VERNACULAR TRANSLATION IN DANTE’S ITALY

Translation and commentary are often associated with institutions and patronage, but in Italy around the time of Dante, widespread vernacular translation was mostly on the spontaneous initiative of individuals. While Dante is usually the starting point for histories of vernacular translation in Europe, this book demonstrates that The Divine Comedy places itself in opposition to a vast vernacular literature already in circulation among its readers. Alison Cornish explores the anxiety of vernacularization as expressed by translators and contemporary authors, the prevalence of translation in religious experience, the role of scribal mediation, the influence of the Italian reception of French literature on that literature, and how translating into the vernacular became a project of nation-building only after its virtual demise during the humanist period. Vernacular translation was a phenomenon with which all authors in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe – from Brunetto Latini to Giovanni Boccaccio – had to contend.

ALISON CORNISH is Associate Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages – the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek – during the period c.1100–1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

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ALISON CORNISH
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Acknowledgements

This book was written in pockets of time over eight years in Ann Arbor between diapers and soccer games, operas and Dante lectures, in Hatcher, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Riccardiana, and Vatican libraries, in Trastevere and in Ponte a Mensola and on the train in between, overlooking Lake Michigan and the Valley of the Tiber, and in a few magical days between one and the other peak of the Dolomites. Thanks go to Albert Ascoli, Zygmunt Barański, Catherine Brown, Theodore J. Cachey, Jr, Topher Davis, Alison Frazier, John Freccero, Simon Gaunt, Enrique Garcia Santo-Tomás, Patrick Geary, George Hoffman, Megan Holmes, Ronald Martinez and Peggy McCracken who generously read and commented upon chapters in inchoate stages, as well as to the two anonymous readers of Cambridge University Press and my copy-editor, Jacqueline French. Authorship of all errors remains of course wholly mine. For stimulation at crucial junctures, I am grateful to Teodolinda Barolini for her shining Dante2000 conference at Columbia, Steven Botterill for including me among cose nove in his 2007 conference in Berkeley, and Anna Maria Busse Berger for an unforgettable conference on memory in 2005, as well as to all my fellow fellows and the truly remarkable staff at Villa I Tatti. For gracious invitations to share my work with various vibrant groups, thanks to Martin Eisner at Duke, Douglas Biow at Texas, and to Tom Green and Tom Willette here at the University of Michigan. I also thank Mediaevalia, Romanic Review and Olschki for placing some of this material in earlier incarnations and for permission to republish it here. Thanks most of all to Paolo Squatriti who gives me a home and dinner and partnership in all things and – for their patience, affection and independence – to Sofia, Giacomo and Cristina, to the last of whom I dedicate this book, her coetaneo.

I feel very much like a volgarizzatrice, making this book out of other books, hoping for its utility, but apologizing for my poca scienza and submitting it humbly to the learned.


All citations from Dante’s *Commedia* are from the Petrocchi edition (1966–8) unless otherwise indicated. Translations of texts are mine where no translation is specified.

Thanks to the Augustinian Fathers of the Sanctuary of San Nicola in Tolentino for permission to publish the cover image.