Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

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Citer ce compte rendu

into Italian. The project also includes four interactive maps of the Venetian parish system and Venice's territories, which provide quick access to all records associated with parishes, cities, and regions. Essays by Benjamin G. Kohl, Andrea Mozzato, Monique O'Connell, and Claudia Salmini highlight technical difficulties and interpretive possibilities, and greatly enhance users' familiarization with the database.

The Rulers of Venice is a project that has much to offer and can variously serve the scholarly community. At a basic level, historians of Venice now have a handy tool for tracking down persons, offices, career paths, and places within the republic's administration system, which otherwise would require access to the Venetian Archive. The database can serve as the basis for sophisticated investigations into the political and institutional history of medieval Venice or its political culture. More broadly, historians with an interest in histories of the archive will also find invaluable material. Finally, its user-friendly interface makes it useful in the classroom. I have used it in seminars to familiarize students with the formation of historical questions and hypotheses. If in the last decades political and institutional histories have lost their erstwhile prominence, by broadening the scope of enquiry projects such as the Rulers of Venice can reinvigorate interest in these fields of historical research. A future expansion into later periods would be more than welcome.

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World of Dante. Other.
Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1996. Accessed 13 June 2020. worldofdante.org.

The World of Dante web resource for Dante studies is an excellent and easy-to-navigate tool for both teachers and students, and its search/concordance is useful for scholars. Initiated in 1996, the site has been aiding the classroom for almost a quarter of a century. The general editor, Deborah Parker (professor of Italian, University of Virginia) has been assisted by three co-directors, John Unsworth

(1996–97), Daniel Pitti (1997, 2006–08), and Worthy Martin (2006–08); a host of programmers, analysts, and research assistants (until 2008); and a sixteen-member advisory board that includes librarians, a Microsoft expert, and many of the leading Dante scholars in the United States. It is endowed by numerous entities, as stated on the site: "The World of Dante is sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Technologies in the Humanities, University of Virginia and funded in part by an IATH Research Fellowship; The National Endowment for the Humanities; the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation; and a grant from the National Italian American Foundation" ("About"). It is primarily a University of Virginia project, and the university, its faculty, graduate students, and staff deserve accolades for this superb resource. Despite the fact that the site does not appear to have been updated since 2008, it remains a highly successful and useful tool.

Designed primarily for readers and students of Dante's *Comedy*, both undergraduate and graduate students can benefit from it, and it is an excellent resource for faculty who are teaching the poem. Along with an instructional video that explains the resource's main features and how to use it, the site also provides the same information in written form. As the site explains,

> *The World of Dante* offers a digital environment for the study of the *Comedy*. This project is designed to appeal to the different purposes of a wide range of readers, not simply those with scholarly interests. This version of the poem is generated by software from a densely encoded electronic text. Unlike other versions of the poem presently online, this copy of the *Comedy* has been edited in XML. Translating poetry into markup entails certain compromises, but we hope that any perceived loss of meaning will be offset by the possibilities the project offers readers to navigate through a considerable amount of data, and to connect this information, or parts of it, in dynamic ways. ("Editing Criteria")

There can be no doubt that the site fulfills these intentions.

The navigation bar is divided among the three sections of the *Comedy*: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. Clicking on one will bring up an overview of the canticle and a "Select Canto" link, which comes up in Italian and English. Each individual canto can be searched by People (PE), Places (PL), Creatures (C), Deities (D), Structures (S), Images (I), and Music (M). Dante's

circumlocutions and periphrases are also tagged to help the student identify the item. The canto location links will open a box with information on the person, place, etc.; identify the image and artist and how it represents the scene; or play the music. These latter two items are especially practical in the classroom for students who have never seen a medieval illumination or heard medieval liturgical music.

As the site accurately explains, "passages pertaining to persons, geographical sites on earth and the afterlife, mythical creatures, deities, and architectural and artistic structures have been tagged" ("Editing Criteria"). Tagging them by "their conventionally recognized proper or standard name (e.g. Minos, Satan, Styx, Virgil) and by various devices of language such as circumlocution, epithets, apostrophes, patronyms, matronyms, and toponyms" links the proper name with whatever alternate identifier Dante has selected ("Editing Criteria"). The same occurs for places, whether geographical or otherworldly as well as for structures. A further strength of the searching device is that "recurring characters such as Virgil, Minos, Eve, St. Peter, and Beatrice" can be traced by their innumerable appellatives throughout the poem ("Editing Criteria").

The English translation is Allen Mandelbaum's, published between 1980 and 1984, and the Giorgio Petrocchi Italian text of the *Commedia*, accepted as the standard version. Since then, many fine English translations have been produced (by such as Anthony Esolen, Robert and Jean Hollander, and Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez); perhaps the English translation could be updated, although that would require a complete overhaul of the search engine of the poem in English.

What follows are multiple tools identified on the menu, most of which cross-reference the links for each canto: "Gallery," "Maps," "Music," "Timeline," "Search," and "Teacher Resources." Under "Gallery" appear five sets of images inspired by the *Comedy*, the originals dating from the fifteenth century to Gustave Doré's nineteenth-century illustrations, all with attached links. In addition, links to other image sites are available. This is a very handy tool for a student to initiate an art history project when studying the *Comedy*, for it provides a quick access to some of the major illustrations of the poem. Under "Maps," many of which are viewable with a pan and zoom feature, can be found various medieval and Renaissance charts of *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. Also, extremely useful for today's student who may know little about geography,

the section includes maps of Europe, Italy, Tuscany, and Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. What follows is an extremely useful series on "Astronomy," again, bringing together in one place a wealth of information (in visual form) about Dante's universe, the Ptolemaic system, and the Christian Aristotelian cosmos, as well as visualizations of Dante's astronomical references. For a teacher this is very useful, as it provides students with a visual means to understand references and gives them access to resources for writing an essay on Dante and Astronomy. Under "Music," we find all the hymns and chants in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* recorded and identified by canto and canticle. The next section is an interactive "Timeline" of historic events pertinent to Dante and to Dante's biography. Click on a name (event or person) and a box pops up with the event, background, and date. For example, "Santa Croce constructed" gives you "First church of Santa Croce (Franciscan basilica of Florence) constructed (1228, 1252). Building of the current structure begins in 1294" ("Timeline"). The timeline can be dragged across the screen.

The "Search" tab is the most useful and impressive of the entire site. This of course is useful for students, teachers, and scholars. First is "Search the Text," which is a concordance to the Italian or English text. The user can select which canticle to search, or all three. Then follows several search criteria: "People," "Places," "Structures," "Creatures," "Deities," and "Images," which replicate what can be searched through the main navigation bar of the three canticles.

The "Teacher Resources" item on the menu provides the instructional video, explaining in detail how the site works, a list of activities for the classroom, and related links (National Endowment for the Humanities seminars, Dante Society of America, Roberto Benigni reciting *Inferno* 5, for example). Since the Dante Society of America will take the user to all the main Dante sites in the United States and Europe, an advanced student can initiate serious scholarly work.

To emphasize, this web site—exceptionally well-designed and very user-friendly—is an excellent resource for students and teachers.

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