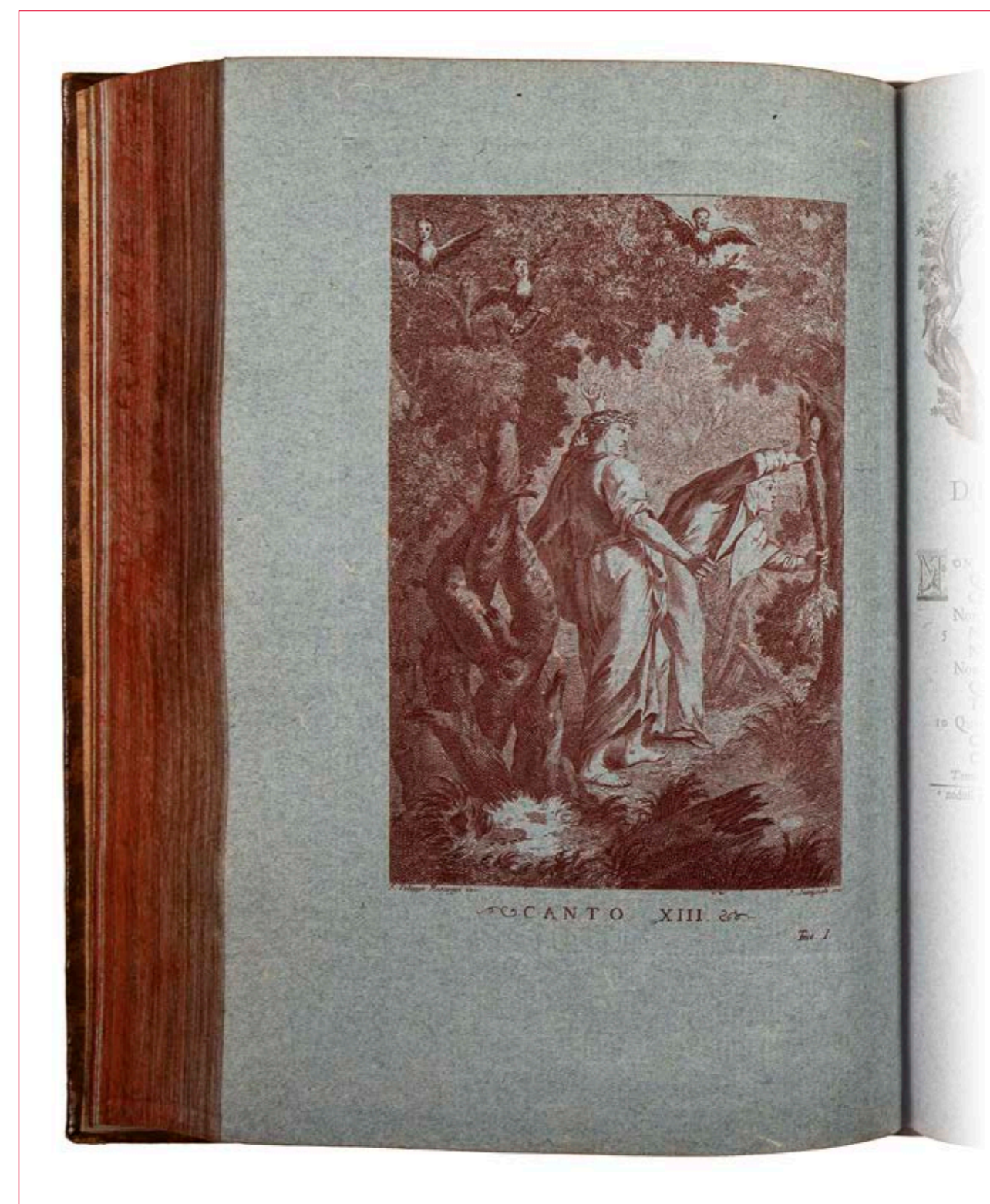
Provenance: Giovanni Giacomo Trivulzio (1774-1831); Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan (small stamps on the front flyleaf and some leaves of each volume; copy sold as duplicate); Sergio Colombi (ex-libris on the front pastedown); Livio Ambrogio collection.

An exceptional copy – printed by Antonio Zatta on thick blue paper of very high quality and with numerous plates printed in different shades of red, blue and green – of this monumental achievement, the first illustrated *Commedia* to be published since 1596. No other copy on blue paper is recorded. Batines mentions that a few special copies – “in carta grande” and “in carta stragrande” – were issued, but only the present copy is today listed as being on blue paper.

The edition is dedicated by the editor, Cristoforo Zapata de Cisneros, to Empress Elizaveta Petrovna of Russia, the daughter of the Czar Peter the Great. This publication launched the fortune of the *Commedia* in Russia: its first translation into Russian appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The text of the Zatta edition of the *Commedia* is based on that printed in Padua in 1727 (the well-known *Cominiana* edition), and is accompanied by the commentaries of some of the best Dante scholars of the time such as Pompeo Venturi and Giovanni Antonio Volpi. Bound into the third volume of this copy is the first edition of Gasparo Gozzi’s *Giudizio*, a defence of the Florentine poet against the criticism of Saverio Bettinelli (1718-1808) which greatly contributed to the reputation of Dante in the decades to come.

The numerous engraved plates included in the edition – in this blue-paper copy also printed in red, blue or green – were designed by numerous ‘valentissimi’ artists, among them the Venetian Francesco Fontebasso (1707-1769), Gaetano Gherardo Zompini from Nervesa near Treviso (1700-1778) and Michelangelo Schiavone from Chioggia (1712-1772), who also were responsible for the designs to the edition of Petrarca’s *Rime*, published by Zatta in 1756. The drawings were skilfully engraved, among others, by Giovanni Magnini, Bartolomeo Crivellari, and Giuliano Giampiccoli.

A marvellous copy, from the celebrated library of the Marquis Giovanni Giacomo Trivulzio, who assembled one of the most complete Dante collections of all time.



... questa bella, magnifica, e splendidissima, edizione,
la quale è in bei caratteri, più bella carta, e più belli adornamenti...

— Antonio Zatta, *Novelle Letterarie* (1757) —

An outstanding copy on thick and bleu foncé paper,
with the plates issued in blue, red and green

29 DANTE ALIGHIERI

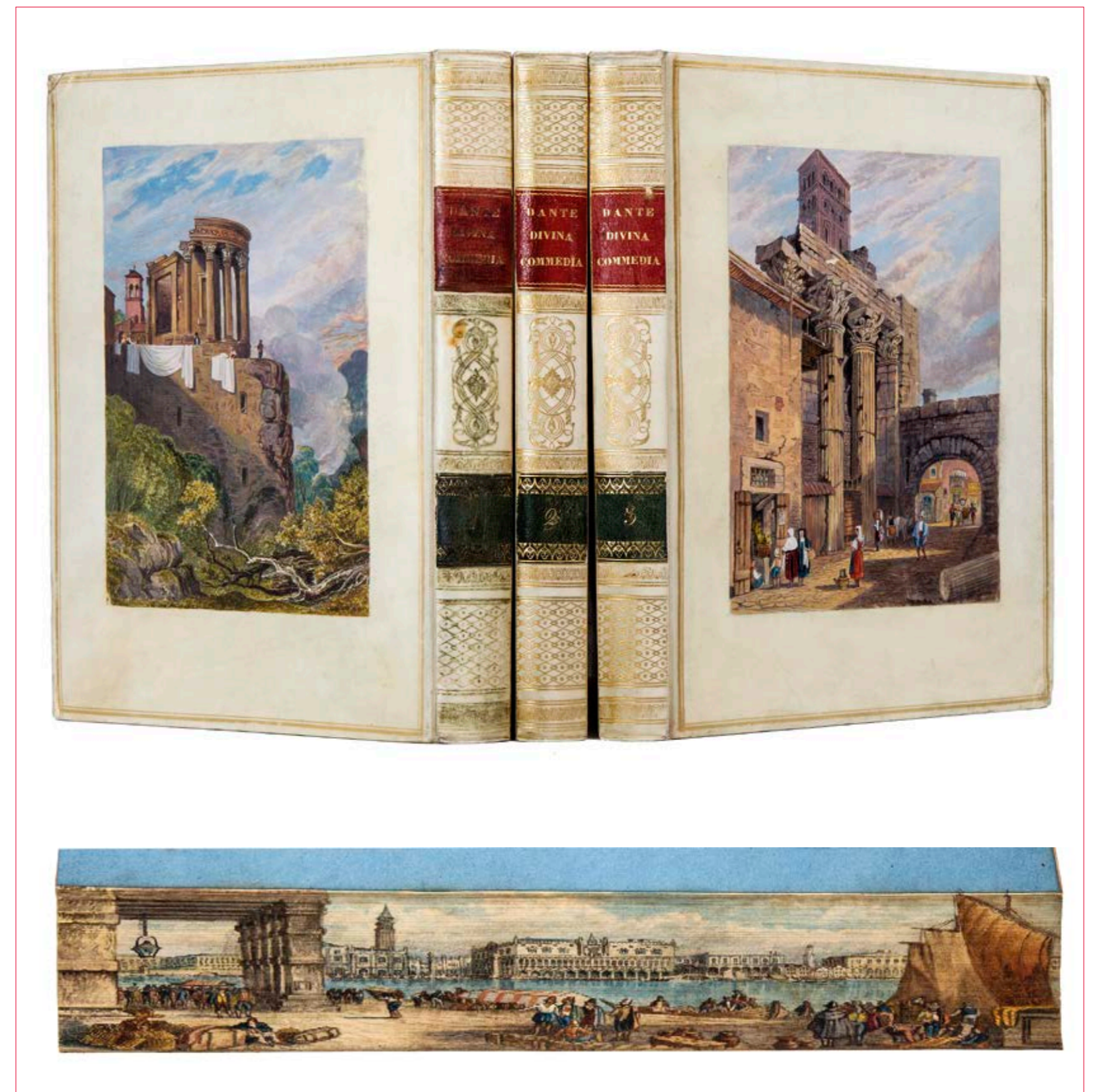
La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri postillata da Torquato Tasso... Pisa, co' caratteri di F. Didot, 1830.

Three volumes in 4° (288x207 mm). [4], xviii, [2], 259, [1]; [4], 244; [4], 239, [1] pages. In the first volume engraved portraits of Dante and Tasso, both protected by tissue paper. Uniformly bound in contemporary vellum, all covers framed in border of gilt fillets and with hand-painted scenes depicting views of Italian cities (occasional light abrasion to edges). Spines elaborately gilt-tooled, title and volume numbering on double lettering-pieces. Pastedowns and flyleaves in blue paper. Gilt edges; each volume with fine fore-edge paintings. Excellent condition.

Provenance: the outstanding Dante scholar George John Warren, 5th baron Vernon (1803-1866; ex-libris on the front pastedown; Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, *Catalogue of Printed Books, and a few Manuscripts, comprising The Property of A. R. Geldie... also a Further Selection from the Library of the Right Hon. Lord Vernon*, London 19 October 1921, lot 461); purchased by Davis (probably the bookseller active at the time in Cambridge); Philip C. Duschnes Rare Books New York (small label on the recto of the rear flyleaf); the Chicago collectors Samuel R. and Marie-Louise Rosenthal (ex-libris on the front pastedown; Bloomsbury Auctions, *The Library of the late Samuel R. and Marie-Louise Rosenthal of Chicago*, London 2006, lot 32); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A sumptuous copy, with unique hand-paintings on covers and fore-edges, of the *Commedia* edited by Giovanni Rosini and accompanied by Torquato Tasso's (1544-1595) glosses, including the engraved portraits of Dante and Tasso, inserted only in a few copies. The edition was limited to 166 copies, and this one belongs to the one hundred copies printed on 'carta velina grave'. The finely executed hand-painted views on the covers are the Ducal Palace in Ferrara and the Temple of the Sybil in Tivoli (volume 1); the Bridge of Sighs and the Campanile of St Mark's in Venice (volume 2); the Temple of Mars and the Fish Market in Rome (volume 3). Each volume also has a fore-edge water-colour painting of high quality, with scenes depicting respectively the Ponte Santa Trinita in Florence – the bridge on which Dante first encountered his beloved Beatrice as described in the *Vita Nuova* –, a view of Venice from the Giudecca, and the Bridge and the Castle of St Angelo in Rome.

A spectacular set from a distinguished owner: the renowned Dante scholar Lord Vernon, one of the leading figures in the Anglo-Florentine community and one of the members of the 'Dante Club', who were in the habit of dressing up like Dante in medieval costume. Between 1858 and 1865 Vernon published his three-volume edition of the *Inferno*. The third volume is commonly known as the *Album*, and contains numerous plates of towns, buildings and landscapes mentioned in the *Inferno*, reflecting the nineteenth-century vogue for sightseeing 'in the steps of Dante', as this copy attests.



*Dante est un admirable cicérone à travers l'Italie, et l'Italie
est un beau commentaire de Dante...*

— Jean-Jacques Ampère, *Le voyage dantesque* (1839) —

30 DANTE ALIGHIERI

L'Enfer de Dante Alighieri. Avec le dessins de Gustave Doré. Traduction française de Pier-Angelo Fiorentino accompagnée du texte italien. Paris, Librairie de L. Hachette et C.^{ie}, 1861.

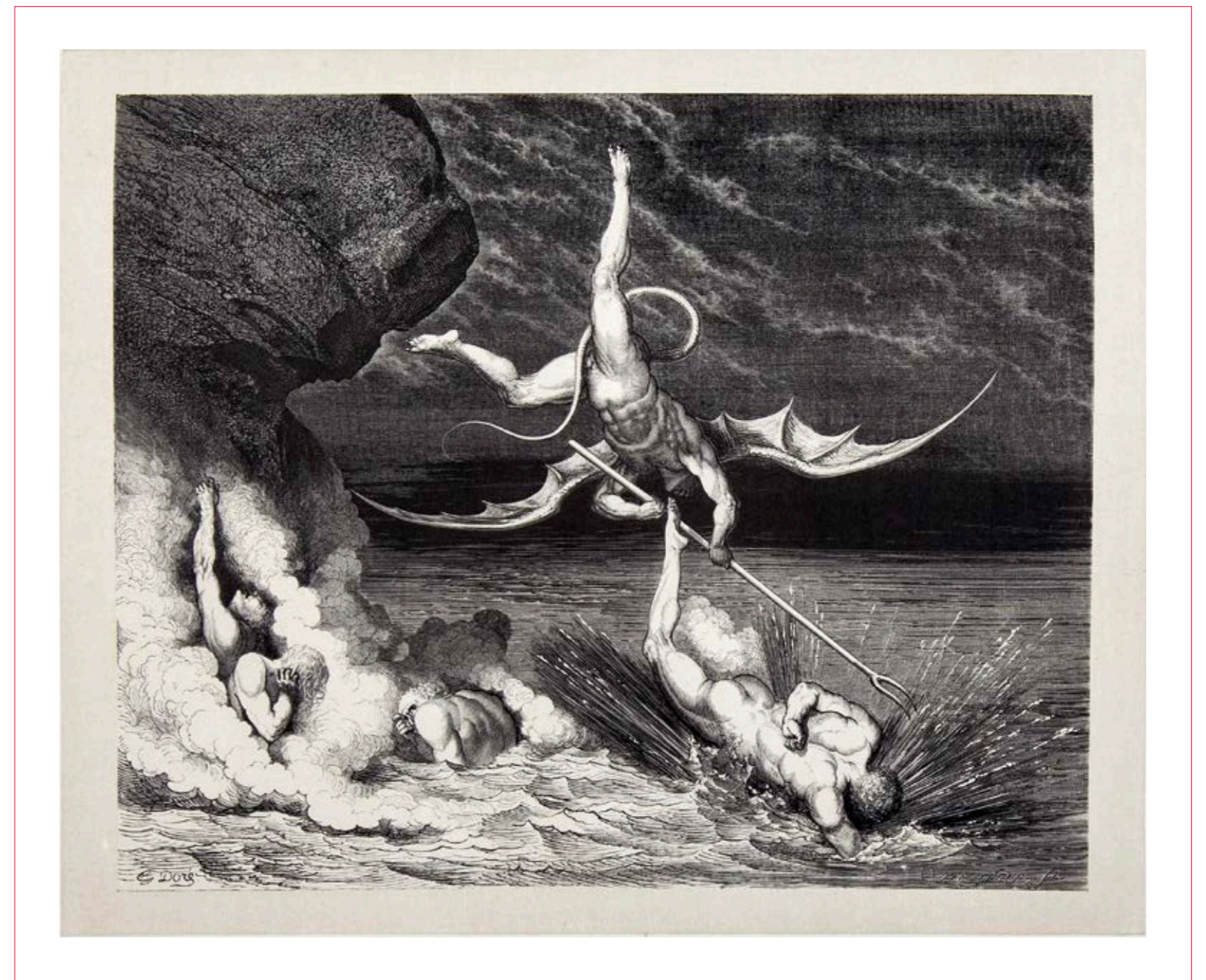
Folio (420x302 mm). [4], iv, 194, [2] pages. Title-page in red and black. Dante's portrait as frontispiece. Seventy-five woodcuts after Gustave Doré, all protected by tissue paper with Dante's verses printed as captions on the recto. Late nineteenth-century gilt-tooled red morocco, signed by Charles Magnier. Covers within a border of fillets and interlaced ribbons. Spine with five raised bands, title lettered on second compartment. Marbled pastedowns and flyleaves; inside *dentelles*. Gilt edges. A very fine copy, with strong impression of the plates. Inserted in the volume is a loose page from *La chronique illustrée* no. 13, 6 November 1868, with a portrait of Doré, with the caption "Dessin de E. Penauille – Photographie de Nadar".

