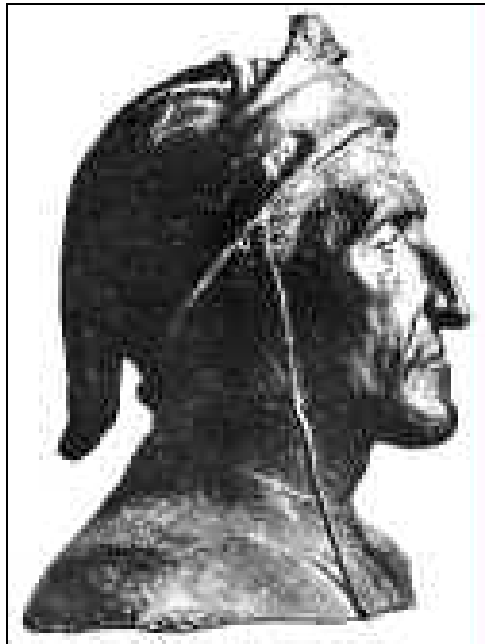


Dante

The Divine Comedy



Translated by A.S.Kline

ILLUSTRATED EDITION

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Inferno Canto I:1-60 The Dark Wood and the Hill

In [the middle](#) of the journey of our life, I came to myself, in a dark wood, where the direct way was lost. It is a hard thing to speak of, how wild, harsh and impenetrable that wood was, so that thinking of it recreates the fear. It is scarcely less bitter than death: but, in order to tell of the good that I found there, I must tell of the other things I saw there.

I cannot rightly say how I entered it. I was so full of sleep, at that point where I abandoned the true way. But when I reached the foot of a hill, where the valley, that had pierced my heart with fear, came to an end, I looked up and



saw its shoulders brightened with the rays of that sun that leads men rightly on every road. Then the fear, that had settled in the lake of my heart, through the night that I had spent so miserably, became a little calmer. And as a man, who, with panting breath, has escaped from the deep sea to the shore, turns back towards the perilous waters and stares, so my mind, still fugitive, turned back to see that pass again, that no living person ever left.

After I had rested my tired body a while, I made my way again over empty ground, always bearing upwards to the right. And, behold, almost at the start of the slope, a light swift leopard with spotted coat. It would not turn from before my face, and so obstructed my path, that I often turned, in order to return.



The time was at the beginning of the morning, and the sun was mounting up with all those stars, that were with him when Divine Love first moved all delightful things, so that the hour of day, and the sweet season, gave me fair hopes of that creature with the bright pelt. But not so fair that I could avoid fear at the sight of a lion, that appeared, and seemed to come at me, with raised head and rabid hunger, so that it seemed the air itself was afraid; and a she-wolf that looked full of craving in its leanness, and, before now, has made many men live in sadness. She brought me such heaviness of fear, from the aspect of her face, that I lost all hope of ascending. And as one who is eager for gain, weeps, and is afflicted in his thoughts, if the

moment arrives when he loses, so that creature, without rest, made me like him: and coming at me, little by little, drove me back to where the sun is silent.

Inferno Canto I:61-99 Dante meets Virgil

While I was returning to the depths, one appeared, in front of my eyes, who seemed hoarse from long silence. When I saw him, in the great emptiness, I cried out to him ‘Have pity on me, whoever you are, whether a man, in truth, or a shadow!’ He answered me: ‘Not a man: but a man I once was, and my parents were Lombards, and both of them, by their native place, Mantuans.

I was born *sub Julio* though late,
and lived in Rome, under the good
Augustus, in the age of false,
deceitful gods. I was a poet, and
sang of Aeneas, that virtuous son of
Anchises, who came from Troy
when proud Ilium was burned. But
you, why do you turn back towards
such pain? Why do you not climb
the delightful mountain, that is the
origin and cause of all joy?’

I answered him, with a humble
expression: ‘Are you then that
Virgil, and that fountain, that pours
out so great a river of speech? O,
glory and light to other poets, may
that long study, and the great love,
that made me scan your work, be
worth something now. You are my
master, and my author: you alone
are the one from whom I learnt the
high style that has brought me

honour. See the creature that I turned back from: O, sage, famous in wisdom, save me from her, she that makes my veins and my pulse tremble.’

When he saw me weeping, he answered: ‘You must go another road, if you wish to escape this savage place. This creature, that distresses you, allows no man to cross her path, but obstructs him, to destroy him, and she has so vicious and perverse a nature, that she never sates her greedy appetite, and, after food, is hungrier than before.’

Inferno Canto I:100-111 The salvation of Italy

‘Many are the creatures she mates with, and there will be many more, until the [Greyhound](#) comes,

who will make her die in pain. He will not feed himself on land or wealth, but on wisdom, love and virtue, and his birthplace will lie between [Feltro](#) and Feltro. He will be the salvation of that lower Italy for which virgin [Camilla](#) died of wounds, and [Euryalus](#), [Turnus](#), and [Nisus](#). He will chase the she-wolf through every city, until he has returned her to Hell, from which envy first loosed her.’

Inferno Canto I:112-136 Virgil will be his guide through Hell

‘It is best, as I think and understand, for you to follow me, and I will be your guide, and lead you from here through an eternal space where you will hear the desparate shouts, will see the

ancient spirits in pain, so that each one cries out for a second death: and then you will see others at peace in the flames, because they hope to come, whenever it may be, among the blessed. Then if you desire to climb to them, there will be a spirit, fitter than I am, to guide you, and I will leave you with her, when we part, since the Lord, who rules above, does not wish me to enter his city, because I was rebellious to his law.

He is lord everywhere, but there he rules, and there is his city, and his high throne: O, happy is he, whom he chooses to go there!’

And I to him: ‘Poet, I beg you, by the God, you did not acknowledge, lead me where you said, so that I might escape this evil or worse, and see the Gate of

St. Peter, and those whom you make out to be so saddened.’

Then he moved: and I moved on behind him.

Inferno Canto II:1-42 Dante’s doubts as to his fitness for the journey

The day was going, and the dusky air was freeing the creatures of the earth, from their labours, and I, one, alone, prepared myself to endure the inner war, of the journey and its pity, that the mind, without error, shall recall.

O Muses, O high invention, aid me, now! O memory, that has engraved what I saw, here your nobility will be shown.

I began: ‘Poet, who guides me, examine my virtue, see if I am



fitting, before you trust me to the steep way. You say that [Aeneas](#), the father of Sylvius, while still corruptible flesh, went to the eternal world, and in his senses. But if God, who opposes every evil, was gracious to him, thinking of the noble consequence, of who and what should derive from him, then that does not seem unreasonable to a man of intellect, since he was chosen to be the father of benign Rome, and of her empire. Both of them were founded as a sacred place, where the successor of the great Peter is enthroned. By that journey, by which you graced him, Aeneas learned things that were the source of his victory and of the Papal Mantle. Afterwards [Paul](#), the Chosen Vessel, went there, to bring

confirmation of the faith that is the entrance to the way of salvation.

But why should I go there? Who allows it? I am not Aeneas: I am not Paul. Neither I, nor others, think me worthy of it. So, if I resign myself to going, I fear that going there may prove foolish: you know, and understand, better than I can say.’ And I rendered myself, on that dark shore, like one who unwishes what he wished, and changes his purpose, in new thinking, so that he leaves off what he began, completely, since in thought I consumed action, that had been so ready to begin.

Inferno Canto II:43-93 Virgil explains his mission:Beatrice

The ghost of the generous poet replied: ‘If I have understood your

words correctly, your spirit is attacked by cowardly fear, that often weighs men down, so that it deflects them from honourable action, like a creature seeing phantoms in the dusk. That you may shake off this dread yourself, I will tell you why I came, and what I heard at the first moment when I took pity on you.

I was among those, in Limbo, in suspense, and a lady called to me, she so beautiful, so blessed, that I begged her to command me. Her eyes shone more brightly than the stars, and she began to speak, gently, quietly, in an angelic voice, in her language: ‘O noble Mantuan spirit, whose fame still endures in the world, and will endure as long as time endures, my friend, not fortune’s friend, is so obstructed in his way, along the desert strand, that

he turns back in terror, and I fear he is already so far lost, that I have started too late to his aid, from what I heard of him in heaven. Now go, and help him so, with your eloquence, and with whatever is needed for his relief, that I may be comforted. I am [Beatrice](#), who asks you to go: I come from a place, I long to return to: love moved me that made me speak. When I am before my Lord, I will often praise you to him.'

Then she was silent, and I began: 'O lady of virtue, in whom, alone, humanity exceeds all that is contained in the lunar heaven, which has the smallest sphere, your command is so pleasing to me, that, obeying, were it done already, it were done too slow: you have no need to explain your wishes further.

But tell me why you do not hesitate to descend here, to this centre below, from the wide space you burn to return to.’

She replied: ‘Since you wish to know, I will tell you this much, briefly, of why I do not fear to enter here. Those things that have the power to hurt are to be feared: not those other things that are not fearful. I am made such, by God’s grace, that your suffering does not touch me, nor does the fire of this burning scorch me.’

Inferno Canto II:94-120 The Virgin sends Lucia to Beatrice

‘There is a gentle lady in heaven, who has such compassion, for this trouble I send you to relieve, that she overrules the strict laws on

high. She called Lucia, to carry out her request, and said: “Now, he who is faithful to you, needs you, and I commend him to you.” Lucia, who is opposed to all cruelty, rose and came to the place where I was, where I sat with that Rachel of antiquity. Lucia said: “Beatrice, God’s true praise, why do you not help him, who loved you, so intensely, he left behind the common crowd for you? Do you not hear how pitiful his grief is? Do you not see the spiritual death that comes to meet him, on that dark river, over which the sea has no power?”

No one on earth was ever as quick to search for their good, or run from harm, as I to descend, from my blessed place, after these words were spoken, and place my faith in

your true speech, that honours you and those who hear it.' She turned away, with tears in her bright eyes, after saying this to me, and made me, by that, come here all the quicker: and so I came to you, as she wished, and rescued you in the face of that wild creature, that denied you the shortest path to the lovely mountain.'

Inferno Canto II:121-142 Virgil strengthens Dante's will

'What is it then? Why, do you hold back? Why? Why let such cowardly fear into your heart? Why, when three such blessed ladies, in the courts of heaven, care for you, and my words promise you so much good, are you not free and ardent?'

As the flowers, bent down and closed, by the night's cold, erect themselves, all open, on their stems, when the sun shines on them, so I rose from weakened courage: and so fine an ardour coursed through my heart, that I began to speak, like one who is freed: 'O she, who pities, who helps me, and you, so gentle, who swiftly obeyed the true words she commanded, you have filled my heart with such desire, by what you have said, to go forward, that I have turned back to my first purpose.

Go now, for the two of us have but one will, you, the guide, the lord, the master.' So I spoke to him, and he going on, I entered on the steep, tree-shadowed, way.

**Inferno Canto III:1-21 The Gate
of Hell**

**THROUGH ME THE WAY
TO THE INFERNAL CITY:**

**THROUGH ME THE WAY
TO ETERNAL SADNESS:**

**THROUGH ME THE WAY
TO THE LOST PEOPLE.**

**JUSTICE MOVED MY
SUPREME MAKER:**

**I WAS SHAPED BY DIVINE
POWER,**

**BY HIGHEST WISDOM,
AND BY PRIMAL LOVE.**

**BEFORE ME, NOTHING
WAS CREATED,**

**THAT IS NOT ETERNAL:
AND ETERNAL I ENDURE.**

**FORSAKE ALL HOPE, ALL
YOU THAT ENTER HERE.**

These were the words, with their dark colour, that I saw written above the gate, at which I said: 'Master, their meaning, to me, is hard.' And he replied to me, as one who knows: 'Here, all uncertainty must be left behind: all cowardice must be dead. We have come to the place where I told you that you would see the sad people who have lost the good of the intellect.' And placing his hand on mine, with a calm expression, that comforted me, he led me towards the hidden things.

Inferno Canto III:22-69 The spiritually neutral

Here sighs, complaints, and deep groans, sounded through the starless air, so that it made me weep at first. Many tongues, a terrible crying, words of sadness, accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse, with sounds of hands amongst them, making a turbulence that turns forever, in that air, stained, eternally, like sand spiralling in a whirlwind. And I, my head surrounded by the horror, said: ‘Master, what is this I hear, and what race are these, that seem so overcome by suffering?’

And he to me: ‘This is the miserable mode in which those exist, who lived without praise, without blame. They are mixed in with the despised choir of angels,

those not rebellious, not faithful to God, but for themselves. Heaven drove them out, to maintain its beauty, and deep Hell does not accept them, lest the evil have glory over them.’ And I: ‘Master, what is so heavy on them, that makes them moan so deeply?’ He replied: ‘I will tell you, briefly. They have no hope of death, and their darkened life is so mean that they are envious of every other fate. Earth allows no mention of them to exist: mercy and justice reject them: let us not talk of them, but look and pass.’

And I, who looked back, saw a banner, that twirling round, moved so quickly, that it seemed to me scornful of any pause, and behind it came so long a line of people, I never would have believed that death had undone so many.

Inferno Canto III:58-69 Their punishment

When I had recognised some among them, I saw and knew the shade of him who from cowardice made ‘the great refusal’. Immediately I understood that this was the despicable crew, hateful to God and his enemies. These wretches, who never truly lived, were naked, and goaded viciously by hornets, and wasps, there, making their faces stream with blood, that, mixed with tears, was collected, at their feet, by loathsome worms.

Inferno Canto III:70-99 Charon, the ferryman of the Acheron

And then, as I looked onwards, I saw people on the bank of a great river, at which I said: ‘Master, now let me understand who these are, and what custom makes them so ready to cross over, as I can see by the dim light.’ And he to me: ‘The thing will be told you, when we halt our steps, on the sad strand of Acheron.’ Then, fearing that my words might have offended him, I stopped myself from speaking, with eyes ashamed and downcast, till we had reached the flood.

And see, an old man, with white hoary locks, came towards us in a boat, shouting: ‘Woe to you, wicked spirits! Never hope to see heaven: I come to carry you to the other shore, into eternal darkness, into fire and ice. And you, who are there, a



living spirit, depart from those who are dead.’

