Michelangelo Picone, ed. *Dante e le forme dell'allegoresi*. Ravenna: Longo, 1987. Pp. 175.

Few areas of Dante scholarship have received more attention than the question of allegory, especially with regard to the *Commedia*. Dante himself fed the debate by his interest in literary theory. He distinguished two types of allegory: *allegoria dei poeti*, where a text of fiction conceals a hidden truth, and *allegoria dei teologi*, where the letter of the text also signifies the reality of God's book; thus the stories of the Old Testament are not only history, but also represent a prefiguration of God's will. The hermeneutic techniques which the Middle Ages used to "read" the allegories present in the Bible are collectively known as *allegoresis*. The objective of this book, which consists of nine somewhat loosely bound articles, is to verify the extent to which these techniques, traditionally reserved for the study of the Bible, may also be applicable to Dante. Behind this objective lies the recent progress in the theory of allegory best illustrated by the work of Beryl Smalley and A. J. Minnis, still perhaps only hesitatingly accepted by Dante criticism which largely remains under the influence of Charles Singleton's "biblical allegorism."

How can we define Dante's conception of allegory? G. C. Alessio, in a detailed and well-researched article, starts from the highly varied picture of the way in which the Middle Ages, from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, understood allegory in treatises of rhetoric and grammar. Some interesting topics which Alessio studies involve the issues of the relationship between the literal and the allegorical, and the possibility of multiplicity of meaning, both very relevant questions today for the interpretation of the *Commedia*. E. Costa, in a close reading of the ideological tradition lying behind Brunetto Latini's *Tesoretto*, manages to further define the cultural context in which Dante operated. The allegory of the *Tesoretto* creates an analogy with texts such as Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae*, and this relationship reinforces the work's socio-political message. A. D'Andrea brings the scrutiny of allegory into Dante's own praxis in the allegorical mode: he concludes that Dante's poetry exceeds its theoretical framework. A. Iannucci focuses the inquiry on Dante's masterpiece; with the aid of supporting texts and illustrations from manuscripts, he reveals how Dante uses allegorical technique to create a narrative Christian epic in *Inf.* VII.67–IX.105, a passage parallel to a *sacra rappresentazione*. Art history is the theme of J. Friedman's interesting study of illustrations to *Purg.* XXIX: the critic uses the iconographic tradition to show how the reception of the text served the purpose of reinforcing the allegorical message, seen as essentially Eucharistic. The influence of Dante can be measured as well by his relevance in a Castilian *tenzone*, as studied by G. Caravaggi.

In the opinion of this reviewer, three articles in this volume are especially worthy of note, those of M. Corti, M. Picone and Z. Barański: I will try to do them justice within the limited space available. M. Corti's "Il modello analogico nel pensiero medievale e dantesco" aims to define the context in which Dante's poetry and his allegories flourished. This article has two poles, one theoretical and one applied. Allegory creates an analogy with another context; it is an intellectual reality applied to a literary event. The poetic reality uses the "products" of this analogy for its

metaphorical purpose, taking advantage of the situation and using the language of the other reality in a new context. This *risrittura analogica* actually creates a new situation, takes advantage of the prestige of its "other" reality (as lyric poetry became associated with the feudal world) and at the same time integrates the individual poetic experience into certain cultural codes. In the *Vita Nuova*, Dante created an analogy with the mystic tradition which lent him poetic motifs (such as the *ineffabile*) and allowed him to shift and ennoble the debate of the Stilnovisti on love.

M. Picone's article, "La *Vita Nuova* fra autobiografia e tipologia" attempts to lay the foundations for a cohesive interpretation of the *libello* in its duality as an exemplary and a personal work. In its biographical aspect, the work is akin to a Provençal *Vida*, so that the *actor* might be presented as an *auctor*. His experiences have the weight of tradition and a "typological" rather than a properly personal value. The renewal of the character coincides with the renewal of love poetry in light of the New Testament. Dante uses the techniques of medieval allegory to discover the meaning of his youthful autobiography: the "selection" of these facts and their "ordering" into a narrative of teleological order give the ultimate meaning to the work, the poet's understanding of the destiny of the eternal dimension of his poetry.

Barański's article argues that the critics, moving between Auerbach's figuralism and Singleton's moral exegesis, have not shown convincingly how allegory organizes the text in its entirety. Dante creates a "tension" between his poem and the forms of tradition: here, in the privileged *locus* of the *proemium*, lies the answer to what type of allegory he intended. The allegory of the first canto of *Inferno* can be confusing, offering parallels to *fabulae* (like the *Roman de la Rose* in its symbolism) and to the *historiae* of religious literature. The first part of the canto (vv. 1–63) seems to reflect a more archaic form of allegory; with the forest and the symbolic beasts it becomes an *allegoria dei poeti* which establishes a metaphoric (arbitrary) relation between words and their ultimate meaning. But when Virgil appears, in all his historicity, the *historia* seems to over-take the *fabula*: Dante insists on the reality of the journey, thereby connecting to the Biblical tradition of the *allegoria in factis*, which unfolds in the four levels of meaning: the literal, the allegorical (both Virgil as guide and Dante as traveller "ripetono l'esempio di Cristo" by going from Hell to the *loco eterno*), the anagogical (the meaning of which lies in the exemplary structure of Dante-personaggio moving from the *selva* of sin to the Celestial città) and the moral (the *conversio anime de luctu et miseria peccati ad statum gratie*). To the Biblical tradition of allegoresis Dante has added other works in which different forms of allegory coexist: thus we should consider the *allegoria in factis* only for the parts of the *Commedia* which describes the voyage, and not for the multitude of symbols incorporated in the work. In the novelty of the poem's form, as a work carefully balanced between the Classical and the Christian worlds, Dante created the space in which his poetic genius flourished.

DAVID P. BÉNÉTEAU

U. of California, Berkeley

J. M. De Bujanda, ed. *Index des Livres Interdits. III. Index de Venise 1549; Venise et Milan 1554*. Sherbrooke: Editions de l'Université de Sherbrooke/Librairie Droz, 1987.

In order of appearance, this is the fourth volume of what promises to be a splendid series of modern editions of sixteenth-century indexes of prohibited books. These