The French manuscripts of Dante's *Commedia*

A comprehensive analysis of the *corpus*

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Résumé : This essay deals with the *corpus* of manuscripts of Dante's *Commedia* preserved in the Bibliothèque National de France from a stemmatics and cultural history point of view. Indeed, through the crossing between external data (signature, date, presence of explicit, interpolations, etc.) and genealogical classification we can draw some interesting information on the cultural circulation of the text and on the 14th and 15th century reception of Dante.

Mots-clés : Dante's *Commedia* ; textual criticism ; BnF collection ; manuscripts.

1 Introduction

Libraries all over the world (and many private collections as well) hold about 800 manuscript witnesses of Dante's *Commedia*[1]. It is a case of a superabundant tradition, undoubtedly one of the most complex in the Romance area. Precisely for this reason, an edition of the *Commedia* based on the whole manuscript tradition does not yet exist, nor are there exhaustive studies of a palaeographical or iconographic nature.

As I am involved in the project (coordinated by Paolo Trovato) of the critical edition of the poem, I have been carrying out studies on the classification of the manuscripts belonging to the Tuscan-Florentine α tradition, which is the richest one, and is traditionally distinguished from the Northern tradition (β). The latter is regarded as a "quiescent" tradition, deriving from the first copies of the poem, which the poet supposedly left behind in Ravenna at the time of his death. On the contrary, the

1. In particular, 600 mss. witnesses contain at least 30 *cantos* while 200 others are fragments, often consisting of no more than two sheets.

Tuscan-Florentine tradition is an "active" one, which produced a large number of copies thanks to techniques of serial production in workshops mainly based in Florence (near to the so-called "pecia" method) [2]. According to Trovato, this branch of the genealogical tree necessarily depends on the northern one, which hence will be used for the reconstruction of the text [3].

While the α tradition, then, is of no help on a strictly stemmatical level, research on it may nonetheless prove illuminating because of the abundance of witnesses, which allows us to formulate important hypotheses in the fields both of methodology and of statistics.

— Methodology : given the abundance of the tradition, we can proceed by choosing to collate manuscripts which share common external features, i.e. those written by the same copyist or, alternatively, just the ones presenting the same commentary, or the ones that seem to be similar from a codicological point of view ; and so on. This method leads us to important suppositions concerning the production and spread of manuscripts in the Middle Ages.
— Statistics : if we consider that, statistically, surviving manuscript traditions have to be regarded as representing 15% of the entire manuscript production, philologists usually have to deal with no more than a few dozens of witnesses. In the case of the *Commedia*, given its overabundant tradition, all the aspects normally considered by philology as a discipline – such as *descriptio*, timing and ways of copying, palaeographical and codicological characteristics etc. – become highly informative. Both lead us to significant conclusions concerning the history of the reading and the studying of Dante's *Commedia*.

The major part of the mss. of the *Commedia* is preserved in Italian libraries, but significant mss. collections, extremely valuable as a representative selection, are also found in a number of capital cities of other countries. In France, in particular, there are many manuscript witnesses (34 in Paris alone) [4].

I would like to present some considerations about this *corpus* of mss., that seems to be extremely interesting from several points of view. I will divide this paper in two sections : "Stemmatics" and "Readers and Writers".

2 Stemmatics

First of all, let us consider the position of these manuscripts in the genealogical tree. In such an abundant tradition it is not possible to fully collate texts, so we have chosen to work by collating selected verses (*loci critici*). In some cases, our canon of *loci* is enough to determine the stemmatic collocation of the mss., but, in others, the classification could be very hard because of the phenomenon of contamination.

2. What is called the *pecia* method consisted in dividing the mss. into quires and entrusting each quire to a different scribe, in order to make the copy process faster ; the quires (from different testual models) were eventually assembled into a single codex.

3. NP.

4. I would like to thank my colleagues from the DYPAC Research centre – Pierre Chastang and Susan Baddeley – who hosted me for the research period of the fellowship 'Jean d'Alembert', University Paris-Saclay.

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The process of classification can be divided into different types. In particular, there can be identified *simple* and *complex* stemmatic collocations. The former entail that ms. X follows his relatives in a disciplined way and can, therefore, be inserted easily within the group Y.

But we sometimes run into texts that are difficult to classify resorting only to *loci critici*. This is a case of *complex* stemmatic collocation. The reasons are the most diverse. In increasing order of difficulty, the following can happen : the ms. is affected by contamination of readings ; the ms. is affected by contamination by juxtaposition of exemplars ; the ms. is affected by irremediable contamination. To make things even more complicated, if the portions of text that the copyist takes from different ancestors [5] alternate with a high frequency it can become difficult to identify the interruptions between them, or (even more) to find in those excerpts the circumscribed – and therefore meaningful – errors that enable us to attribute a text to a specific stemmatic area. In this case, it is recommended to use other arguments in support of the hypothesis of relationship. For example, the presence of conjunctive elements such as the same external feature or a same comment, or a peculiar *explicit*, and so on.