But when he saw that I did not depart, he said: ‘By other ways, by other means of passage, you will cross to the shore: a quicker boat must carry you.’ And my guide said to him: ‘Charon, do not vex yourself: it is willed there, where what is willed is done: ask no more.’ Then the bearded mouth, of the ferryman of the livid marsh, who had wheels of flame round his eyes, was stilled.

Inferno Canto III:100-136 The souls by the shore of Acheron

But those spirits, who were naked and weary, altered colour, and gnashed their teeth, when they heard his former, cruel words. They

blasphemed against God, and their parents, the human species, the place, time, and seed of their conception, and of their birth. Then, all together, weeping bitterly, they neared the cursed shore that waits for every one who has no fear of God.

Charon, the demon, with eyes of burning coal, beckoning, gathers them all: and strikes with his oar whoever lingers. As the autumn leaves fall, one after another, till the branches see all their spoilage on the ground, so, one by one, the evil seed of Adam, threw themselves down from the bank when signalled, like the falcon at its call. So they vanish on the dark water, and before they have landed over there, over here a fresh crowd collects.

The courteous Master said: ‘My son, those who die subject to God’s anger, all gather here, from every country, and they are quick to cross the river, since divine justice goads them on, so that their fear is turned to desire. This way no good spirit ever passes, and so if Charon complains at you, you can well understand, now, the meaning of his words.

When he had ended, the gloomy ground trembled so violently, that the memory of my terror still drenches me with sweat. The weeping earth gave vent, and flashed with crimson light, overpowering all my senses, and I fell, like a man overcome by sleep.

Inferno Canto IV:1-63 The First Circle: Limbo:The Heathens

A heavy thunder shattered the deep sleep in my head, so that I came to myself, like someone woken by force, and standing up, I moved my eyes, now refreshed, and looked round, steadily, to find out what place I was in. I found myself, in truth, on the brink of the valley of the sad abyss that gathers the thunder of an infinite howling. It was so dark, and deep, and clouded, that I could see nothing by staring into its depths.

The poet, white of face, began: ‘Now, let us descend into the blind world below: I will go first, and you go second.’ And I, who saw his altered colour, said: ‘How can I go on, if you are afraid, who are my

comfort when I hesitate?’ And he to me: ‘The anguish of the people, here below, brings that look of pity to my face, that you mistake for fear. Let us go, for the length of our journey demands it.’ So he entered, and so he made me enter, into the first circle that surrounds the abyss.

Here there was no sound to be heard, except the sighing, that made the eternal air tremble, and it came from the sorrow of the vast and varied crowds of children, of women, and of men, free of torment. The good Master said to me: ‘You do not demand to know who these spirits are that you see. I want you to learn, before you go further, that they had no sin, yet, though they have worth, it is not sufficient, because they were not baptised, and baptism is the gateway to the faith

that you believe in. Since they lived before Christianity, they did not worship God correctly, and I myself am one of them. For this defect, and for no other fault, we are lost, and we are only tormented, in that without hope we live in desire.’

When I heard this, great sadness gripped my heart, because I knew of people of great value, who must be suspended in that Limbo. Wishing to be certain in that faith that overcomes every error, I began: ‘Tell me my Master, tell me, sir, did anyone ever go from here, through his own merit or because of others’ merit, who afterwards was blessed?’ And he, understanding my veiled question, replied: ‘I was new to this state, when I saw a great one come here crowned with the sign of victory. He took from us the shade

of Adam, our first parent, of his son Abel, and that of Noah, of Moses the lawgiver, and Abraham, the obedient Patriarch, King David, Jacob with his father Isaac, and his children, and Rachel, for whom he laboured so long, and many others, and made them blessed, and I wish you to know that no human souls were saved before these.

Inferno Canto IV:64-105 The Great Poets

We did not cease moving, though he was speaking, but passed the wood meanwhile, the wood, I say, of crowded spirits. We had not gone far from where I slept, when I saw a flame that overcame a hemisphere of shadows. We were still some way from it, but not so far that I failed to



discern in part what noble people occupied that place.

‘O you, who value every science and art, who are these, who have such honour that they stand apart from all the rest?’ And he to me: ‘Their fame, that sounds out for them, honoured in that life of yours, brings them heaven’s grace that advances them.’ Meanwhile I heard a voice: ‘Honour the great poet: his departed shade returns.’

After the voice had paused, and was quiet, I saw four great shadows come towards us, with faces that were neither sad nor happy. The good Master began to speak: ‘Take note of him, with a sword in hand, who comes in front of the other three, as if he were their lord: that is [Homer](#), the sovereign poet: next [Horace](#) the satirist: [Ovid](#) is the third,

and last is Lucan. Because each is worthy, with me, of that name the one voice sounded, they do me honour, and, in doing so, do good.’

So I saw gathered together the noble school, of the lord of highest song, who soars, like an eagle, above the rest. After they had talked for a while amongst themselves, they turned towards me with a sign of greeting, at which my Master smiled. And they honoured me further still, since they made me one of their company, so that I made a sixth among the wise.

So we went onwards to the light, speaking of things about which it is best to be silent, just as it was best to speak of them, where I was.

Inferno Canto IV:106-129 The Heroes and Heroines

We came to the base of a noble castle; surrounded seven times by a high wall; defended by a beautiful, encircling, stream. This we crossed as if it were solid earth: I entered through seven gates, with the wise: we reached a meadow of fresh turf. The people there were of great authority in appearance, with calm, and serious looks, speaking seldom, and then with soft voices. We moved to one side, into an open space, bright and high, so that every one, of them all, could be seen. There, on the green enamel, the great spirits were pointed out to me, directly, so that I feel exalted, inside me, at having seen them.

I saw Electra with many others, amongst whom I knew Hector, Aeneas and Caesar, armed, with his eagle eye. I saw Camilla and Penthesilea, on the other side, and the King of Latium, Latinus, with Lavinia his daughter. I saw that Brutus who expelled Tarquin, Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia, and I saw Saladin, by himself, apart.

Inferno Canto IV:130-151 The Philosophers and other great spirits

When I lifted my eyes a little higher, I saw the Master of those who know, Aristotle, sitting amongst the company of philosophers. All gaze at him: all show him honour. There I saw

Socrates, and Plato, who stand nearest to him of all of them; Democritus, Anaxagoras, and Thales; Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Zeno; and I saw the good collector of the qualities of plants, I mean Dioscorides: and saw Orpheus, Cicero, Linus, and Seneca the moralist; Euclid the geometer, and Ptolemaeus; Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Galen; and Averrhoës, who wrote the vast commentary.

I cannot speak of them all in full, because the great theme drives me on, so that the word falls, many times, short of the fact. The six companions reduce to two: the wise guide leads me, by another path, out of the quiet, into the trembling air, and I come to a region, where nothing shines.

Inferno Canto V:1-51 The Second Circle:Minos:The Carnal Sinners

So I descended from the first circle to the second, that encloses a smaller space, and so much more pain it provokes howling. There Minos stands, grinning horribly, examines the crimes on entrance, judges, and sends the guilty down as far as is signified by his coils: I mean that when the evil-born spirit comes before him, it confesses everything, and that knower of sins decides the proper place in hell for it, and makes as many coils with his tail, as the circles he will force it descend. A multitude always stand before him, and go in turn to be judged, speak and hear, and then are whirled downwards.

When Minos saw me, passing by the actions of his great office, he said: ‘O you, who come to the house of pain, take care how you enter, and in whom you trust, do not let the width of the entrance deceive you.’ And my guide replied: ‘Why do you cry out? Do not obstruct his destined journey: so it is willed, where what is willed is done: demand no more.’ Now the mournful notes begin to reach me: now I come where much sorrowing hurts me.

I came to a place devoid of light, that moans like a tempestuous sea, when it is buffeted by warring winds. The hellish storm that never ceases drives the spirits with its force, and, whirling and striking, it molests them. When they come to the ruins there are shouts, moaning

and crying, where they blaspheme against divine power. I learnt that the carnal sinners are condemned to these torments, they who subject their reason to their lust.

And, as their wings carry the starlings, in a vast, crowded flock, in the cold season, so that wind carries the wicked spirits, and leads them here and there, and up and down. No hope of rest, or even lesser torment, comforts them. And as the cranes go, making their sounds, forming a long flight, of themselves, in the air, so I saw the shadows come, moaning, carried by that war of winds, at which I said: ‘Master, who are these people, that the black air chastises so?’

Inferno Canto V:52-72 Virgil names the sinners

He replied: ‘The first, of those you wish to know of, was Empress of many languages, so corrupted by the vice of luxury, that she made licence lawful in her code, to clear away the guilt she had incurred. She is [Semiramis](#), of whom we read, that she succeeded [Ninus](#), and was his wife: she held the countries that the Sultan rules.

The next is [Dido](#) who killed herself for love, and broke faith with [Sichaeus](#)’s ashes: then comes licentious [Cleopatra](#). See [Helen](#), for whom, so long, the mills of war revolved: and see the great [Achilles](#), who fought in the end with love, of [Polyxena](#). See [Paris](#); [Tristan](#); and he pointed out more than a thousand

shadows with his finger, naming, for me, those whom love had severed from life.

Inferno Canto V:70-142 Paolo and Francesca

After I had heard my teacher name the ancient knights and ladies, pity overcame me, and I was as if dazed. I began: ‘Poet, I would speak, willingly, to those two who go together, and seem so light upon the wind.’ And he to me: ‘You will see, when they are nearer to us, you can beg them, then, by the love that leads them, and they will come.’

As soon as the wind brought them to us, I raised my voice: ‘O weary souls, come and talk with us, if no one prevents it.’ As doves, claimed by desire, fly steadily, with



raised wings, through the air, to their sweet nest, carried by the will, so the spirits flew from the crowd where [Dido](#) is, coming towards us through malignant air, such was the power of my affecting call.

‘O gracious and benign living creature, that comes to visit us, through the dark air, if the universe’s king were our friend, we, who tainted the earth with blood, would beg him to give you peace, since you take pity on our sad misfortune. While the wind, as now, is silent, we will hear you and speak to you, of what you are pleased to listen to and talk of.

The place where I was born is by the shore, where the River Po runs down to rest at peace, with his attendant streams. Love, that is quickly caught in the gentle heart,

filled him with my fair form, now lost to me, and the nature of that love still afflicts me. Love, that allows no loved one to be excused from loving, seized me so fiercely with desire for him, it still will not leave me, as you can see. Love led us to one death. Caina, in the ninth circle waits, for him who quenched our life.’

These words carried to us, from them. After I had heard those troubled spirits, I bowed my head, and kept it bowed, until the poet said: ‘What are you thinking?’ When I replied, I began: ‘O, alas, what sweet thoughts, what longing, brought them to this sorrowful state? Then I turned to them again, and I spoke, and said: Francesca, your torment makes me weep with grief and pity. But tell me, in that

time of sweet sighs, how did love allow you to know these dubious desires?’

And she to me: ‘There is no greater pain, than to remember happy times in misery, and this your teacher knows. But if you have so great a yearning to understand the first root of our love, I will be like one who weeps and tells. We read, one day, to our delight, of [Lancelot](#) and how love constrained him: we were alone and without suspicion. Often those words urged our eyes to meet, and coloured our cheeks, but it was a single moment that undid us. When we read how that lover kissed the beloved smile, he who will never be separated from me, kissed my mouth all trembling. That book was a [Galeotto](#), a *pandar*, and

he who wrote it: that day we read no more.'

While the one spirit spoke,
the other wept, so that I fainted out
of pity, and, as if I were dying, fell,
as a dead body falls.

Inferno Canto VI:1-33 The Third Circle: Cerberus: The Gluttonous

When my senses return, that
closed themselves off from pity of
those two kindred, who stunned me
with complete sadness, I see around
me new torments, and new
tormented souls, wherever I move,
or turn, and wherever I gaze. I am in
the third circle, of eternal, accursed,
cold and heavy rain: its kind and
quality is never new. Large hail,
tainted water, and sleet, pour down

through the shadowy air: and the earth is putrid that receives it.

Cerberus, the fierce and strange monster, triple-throated, barks dog-like over the people submerged in it. His eyes are crimson, his beard is foul and black, his belly vast, and his limbs are clawed: he snatches the spirits, flays, and quarters them. The rain makes them howl like dogs: they protect one flank with the other: often writhing: miserable wretches.

When Cerberus, the great worm, saw us, he opened his jaws, and showed his fangs: not a limb of his stayed still. My guide, stretching out his hands, grasped earth, and hurled it in fistfuls into his ravening mouth. Like a dog that whines for food, and grows quiet when he eats it, only fighting and struggling to devour it,

so did demon Cerberus's loathsome muzzles that bark, like thunder, at the spirits, so that they wish that they were deaf.

Inferno Canto VI:34-63 Ciaccio, the glutton.

We passed over the shades, that the heavy rain subdues, and placed our feet on each empty space that seems a body. They were all lying on the ground but one, who sat up straight away when he saw us cross in front of him: He said to me: 'O you, who are led through this Inferno, recognise me if you can: you were made before I was unmade.' And I to him: 'The anguish that you suffer, conceals you perhaps from my memory, so that it seems as if I never knew you.'

But tell me who you are, that are lodged so sadly, and undergo such punishment, that though there are others greater, none is so unpleasant.’

And he to me: ‘Your city, Florence, that is so full of envy it overflows, held me in the clear life. You, the citizens, called me Ciacco: and for the damnable sin of gluttony, as you see, I languish beneath the rain: and I am not the only wretched spirit, since all these are punished likewise for like sin. I answered him: ‘Ciacco, your affliction weighs on me, inviting me to weep, but tell me, if you can, what the citizens of that divided city will come to; if any there are just: and the reason why such discord tears it apart.’

Inferno Canto VI:64-93 Ciacco's prophecy concerning Florence

And he to me: ‘After long struggle, they will come to blood, and, the Whites, the party of the woods, will throw out the Blacks, with great injury. Within three years, then, it must happen, that the Blacks will conquer, with the help of him, who now veers about. That party will hold its head high for a long time, weighing the Whites down, under heavy oppression, however they weep and however ashamed they are. Two men are just, but are not listened to. Pride, Envy and Avarice are the three burning coals that have set all hearts on fire.’

