

Dante and Milton

Dante and Milton:

Envisioned Visionaries

Edited by

Christoph Singer and Christoph Lehner

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Dante and Milton:
Envisioned Visionaries

Edited by Christoph Singer and Christoph Lehner

This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2016 by Christoph Singer, Christoph Lehner and
contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without
the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-8575-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8575-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Envisioning Visionaries: The Cultural Construction of Dante and Milton <i>Christoph Lehner and Christoph Singer</i> | |
| Chapter One..... | 15 |
| “Swaggering in the fore-top of the State”: Milton, the Prelates and the Protestant Dante, from <i>Lycidas</i> to <i>Of Reformation</i> <i>Nick Havely</i> | |
| Chapter Two | 41 |
| On His Blindness: Milton’s Reputation in the Nineteenth Century <i>Andrew Sanders</i> | |
| Chapter Three | 53 |
| Milton and the Question of National Identity: Political Reality and Ideal Conceptions <i>Eliza Richter</i> | |
| Chapter Four..... | 67 |
| Milton in Material Culture <i>Christoph Ehland</i> | |
| Chapter Five | 85 |
| “Unteaches conquer’d Nations to Rebel, By Singing how their Stubborn Parents fell”: Exploring and Exporting John Milton in the Long Eighteenth Century <i>Anne-Julia Zwierlein</i> | |
| Chapter Six..... | 107 |
| “Heretics in the Truth”: Miltonic Echoes in Edward Young’s <i>Conjectures on Original Composition</i> <i>Christoph Singer</i> | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter Seven..... | 123 |
| “With Fry Innumerable Swarm”: Reading Milton as Intertext in Nineteenth-Century Popular Science <i>Alison E. Martin</i> | |
| Chapter Eight..... | 147 |
| Envisioning the Visionary: Poetic Quality and Allegorical Language in T.S. Eliot’s Dante Criticism <i>Christoph Lehner</i> | |
| Chapter Nine..... | 163 |
| “Denti Alligator” and “the humours of Milltown”: The Canonical Comedy of James Joyce’s <i>Finnegans Wake</i> <i>Zachary Leszek Kell</i> | |
| Chapter Ten | 181 |
| From Fallen Angel to Dark Lord: Traces of Dante and Milton in the Harry Potter Series <i>Elizabeth E. J. Gilbert</i> | |
| Contributors..... | 203 |

INTRODUCTION

ENVISIONED VISIONARIES: THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF DANTE AND MILTON

CHRISTOPH LEHNER AND CHRISTOPH SINGER

In Dante's *Inferno*, Dante and Virgil encounter the giant Antaeus in the last circle of Hell. Antaeus agrees to help them proceed their journey, setting the two poets down into Cocytus. In return, the poets promise, Dante will increase Antaeus' fame on earth. This scene, famously illustrated by William Blake in 1826, features prominently on the cover of this volume and perfectly underlines the role literary criticism plays in the process of cultural remembrance: by bridging the—historical, cultural, political—gap between those canonical writers and our times, by “setting their works down” in a different socio-cultural environment, such an Antaeuean moment becomes a vital actualisation of cultural objectivations and engrains these writers deeply in our cultural memory.

Looking back the influence between Dante and Blake may as well be considered reciprocal, in the sense that the perception of both was increased by Blake's illustrations. Stephen Prickett and Adina Ciugureanu point out that, “one might even argue that more than any other factor, it was Blake's discovery of Dante that, within a hundred years of his death, was to turn him from an eccentric unknown on the very fringes of the literary world into an iconic British and international artist.” (2015, 8) In a sense Antaeus becomes a place-holder for the artist, the critic or the reader alike, all of which are essential in bridging the gap between different periods and cultures.

This metaphor, as illustrated by William Blake, evokes a similar argument Percy Bysshe Shelley made five years earlier. In his 1821 essay “A Defence of Poetry” Shelley famously claimed that

The poetry of Dante may be considered as the bridge thrown over the stream of time, which unites the modern and ancient world. The distorted notions of invisible things which Dante and his rival Milton have idealized, are merely the mask and the mantle in which these great poets walk through eternity enveloped and disguised. (Shelley 1821, 289f)

The bridge “thrown over the stream of time, which unites the modern and ancient world” serves as a beautiful metaphor to illustrate the function and conception of cultural memory this collection of essays is interested in. Whether intentionally or not, the poetry-as-bridge-metaphor paradoxically represents the construction of cultural memory while similarly problematizing the very performance of memorial culture. Explicitly this metaphor installs the writer, here Dante, as the architect of said connecting structure. Implicitly it is fair to assume that Shelley presents the critic as the creator of said bridge, who by means of elucidation and dissemination opens the bridge for the reading public. In this light the metaphor serves to show that the process of connecting is also based on the agency of said reader, who after all, has to be willing to cross the bridge. Only the bridge’s use transforms the artistic artefact from a merely decorative monument into an integral part of a society’s cultural memory. Ultimately, Shelley’s poetic metaphor retains a paradoxical element considering that cultural memory serves, as does a bridge, not only to connect distant entities. At the same time the bridge stresses the very difference it tries to gap. This dialectic is taken up by Shelley’s notion of Dante and Milton as “rivals,” who only by means of opposition can become equals.

Dante Alighieri and John Milton, the two vernacular composers of epic poems, hold firm positions in the literary canons of Italy and England respectively. Both authors have also become universal cultural icons deeply engrained in the world’s cultural memory, with their importance extending vastly beyond their literary and political influence: on the one hand, Dante as the exiled avenger of sins and supposed father of the Italian nation, on the other, Milton as the blind polemicist and observer of current political affairs.

This anthology aims to explore the synchronic as well as the diachronic constructions of Dante and Milton as cultural icons, and so the main focus of analysis is the production of cultural memory, national and transnational alike. The juxtaposition and comparison of Dante and Milton invites a broader perspective that goes beyond the merely national contexts and also touches on the question of the emergence of a European Dante and a European Milton. At the same time, this comparison allows us to explore the opposite of cultural memory, namely processes of forgetting

and side-lining authors or parts of their respective histories, which both authors have been subjected to throughout their literary reception.

In line with this reading of Shelley's metaphor this anthology on Dante and Milton is not only interested in their lives and works proper but also their cultural appropriation. In consequence the articles deal less with the envisioned, that is Dante and Milton, but more with those who envisioned, imagine and reimagine both writers and their (proposed) influence. The authors in the compilations analyse this anatomy of influence by looking at various realizations thereof: paintings, pamphlets, material culture, literary criticism, scientific writing as well as revisions of Dante and Milton from the highbrow to the lowbrow.