We know that there are at least three large stemmatic families in the tradition of the *Commedia*, namely the Vatican and Boccaccio families (= *vatbocc*), the *Cento* Group (=*cento**&) and *parm*& [6]. Among the 34 manuscripts held by the BnF, there is evidence that five of them pertained to the first family (Par. 531, Par. 532, Par. 534, Par. 542, Par. 543) and two to the second one (Par. 527, Par. 2085) [7].

The *vatbocc* family is an area of the *stemma* that is very hard to classify because of the contamination that characterizes the products of medieval workshops. We have seven mss. copied by the same copyist, the so-called Scribe of Vat : they are Cha (that contains only the *Inferno* with Guido da Pisa's commentary), Vat, Barb. 3644, Fior. Pal. 314, Laur. 40.13, Marc. Zan. 55, Ricc. 1012. They constitute the core of the Vatican family. The Boccaccio family consists of To, Ri and Chig, the three autographs of the Dantean poem by Boccaccio. These manuscripts are quite similar to each other, but they were not copied from the same ancestor ; the relationship between these manuscripts perfectly exemplifies the result of the process of copying according to the "*pecia*" method. As it is known, in the middle of the 14th century, in Central Italy and most of all in Florence, Dante's poem was very much in demand and, therefore, much copied. In order to produce a huge amount of copies and hence to optimize the production process time, the workshops were able to organize a form of mass production. The method was as follows : the text was divided into units (for instance quires, or canticas), and the units were copied simultaneously, even from different ancestors, in the workshop ; eventually, these units were assembled to create a unified

5. The repeated act of copying contaminated mss. pollutes the text considerably. While in vertical transmission every copy introduces new errors, moving farther and farther away from the archetype, in horizontal transmission the result of such a process is, in the worst-case scenario, to no longer recognize any ancestor. In fact, if a contaminated text becomes one of the sources for another one, the number of traditions involved would grow exponentially, making the classification impossible.

6. For all the *sigla* of the families (and their composition), see Tonello 2017.

7. I am adopting the most widespread, and traditional, shelfmarks, used by Roddewig 1984 ; note, however, that the French manuscripts of the *Commedia* at the BnF are catalogued as *Italien* and not as *Par*(*isien*).

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text. It is evident that in this way contamination by juxtaposition of exemplars, in critical points such as the beginning of quires or canticas occurs in a large amount of cases.

While, on the one hand, the derivation of these manuscripts from a common ancestor is proven by common errors, on the other hand, the variability of the agreements is maximum. Indeed, the peculiarity of the *vatbocc* family lies in the fact that, for some *loci critici*, the codices show variable configurations. For every verse, we can find agreements among five codices against four, among eight against one only, among three against six, and so on. In other words, it is impossible to trace a stable configuration, even for short sections of text.

This is the reason why I gave up drawing a family tree ; instead, I preferred to arrange the manuscripts in sets that show interdependent relationships (by using Venn diagrams). This kind of representation is, for some areas of the tradition of the *Commedia*, more suitable to show the instability intrinsic to these constellations of mss. I will now provide the overall *stemma* of the Tuscan Florentine tradition of the *Commedia*, which I traced in my recent monograph on this subject : from it, one can understand the position of *vatbocc* but also of the families that will be named below [8].

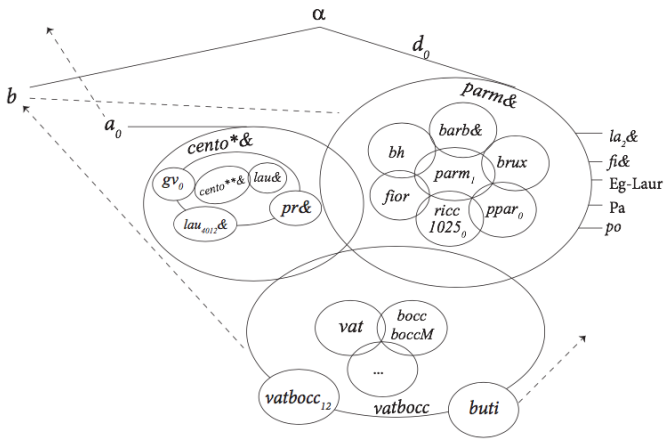


Figure 1 – Stemma of the Tuscan Florentine tradition

Five mss. (Par. 531, Par. 532, Par. 534, Par. 542, Par. 543) preserved at the BnF belong to the Vatican and Boccaccio families. I was able to collocate Par. 534 and Par. 543 in a group of mss. very close to the Vatican family. Par. 532, instead, is closer to the Boccaccio group, and so it is for Par. 542, that is, a witness belonging to a subgroup that shares several typical innovations with the three autographs by Boccaccio. In the end, Par. 531 is a ms. equidistant from the Vatican and the Boccaccio families. In other words, it shares the same number of indicative errors with the Vatican family and with the Boccaccio group.