Here he ended the mournful prophecy, and I said to him: I want you to instruct me still, and grant

me a little more speech. Tell me where [Farinata](#) and [Tegghiaio](#) are, who were worthy enough, and [Jacopo Rusticucci](#), [Arrigo](#), [Mosca](#), and the rest who set their minds to doing good: let me know of them, for a great longing urges me to discover whether Heaven soothes them, or Hell poisons them.’

And he to me: ‘They are among the blackest spirits, another crime weighs them to the bottom: if you descend so deep, you may see them. But when you are, again, in the sweet world, I beg you to recall me to other minds: I tell you no more, and more I will not answer.’ At that he turned his fixed gaze askance, and looked at me a while: then, bent his head, and lowered himself, and it, among his blind companions.

Inferno Canto VI:94-115 Virgil speaks of The Day of Judgement

And my guide said to me: ‘He will not stir further, until the angelic trumpet sounds, when the Power opposing evil will come: each will revisit his sad grave, resume his flesh and form, and hear what will resound through eternity.’ So we passed over the foul brew of rain and shadows, with slow steps, speaking a little of the future life.

Of this I asked: ‘Master, will these torments increase, after the great judgement, or lessen, or stay as fierce?’ And he to me: ‘Remember your science, that says, that the more perfect a thing is, the more it feels pleasure and pain. Though these accursed ones will never achieve true perfection, they

will be nearer to it after, than before.’

We circled along that road, speaking of much more than I repeat: we came to the place where the descent begins, where we found Plutus, the god of wealth, the great enemy.

**Inferno Canto VII:1-39 The
Fourth Circle: Plutus: The
Avaricious**

‘Pape Satan, pape Satan aleppe,’ Plutus, began to croak, and the gentle sage, who understood all things, comforted me, saying: ‘Do not let fear hurt you, since whatever power he has, he will not prevent you descending this rock.’ Then he turned to that swollen face and said: ‘Peace, evil wolf! Devour yourself

inside, in your rage. Our journey to the depths is not without reason: it is willed on high, there where [Michael](#) made war on the great dragon's adulterating pride.'

Like a sail, bellying in the wind, that falls, in a heap, if the mast breaks, so that cruel creature fell to earth. In that way we descended into the fourth circle, taking in a greater width of the dismal bank, that encloses every evil of the universe.

O Divine Justice! Who can tell the many new pains and troubles, that I saw, and why our guilt so destroys us? As the wave, over [Charybdis](#), strikes against the wave it counters, so the people here are made to dance. I found more people here than elsewhere, on the one side and on the other, rolling weights by pushing with their chests, with loud

howling. They struck against each other, and then each wheeled around where they were, rolling the reverse way, shouting: ‘Why do you hold?’ and ‘Why do you throw away.’

So they returned along the gloomy circle, from either side to the opposite point, shouting again their measure of reproach. Then each one, when he had reached it, wheeled through his half circle onto the other track. And I, who felt as if my heart were pierced, said: ‘My Master, show me now who these people are: and whether all those, with tonsures, on our left were churchmen.’

Inferno Canto VII:40-66 The avaricious and prodigal churchmen

And he to me: ‘They were so twisted in mind in their first life, that they made no balanced expenditure. Their voices bark this out most clearly when they come to the two ends of the circle, where opposing sins divide them.

These were priests, that are without hair on their heads, and Popes and Cardinals, in whom avarice does its worst. And I: ‘Master, surely, amongst this crowd, I ought to recognise some of those tainted with these evils.’ And he to me: ‘You link idle thoughts: the life without knowledge, that made them ignoble, now makes them incapable of being known. They will go

butting each other to eternity: and these will rise from their graves with grasping fists, and those with shorn hair.

Useless giving, and useless keeping, has robbed them of the bright world, and set them to this struggle: what struggle it is, I do not amplify. But you, my son, can see now the vain mockery of the wealth controlled by Fortune, for which the human race fight with each other, since all the gold under the moon, that ever was, could not give peace to one of these weary souls.'

Inferno Canto VII:67-99 Virgil speaks about Fortune

I said to him: 'Master, now tell me about Fortune also, that subject you touched on, who is she, who has

the wealth of the world in her arms?’ And he to me: ‘O, blind creatures, how great is the ignorance that surrounds you! I want you, now, to hear my judgement of her.

He whose wisdom transcends all things, made the heavens, and gave them ruling powers, so that each part illuminates the others, distributing the light equally. Similarly he put in place a controller, and a guide, for earthly splendour, to alter, from time to time, idle possession, between nation and nation, and from kin to kin, beyond the schemes of human reason. So one people commands: another wanes, obeying her judgement, she who is concealed, like a snake in the grass.

Your wisdom cannot comprehend her: she furnishes,

adjudicates, and maintains her kingdom, as the other gods do theirs. Her permutations never end: necessity makes her swift: so, often, someone comes who creates change. This is she: so often reviled, even by those who ought to praise her, but, wrongly, blame her, with malicious words. Still, she is in bliss, and does not hear: she spins her globe, joyfully, among the other primal spirits, and tastes her bliss.

Now let us descend to greater misery: already every [star is declining](#), that was rising when I set out, and we are not allowed to stay too long.’

Inferno Canto VII:100-130 The Styx: They view the Fifth Circle

We crossed the circle to the other bank, near a spring, that boils and pours down, through a gap that it has made. The water was darker than a dark blue-grey, and we entered the descent by a strange path, in company with the dusky waves. This woeful stream forms the marsh called Styx, when it has fallen to the foot of the grey malignant walls. And I who stood there, intent on seeing, saw muddy people in the fen, naked, and all with the look of anger. They were striking each other, not only with hands, but head, chest, and feet, mangling each other with their teeth, bite by bite.

The kind Master said: ‘Now, son, see the souls of those overcome by anger, and also, I want you to know, in truth, there are people under the

water, who sigh, and make it bubble on the surface, as your eye can see whichever way it turns. Fixed in the slime they say: “We were sullen in the sweet air, that is gladdened by the sun, bearing indolent smoke in our hearts: now we lie here, sullen, in the black mire.” This measure they gurgle in their throats, because they cannot utter it in full speech.’

So we covered a large arc of the loathsome swamp, between the dry bank and its core, our eyes turned towards those who swallow its filth: we came at last to the base of a tower.

Inferno Canto VIII:1-30 The Fifth Circle: Phlegyas: The Wrathful

I say, pursuing my theme, that, long before we reached the base of

the high tower, our eyes looked upwards to its summit, because we saw two beacon-flames set there, and another, from so far away that the eye could scarcely see it, gave a signal in return. And I turned to the fount of all knowledge, and asked: ‘What does it say? And what does the other light reply? And who has made the signal?’ And he to me: ‘Already you can see, what is expected, coming over the foul waters, if the marsh vapours do not hide it from you.’

No bowstring ever shot an arrow that flew through the air so quickly, as the little boat, that I saw coming towards us, through the waves, under the control of a single steersman, who cried: ‘Are you here, now, fierce spirit?’ My Master said: ‘[Phlegyas](#), Phlegyas, this time

you cry in vain: you shall not keep us longer than it takes us to pass the marsh.’

Phlegyas in his growing anger, was like someone who listens to some great wrong done him, and then fills with resentment. My guide climbed down into the boat, and then made me board after him, and it only sank in the water when I was in. As soon as my guide and I were in the craft, its prow went forward, ploughing deeper through the water than it does carrying others.

Inferno Canto VIII:31-63 They meet Filippo Argenti

While we were running through the dead channel, one rose up in front of me, covered with mud, and said: ‘Who are you, that come



before your time?’ And I to him: ‘If I come, I do not stay here: but who are you, who are so mired?’ He answered: ‘You see that I am one who weeps.’ And I to him: ‘Cursed spirit, remain weeping and in sorrow! For I know you, muddy as you are.’

Then he stretched both hands out to the boat, at which the cautious Master pushed him off, saying: ‘Away, there, with the other dogs!’ Then he put his arms around my neck, kissed my face, and said: ‘Blessed be she who bore you, soul, who are rightly indignant. He was an arrogant spirit in your world: there is nothing good with which to adorn his memory: so, his furious shade is here. How many up there think themselves mighty kings, that will lie here like pigs in mire,

leaving behind them dire
condemnation!’

And he to me: ‘You will be
satisfied, before the shore is visible
to you: it is right that your wish
should be gratified.’ Not long after
this I saw the muddy people make
such a rending of him, that I still
give God thanks and praise for it.
All shouted: ‘At [Filippo Argenti!](#)’
That fierce Florentine spirit turned
his teeth in vengeance on himself.

Inferno Canto VIII:64-81 They approach the city of Dis

We left him there, so that I can
say no more of him, but a sound of
wailing assailed my ears, so that I
turned my gaze in front, intently.
The kind Master said: ‘Now, my
son, we approach the city they call

Dis, with its grave citizens, a vast crowd.’ And I: ‘Master, I can already see its towers, clearly there in the valley, glowing red, as if they issued from the fire.’ And he to me: ‘The eternal fire, that burns them from within, makes them appear reddened, as you see, in this deep Hell.’

We now arrived in the steep ditch, that forms the moat to the joyless city: the walls seemed to me as if they were made of iron. Not until we had made a wide circuit, did we reach a place where the ferryman said to us: ‘Disembark: here is the entrance.’

Inferno Canto VIII:82-130 The fallen Angels obstruct them

I saw more than a thousand of those angels, that fell from Heaven like rain, above the gates, who cried angrily: ‘Who is this, that, without death goes through the kingdom of the dead?’ And my wise Master made a sign to them, of wishing to speak in private. Then they furled their great disdain, and said: ‘Come on, alone, and let him go, who enters this kingdom with such audacity. Let him return, alone, on his foolish road: see if he can: and you, remain, who have escorted him, through so dark a land.’

Think, Reader, whether I was not disheartened at the sound of those accursed words, not believing I could ever return here. I said: ‘O my dear guide, who has ensured my safety more than the seven times, and snatched me from certain

danger that faced me, do not leave me, so helpless: and if we are prevented from going on, let us quickly retrace our steps.’ And that lord, who had led me there, said to me: ‘Have no fear: since no one can deny us passage: it was given us by so great an authority. But you, wait for me, and comfort and nourish your spirit with fresh hope, for I will not abandon you in the lower world.’

So the gentle father goes, and leaves me there, and I am left in doubt: since ‘yes’ and ‘no’ war inside my head. I could not hear what terms he offered them, but he had not been standing there long with them, when, each vying with the other, they rushed back. Our adversaries closed the gate in my lord’s face, leaving him outside, and

he turned to me again with slow steps. His eyes were on the ground, and his expression devoid of all daring, and he said, sighing: 'Who are these who deny me entrance to the house of pain? And to me he said: 'Though I am angered, do not you be dismayed: I will win the trial, whatever obstacle those inside contrive. This insolence of theirs is nothing new, for they displayed it once before, at that less secret gate we passed, that has remained unbarred. Over it you saw the fatal writing, and already on this side of its entrance, one is coming, down the steep, passing the circles unescorted, one for whom the city shall open to us.'

Inferno Canto IX:1-33 Dante asks about precedents

The colour that cowardice had printed on my face, seeing my guide turn back, made him repress his own heightened colour more swiftly. He stopped, attentive, like one who listens, since his eyes could not penetrate far, through the black air and the thick fog. ‘Nevertheless we must win this struggle,’ he began, ‘if not.....then help such as this was offered to us. Oh, how long it seems to me, that other’s coming!’ I saw clearly, how he hid the meaning of his opening words with their sequel, words differing from his initial thought. None the less his speech made me afraid, perhaps because I took his broken phrases to hold a worse meaning than they did.

‘Do any of those whose only punishment is deprivation of hope, ever descend, into the depths of this sad chasm, from the first circle? I asked this question, and he answered me: ‘It rarely happens, that any of us make the journey that I go on. It is true that I was down here, once before, conjured to do so by that fierce sorceress [Erichtho](#), who recalled spirits to their corpses. My flesh had only been stripped from me a while when she forced me to enter inside that wall, to bring a spirit out of the circle of Judas. That is the deepest place, and the darkest, and the furthest from that Heaven that surrounds all things: I know the way well: so be reassured. This marsh, that breathes its foul stench, circles the woeful city round

about, where we also cannot enter now without anger.’

Inferno Canto IX:34-63 The Furies (Conscience) and Medusa (Obduracy)

And he said more that I do not remember, because my eyes had been drawn to the high tower, with the glowing crest, where, in an instant, three hellish [Furies](#), stained with blood, had risen, that had the limbs and aspects of women, covered with a tangle of green hydras, their hideous foreheads bound with little adders, and horned vipers. And Virgil, who knew the handmaids of the queen of eternal sadness well, said to me: ‘See, the fierce [Erinyes](#).’



That is Megaera on the left: the one that weeps, on the right, is Alecto: Tisiphone is in the middle.’: then he was silent. Each one was tearing at her breast with her claws, beating with her hands, and crying out so loudly, that I pressed close to the poet, out of fear. ‘Let [Medusa](#) come,’ they all said, looking down on us, ‘so that we can turn him to stone: we did not fully revenge [Theseus](#)’s attack.’

‘Turn your back.’ said the Master, and he himself turned me round. ‘Keep your eyes closed, since there will be no return upwards, if she were to show herself, and you were to see her.’ Not leaving it to me, he covered them, also, with his own hands.

O you, who have clear minds, take note of the meaning that

conceals itself under the veil of
clouded verse!

Inferno Canto IX:64-105 The Messenger from Heaven

Now, over the turbid waves,
there came a fearful crash of sound,
at which both shores trembled; a
sound like a strong wind, born of
conflicting heat, that strikes the
forest, remorselessly, breaks the
branches, and beats them down, and
carries them away, advances
proudly in a cloud of dust, and
makes wild creatures, and
shepherds, run for safety. Virgil
uncovered my eyes, and said: ‘Now
direct your vision to that ancient
marsh, there, where the mists are
thickest.’ Like frogs, that all scatter
through the water, in front of their

enemy the snake, until each one squats on the bottom, so I saw more than a thousand damaged spirits scatter, in front of one who passed the Stygian ferry with dry feet. He waved that putrid air from his face, often waving his left hand before it, and only that annoyance seemed to weary him. I well knew he was a messenger from Heaven, and I turned to the Master, who made a gesture that I should stay quiet, and bow to him.

