Digital Readers of Allusive Texts: Ovidian Intertextuality in the *Commedia* and the Digital Concordance on *Intertextual Dante**

Julie Van Peteghem

Abstract: This essay introduces the notion of a digital concordance as a reading and research tool to explore intertextual passages online, and illustrates how a digital concordance of highly allusive texts can change how we read and research such texts. I take as example the digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante*, a project on *Digital Dante* (digitaldante.columbia.edu) developed in collaboration with the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship at Columbia University, which in the first phase highlights the Ovidian intertextuality in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The essay traces the history of the scholarship on Dante's Ovid, identifying its strengths and limitations, especially of the concordances in print. Since the intertextual passages in the *Commedia* require a reading not restricted to the obviously corresponding verses, but attentive to the broader textual contexts, I show how the digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* greatly facilitates such a contextualized reading. The visualization of the corresponding passages (side by side, highlighted, within context) and the search options (by category of text reuse or by canto/book/poem) help the study of (Ovidian) intertextuality in the *Commedia*, as illustrated with examples from the site.

Readers of Dante's *Divina Commedia* have often felt the need to provide glosses and notes to the poem for fellow and future readers. The commentary tradition on the *Commedia* started just a few years after the completion of Dante's poem and is still ongoing. One sort of additional information these commentaries include is the clarification of where and how Dante uses theological, classical, and vernacular sources in the *Commedia*. Sometimes this information is collected in separate concordances, which list passages in Dante's *Commedia* and the corresponding source texts. Now that the contemporary reader can easily access the text of the *Commedia* and the commentaries online, the concordance is to follow.[1]

This essay introduces the concept of a digital concordance through the example of *Intertextual Dante*, a reading and research tool to explore intertextual passages in Dante's *Commedia* online, which I developed in collaboration with the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship at Columbia University and is part of the renewed *Digital Dante* website (digitaldante.columbia.edu). I place this notion of a digital concordance within the history of studying intertextuality in Dante's *Commedia,* from the first mentions in the commentaries to the existing concordances in print, and illustrate how technology can be used to incorporate the strengths of that long tradition and overcome its limitations. As the first phase of *Intertextual Dante* highlights Ovidian intertextuality in the *Commedia*, this will be the focus of this essay.

Studying Ovidian Intertextuality in Dante's *Commedia*

In the most general formulation, intertextuality is concerned with the reuse of a passage from one text in another. Quotations, imitations, reminiscences, echoes, allusions are all specific kinds of text reuse, but some of these are more easily defined than others. Quotations, for instance, are easily understood as the verbatim repetitions of phrases or sentences, while the difficulty of precisely defining allusions (broadly, instances where the reuse is not direct or explicit) goes to the heart of the theoretical questions of what intertextuality exactly is and does. Are these similarities between texts just an inevitable feature of literature, as some theorists of intertextuality have it, or are they the result of an intentional reuse by the author, who had another text on his or her mind while writing? Or is intertextuality solely created by the reader who notices the connection and gives meaning to the reuse of an old passage in a new context (Coffee et al. 419)? There is no critical consensus on these issues other than a shared concern that this kind of research needs to go beyond the detection of instances of intertextuality, and mainly focus on the new meanings the text reuse creates. In this essay, I use "intertextuality" and "text reuse" interchangeably to indicate the general phenomenon, and "allusion" for any instance in which the text reuse is not made explicit by exact word repetition or by the author's mentioning the source.

Dante's *Divina Commedia* is a highly allusive text: Dante works with nearly fifty different sources (but only identifies a few), and more than a tenth of the entire poem features text reuse of some sort.[2] Among Dante's source texts, the work of the Latin poet Ovid occupies a distinct position. As Teodolinda Barolini pointed out, "Ovid is one of the poets Dante most uses, but—with respect to other major poets—least acknowledges" (*Dante's Poets* 196). Vergil is the only Latin author Dante works with more than Ovid, but while Vergil became the pilgrim's guide Virgilio for almost two canticles of the *Commedia* and Dante calls his work a model (for himself in *Inf.* 1.82-87, and for Statius in *Purg.* 21.94-102), Ovid only briefly appears as a character in *Inf.* 4.90 and Dante tells him in *Inf.* 25.97-102 that his own work is better.[3] We know Dante had direct knowledge of Ovid's writings: in his treatises and letters he often quotes Ovid and several Italian phrases from the *Commedia* come close to being literal translations of Ovid's Latin. But while at times Dante borrows Ovid's language and characters in an explicit and straightforward manner, far more often the text reuse takes the form of allusions tucked away into the text of the *Commedia*. Not surprisingly, then, readers of the *Commedia* have often wanted to identify, organize, and define this vast amount of Ovidian material.