8. Tonello 2018.

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Moreover, *vatbocc* influences another remarkable stemmatic area, namely, the *buti* family (a group of related manuscripts, almost all of which are accompanied by the commentary of the grammarian Buti). Among the *buti* family there are two witnesses of the *Commedia* (Par. 1469 and Par. 2017) with the commentary of Barzizza, which in fact owes much to Buti's work.

We shall also mention five manuscripts belonging to the *Cento* group, that is, the other big stemmatic group which adopted the "*pecia*" method. However, even if there is evidence that it was a mass production, the copies that originated look very homogeneous. This is probably due to the fact that the ancestors were very similar to each other ; for this reason, despite the mixing of different quires, apparently no composite copies were generated. The group is composed of all the relatives of Lo Ricc Tz and has been well known to scholars for a long time. In the nineteenth century, Marchesini and Täuber conducted important palaeographical and textual studies on this family [9].

Ms. Par. 2085 is an ordinary product of the *Cento* group. Then we can consider three more witnesses that are very close to *cento**& but contaminated with different branches of the genealogical tree : Par. 74 (that is very close to Mad. 23.3 and Ricc. 1004), Par. 1298 (that is related to Ricc. 1034 and Parm. 118) and Ars. 8506.

Concerning Par. 2085, I was able to attribute it with certainty to the *Cento* group only thanks to a *de visu* examination. In fact, two copyists, one in the 16^{th}-17^{th} century and another one in the 17^{th}-18^{th} century, attempted to remove the most characteristic *Cento* errors through erasures, revisions and *marginalia* ; nonetheless several *Cento* innovations are still detectable throughout the codex, and a deeper examination allowed me to identify and precisely read the *Cento* errors under the erasures.

Smith-Lesouëf 52 is a contaminated ms. belonging, for the most part, to *Cento* : however, in the *Purgatorio* the text shows similarities with the a_0 group.

The *pr*& group can be regarded as a branch of *cento**&. At the BnF are also preserved the ancestor of the *pr*& group, namely ms. Pr (Par. 539), and one of its relatives, Par. 527.

Only the *parm*& family remains to describe. From the palaeographical data at our disposal we know that the *codices* copied by the so-called Copyist of Parm belong to a workshop very active in mid-fourteenth-century Florence. The manuscripts produced in this workshop were the result of the collaboration of several copyists with different roles, who alternated their work in the different phases of the copying process (rubrication, revision, completion of the text, etc.) [10]. The witnesses belonging to *parm*& are very inconsistent and changeable as far as the text is concerned. However, all textual divergences occur within a limited range of possible errors. The texts were mixed when each scribe involved in the copying process (who, we know, used only his own ancestor) intervened on the *codex*. Since every *scriptorium* had a limited number

9. Marchesini 1890a e b and Täuber 1889.

10. The group *parm*& consists of some well-known mss., like Parm, or Ashb, App etc., and of the other products of these copyists, studied from a paleographical (and partly textual) point of view by Pomaro 1994.

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of ancestors available, even the amount of possible variant readings is small. Each subfamily has some variants (often common to a *cento**& and *vatbocc*) in common, which appear in the same order, and is linked to other subfamilies by some specific errors.

Within the *corpus* of French manuscripts, two codices belong to *parm*&, Par. 76 and Par. 528 should be mentioned. Then there are some independent branches influenced by *parm*& : for example, *pa*& and *fi*&. Ms. Pa (Par. 538) has a close relative, that is, Ashb. Ap. 7. As for the *fi*& family, it is the one that includes, among others, also Par. 77. Finally, a manuscript that shares many errors with *parm*& is Par. 78. This is a rather contaminated *codex*, perhaps due to the interference of the commentary all over the text. In fact, Benvenuto's commentary often offers divergent readings from the text, and sometimes discusses alternative variants of the same reading.

Other "simple" classifications concern Ars. 8531, a witness that evidently belongs to the a_0 group (the family to which the well-known Mart and Triv also belong), despite some evidence of contamination, and Ars. 8530, a member of *p*, a Northern family very close to the archetype, that will be used for the textual reconstruction (*constitutio textus*). Another Northern group involved in the textual reconstruction process is *bol*, and the ms. Par. 533 is an exponent of that family.