How full of indignation he seemed to me! He reached the gate, and opened it with a wand: there was no resistance. On the vile threshold he began to speak: ‘O, outcasts from Heaven, why does this insolence still live in you? Why are you recalcitrant to that will, whose aims can never be frustrated,

and that has often increased your torment? What use is it to butt your heads against the Fates? If you remember, your [Cerberus](#), still shows a throat and chin scarred from doing so.'

Then he returned, over the miry pool, and spoke no word to us, but looked like one preoccupied and driven by other cares, than of those who stand before him. And we stirred our feet towards the city, in safety, after his sacred speech.

Inferno Canto IX:106-133 The Sixth Circle: Dis: The Heretics

We entered Dis without a conflict, and I gazed around, as soon as I was inside, eager to know what punishment the place enclosed,

and saw on all sides a vast plain full of pain and vile torment.

As at [Arles](#), where the [Rhone](#) stagnates, or [Pola](#), near the Gulf of [Quarnaro](#), that confines Italy, and bathes its coast, the sepulchres make the ground uneven, so they did here, all around, only here the nature of it was more terrible.

Flames were scattered amongst the tombs, by which they were made so red-hot all over, that no smith's art needs hotter metal. Their lids were all lifted, and such fierce groans came from them, that, indeed, they seemed to be those of the sad and wounded.

And I said: 'Master, who are these people, entombed in those vaults, who make themselves known by tormented sighing?' And he to me: 'Here are the arch-heretics, with

their followers, of every sect: and the tombs contain many more than you might think. Here like is buried with like, and the monuments differ in degrees of heat.' Then after turning to the right, we passed between the tormented, and the steep ramparts.

Inferno Canto X:1-21 Epicurus and his followers

Now my Master goes, and I, behind him, by a secret path between the city walls and the torments. I began: 'O, summit of virtue, who leads me round through the circles of sin, as you please, speak to me, and satisfy my longing. Can those people, who lie in the sepulchres, be seen? The lids are all raised, and no one keeps guard.'

And he to me: ‘They will all be shut, when they return here, from Jehoshaphat, with the bodies they left above. In this place Epicurus and all his followers are entombed, who say the soul dies with body. Therefore, you will soon be satisfied, with an answer to the question that you ask me, and also the longing that you hide from me, here, inside.’ And I: ‘Kind guide, I do not keep my heart hidden from you, except by speaking too briefly, something to which you have previously inclined me.’

Inferno Canto X:22-51 Farinata degli Uberti

‘O Tuscan, who goes alive through the city of fire, speaking so politely, may it please you to rest in

this place. Your speech shows clearly you are a native of that noble city that I perhaps troubled too much.’ This sound came suddenly from one of the vaults, at which, in fear, I drew a little closer to my guide. And he said to me: ‘Turn round: what are you doing: look at [Farinata](#), who has raised himself: you can see him all from the waist up.’

I had already fixed my gaze on him, and he rose erect in stance and aspect, as if he held the Inferno in great disdain. The spirited and eager hands of my guide pushed me through the sepulchres towards him, saying: ‘Make sure your words are measured.’ When I was at the base of the tomb, Farinata looked at me for a while, and then almost



contemptuously, he demanded of me: ‘Who were your ancestors?’

I, desiring to obey, concealed nothing, but revealed the whole to him, at which he raised his brows a little. Then he said: ‘They were fiercely opposed to me, and my ancestors and my party, so that I scattered them twice.’ I replied: ‘Though they were driven out, they returned from wherever they were, the first and the second time, but your party have not yet learnt that skill.’

Inferno Canto X:52-72
Cavalcante Cavalcanti

Then, a shadow rose behind him, from the unclosed space, visible down to the tip of its chin: I think it had raised itself on to its knees. It

gazed around me, as if it wished to see whether anyone was with me, but when all its hopes were quenched, it said, weeping: ‘If by power of intellect, you go through this blind prison, where is my son, and why is he not with you?’ And I to him: ‘I do not come through my own initiative: he that waits there, whom your Guido disdained perhaps, leads me through this place’

His words and the nature of his punishment had spelt his name to me, so that my answer was a full one. Suddenly raising himself erect, he cried: ‘What did you say? *Disdained?* Is he not still alive? Does the sweet light not strike his eyes?’ When he saw that I delayed in answering, he dropped supine again, and showed himself no more.

Inferno Canto X:73-93 Farinata prophesies Dante's long exile

But the other one, at whose wish I had first stopped, generously did not alter his aspect or move his neck, or turn his side. Continuing his previous words, he said: 'And if my party have learnt that art of return badly, it tortures me more than this bed, but the face of the moon-goddess Persephone, who rules here, will not be crescent fifty times, before you learn the difficulty of that art. And, as you wish to return to the sweet world, tell me why that people is so fierce towards my kin, in all its lawmaking?' At which I answered him: 'The great slaughter and havoc, that dyed the Arbia red, is the cause of those

indictments against them, in our churches.’

Then he shook his head, sighing, and said: ‘I was not alone in that matter, nor would I have joined with the others without good cause, but I was alone, there, when all agreed to raze Florence to the ground, and I openly defended her.’

Inferno Canto X:94-136 The prophetic vision of the damned

‘Ah, as I hope your descendants might sometime have peace,’ I begged him, ‘solve the puzzle that has entangled my mind. It seems, if I hear right, that you see beforehand what time brings, but have a different knowledge of the present.’ ‘Like one who has imperfect vision,’ he said, ‘we see things that

are distant from us: so much of the light the supreme Lord still allows us. But when they approach, or come to be, our intelligence is wholly void, and we know nothing of your human state, except what others tell us. So you may understand that all our knowledge of the future will end, from the moment when the Day of Judgement closes the gate of futurity.'

Then, as if conscious of guilt, I said: 'Will you therefore, tell that fallen one, now, that his son is still joined to the living. And if I was silent before in reply, let him know it was because my thoughts were already entangled in that error you have resolved for me.'

And now my Master was recalling me, at which I begged the

spirit, with more haste, to tell me who was with him. He said to me: ‘I lie here with more than a thousand: here inside is [Frederick the Second](#), and the Cardinal, [Ubaldini](#), and of the rest I am silent.’ At that he hid himself, and I turned my steps towards the poet of antiquity, reflecting on the words that boded trouble for me.

Virgil moved on, and then, as we were leaving, said to me: ‘Why are you so bewildered?’ And I satisfied his question. The sage exhorted me: ‘Let your mind retain what you have heard of your fate, and note this,’ and he raised his finger, ‘When you stand before the sweet rays of [that lady](#), whose bright eyes see everything, you will learn the journey of your life through her.’

Then he turned his feet towards the left: we abandoned the wall, and went towards the middle, by a path that makes its way into a valley, that, even up there, forced us to breathe its foulness.

Inferno Canto XI:1-66 The structure of Hell: The Lower Circles

On the edge of a high bank, made of great broken rocks in a circle, we came above a still more cruel crowd, and here, because of the repulsive, excessive stench that the deep abyss throws out, we approached it in the shelter of a grand monument, on which I saw an inscription that said: ‘I hold Anastasius, that Photinus drew away from the true path.’

The Master said: 'We must delay our descent until our sense is somewhat used to the foul wind, and then we will not notice it.' I said to him: 'Find us something to compensate, so that the time is not wasted.' And he: 'See, I have thought of it.' He began: 'My son, within these walls of stone, are three graduated circles like those you are leaving. They are all filled with accursed spirits: but so that the sight of them may be enough to inform you, in future, listen how and why they are constrained.

The outcome of all maliciousness, that Heaven hates, is harm: and every such outcome, hurts others, either by force or deceit. But because deceit is a vice peculiar to human beings, it displeases God more, and therefore

the fraudulent are placed below, and more pain grieves them. The whole of the seventh circle is for the violent, but, since violence can be done to three persons, it is constructed and divided in three rings. I say violence may be done to God, or to oneself, or one's neighbour, and their person or possessions, as you will hear, in clear discourse.

Death or painful wounds may be inflicted on one's neighbour; and devastation, fire, and pillage, on his substance. Therefore the first ring torments all homicides; every one who lashes out maliciously; and thieves and robbers; in their diverse groups.

A man may do violence to himself and to his property, and so, in the second ring, all must repent,

in vain, who deprive themselves of your world; or gamble away and dissipate their wealth; or weep there, when they should be happy.

Violence may be done, against the Deity, denying him and blaspheming in the heart, and scorning Nature and her gifts, and so the smallest ring stamps with its seal both [Sodom and Cahors](#), and those who speak scornfully of God, in their hearts.

Human beings may practise deceit, which gnaws at every conscience, on one who trusts them, or on one who places no trust. This latter form of fraud only severs the bond of love that Nature created, and so, in the eighth circle, are nested hypocrisy; sorcery; flattery; cheating; theft and selling of holy

orders; pimps; corrupters of public office; and similar filth.

In the previous form, that love that Nature creates is forgotten, and also that which is added later, giving rise to special trust. So, in the ninth, the smallest circle, at the base of the universe, where Dis has his throne, every traitor is consumed eternally.’

Inferno Canto XI:67-93 The structure of Hell: The Upper Circles

And I said: ‘Master, your reasoning proceeds most clearly, and lays out excellently this gulf, and those that populate it, but tell me why those of the great marsh, those whom the wind drives, and the rain beats, and those who come together with sharp words, are not

punished in the burning city, if God's anger is directed towards them? And if not why they are in such a state?' And he to me: 'Why does your mind err so much more than usual, or are your thoughts somewhere else?'

Do you not remember the words with which your [Aristotelian](#) Ethics speaks of the three natures that Heaven does not will: incontinence, malice and mad brutishness, and how incontinence offends God less and incurs less blame? If you consider this doctrine correctly, and recall to mind who those are, that suffer punishment out there, above, you will see, easily, why they are separated from these destructive spirits, and why divine justice strikes them with less anger.'

I said: ‘O Sun, that heals all troubled sight, you make me so content when you explain to me, that to question is as delightful as to know.’

Inferno Canto XI:94-115 Virgil explains usury

‘Go back a moment, to where you said that usury offends divine goodness, and unravel that knot.’ He said to me: ‘To him who attends, Philosophy shows, in more than one place, how Nature takes her path from the Divine Intelligence, and its arts, and if you note your Physics well, you will find, not many pages in, that art, follows her, as well as it can, as the pupil does the master, so that your art is as it were the grandchild of God. By these two, art

and nature, man must earn his bread and flourish, if you recall to mind Genesis, near its beginning.

Because the usurer holds to another course, he denies Nature, in herself, and in that which follows her ways, putting his hopes elsewhere.

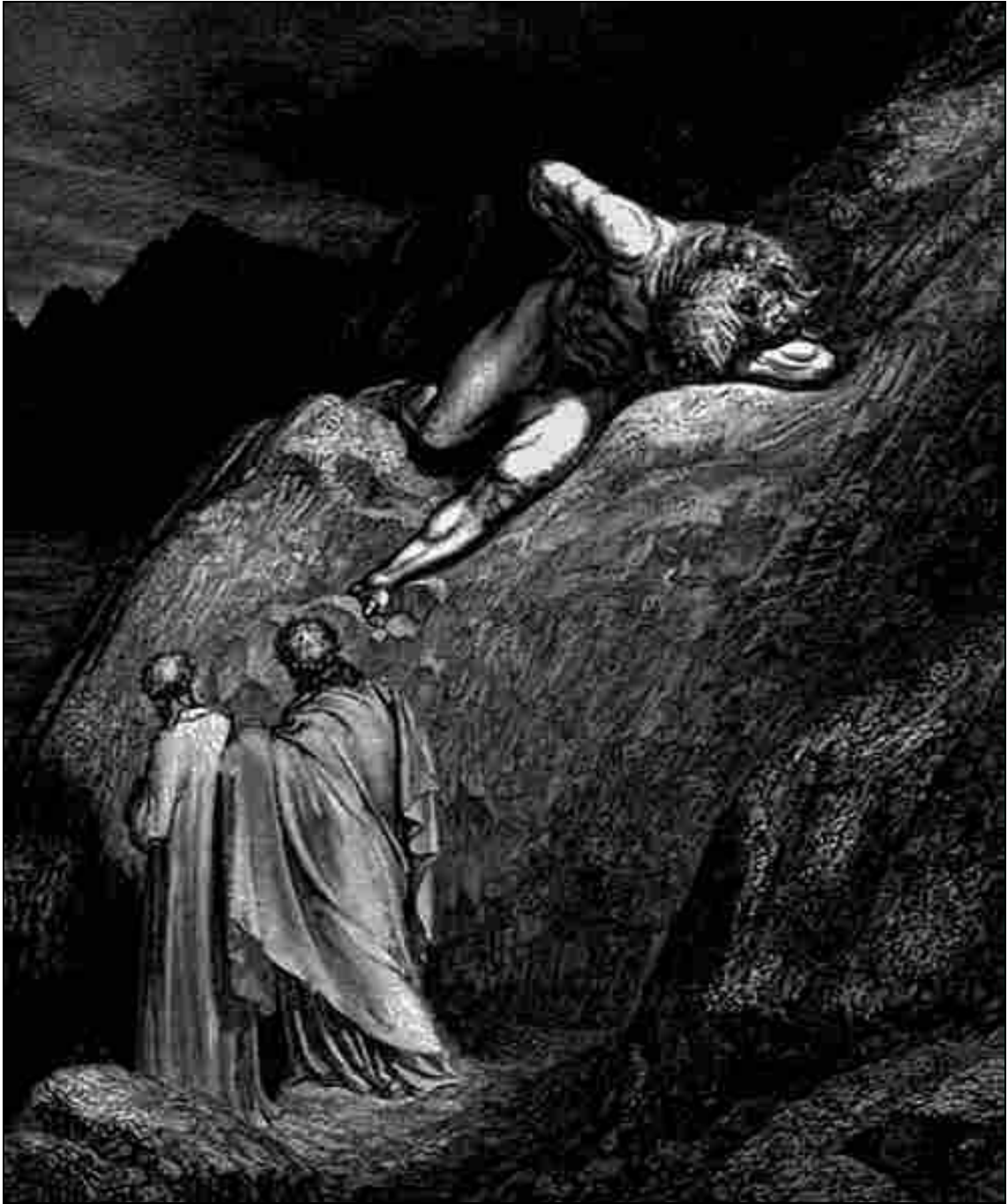
But follow me, now, by the path I choose, for Pisces quivers on the horizon, and all Bootës covers Caurus, the north-west wind, and over there, some way, we descend the cliff.’

