

ABSTRACTS

VALTER BOGGIONE, *La custodia, la vera libertà, la colpa e la pena. Ancora sul Catone dantesco*

Reconstructing the references made in *Purgatorio* to Lucan and to Dante's other works, this article aims to better define the role of Cato in the first Canto. Cato is not merely the guardian of ante-Purgatory; his role is also to oversee the entire process of purification which takes place in the second realm of the afterlife, by virtue of his being an innocent victim who has sacrificed himself for all of humanity. The freedom he speaks of is not political in nature, or if so, only to the extent in which it foreshadows a much greater one, the freedom from sin; nor was his suicide at Utica an attempt to gain freedom (a condition which for this Stoic does not depend on external circumstances), but rather to bear witness to the merits of freedom and to make it possible for others. In this sense, his act can be likened to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Dante chooses to save this ancient hero because of the highly noble intentions driving him; however, given the utter contempt for suicide in Christian theology, Dante cannot overlook the fact that Cato committed a serious sin that must be expiated. The harsh penance imposed upon the only suicide victim to be granted salvation is to remain in ante-Purgatory until the end of time, serving as a guide for all the purging souls.

PAUL LARIVAILLE, «*Istorie fiorentine*». *Cosimo de' Medici nell'ora del ripilogo*

Cosimo de' Medici is the central figure in Machiavelli's *Istorie fiorentine*, and from the initial drafts to the final version of the work the author modified his view of the founder of the Medici dynasty. Cosimo posed some fundamental problems for Machiavelli who, commissioned by Clement VII to write the *Istorie*, found himself having to praise the very man who was seeking to transform the republic into a 'civil principedom'. For this reason, Machiavelli elected at one point to give voice to adversaries who presented Cosimo as a ruthless cynic, while at another to present Cosimo as a prince incapable of controlling his own followers; in this way, the blame was never to fall on Cosimo himself but on his men. The latter interpretation is the one which was ultimately embraced by Machiavelli, who in fact shifted to pro-Medici sentiments in his later years.

FRANCO PIPERNO, *Fonti musicali e scritture tassiane*

Musical madrigals of the 16th century have often played an important role in the field of poetic writing, documenting early or transitory stages in

their textual development. Such is the case with two sonnets by Tasso, *Negro era intorno e bianche falde il cielo* (237) and *Facelle son d'immortal luce ardenti* (558), both of which were set to music by Leonard Meldert in circa 1574 and appeared in print in 1578, a few years before they were published in separate volumes of Tasso's collected poems (1579 and 1581 respectively). In addition to offering some insight into the evolution of his early poetic writing, these two texts clarify certain aspects of Tasso's life, in particular his relationship with the Modenese poet Ersilia Cortese.

LAURA PAOLINO, *Lorenzo Da Ponte editore a Londra*

During his stay in London from 1792 to 1805, the Venetian writer Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838) worked not only as an Italian opera librettist at King's Theatre, but also rather consistently as a printer, publishing various editions of Italian classics, including Giambattista Casti's epic poem *Gli animali parlanti*. Though filled with imprecisions and anachronisms, Da Ponte's autobiography mentions that for a certain period of time his partner in the printing business was Leonardo Nardini (1762-1834), a man of letters and the future head of the Stamperia Reale in Milan. Using this account from Da Ponte's *Memorie* as a springboard for a thorough bibliographical study of the works published by Nardini and Da Ponte, this article attempts to reconstruct the formation of their presumed partnership and its subsequent developments, highlighting Da Ponte's specific strategies of self-promotion which account for the reticence, contradictions and ambiguities present in his version of the events.

ALESSANDRA DI RICCO, *I canzonieri «nazionali» prima dell'Unità*

This article reconstructs the history and evolution of patriotic poetry anthologies surfacing between 1799 and 1855, i.e. from the end of the Jacobin triennium to the domination of Piedmontese moderates in the process of building the nation-state. The first anthology of this kind was Storno Bolognini's *Raccolta di poesie repubblicane de' più celebri autori viventi* and the last one was *La Patria*, an unsigned Turinese compilation created under the aegis of Terenzio Mamiani. The study aims primarily to examine the canon defined by the collections of Risorgimento poetry, examining the transformations it underwent and its ties with the Italian literary tradition, in particular with the works contained in the most widely-used school anthologies. Special focus is directed at the various contexts and figures overseeing the creation of the patriotic poetry anthologies and the political overtones evident in them.