In the commentaries on the *Commedia*, the main focus was for a long time on the identification of Dante's source texts. I illustrate this by looking at the commentaries on one of the two cantos that mentions Ovid by name, canto 25 of the *Inferno*. In this canto, Dante tells Ovid to be silent about his characters Cadmus and Arethusa: his descriptions of transformation in the *Commedia* outdo those of the Latin poet (*Inf.* 25.97-102).[4] It is now well understood that Dante used several Ovidian stories to shape the transformations in this canto, which creates tensions with Dante's claims of originality and authority over Ovid.[5] The first commentators, however, focused on the identification of the Ovidian characters mentioned by Dante (Cadmus and Arethusa) and other passages that showed similarities with Ovidian verses. Their comments demonstrate a good knowledge of Ovid's writings: they include the precise book and verse numbers of Cadmus's and Arethusa's stories in the *Metamorphoses*, paraphrase their stories often at great length, and

mention other works by the Latin poet. For instance, one of the earliest commentators, Guido da Pisa (1327-28) refers to or cites passages from Ovid's *Fasti* (in his note on 25.25-27) and the *Heroides* (in his note on *Inf.* 25.58-60). That last reference is also the first time a commentator on *Inf.* 25 establishes a connection between Dante's language in the *Commedia* and his Ovidian source text. Many commentators will do that after him, bit by bit revealing how much the images of Dante's metamorphoses described in this canto are similar to Ovid's transformation stories of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (first noted in 1440 by Guiniforto delli Bargigi, comment on *Inf.* 25.46-57) and Cadmus and Harmonia (first noted in the commentary by Giovan Battista Gelli [1541-63] on *Inf.* 25.136-41). While some commentators further explore the connections between the two texts in more depth,[6] the general tendency is to write about intertextuality in the shortest possible way: the identification of the corresponding passages without much more explanation.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a series of studies marked the growing interest in identifying and organizing Dante's sources in a much more systematic way: for instance, Luigi Venturi's *Le similitudini dantesche* (1874) organizes Dante's similes in the *Commedia* thematically and identifies Dante's sources; Gioachino Szombathely's *Dante e Ovidio* (1888) goes through the *Metamorphoses* book by book, listing and discussing all corresponding passages in the *Commedia*; Edward Moore's *Scripture and Classical Authors in Dante* (1896) dedicates individual chapters to the influence of Scripture, classical texts, and Christian authors from Late Antiquity on Dante's writings, and includes indexes of quotations for each source text. These works, especially Moore's, became at their turn frequently mentioned in the commentaries, and provided later scholars with extensive materials for a more focused and reflective approach to the study of intertextuality in the *Commedia*.

Before turning to the scholarly writings that resulted from this initial work of identification and organization, a short note on methodology. After all, the work of scholars such as Venturi, Szombathely, and Moore is one of interpretation as well, the result of their choices of what and what not to include, according to their own definition of intertextuality. Unfortunately, in these early works this definition is not always clearly specified: only Moore explicitly explains the rationale behind his system used for the indexes of quotations. (While Moore uses the word "quotations" to describe the content of his lists, it would be more precise to call them concordances – lists of corresponding passages in Dante's writings and his source texts – of which quotations are only a part.)[7] For these concordances, he divided the pairs of passages into three categories: "direct citations," "obvious references or imitations," and "allusions and reminiscences" (4, 45-46). At the same time, Moore is the first to temper the importance of this system of classification, admitting that he himself had often hesitated when classifying an entry (46). For his study of Ovid's influence on Dante's *Commedia*, the added value of these categories is limited: with hardly any direct citations, about two out of three Ovid-inspired lines in Moore's concordance fall under the category of "obvious references or imitations," a broad definition that covers many different uses of Ovid's texts.[8]

More than a century after Moore's impressive study, Steno Vazzana's *Dante e la "bella scola"* (2002) includes a new "indice di concordanze," lists of corresponding passages in Dante's *Commedia* and the works of several Latin authors. In his concordance the majority of the Ovidian lines come from the *Metamorphoses*, but it also includes many new passages from all of

Ovid's other works. Unlike Moore, Vazzana does not categorize the entries or explain his criteria for inclusion. Only in the introduction, does he point out – and then only briefly -- that his focus will be mainly on language (10). Between the publication of Moore's and Vazzana's concordances, scholars had proposed to structure the Ovidian material in the *Commedia* according to principles of organization other than verbal similarities. For instance, Michelangelo Picone took a thematic approach, characterizing Ovidian myths in the *Commedia* as "objective" (i.e., explaining historical facts) or "subjective" (i.e., explaining the experience of the pilgrim) ("L'Ovidio di Dante" 126); Madison U. Sowell found Ovidian myths that run "horizontally" through the cantos and "vertically" through the canticles of the *Commedia* (10); Kevin Brownlee proposed to distinguish between Ovid-inspired characters, similes, and similes regarding the pilgrim ("Dante and the Classical Poets" 113). Picone, Sowell, and Brownlee did not systematically apply their proposed categories to the Ovidian material in the *Commedia*, but their writings nevertheless show a continued interest in giving structure to it.

Picone's and Sowell's essays belong to a distinct group of writings that give short general overviews of Dante's use of Ovid's oeuvre: introductory essays, book chapters, and dictionary entries, often with the title "Dante's Ovid" or a variant of it.[9] Not all of these essays propose categories to structure the Ovidian material in Dante's writings, as Picone's and Sowell's essays did. But most of them share a focus on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Dante's *Inferno*. A clear exception is the most recent essay of this type, Warren Ginsberg's "Dante's Ovids" (2011), which calls attention to the different phases in both Ovid's and Dante's literary careers.

In addition to these short overviews that describe the general traits of Dante's use of Ovid, the scholarship includes a much larger corpus of essays that break down this subject into very specific topics, such as Dante's reuse of a particular Ovidian story, or Ovid's influence on a canto or series of cantos. In the early 1990s, two collections of such essays (Jacoff and Schnapp; Sowell) shifted the focus from studying Ovidian intertextuality in Dante's *Inferno* to the other two canticles, arguing that Ovid's influence is equally present in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* – if not more. While this was an important new direction in the scholarship, the majority of the close readings still focus on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Dante's *Commedia*, and not their other writings. One of the *Intertextual Dante* project's goals is to further broaden the scope of this analysis and eventually feature the complete oeuvres of Dante and of the authors he reuses in his writings.