Inferno Canto XII:1-27 Above the Seventh Circle: The Minotaur

The place we reached to climb down the bank was craggy, and, because of the creature there, also, a path that every eye would shun. The

descent of that rocky precipice was like the landslide that struck the left bank of the Adige, this side of Trento, caused by an earthquake or a faulty buttress, since the rock is so shattered, from the summit of the mountain, where it started, to the plain, that it might form a route, for someone above: and at the top of the broken gully, the infamy of Crete, the [Minotaur](#), conceived on [Pasiphaë](#), in the wooden cow, lay stretched out.

When he saw us he gnawed himself, like someone consumed by anger inside. My wise guide called to him: ‘Perhaps you think that [Theseus](#), the Duke of Athens, is here, who brought about your death, in the world above? Leave here, monstrous creature. This man does not come here, aided by your sister,



Ariadne, but passes through to see the punishments.’

Like a bull, breaking loose, at the moment when it receives the fatal blow, that cannot go forward, but plunges here and there, so I saw the Minotaur, and my cautious guide cried: ‘Run to the passage: while he is in a fury, it is time for you to descend.’

Inferno Canto XII:28-48 The descent to the Seventh Circle

So we made our way, downwards, over the landslide of stones, that often shifted beneath my feet, from the unaccustomed weight. I went thoughtfully, and he said: ‘Perhaps you are contemplating this fallen mass of rock, guarded by the bestial anger that I quelled a

moment ago. I would have you know that the previous time I came down here to the deep Inferno, this spill had not yet fallen. But, if I discern the truth, the deep and loathsome valley, shook, not long before He came to take the great ones of the highest circle, so that I thought the universe thrilled with love, by which as some believe, the world has often been overwhelmed by chaos. In that moment ancient rocks, here and elsewhere, tumbled.

But fix your gaze on the valley, because we near the river of blood, in which those who injure others by violence are boiled.’

Inferno Canto XII:49-99 The First Ring: The Centaurs: The Violent

O blind desires, evil and foolish, which so goad us in our brief life, and then, in the eternal one, ruin us so bitterly! I saw a wide canal bent in an arc, looking as if it surrounded the whole plain, from what my guide had told me. [Centaur](#)s were racing, one behind another, between it and the foot of the bank, armed with weapons, as they were accustomed to hunt on earth.

Seeing us descend they all stood still, and three, elected leaders, came from the group, armed with bows and spears. And one of them shouted from the distance: ‘What torment do you come for, you that descend the rampart? Speak from there, if not, I draw the bow.’ My Master said: ‘We will make our reply to [Chiron](#), who is there, nearby. Sadly, your nature was

always rash.’ Then he touched me, and said: ‘That is [Nessus](#), who died because of his theft of the lovely [Deianira](#), and, for his blood, took vengeance, through his blood.

He, in the centre, whose head is bowed to his chest, is the great Chiron, who nursed [Achilles](#): the other is [Pholus](#), who was so full of rage. They race around the ditch, in thousands, piercing with arrows any spirit that climbs further from the blood than its guilt has condemned it to. We drew near the swift creatures. Chiron took an arrow, and pushed back his beard from his face with the notched flight. When he had uncovered his huge mouth, he said to his companions: ‘Have you noticed that the one behind moves whatever he touches? The feet of dead men do not usually do so.’

And my good guide, who was by Chiron's front part, where the two natures join, replied: 'He is truly alive, and, alone, I have to show him the dark valley. Necessity brings him here, and not desire. She, who gave me this new duty, came from singing Alleluiahs: he is no thief: nor am I a wicked spirit. But, by that virtue, by means of which I set my feet on so unsafe a path, lend us one of your people whom we can follow, so that he may show us where the ford is, and carry this one over on his back, since he cannot fly as a spirit through the air.'

Chiron twisted to his right, and said to Nessus: 'Turn, and guide them, then, and if another crew meet you, keep them off.'

Inferno Canto XII:100-139 The Tyrants, Murderers and Warriors

We moved onwards with our trustworthy guide, along the margin of the crimson boiling, in which the boiled were shrieking loudly. I saw people immersed as far as the eyebrows, and the great Centaur said: ‘These are tyrants who indulged in blood, and rapine. Here they lament their offences, done without mercy. Here is [Alexander](#), and fierce [Dionysius](#) of Syracuse, who gave Sicily years of pain. That head of black hair is [Azzolino](#), and the other, which is blonde, is [Obizzo da Este](#), whose life was quenched, in truth, by his stepson, up in the world.’ Then I turned to the poet, and he said: ‘Let him guide you first, now, and I second.’

A little further on, Nessus paused, next to people who seemed to be sunk in the boiling stream up to their throat. He showed us a shade, apart by itself, saying: ‘That one, [Guy de Montfort](#), in God’s church, pierced that heart that is still venerated by the Thames.’

Then I saw others, who held their heads and all their chests, likewise, free of the river: and I knew many of these. So the blood grew shallower and shallower, until it only cooked their feet, and here was our ford through the ditch.

The Centaur said: ‘As you see the boiling stream continually diminishing, on this side, so, on the other, it sinks more and more, till it comes again to where tyrants are doomed to grieve. Divine Justice here torments [Attila](#), the scourge of

the earth; and Pyrrhus, and Sextus Pompeius; and for eternity milks tears, produced by the boiling, from Rinier da Corneto, and Rinier Pazzo, who made war on the highways.’ Then he turned back, and recrossed the ford.

Inferno Canto XIII:1-30 The Second Ring: The Harpies: The Suicides

Nessus had not yet returned to the other side, when we entered a wood, unmarked by any path. The foliage was not green, but a dusky colour: the branches were not smooth, but warped and knotted: there were no fruits there, but poisonous thorns. The wild beasts, that hate the cultivated fields, in the Tuscan Maremma, between Cecina

and Corneto, have lairs less thick and tangled. Here the brutish Harpies make their nests, they who chased the Trojans from the Strophades, with dismal pronouncements of future tribulations.

They have broad wings, and human necks and faces, clawed feet, and large feathered bellies, and they make mournful cries in that strange wood. The kind Master said: 'Before you go further, be aware you are in the second ring, and will be until you come to the dreadful sands. So look carefully, and you will see things that might make you mistrust my words.'

Already I heard sighs on every side, and saw no one to make them, at which, I stood totally bewildered. I think that he thought that I was



thinking that many of those voices came from among the trees, from people who hid themselves because of us. So the Master said: ‘If you break a little twig from one of these branches, the thoughts you have will be seen to be in error.’

Inferno Canto XIII:31-78 The Wood of Suicides: Pier delle Vigne

Then I stretched my hand out a little, and broke a small branch from a large thorn, and its trunk cried out: ‘Why do you tear at me?’ And when it had grown dark with blood, it began to cry out again: ‘Why do you splinter me? Have you no breath of pity? We were men, and we are changed to trees: truly, your hand would be more merciful, if we were merely the souls of snakes.’

Just as a green branch, burning at one end, spits and hisses with escaping air at the other, so from that broken wood, blood and words came out together: at which I let the branch fall, and stood, like a man afraid. My wise sage replied: ‘Wounded spirit, if he had only believed, before, what he had read in my verse, he would not have lifted his hand to you, but the incredible nature of the thing made me urge him to do what grieves me. But tell him who you were, so that he might make you some amends, and renew your fame up in the world, to which he is allowed to return.

And the tree replied: ‘You tempt me so, with your sweet words, that I cannot keep silent, but do not object if I am expansive in speech. I am

Pier delle Vigne, who held both the keys to Frederick's heart, and employed them, locking and unlocking, so quietly, that I kept almost everyone else from his secrets. I was so faithful to that glorious office that through it I lost my sleep and my life.

The whore that never turned her eyes from Caesar's household, Envy, the common disease and vice of courts, stirred all minds against me, and being stirred they stirred Augustus, so that my fine honours were changed to grievous sorrows. My spirit, in a scornful mode, thinking to escape scorn by death, made me, though I was just, unjust to myself. By the strange roots of this tree, I swear to you, I never broke faith with my lord, so worthy of honour. If either of you return to

the world, raise and cherish the memory of me, that still lies low from the blow Envy gave me.'

Inferno Canto XIII:79-108 The fate of The Suicides

The poet listened for a while, then said to me: 'Since he is silent, do not lose the moment, but speak, and ask him to tell you more.' At which I said to him: 'You ask him further, about what you think will interest me, because I could not, such pity fills my heart.' So he continued: 'That the man may do freely what your words request from him, imprisoned spirit, be pleased to tell us further how the spirits are caught in these knots: and tell us, if you can, whether any of them free themselves from these limbs.'

Then the trunk blew fiercely, and the breath was turned to words like these: ‘My reply will be brief. When the savage spirit leaves the body, from which it has ripped itself, [Minos](#) sends it to the seventh gulf. It falls into this wood, and no place is set for it, but, wherever chance hurls it, there it sprouts, like a grain of German wheat, shoots up as a sapling, and then as a wild tree. The [Harpies](#) feeding then on its leaves hurt it, and give an outlet to its hurt.

Like others we shall go to our corpses on the Day of Judgement, but not so that any of us may inhabit them again, because it would not be just to have what we took from ourselves. We shall drag them here, and our bodies will be hung through the dismal wood, each on the thorn-tree of its tormented shade.

Inferno Canto XIII:109-129 Lano Maconi and Jacomo da Sant' Andrea

We were still listening to the tree, thinking it might tell us more, when we were startled by a noise, like those who think the wild boar is nearing where they stand, and hear the animals and the crashing of branches. Behold, on the left, two naked, torn spirits, running so hard they broke every thicket of the wood. The leader, cried: ‘Come Death, come now!’ and the other, Jacomo, who felt himself to be too slow cried: ‘Lano, your legs were not so swift at the jousts of Toppo.’ And since perhaps his breath was failing him, he merged himself with a bush.

The wood behind them was filled with black bitch hounds, eager and quick as greyhounds that have slipped the leash. They clamped their teeth into Lano, who squatted, and tore him bit by bit, then carried off his miserable limbs.

Inferno Canto XIII:130-151 The unnamed Florentine

My guide now took me by the hand, and led me to the bush, which was grieving, in vain, through its bleeding splinters, crying: ‘O Giacomo da Sant’ Andrea, what have you gained by making me your screen? What blame do I have for your sinful life? When the Master had stopped next to it, he said: ‘Who were you, that breathe out

your mournful speech, with blood,
through so many wounds?

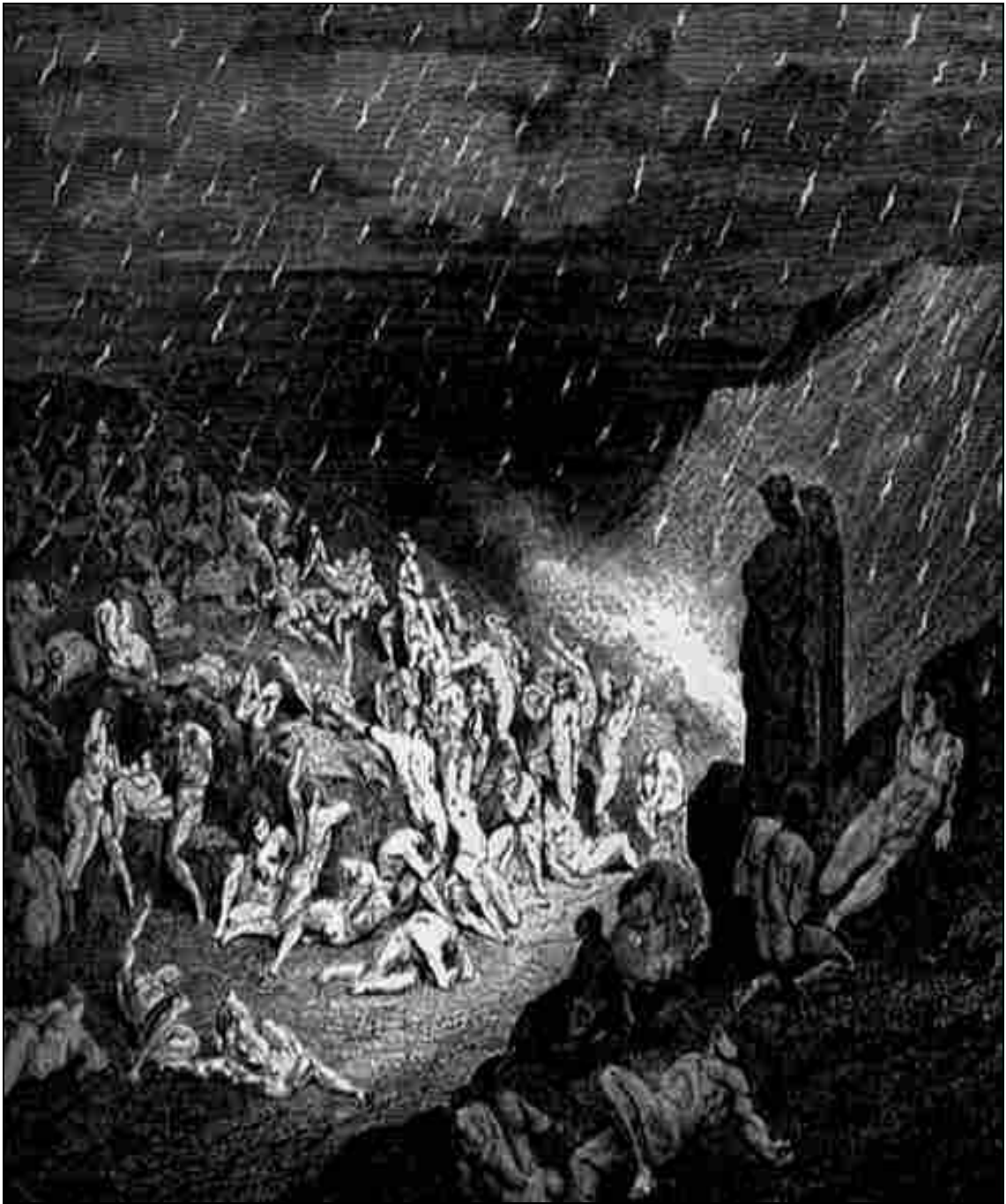
And he to us: ‘You spirits, who
have come to view the
dishonourable mangling that has
torn my leaves from me, gather
them round the foot of this sad tree.
I was of Florence, that city, which
changed Mars, its patron, for
[St John the Baptist](#), because of
which that god, through his powers,
will always make it sorrowful. Were
it not that some fragments of his
statue remain where Ponte Vecchio
crosses the Arno, those citizens,
who rebuilt it on the ashes [Attila](#)
left, would have worked in vain.

