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Reading Cultures in Dante's *Vita Nova*

“Reading Cultures in Dante’s *Vita Nova*” studies Dante’s early work from two points of view: Dante the reader of previous traditions and compiler of the *Vita Nova*, and on the other hand the reception of the *Vita Nova* by its readers, copyists, and early editors in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Firstly, “Reading Cultures in Dante’s *Vita Nova*” focuses upon the role of the diverse cultural mechanisms behind the composition and compilation of the *Vita Nova* and its implications in Dante’s transfer and conversion of both literary and scribal genres of the classical and Medieval Latin, Old Occitan, and Italian traditions. Secondly, “Reading Cultures in Dante’s *Vita Nova*” investigates the other side of the coin: the early manuscript transmission of the *Vita Nova* in the first half of the fourteenth century, and its relationship to and differences with Boccaccio’s treatment of the text, which changes dramatically its future reception, both material and literary. “Reading Cultures in Dante’s *Vita Nova*” concludes by examining the first printed edition (*editio princeps*) of the *Vita Nova* published in 1576, whose heavily edited text reflects the censorship in the times of Counter-Reformation and represents an opposing editorial course ultimately rejected in the eighteenth century. “Reading Cultures in Dante’s *Vita Nova*” studies cultural contexts which stand behind Dante’s sources, as well as those behind the poet’s work on a fine line between tradition and innovation, investigating not only the contextual importance of Boethius’s *Consolatio*, but also the material and intellectual traditions of other cultural matrices, such as the *accessus ad auctores*, which converge in the *Vita Nova*. This study demonstrates that elements of scribal language and culture, the *tenzone*, the medieval *accessus ad auctores*, the epistle, and the Old Occitan tradition of the *vidas* and the *razos* had an extraordinary impact on the young Dante and on his compositional and editorial choices in his *prosimetrum*. “Reading Cultures in Dante’s *Vita Nova*” also proposes that Boccaccio’s two extant autograph copies of the *Vita Nova* represent a clear moment of interpretative change in the editorial practices of the *libello*, influencing not only the manuscript transmission of the *Vita Nova*, but its printed editions as well, until the twentieth century.

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