Another important common thread through these close readings is the attention given to the larger context of the Ovidian episodes that Dante selected (instead of focusing only on the corresponding passages, which, as we saw before, was the way most commentators wrote about the subject). In an essay on Dantean intertextuality, Christopher Kleinhenz convincingly argues that Dante intended his citations in the *Commedia* to be interpreted with attention to the broader textual context (184-85). He illustrates this with a passage in *Purg.* 2: when a boat of souls approaches mount Purgatory, Dante notes that they were singing the psalm *In exitu Israel de Aegypto* "con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scripto" ("with what is written after of that psalm" [*Purg.* 2.48]). In other words, Dante is telling us that not only the quoted opening words but the entire text of the psalm are relevant for the understanding of the citation in this canto. This example features a citation, the most direct form of including source texts, but we should also look at what is "written after" for the more obscure intertextual passages in the *Commedia*,

where Dante does not cite his sources. As we will see later in the discussion of *Intertextual Dante*, it is one of the main features of the digital concordance to facilitate this kind of contextualized reading of Dante's source materials.

These two short forms of writing – the general overviews and the close readings of specific passages – together with the concordances and the notes on Ovidian source passages in the commentaries make up the current state of the scholarship on Dante's Ovid. The topic has clearly received plenty of scholarly attention, but ultimately the literature still remains somewhat fragmented, probably because of the lack of a comprehensive study on the subject. The specificity of certain contributions (the notes in commentaries, and, to some extent, the close readings) usually leaves little room to reflect on the general traits of Dante's use of Ovid; the general overview essays are often too partial to Dante's use of the *Metamorphoses* and their short format at times leads to inevitable overgeneralizations; the concordances offer completeness but little to no interpretation. Rooted in this tradition of studying Dante's Ovid, the digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* builds on the scholarship's strengths and uses the advantages of a digital approach to reading and researching texts to address its shortcomings.

Intertextuality and the Digital Humanities

Digital Humanities research on intertextuality continues to study how texts are reused in other texts, but now with the prospect of exploring much larger corpora than previously possible. Projects focus on the detection of (new) instances of intertextuality, and the visualization and searchability of the results, both those obtained by human compilation and those obtained through computational models. The switch from traditional to digital approaches to the study of intertextuality comes with new questions about definition and methodology. Where it is possible to compile a print concordance of corresponding passages or write an essay on an intertextual passage without defining what is precisely understood by "intertextuality," technology cannot be involved to detect instances of intertextuality without a clear definition of what such an instance should look like. As we saw before in the first section of this essay, text reuse takes different forms: it ranges from the obvious to the oblique, from quotations (the literal reuse of words or phrases from one text into another) to allusions (the more obscure instances where the reuse is not direct or explicit). Different digital approaches are needed to detect them.

Within the digital framework, it has become possible to search large text corpora for the precise recurrence of words and phrases, and use the results to make observations and interpretations of various aspects of text reuse: the new context in which the copied passage is inserted, the distribution of borrowed quotations within a text, tracking how a certain word or phrase is reused over time – to name a few of the aspects that tools such as PhiloLogic, eTRACES, and AntConc can explore. Allusions, on the other hand, are much more difficult to discover in both the traditional and digital setting: for human readers it requires an extensive and thorough understanding of all the texts involved, and the difficulty of formulating what counts as an allusion (a problem the quotations do not pose) is one that the researcher writing the computational model to detect such instances cannot avoid. Nevertheless, even models for this more difficult form of digital detection have yielded promising results: the method to detect allusions in Latin poetry developed by Coffee et al. for the *Tesserae* project searches for at least two-word phrases with the same lemmas at the sentence level (adhering to the "traditional

scholarly identification of *loci similes*, which takes two-word pairs as the most basic and common form of intertextuality" [386]); the method proposed by Bamman and Crane focuses on the use of identical words, word order, syntactic similarity, metrical and phonetic similarity, semantic similarity ("Logic and Discovery of Textual Allusion").

An additional difficulty for the automated detection of text reuse arises when the source and target texts are not written in the same language. Again, literal translations of phrases and sentences from one language into another will be easier to discover than instances where an author writing in one language just alludes to a sentence originally written in another. Not surprisingly, models addressing multilingual text reuse have been more successful in detecting the former than the latter (Bamman and Crane, "Discovering Multilingual Text Reuse").[10]

When thinking about intertextuality in Dante's *Commedia* within a digital context, two interconnected issues immediately arise. In short, these are that the majority of instances of intertextuality in the *Commedia* are cross-language quotations and allusions. As pointed out before, Dante rarely quotes from his Latin or vernacular sources, and rarely literally translates any of his non-Italian source texts. Most of the time, he transforms his Latin sources in his Italian poem in a rather oblique way, and often his text reuse runs over more than one sentence. Thus, the instances that we would expect a computational model to detect are actually the ones that are the hardest to discover by human or machine reading. To work with the two languages in this case would require a digital translation lexicon (Latin-modern Italian for the Latin sources, and medieval Italian-modern Italian for the *Commedia*) and a strong computational model that can address all these difficulties. For the moment, these resources are not available. Looking forward, with those elements in place, the *Commedia* would be a good text for testing new models of text reuse detection: as we saw in the first section of this essay, there already exists a significant amount of research on the topic with which to compare the automatically obtained results. But for the reasons here listed, *Intertextual Dante* is a digital project that right now solely works on searching and visualizing the intertextual passages that I compiled.