Cultural Memory and the Social Sphere

What exactly is meant by the term cultural memory? What implications does it denote? How do cultural memory studies relate to the topic of this book? A look back at the very beginnings of this discipline will help answer these questions. The following paragraphs will outline the theoretical framework provided by the mental ancestors of cultural memory studies: generally speaking the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs can be regarded as the forefather of cultural memory studies. His two books *La mémoire collective* and *Les cadres sociaux* circumscribed what he called the collective memory and the social sphere and had a lasting impact on all socio-cultural studies to follow.¹ In particular Jan Assmann's work would be unthinkable without his mental ancestor. In his seminal 1988 essay "Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität" ("Collective Memory and Cultural Identity"), Jan Assmann gave a definition of cultural memory as

the characteristic store of repeatedly used texts, images and rituals in the cultivation of which each society and epoch stabilizes and imports its self-image; a collectively shared knowledge of preferably (yet not exclusively) the past, on which a group bases its awareness of unity and character.
(Assmann 1995, 125-33)

¹ See Halbwachs' seminal books *La mémoire collective* and *Les cadres sociaux*. Freud and Jung, contemporaries of Halbwachs were also developing theories of collective memory; however, they adhered to the inner and personal level of memory and delved in the unconscious depths of the human psyche. For Jung and Freud and their concepts see Jürgen Straub, "Psychology, Narrative, and Cultural Memory: Past and Present" in: Erll / Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*. pp. 215-228.

Dante and Milton have become such carriers of cultural memory, since their texts and politics helped strengthen Italy's, England's and to some extent European self-identity in various epochs and formed a foil upon which societies could project various anxieties, hopes and revelations. In particular the multitude of political responses to both authors reveal the cultural longevity and historical resilience of their texts.

Assmann discerns three levels of memory, the inner level, the social level and the cultural level of memory. The first one refers to the highly subjective perception of time and self-identity and can also be considered a person's individual memory. As Assmann points out "memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and on the collective level." (Assman 2008, 109)² The awareness of ourselves therefore is inextricably linked to our storage of information about ourselves and our past. Consequently the inner level of memory is characterised predominantly by a person's cultural upbringing, social experiences, and individual circumstances. In contrast to this the social level of memory feeds itself of identity as a person as carrier of social roles and goes back to Maurice Halbwachs' idea of the collective memory. Halbwachs' immense accomplishment was to show that our memory, like consciousness in general, depends on socialisation and communication, and that memory can be analysed as a function of our social life. Memory and communities have a reciprocal relationship, since memory enables us to live in groups and communities, and living in groups and communities enables us to build a memory. Art historian Aby Warburg coined the term social memory with regard to the third, the cultural level of memory. He was the first historian to treat images, that is, cultural objectifications, as carriers of memory. In his project called "Mnemosyne", the ancient Greek term for memory and the mother of the nine muses, he set himself the task to study the afterlife of classical antiquity in Western culture by examining what he called *Bildgedächtnis* (iconic memory). His groundbreaking visual approach to the study of cultural memory became the basis for the so-called Warburg School, with Ernst Gombrich and Erwin Panofsky being his most prominent art historical successors.³ In his opinion images have the capacity to store

² Jan Assmann: "Communicative and Cultural memory", in: Ertl, Astrid / Nünning, Ansgar (eds.), *Cultural memory studies* (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter 2008), pp. 109-118, p.109.

³ However, Warburg never used the term cultural memory. Harking back to Halbwachs' and Warburg's ideas, this concept has been developed only during the last twenty years, when the three-dimensionality of memory was gradually crystallizing in the Humanities.

social and cultural energy, which can be preserved for a long time and given off in future epochs. His task, however, to analyse and describe the iconic memory of the Western World remained fragmentary.

Cultural memory and its images are part of a process of reciprocal production. The related construction of identity can be analysed as an act of differentiation, of drawing a line between those who partake in the creation and consumption of a particular cultural memory and those that don't. One example would be related to literary taste and class, as illustrated by Virginia Woolf's essay "Middlebrow," (1981) originally a letter that "was written, but not send to the New Statesman" (*ibid.*). In this essay Woolf refutes the claim that her writing were middlebrow and she decidedly asserts her highbrow ambitions. This letter, which is as vitriolic as it is humorous, closes with a description of her experience of reading a middlebrow book:

I rise. I dress. I proceed weakly to the window. I take that book in my swollen right hand and toss it gently over the hedge into the field. The hungry sheep—did I remember to say that this part of the story takes place in the country?—the hungry sheep look up but are not fed. (Woolf 1996, 200)

This short excerpt beautifully illustrates the process of discussing, defining and creating cultural memory by means of differentiation. For one, the essay is a clear statement by Woolf on what kinds of literature and art are not worthy to be remembered—anything middlebrow. She formulates this argument by employing quotation that evokes, what could be called, highbrow cultural memory: "the hungry sheep look up but are not fed" (*ibid.*). By means of a device that could be called hyper-textual Woolf implicitly refers to a whole history of cultural memory. Firstly, this quote is taken directly from John Milton's poem "Lycidas," which—with its extensive use of literary references—is a vehicle of cultural memory in its own right. Secondly, Milton is reusing a quotation from Dante's *Paradiso*: "sì che le pecorelle, che non sanno, / tornan del pasco pasciute di vento" (*Paradiso* 29, 107-08).⁴ Thirdly, this quotation also evokes Vergil's "Eclogue III," especially Menaclás's feelings concerning a flock of sheep. So while Woolf figuratively is tossing her middlebrow-novel to the sheep, she similarly is tossing a whole history of literary references and discourses at the reader of her essay. Whether she is casting pearls before swine depends on the readers.

⁴ For a detailed discussion of this quote see Nick Havely's article in this anthology.

When Woolf thus likens the readers of middlebrow literature to “sheep that are not fed” she not only uses a canonized part of highbrow-literature to distance herself from those readers. She further establishes said quote and its extended discourses as highbrow. And by refusing to indicate the quote as such, Woolf creates a bond with those readers who can identify the quote without additional help.

Cultural memory thus serves to signify how the underlying ideologies (de-)construct cultural heroes in a process akin to stereotyping. In the words of Stuart Hall “Stereotypes . . . reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them . . . stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘difference’” (Hall, 257). Similar processes of reducing writers, their lives and works to specific aspects play an important role in regards to cultural memory. This reduction is essential for appropriating, embedding and (mis-)using historical figures and their work for specific causes, be these causes driven by questions of literary taste, class or nationalism. A case in point would be transformation of the Florentine poet Dante into a “großen nordischen Italiener[.]”—a great Nordic Italian— by national-socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg in 1930. (cf. Hausmann 2007, 367)

How reductive and essentialist representations of cultural memory are depends of course on a number of variables amongst others their socio-historical-contexts, the underlying ideologies and the media that represent them. Still the importance differentiation by means of reduction plays for cultural memory is illustrated in various of the articles in this anthology. That cultural icons such as Dante and Milton are highly flexible in regards to their cultural appropriations, irrespective of their biographical background or previous representations, becomes clear in a post-modern context. In post-modern cultural production both, Dante and Milton, transcend canonicity, class and categorizations. In the last decade alone both others were written into various (pop-)cultural contexts. And the motivations may differ from name-dropping to appreciative reference: Dan Brown’s thriller *Inferno* (2013) presents the reader with a professor of symbology hunting for—amongst other things—Dante’s death-mask. In Electronic Arts’ computer-game *Dante’s Inferno* (2010) the player guides a fearless version of Dante through hell. Here confrontation beats conversation.