It is now time to describe the most complex cases. Par. 73 derives from a family close to *bocc* for the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, while for the *Paradiso* it is related to Ash. Par. 530 changes its stemmatic collocation in every *cantica* : in the *Inferno* it seems to belong to *parm*&, in the *Purgatorio* it pertains to *cento**& and in the *Paradiso* it forms a family with Vat. 4777 and Br. AG XII 5 (in a small group close to *bol*). Also Par. 541 presents contamination by juxtaposition of exemplars. Its *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* are close to *bol* and the Ashburnham Combination, while its *Paradiso* is a member of *brux* family (in *parm*&). Par. 544, too, is a member of the Ashburnham Combination for the *Inferno*, but for the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* it is very close to Cambr. Mm 2.3a and Cass instead. These three manuscripts are certainly A, but do not present a clear majority of readings belonging to a specific family. Furthermore, they show many *lectiones singulares* that prevent an exhaustive classification being made. Par. 71, Ashb. Ap. 10 and Ott. 2373 are members of a family close to a_0 in the *Paradiso*, but for the other *canticas* they share indicative errors with *vatbocc*. Par. 72 is a relative of Pad. 2 in the *Inferno*, while in the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* its collocation is not clear : the errors it shares with *fi*& are actually quite common to the whole group A.

Par. 69 is a relative of Ricc. 1024 (*parm*&) in the *Inferno*, but in the other *canticas* seems instead to be a contaminated relative of *pr*&. Par. 1470 has a relative in its *Paradiso*, Laur. 40.6 (indeed, they share a lot of *singulares*) but if one looks at the *Inferno* and the *Paradiso* it would only seem to be a generic A product, slightly more oriented towards *Cento* and *parm*&. Par. 75 forms an independent group (close to *vatbocc*, but also with an interference from a generic A, which cannot be better defined) together with Harv. 54. Also Par. 529 has a close relative, Per. D 58, but it is not clear where the couple of mss. is situated. Finally, three manuscripts show the same mix of Northern and Tuscan Florentine tradition, but in different ways. Par.

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70 shares some errors with *bol* (most of all in *Inferno*), but it also has plenty of α variants. Par. 79 is very corrupted, but we can see clear traces of the presence of *Cento* and of *p*. Par. 540 seems to be a *cento* ms., but very contaminated ; moreover, the revisions are conducted with a *p* text as its ancestor.

I shall now linger for a moment on ms. Par. 540. It contains an interpolation, at *Inferno* XXXIII, 90, shared with only four other mss. in the whole tradition, Chig. L VIII 292, Can. 103, Ricc. 1106, Marc. Zan. 54 (and with a fragment : Ross. 463). This is the interpolation as it appears in the mss. (I will use bold characters for the macro-variants) [11] :

Par. 540

Quand' ebbi cosi parlato **esta fiata**, Guardai dall' altro canto, e vidi un fritto **Piangendo orribilmente tutta fiata**. Ed i' gli dissi, Se' tu costi dritto ? I' **ri**conosco ben che se' Lucchese ; Qual fallo **ti reco tanto giù fitto** ? Ed egli a me, **quand'a guardar mi prese** Perché pur mi molesti, e va tua via, Se **tu ritorni su nel buon paese**. I' non mi partirò, **dissi lui**, pria Se conto non mi fai perché qua entro **Se' tanto basso tra la gente ria**. **Ed egli a me**, I' 'l dico fuor talento, Che per l'inganno ch' io a' grandi usai, Ch' al popol' i sommisi a tradimento, **Concito mi riceve sempre mai. Or ten va, non dir** di me ambasciata Poiché **tra' traditori trovato m'hai** [12].

Marc. Zan. 54

Quando ei cosi parlato **esta fiata**, Guardai da l'altro canto, e vidi un fricto **Piangendo oribilmente tucta fiata**. Ed io li dissi **Or se'** tu costi ricto ? Io ti conosco ben che se' Luchese ; Qual fallo **ti reco tanto in giù ficto** ? Ed elli a me, **quando a guardar mi prese**, Perché pur mi molesti, va tua via, Se tu **mi ritorni si comel buom paese**. Io no mi partirò, **dissio a lui**, pria Se conto non mi fai perché qua entro **Se' tanto basso tra le gente ria**. **Ed elli a me**, Io 'l dico fuor talento, Che per lo inganno ch' io ai grandi ussai, Che al popolo io somisi a tradimento, **Cocito mi riceve sempre mai**. **Or tine va, non dir** di men basciata Poiché **coi traditori trovato mai**.

Ross. 463

Quande chosi parlato **lattristata**, Guardai dall'altro canto, e vidi un fritto **Lo qual piangea tremando la corata** Ed io li dissi **se'** tu cosi fitto ? Io ti conosco ben che se' Luchese ; Qual fallo **ti rego costì issconfitto** ? Ed elli a me, **poi che tu sai nmei offese**, Per ché pur mi molesti, va tua via, Se tu ritorni **su nel buon paese**. Io no mi parto, **allui dissi** pria Se non mi conti per chesse qua entro **Che non po' esser senza gran follia**. **Poi chetti piace** dico for talento, Che per lo 'ngaano ch' io ai grandi usai, Ch'al popolo i' somisi a tradimento, **Lonferno mi riceve sempre mai. vande, non dir** di men basciata Poiché t**rovato qua dritto mai**.