The Digital Concordance on *Intertextual Dante*

The *Intertextual Dante* project is part of the renewed *Digital Dante* website (digitaldante.columbia.edu). In the early 1990s, Jennifer Hogan developed one of the first online Dante resources together with Columbia University's Institute for Learning Technology. The new iteration of *Digital Dante* under the editorship of Teodolinda Barolini is a collaboration between the Department of Italian at Columbia University and the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship (CDRS) and the Humanities and History Division at Columbia University Libraries/Information Services. *Intertextual Dante*, which I developed together with CDRS, is one of the new digital projects on the site.[11]

Intertextual Dante features a reading and research tool – a digital concordance – that offers new ways to explore Dante's reuse of other texts in the *Commedia.* The ultimate goal is to create digital editions of the *Divina Commedia* and Dante's other works that offer the most complete overview of Dante's reuse of his source texts, when at the same time also allowing for very specific searches and attention to the textual context. While the site will of course become more powerful and insightful as more texts are added, the first phase of the project focuses on Ovidian

intertextuality in the *Commedia*. At its core, *Intertextual Dante* still contains lists of corresponding passages in Dante's *Commedia* and his source texts, just like a concordance in print. But on *Intertextual Dante* these corresponding passages, the entries of the concordance, are visually represented side by side and can be searched in various ways. In what follows, I describe how the digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* addresses the limitations of concordances in print and functions as a research tool.

On the opening page of *Intertextual Dante* two columns feature the complete text of Dante's *Commedia* (left column) and of his sources (right column). These text columns are scrollable and the clickable tables of contents (far left and right side) allow users to jump to specific passages within the texts (see fig. 1). In the *Intertextual Dante* editions of the *Commedia* and Dante's source texts each entry of the concordance is marked with the icon of a manicule, a nod to the drawings of a hand with pointing finger indicating noteworthy passages in medieval and Renaissance manuscripts. Clicking on this icon will highlight the entire passage in one text and scroll up or down in the other text column to the corresponding passage, which will be highlighted as well (see fig. 2).

Figure 1. Current opening page of *Intertextual Dante*. In the center, the two scrollable columns contain the text of Dante's *Commedia*, starting with the *Inferno* (left column), and Ovid's works, starting with the *Amores* (right column). The clickable tables of contents (far left and right side) are the first way in which the entries on *Intertextual Dante* can be searched: one can look for intertextual passages in a specific canto of the *Commedia* or book, poem, letter, or story by Ovid. At the bottom of the page, the drop-down or drop-up menus (depending on the browser) contain all entries belonging to the different categories of text reuse: word choice, character, event, place, and simile.

Figure 2. View after the icon of the manicule next to *Inf.* 1.4 is clicked. The two corresponding passages (*Inf.* 1.4-6 and *Tr.* 3.6.29-30) are highlighted and aligned. The tables of contents indicate the canto number (Dante's *Inferno* 1) and the precise book, poem, letter, or story by Ovid (*Tristia* 3.6). In the text box on top of the page, a comment explains the connection between the two texts and contexts and specifies to which category of text reuse the entry belongs. One can scroll up or down to read Dante's canto and Ovid's letter in their entirety.

On *Intertextual Dante* the *Commedia* and Dante's source texts can thus be read side by side in the order desired. In contrast, concordances in print need to commit to one order and as a result can only highlight one direction of the intertextuality: they first list the passages from Ovid in the order they appear in his texts and then all corresponding passages in Dante's works (which highlights the popular Ovidian passages), or the other way around (which makes it easy to see where Dante works with Ovid the most).[12] The digital concordance, on the other hand, gives the option to decide on the starting point of the search: for instance, one can start reading the text of Dante's *Inferno*, easily see where the intertextual passages are (all indicated in the texts with the icon of a manicule), and look up the corresponding passages in Ovid's works, or start with Ovid's texts and search for passages Dante reused. This gives the reader more complete information about the distribution of Ovidian material in the *Commedia*: the changing presence or absence of manicules indicates which are the "Ovidian" cantos in the *Commedia* and which Ovidian texts appealed more or less to Dante. The two-column organization on *Intertextual Dante* makes it possible to move back and forth efficiently between the *Commedia* and Dante's source texts.

Once a manicule has been clicked and the corresponding passages appear side by side on the screen, this presentation greatly facilitates the kind of contextualized reading that, as I argued earlier, the discussion of Dante's text reuse requires. The digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* indicates precisely where the corresponding passages are found in both works: it gives the larger Ovidian textual context from which Dante excerpted the passage as well as the entire episode of the *Commedia* in which the Ovidian passage is reused. In other words, the corresponding passages are literally placed into context. By scrolling up and down in both text columns, one can immediately read what came before and after the highlighted passages in both texts and determine how much of this surrounding text is relevant to the interpretation of the text reuse. In the text box on top of the page a brief comment explains the connection between the two texts and contexts (see fig. 2). These are remarkable departures from the concordances in print, which only give the references to the two corresponding passages and, in contrast to the digital concordance, exist completely outside of the textual context.

To facilitate a reading that is even more attentive to the context, all works displayed in the columns are broken down into textual divisions: Dante's *Commedia* into canticles and cantos; Ovid's *Fasti* and *Ars amatoria* into books, his *Amores* into the individual poems, the *Heroides*, *Tristia,* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* into the individual letters, and his *Metamorphoses* into books and stories. As pointed out before, the clickable tables of contents make it possible to search specifically for these divisions (see figs. 1 and 2).