In fact, Dante seems to be more popular now than ever, with Roberto Benigni’s lectures on Dante filling stadiums around the world, his likeness adorning computer games, his figure surfacing in contemporary Italian

telecommunication adverts.⁵ However, Dante himself understood the fickleness and ephemeral nature of earthly fame and compared the futility of human endeavour to a gust of wind in a famous passage from *Purgatorio*:

Oh vana gloria de l'umane posse! [...]
 Non è il mondan romore altro ch'un fiato
 di vento, ch'or vien quinci e or vien quindi,
 e muta nome perché muta lato.

O empty glory of the power of humans! [...]
 Wordly renown is nothing other than
 a breath of wind that blows now here, now there,
 and changes name when it has changed its course.
 (Dante, *Purgatorio*, 11.91, 100-2)

In Dante's case, the wind has changed its course several times in the history of his appropriation. His name, however, has never fallen into oblivion. As already mentioned in passing, this study, therefore, promotes the view that Dante's earthly fame has not been blown away by the changing course of the winds—not only because of his poetic quality and literary authority, but also because of the manifold adaptations and reinterpretations of work and author, which have secured their cultural longevity.

Milton also features prominently in popular fiction. German author Christopher Marzi titled his intertextual debut *Lycidas* (2004). Mike Mignola's graphic novel *Hellboy in Hell* leads his titular character in a Dantesque journey through hell, where he discovers Milton's capital *Pandemonium* and its surrounding sea. And the two-page comic *Pancakes*, also set in the *Hellboy* cosmos, is a tongue-in-cheek reference to John Milton's representation of Eve biting into the apple in "evil hour." As a

⁵ The Italian actor and director Roberto Benigni toured with his show *Tutto Dante* in Europe, the United States, Canada and South America from 2006 to 2013, interpreting and reciting selected passages of the *Divina Commedia*. He also published a set of DVDs and a book on Dante. See Roberto Benigni, *Il mio Dante* (Turin: Einaudi, 2008). Electronic Arts published the video game *Dante's Inferno* in 2010, which was loosely inspired by Dante's journey through hell. In 2012, an advert for the Italian telecommunication company TIM featured Dante, Virgil and Beatrice and was broadcast throughout Italy. Dan Brown's novel *Inferno* was published in 2013 and will be adapted for the screen in 2016. The story largely takes place in Florence and extensively uses themes taken from the *Divina Commedia*.

result “Nature from her seat / sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe, / That all was lost.” (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.783f). In Mignola’s short account a young Hellboy indulges in his first pancake, resulting in Hell’s creatures to give signs of woe and sorrow. All Ashtaroth—“granduke of the infernal legions” (Mignola 2000)—can do, is to accept defeat: “Truly this is our blackest hour.” (*ibid.*).

The cultural reception of Dante and Milton seem to be as thriving as ever. This anthology wants to shed light on various such instances throughout the centuries and cultural backgrounds. The intention is to illustrate how and under what circumstances cultural memory is being produced/performed, authors and their backgrounds are being adapted, altered, and appropriated.

The opening essay of this volume, “*Swaggering in the Fore-Top of the State*”: *Milton, the Prelates and the Protestant Dante, from Lycidas to Of Reformation*, explores John Milton’s appropriation of Dante Alighieri in the aftermath of the Protestant reformation. Spurred by the recent discovery of Milton’s own annotated copy of Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Vita di Dante Poeta Fiorentinus*, commonly known as Boccaccio’s *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, Nicholas Havely gives evidence of Protestant readings of Dante within Milton’s cultural circle and traces Milton’s own encounters with Dante’s *Commedia*. Thereby his essay not only suggests the impact of historical Protestant polemic on Milton, but, set against the backdrop of Milton’s travels to Florence, it also addresses the Miltonic debts paid to Dante for several *dantismi*, which “could be quarried for missiles against the Papacy and the preachers and prelates of the Roman Church.” (Havely, 20) Furthermore the author reiterates the success of Dante’s *Monarchia* in British Protestant circles, which rubbed off on Milton’s anti-prelatical polemic in *Of Reformation* with its “emphasis on Church governance and corruption closer to home.” (Havely, 25) Ultimately, the presence of Dante’s political opera magnum in late 16th and early 17th-century Britain fuelled the national reformational flames and testified to “the construction of Dante’s identity as witness against Rome.” (Havely, 27) Thus Milton becomes a Protestant Aeneas, bridging the gap between Dante’s genuinely Catholic culture and his own, making him palpable for a Protestant audience, and finally ‘protestantizing’ the Florentine poet to serve Protestant cause.

Christoph Ehland analyses Milton’s memorization in form of material culture to show how certain aspects of Milton’s biography—such as his support of the regicide that ended the reign and life of Charles I—are edited out of Miltonic memorial culture. Alison Martin gives a detailed analysis of how Milton was employed in Victorian popular science. How

Dante and Milton echo in the *Harry Potter* series is explained by Elizabeth Gilbert.

Andrew Sanders article “On His Blindness: Milton’s Reputation in the Nineteenth Century” examines the perception of Milton in Victorian commemoration, at the heart of which lies the discrepancy between Milton as writer and political actor. Sanders illustrates how writers like Thomas Babington Macaulay in his critical and historical essays tried to combine these two perspectives rather than assuming their opposition. For Macaulay, Sanders argues, “the poet and the political thinker were integrally linked. Milton’s greatness as a poet could not be viewed as somehow detached from his politics.” (Sanders, 41)

Sanders argues that Macaulay’s reading of Milton was essentially based on a post-French Revolutionary liberalism. In light of these political philosophies Milton was “recast in the role of a hero who had struggled for enlightenment against the forces of darkness.” (Sanders, 42) Based on this nineteenth-century re-imagining of Milton Sanders illustrates how the relationship between John Milton and Oliver Cromwell was re-written and conceptualised in literary and visual representations such as Alfred Waterhouse’s designs of Manchester’s new Assize Courts, Scott’s *Woodstock*, Horace Smith’s *Oliver Cromwell: An Historical Romance* or Augustus Egg’s *Cromwell before Naseby* and Ford Madox Brown’s painting *AD 1630*.

