

which he could derive Ovidian materials: all the Latin works of the poet, and the vernacular Italian lyric of the time. Both sources are exploited in the *Commedia*. Van Peteghem refers here to her digital humanities project Intertextual Dante, part of the Digital Dante website. She focuses her intertextual analysis on the Cacciaguida episode in *Paradiso* as a means of illustrating the depth of Dante's engagement with his Ovidian sources.

While it is true that the Cacciaguida episode contains two clearly Ovidian passages (*Par.* 17.1–3, “Qual venne a Climenè”; 46–48, “Qual si partio Ipolito di Atene”), I am not convinced of the relevance of some of the Ovidian passages Van Peteghem cites as parallels to Dante's words. For example, it might be that, as commentators have suggested, there is a connection between *Par.* 15.13–18 and *Met.* 2.319–22 (from the Phaeton episode). Saying, however, that at *Met.* 2.323 Phaeton is described as “procul a patria” and that this means, by (supposedly) reworking the preceding passage, that “Dante introduces the theme of exile: a theme he will treat most explicitly in *Par.* 17” (184), sounds very much like an overinterpretation. Chapter 5, “Petrarch's Scattered Ovidian Verses,” aims at locating Petrarch's reception of Ovid in the literary and cultural contexts of contemporary Italy.

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Dante's Christian Ethics: Purgatory and Its Moral Contexts. George Corbett.
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George Corbett's *Dante's Christian Ethics* is a bold reappraisal of the intertextual foundations of the classifications and hermeneutics of vices and virtues in the second canticle of the *Commedia*. Continuing the scholarship of Carlo Delcorno and Siegfried Wenzel, which highlights the affinity of Dante's moral organization of purgatory with the *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* by William Peraldus (ca. 1200–71), Corbett enumerates how Dante's poem more closely echoes that “older, more conservative tradition” of conceptualizing vices than Thomas Aquinas's apparently more innovative *Summa Theologicae* (101). The volume is arranged in nine parts: a brief introduction, seven main chapters grouped into three sections, and a conclusion. Corbett's tone is straightforward and economical, presenting his topics, arguments, and primary and supporting texts with invigorating efficiency throughout. While the primary focus of the volume is specifically *Purgatorio*, the author provides an overview of the moral structure of the entire poem, starting with a summary of the organization of vices in *Inferno*, the correlation of these with their complementary virtues in *Purgatorio*, and then, finally, a review of the virtues represented in *Paradiso*.

Corbett's stated objective is to help orient the reader of the *Commedia* by providing a bird's-eye view of the moral structure of Dante's itinerary in its entirety before focusing

on *Purgatorio* proper, recognizing that the poet intentionally delays providing such a context in the interest of challenging readers “to find our own ethical bearings” (18). Corbett is able to accomplish this task with an engagingly glossed intertextual discussion of the Aristotelian model of the typology of each section of hell delivered by Dante’s guide in *Inferno* 11, as well as a comparative look at his disquisition on the organization of purgatory at the center of the second canticle.

In the volume’s central chapter 4, Corbett enumerates the differences between how Aquinas and Perardus conceptualize vices. This distinction then serves to demonstrate the *Commedia*’s closer proximity to Perardus in the moral organization of the seven terraces of *Purgatorio*. Corbett’s discussion reveals an underlying presumption that the success of Dante’s poetic treatment is, in his estimation, contingent upon the poem’s fidelity to this source text: for while Aquinas uses Aristotelian anthropology “to treat vices and virtues together in terms of their shared good objects, either to be desired or avoided,” Virgil has the merit of describing the moral order of purgatory in line with the way Perardus classifies the vices “according to disordered love by excess or deficiency . . . or to love of an evil” (101). Corbett subsequently proceeds to correlate the four cardinal and three theological virtues in Perardus’s *De virtutibus* to Dante’s *Paradiso*.

Among some of the other notable discussions in the volume, Corbett engages the much-vexed question of the significance of the metonymically cited “Sodomma” (*Inf.* 11.50, *Purg.* 26.40, 79) through the lens of Perardus’s various classifications of the *peccatum contra naturam* (chapter 1). Even more engaging, perhaps, is Corbett’s argument that Dante’s principal sin at the beginning of his journey is not, as conventionally cited, avarice or concupiscence, but rather sloth, *acedia* (chapter 6).

The natural consequence of Corbett’s historico-biographical approach to the poem is to narrow the poetic breath of the text by minimizing its explicitly universalizing program. There are a few instances where Corbett is quick to note Dante’s poetically inventive divergence from his source material or conventional approaches, but he does not interrogate the hermeneutic function of the poet’s fiction, preferring to maintain the historico-biographical specificity of his reading. By ignoring the inclusive “nostra” of the poem’s first line, to say nothing of the “nostra” of the poet’s final vision in “nostra effige,” the specificity of the historico-biographical lens limits the breath of an intrinsically poetic text to the particular histories of individuals in specific places and times, rather than offering a mirror to the human experience writ large.

Corbett has identified a significant deficiency in the commentary tradition and makes efficiently economical use of relevant source materials to offer a compact, stimulating gloss of the moral rationale for Dante’s *Purgatorio*. Readers and researchers interested in an intertextually empirical hermeneutic instrument to supplement their exploration of the *Commedia*, be they students or seasoned scholars, will find this volume invaluable.

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