Provenance: the Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev (1938-1993); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The first issue of the *Inferno* illustrated with the seventy-five spectacular wood-block engravings designed by the famous painter and printmaker Paul Gustave Doré (1832-1883), and executed by around forty engravers.

In 1855 Doré planned to produce sets of illustrations for the greatest literary masterpieces of all time, and the *Inferno* was chosen to be the first in the series, reflecting Dante's wide popularity in France in the second half of the nineteenth century. Doré began to work in 1857, using Pier Angelo Fiorentino's French translation of the poem. The publishing costs were defrayed by Doré himself, and the commercial success of the volume was immediate: the reading public was impressed by the hallucinatory power and emotional intensity of the plates, which resemble paintings more than drawings, thanks to Doré's skilful handling of sfumato and chiaroscuro. In 1862 Hachette published a second issue of the *Inferno*. The complete series of plates executed by the French artist – forty-two for the *Purgatorio* and eighteen for the *Paradiso* – appeared only in 1868.

Although Doré's production includes numerous illustrated literary works – Rabelais, Cervantes, Byron, and Poe among others – his name is most closely connected with his illustrations for the *Commedia*. The French artist often went back to these engravings as sources for paintings, and his Dante plates have also been a source of inspiration for many later artists, filmmakers and set designers. The influence of Doré's extraordinary bizarre imagery is also detectable in the 1992 choreography of the ballet *La Bayadère* (*The Temple Dancer*), the last production mounted for the Paris Opéra by one of the greatest of all dancers, Rudolf Nureyev, the former owner of this copy.



The most scenographic vision of the *Inferno*,
from the library of the famous Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev

31 WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

Illustrations of Dante. Seven Plates, designed and engraved by William Blake. Author of "Illustrations of the Book of Job," &c. &c. [London ca. 1892].

India-paper suite of seven line engravings (each approx. 268x345 mm, plate mark 276x356 mm), mounted on thick drawing paper (394x564 mm) and protected by tissue paper. Fragments of a watermark (italic capital N) on the backing sheet of the first two plates. Original letterpress label printed in 1838 ("BLAKE'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF DANTE. Seven Plates, designed and engraved by W. BLAKE, Author of "Illustrations of the Book of Job," &c. &c. Price £2 2s. India Paper.") with Dante's verses as captions, taken from H. F. Cary's translation of the *Commedia*. Green morocco folding case, title in gilt lettering of the front board and spine, 'ILLUSTRATIONS OF DANTE WILLIAM BLAKE 1826'.

Provenance: John Linnell (1792-1882; the owner of the original copper plates); his heirs (pencil inscription inside the folding case); Philip Hofer (1898-1984; the founder of the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts in the Houghton Library, Harvard); Sotheby's, New York, 14 May 1992, lot 251; Livio Ambrogio collection.

One of the very rare set of engravings made from the original copper plates in John Linnell's possession of the most significant of Blake's unfinished projects, his spiritual and artistic testament. The illustrations for the *Commedia* demonstrate the extraordinary power of his visionary imagination, and had been commissioned by his friend the painter John Linnell. Blake began to work in the autumn of 1824, using as source Henry F. Cary's translation of the *Commedia* (probably the 1819 edition); by his death in 1827 only seven plates had been engraved and 102 designs in pencil, mostly with some colour, were in various stages of completion. The Dante copperplates became the property of Linnell, and they were first printed in 1838 – after a few proof-state impressions pulled by Blake himself during 1826-1827 – by Dickson & Ross in thirty-eight sets. A second commercial issue in fifty suites was printed in about 1892 by Holdgate for John Linnell Jr. The date of printing of the present set cannot be determined with certainty, but probably it belongs to this later issue. Inside the folding case is preserved the original cover label in letterpress, with the description of the plates, printed for the 1838 set. The suite includes the engraving of one of the most impressive and dramatic designs realised by Blake for the *Commedia*: *The Circle of the Lustful* or the *Whirlwind of Lovers*, depicting the touching encounter in the second circle of Hell with Francesca da Rimini and her brother-in-law Paolo Malatesta. Dante was the first to tell the story of this passionate and tragic love, saving it from oblivion. This splendid engraving, which is not faithful to Dante's text, is an example of the Romantic interest in the figure of Francesca, transforming her into a heroine. It was one of the seven Dante designs which Blake engraved during 1826-1827.

The original Blake drawings were sold in the Linnell sale at Christie's in March 1918, and are nowadays held by different museums in Britain, America, and above all by the Melbourne Gallery in Australia. The Dante copper plates have passed, with the Rosenwald Collection, to the National Gallery of Art in Washington.



BLAKE'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF DANTE. Seven Plates, designed and engraved by W. BLAKE, Author of "Illustrations of the Book of Job," &c. &c. Price £2 2s. India Paper.

PLATE I.
... and like a corpse fell to the ground.
HELL; Canto v. line 137.

32 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Tutte le opere di Dante Alighieri Fiorentino nuovamente rivedute nel testo e diligentemente emendate dal reverendo dottore Edoardo Moore, ed ora stampate per la gentile cortesia dei distinti direttori della Stamperia dell'Università di Oxford. Chelsea, Ashendene Press, 1909.

Folio (410x287 mm). xiv, [2], 392 [6] pages. Text printed in two columns in Subiaco type. Headings and shoulder notes in red. Large initials in red and opening-words by William Graily Hewitt. Full-page woodcut depicting Dante, and five large woodcut headpieces by W. H. Hooper after Charles M. Gere; one diagram in text, illustrating the *Quaestio de Aqua & Terra*. Bound in original linen-backed Holland blue boards. On the spine title printed on paper label. An excellent copy, uncut.

Provenance: from the Ashendene Collection belonging to the Hornby family (on a loose slip the printed note 'From C. H. St J. Hornby, Shelley House, Chelsea Embankment, S. W.', and in manuscript 'Exhibition Copy. To be returned to above address'); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A splendid copy of the deluxe edition of Dante's works printed by the Ashendene Press, the well-known private press founded in 1895 by Charles Harold St John Hornby (1867-1946), which was active until 1935. This edition is one of the so-called 'Triple Crown' of the three greatest fine-press books, alongside the Doves Bible (1902-1904) and the Kelmescott Chaucer (1896) by William Morris. The copy presented here is one of the only four recorded copies bound in linen-backed Holland, and formed part of the complete Ashendene Press collection owned by Hornby himself. The printing of this folio-sized volume – limited to 111 copies (of which only eighty-four were for sale), including six on vellum – took three years to complete.

The volume is printed on specially hand-made Batchelor paper, with the fine Subiaco type designed by Hornby's friends and close collaborators Emery Walker and Sydney Carlyle Cockerell. The volume opens with a short preface by Hornby, in which he dedicates his publication "a tutti coloro i quali portano, al pari di me, amore e riverenza al Divino Poeta" ("to all those who, like me, love and revere the Divine Poet"). The edition is also famous for its illustrations, designed by Charles M. Gere, an artist influenced in his early works by the Pre-Raphaelite school, and the *Commedia* is introduced by a fine full-page woodcut portrait of Dante holding his book, with the city of Florence in the background. The outstanding calligrapher William Graily Hewitt was employed to design and execute the handsome red initials and other decorations throughout the book.



*Your magnificent Dante... is superlatively fine.
Dante may well look down upon you
with gratitude from his Paradise*

— Sidney Carlyle Cockerell to Charles Harold St John Hornby —

33 DANTE ALIGHIERI

La Divina Commedia novamente illustrata da artisti italiani a cura di Vittorio Alinari e riveduta nel testo da Giuseppe Vandelli. Seconda edizione rinnovata. Florence, Giorgio and Piero Alinari, 1922-1923.

Large 4° (304x243 mm). 263, [1] pages. With eighty-nine original sketches and drawings in varying sizes, executed by twenty-three artists using different techniques, each mounted on brown cardboard and protected by tissue paper printed with the artist's name and the number of the relevant canto. Original binding in antique style, blind tooled half-leather, wooden boards with two clasps, straps missing. On the front cover the title 'LA DIVINA COMMEDIA DI DANTE ALIGHIERI' on a vellum label. Spine with four double raised bands, blind and gilt tooled, author's name in gilt lettering. Pastedowns and flyleaves in parchment paper. Preserved inside there is a typewritten sheet from Alinari himself, describing his copy.

Provenance: Vittorio Alinari (1859-1932); his heirs; Livio Ambrogio collection.

A unique and extraordinary copy of the second edition of the Alinari *Divina Commedia*, containing eighty-nine original sketches and drawings made mainly on the occasion of the competition to illustrate Dante's poem held in May 1900 by the Fratelli Alinari firm in Florence.

The competitors had to send drawings for at least two cantos from the *Inferno*, and in June 1901 the works were exhibited at La Società di Belle Arti in Florence. The first prize was awarded to Alberto Zardo, the second one to Armando Spadini, while the third prize was divided equally between Duilio Cambellotti and Ernesto Bellandi. In the same period the Alinari commissioned illustrations for the other two *cantiche* of the poem. In all 381 illustrations by fifty-nine Italian artists were created, which taken as a whole reflect both the popularity of Dante at the time and the influence of Symbolism, the Pre-Raphaelites and Art Nouveau in Italy. The first edition of this artistic masterpiece appeared in 1902-1903.

Most of the original works, both those submitted for the competition and those commissioned later by the Alinari, are now dispersed among public and private collections, but eighty-nine – among the most important ones – remained in the possession of the Alinari, and were later mounted on cardboard and inserted into Vittorio Alinari's personal copy of the *Commedia*.

The present copy contains drawings by twenty-three artists, including Alfredo Baruffi, Ernesto Bellandi, Silvio Bicchi, Pietro Chiesa, Giovanni Costetti, Adolfo De Carolis, Natale Faorzi, Giacomo Lolli, Armando Spadini, Alberto Zardo, and in particular Duilio Cambellotti, whose illustrations to Dante are justly praised for their very high quality and much sought after by art collectors. A few drawings included in this personal Alinari copy are unpublished, such as the pen-and-wash ink portrait of Dante by Silvio Bicchi, inserted after the half-title page.



Su questo esemplare si contengono n. 89 bozzetti e disegni originali che servivano ad illustrare le mie due edizioni della Divina Commedia. Sono inclusi pure alcuni disegni che mi pervennero dopo la stampa di quelle due edizioni...

— Vittorio Alinari —

34 DANTE ALIGHIERI

La traducion del dante de lengua toscana en verso castellano: por el Reverendo don pedro fernandez de villegas arcediano de burgos... Con otros dos tratados, uno que se dize querella de la fe. y otro aversion del mundo y conversion a dios. Burgos, Fadrique Alemán de Basilea, 2 April 1515.

Folio (281x207 mm). Collation: (8, a-z^s, [et]^s, [rum]^s, A-O^s, P-Q^s. [331] of [332] leaves. The first leaf with title and privilege (often lacking in the recorded copies), here supplied in facsimile. Gothic and roman type. Contemporary pagination, in brown ink. On the recto of the last leaf woodcut printer's device. On the fol. signed (8v full-page woodcut arms of Joanna of Aragon, with two dedicatory lines printed in red; on the verso of the last leaf full-page woodcut coat of arms of the editor Pedro Fernández de Villegas. Finely decorated and animated woodcut initials. Twentieth-century vellum. Smooth spine with inked title and imprint. In the *Suma delo contenido* a contemporary hand has added the page-numbering in red; underlinings in text by the same hand. A good copy, the first and last leaves browned; in the first quire small repairs to the outer blank corners; the margins of the last leaf restored; small stains in places. A few marginal notes by a later hand.

Provenance: on fol. signed (2r an early nineteenth-century Spanish ownership inscription, barely legible but dated '27 Enero 1819'; Livio Ambrogio collection.

The very rare first printed translation of a *cantica* of the *Commedia* into a foreign language, the *Inferno* translated into Castilian verses by the humanist Don Pedro Fernández de Villegas (1453-1536), archdeacon of the cathedral of Burgos. The edition was commissioned by the beautiful and erudite Joanna of Aragon Queen of Castile, the second daughter of Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand the Catholic, and generally, though unjustly, known as Joan the Mad.

The volume was published by Fadrique Alemán, i.e. Friedrich Biel from Basel, who in 1485 set up the first printing press in Burgos. The text of Dante's poem is accompanied by the commentary of Villegas, who used Cristoforo Landino's *Comento* of 1481 as his main source, but he re-interpreted it from an orthodox Catholic point of view, omitting the Neoplatonic readings of the Florentine humanist. Don Pedro also made a wide use of Patristic literature, writings by Thomas Aquinas, Antoninus of Florence, Alexander of Hales, and other traditional Catholic sources. Villegas criticises some of what he deems to be Dante's inappropriate expressions, and condemns obscenities in some cantos of the *Inferno*: a moralistic reading which could be seen as anticipating the Spanish Inquisition's later attitude to Dante (in 1612 the *Commedia* was included in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, and three passages in the text in particular were censored and deleted in the copies held in Spanish libraries).

The edition, which also contains two brief moral works by Villegas himself, has been praised for the elegance of its *mise-en-page* with the commentary surrounding the text, the handsome woodcut initials, the alternation of red and black, and the neat gothic type used for printing. A curious feature of the translation is the choice of the eight-line *stanza*, normally associated with vernacular epic poetry, rather than the original *terzine* as the metrical scheme.

The *Inferno* of Villegas represents the apogee of Renaissance Iberian *dantismo*. A fine copy of an edition that rarely comes onto the market, despite the lack – as usual in the recorded copies, owing to the presence of the Royal privilege – of the first leaf, here skilfully supplied in facsimile.