In her essay *Milton and the question of national identity: political reality and ideal conceptions* Eliza Richter examines Milton’s ideas of ideal governance and relates them to his own political career and their socio-historical circumstances. In particular the concept of liberty as an “ideal form of rule” (Richter, 55) reveals a multitude of connotations for Milton, which deserve closer scrutiny. The author gives evidence of the repercussions these concepts had on Milton’s political writings, particularly on *Tenure*, *Defence*, and *Eikonoklastes*. Furthermore she explores how Milton gradually integrated the concept of liberty into his idea of a British national identity, since “the English appeared to be the only people who lived up to this natural, innate liberty by freeing themselves from what Milton deemed religious and monarchical tyranny”. (Richter, 60).

In his article “Milton in Material Culture” Christoph Ehland discusses the ways in which writers and their “two bodies”—their work and their biographies—are commemorated. Ehland attempts “to establish a plotline for the story of Milton’s afterlife by looking at the various public acts of commemoration by which the poet was invested in material culture” (Ehland, 69). In doing so Ehland illustrates how acts of commemoration

such as statues, plaques, memorials and others serve in the construction of a writer's public perception and in 'writing' his or her life posthumously. In doing so certain aspects are foregrounded whereas other biographical details are repeatedly omitted to serve the ideological purpose of those creating commemorative sites.

In regard to Milton, Ehland focuses on how John Milton is mainly represented in relation to his poetic work, whereas his political writings and convictions are being glossed over. Ehland claims that in "the case of Milton there seems to be a strange hesitation to remember his life in the form of public monuments and museums." (Ehland, 69) The article illustrates this hesitation and the related discourses with regards to Milton's cottage in Chalfont St Giles, the Temple of British Worthies in Stowe, Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner and Milton's grave at St. Giles Cripplegate.

Anne-Julia Zwierlein traces Milton's appropriation as a national and, later, as a significant imperial poet. In her essay "*Unteaches conquer'd nations to rebel, By singing how their stubborn parents feel*": exploring and exporting John Milton in the long eighteenth century she argues that such a process of enhanced cultural importance went *pari passu* with Milton's gradual depoliticization and a steady reevaluation of his universal multilinguism. In particular the expansion of the British Empire led to new contexts in which "the language of Milton's epic was increasingly scrutinized and keyed to a new 'national' understanding of the vernacular." (Zwierlein, 87) Examples of such close linguistic scrutiny are Milton's insertion into the English school curriculum as well as aesthetic considerations regarding the sublimity and universality of his language in neo-classical and romantic discourses. In this regard the author analyses poetological and linguistic considerations ranging from the early Milton critics Patrick Hume and Christopher D'Addario to, among others, Jonathan Richardson and Joseph Addison.

Christoph Singer outlines John Milton's influence on Edward Young's concepts of the 'genius' and 'originality'. In his article "'Heretics in the Truth': Miltonic Echoes in Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*" Singer discusses the influence of Miltonic mythologies on Young's seminal 1759 essay. In Young's elaborations on the 'genius' and 'original composition' several Miltonic references illustrate the author's theory on reading, learning and writing. In a seemingly counter-intuitive move Young presents the Miltonic version of Eve as a genius that experiences an epiphany that actually leads to the individual's self-actualisation.

It is especially in relation to Young's discussion of critical, learning and knowledge that Milton's own epistemic convictions become discernible. Singer illustrates how Young borrows a number of Miltonic metaphors and similes—such as the angel Raphael's verdict: "food is as knowledge"—and the related theories of learning, critical reading and ultimately composing. Regarding Young's influential essay it may be argued that the Miltonic influences found in this work ultimately—and ironically—helped to path the way for a Romantic re-discovery of Milton as a genius himself. In that sense Milton by way of Young is re-created as a "British original."

Alison Martin explores Milton as an intertext in Nineteenth-Century scientific writing. Her article—"With Fry Innumerable Swarm": *Reading Milton as Intertext in Nineteenth-Century Popular Science*—she illustrates how Milton's poetic writing was appropriated in scientific discourses, such as Philip Henry Gosse's *The Aquarium: An Unveiling of the Wonders of the Deep Sea* from 1854. Arguing that "mixing molluscs and Milton was not a stylistic device typical only of Gosse" (Martin, 123) she traces Miltonic influences and their function in the publishing history of similar works.

This intertextual and discursive synthesis of British literary heritage and Victorian science illustrates two things: firstly, the perpetuation of cultural memory; secondly, the ideological inferences underlying supposedly value-free scientific discourses. Martin analyses how "processes of borrowing, appropriation and (half-)digestion that characterise the intertextual layering which brought Milton into dialogue with the authors of British marine natural history." (Martin, 125) In tracing this intertextuality of Milton and scientific discourses Martin examines the contemporary readerships familiarity with the original Miltonic sources, and goes to show how this intertextual approach became increasingly formulaic.

Christoph Lehner's and Zachary Kell's essays explicitly relate to Dante's and Milton's appropriation by Modernist writers. In his essay *Envisioning the visionary: poetic quality and allegorical language in T. S. Eliot's Dante criticism* Lehner reevaluates T. S. Eliot's texts composed as a literary critic and Dante connoisseur. He moves Eliot's acts of envisioning Dante as a 'visionary' poet to the foreground, whose capacity to communicate through "clear visual images, . . . , springs from a clear vision in the poet's visionary mind." (Lehner, 154) The author explores the etymology and the history of the terms 'visual' and 'visionary' as well as their application by Eliot, concluding that the use of allegory stresses "the enhanced imagination and high memorability inherent in cerebral visual perception." (Lehner, 154) Furthermore it becomes evident that

Eliot's debts to Dante comprise the discovery of poetic quality in his texts and had a mutual effect on both writers' fame, since Eliot's texts on Dante, as the author argues, strongly increased Dante's international fame and his insertion into the literary cultural memory.

Zachary Leszek Kell examines James Joyce's appropriation of the two canonical writers Dante and Milton with a particular interest in the way "canonicity from the perspective of the writer comes to be formulated". (Kell, 179) His essay "*Denti Alligator*" and "*the humours of Milltown*": *The Canonical Comedy of James Joyce's Finnegans Wake* touches upon the questions how Joyce formally integrates the two epic poets into his self-sustaining work and how *Finnegans Wake* relates to the Modernist tradition. Here Kell argues that "the layering of multiple allusions allows the *Wake* to simultaneously recreate and destroy the art of the past, leaving behind a new vision of the universe no longer held back by canonical/historical bias". (Kell, 178) Such a treatment of past canonical writers goes clearly beyond the Modernist approach established by Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot and presents Dante and Milton "less as figures of the past being supplemented by arguments of the present". (Kell, 178) Instead they become "living, breathing artists who belong in Joyce's text as comfortably as their presence in their own" (Kell, 178).