Further search options are available in the menus on the bottom of the page, addressing the different kinds of text reuse in the *Commedia* (see fig. 1). The scope is to highlight the distinctive traits of how Dante works with his source texts throughout the three canticles: not all instances of text reuse are equal, and sheer numbers easily mask significant differences among them. *Intertextual Dante* categorizes the entries of the concordance, using a new system to do so. Language remains the overarching criterion: verbal similarities between the passages in Dante's *Commedia* and his source texts. In that respect, this approach does not differ too much from Moore's, which tries to indicate how certain it is that Dante had Ovid in mind, or Vazzana's, which also focuses on linguistic similarities. But instead of further dividing the entries based on the degree of closeness between the corresponding passages (which, as we have seen in the discussion of Moore's concordance, yields limited results for an author such as Ovid), I work with three categories that illuminate specific stylistic, structural, and rhetorical aspects of Dante's text: word choice, characters/place/events, and similes. Working with these criteria, I collected and evaluated the entries from the works on Ovidian intertextuality in the *Commedia* by Szombathely, Moore, Paratore ("Ovidio e Dante"), and Vazzana, and complemented them with own findings.

Whereas Dante's more obvious reuse of Ovid's works includes names of characters, places, or events, the "word choice" category contains the more obscure instances that are tucked away into the text of the *Commedia*. In most cases, there are at least two verbal connections (literal translations or synonyms in Italian) between Ovid's and Dante's texts (in that respect, this approach resembles Coffee et al.'s, whose algorithm searches for at least two matches of dictionary headwords in both source and target texts, with the difference that I do not limit the text reuse to the sentence level as they did), but sometimes it can be just one word that establishes the connection. However, this concordance does not include the literal translation of

one Latin word into Dante's Italian, if that word is found in other Latin authors besides Ovid. For instance, when Dante writes, "Sì come neve tra le vive travi / per lo dosso d'Italia si congela" ("Even as snow among the sap-filled trees / along the spine of Italy will freeze" [*Purg*. 30.85-86]), his use of the word "travi" stands out because it is a *hapax* in the *Commedia* and clearly a Latinism. But these verses should not be included in a concordance merely because Ovid uses the original Latin word "trabs" in a passage for which no connection to Dante is found – especially since the word is found in other Latin writers.[13]

Characters/events/places is the second category; the reader can look for their recurrence throughout the *Commedia*. The criteria for inclusion are the same as for the word choice category: for instance, the shared mention of a classical character's name is not sufficient to establish a connection between Ovid's and Dante's texts; Dante needs to include particular words or details to indicate that Ovid's Latin text, and not another version of the story, was his source of inspiration. For example, despite the fact that the giant Cacus is mentioned in texts by Livy, Horace, Vergil, and Ovid, Dante includes particular details about Cacus's death (*Inf*. 25.25-33) that allow us to identify Ovid's *Fasti* as his source text. Of course Dante often combines different sources in a single passage; but at this point, the concordance only indicates his Ovidian sources.

Similes are the third and last category. Also here only those instances are included where Dante's language indicates his knowledge of the source texts. Given that the simile is a highly distinguishing feature of Dante's writing, it is informative to dedicate a separate category to them.[14] In fact, while the strongest presence of Ovid's texts is found in *Inferno* (i.e., the highest total number of instances), Dante uses Ovid-inspired similes constantly throughout the *Commedia*, inserting a similar amount in all three canticles. This is the sort of nuance that gets lost when just looking at the general numbers of intertextual passages, while on *Intertextual Dante* it is possible to carry out more specific searches within those entries of the concordance.

In sum, these are the search options on the current site: users of the digital concordance can explore the different categories of text reuse (in the menus on the bottom of the page) or look up specific parts of Dante's or Ovid's works (in the text columns or in the tables of contents); by clicking an entry they can display on the screen any two corresponding passages side by side, highlighted, and within context. (In a later phase of the project, a separate search page will be added.) Now let us look at some concrete examples of the kind of reading and interpretation this digital concordance facilitates and favors.

On *Intertextual Dante*, the first instance of Ovidian intertextuality in the *Commedia* is already found in the second tercet of the *Inferno* (see fig. 2). After the opening tercet, where we find the pilgrim lost in the dark wood, Dante the author writes how difficult it is to describe that moment: "Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura / esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte / che nel pensier rinova la paura!" ("Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, / that savage forest, dense and difficult, / which even in recall renews my fear" [*Inf*. 1.4-6]). The corresponding passage in Ovid's writings (from the "word choice" category) is: "mensque reformidat, veluti sua vulnera, tempus / illud, et admonitu fit novus ipse pudor" ("my mind shrinks from those days as from wounds, at the mere reminder / my shame flares up afresh" [*Tr*. 3.6.29-30]).[15] In print the concordance (first included in Vazzana 147) reveals only this bit of information, the similar language at the

sentence level: in both excerpts the authors look back at a moment in the past and retelling that memory renews the feeling they then experienced.