Questi fu messer Guielmo Malaspina da lucca lo qual tradio li grandi uomini da Lucca e sottomiseli al possel ? Fidandosi li gi ? ?di di lui

11. I would like to add a piece of information that is important to consider for understanding the transmission of this interpolation, namely, its position in the text. While in Can. 106, Marc. Zan. 54 and Par. 540 there is no sign of attention (i.e. break or note of any kind) in the text that indicates the unrelatedness of these *terzine* (which, therefore, fit in the context seamlessly), in Ross. 436 they are placed in another section of the sheet (where, as you can read in the transcription that I offer, there is also an explicative note regarding this character : Guglielmo Malaspina) ; as for Ricc. 1106, there one can find a horizontal pen mark along that text portion. Regarding ms. Chig. L VIII 292, we must rely on Moore's studies : the scholar claims that the interpolation was written on a loose leaf, and offers a transcription of it in Moore 1889. Today, that sheet is no longer present inside the manuscript. The Chigi collection became part of the Vatican Library in 1923, and in Baronci's inventory, from the early decades of the twentieth century, there is no reference to it (I would like to thank again the Director of the Department of Manuscripts of the BAV, Paolo Vian, for helping me to search for the sheet). Another paratextual element that can be considered is the presence of other texts in the codices. Marc. Zan. 54 and Ricc. 1106 do not have any commentary, while glosses are found in Par. 540 (here, they derive from the commentary of Benvenuto da Imola) and in Can. 103. Moreover, and significantly, Ross. 463 and Chig. L VIII 292 include some passages (lib. VI) and the text of the vulgarization of the *Eneide* respectively.

12. These terzine were probably influenced by *Inf.* XIX (49-54) : Io stava come 'l frate che confessa / lo perfido assessin, che, poi ch'è fitto, / richiama lui per che la morte cessa. / Ed el gridò : «Se' tu già costì ritto, / se' tu già costì ritto, Bonifazio ? / Di parecchi anni mi mentì lo scritto.

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Ricc. 1106

Quando cosi parlato **la tristata**, Guardai dall'altro lato, e vidi un fricto **Lo qual piangea tremando la corata** Ed io gli dissi se' tu chossi ficto ? Io ti congnosco ben che se' Luchese ; Qual fallo tucto **così sconficto** ? Ed egli a me, **poi che sai mie offese**, Per ché pur mi molesti, va a tua via, Se tu ritorni **su nel buon paese**. Io no mi partirò, **dissio allui** pria Se non mi conti per che se qua entro **Che non puo esser senza gran follia. Puoi che ti piace** dico fuor talento, Per che lo 'nganno grande ch' io usai, Chel popolo io somisi a tradimento, **Lonferno mi riceve sempre mai. Vanne e non portar** di me ambasciata Poiché **trovato qua dricto mai**.

Can. 103

Quando cosi parlato **la traffita**[?] Guardai dall' altro canto e vidi un fritto **Lo qual piangea tremando la corata**. Ed io gli dissi : **Perché se'** tu costì fitto ? lo ti conosco ben che se' Lucchese, Qual fallo **ti reco cosi confitto** ? Ed egli a me : **Poiché tu sai mie offese**, Perché pur mi molesti ? Va alla tua via, Se **torni mai in su nel buon paese**. Io non mi partirò, **a lui diss' io**, pria Se non mi conti perché se' qua dentro, **Che non può esser senza gran follia. Poiché ti piace**, dico fuor talento Che per 1'inganno ch' io ai grandi usai, Ch' al popolo i sommisi a tradimento, **L' inferno mi riceve sempre mai. Vanne e non portar** di me ambasciata Perché **qua dentro tu trovato m' hai**.

Chig. L VIII 292

Quand' ebbe si parlato **la ristata**[?] Guardai dall' altro canto e vidi un fitto **Che piangeva, e gli tremava la corata**. Ed io gli dissi, **Perché se'** qui fitto ? Io ti conosco ben che se' Lucchese. Qual fallo **ti recò costi confitto** ? Ed egli a me : **Poichè tu sai mie offese**, Perché pur mi molesti ? Va a tua via, Se tu ritorni **su nel buon paese**. Io non mi partirò, **diss' io**, pria Se non mi conti perché se' qua dentro, **Che non può esser senza gran follia. Poiché ti piace**, dico fuor talento Che per 1' inganno ch' io ai grandi usai, il popolo i' sommossi a tradimento, **Perpetuo son qui dentro a questi lai. Vanne, e piu non mi far** omai ambascia Poich' **io t' ho detto li miei forti guai**.