In her article "From Fallen Angel to Dark Lord: Traces of Dante and Milton in the Harry Potter Series" Elizabeth Gilbert traces the intertextual sources of J. K. Rowling's bestselling book-series. Gilbert illustrates a range of explicit and implicit references in the *Harry Potter* series, which can be traced back to Dantean and Miltonic mythologies. This serves to illustrate how processes of cultural memory not only employ and re-write their predecessors but also how the original sources' philosophical underpinnings shape their modern successors.

In regards to the *Harry Potter*-universe, Gilbert argues how the Dantean and Miltonic influences on the semantics of setting, the construction of story arcs and the representations of characters goes beyond a mere referential gimmick. The sources also influence and undermine the representation and deconstruction of seemingly binary concepts such as 'good' and 'evil'. By analysing these epic influences Gilbert intends to show how our "perception, understanding and explanation of the nature and quality of evil have been vitally influenced by the works of the two grandmasters of European epic, Dante and Milton." (Gilbert, 182)

Works Cited

- Assmann, Jan. 1995. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." In *New German Critique*. 65: 125-133.
- . 2008. "Communicative and Cultural Memory." In *Cultural Memory Studies*. Edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning. Berlin: De Gruyter. 109-118.
- Brown, Dan. 2013. *Inferno*. New York: Doubleday.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1950 (1939). *La Mémoire Collective*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- . 1952 (1925). *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Hall, Stuart. 1997. "The Work of Representation." In *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. Edited by Stuart Hall: London, Sage. 257.
- Marzi, Christopher. 2004. *Lycidas*. München: Heyne.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Teskey, Gordon. New York: Norton, 2005.
- Mignola, Mike. 2014. *Hellboy in Hell: The Descent*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse.
- . 2000. "Pancakes." In *Hellboy: The Right Hand of Doom*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse.
- Prickett, Stephen, Adina Ciugureanu. 2015. "Dante in the Nineteenth Century." In *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Studies and Environmental Communication*. 4 (1): 7-16.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. 1951 (1821) "A Defence of Poetry." In *Shelley's Prose*. Edited by David Lee Clark. London: Fourth Estate. 275-79.
- Straub, Jürgen. 2008. "Psychology, Narrative, and Cultural Memory: Past and Present." In *Cultural Memory Studies*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning. Berlin: De Gruyter. 215-28.
- Woolf, Virginia. 1981. "Middlebrow." In *Virginia Woolf: Collected Essays*. Vol. 2. Edited by Leonard Woolf. London: The Hogarth Press. 196-203.

CHAPTER ONE

“SWAGGERING IN THE FORE-TOP OF THE STATE”: MILTON, THE PRELATES AND THE PROTESTANT DANTE, FROM *LYCIDAS* TO *OF REFORMATION*

NICK HAVELY

[B]lind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
a sheephooke, or have learn't ought else the least
that to the faithfull heardsman's art belongs!
what recks it them? what need they? they are sped;
and when they list, thire leane and flashie songs
grate on thire scrannel pipes of wretched straw,
the hungrie sheep looke up and are not fed,
but swolne with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
rot inwardly, and foule contagion spread . . .
(Milton 1645, ll. 113-27)¹

The Dean of Wells, E.H. Plumptre, in the extensive notes to his late nineteenth-century *terza rima* version of the *Commedia*, pointed to a parallel between Milton's "hungrie sheep . . . swolne with wind" (Plumptre 1886-7, 2: 171n.) and the *pecorelle* that preachers leave *pasciute di vento*, according to Dante's Beatrice in *Paradiso* 29.² Paget Toynbee's monumental early twentieth-century collection tracing "the history of Dante in English literature" noted that "[t]his apostrophe of

¹ Milton, *Lycidas* (spellings as in Trinity College Cambridge MS); ll. 113-27 in modern editions. The reference to 'corrupted clergy' is from the headnote in the 1645 Poems.

² For comments on his translation, see Cunningham 1965: 131-6 and (quoted here) Pite 1998: 99-105.

[Milton's] St Peter is evidently a reminiscence of that put into St Peter's mouth by Dante, *Par.* xxvii. 19ff.", whilst also suggesting specific comparisons with that canto and (again) Beatrice's denunciation of corrupt pastors two cantos later.³ Irene Samuel has explored more fully *Lycidas's* "large debt to the *Commedia*", suggesting that in deploying the "authoritative voice" of St Peter here, Milton "was probably adopting the device from Dante." (Samuel 1966: 251, 277) Samuel also argued that the passage showed the poet taking "impetus from *Paradiso* 27 and 29" (*ibid.* 36-9) whilst responding to both St Peter's and Beatrice's invocations of apocalyptic judgment, and that his close reading of Dante would serve to strengthen bonds with Florentine intellectuals (and defenders of the *Commedia*), such as Benedetto Buonmattei and Carlo Roberto Dati during his subsequent Italian journey of 1638-9.⁴ The present essay aims to place evidence of such reading and reminiscence in *Lycidas* and *Of Reformation* (1641) within the context of the "proto-Protestant" Dante constructed by Reformation polemicists in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

During and shortly after his Italian journey, Milton explicitly invoked Dante on several occasions, indicating that the precedent of the Italian poet was contributing to his vocation and formation as an author.⁵ Like *Lycidas* in its wide stylistic and lexical range, *Of Reformation*—the first of his anti-prelatical tracts and his first major work to be published after return from Italy—reflects a Dantean *plurilinguismo* suggesting that Milton was continuing to learn the lessons of the *Commedia's* invective. Like *Lycidas*, too, it shows how "at the highest pitch" in his writing of this period, he "links satire . . . to the role of the poet-prophet." (Lewalski 2000, 138) In *Of Reformation* (Book 1), as the argument about the baleful effects wrought by the Donation of Constantine upon the Church and clergy gathers to a head it converges with one of the recurrent concerns in the *Commedia* and the English polemicist turns to an Italian tradition which has Dante at its source:

Now lest it should bee thought that something else might ayle this Author thus to hamper the Bishops of those dayes; I will bring you the opinion of three the famousest men for wit and lear[n]ing, that *Italy* at this day glories of, whereby it may be concluded for a receiv'd opinion even among men

³ Toynbee 1909: 1. 123n. and 124n.

⁴ For a more recent account of Milton's relationship with Buonmattei and the possible influence of the latter's Dante commentary, see Cinquemani 1998, esp. 1-7, 17-18, 29-30, and 117-62. On Milton's two visits to Florence in 1638 and 1639, see also Lewalski 2000: 90-3.

⁵ As a recent and important article has concluded; see Poole 2014: 160.

professing the Romish Faith, that *Constantine* marr'd all in the Church. *Dante* in his 19. *Canto* of *Inferno* hath thus, as I will render it you in English blank Verse.