The celebrated Dante in Castilian, the first edition of the *Commedia* translated into a foreign language

35 DANTE ALIGHIERI

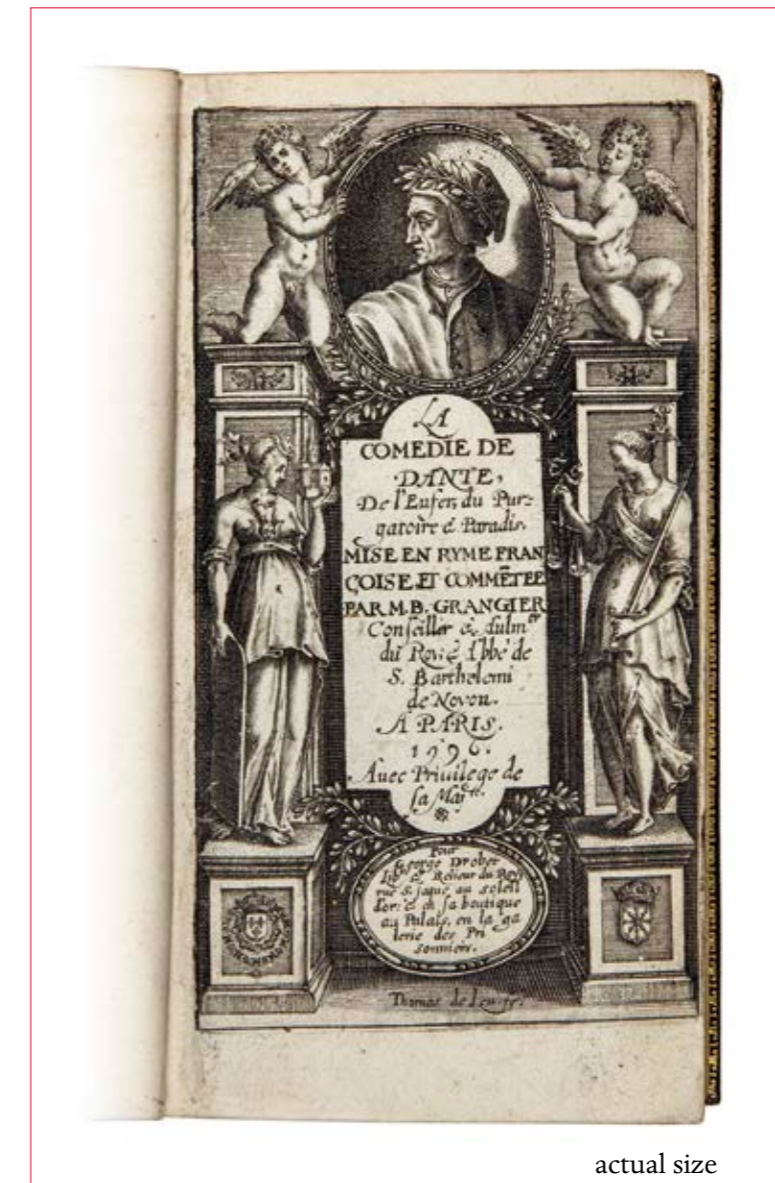
La Comedie de Dante, De l'Enfer, du Purgatoire et Paradis. Mise en ryme françoise et commentée par M. B. Grangier Conseiller et Aulm^{er} du Roys... Paris, George Drobet [after Jean Gesselin], 1596-1597.

Three volumes in 16° (139x75 mm). Collation: A¹², Æ², ā¹², ē¹², i⁶, A-S¹²; Aa-Zz¹², Aaa¹², Bbb¹⁰; AAa-ZZz¹², AAaa-DDdd¹², EEee⁸, FFFF. [86], 438; 587, [1]; 668 pages. Roman, italic and Greek type. Each volume with its own engraved title-page signed by Thomas de Leu (1560-1612), framed within an architectural border containing a portrait of Dante. On fol. A1v of the first volume engraved portrait of Henry IV of France, also by de Leu. Woodcut initials, head- and tailpieces. Uniformly bound in early twentieth-century brown morocco, over pasteboards. Spines with five raised bands, title and imprint in gilt lettering. Marbled pastedowns and flyleaves, inside *dentelles*, green silk bookmarks. Gilt edges. A fine copy, carefully washed and pressed.

Provenance: the French theologian Pierre Morestel (1575-1658; ownership inscription readable under UV lamp on fol. Aa2r of the second volume); Pierre Berès, Paris (small label on the front pastedown of the first volume); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A fine copy of the first printed translation into French of the *Commedia*, in alexandrine verses by the royal almoner Balthazar Grangier de Liverdis (d. 1606), abbot of Saint-Barthélemy de Noyon, who dedicated his work to the King, Henri IV of Navarre. Although already at the beginning of the fifteenth century passages from the *Commedia* had been echoed in the works of Christine de Pisan – especially her *Chemin de long estude* (1402-1403), and *Le livre de la cité des Dames* (1405) – and later, in 1494, the French invasion of Italy had encouraged a manuscript circulation of Dante's text in France (a now-lost bilingual *Commedia* belonged to the library of Marguerite de Navarre), in the sixteenth century Dante enjoyed little acclaim in France. Among the works by the so-called 'Three Crowns' Francesco Petrarca's *Canzoniere* had already been published into French in 1513, while Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decamerone* had appeared as early as 1485. On the contrary, Dante was almost completely overlooked and the sixteenth-century Lyon editions of the *Commedia* in Italian – including the early Aldine counterfeit published by Gabiano and Troth in 1502/1503 – appear to have been produced for the large Italian community in the city rather than for a French reading public. Moreover, owing to the extensive popularity of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and *Trionfi* and the growing influence of Petrarchism, together with the vogue for the exquisite 'crystalline style' of the works of the Pléiade school, in France Dante's style remained out of favour.

During the reign of Henri IV – in 1600 he married Maria de' Medici – Italian influence became particularly strong. Singers, dancing masters, troupes of actors and musical *virtuosi* from Italy swarmed to the French court. It was in this cultural context that Grangier's decision to publish the first complete French translation of the *Commedia* emerged. In his preface Grangier points out the difficulties he has encountered in translating Dante's *terzine*, on account of the Italian poet's '*pietrosità*' or 'harshness' in language and style. His attempt to promote Dante apparently had very little impact, and Grangier's contemporaries disdained his version: only in 1776 did a new French translation of the *Commedia* appear. A further point of interest of the present copy lies in its earliest recorded ownership: the volumes belonged to the French theologian Pierre Morestel, author of works on the Kabbalah and Lullism.



actual size

Dante at the Court of Henri IV.
The first printed French version of the *Commedia*

36

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, père (1802-1870) *Premier chant du Dante traduit pour Madame la Princesse.* [Possibly datable to November 1835].

TOMMASO GARGALLO (1760-1843) *Cenno della montagna tra Vicenza e Verona.* [After 1825].

Autograph manuscripts on paper, both signed.

210x290 mm. One bifolium, fols. [1]r and [2]v blanks. I. Dumas's text written in dark ink in three columns, 48 lines, on fol. [1]v; on the lefthand side of fol. [2]r the last three lines of the text in one column, signed below 'Alex Dumas'. II. Gargallo's text written in dark ink in one column on fol. [2]r, 14 lines, with his signature below. A small tear at the lower blank margin of the second leaf. On fol. [2]r the twentieth-century pencilled note 'Dumas père'.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

Alexandre Dumas père's translation into French of the first canto of the *Inferno*, written and signed by the writer himself, a precious autograph possibly datable to November 1835. The text appeared in print only in March 1836 in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, as an appendix to the essay *Guelfes et Gibelins* also by Dumas.

Between May and November 1835 Dumas had travelled in Sicily; he stayed in Syracuse from 4 to 6 November. As he relates in his account of his travels on the island, while in Syracuse he met the erudite count Tommaso Gargallo Marquis of Castel Lentini, a correspondent of Vittorio Alfieri and Giacomo Leopardi, and whose renowned translation of Horace Dumas considered to be the finest into Italian. The French writer also got to know Gargallo's son Francesco, who was his guide in Syracuse. In the first part of his trilogy *Impressions de voyage dans le Royaume de Naples* (1842), Dumas recalls these encounters, and in particular the figure of Francesco Gargallo, whom he describes as a character "spirituel comme un Français moderne et hospitalier comme un vieux Syracusain".

On this manuscript leaf Dumas copied out in his own hand his translation of the first canto of the *Inferno*, alongside a short prose passage written and signed by Tommaso Gargallo, describing the mountainous region between Verona and Vicenza, which the Sicilian count had visited in 1825, probably as a guest of his friend the writer Ippolito Pindemonte (1753-1828). The provenance of this leaf remains a mystery, but it is possible that it was at some point extracted from a kind of *Liber amicorum* belonging to Gargallo, who often quotes Dante and the *Commedia* in his writings, and in 1832 lectured on Canto xxxiii of the *Inferno*. The dedicatee of Dumas's translation – 'Madame la Princesse' – was possibly the wife of Tommaso Gargallo, Lucia Grimaldi.



J'atteignais la moitié du chemin de la vie...

Alexandre Dumas's autograph translation of the first canto of the *Inferno*

Opera. Rome, Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz, 1468.

Median folio (321x220 mm). Collation: [*¹², a-l¹⁰, m⁸, n-q¹⁰, r¹², s-v¹⁰, x⁸]. [218] of [220] leaves, lacking the first and last blanks. Text in one column, 38 lines. Types: 115R. On fol. a1r white vinestem full-border on green, blue and crimson ground within a gold burnished frame, including a seven-line illuminated initial 'M' in gold, by a contemporary Roman artist; in the bas-de-page unidentified arms within a green laurel wreath (three green bends on a gilt shield). Nine seven-line illuminated initials in text, on similar white vinestem ground with marginal extensions. Numerous painted initials alternately in red and blue. Chapter headings supplied in red ink. Late sixteenth-century vellum, over pasteboards. Smooth spine, with inked title. A very fine wide-margined copy; paper flaw on fol. *11; small wormholes in the preliminary leaves, with the occasional loss of a few single letters; fols. q2-q5 somewhat stained. On the front pastedown and flyleaves eighteenth-century annotations on Lactantius' life and works, in Latin and Italian.

Provenance: contemporary coat of arms painted on fol. a1r, similar to that used by the Fieschi family of Genoa, or the Carpegnas; Livio Ambrogio collection.

The earliest appearance of Dante in print, two *terzine* from the *Inferno* included for the first time in the extremely rare first Roman edition of Lactantius, from the second press of Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz.

The two German clerics had worked for Gutenberg in Mainz and introduced printing into Italy, in their first press in Subiaco, established in 1465. The 1468 Lactantius is nearly as rare as the first edition printed in Subiaco on 29 October 1465, and is one of the first books produced by Sweynheym and Pannartz after their move to Rome in 1467, where they set up their new press in *domo Petri de Maximo* as stated in the colophon, in the house of Pietro de' Massimi near Piazza Navona.

In the last quire of this masterpiece of early typography the text of *De Phoenice carmen*, taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was printed for the first time (the *carmen* had not been included in the Subiaco edition), including two *terzine* from the *Inferno* about the mythical Phoenix (*Inferno*, xxiv 106-111). This is the first appearance in print of verses from the *Commedia*, the entire text of which would be published just four years later in 1472. The exquisite white vinestem decoration in the present copy is in a style popular in manuscripts and incunabula produced in Rome in the late 1460s, and would thus appear to have been executed by a Roman artist, possibly working in the same atelier that often collaborated with Sweynheym and Pannartz. Owing to a mistake which occurred during the decoration of this copy the artist has painted in red a capital letter 'P' in place of the correct initial 'C' of the word 'Cossi' which opens the first *terzina* cited.



Possi [sic] per li gran saui se confessa
Chella la phenice muore e poi renasce
Che al cinq[ue] centeno ano se appressa

— *Inferno* XXIV, 106-108 —

The earliest appearance of Dante in print

De bello italico adversus Gothos gesto. Foligno, Johann Neumeister and Aemilianus de Orfinis, 1470.

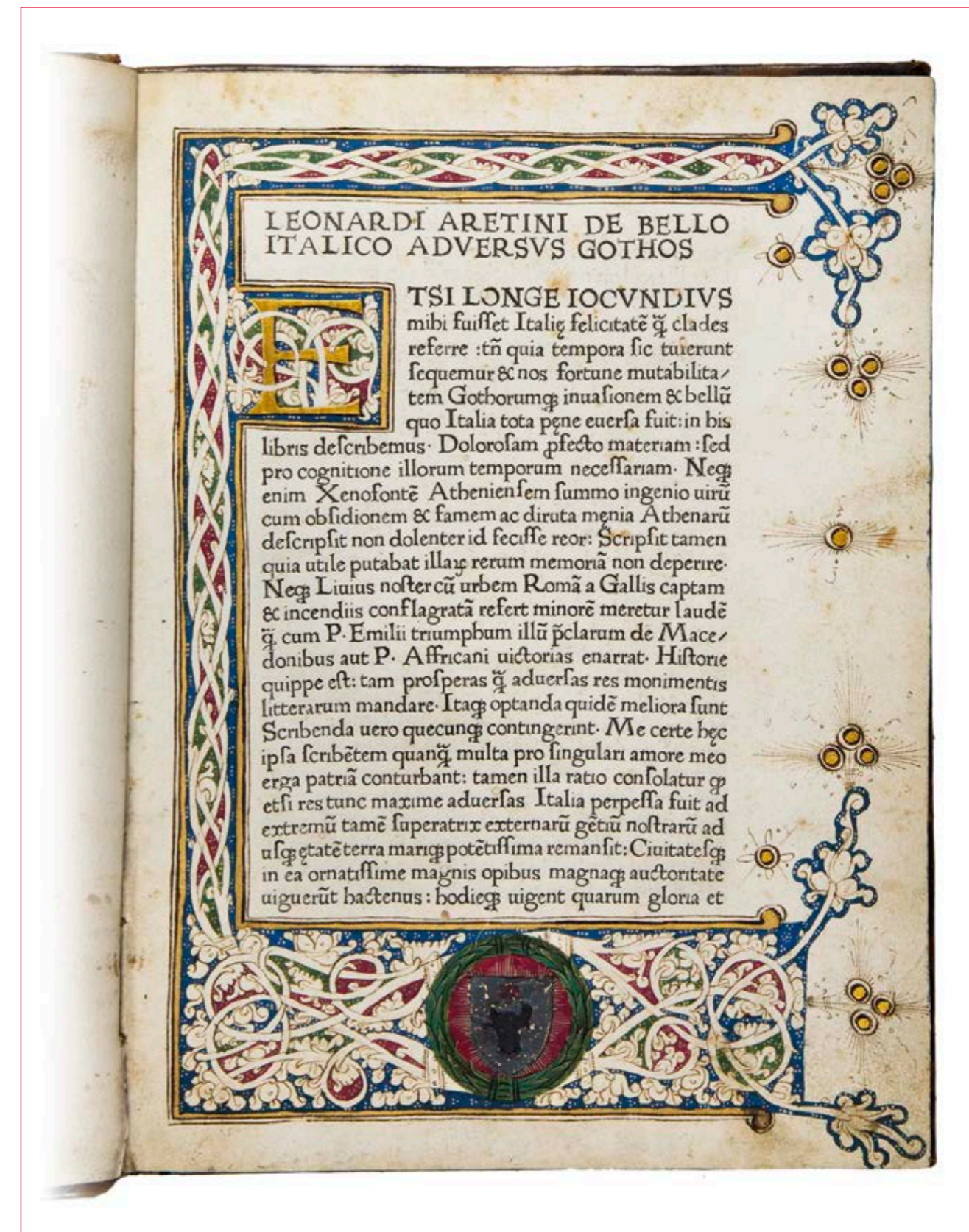
Folio (283x206 mm). Collation: [a¹², b-f⁰, g¹²]. [73] of [74] leaves, wanting the last blank. Text in one column, 29 lines. Type: 1:124R. Seventeenth-century inked foliation on the upper outer corner. On fol. [a]2r within a gold burnished frame white vinestem three-side border on green, blue and crimson ground, including a six-line illuminated initial 'E' in gold; on the lower panel the coat of arms of the Bufalini family within a laurel wreath (on silver ground a bull's head surmounted by a red flower). Four illuminated initials on similar vinestem ground with marginal extensions; one smaller initial on fol. [a]3r. Three- to six-line blank spaces for capitals. Handsome seventeenth-century mottled calf. Smooth spine, gilt tooled and divided in compartments by fillets and friezes. Title and imprint on double lettering-pieces. Pastedowns in floral design paper. Marbled blue edges. A beautiful copy on thick paper with the original illumination, the last leaf backed. A few marginal notes in a seventeenth-century hand. On the verso of the front flyleaf an early shelfmark 'C.II.X.3'.