[I made](#) a gibbet for myself, from
my own roofbeam.’

Inferno Canto XIV:1-42 The Third Ring: The Violent against God

As the love of my native place stirred in me, I gathered up the scattered leaves, and gave them back to him who was already hoarse. Then we came to the edge, where the second round is divided from the third, where a fearsome form of justice is seen. To make these new things clear, I say we reached a plain, where the land repels all vegetation. The mournful wood makes a circle round it, as the ditch surrounds the wood: here we stepped close to its very rim.

The ground was dry, thick sand, no different in form than that which [Cato](#) once trod. O God's vengeance, how what was shown to my sight



should be feared, by all who read! I saw many groups of naked spirits, who were all moaning bitterly: and there seemed to be diverse rules applied to them. Some were lying face upward on the ground; some sat all crouched: and others roamed around continuously.

Those who moved were more numerous, and those that lay in torment fewer, but uttering louder cries of pain. Dilated flakes of fire, falling slowly, like snow in the windless mountains, rained down over all the vast sands. Like the flames that [Alexander](#) saw falling, in the hot zones of India, over all his army, until they reached the ground, fires that were more easily quenched while they were separate, so that his troops took care to trample the earth - like those, fell this eternal heat,

kindling the sand like tinder beneath
flint and steel, doubling the pain.

The dance of their tortured hands
was never still, now here, now there,
shaking off the fresh burning.

Inferno Canto XIV:43-72
Capaneus

I began: ‘Master, you who
overcome everything except the
obdurate demons, that came out
against us at the entrance to the
gate, who is that great spirit, who
seems indifferent to the fire, and lies
there, scornful, contorted, so that the
rain does not seem to deepen his
repentance?’ And he himself, noting
that I asked my guide about him,
cried: ‘What I was when I was
living, I am now I am dead. Though
Jupiter exhausts Vulcan, his

blacksmith, from whom he took, in anger, the fierce lightning bolt, that I was struck down with on my last day, and though he exhausts the others, the [Cyclopes](#), one by one, at the black forge of Aetna, shouting: ‘Help, help, good Vulcan’, just as he did at the battle of Phlegra, between the gods and giants, and hurls his bolts at me with all his strength, he shall still not enjoy a true revenge.’

Then my guide spoke, with a force I had not heard before: ‘O [Capaneus](#), you are punished more in that your pride is not quenched: no torment would produce pain fitting for your fury, except your own raving.’ Then he turned to me with gentler voice, saying: ‘That was one of the seven kings who laid siege to Thebes: and he held God, and seems to hold him, in disdain, and value

him lightly, but as I told him, his spite is an ornament that fits his breast.'

Inferno Canto XIV:73-120 The Old Man of Crete

'Now follow me, and be careful not to place your feet yet on the burning sand, but always keep back close to the wood.' We came, in silence, to the place, where a little stream gushes from the wood, the redness of which still makes me shudder. Like the rivulet that runs sulphur-red from the Bulicame spring, near Viterbo, that the sinful women share among themselves, so this ran down over the sand. Its bed and both its sloping banks were petrified, and its nearby margins: so that I realised our way lay there.

‘Among all the other things that I have shown you, since we entered though the gate, whose threshold is denied to no one, your eyes have seen nothing as noteworthy as this present stream, that quenches all the flames over it.’ These were my guide’s words, at which I begged him to grant me food, for which he had given me the appetite.

He then said: ‘There is a deserted island in the middle of the sea, named Crete, under whose king [Saturn](#), the world was pure. There is a mountain, there, called Ida, which was once gladdened with waters and vegetation, and now is abandoned like an ancient spoil heap. [Rhea](#) chose it, once, as the trusted cradle of her son, and the better to hide him when he wept, caused loud shouts to echo from it.

Inside the mountain, a great Old Man, stands erect, with his shoulders turned towards Egyptian Damietta, and looks at Rome as if it were his mirror. His head is formed of pure gold, his arms and his breasts are refined silver: then he is bronze as far as the thighs. Downwards from there he is all of choice iron, except that the right foot is baked clay, and more of his weight is on that one than the other. Every part, except the gold, is cleft with a fissure that sheds tears, which collect and pierce the grotto. Their course falls from rock to rock into this valley. They form Acheron, Styx and Phlegethon, then, by this narrow channel, go down to where there is no further fall, and form Cocytus: you will see what kind of

lake that is: so I will not describe it to you here.’

Inferno Canto XIV:121-142 The Rivers Phlegethon and Lethe

I said to him: ‘If the present stream flows down like that from our world, why does it only appear to us on this bank? And he to me: ‘You know the place is circular, and though you have come far, always to the left, descending to the depths, you have not yet turned through a complete round, so that if anything new appears to us, it should not bring an expression of wonder to your face.’

And I again: ‘Master, where are Phlegethon, and Lethe found, since you do not speak of the former, and say that the latter is formed from

these tears?’ He replied: ‘You please me, truly, with all your questions, but the boiling red water might well answer to one of those you ask about. You will see Lethe, but above this abyss, there, on the Mount, where the spirits go to purify themselves, when their guilt is absolved by penitence.’

Then he said: ‘Now it is time to leave the wood: see that you follow me: the margins which are not burning form a path, and over them all the fire is quenched.’

Inferno Canto XV:1-42 The Violent against Nature: Brunetto Latini

Now one of the solid banks takes us on, and the smoke from the stream makes a shadow above, so

that it shelters the water and its margins. Just as the Flemings between Bruges and Wissant make their dykes to hold back the sea, fearing the flood that beats against them; and as the Paduans do, along the Brenta, to defend their towns and castles, before Carinthia's mountains feel the thaw; so those banks were similarly formed, though their creator, whoever it might be, made them neither as high or as deep.

Already we were so far from the wood, that I was unable to see where it was, unless I turned back, when we met a group of spirits, coming along the bank, and each of them looked at us, as, at twilight, men look at one another, under a crescent moon, and peered towards us, as an old tailor does at the eye of

his needle. Eyed so by that tribe, I was recognised, by one who took me by the skirt of my robe, and said: ‘How wonderful!’

And I fixed my eyes on his baked visage, so that the scorching of his aspect did not prevent my mind from knowing him, and bending my face to his I replied: ‘Are you here Ser Brunetto?’ And he: ‘O my son, do not be displeased if [Brunetto Latini](#) turns back with you a while, and lets the crowd pass by.’ I said: ‘I ask it, with all my strength, and, if you want me to sit with you, I will, if it pleases him there, whom I go with.’

He said: ‘O my son, whoever of the flock stops for a moment, must lie there for a hundred years after, without cooling himself when the fire beats on him. So go on, I will



follow at your heels, and then I will rejoin my crew again, who go mourning their eternal loss.'

Inferno Canto XV:43-78
Brunetto's prophecy

I did not dare leave the road to be level with him, but kept my head bowed like one who walks reverently. He began: 'What fate, or chance, bring you down here, before your final hour? Who is this who shows you the way?' I replied: 'I lost myself, in the clear life up above, in a valley, before my years were complete. Only yesterday morning I turned my back on it: he appeared to me as I was returning to it, and guides me back again, but by this path.'

And he to me: ‘If you follow your star, you cannot fail to reach a glorious harbour: if I judged clearly in the sweet life. If I had not died before you, I would have supported you in your work, seeing that Heaven is so kind to you. But that ungrateful, malignant people, who came down from Fiesole to Florence, in ancient times, and still have something of the mountain and the rock, will be inimical to you for the good you do, and with reason, since it is not fitting for the sweet fig tree to fruit, among the sour crab-apples.

Past report on earth declares them blind, an envious, proud and avaricious people: make sure you purge yourself of their faults. Your fate prophesies such honour for you, that both parties will hunger for you,

but the goat will be far from the grass. Let the herd from Fiesole make manure of themselves, but not touch the plant in which the sacred seed of those Romans revives, who stayed, when that nest of malice was created, if any plant still springs from their ordure.’

Inferno Canto XV:79-99 Dante accepts his fate

I answered him: ‘If my wishes had been completely fulfilled, you would not have been separated, yet, from human nature, since, in my memory, the dear, and kind, paternal image of you is fixed, and now goes to my heart, how, when in the world, hour by hour, you taught me the way man makes himself eternal; and it is fitting my tongue

should show what gratitude I hold, while I live. What you tell me of my fate, I write, and retain it with a former text, for a lady, who will know, how to comment on it, if I reach her.

I would make this much known to you: I am ready for whatever Fortune wills, as long as conscience does not hurt me. Such prophecies are not new to my ears: so let Fortune turn her wheel as she pleases, and the peasant wield his mattock.’ At that, my Master, looked back, on his right, and gazed at me, then said: ‘He listens closely, who notes it.’

Inferno Canto XV:100-124
Brunetto names some of his companions

I carry on speaking, no less, with Ser [Brunetto](#), and ask who are the most famous and noblest of his companions. And he to me: ‘It is good to know of some: of the rest it would be praiseworthy to keep silent, as the time would be too little for such a speech. In short, know that all were clerks, and great scholars, and very famous, tainted with the same sin on earth.

[Priscian](#) goes with that miserable crowd, and [Francesco d’Accorso](#): and if you had any desire for such scum, you might have seen [Andrea di Mozzi](#) there, who by [Boniface](#), the Pope, *servus servorum Dei*, servant of servants, was translated from the Arno to Vicenza’s Bacchiglione, where he departed from his ill-strained body.

I would say more, but my speech and my departure must not linger, since there I see new smoke, rising from the great sand. People come that I cannot be with: let my *Tresoro* be commended to you, in which I still live: more I ask not.'

Then he turned back, and seemed like one who runs for the green cloth, at Verona, through the open fields: and seemed one of those who wins, not one who loses.

Inferno Canto XVI:1-45
Rusticucci, Guido Guerra,
Aldobrandi

I was already in a place where the booming of the water, that fell, into the next circle, sounded like a beehive's humming, when three shades together, running, left a

crowd that passed under the sharp burning rain. They came towards us, and each one cried: 'Wait, you, who seem to us, by your clothes, to be someone from our perverse city.'

Ah me, what ancient, and recent, wounds I saw on their limbs, scorched there by the flames! It saddens me now, when I remember it. My teacher listened to their cries, turned his face towards me, and said: 'Wait, now: courtesy is owed them, and if there were not this fire, that the place's nature rains down, I would say that you were more hasty than them.'

As we rested, they started their former laments again, and when they reached us, all three of them formed themselves into a circle. Wheeling round, as champion wrestlers, naked and oiled, do,

looking for a hold or an advantage, before they grasp and strike one another, each directed his face at me, so that his neck was turned, all the time, in an opposite direction to his feet.

And one of them began: ‘If the misery of this sinful place, and our scorched, stained look, renders us, and our prayers, contemptible, let our fame influence your mind to tell us who you are, that move your living feet, safely, through Hell. He, in whose footsteps you see me tread, all peeled and naked as he is, was greater in degree than you would think. His name is [Guido Guerra](#), grandson of the good lady [Gualdrada](#), and in his life he achieved much in council, and with his sword.

The other, that treads the sand behind me, is [Tegghiaio Aldobrandi](#), whose words should have been listened to in the world. And I, who am placed with them in torment, am [Jacopo Rusticucci](#), and certainly my fierce wife injured me more than anything else.’

Inferno Canto XVI:46-87 The condition of Florence

If I had been sheltered from the fire, I would have dropped down among them below, and I believe my teacher would have allowed it, but as I would have been burned and baked, myself, my fear overcame the goodwill, that made me eager to embrace them.

Then I began: ‘Your condition stirred sadness, not contempt, in me,

so deeply, it will not soon be gone, when my guide spoke words to me by which I understood such men as yourselves might be approaching. I am of your city, and I have always heard, and rehearsed, your names and your deeds, with affection. I leave the gall behind, and go towards the sweet fruits promised me by my truthful guide, but first I must go downwards to the centre.’

He replied, then: ‘That your soul may long inhabit your body, and your fame shine after you, tell us if courtesy and courage, still live in our city as they used to, or if they have quite forsaken it? [Guglielmo Borsiere](#), who has been in pain with us, a little while, and goes along there with our companions, torments us greatly with what he says.

‘New men, and sudden wealth, have created pride and excess in you, Florence, so that you already weep for it.’ So I cried with lifted face, and the three, who took this for an answer, gazed at one another, as one gazes at the truth. They replied together: ‘Happy are you, if, by speaking according to your will, it costs so little for you to satisfy others! So, if you escape these gloomy spaces, and turn, and see the beauty of the stars again, when you will be glad to say: “*I was*”, see that you tell people of us.’

Then they broke up their circle, and, as they ran, their swift legs seemed wings.

Inferno Canto XVI:88-136 The monster Geryon

An *Amen* could not have been said in so quick a time as their vanishing took, at which my Master was pleased to depart. I followed him. We had gone only a little way, when the sound of the water came so near us, that if we had been speaking we would hardly have heard each other.

Like that river (the first that takes its own course to the eastern seaboard, south of Monte Veso, where the Po rises, on the left flank of the Apennines, and is called Acquacheta above, before it falls to its lower bed, and loses its name, to become the Montone, at Forlì) which, plunging through a fall, echoes from the mountain, above San Benedetto, where there should be refuge for a thousand, so, down from a steep bank, we found that

tainted water re-echoing, so much so that, in a short while, it would have dazed our hearing.