Ah *Constantine*, of how much ill was cause
Not thy Conversion, but those rich demaines
That the first wealthy *Pope* receiv'd of thee.

So in his 20. *Canto* of *Paradise* hee makes the like complaint . . .
(Milton 1641, 30)

Milton will go on to translate a passage from each of the other two “famous Italians” (Petrarch and Ariosto), and so gives no further details of this later “complaint.” (Milton 1641, 30)⁶

However, “receiv'd opinion . . . that *Constantine* marr'd all in the Church” had been equally if not more powerfully reflected in Dante's portrayal of Constantine crowning the eyebrow of the Eagle in *Paradiso* 20:

‘L'altro che segue, con le leggi e meco,
sotto buona intenzion che fé mal frutto,
per cedere al pastor si fece greco:
ora conosce come il mal dedutto
dal suo bene operar non li è nocivo,
avvegna che sia 'l mondo indi distrutto.’
(*Par.* 20, 55-60)

[“The next that follows, bearing both the laws and myself (the Imperial Eagle)—and with good intentions that bore bad fruit— by yielding to the (Papal) Shepherd turned himself into a Greek: now he can see that the evil consequences of his well-meant act do not harm him, although it brought ruin to the world.”]⁷

For Dante the paradox of the Donation of Constantine is—like others he faces in the Heaven of Jupiter and justice—a painful one, as Milton seems to recognize. After citing the accounts of the Donation's consequences in Petrarch and Ariosto (*Orlando furioso* 34. 79-80) and suggesting how the Italian antipapal tradition might converge with the English “Chaucerian”

⁶ The Petrarch sonnet (‘Fontana di dolore’) cited as ‘108’ here is numbered 138 in modern editions. On Milton and the Protestantizing of Petrarch, see the recent article by Serjeantson (2014).

⁷ All quotations from the *Commedia* are from the edition with commentary by Chiavacci Leonardi (Dante 1997), and all translations are my own.

one, Milton raises the question of “whether ever any, though perhaps not wittingly, set open a dore to more mischiefe in Christendome”. (Milton 1641, 31) His sentence’s slightly awkward parenthesis seems more consonant with Dante’s uneasy view of Constantine’s *buona intenzion* in *Paradiso* 20 than with Petrarch’s or Ariosto’s less complicated portrayals of the Donation and the Emperor.

Another direct response to the *Commedia*’s antipapal invective could have helped to shape *Of Reformation*’s eventual conclusion. Here two antithetical paragraphs contrast the anticipated paradisaical state of those who “have been earnest for the *Common good* of *Religion* and their *Country*” with the judgment awaiting those “that by the impairing and diminution of the true *Faith*, the distresses and servitude of their *Country*” down in “the *darkest* and *deepest Golfe* of HELL”. (Milton 1641, 89-90) Milton’s final vivid representation of the latter’s overthrow—his status-conscious prelates now becoming “the trample and spurne of all the other *Damned*” and the “most *underfoot* and *downe-trodden Vassals of Perdition*” [his italics]—has much in common with Dante’s carnivalesque portrayal of the simoniac clerics in *Inferno* 19 (the canto which *Of Reformation* has already cited) and of the pope planted upside down in the rock with his legs flailing above it. Moreover, Milton’s contrast between the souls in his heavenly city “progressing the *datelesse* and *irrevoluble* Circle of *Eternity*” and those in “the *darkest* and *deepest Golfe* of HELL” parallels a rhetorical pattern that is traced near the end of the *Commedia*. In Beatrice’s final speech to the pilgrim Dante she too begins by lyrically celebrating the collegiate and civic ideal of the circling and eternal Rose (*Mira/ quanto è 'l convento de le bianche stole!/ Vedi nostra città quant'ella gira . . .*) and marking the place in it reserved for the righteous ruler Henry of Luxemburg.⁸ But she then concludes her whole speech, and all her utterances in the poem, with a balancing passage of ferocious invective against the “blind greed” (*cieca cupidigia*) of the Emperor’s adversary and (in Dante’s view) betrayer, Pope Clement V.⁹ Beatrice’s pope, like Milton’s prelatial “*Vassals of Perdition*” will also, she prophesies, participate in a Dantean form of infernal “trample and spurne”: the parody of apostolic succession, whereby one simoniac pope, having spent due time flailing his legs above the surface of Hell’s eighth circle, will be driven by the next arrival yet further into the fissures of the rock:

⁸ Par. 30, 128-38.

⁹ Par. 30, 139-48.

. . . ch'el sarà detruso
 là dove Simon mago è per suo merto,
 e farà quel d'Alagna intrar più giuso'.
 (*Par.* 30, 146-8)

[“For he will be thrust down there where Simon Magus has his reward, and he will force the Anagni Pope (Boniface VIII) further down”.]¹⁰

Milton’s appropriations of Dantean invective are, however, not based solely upon his impressively close reading of the text of the *Commedia*. It has long been recognized that he was also following a century-long polemical tradition in conscripting Dante amongst a host of medieval and *trecento* writers as one of the “notabile doctours” (to quote John Bale) who “hath in theyr famouse wrytynges called upon the churches reformacion”; (Bale 1548 (?), sig. Aa 8v)¹¹ or as (in John Foxe’s more concise characterization) “an Italian writer against the Pope”. (Foxe 1570, sig. T3r (shouldernote))¹²

Several of the Miltonic *dantismi* already mentioned in this essay themselves have a history in Protestant polemic. Beatrice’s metaphor portraying hapless audiences of frivolous preachers as flocks “fed with wind” (*Par.* 29. 107; *Lycidas* 125) had been cited and translated in critiques of “the vayne fables of Monkes and Friers” from the mid sixteenth century and in one of the key texts of this Protestant tradition: Matthias Flacius’s *Catalogus testium veritatis qui ante nostram aetatem reclamarunt Papae* (“Catalogue of witnesses for the truth who before our time spoke out against the Papacy”).¹³ Flacius’s *Catalogus* appeared in at least five editions from 1556 to 1608 and was used by some of the main

¹⁰ The workings of the simoniac conveyor-belt have already been described by Dante’s Nicholas III in the canto which Of Reformation has cited: *Inf.* 19 (73-7).

¹¹ The citing of Dantes Aligerius (along with Franciscus Petrarcha) among fifty-one such ‘notabile doctours’ appears to be the earliest (as yet) known conscription of Dante to the Protestant cause; see Havely 2014: 46-9.

¹² See Toynbee 1909: 1. 58, Caesar 1989: 278-9, and Havely 2003. On the early tradition of establishing Protestant legitimacy through historical precedent, see Ryrie 1996.