Provenance: Bufalini family (coat of arms in the illuminated border on [a]2r); 'a.r.s.' (small ex-libris on the front pastedown); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The exceedingly rare first book printed in Foligno (Umbria), the first edition of this work traditionally ascribed to the Florentine chancellor Leonardo Bruni, and the first appearance of the fine *antiqua* type designed and cut by the goldsmith Emiliano di Piermatteo degli Orfini for the German printer Johann Neumeister, who introduced printing into the city. One of only three books printed by the two men's partnership: the *Epistolae ad familiares* by Cicero followed in about 1471, and on 11 April 1472 Dante's *Commedia* was published. The *De bello italico adversus Gothos gesto libri iv* is a narrative account of the barbarian invasions of Italy in the years 535-554; although Bruni claimed to be the author his role was actually limited to translating a work by the Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea, originally composed in Greek in the sixth century A.D.: this edition is therefore probably the first incidence of plagiarism in the history of printing, since Bruni omitted to mention Procopius as the author of the text.

As shown by the coat of arms painted on the first leaf, the earliest recorded owner of this copy was a member of the noble Bufalini family, whose residence was in Città di Castello near Foligno. As archival sources attest, a now-lost fifteenth-century codex containing Bruni's *Epistolae* once belonged to the Bufalini family, a circumstance that might suggest that the hitherto unidentified manuscript used for this edition also belonged to the same family, and that the present finely illuminated volume might have been the presentation copy offered by the grateful printers to the munificent Bufalini.

The colophon of this Foligno edition is known in at least five variants. In this copy the first line of the colophon contains the misprint 'Eulginas' instead of 'Fulginas'.



The first book printed in Foligno, two years before the *Commedia*

III. MINOR AND APOCRYPHAL WORKS

39-41

The Lyrical Works

42-43

The Convivio

44

The De vulgari eloquentia

45

The Credo



The glorious poet composed many works in his time...

— Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* —

*He also wrote some moral Odes and Sonnets. His Odes are perfectly
polished and beautiful, and full of loftly manner...*

— Leonardo Bruni, *Vita di Dante* —

39

DANTE ALIGHIERI *Canzoni. Vita Nuova.*

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO (1313-1375) *Trattatello in laude di Dante. Argomenti in terza rima su la Commedia.*

SIMONE SERDINI DA SIENA (ca. 1360 - ca. 1420) *Four poems.*

Manuscript on paper. Northern Italy, mid-fifteenth century (not before 1404).

215x145 mm. 91 leaves. Eleven quires. Actual collation: 1^s, 2¹⁰, 3¹⁰, 4¹⁰, 5¹¹, 6^s, 7¹⁰, 8¹³, 9^s, 10⁴, 11^s (the volume has recently been re-sewn with the result that it is impossible to say how many leaves are missing from some quires; some leaves have been pasted onto the recto of the following leaf and their conjugates are therefore lacking). Blanks: fols. 14v, 15, 51 and 91v. Modern foliation in pencil. Text block: 137x74 mm, one column, 29-33 lines, first line above top line. Ruled in blind and plummet. Text written in brown ink, in a semi-gothic hand. The titles of the chapters, when present, are written in Latin and rubricated in red. Contemporary half-calf over wooden boards. Spine with three raised bands, label with printed shelfmark 'P|2|1' (probably recased). In a contemporary hand the inscriptions in brown ink 'CANTILENAE' on the upper edge, 'CLARISSIMI POETAE' on the fore-edge, and 'DANTIS' on the lower one. Small round holes on the panels; clasp missing. A very well preserved manuscript, thin wormholes in the gutter of the first leaves, only in two cases slightly touching the text.

Provenance: 'Ioanes Christofarus Ceccarinus [or Ciccarinus] urbinas' (sixteenth-century ownership inscription on fols. 3v, 35r, 56v, 84v and 91v); the initial 'S.C.' (fol. 1r); Bernard M. Rosenthal's collection (on the front pastedown 'ms | 231'); Livio Ambrogio collection.

An important and unrecorded fifteenth-century manuscript containing a selection of Dante's texts compiled in about 1404 by the Sieneese poet Simone Serdini called Il Saviozzo, following the model established by Giovanni Boccaccio in the famous codex *Toledano* (Biblioteca Capitolare Toledo, ms 104.6), in which in about 1355 he copied out different works by Dante. Serdini wrote these texts in volumes destined for his various patrons; however none of Serdini's autograph manuscripts survives.

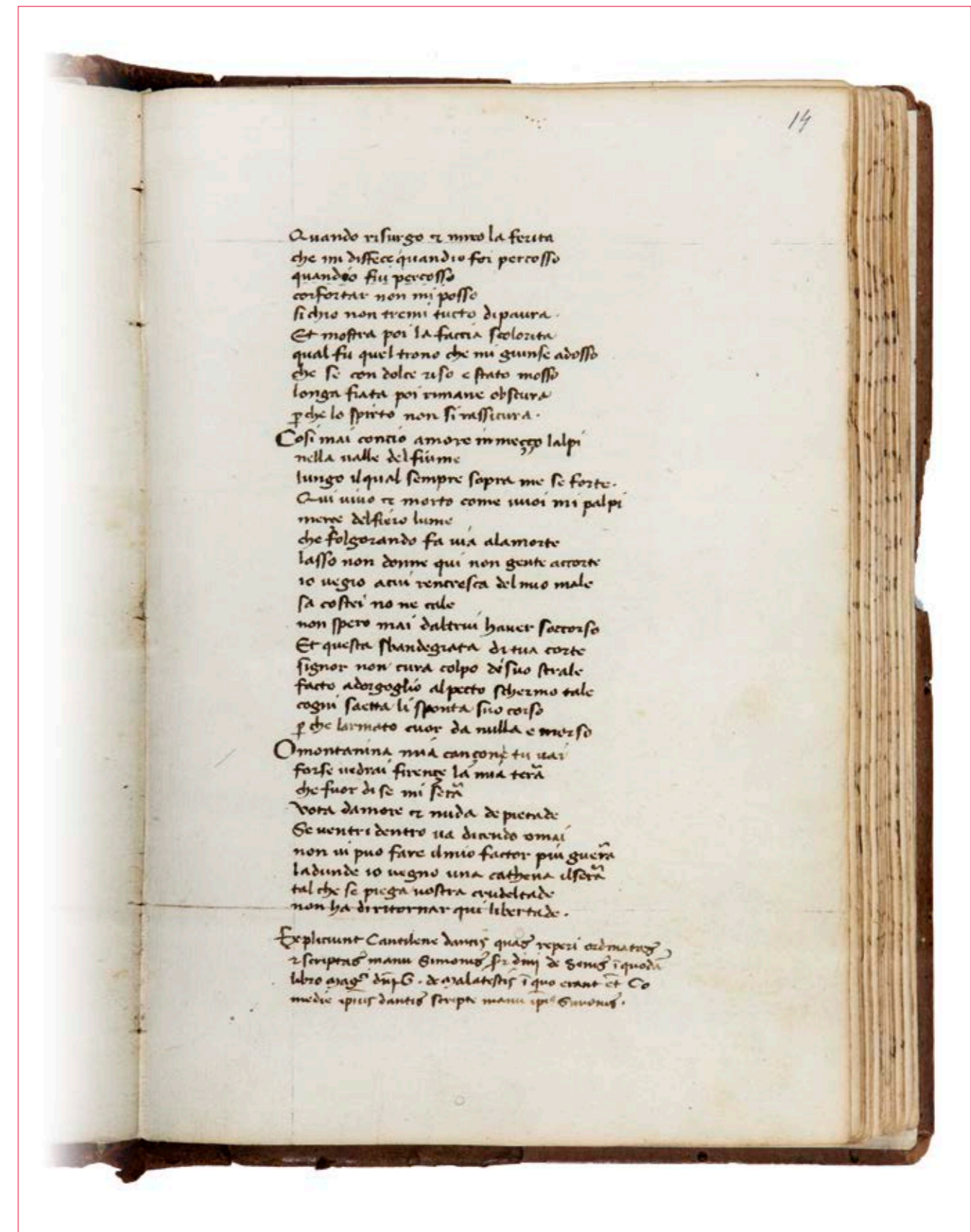
This manuscript contains most of the so-called minor poetic works of Dante: the text of eleven of the surviving fifteen *rime* or *canzoni*, albeit with some *lacunae* (*canzoni* 1, 2, 3, and 9 are missing), and the chapters III-XLII from the *Vita Nuova*, the work which celebrates Dante's love for Beatrice, in prose and verse, composed between ca. 1283 and 1293. In addition, the volume includes the summary *in terza rima* of the *Commedia* and the *Trattatello in laude di Dante* by Boccaccio, and in the last leaves four poems by Serdini himself (nos. xc, xxvi 67-169, xiii, xxv).

The colophon added by the anonymous scribe gives us some significant information:

Expliciunt Cantilene dantis quas reperi ordinatas | et scriptas manu Simonis s[er]dini de senis i[n] quoda[m] | libro mag[n]ifici d[omi]ni G. de malatestis i[n] quo erant et Co | medie ipsius dantis scripte manu ipsius Simonis.

This manuscript is indeed a nearly contemporary copy of a now-lost autograph written by Serdini for Galeazzo Malatesta, which the scribe states in the colophon to have personally seen in the Malatesta library (in Pesaro). Moreover, it is very similar in content to another manuscript which has been attributed to Serdini, put together for the captain Giovanni Colonna, now in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence (ms xc sup.136).

With this compilation and his occasional poems Serdini became an ambassador for the cult of Dante in the courts of northern and central Italy. The present manuscript is new evidence of Serdini's active role in the transmission of Dante's works in the fifteenth century.



He put together in a little volume, which he called the *Vita Nuova*, certain small things, as *Sonnets and Odes*... marvellously beautiful...

— Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* —

Saviozzo's Anthology of Dante

Sonetti e' Canzoni di diversi antichi Autori Toscani in dieci libri raccolte. Di Dante Alaghieri Libri quattro. Di M. Cino da Pistoia Libro uno. Di Guido Cavalcanti Libro uno. Di Dante da Maiano Libro uno. Di Fra Guittone d'Arezzo Libro uno. Di diverse Canzoni e' Sonetti senza nome d'autore Libro uno. Florence, Filippo Giunta's heirs, 6 July 1527.

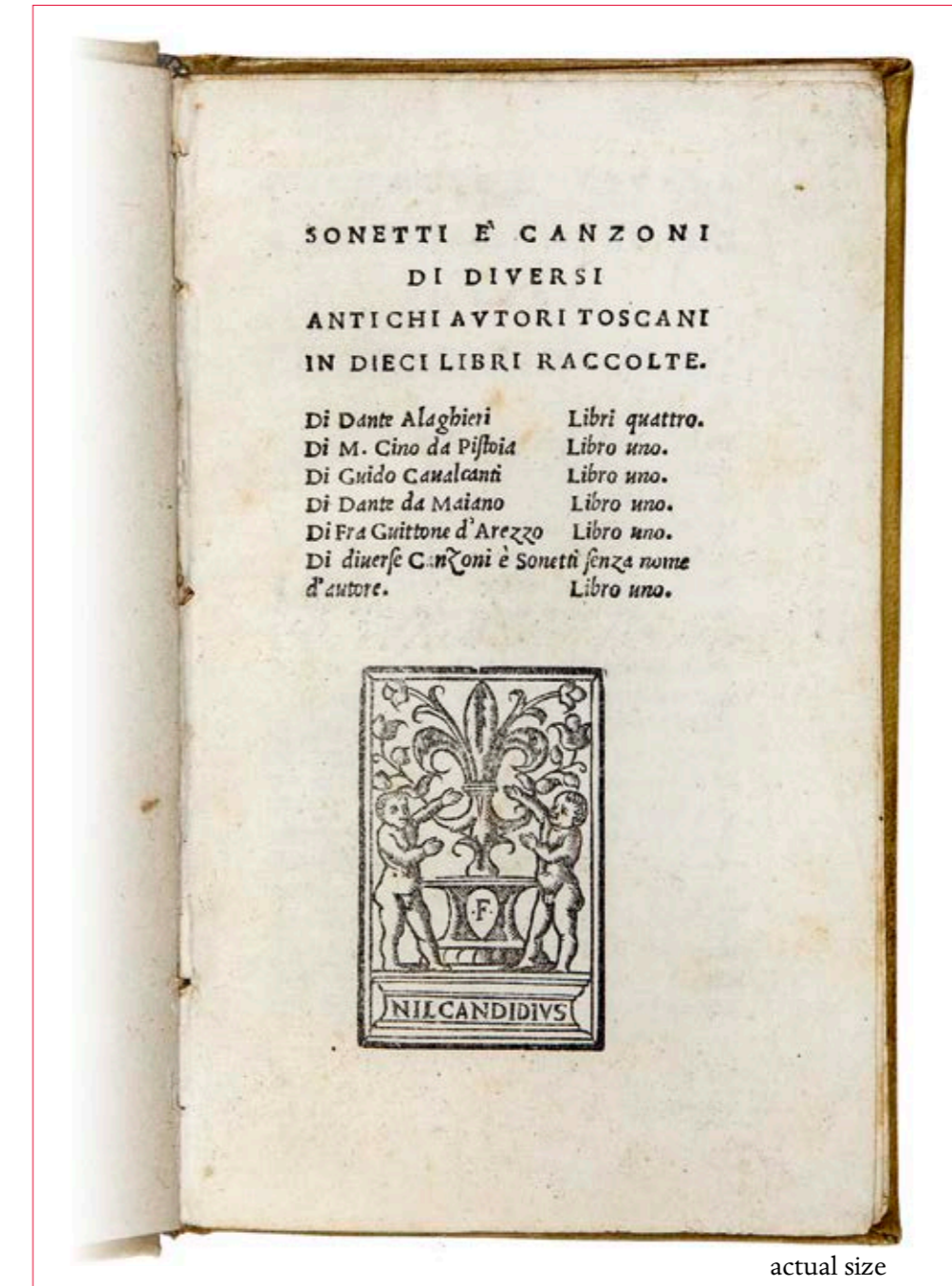
8° (161x96 mm). Collation: AA⁴, a-s⁸, t⁴. [4], 148 leaves. Italic and roman type. Woodcut printer's device on the title-page and on the verso of the last leaf. Early twentieth-century vellum, over pasteboards. Spine with title and imprint lettering in gilt on double lettering pieces. Marbled pastedowns and flyleaves. A very good copy, light marginal waterstains and foxing.