I had a cord tied round me, and with it I had once thought to catch the leopard with the spotted skin. After I had completely unwound it from myself, as my guide commanded, I held it out to him, gathered up and coiled. Then he turned towards the right, and threw the end of it, away from the edge a little, down into the steep gulf. I said to myself: ‘Surely something strange will follow this new sign of our intentions, that my master tracks with his eyes, as it falls.’

Ah, how careful men should be with those who do not only see our actions but, with their understanding, see into our thoughts! He said to me: ‘That

which I expect will soon ascend, and, what your thoughts speculate about, will soon be apparent to your sight.’

A man should always shut his lips, as far as he can, to truth that seems like falsehood, since he incurs reproach, though he is blameless, but I cannot be silent here: and Reader, I swear to you, by the words of this *Commedia*, that they may not be free of lasting favour, that I saw a shape, marvellous, to every unshaken heart, come swimming upwards through the dense, dark air, as a man rises, who has gone down, sometime, to loose an anchor, caught on a rock or something else, hidden in the water, who spreads his arms out, and draws up his feet.

Inferno Canto XVII:1-30 The poets approach Geryon

‘See the savage beast, with the pointed tail, that crosses mountains, and pierces walls and armour: see him, who pollutes the whole world.’ So my guide began to speak to me, and beckoned to him to land near the end of our rocky path, and that vile image of Fraud came on, and grounded his head and chest, but did not lift his tail onto the cliff.

His face was the face of an honest man, it had so benign and outward aspect: all the rest was a serpent’s body. Both arms were covered with hair to the armpits; the back and chest and both flanks were adorned with knots and circles. Tartars or Turks never made cloths with more colour, background and

embroidery: nor did [Arachne](#) spread such webs on her loom. As the boats rest on the shore, part in water and part on land, and as the beaver, among the guzzling Germans, readies himself for a fight, so that worst of savage creatures lay on the cliff that surrounds the great sand with stone.

The whole of his tail glanced into space, twisting the venomous fork upwards, that armed the tip, like a scorpion. My guide said: ‘Now we must direct our path, somewhat, towards the malevolent beast that rests there.’

Inferno Canto XVII:31-78 The Usurers

Then we went down, on the right, and took ten steps towards the

edge, so that we could fully avoid the sand and flame, and when we reached him, I saw people sitting near the empty space, a little further away, on the ground.

Here my Master said: 'Go and see the state of them, so that you may take away a complete knowledge of this round. Talk briefly with them: I will speak with this creature, until you return, so that he might carry us on his strong shoulders.' So, still on the extreme edge of the seventh circle, I went, all alone, to where the sad crew were seated.

Their grief was gushing from their eyes: they kept flicking away the flames and sometimes the burning dust, on this side, or on that, with their hands, no differently than dogs do in summer, now with their

muzzle, now with their paws, when they are bitten by fleas, or gnats, or horse-flies. When I set my eyes on the faces of several of them, on whom the grievous fire falls, I did not recognise any, but I saw that a pouch hung from the neck of each, that had a certain colour, and a certain seal, and it seemed their eye was feeding on it. And as I came among them, looking, I saw, on a golden-yellow purse, an azure seal that had the look and attitude of [a lion](#).

Then my gaze continuing on its track, I saw another, red as blood, showing [a goose](#) whiter than butter. And one who had his white purse stamped with an azure, [pregnant sow](#), said to me: ‘What are you doing in this pit? Now go away, and since you are still alive, know that my

neighbour, [Vitaliano](#), will come to sit here on my left. I, a Paduan, am with these Florentines. Many a time they deafen my hearing, shouting: ‘Let the noble knight come, who will carry the purse with [three eagles’ beaks!](#)’

Then he distorted his mouth, and thrust his tongue out, like an ox licking its nose, and I, dreading lest a longer stay might anger him, who had warned me to make a brief stay, turned back from those weary spirits.

Inferno Canto XVII:79-136 The poets descend on Geryon’s back

I found my guide, who had already mounted the flank of the savage creature, and he said to me: ‘Be firm and brave. Now we must

descend by means of these stairs: you climb in front: I wish to be in the centre, so that the tail may not harm you.'

Like a man whose fit of the quartan fever is so near, that his nails are already pallid, and he shakes all over, by keeping in the shade, so I became when these words were said: but his reproof roused shame in me, that makes the servant brave in the presence of a worthy master. I set myself on those vast shoulders. I wished to say: 'See that you clasp me tight.' but my voice did not come out as I intended. He, who helped me in other difficulties, at other times, embraced me, as soon as I mounted, and held me upright. Then he said: 'Now move, [Geryon](#)! Make large circles, and let your descent be

gentle: think of the strange burden that you carry.'

As a little boat goes backwards, backwards, from its mooring, so the monster left the cliff, and when he felt himself quite free, he turned his tail around, to where his chest had been, and stretching, flicked it like an eel, and gathered the air towards him with his paws. I do not believe the fear was greater when [Phaëthon](#) let slip the reins, and the sky was scorched, as it still appears to be; or when poor [Icarus](#) felt the feathers melt from his arms, as the wax was heated, and his father [Daedalus](#) cried: 'You are going the wrong way!' as mine was when I saw myself surrounded by the air, on all sides, and saw everything vanish, except the savage beast.



He goes down, swimming slowly, slowly: wheels and falls: but I do not see it except by the wind, on my face, and from below. Already I heard the cataract, on the right, make a terrible roaring underneath us, at which I stretched my neck out, with my gaze downwards. Then I was more afraid to dismount, because I saw fires, and heard moaning, so that I cowered, trembling all over. And then I saw what I had not seen before, our sinking and circling through the great evils that drew close on every side.

As the falcon, that has been long on the wing, descends wearily, without seeing bird or lure, making the falconer cry: 'Ah, you stoop!' and settles far from his master disdainful and sullen, so Geryon set

us down, at the base, close to the foot of the fractured rock, and relieved of our weight, shot off, like an arrow from the bow.

Inferno Canto XVIII:1-21 The Eighth Circle: Malebolge: Simple Fraud

There is a place in Hell called Malebolge, all of stone, and coloured like iron, as is the cliff that surrounds it. Right in the centre of the malignant space, a well yawns, very wide and deep, whose structure I will speak of in due place.

The margin that remains, between the base of the high rocky bank and the well, is circular, and its floor is divided into ten moats. Like the form the ground reveals, where successive ditches circle a castle, to

defend the walls, such was the layout displayed here. And as there are bridges to the outer banks from the thresholds of the fortress, so, from the base of the cliff, causeways ran, crossing the successive banks and ditches, down to the well that terminates and links them.

We found ourselves there, shaken from Geryon's back, and the Poet kept to the left, and I went on, behind him.

Inferno Canto XVIII:22-39 The First Chasm: The Pimps and Seducers

On the right I saw new pain and torment, and new tormentors, with which the first chasm was filled. In its depths the sinners were naked: on our inner side of its central round

they came towards us, on the outer side, with us, but with larger steps. So the people of Rome, in that year, at the Jubilee, because of the great crowds, initiated this means to pass the people over the bridge: those on the one side all had their faces towards Castello Sant' Angelo, and went to St Peter's: those on the other towards Monte Giordano.

On this side and on that, along the fearful rock, I saw horned demons with large whips, who struck them fiercely, from behind. Ah, how it made them quicken their steps at the first stroke! Truly none waited for the second or third.

**Inferno Canto XVIII:40-66 The
Pandors: Venedico de'
Caccianemico**

As I went on, my eyes encountered one of them, and instantly I said: This shade I have seen before.’ So I stopped to scrutinise him, and the kind guide stood still with me, and allowed me to return a little. And that scourged spirit thought to hide himself, lowering his face, but it did not help, since I said: ‘You, who cast your eyes on the ground, if the features you display are not an illusion, you are [Venedico Caccianimico](#): but what led you into such a biting pickle?’

And he to me: ‘I tell it unwillingly, but your clear speech that makes me remember the former world, compels me. ‘It was I who induced the fair [Ghisola](#) to do the Marquis of [Este](#)’s will, however unpleasant the story sounds. And I

am not the only Bolognese that weeps here: this place is so filled with us, that as many tongues are no longer taught to say *sipa* for *si*, between the Savena's stream that is west, and the Reno's, that is east of Bologna. If you want assurance and testimony of it, recall to mind our avaricious hearts.' And as he spoke, a demon struck him with his whip, and said: 'Away, pander, there are no women here to sell.'

Inferno Canto XVIII:67-99 The Seducers: Jason

I rejoined my guide: then in a few steps we came to where a causeway ran from the cliff. This we climbed very easily, and, turning to the right on its jagged ridge, we moved away from that eternal

round. When we reached the arch where it yawns below to leave a path for the scourged, my guide said: ‘Wait, and let the aspect of those other ill-born spirits strike you, whose faces you have not yet seen, since they have been going in our direction.’

We viewed their company from the ancient bridge, travelling towards us on the other side, chased likewise by the whip. Without my asking, the kind Master said to me: ‘Look at that great soul who comes, and seems not to shed tears of pain: what a royal aspect he still retains! That is [Jason](#), who, by wisdom and courage, robbed the Colchians of the Golden Fleece.

He sailed by the Isle of Lemnos, after the bold merciless women there had put all their males to

death. There with gifts and sweet words he deceived the young [Hypsipyle](#), who had saved her father by deceiving all the rest. He left her there, pregnant and lonely: such guilt condemns him to such torment: and revenge is also taken for his abandoning [Medea](#). With him go all who practise like deceit, and let this be enough for knowledge of the first chasm, and those whom it swallows.'

Inferno Canto XVIII:100-136 The Second Chasm: The Flatterers

We had already come to where the narrow causeway crosses the second bank, and forms a buttress to a second arch. Here we heard people whining in the next chasm, and blowing with their muzzles, and

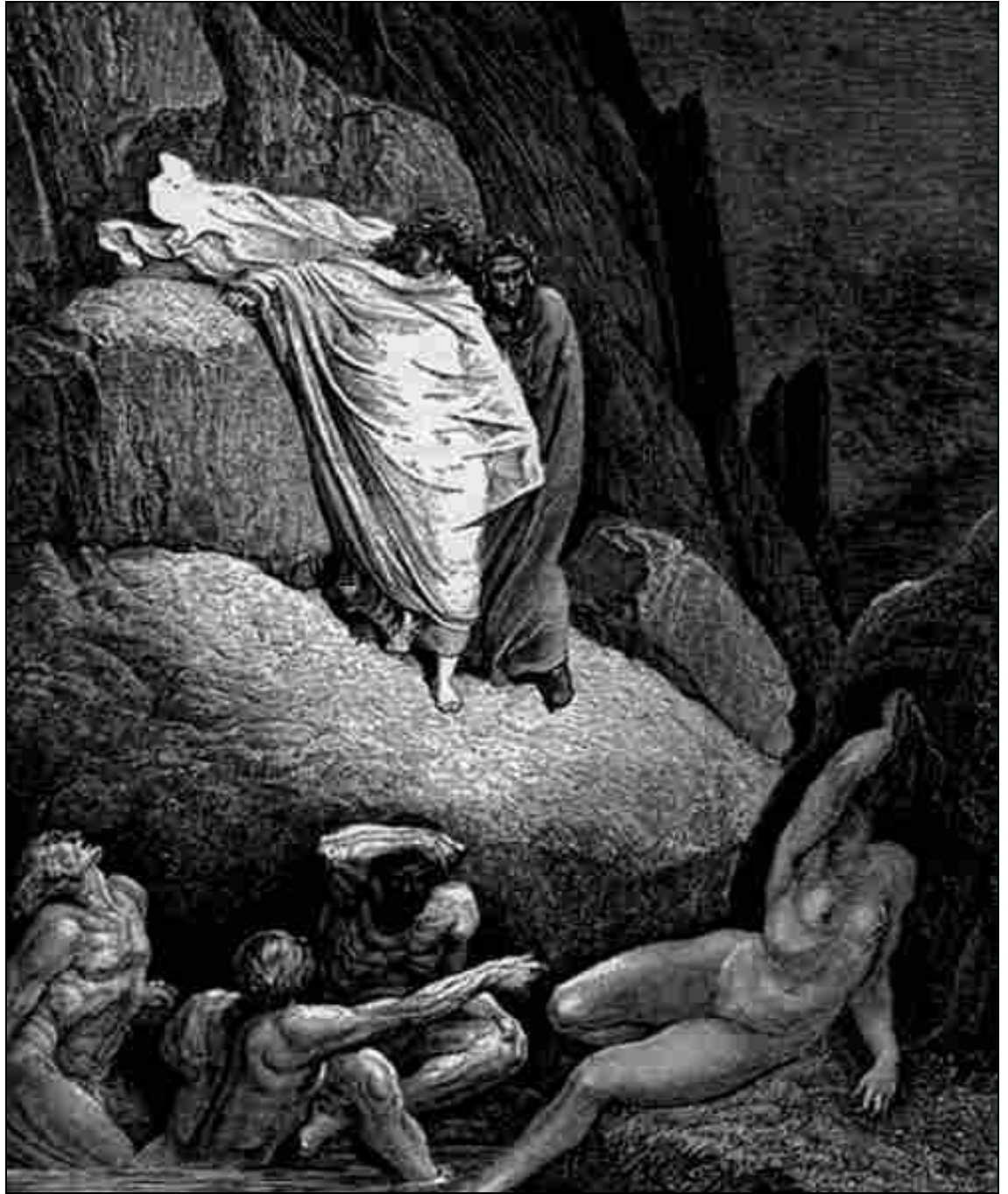
striking themselves with their palms.

The banks were crusted, with a mould from the fumes below that condenses on them, and attacks the eyes and nose. The floor is so deep, that we could not see any part of it, except by climbing to the ridge of the arch, where the rock is highest. We came there, and from it, in the ditch below, I saw people immersed in excrement, that looked as if it flowed from human privies. And while I was searching it, down there, with my eyes, I saw one with a head so smeared with ordure, that it was not clear if he was clerk or layman.