The added *terzine* report Dante's meeting with a citizen from Lucca in the Cocito, among the betrayers – more precisely, the betrayers of their homeland. Here, the Lucchese admits being guilty of instigating the population against its rulers. This passage was probably inserted by someone who wanted to add a new invective, against the Lucchesi, to the two already present in this canto, against the Pisans and the Genoese.

As is evident from the analysis of the variants, a first group of witnesses, consisting of Par. 540, Marc. Zan. 54, Can. 106, Ricc. 1106 and Ross. 463, departs from Chig. L VIII 292 and forms an autonomous subgroup (= Int_1). Within Int_1, the couple Marc. Zan. 54 Par. 540 share some variants, suggesting the existence of an ancestor Int_2, in opposition to the couple Ricc. 1106 and Ross. 463 (= Int_3). Can. 106 seems to derive from Int_1 independently.

Besides showing several innovations, the presence of these verses suggests that the five mss. are related to each other also concerning the proper text of the *Commedia*. But, surprisingly, only two of them, Can. 103 and Ricc. 1106, belong to the same stemmatic area, the well-known *Cento* group. Ms. Chig. L VII 292, instead, belongs to the *parm*$_0$ group, and Marc. Zan. 54 – that is, a codex copied by five different scribes using at least four different ancestors – is close to the well-known Ms. Ham concerning this portion of text.

The fact that these manuscripts, although connected by such a strong external clue, are not genealogically related to each other goes against the norm and is, therefore, worthy of note. And it is also worth noting how much the interpolation differs from one ms. to another and how many innovations we can find in these few verses. Most of these innovations are polygenetic, but the extreme divergence between the texts could also suggest an "active" circulation of these additional tercets. By the expression 'active circulation' I am here referring to the freedom of the copyist to innovate in the text, which is even stronger in the case of clear spurious additions. In this particular

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case, the fact that in the Ms. Chigiano the interpolated verses were originally on a loose leaf, but also the horizontal pen mark along the text portion in Ricc. 1106, and their being off-center in Ross. 436 could be revealing of the way in which this text was transmitted : namely, as something that could be copied in the text as well as not. The interpolation shows an autonomous circulation, probably in a workshop, and this could explain its presence in witnesses very distant from a genealogical point of view and, to a certain extent, the freedom of intervention of the single scribe.

3 Dante's readers and writers

It is curious that, in all of the mss. of the *Commedia* preserved in Paris, 40% are signed by their copyists. Precisely, as you can see, we have 13 signed witnesses. To them one can also add the anonymous (but well-recognizable for paleographers) so-called Copyist of Pr, who copied Par. 539, and the Copyist of Parm, who wrote Par. 528 [13].

Par.	Copyist	Date	Script	Location
73	Paolo di Duccio Tosi	1403	*Littera textualis*	Pisa
74	Jacopo Guido di Puccini	1420-1430	*Littera textualis*	Florence
75	Francesco del maestro Andrea da Orvieto	1389	*Littera textualis* (semplified)	Orvieto
76	Bonacorso di Filippo Adimari	1459	Cursive	Florence
77	Pietro Campenni	1395	Bastard / *Littera textualis*	Tropea
78	Giorgio Zancani	XIV *ex.*- XV *in.*	Bastard	Venice
527	Niccolò de' Giunta	XV	Bastard	Florence
528	Copyist of Parm	XIV	Bastard	Florence
529	Antonio da Cortona	XIV	Bastard	Cortona
530	A.	1411	Bastard	Padua
532	Michele Sizi	XV	Bastard	Florence
538	Bettino de' Pilis	1351	*Littera textualis*	Bergamo
539	Copyist of Pr	XIV	Bastard	Florence
1298	Antonio di Bellante	XIV *ex.*	Bastard	Bellante (Umbria)
1469	Giacomo Minuzio	1519	*Littera antiqua*	Milan

Among this representative sample we can recognize various kinds of scribe, from professional copyists to Dante's admirers.

Copyists by profession are well recognizable from their subscription. Moreover, they used to sign many witnesses (of the same work or of different ones). Jacopo Guido di Puccini, the scribe of Par. 74, also copied Ricc. 1004 (another witness of the *Commedia*). In the latter ms. it is possible to read the following *colophon* : « *Deo gratias. Amen. Compiuto il primo libro della Comedia di Dante chiamato Inferno colle sue chiose a dì X del mese d'ottobre MCCCC° XXVI indizione Va scripto per me Pagolo di Iacopo di Guido Puccini notaio fiorentino* ».

13. In Par. 534 the colophon at f. 77r has been erased. The ms. was probably signed, but we cannot read under the erasure (even with a Wood lamp).