Provenance: the Italian violinist Arrigo Serato (1877-1948: ex-libris on the front pastedown); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The rare first edition of the remarkable collection known as the 'Giuntina di rime antiche', the first anthology in print which contains Dante's *canzoniere* and the lyrics composed by the poets belonging to the tradition of the *Dolce Stil Novo*. Edited by Bardo di Antonio Segni, member of a distinguished Florentine family, the anthology is an authentic monument to Italian vernacular poetry. In his prefatory letter the printer Bernardo Giunta addressed the publication to the *Amatori de le toscane rime*, i.e. admirers of Tuscan poetry, inviting them to read and study the early vernacular lyric tradition, and Dante's poems above all. The *Giuntina di rime antiche* is divided into eleven books (not ten as erroneously stated in the title), and includes the texts of about three hundred poems, most of which had never appeared in print. The compositions are grouped by metrical form, and are almost entirely by Tuscan authors, although the anthology also contains the poetical production of the Sicilian and Bolognese Schools (the former is represented by, among others, Giacomo da Lentini, Guido delle Colonne, and Pier delle Vigne, while for the latter there are poems composed by Guido Guinizelli, Onesto degli Onesti, and others).

The first four books of this edition are entirely devoted to Dante, and contain for the first time his complete poems, excluding the *Commedia* but including the poems from the *Vita Nuova*, which was only published in its complete form in 1576. The *Giuntina* poetical collection is very important from a textual point of view, and played a significant part in the reconstruction of the complex history of Dante's lyrical works. In addition to the fifteen so-called *canzoni distese*, the texts of which are mainly derived from Giovanni Boccaccio's transcriptions, the editor Bardo di Antonio Segni attributes to Dante poems which are not included in the manuscripts which have come down to us.

The edition represents the highest achievement in print of the long tradition of Florentine lyric anthologies.



4I DANTE ALIGHIERI

Vita Nuova di Dante. Proemio di Benedetto Croce. Montagnola, Officina Bodoni, July 1925.

Large 4° (343x243 mm). PRINTED ON VELLUM. VI, [2], 101, [3] pages. Printer's device in red on the verso of the last leaf. Original green morocco, covers framed within a richly gilt tooled border. Spine with five raised bands, title and imprint in gilt lettering. Double fillets on board edges, and inside *dentelles*. Gilt edges. Marbled cardboard slipcase. In perfect conditions.

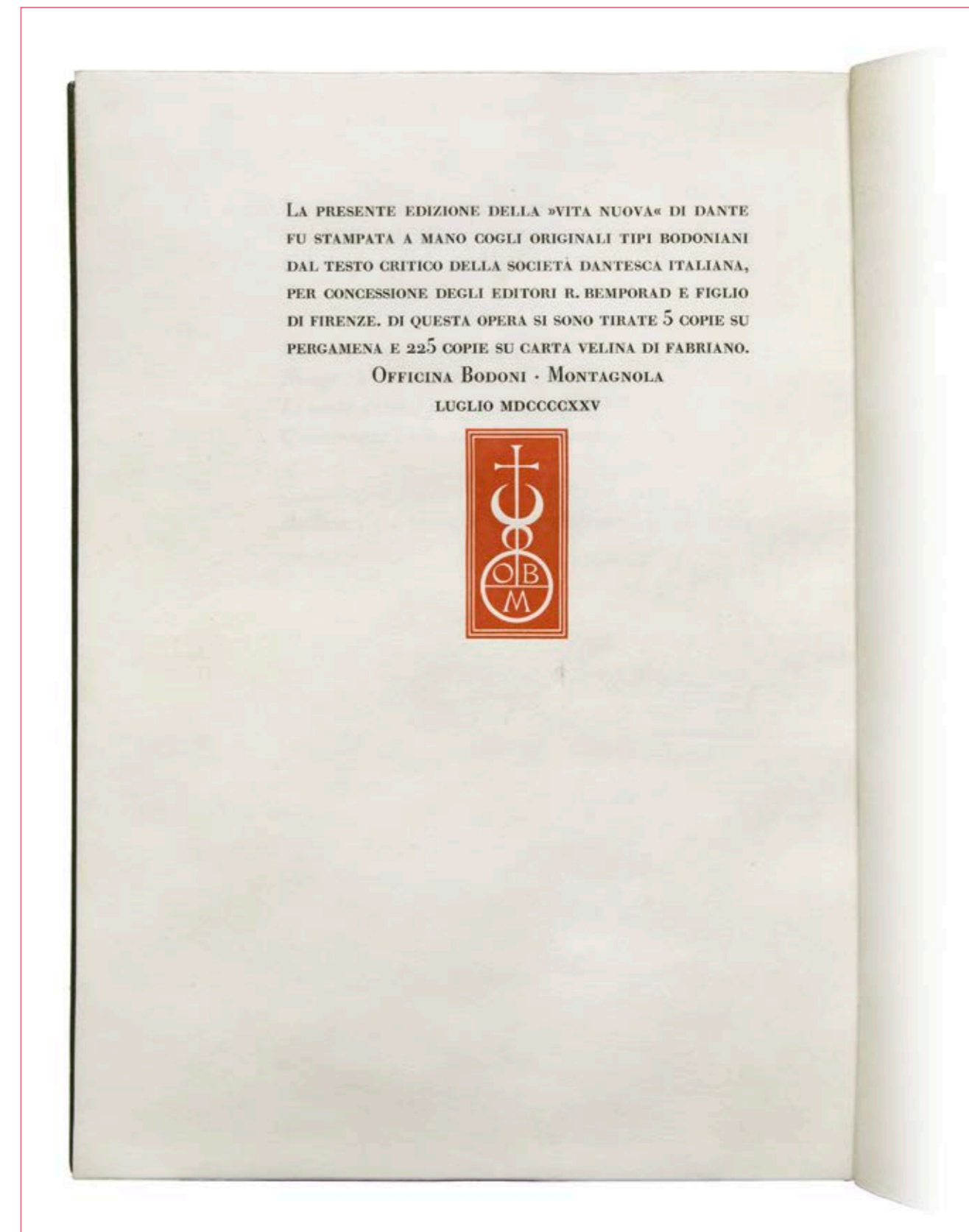
Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

One of the only five copies printed on vellum of the deluxe edition of the *Vita Nuova* published by the renowned private press founded by the printer and scholar Giovanni Mardersteig (1892-1977) in 1922 in Montagnola, near Lugano in Switzerland. The edition was issued in a total of 230 copies, 225 of which were printed on handmade Fabriano paper. The text of Dante's work is the standard scholarly one established by the Italian Dante Society and the prefatory essay was written by the leading Italian philosopher of the time (and important book collector) Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), who declares that Mardersteig's *Vita Nuova* "is more beautiful, perhaps, than any previous edition, though there have been some very lavish ones. In this edition, quite properly, the reader who is susceptible to poetry is left alone with Dante".

Starting with the name he chose for his hand press – Officina Bodoni – Mardersteig's desire to emulate the celebrated printer and typesetter Giambattista Bodoni (1740-1813) by continuing the Bodonian tradition of fine printing is clear. The text of the *Vita Nuova* is set in original Bodoni types: Mardersteig was in effect granted the privilege of casting his type from the original matrices used by his illustrious eighteenth-century predecessor, preserved in the Museo Bodoniano in Parma.

In 1927 the Officina Bodoni moved to Verona. It changed its name to Stamperia Valdonega, and is still active today as a private press producing books of exceptionally high quality. In 1936 Mardersteig began personally to design typefaces for his books; one of the most famous is the so-called *Dante* font, cut by Charles Malin and so named because it was first used in 1955 for setting the *Trattatello in laude di Dante* by Giovanni Boccaccio.

The magnificent volumes published by the Officina Bodoni – with the well-known printer's device symbolically representing, as Mardersteig himself explained, the terrestrial globe together with the emblem of the Christian religion – have always been highly praised both by printers and bibliophiles, and widely sought after and collected for the quality of the materials Mardersteig used in their making and the elegance and beauty of their design and production.



*Per prima cosa servi l'autore, cerca la soluzione migliore per rendere comprensibile il suo testo.
In secondo luogo servi il lettore, rendigli la lettura piacevole e facile.
In terzo luogo dai al tutto una veste attraente, senza essere troppo eccentrico.*

— Giovanni Mardersteig, *Una vita dedicata al libro* (1968) —

One of only five copies printed on vellum

Convivio di Dante Alighieri Fiorentino. Florence, Francesco Bonaccorsi, 20 September 1490.

4° (191x126 mm). Collation: a-k⁸, l¹⁰. [90] leaves. Text in one column, 39 lines. Type: 1:110R, 2:78R. Contemporary inked foliation in the upper outer corner (partly shaved). Blank spaces for capitals, with printed guide letters. Early twentieth-century brown morocco with red morocco inlays, over pasteboards. Covers framed by a three-fillet border in red morocco. Spine with five small raised bands, red morocco inlays in floral pattern; title and imprint in gilt lettering. Blind inside *dentelles*. A beautiful wide-margined copy, skilfully washed and pressed.

Provenance: an early stamp on the title-page ('BIBLIOT: PDD [?] FLORENTIN.'): Biblioteca Magnani, Bologna (on the title-page stamp dated 1816; copy sold); Livio Ambrogio collection.

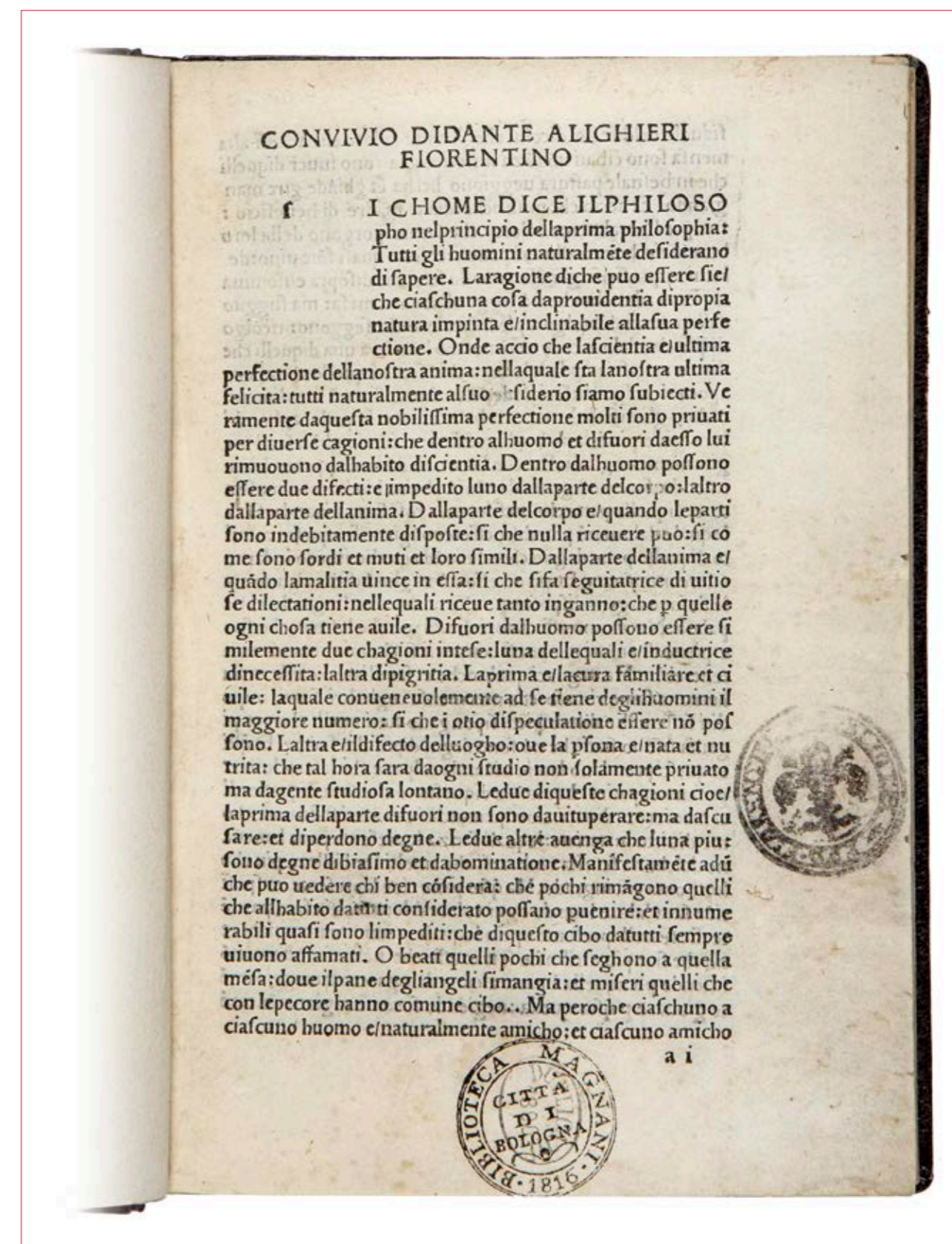
The first edition of the *Convivio*, a work alternating compositions in verse and passages in prose: a 'banquet' ('convivio') of learning, in which the poems are the 'meat' or main dish and the prose commentaries on them the accompanying 'bread'. The work was composed by Dante between 1304 and 1307 in the first years of his exile and clearly shows his desire to rebuild his 'good name' and to defend himself after – as he writes – 'the perpetual infamy' of his unmerited banishment from his native city. In the *Convivio*, which was planned to be in fourteen books called *trattati* but which was left unfinished, the Florentine poet expresses his political and ethical views and deals with many scientific and especially philosophical topics.

As Dante conceived it, the *Convivio* was to have been a sort of *summa* or encyclopedia of human knowledge. It was intended for a literate but non-Latin-reading public, a wide urban readership forming part of economic, social and political structures in rapid transformation. This explains Dante's choice of the Italian vernacular for the work, thus bestowing on it a parity of status with Latin.

Dante abandoned the composition of this ambitious work in late 1307, and only four *trattati* were actually written. Only three *canzoni* of the fourteen projected were included; their texts had been composed some time earlier, and they also had a separate manuscript circulation. These are the famous 'philosophical' poems *Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete*, *Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona*, and *Le dolci rime d'amor, ch'i 'solia*. This *editio princeps* of the *Convivio* is their earliest appearance in print.

The *Convivio* had a very late circulation. Forty-six manuscripts of the work, which all derive from a single lost codex and often contain an incorrect or incomplete version of the text, survive today; among them only two manuscripts are datable to the fourteenth century. Interest in the work increased significantly in the second half of the fifteenth century, and the *Convivio* was the first of Dante's so-called minor works to be published after the *Commedia*. For this edition the Florentine printer Francesco Bonaccorsi – whose production was largely made up of vernacular literature – used a unique and hitherto unidentified manuscript as his source.

After the Florentine *editio princeps*, the *Convivio* was published a further three times between 1521 and 1531, whereas in the seventeenth century it fell into almost complete obscurity, probably owing to Pietro Bembo's severe criticisms of the work in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525). Only in the eighteenth century was the work finally reprinted by Antonio Maria Biscioni, in the collection of Dante's *Opera omnia* published in 1723.



He also composed a Comment, in prose, in the Florentine vernacular, on three Odes (of the greater kind) of his own... this, which he called *Convivio*, is a full beautiful work and worthy of praise...

— Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* —

43 DANTE ALIGHIERI

Lo amoroso Conuiuio di Dante: con la additione: Nouamente stampato. Venice, Giovanni Antonio da Sabbio and brothers for Niccolò and Domenico dal Gesù, October 1521.

8° (154x100 mm). Collation: a⁸, a-t⁸. [8], 151, [1] leaves. Roman and gothic type. On the verso of the title-page woodcut printer's device. Large woodcut portrait of Dante as laureate poet on the title-page, with contemporary colouring. Late nineteenth-century light brown diced morocco, covers framed within border of blind fillets, decorated in gilt with small floral tools. Spine with four raised bands, title and imprint lettered in gilt. A very good copy. On the verso of the front flyleaf the note 'Rarissimo ed esempl. di stupenda conservazione'. The price notice '4-17' inked by an early hand on the title-page.