The digital concordance, on the other hand, presents the texts side by side and situates both passages within the narrative units from which they were excerpted. It is already interesting that the first Ovidian source text Dante works with in the *Commedia* is not the expected, much more used *Metamorphoses*. That he selected a passage from Ovid's *Tristia*, the letters written during his exile in Tomis near the Black Sea, is quite a meaningful choice. Even though in the narrative of the *Commedia* (set in 1300) the pilgrim's exile is presented as a future event, it was a harsh reality for Dante composing his poem (from 1308 on). The prophecies of his future exile in the *Commedia* are Dante's direct way of incorporating this event in his poem; the reuse of Ovid's exile writings is indirect. In *Tristia* 3.6, the letter from which Dante selected a passage, the exiled Ovid writes to a dear friend about his mistake ("error" [*Tr.* 3.6.26]) that forced him to leave Rome, if it can be called a mistake – "stultitia" or foolishness would be a better word (*Tr.* 3.6.35). Ovid even asks if "every good and advantageous path" is closed ("Omne bonae claudent utilitatis iter?" [*Tr.* 3.6.16]), which brings Dante's "diritta via . . . smarrita" ("lost the path that does not stray" [*Inf.* 1.3]) in mind. This is one of the letters in which Ovid addresses, be it in vague terms, the reason for his exile, the extreme harshness of his punishment, and the despair it caused him.

The user of the concordance on *Intertextual Dante* finds this content by scrolling up and down in the text of Ovid's letter on the site. For the interpretation of the verbal similarities between Dante's *Inf.* 1.4-6 and Ovid's *Tr.* 3.6.29-30, the themes of this Ovidian letter need to be taken into consideration as well. By reusing those Ovidian verses, I argue, Dante also evoked the broader themes of Ovid's letter: immediately at the opening of the *Commedia*, he identifies himself with Ovid as a fellow undeserved exile. Dante explicitly calls himself an "exul immeritus" in the salutations of several letters written in exile (*Epistles* III, V, VI, and VII); a contextualized reading of Dante's reuse of verses from one of Ovid's exile letters reveals how in a subtle but powerful manner he does the same at the very opening of his poem.

Besides providing the opportunity to read the corresponding passages in context, the digital concordance also has the option to search for specific divisions in the source texts (e.g., a poem from the *Amores*, a letter from the *Heroides*, a book of the *Fasti*), and see where they reappear in Dante's *Commedia*, or the other way around. To illustrate the potential of such searches, we return to canto 25 of the *Inferno*, the example in the discussion of the commentaries on the *Commedia* in the first section of this essay. There we already saw that Dante mainly worked with two Ovidian stories to structure the metamorphoses in his canto: the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (*Met.* 4.274-388) for the transformation described in *Inf.* 25.49-93, and the story of Cadmus and Harmonia (*Met.* 4.563-603) for the one described in *Inf.* 25.103-41.[16] Searching the concordance for these passages in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, one finds this information, but also that Dante uses the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus in three more passages in the *Inferno*. We will focus here on the first two instances, which are found toward the end of the same canto 25, where we note the similarities between *Inf.* 25.94-102 and *Met.* 4.276 (see fig. 3), and between *Inf.* 25.142-44 and *Met.* 4.284 (see fig. 4).

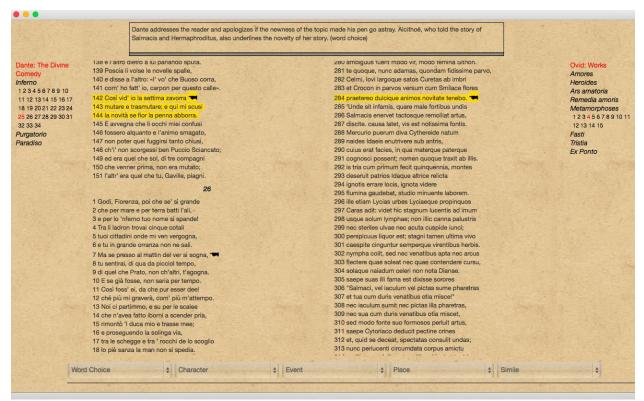Figure 3. The corresponding passages *Inf.* 25.94-102 and *Met.* 4.276.

Figure 4. The corresponding passages *Inf.* 25.142-44 and *Met.* 4.284.

Once again, the full scope of Dante's text reuse only becomes clear when reading the Ovidian verses in context. *Met.* 4.276 and *Met.* 4.284 are the first and last verses of the introduction to the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, told by Alcithoë, one of the three daughters of Minyas or Minyades (*Met.* 4.276-84). Refusing to participate in the festivities for Bacchus in their town, the Minyades stay at home, weaving and telling stories instead. In this frame story of the storytelling sisters, Ovid introduces the theme of poetic novelty: before telling their tales, the Minyades openly discuss the requirements of a good story, turning the passage into a metanarrative reflection. Defining what constitutes good storytelling in the *Metamorphoses*, the sisters repeatedly stress the importance of originality. The first sister goes through a list of possible stories she could tell (*Met.* 4.43-52) and eventually picks the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, "quoniam uulgaris fabula non est" (*Met.* 4.53), because it is not well-known. Similarly, the second sister Alcithoë rejects "uulgatos" or "common" stories (*Met.* 4.276) and selects the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus based on the criterion of novelty (*Met.* 4.276-84).[17] In these passages, Ovid is obviously alluding to the Callimachean trope of novelty –the view that a poet should always walk untrodden paths (Anderson 417). According to Callimachus, short writings should strive for innovation; Ovid, however, applies Callimachus's principle in a fifteen book-long epic composed of more than one hundred stories skillfully woven together. The passage of the storytelling Minyades is one of the metanarrative moments in the *Metamorphoses* where Ovid through the voice of his characters addresses this poetics of novelty.