¹³ See Flacius 1556: 868; and (with 39 lines of Latin translation from *Par.* 29) the second edition of the *Catalogus*: Flacius 1562: 506-7. Subsequent editions are Lyon 1597 (twice), Geneva 1608, Frankfurt 1666-7 and Frankfurt 1672. On Flacius and the *Catalogus*, see Toynbee 1909: 1. 148n; Grimm 1973: 398-401 and 490-1; Caesar 1989: 30-1; Frank 1990: 11-25; Lindberg 1996: 6-7, 242-5, 374; and Backus 2003: 343-50. On Milton and Flacius, see also Serjeantson 2014: 839 and Poole 2014: 151-2.

English Protestant polemicists before Milton, a number of whom specifically refer to the passage about preachers in *Paradiso* 29.¹⁴

The Protestant “Inferno”

Flacius’s *Catalogus* had shown (especially in its expanded 1562 edition, including translations of passages from the *Commedia*) that the *Paradiso* and the *Purgatorio* could be quarried for missiles against the Papacy and the preachers and prelates of the Roman Church; but Protestant polemicists in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries would also begin to mine the *Inferno*. Amongst the latter a leading figure was a French Huguenot: Francois Perrot de Mézières. Perrot was one of a number of French Protestant polemical writers whose work appeared or was translated in England around this time.¹⁵ Fluent in several languages including Hebrew and Italian, he was resident in major centres of intellectual culture such as Geneva and Venice, and he met and corresponded with Sir Philip Sidney in the 1570s when Perrot was translating the Psalms into Italian.¹⁶ Responding to Sixtus V’s bull of 1585 excommunicating Henri de Condé and Henri de Navarre and excluding them from the succession to the French throne, Perrot published a “friendly warning” to the people of Italy, who might not have noticed that Rome was the new Babylon and the Pope the Antichrist. His *Aviso piacevole dato alla bella Italia* (1586) was not only in Italian but also reinforced its argument with ample reference to the *tre lumi della tua nobil favella, o Italia* (“the three leading lights of your noble language, O Italy”), including nineteen passages of quotation from Dante’s *Commedia*, a number of Petrarch sonnets, and summaries from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*.¹⁷ Although its title page announces the work to have been published in *Monaco appresso Giovanni Swartz*, Perrot’s antipapal

¹⁴ For example (as well as Foxe), Laurence Humphrey, Matthew Sutcliffe, and Simon Birckbek; see Havelly 2004b, 93-101 and 2014, 60-5. On Milton and Foxe, see: Boswell 1975, 105 (item 617), Havelly 2003, 149 and 2014, 66-7; and Serjeantson 2014, 834.

¹⁵ Other such writers who cited Dante against Rome were Simon de Vyon, whose *Testimonie of the True Church of God* was translated in 1585, and Philippe de Mornay, whose dual-language (Latin and French) *Le Mystère d’Iniquité* was published at Saumur in 1611 and appeared in an English version (by Sampson Lennard) the following year; see Havelly 2014, 54-5, 62, 64, 103 and 108 with n. 244.

¹⁶ See van Dorsten 1986, 209.

¹⁷ Perrot 1586, 7v-11r; see also Balsamo 1998, esp. 84-90 and Sozzi 1999, 17-18.

anthology actually reflects what one recent writer has described as “the international nature of early-modern Protestantism and Protestant writing”, since this book by a French author in Italian was actually brought out in London by John Wolfe, associate of Italian Protestants such as Giacomo Castelvetro, and publisher of English editions of Machiavelli and Aretino.¹⁸

A striking and quite innovative feature of Perrot’s *Aviso piacevole* is the amount of space it allots not only to the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* but also to the *Inferno*, selecting anticlerical or antipapal material from five of the latter’s cantos (*Inf.* 3, 11, 15, 19 and 27).¹⁹ Of these, *Inferno* 19 provides Perrot with the largest amount of antipapal material. He cites the first four lines condemning Simon Magus and his followers, and adds a note that the Popes are followers of the wrong Simon (“i Papi sono successori, non di Simone Pietro, ma di Simone Mago”). (Perrot 1586, 14r) His longest quotation from this canto (with his comment on it) brings him closer to Milton. Nearly all of the simoniac Pope Nicholas III’s confessional speech about himself, his predecessors and successors is included (67-87) and so—more importantly in this context—is the whole of the pilgrim Dante’s ensuing condemnation of papal *avarizia* with his final lines lamenting the Donation of Constantine—lines which Milton would translate in *Of Reformation*:

“Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
che da te prese il primo ricco patre!”
(*Inf.* XIV, 115-117)²⁰

Perrot’s comment on this *terzina* follows Landino’s commentary (which like the verses themselves would be subject to expurgation early in the following century), arguing that

Seguita il poeta la commune opinione che Consta[n]tino Imperadore convertito alla fede donasse alla chiesa il temporale: ma non si truova in historia alcuna, che mai facesse questa donatione. Et Lorenzo Valla ne ha fatto un libro, per prouar che ella è falsa. (Perrot 1586, 16r)

¹⁸ On Wolfe, see Wyatt 2005, 185-99; Serjeantson 2014, 840; and Poole 2014, 152.

¹⁹ From *Purg.* passages in cantos 6, 16, 20, 32 and 33 (the last with Perrot’s comment citing Henri de Condé and Henri of Navarre as those through whom Dante’s DXV prophecy may hopefully be fulfilled); from *Par.* cantos 9 (misprinted as ‘6’), 18, 21, 22, 24, 27 and 29.

²⁰ For Milton’s translation, see above, p. 000.

[The poet adopts the common view that the Emperor Constantine when converted to the Faith donated his temporal possessions to the Church, but it is not recorded in any history that he ever made this donation. And Lorenzo Valla has produced a book about it proving it to be false.]²¹

Although Perrot's *Aviso* does not appear to have been reprinted after 1586, it provided a major precedent for the use of the *Inferno* alongside the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* in Protestant polemic during the early seventeenth century. At the turn of the century, the indefatigable antipapist Dean of Exeter Matthew Sutcliffe, whilst making the more familiar allusions to Dante's popes as shepherds turned into wolves (from *Par.* 9.132 and 27. 55), notes also that the poet found a place for some of them in Hell (*apud inferos locum assignavit*). (Sutcliffe 1600, 63r)²² Ten years later another "satirical enemy in his writings against the Romanists", Alexander Cooke, vicar of Louth in Lincolnshire, targeted Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino's admission that Dante had damned six popes (including Nicholas III) in his *Pope Joane: A Dialogue betweene a Protestant and a Papist*. (Cooke 1610, 62)²³