Provenance: Gustavo Camillo Galletti (1805-1868; stamp on the title-page); Baron Horace de Landau (1824-1903; ex-libris on the front pastedown; *Catalogue des livres manuscrits et imprimés composant la bibliothèque de M. Horace de Landau. Première partie*, Florence 1885, pp. 162-163); Landau-Finally collection; Bibliotheca Pagni (stamps on the title-page and at the end); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The rare first sixteenth-century edition of the *Convivio*, which from a textual point of view follows the first 1490 Florence edition with a few emendations. The Venetian edition is famous for bearing on the title-page the first portrait of Dante ever printed, in the copy presented here – which once belonged to Baron Horace de Landau – in contemporary colouring.

This large woodcut shows Dante's characteristic prominent chin and aquiline nose and severe gaze, all traditional aspects of his appearance. It also shows him wearing the usual cap and laurel wreath. In the background is a level landscape, traversed by a river, with houses in the far distance and behind them a hill. The source of this woodcut profile portrait and its designer is not known, but it is generally argued that the model might have been, with some variations and adaptations, the illuminations found in either ms Palatino 320 of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence or ms 1040 of the Biblioteca Riccardiana.

Even though no verified iconographic representation of Dante exists, it is possible to divide the images we do have into two standard depictions: one, more youthful, serene and of clear countenance, as seen in Giotto's portrait in the Florentine Bargello museum, discovered in 1840 by Seymour Kirkup, the English painter and a great admirer of Dante; the other, more mature, with heavily pronounced features and a tormented and gloomy look. The late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century tradition, in painting as well as in printed books, mainly follows this second model, in accordance with the famous physiognomical description of Dante's appearance sketched by Giovanni Boccaccio in his *Trattatello in laude di Dante*. This model was also adopted by the anonymous and skilled artist who designed the beautiful portrait for the Venetian *Amoroso Convivio* of 1521: as F. J. Mather states, the best portrait of Dante executed in the sixteenth century.



actual size

This our poet, then, was of middle height... His face was long, his nose aquiline, and his eyes rather large than small; his jaws big, and the under lip protruding beyond the upper... and his expression was ever melancholy and thoughtful...

— Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* —

The first printed portrait of Dante

DANTE ALIGHIERI *Dante. De la Volgare Eloquenzia...* Vicenza, Tolomeo Gianicolo, January 1529. (Bound with:)

GIAN GIORGIO TRISSINO (1478-1550) *Dialogo del Trissino intitulato il Castellano, nel quale si tratta della lingua italiana...* [Vicenza, Tolomeo Gianicolo, 1529]. (Bound with:)

ID. *Epistola del Trissino de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana...* Vicenza, Tolomeo Gianicolo, February 1529.

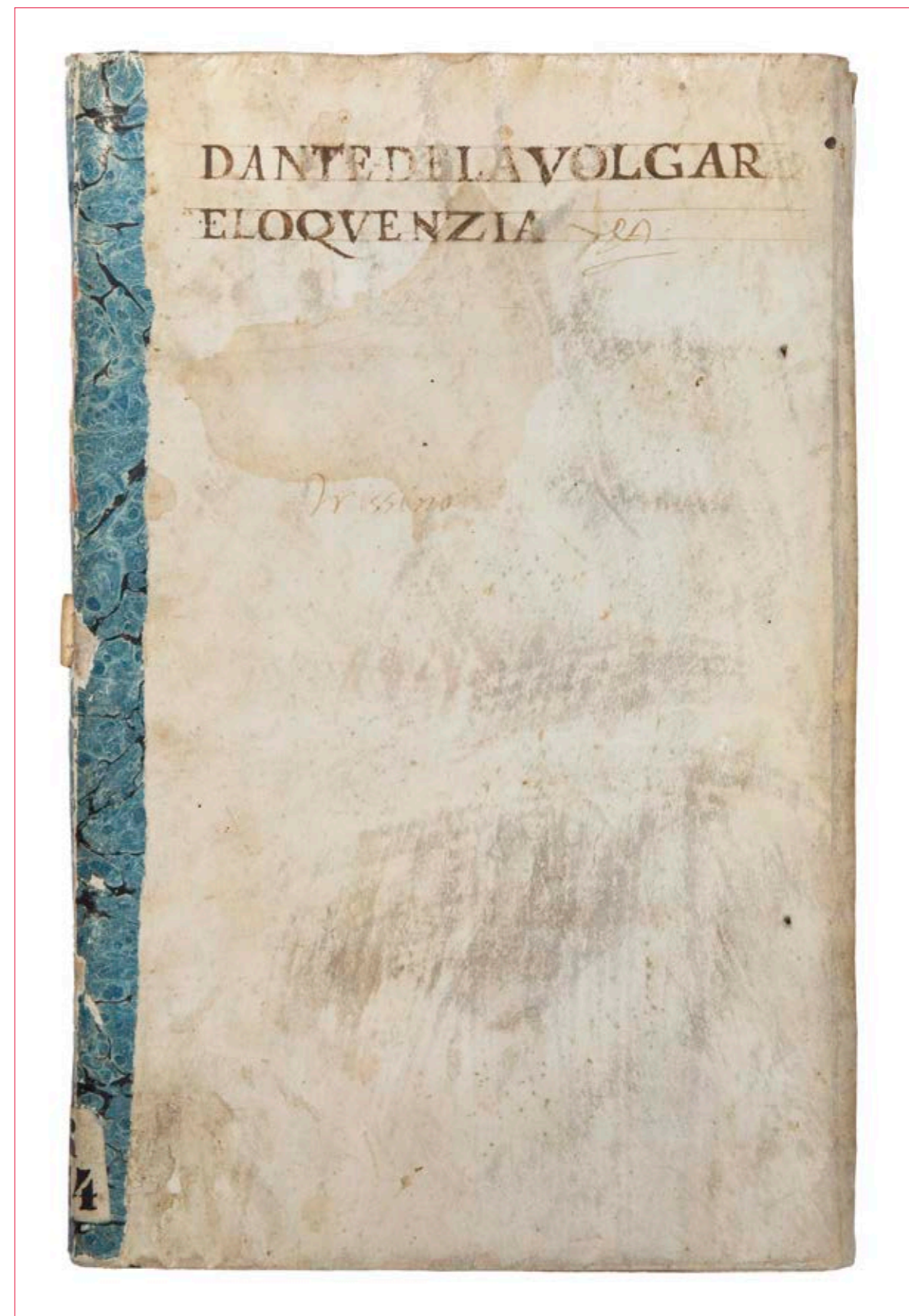
Three works in one volume, large 4° and small folio (286x182 mm). I. Collation: a-b⁸, c⁶, d⁴. [26] leaves. II. Collation: A-B⁸, C⁴. [20] leaves. III. Collation: A⁴, aa-bb⁴, cc⁶. [17], [1] leaves. Woodcut printer's device on each title-page. Italic and Greek type. Contemporary limp vellum. Smooth spine later covered with marbled paper, with title in dark ink on orange paper label; at the foot of the spine the early shelfmark 'K 274' on a small paper label. On the front cover the title 'DANTE DE LA VOLGAR ELOQVENZIA' and the name of Trissino in cursive script, both inked in an early hand. The title in capital letters also inked on the lower and upper edges. Binding partly detached, remains of the original leather bands. A fine copy. Numerous annotations and reading marks in Brevio's own hand.

Provenance: Giovanni Brevio (d. 1549 ca.; ownership inscription 'Del Brevio et amici' on the front turn-ins); Livio Ambrogio collection.

The copy – a remarkable discovery – owned and assiduously annotated by the Venetian scholar and poet Giovanni Brevio of the first edition of Trissino's Italian translation of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, the unfinished treatise which the exiled Dante wrote between 1304 and 1307 in Latin. The subject of the work is the nature of poetry in vernacular languages – above all Italian – and it attempts to defend, against their detractors, the eloquence of the vernacular languages, which in Dante's opinion potentially deserved the same dignity as Latin. Trissino edited the *De la Volgare Eloquenzia* – the original Latin text appeared only in 1577 – on the basis of a manuscript in his possession, today in the Biblioteca Trivulziana in Milan (ms 1088).

In addition to the Italian translation of the *De vulgari eloquentia* the miscellaneous volume presented here also includes – as frequently found – two treatises composed by Trissino himself: the first edition of the *Dialogo intitulato il Castellano* and the reprint of the *Epistola de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana* (first published in 1524), both printed like the Dante work in 1529 by the enigmatic Vicenza printer Tolomeo Gianicolo, and set in the handsome italic type, with the addition of the Greek vocals ε and ω, designed for him by Ludovico degli Arrighi.

Of the just four books which are known to have belonged to Giovanni Brevio – a close friend of Pietro Bembo, Giovanni Della Casa, Francesco Berni and Pietro Aretino – the only one hitherto identified with an actual physical copy is the Aldine Petrarch of 1514. The copy is today in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, and displays the same ownership inscription, 'Del Brevio et amici' found here. In this newly discovered volume Brevio has marked several words and phrases in the margins of the text of the *De la Volgare Eloquenzia*. There are autograph annotations also on the leaves which contain Trissino's *Castellano*, and there is an important and lengthy note in the margin of fol. B8r, in which Brevio refers to two passages from the *Convivio* on the Italian vernacular. This copy therefore gives a unique insight into Brevio's careful reading of Dante, and at the same time reveals the lasting influence of Dante's reflections on poetic and literary language, especially on the use of the vernacular, in the Italian Renaissance.



*Dante... in molti altri luoghi chiama la lingua volgar italica
e non fiorentina né toscana...*

— Giovanni Brevio, from his annotated copy of Dante's
De la Volgare Eloquenzia —

45

DANTE ALIGHIERI

Credo di Dante (included in:) *Colletanio de cose Nove Spirituali zoe de Sonetti, Laude, Capituli & Stantie Composte Da diversi & preclarissimi Poeti*. Venice, Niccolò Zoppino and Vincenzo di Paolo, 15 July 1521.

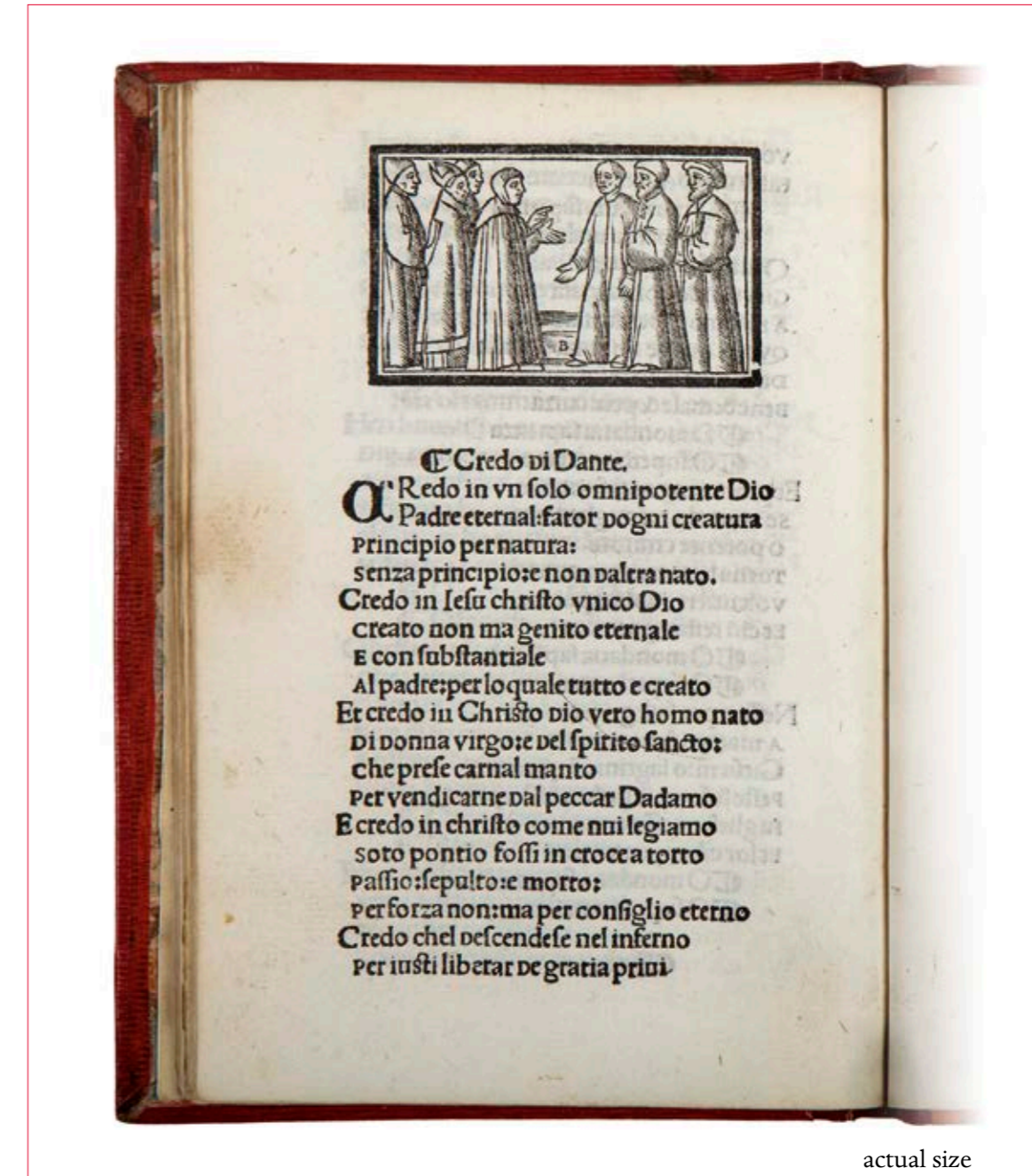
8° (152x103 mm). Collation: A-F⁸. [48] leaves. Gothic and roman type. On fol. F8r large woodcut printer's device. On the title-page woodcut depicting the Crucifixion, one full-page woodcut on fol. A1v, twenty-three woodcut vignettes in text. Twentieth-century red half-morocco, boards covered by red paper. Smooth spine, divided in compartments with gilt fillets, title and imprint in gilt lettering. Marbled pastedowns and flyleaves. A very good copy. Light stain at the gutter of the first leaves. A contemporary hand has added on the margins the names of the authors of the anonymous poems which are included in the volume.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

The exceedingly rare early edition of the vernacular religious collection first published by the Venetian printer Niccolò Zoppino in 1509. The anthology also includes the apocryphal poem in *terzine* entitled the *Credo*, a substantial paraphrase of the Apostle's Creed. The tradition says that Dante composed the *Credo* to defend himself from the accusation of heresy, with which the ecclesiastical authorities in Ravenna had charged him, on the grounds that the *Commedia* included numerous doctrinal errors. The legend of 'Dante as heretic' rapidly spread after his death, with the story of his encounter with a Franciscan inquisitor in a Ravenna church being found in numerous manuscripts: the friar is supposed to have declared that Dante would have done better to write his poem in Latin, basing it on the teachings of the Holy Church.

Even though most of the approximately forty manuscripts which include the text, as well as the printed editions which appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, name Dante as the author of the *Credo*, scholars have more recently attributed it to 'Maestro' Antonio da Ferrara, i.e. the fourteenth-century poet Antonio Beccari, who composed poems stylistically close to the *Credo*, and containing many references to Dante and his works. The *Credo di Dante* appeared for the first time in print in Jesi, between 1472 and 1475. The unique copy of this edition – bearing the title of *Credo che Dante fece quando fu accusato per eretico all'inquistoro* – is today in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. There are at least thirteen separate editions of the work published before about 1530, all of them of great rarity. The text was also included in the Venetian edition of the *Commedia* printed in 1477 by Vindelinus de Speyer, the first to include other spurious works ascribed at the time to Dante: in addition to the *Credo*, the vernacular translations of the *Ave Maria*, the *Pater noster* and the *Septem Psalmi Poenitentiales*.