The metanarrative tone of the Ovidian passage resonated with Dante, who in *Inf.* 25 also makes the case for a new and novel way of writing about transformation, different from the traditional metamorphosis stories by Lucan and Ovid. From Alcithoë's introductory remarks to the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, Dante selected two key words that allowed him to evoke the same tone and connect each reuse from this Ovidian story to his own poetic message in the *Commedia*. More specifically, in her introduction Alcithoë says that she will keep silent ("taceo") about well-known stories (*Met.* 4.276), just as Dante tells Lucan and Ovid to be silent ("taccia") about their common and ordinary stories of transformation (*Inf.* 25.94-102) (see fig. 3). Instead of the same old love stories, Alcithoë promises a story with "dulci nouitate" ("sweet newness" [*Met.* 4.284]);[18] at the end of canto 25 Dante uses "newness" as the excuse if his pen had wandered off: "qui mi scusi / la novità se fior la penna abborra" (*Inf.* 25.143-44) (see fig. 4).[19]

These are two instances where the text reuse is established on the basis of just one repeated word: novelty (Ovid's "nouitate" and Dante's "novità") and silence (Ovid's "taceo" and Dante's "taccia"). There is of course a grammatical difference between Alcithoë's simple present "I keep silent" and Dante's exhortative subjunctive "let [Lucan / Ovid] keep silent." At a first reading, each passage represents a different rhetorical trope: the Ovidian "taceo" together with "non loquor" (*Met.* 4.279) and "praetereo" (*Met.* 4.284) turn Alcithoë's introduction into a *praeteritio*, the rhetorical trope of mentioning without mentioning; Dante's repeated "taccia" is the Italian version of the Latin *taceat* topos, a formula used to express poetic superiority over predecessors (Curtius 162-65). But taking all Ovidian elements in this canto into consideration, we see that Dante's passage functions exactly like Alcithoë's *praeteritio*. While mentioning the stories she will not tell, Alcithoë gives a short summary of each of these stories (*Met.* 4.277-83). Similarly, by silencing the poets Lucan and Ovid and their characters he will surpass, Dante names the very stories and authors that turn out to be fundamental to the shaping of his own metamorphoses in the *Commedia* (*Inf.* 25.94-102): as mentioned before, Dante based the transformations in this

canto on the Ovidian stories of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus and Cadmus and Harmonia (and also Lucan was a source text). Dante's repeated reuse of elements from the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, highlighted by the digital concordance, suggests that Dante selected this Ovidian story not only for its imagery, but also for its metapoetic reflections on tradition and innovation.

The digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* also indicates where Dante uses two or more Ovidian sources for the same passage in the *Commedia*. This gives interesting insights into Dante's technique of working with his sources. Take for instance canto 30 of the *Inferno*, which opens with two long similes based on Ovidian stories. In the first simile (*Inf.* 30.1-12), Dante compares the rage of the falsifiers found in this canto to the rage of king Athamas. Turned insane by Juno, Athamas killed his son Learchus (thinking he was a lion cub); his wife Ino saved their other son by jumping together off a cliff. The concordance shows that Dante works with two Ovidian source texts here: the story of Athamas as told in the *Metamorphoses* (4.416-562) and the version in the *Fasti* (6.485-500).[20]

By looking at the two source texts, we can see how Dante took over elements from both to create his simile in the *Commedia*. From the version in the *Metamorphoses* (see fig. 5), he reused Athamas's words: "io, comites, his retia tendite siluis! / hic modo cum gemina uisa est mihi prole leaena" ("Huntsmen, your nets! And spread them over these woods here! / Look! I've sighted a lioness, there with two of her cubs!" [*Met.* 4.513-14]), which in the *Commedia* became: "Tendiam le reti, sì ch'io pigli / la leonessa e ' leoncini al varco" ("Let's spread the nets, to take the lioness / together with her cubs along the pass" [*Inf.* 30.7-8]). This is one of the instances where Dante comes close to translating Ovid's Latin verses into the Italian of the *Commedia*.

Figure 5. The corresponding passages *Inf.* 30.1-12 and *Met.* 4.512-30.

The passage in the *Fasti* does not show such close verbal similarities with Dante's text, but it was undoubtedly a source text for Dante. Looking at the passages side by side, we notice that Dante structured his simile in exactly the same way as Ovid's account in the *Fasti* (see fig. 6). Ovid first gives the reason for Juno's anger (Jupiter's love affair with Semele, Ino's sister and Athamas's sister-in-law, and the fact Ino took care of Semele's and Jupiter's son Bacchus [6.485-88]); he then describes Athamas's madness and the murder of their son Learchus (6.489-92); and narrates how Ino saved herself and their other son Melicertes by jumping in the sea (6.493-98). In almost the same amount of verses (14 verses in Ovid's *Fasti,* 12 verses in Dante's *Commedia*), Dante follows the same narrative outline: Juno's anger because of Semele (*Inf.* 30.1-3), Athamas's madness and the killing of Learchus (*Inf.* 30.4-11), the unnamed Ino who saves the second child (*Inf.* 30.12). From this example we learn that Dante is as familiar with Ovid's *Fasti* as with the *Metamorphoses*, and that this familiarity is not only seen in verbal similarities but also in the reuse of the narrative structure and sequence of events. It will be interesting to further explore Dante's technique of combining sources, when more texts will be added to *Intertextual Dante*.

Figure 6. The corresponding passages *Inf.* 30.1-12 and *Fasti* 6.485-98.

As we have seen in these examples, the digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* makes it possible to carry out very specific searches and pay close attention to the broader textual context of the Ovidian passages Dante selected in the *Commedia*, just as Dante himself did. Throughout his works, Dante reveals himself to be a very attentive reader of the Latin poet: his text reuse of Ovid is not an act of anthology – plucking meaningful but isolated words and phrases – but rather a careful process of responding to larger passages and stories within Ovid's texts. A simple comparison between the obviously corresponding passages in Ovid and Dante is thus not sufficient to describe Dante's close engagement with Ovidian material. As the Ovid scholar Charles Segal wrote, "context is an important clue to Ovid's mood and meaning" (262) – something Dante realized centuries earlier. The digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante* allows us to focus precisely on that.