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We could hypothesise that Paolo di Duccio Tosi was a member of a workshop because his name appears in a number of mss. He copied at least other three witnesses of the *Commedia*, in addition to Par. 73 : the lost Ricc. 1046, Triv. 2263 and a ms. supposed by scholars to be missing, Kraus 1, which however is not lost, as I was able to see it in New York, thanks to the private owner of it [14]. The *colophon* at f. 3 specifies that the manuscript was commissioned by Francesco di Bartolomeo Petrucci da Siena : « *Scripto per mano di me Paolo di Duccio Tosi di Pisa. Negli anni Domini MCCCCIII adì xxx dottobre. Et è il decto libro del nobile huomo Francesco di Bartholomeo de Petrucci da Siena. Nel tempo ch'egli era honorevile executore della Cicta di Pisa lo fece scrivere* ».

Antonio da Cortona, too, is a copyist by profession. His elegant writing can be found in several documents, and in particular in three other copies of the *Commedia*, in addition to Par. 529 : Laur. 90 sup. 127, Marc. IX 33 and in a fragment preserved in Rome, at the Archivio Storico Capitolino. The *explicit* is at f. 81 : « *Qui scripsit scribat. Antonium de Curtona Dominus benedicat* ».

Bettino de' Pilis signs his work several times in Par. 538 : f. 7, 22v, 32v, 41v, 72v, 103v (*colophon* : « *[...] a quorum demonum conversatione et amicitia plene per Dei misericordiam defendatur Betinus de Pilis qui hic scripsit die penultimo agusto millesimo trecentesimo quinquagesimo primo. Hic finitur comedia inferni* ») and 237. He copied three witnesses of the *Commedia* : Par. 538 (1351), Ashb. App. 7 (1368) and Class. 6 (1369).

Regarding the copyist named A., of Par. 530 (f. 143 : « *Explicit tertia et ultima Cantica Comedie Dantis Aldigerii excellentis poete de Florentia quam ego A. scripsi Padue anno Domini M. CCCC. XI die decima mensis Julii. Deo gratias. Amen* »), Marie-Thérèse Gousset states that the ms. may have been copied for Pandolfo III Malatesta or for his entourage (like Nap. XIII C 2) [15]. The illustrious commission and the rich iconographic *apparatus* suggest that he was a professional copyist.

Finally, the Copyist of Pr is, as I said, responsible for four manuscripts and his productions can be ascribed to a particular subfamily of the *Commedia*, that is to say *pr&*. The Copyist of Parm copied entirely Par. 528, Parm, Rehd. 227, and the rubrics or some textual sections in other mss. such as Ricc. 1025 and Brux.

Francesco del maestro Andrea da Orvieto, who copied Par. 75, is a member of the category that Branca has effectively defined as the "merchant writers". Francesco is the son of the well-known painter Andrea da Orvieto, who is remembered for having decorated the Dome of Orvieto and for other, less excellent, paintings. The *colophon*, at f. 152v reveals « *Scriptus per me Franciscum Mag[istr]i Andree de Vrbeuet[ere] sub annis d[omi]ni Mill[esim]o trecentesimo octuagesimo nono* ».

Par. 532 was copied by Michele Sizi, a Florentine goldsmith. At f. 79 there is this subscription : « *Istrum librum scripsit M. S. del Buonconsigl[i]o Sitii. Deo gratias. Amen.* » He also wrote Ricc. 1329, of the 1459 (which contains Agostino, *Sermons*, in Agostino della Scarperia's vernacular rendering, as well as the *Trattato della vita*

14. See Tonello 2016.
15. Avril Gousset 2012, p. 137-138.

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religiosa and other *excerpta* from Saint Bernard). The *colophon* is very similar to that in Par. 532 : « *Scripto per me Michele di Sictii del Buonconsiglio Sitii* » (f. 23v).

In Par. 76 we can read only a short *formula* of signature : « *Finito e questo libro scrittolo Bonacorso di Filippo Adimari* ». Bonaccorso di Filippo Adimari (the Adimaris were a rich and important Florentine family) copied many codices, for instance, a collection of poems by Petrarch, Dante, Fazio degli Uberti and others ; the *Epistles* by Seneca ; Livio's works translated in the vernacular, and so on. In these manuscripts we can find different kinds of statements : for example, he claims the property of the books he copied and his interest in them, as well as his passion for culture and literature.