In this edition published by Zoppino, the text of the *Credo* is introduced by a woodcut vignette in a popular style which depicts, in all likelihood, Dante pronouncing his formal confession of faith before the ecclesiastical authorities.



Dante the 'Heretic': a spuriously attributed work

IV. DANTE'S REPUTATION

46-47

Biographies of Dante

48-50

Dantean Literature



*Were I to save... a whole book I would save the Divine Comedy...
I think of Dante of being the writer, as being the poet...*

— Jorge Luis Borges —

Trattatello in laude di Dante.

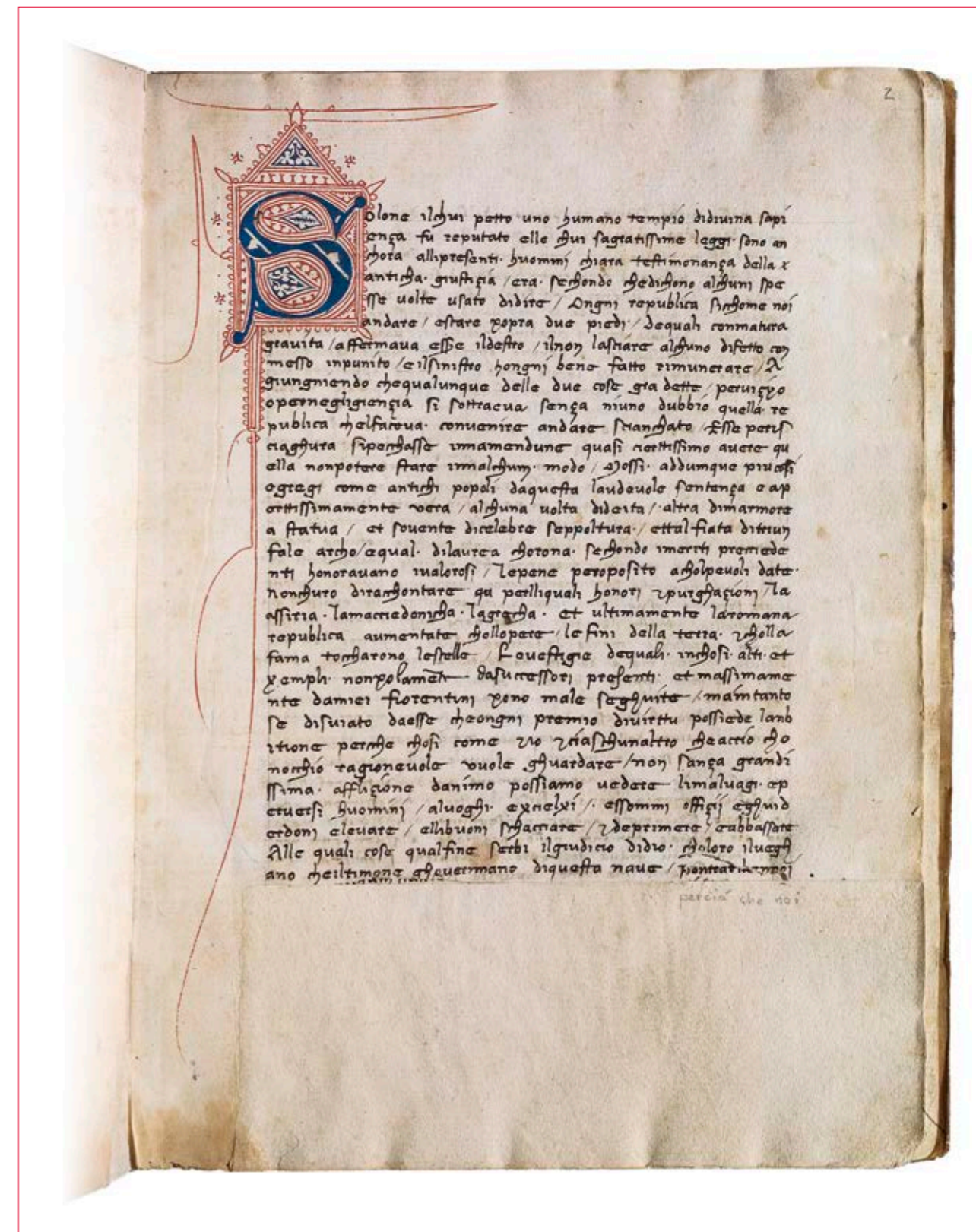
Decorated manuscript on paper. Florence, first half of the fifteenth century.

293x218 mm. II+30 leaves. COMPLETE. Three regular quires. Collation: I-3¹⁰. The first and last leaves blanks. Modern pencilled foliation in the upper right corner. Text block: 180x143 mm, one column, 34-36 lines, first line above top line. Ruled in plummet. Catchwords in the centre of the lower margin of some leaves. Text written in brown ink, a regular gothic *mercantesca* cursive. The verso of the first and the second flyleaves in cursive in a sixteenth-century hand, containing three exorcism prayers and the Benediction of animals. Thirty-one four-line initials alternately of red or blue with contrast flourishing; on fol. 1r a six-line blue initial with gabled frame and ground of red and blue pen-work. Contemporary brown calf over wooden boards, diagonally ruled in blind, five brass bosses on the upper and lower covers. Spine with three raised bands, vellum pastedowns. Upper cover stained, some rubbing and worming, upper joint split at the foot, lacking clasps. Modern black morocco box. A very well preserved manuscript, repair to the lower margin of fol. 2 affecting a few letters. A tear at the lower margin of fol. 25, insignificant old repair in the gutter of fol. 26. Edges darkened. On fol. 1r the inked note 'Boccaccio. Vita di Dante Alighieri (stampata più volte)', possibly in a nineteenth-century hand, and the later pencilled annotation 'Boccaccio Giovanni s. XIV'.

Provenance: Giannalisa Feltrinelli (1903-1981; ex-libris on the front pastedown; Christie's, *The Giannalisa Feltrinelli Library. Part II. Italian Renaissance Manuscripts and Autograph Letters*, London, 3 December 1997, lot 139); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A very fine manuscript, in its original binding, containing the first full-length biography of Dante, the first biographical treatment of any 'modern' author, an innovative work written in the vernacular that had a lasting influence on the genre of the literary *vita*. In his biography Boccaccio combines motifs from both classical and medieval traditions, following the model of the *Vitae Vergili* circulating in the Middle Ages, and in particular those by Donatus and Servius, as a way of identifying Dante as the new Virgil. He describes Dante's ancestry, his studies, the relationships with Beatrice and Gemma Donati, his political career and exile, his death, and concludes with an invective against the ungrateful city of Florence. Boccaccio's physiognomical description of Dante's appearance is famous. The chronology of the biographical information which he gives is somewhat uncertain, and there are numerous legendary details. Yet the work is in effect a 'verbal monument' raised in homage to Dante, responsible in Boccaccio's opinion for the rebirth of poetry in Italy; at the same time the text can be seen as a political attack on Florence for having sent this outstanding native into exile. The composition of the work seems to have been stimulated by Boccaccio's first meeting with Petrarch when the latter visited Florence in 1350. In March 1351 Boccaccio in his turn paid Petrarch a visit in Padua, where the two writers discussed the value of Dante's work. Having learned that Petrarch did not possess a copy of the *Commedia*, Boccaccio sent him, between 1351 and 1353, the work (today in the Vatican Library, ms Vat. Lat. 3199). These are the circumstances in which Boccaccio's plan to write a biography of Dante in the vernacular, recounting the life of the supreme Florentine poet.

Of the work three different redactions are known, dated 1351-1355, early 1360s, and early 1370s. This manuscript belongs to the group containing the first and longer redaction, derived from the original autograph preserved in the Biblioteca Capitolare in Toledo (ms Zelada 104.6). Of this first version about fifty manuscripts are recorded, the majority of which were copied in Florence over the course of the fifteenth century.



*I have briefly set forth what was the origin, what the studies,
what the life and habits, and what the works of that glorious man
and most illustrious poet Dante Alighieri...*

— Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* —

Vita di Danthe Per Leonardo Aretino.

Manuscript on paper, from a miscellaneous codex. Florence, late fifteenth-early sixteenth centuries.

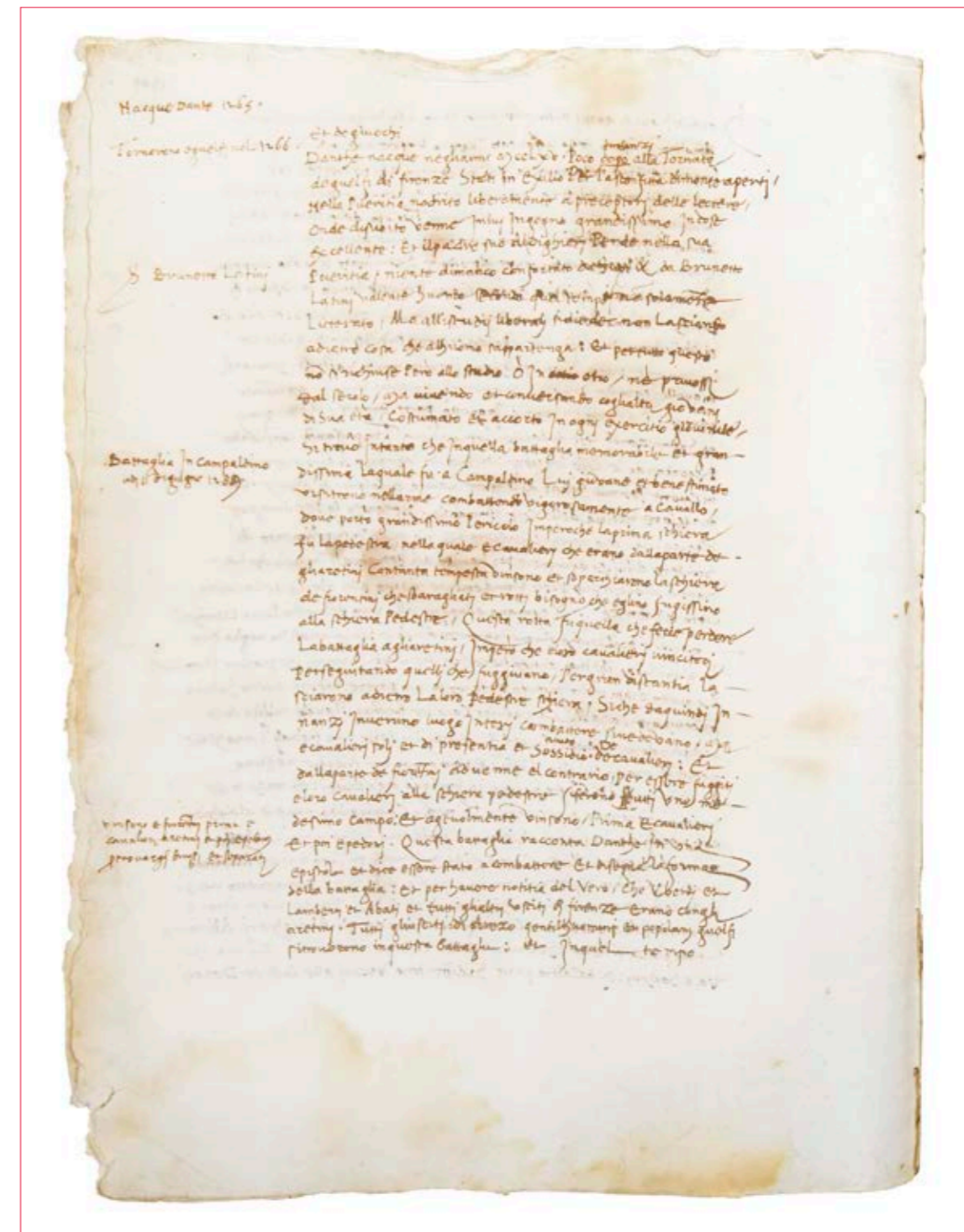
295x220 mm. [10] leaves, a portion from a miscellaneous codex, containing the complete text of Bruni's *Vita di Dante*. Collation: one quire of ten leaves. Blanks: fols. 129v, 136, 137 and 138. In the upper margin contemporary foliation in the hand of the same scribe who copied the text, and modern foliation numbering from fol. 129 to fol. 138. Text block: 225x110 mm, one column, 35-38 lines. Unruled. Text written in light brown ink, in Italian humanist cursive by Francesco Baroncini. Disbound in grey wrappers, remains of the original sewings; laid in a polished black morocco box, title gilt lettered on spine. Contemporary marginal notes, a few annotations on the verso of the last leaf, calculating the Biblical birth and death dates of the patriarch Abraham.

Provenance: Charles Thomas-Stanford (1858-1932); the well-known bookseller and bibliophile Giuseppe Martini (1870-1944); H. P. Kraus, *Catalogue 189. Part I, Classics and Humanism. Part II, Annotated Books & Manuscripts*, New York 1992, no. 22; Livio Ambrogio collection.

The manuscript, in Francesco Baroncini's own hand, of one of the most sophisticated of Renaissance biographies, the *Vita* of Dante composed – together with the *Vita* of Petrarch – in 1436 by the chancellor of the Florentine Republic Leonardo Bruni, and written on the model of Plutarch's *Vitae*. Bruni had carefully read Boccaccio's *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, and comments on numerous details of this earlier work, criticizing its hagiographical approach and, in his own text, choosing to focus on the historical and political aspects of Dante's life: Bruni presents the poet as the ideal Florentine citizen, and the *Vita* can be read as an explicit manifesto for Bruni's own civic humanism.

The present manuscript was copied between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth by the Florentine Francesco Baroncini, a close collaborator of Bartolomeo Fonzio, whose scribal circle produced manuscripts for Matthias Corvinus of Hungary and Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino. There appear to be some connections between the miscellaneous codex volume from which this present quire has been extracted and the manuscript *Ashburnham 567* in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence, neither of which contain Bruni's *Life of Petrarch*. In the Laurenziana codex the *Vita di Dante* directly precedes the text of the play *La rappresentazione di Abram e di Isaac* by Feo Belcari (1410-1484) and it is therefore perhaps significant that on the final leaf of the present manuscript there are notes in a contemporary hand on the birth and death dates of Abraham.

A manuscript of the greatest importance both for the history of Florentine cursive handwriting, and the critical reputation of the Italian vernacular tradition, showing how humanists read Dante.



So it came into my heart to write another life of Dante for my diversion... Nor do I this in disparagement of Boccaccio, but that my work may be a supplement to his...

— Leonardo Bruni, *Vita di Dante* —

Baroncini's autograph manuscript of Bruni's *Vita di Danthe*

PAOLO ATTAVANTI (ca. 1445-1499)

Quadragesimale de reditu peccatoris ad Deum. Milan, Leonardus Pachel and Uldericus Scinzenzeler, 10 September 1479.