Notes

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[*] The *Intertextual Dante* project was conceived while I was working on my dissertation (2013), and is first outlined in its conclusion. The lists of the Ovidian passages in the *Commedia*, included in appendix, were the basis for the entries of the digital concordance on *Intertextual Dante*. Parts of this essay are based on that study, such as the system to categorize the different kinds of text reuse, which are also used on the site. I developed *Intertextual Dante* in collaboration with the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship at Columbia University (2014).

[1] The text of the *Commedia* can be consulted online on several websites, including the *Digital Dante* site to which the *Intertextual Dante* project belongs. The *Dartmouth Dante Project* includes over seventy-five commentaries on the *Commedia*, which also can be consulted at their *Dante Lab* digital workspace. The most recent commentary on the *Commedia*, Teodolinda Barolini's *Commento Baroliniano*, is published on *Digital Dante*.

[2] These broad calculations are based on the concordance in Moore 342-94 (discussed later in this essay), which are still the most complete lists of intertextual passages in Dante's works.

[3] All quotations from the *Commedia* refer to the text established by Petrocchi. The English translations are by Mandelbaum, which are also available on *Digital Dante*.

[4] I reviewed all the commentaries included in the *Dartmouth Dante Project*.

[5] On this issue, see especially Cioffi.

[6] Only from the twentieth century on, commentators seem more interested in providing longer and more detailed notes on intertextual passages. A notable earlier exception is the commentary by Castelvetro (1570).

[7] Moore used the term "concordance" twice to describe Fay's work, the alphabetical list of all words used in the *Commedia* with references to where they appear in the text (45, 130).

[8] Almost all of the "direct citations" are found in Dante's treatises, especially the *Convivio*. Moore lists only two direct citations in the *Commedia*: *Inf*. 25.97 and *Inf*. 25.98 – the moment where Dante tells Ovid to be silent about Cadmus and Arethusa – correspond to *Met*. 4.570-88 and to *Met* 5.572ff. – the passages in the *Metamorphoses* where Ovid tells these stories (Moore 349, 350, 363). Moore's category of "allusions and reminiscences" seems the perfect label for cases of doubt, where Ovid's text is but one of the sources featuring a certain classical character or motif.

[9] In chronological order, the "Dante's Ovid" essays are: Szombathely; Moore 206-28; Palgen; Settineri; Paratore, "Ovidio"; Paratore, "Ovidio e Dante"; Hawkins, "Dante's Ovid"; Sowell 1-15, Hawkins, "The Metamorphosis of Dante"; Picone, "L'Ovidio di Dante"; Brugnoli; Picone, "Dante e i miti"; Clay; Brownlee, "Ovid"; Vazzana 123-47; Ginsberg, "Dante's Ovids: Allegory"; Wetherbee; Ginsberg, "Dante's Ovids."

[10] For all projects involving computational models, it is important to stress that this kind of research does not take the human out of literary studies, in the sense of neglecting "the significance of gender, race, class, religion, sexuality, and history" (as Clement par. 1 has it), or in the sense that the role of the researcher would drastically diminish. As many articles on Digital Humanities research stress, the computer technology does not replace but rather supplements, modifies, redefines traditional research (see, for instance, Cooney, Roe, and Olsen par. 39). Researchers construct the computational models, determine which results are meaningful and valid, and so on.

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[11] On the history and relaunch of the *Digital Dante* website, see the Note from the Editor Teodolinda Barolini: http://digitaldante.columbia.edu/about-us/.

[12] Szombathely, Moore 349-51, and Vazzana 146-51 are examples of the first approach and follow the order of Ovid's texts, my own print concordance ("Italian Readers of Ovid," appendix) lists the passages in the order they appear in Dante's *Commedia*.

[13] For other instances where the word is used in Latin literature, see "trabs" in Lewis and Short, which includes passages by Vergil, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus, among others.

[14] See Brownlee, "Dante and the Classical Poets" 113, which inspired the inclusion of this category.

[15] All quotations from Ovid's *Tristia* refer to the Oxford Classical Texts edition by Owen, and the English translations are by Green. Some editions, for instance the Loeb edition, have "dolor" instead of "pudor" at v. 30. While these are different sentiments, it should be pointed out that Ovid (re)mentions the feeling of shame – "pudorem" – at the following v. 31.

[16] All quotations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* refer to the Oxford Classical Texts edition by Tarrant, and the English translations are by Raeburn.

[17] In contrast to the other two Minyades, the third sister Leuconoë simply announces the topic of her story and starts narrating (*Met*. 4.169-70).

[18] This is not an intertextual passage commonly included in the concordances and commentaries. I have only seen it briefly mentioned in Ferrero and Chimenz 32, note 21.

[19] The verb "abborrare" (i.e., working with "borra," inferior pieces of wool, and therefore to err, wander) is an interesting choice that can be seen as another connection with the Ovidian passage. As pointed out before, the Minyades pass their time at home weaving and telling stories – two activities that have been traditionally used as each other's proxies. To talk about the act of writing, Dante used a verb that is linked with weaving as well.

[20] All quotations from Ovid's *Fasti* refer to the Loeb edition by Henderson and Goold.

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