> Finito a dì 25 d'ottobre 1445 per le mani di Bonacorso di Filippo Adimari da Florençe *a uso e stança di sé e di suoi amici.* (Fior. Pal. 729)
>
> Qui finiscie la prima decha compilata da Tito Livio padovano di natione e cittadino di roma, la qual prima dechaa scrisse Bonachorso di Filippo Adimari da Firenze *ad istantia e per uso di se medesimo sicchome huomo che piglia piaciere di simile chose* e chominciolla a scriviare a san Sovari [ma Severo] di Puglia a dì primo d'ottobre mulle quatrociento quaranta e finilla in Vinegia a dì primo agosto mille quatrociento quaranta uno. Deo gratias amen. (Ashb. 486, Volgarizzamento Tito Livio)
>
> Finito le ciento venti quatro pistole di Senecha, le quali scrisse Bonachorso di Filippo Adimari da Firenze *ad istantia di se medesimo*, chominciato in Vinegia adì xvi d'ottobre mille quatrociento trentanove e finito in Nociera di Puglia adì ultimo di gienaio anno sopradetto [more fiorentino]. Deo gratias. Amen. (Ashb. 490, Epistole di Seneca)
>
> Questo libro scrisse Bonaccorso di Filippo Adimari da Firenze *ad istanza di sé e delli amici et conoscienti suoi siccome huomo che piglia sommo piacere di simil cose.* cominciato e fornito del mese di diciembre in a. 1464. (Fior. Pal. 710)

However, in one case he says he has copied the text (vulgarization of Cicerone, *De officis*) for someone (Giovanni Spinelli).

> Questo libro scrisse Bonaccorso Adimari *ad istanza dello Egregio huomo Giovanni Spinelli* Cittadino fiorentino in anno MCCCCLXXXV (Laur. 75. Volgarizzamento *De officis* Cicerone)

Pietro Campenni of Tropea, whose hand can probably be recognized in Par. 77 (at f. 139 is written : « *1395 die X marci Ind[iction]e 3a in t[er]ra Insule pr[ouin]cie Ystrie h[ae]c S[ecunda] Cantic[a] script[a] p[er] me petr[um]* »), was a notary and the chancellor of the *podestà* of Istria. He copied the *Commedia* twice, and he also signed Marc. IX 292 (c. 285v, « *Iste liber est scriptus per me Petrum Campenni quondam Johannis de Tropea in terra Insule provincie Ystrie anno nativitatis Domini millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo nono indictione septima die XV Februarii* »). It is well known that notaries were often active as copyists.

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Par. 78 was written by Giorgio Zancani, a member of the well-known patrician family in Venice. The *explicit* of the book is very clearly formulated : « *Zorçi Zancani la scripto per amore per quel da Certaldo et Dante al suo onore* » (f. Hv).

Niccolò de' Giunta left traces of his activity in every *cantica* in the Ms. Par. 527 (f. 34v, 68v and f. 102 : « *Explicit liber dantis Alighierij paradisus deo gratias amen [...] Chi scrisse scribat chon domine senpre viva [sic] regnat in secula seculorum. Amen. Nicholo de Giunta* »). He clearly comes from a rich and cultured Florentine family, so he supposedly copied the poem for himself.

Antonio da Bellante wrote an *explicit* in verses (f. 75), which makes us think of him as a passionate reader rather than a professional one : « *Se pur disio ad alcun venisse/et vole sapere quello chi me scrisse/ Donno Antonio de Bellante dicto/ se chiama chi lo libro ha scripto* »).

4 Conclusion

Although so far Italian scholars have surrendered in the face of the huge mass of witnesses of the *Commedia*, devising the most diverse strategies to avoid the classification of about 600 ms, our team has succeeded in the purpose (thanks to the use of a canon of *loci critici*, to new IT aids and, above all, to the collaboration of a group of people and to the valuable contribution of international guests who have allowed us to study the foreign collections of Dante's manuscripts). The *corpus* of French manuscripts reflects the general classification trends of the overall *Commedia* tradition. In fact, thanks to the canon of *loci critici* established by Barbi, for about 50% of the witnesses it is possible to define a univocal stemmatic classification. The percentage increases to 60% if we consider the slightly contaminated manuscripts (namely, those showing a low contamination of readings). For the remaining 15 manuscripts, variously contaminated, 10 (equal to 65%) are contaminated by juxtaposition of exemplars and, in most cases, it is still easy to propose a convincing classification for them. Only for four manuscripts is it difficult (or impossible) to specify a stemmatic collocation.

The study of this *corpus* also leads us to some considerations on the history of the transmission of the text and, therefore, on the history of culture. From the analysis of the signed mss. (which constitute as much as 40% of the total number) we can obtain a large amount of information. First of all, we can infer the provenance of the copyists from their *colophons* : their geographical distribution reflects the diffusion of the poem, which was widespread in central Italy (especially in Tuscany), but was also well known in more peripheral areas (such as Umbria) and in the North, and even the far North. In this data we can also find confirmation that the period of maximum production of manuscripts of the *Commedia* was the fourteenth century.

A final consideration regards the connection between the type of scribe and his production. Among the cases of copyists traditionally defined "by passion", 50% produce a highly contaminated text. Expectedly, when a cultured person engages in the process of copying a text, it is usual for them to consult different sources, in order to create a product of superior quality. However, and fortunately, these texts hardly enter into the copy circuit and therefore do not generate relatives – which would increasingly be

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corrupted, and which would make the classification of the text tradition impossible today.

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