More specific and closer to Milton's time are references to and paraphrases from *Inferno* 19 in two further polemical works: Thomas Beard's *Antichrist the Pope of Rome* (1625) and Simon Birckbek's *The Protestant's Evidence Taken out of Good Records* (1634). Thomas Beard, Rector of Wistow in Huntingdonshire (and master of the grammar school attended by Oliver Cromwell), was well-practised in turning Italian writers against Rome: in an earlier work—his *Retractive from the Romish Religion* (1616)—he had cited Petrarch and Marsilius of Padua, and provided a lively paraphrase of Boccaccio's tale of Frate Cipolla (*Dec.* 6.10), whilst also identifying Dante as a "fast friend of Popish Religion" who nevertheless (in *Par.* 29) witnessed against Catholic preachers' use of "idle tales, and meere tales, and fables". (Beard 1616: 200, 328, 352 and 415) The full pugnacious title of his later polemic was *Antichrist the Pope of Rome OR The Pope of Rome is Antichrist*, and here, together with his

²¹ (mispaginated as '22'). In the 1564 Venice: Sessa edition of the *Commedia* with the Landino-Vellutello commentary ed. Francesco Sansovino (the edition that Perrot may have used), the comparable passage is on p. 102. On its expurgation, see below, p. 000.

²² See also Boswell 1999, 114-15. On Sutcliffe's polemical work, see Havelly 2014, 54, 63-4, 72 and 99.

²³ Quoted (with the description of Cooke as satirist by Anthony Wood) in Toynbee 1909, 1. 110-11 and Boswell 1999, 135. On Bellarmino's role in the debate about Dante, see Havelly 2014, 56 and 63.

other authorities, Beard assembles a constellation of Italian writers comparable to those in *Of Reformation*: thus Rome's identity as the new Babylon is early on said to have been demonstrated by "the writings of *Petrarch* and *Boccace*, with the Satyrs of *Ariosto* and others". (Beard 1625, 17)²⁴ Shortly afterwards in the first "treatise" of his *Antichrist the Pope of Rome*, Beard turns to a range of fourteenth-century reformers, including Franciscan opponents of John XXII who "wrote directly against the Pope, and called him Antichrist, and the Church of *Rome*, with her Prelates, the whore of *Babylon* made drunke with the blood of the Saints". (*ibid.*, 31)²⁵ This is the immediate context for a reference to "the renowned *Italian Poet Dante*" and for two summaries of material from what Beard calls the "Sonnetts" of the *Commedia*. The second of these visits what is by now quite familiar ground: the condemnation of the Church's assumption of temporal authority in the "sixt [actually the sixteenth] Sonnet of Purgatory".²⁶ Less usual—although obviously grist to Beard's apocalyptic mill—is his account of a passage from *Inferno* 19, where the poet

saith (speaking of Pope *Nicholas* the third) that it was hee, of whom the Evangelist *S. John* intendeth to speake, under the name of the Whore which sitteth upon many waters, with whom the Kings of the earth committed fornication. (Beard 1625, 31)²⁷

Beard's paraphrase here takes us to within a very few lines of the end of the pilgrim Dante's speech, immediately before the verses that Milton would translate in *Of Reformation*.

Significantly closer in time and effect to *Of Reformation*—actually quoting the original and attempting a verse translation—is Simon

²⁴ Later (104) Beard also cites Petrarch's account of the Curia as 'Fountaine of Dolours, and the Schoole of Errors, the Temple of Heresie, Babylon, and the Ship of Fraudes'.

²⁵ The words are attributed to Michael of Cesena, leader of the 'Conventual' Franciscans, who came to oppose John XXII in the 1320s, but the language has rather more in common with Petrus Iohannis Olivi and the more radical Franciscan 'Spirituals'; see Havely 2004a, 172-3.

²⁶ Purg. 16. 106-14 had been cited by Perrot and De Mornay; it also appeared as a new item in the 1608 (Geneva) edition of Flacius's *Catalogus*, cols 1765-6, sig. EE ee 4. Beard's mistaken reference may indeed be due to his use of this latter edition, which presents the passage immediately after a quotation from Purg. 6, and without assigning it a canto number. His confusion between canti and 'sonnets' could perhaps be due to his reading of Petrarch's invectives against Avignon; see above, n. 31 (although the term 'sonnet' had a wider semantic range at this time).

²⁷ Cp. Inf. 19, 106-8.

Birckbek's appropriation of *Inferno* 19 in *The Protestant's Evidence Taken out of Good Records* (1634). Birckbek was another (as he would describe it) "laborious" anti-Romanist vicar—of Gilling in Yorkshire—and he follows a long line of Protestant legitimists in the aim he announces on his title-page: that of "shewing that for fifteene hundred yeares next after Christ, divers worthy guides of Gods Church, have in sundry weightie poynts of religion, taught as the Church of England now doth".²⁸ Calling upon a large "Catalogue of Witnesses", (Birckbek 1634, sig. A4 4r) Birckbek headed this list *Catalogus Testium Veritatis*—in obvious tribute to one of his acknowledged authors: Flacius.²⁹ Among those "witnesses produced . . . in the fourteenth age" he hauls in a number of the usual suspects, such as "Gulielmus Ockam, Marsilius Patavinus, Iohannes de Rupe-scissa, Francis Petrarch, *Saint* Bridget, Iohn Wickliffe, *Sir* Geoffrey Chaucer"—as well as "Dantes." (*ibid.* 57) Turning to the *trecento* in the text of the treatise, he then locates "those famous *Florentine* Poets, *Dante* and *Petrarch*" amid a similarly international group of authors who "found fault with the Romish faith, as well as with her manners". (*ibid.*)

At the end of this section Birckbek proposes a new "Triumvirate of famous Poets" comprising the "two Italians" and "our English Laureat *Sir Geoffrey Chaucer*", (*ibid.*) although it is Dante who here receives most attention. Over three pages of paraphrase, commentary, quotation and translation, in the *Protestant's Evidence* (pp. 57-61) outline how the *Commedia* "found fault with the Romish faith", using passages from three cantos in the *Paradiso* (9, 18 and 29), and concluding with one in the *Inferno*, where "[t]he same *Dante* in covert termes, calleth *Rome* the whore of *Babylon*." (*ibid.* 60) Birckbek then quotes the original lines from *Inferno* 19 (106-11)—alluding to Revelation 17, 1-3 and envisaging the corrupt leadership of the Church as a combination of the Whore of Babylon and the beast on which she sits—followed by his own translation and commentary:

The Evangelist meetes with you well
You [Romish] Pastours ; when he doth tell
How he did see the woman, which
Sits on the waters [that foule witch]
To play the whore with Kings ; that Beast

²⁸ On the tradition of Protestant legitimism, see above, n. 17.

²⁹ Like Beard, he used the 1608 Geneva edition of Flacius's Catalogus, with its additional quotations from Dante, and he cites that edition (under 'C') in his 'Catalogue of Authours cited in this Treatise'. On Flacius, see above, p. 000 with n. 18.