Chancery folio (295x220 mm). Collation: [*]², a-z⁸, aa-nn⁸, oo⁶. [296] leaves. Text in two columns, 49 lines. Type: 2:79G. Blank space for capitals, with printed guide letters. Woodcut portrait of the author on fol. [*]1v. Two Lombard initials supplied in blue with red penwork decoration (fols. a3r and n8v), two plain blue initials on fol. q5v, yellow capital strokes on a few leaves only. Sixteenth-century manuscript foliation. Contemporary Italian limp vellum wallet binding: a back cover extended to form an overlapping fore-edge flap, six large stars of David made of brown leather thongs sewn onto the outer fore-corners of covers and top and bottom of flap, toggle of rolled leather attached to flap by twisted thong (the toggle and its attachment skilfully restored), fastening onto twisted tawed leather loop sewn through spine. Title written in ink in a contemporary hand on the upper and rear covers; many deckle edges preserved. In a folding cloth case with title in gilt on a lettering-piece. Outstanding copy still in its original condition. Old restoration to the upper outer corner of the first leaf, upper outer corners of the first few leaves softened by the rubbing of the brown leather thongs, marginal dampstain in last few quires, last leaf slightly stained, fols. nn2, nn7, nn8 and oo1 lightly browned. Manuscript chapter headings supplied in a neat contemporary hand in the upper margins of fols. a3-n8; contemporary manuscript entry in a different hand added to table on fol. *2r; a few contemporary *marginalia* and underlinings in both hands, a lengthy note on fols. e8v-f1r.

Provenance: 'LCA' (pencilled initials on the front pastedown); Nicholas Rauch, *Manuscripts, incunables, XVI-XIX siècle, livres modernes*, Genève, 16-18 May 1960, lot 75; Lathrop C. Harper, *Catalogue 25. Rare Books, Manuscripts and Fine Bindings*, New York 1964, no. 53; Bibliothek Otto Schäfer Schweinfurt (Sotheby's, *The Collection of Otto Schäfer*, New York, 8 December 1994, lot 142) to Bernard Quaritch; Helmut N. Friedlaender (1913-2008; ex-libris on the front pastedown; Christie's, *The Helmut N. Friedlaender Library*, New York, 23 April 2001, lot 90); Livio Ambrogio collection.

A truly remarkable copy, in its original portfolio binding, of the first and only edition of this collection of thirty-eight Lenten sermons by the well-known Florentine Servite Paolo Attavanti (recorded also as Paulus Florentinus), a contemporary of Savonarola highly praised by Marsilio Ficino for his erudition and eloquence.

The work also goes under the title of *Quadragesimale Dantesco*, because no fewer than 1254 verses of the *Commedia* are cited, accompanied by Attavanti's commentary. The quotations in the text are taken from the *Nidobeatina* edition of 1478, also published in Milan. The volume includes at the beginning the woodcut profile portrait of a cleric writing at his desk within an architectural border, identified as Attavanti by the initials at the bottom 'M.P.F.O.S.S.' (i.e. *Magister Paulus Florentinus Ordinis Sancti Spiritus*) and by the patriarchal cross on his robe and above the lintel. This woodcut is considered to be the first portrait of an author in a printed book, and one of the finest Milanese achievements in woodcut. The block was first used in the edition of the *Breviarium totius juris canonici* by Attavanti, published by the German printers Scinzenzeler and Pachel on 28 August 1479, a few weeks before the appearance of the *Quadragesimale*.



The first and only edition of the *Quadragesimale Dantesco*, bound in its contemporary wallet binding

Signed autograph letter to Francesco Ridolfi, on the *Commedia* and its commentators.
Florence, 19 May 1665.

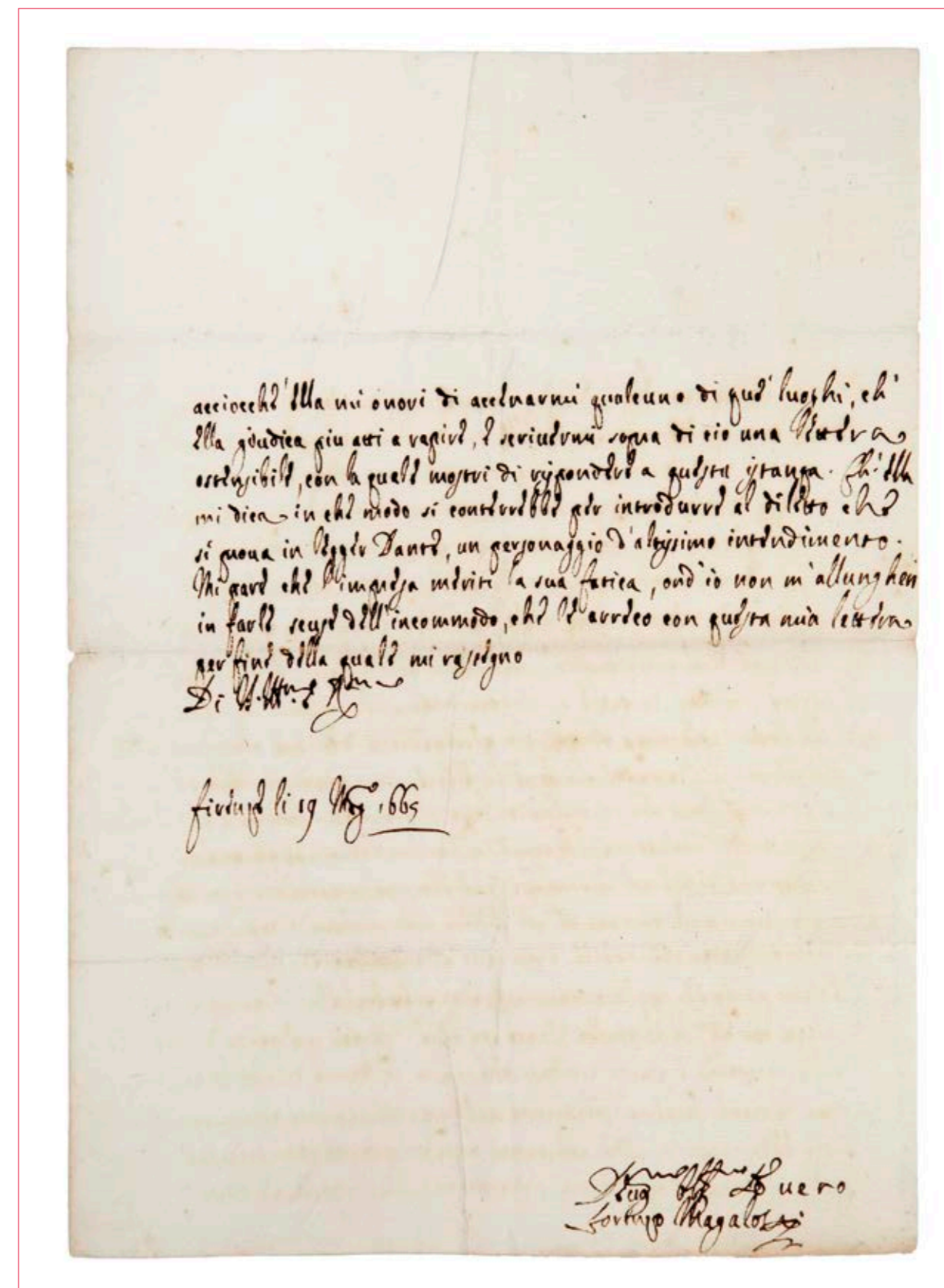
Two paper leaves folded (268x191 mm). 96 lines on five pages, fols. 3v and 4r blanks. Address panel on the lower margin of the recto of the first leaf, 'Sig. F. Ridolfi Roma', in Magalotti's own hand. On fol. 4v the note 'Sr. Lorenzo Magalotti Firenze 19 Maggio 1665.', in a seventeenth-century hand.

Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

An unpublished letter written in 1665 by the Florentine scientist, poet, diplomat and secretary of the Accademia del Cimento Lorenzo Magalotti, which documents his great interest in Dante's poetry. In the same year Magalotti had undertaken the composition of a commentary upon the *Commedia*, which was never completed; it finishes after Canto v of the *Inferno*, and was published only in 1819.

The addressee was his friend and mentor Francesco Ridolfi, a member of the Accademia della Crusca who was at the time resident in Rome. Ridolfi, together with the Roman scholar Ottavio Falconieri, encouraged Magalotti's Dante project, discussing with him many points of detail in a series of letters only partly published in the collection of Magalotti's *Lettere familiari* (1769). In the present letter Magalotti discusses the possible interpretation of some verses from the *Purgatorio*, and also mentions the cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici's desire to read the *Commedia*, "il Sig. Principe di Toscana vorrebbe a tutti i patti innamorarsi di Dante, ma non ne trova la via". Magalotti asks for Ridolfi's advice on the best way to introduce this leading figure at the Florentine court and "un tant'alto protettore" – Leopoldo de' Medici had founded in 1657 the Accademia del Cimento and was also Magalotti's patron – to the pleasure of reading Dante, perhaps with a commentary to guide him, which would provide clear explanations of the most difficult passages: in "tanta faragine di commentatori" Magalotti refers to the well-known commentaries on the *Commedia* composed by Cristoforo Landino, Alessandro Vellutello, and Bernardino Daniello. This request occasioned a famous reply from Ridolfi – included in the *Lettere familiari* – in which he surveys the exegetical tradition on the *Commedia*. According to Ridolfi none of the early commentators can be considered perfect or exhaustive: "l'ottimo però interprete è Dante a se medesimo" (i.e. "the best interpreter of Dante is Dante himself").

This hitherto unrecorded letter thus sheds important new light on the continuing interest in Dante in seventeenth-century Florentine culture, notwithstanding the relative absence of printed editions of the poem during this century (only three were published and none in Florence).



*Ella mi dica in che modo si condurrebbe per introdurre al diletto
che si prova in legger Dante...*

— Lorenzo Magalotti to Francesco Ridolfi —

La última sonrisa de Beatriz.

Autograph manuscript. Buenos Aires, ca. 1948.

Six pieces of paper, of varying sizes, detached from an autograph square-ruled notebook (one entire leaf and five cuttings). COMPLETE. I. 57x166 mm, heading and 6 lines; II. 106x166 mm, 16 lines; III. 76x166 mm, 10 lines; IV. 56x166 mm, 6 lines; V. 123x166 mm, 20 lines; VI. 213x166 mm, 34 lines. The verso of all six pieces of paper blank. Text written in blue ink; the foliation is also in Borges's hand. Numerous corrections, some words and phrases deleted in ink. Traces of a paper clip on the upper margin of the first slip.

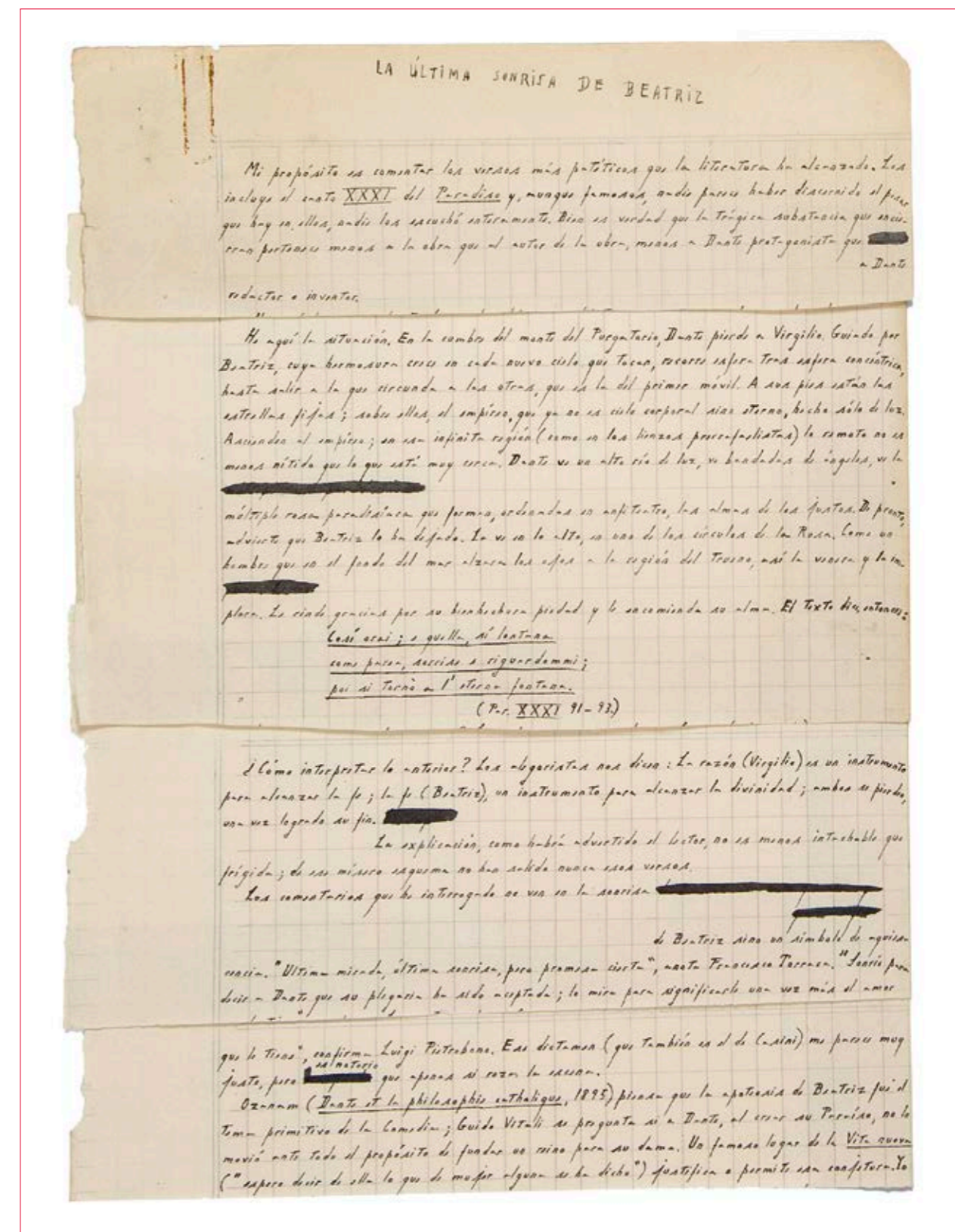
Provenance: Livio Ambrogio collection.

The original autograph text, with numerous corrections and crossings-out, of the essay *La última sonrisa de Beatriz* (*Beatrice's Last Smile*), from one of the square-ruled notebooks which Borges commonly used to draft his literary works and articles. The first slip of paper bears, in his neat and regular handwriting, the title of the essay, in which the Argentinian writer comments on the verses of the *Paradiso* describing Beatrice smiling to Dante from one of the circles of the mystical rose, and then turning away forever (*Paradiso*, xxxi 91-93):

*Così orai; e quella, sí lontana
Come pareva, sorrise, et riguardommi;
Poi si tornò a l'eterna fontana.*

Borges declares that these are “los versos más patéticos que la literatura ha alcanzado” (“the most moving lines literature has achieved”), symbolising the spiritual beauty of Beatrice, Dante's lost love. The essay was composed around 1948 and first published only in 1982 in the collection *Nueve ensayos dantescos*; the corrections, changes and characteristic crossings-out visible in this draft reveal the meticulous revision that the text underwent. Borges began to read the *Commedia* systematically in the late 1930s, on his daily tram journey to the National Library in Buenos Aires, where he was employed. The inexhaustible textual imagery of Dante's poem fascinated him. The collection of essays *Siete noches* (1980) opens with a chapter on the *Commedia*, and echoes of this reading can be found in his literary writings: in *El Aleph* (1949), one of Borges's most celebrated stories, the figure of the beloved Beatriz Viterbo is clearly inspired by Dante's muse, the forever unreachable Beatrice Portinari.

The present manuscript provides significant autograph evidence for Borges's methods of working and, as an evidently late draft of the essay, his final revisions of his most famous tribute to Dante.



The autograph manuscript of Borges's most famous tribute to Dante

V. SELECT DANTEAN
BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND
INDEX OF
PROVENANCES



SELECT DANTEAN BIBLIOGRAPHY

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