He shouted at me: ‘Why are you so keen to gaze at me more than the other mired ones?’ And I to him: ‘Because, if I remember rightly, I

have seen you before with dry head, and you are [Alessio Interminei](#) of Lucca: so I eye you more than all the others.’ And he then, beating his forehead: ‘The flatteries, of which my tongue never wearied, have brought me down to this!’

At which my guide said to me: ‘Advance your head a little, so that your eyes can clearly see, over there, the face of that filthy and dishevelled piece, who scratches herself, with her soiled nails, now crouching down, now rising to her feet. It is [Thais](#), the whore, who answered her lover’s message, in which he asked: “Do you really return me great thanks?” with “No, wondrous thanks.” And let our looking be sated with this.’



Inferno Canto XIX:1-30 The Third Chasm: The Sellers of Sacred Offices

O [Simon Magus](#)! O you, his rapacious, wretched followers, who prostitute, for gold and silver, the things of God that should be wedded to virtue! Now the trumpets must sound for you, since you are in the third chasm.

Already we had climbed to the next arch, onto that part of the causeway that hangs right over the centre of the ditch. O Supreme Wisdom, how great the art is, that you display, in the heavens, on earth, and in the underworld, and how justly your virtue acts. On the sides and floor of the fosse, I saw the livid stone full of holes, all of one width, and each one rounded.

They seemed no narrower or larger, than those in my beautiful Baptistery of St John, made as places to protect those baptising, one of which [I broke](#), not many years ago, to aid a child inside: and let this be a sign of the truth to end all speculation.

From the mouth of each hole, a sinner's feet and legs emerged, up to the calf, and the rest remained inside. The soles were all on fire, so that the joints quivered so strongly, that they would have snapped grass ropes and willow branches. As the flame of burning oily liquids moves only on the surface, so it was in their case, from the heels to the legs.

Inferno Canto XIX:31-87 Pope Nicholas III

I said: 'Master, who is that, who twists himself about, writhing more than all his companions, and licked by redder flames?' And he to me: 'If you will let me carry you down there by the lower bank, you will learn from him about his sins and himself.' And I: 'Whatever pleases you is good for me: you are my lord, and know that I do not deviate from your will, also you know what is not spoken.'

Then we came onto the fourth buttress: we turned and descended, on the left, down into the narrow and perforated depths. The kind master did not let me leave his side until he took me to the hole occupied by the one who so agonised with his feet.

I began to speak: 'O, unhappy spirit, whoever you are, who have



your upper parts below, planted like a stake, form words if you can.' I stood like the friar who gives confession to a treacherous assassin, who, after being fixed in the ground, calls the confessor back, and so delays his burial. And he cried: 'Are you standing there already, Boniface, are you standing there already? The book of the future has deceived me by several years. Are you sated, so swiftly, with that wealth, for which you did not hesitate to seize the Church, our lovely lady, and then destroy her?'

I became like those who stand, not knowing what has been said to them, and unable to reply, exposed to scorn. Then Virgil said: 'Quickly, say to him, "I am not him, I am not whom you think."' And I replied as I was instructed. At which the

spirit's legs writhed fiercely: then, sighing, in a tearful voice, he said to me: 'Then what do you want of me? If it concerns you so much to know who I am, that you have left the ridge, know that I wore the [Great Mantle](#), and truly I was son of the [Orsini](#) she-bear, so eager to advance her cubs, that I pursed up wealth, above, and here myself.

The other simonists, who came before me, are drawn down below my head, cowering inside the cracks in the stone. I too will drop down there, when Boniface comes, the one I mistook you for when I put my startled question. But the extent of time, in which I have baked my feet, and stood like this, reversed, is already longer than the time he shall stand planted in turn with glowing feet, since, after him, will come

Clement, the lawless shepherd, of uglier actions, fit indeed to cap Boniface and me.

He will be a new Jason, the high priest, whom we read about in Maccabees: and as his king Antiochus was compliant, so will Philip be, who governs France.’

Inferno Canto XIX:88-133 Dante speaks against Simony

I do not know if I was too foolhardy then, but I answered him in this way: ‘Ah, now tell me, how much wealth the Lord demanded of Peter, before he gave the keys of the Church into his keeping? Surely he demanded nothing, saying only: ‘Follow me.’ Nor did Peter or the other Apostles, ask gold or silver of Matthias, when he was chosen to fill

the place that [Judas](#), the guilty soul, had forfeited. So, remain here, since you are justly punished, and keep well the ill-gotten money, that made you so bold against [Charles](#) of Anjou.

And were it not that I am still restrained by reverence for the great keys that you held in your hand in the joyful life, I would use even more forceful words, since your avarice grieves the world, trampling the good, and raising the wicked. [John the Evangelist](#) spoke of shepherds such as you, when he saw ‘the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication’, she that was born with seven heads and, as long as virtue pleased her spouse, had justification.

You have made a god for yourselves of gold and silver, and how do you differ from the idolaters, except that he worships one image and you a hundred? Ah, Constantine, how much evil you gave birth to, not in your conversion, but in that Donation that the first wealthy Pope, Sylvester, received from you!’

And while I sung these notes to him, he thrashed violently with both his feet, either rage or conscience gnawing him. I think it pleased my guide, greatly, he had so satisfied an expression, listening to the sound of the true words I spoke. So he lifted me with both his arms, and when he had me quite upon his breast, climbed back up the path he had descended, and did not tire of carrying me clasped to him, till he

had borne me to the summit of the arch, that crosses from the fourth to the fifth rampart.

Here he set his burden down, lightly: light for him, on the rough steep cliff, that would be a difficult path for a goat. From there another valley was visible to me.

Inferno Canto XX:1-30 The Fourth Chasm: The Seers and Sorcerers

I must make verses of new torments, and give matter for this twentieth Canto, of the Inferno that treats of the damned.

I was now quite ready to look into the ditch, bathed with tears of anguish, which was revealed to me: I saw people coming, silent and weeping, through the circling

valley, at a pace which processions, that chant Litanies, take through the world. When my eyes looked further down on them, each of them appeared strangely distorted, between the chin and the start of the chest, since the head was reversed towards the body, and they had to move backwards, since they were not allowed to look forwards. Perhaps one might be so distorted by palsy, but I have not seen it, and do not credit it.

Reader, as God may grant that you profit from your reading, think now yourself how I could keep from weeping, when I saw our image so contorted, nearby, that the tears from their eyes bathed their hind parts at the cleft. Truly, I wept, leaning against one of the rocks of the solid cliff, so that my guide said

to me: ‘Are you like other fools, as well? Pity is alive here, where it is best forgotten. Who is more impious than one who bears compassion for God’s judgement?’

Inferno Canto XX:31-51 The Seers

‘Lift your head, lift it and see him for whom earth opened, under the eyes of the Thebans, at which they all shouted: “Where are you rushing, [Amphiaräus](#)? Why do you quit the battle?” And he did not stop his downward rush until he reached [Minos](#), who grasps every sinner. Note how he has made a chest of his shoulders: because he willed to see too far beyond him, he now looks behind and goes backwards.

See [Tiresias](#), who changed his form, when he was made a woman, all his limbs altering: and later he had to strike the two entwined snakes with his staff, a second time, before he could resume a male aspect.

That one is [Aruns](#), who has his back to Tiresias's belly, he who in the mountains of Tuscan Luni, where the Carrarese hoe, who live beneath them, had a cave to live in, among the white marble, from which he could gaze at the stars and the sea, with nothing to spoil his view.'

Inferno Canto XX:52-99 Manto and the founding of Mantua

‘And she that hides her breasts, that you cannot see, with her

flowing tresses, and has all hairy skin on the other side, was [Manto](#), who searched through many lands, then settled where I was born, about which it pleases me to have you listen to me speak a while.

After her father departed from life, and Thebes, the city of Bacchus, came to be enslaved, she roamed the world a long time. A lake, Lake Garda, lies at the foot of the Alps, up in beautiful Italy, where Germany is closed off beyond the Tyrol. Mount Apennino, between the town of Garda and Val Camonica, is bathed by the water that settles in the lake. In the middle there is a place where the Bishops of Trent, Brescia, and Verona might equally give the blessing if they went that way. A strong and beautiful fortress stands, where the

shoreline is lowest, to challenge the Brescians and Bergamese.

There, all the water that cannot remain in the breast of Lake Garda, has to descend through the green fields, and form a river. As soon as the water has its head, it is no longer Garda, but Mincio, down to Governolo where it joins the Po. It has not flowed far before it finds the level, on which it spreads and makes a marsh there, and in summer tends to be unwholesome. Manto, the wild virgin, passing that way, saw untilled land, naked of inhabitants, among the fens. There, to avoid all human contact, she stayed, with her followers, to practise her arts, and lived there, and left her empty body.

Then the people who were scattered round gathered together in that place, which was well defended

by the marshes on every side. They built the city over those dead bones, and without other augury, called it Mantua, after her who first chose the place. Once there were more inhabitants, before [Casalodi](#), was foolishly deceived by [Pinamonte](#). So, I charge you, if you ever hear another story of the origin of my city, do not let falsehoods destroy the truth.’

Inferno Canto XX:100-130 The Soothsayers and Astrologers

And I said: ‘Master, your speeches are so sound to me, and so hold my belief, that any others are like spent ashes. But tell me about the people who are passing, if you see any of them worth noting, since my mind returns to that alone.’

Then he said to me: ‘That one, whose beard stretches down from his cheeks, over his dusky shoulders, was an augur, when Greece was so emptied of males, for the expedition against Troy, that there were scarcely any left, even in their cradles. Like [Calchas](#) at Aulis, he set the moment for cutting loose the first cable. [Eurypylus](#) is his name, and my high Poem sings of it in a certain place: you know it well, who know the whole thing.

The other, so thin about the flanks, is Michael [Scott](#), who truly understood the fraudulent game of magic. See [Guido Bonatti](#), see [Asdente](#), who wishes now he had attended more to his shoemaker’s leather and cord, but repents too late. See the miserable women who abandoned needle, shuttle and

spindle, and became prophetesses: they made witchcraft, using herbs and images.

But come, now, for Cain with his bundle of thorns, that Man in the Moon, reaches the western confines of both hemispheres, and touches the waves south of Seville, and already, last night, the Moon was full: you must remember it clearly, since she did not serve you badly in the deep wood.’ So he spoke to me, and meanwhile we moved on.

Inferno Canto XXI:1-30 The Fifth Chasm: The Sellers of Public Offices

So from bridge to bridge we went, with other conversation which my *Commedia* does not choose to recall, and were at the summit arch

when we stopped to see the next cleft of Malebolge, and more vain grieving, and I found it marvellously dark.

As, in the Venetian Arsenal, the glutinous pitch boils in winter, that they use to caulk the leaking boats they cannot sail; and so, instead one man builds a new boat, another plugs the seams of his, that has made many voyages, one hammers at the prow, another at the stern, some make oars, and some twist rope, one mends a jib, the other a mainsail; so, a dense pitch boiled down there, not melted by fire, but by divine skill, and glued the banks over, on every side.

I saw it, but nothing in it, except the bubbles that the boiling caused, and the heaving of it all, and the cooling part's submergence. While

I was gazing fixedly at it, my guide said: 'Take care. Take care!' and drew me towards him, from where I stood. Then I turned round, like one who has to see what he must run from, and who is attacked by sudden fear, so that he dare not stop to look: and behind us I saw a black Demon come running up the cliff.

Inferno Canto XXI:31-58 The Barrators

Ah, how fierce his aspect was! And how cruel he seemed in action, with his outspread wings, and nimble legs! His high pointed shoulders, carried a sinner's two haunches, and he held the sinews of each foot tight.

He cried: 'You, Malebranche, the Evil-clawed, see here is one of

Lucca's elders, that city whose patron is [Santa Zita](#): push him under while I go back for the rest, back to that city which is well provided with them: every one there is a barrator, except [Bonturo](#); there they make 'Yes' of 'No' for money.

He threw him down, then wheeled back along the stony cliff, and never was a mastiff loosed so readily to catch a thief. The sinner plunged in, and rose again writhing, but the demons under cover of the bridge, shouted: 'Here the face of Christ, carved in your cathedral, is of no avail: here you swim differently than in the Serchio: so, unless you want to try our grapples, do not emerge above the pitch.'

Then they struck at him with more than a hundred prongs, and said: 'Here you must dance,

concealed, so that you steal in private, if you can.’ No different is it, when the cooks make their underlings push the meat down into the depths of the cauldrons with their hooks, to stop it floating.

Inferno Canto XXI:59-96 Virgil challenges the Demons’ threats

The good master said to me: ‘Cower down behind a rock, so that you have a screen to protect yourself, and so that it is not obvious that you are here, and whatever insult is offered to me, have no fear, since I know these matters, having been in a similar danger before.’ Then he passed beyond the bridgehead, and when he arrived on the sixth bank, it was



necessary for him to present a bold front.

The demons rushed from below the bridge, and turned their weapons against him, with the storm and fury with which a dog rushes at a poor beggar, who suddenly seeks alms when he stops. But Virgil cried: ‘None, of you, commit an outrage. Before you touch me with your forks, one of you come over here, to listen, and then discuss whether you will grapple me.’ They all cried: ‘You go, [Malacoda](#)’ at which one moved while the others stood still, and came towards Virgil, saying: ‘What good will it do him?’

My Master said: ‘Malacoda, do you think I have come here without the Divine Will, and propitious fate, safe from all your obstructions? Let me go by, since it is willed, in

Heaven, that I show another this wild road.’ Then the demon’s pride was so down, that he let the hook drop at his feet, and said to the others: ‘Now, do not hurt him!’ And my guide to me: ‘O you, who are sitting, crouching, crouching amongst the bridge’s crags, return to me safely, now!’ At which I moved, and came to him quickly, and the devils all pressed forward so that I was afraid they would not hold to their orders. So I once saw the infantry, marching out, under treaty of surrender, from Caprona, afraid at finding themselves surrounded by so many enemies.

Inferno Canto XXI:97-139 The Demons escort the Poets

I pressed my whole body close to my guide, and did not take my eyes away from their aspect, which was hostile. They lowered their hooks, and kept saying, to one another: ‘Shall I touch him on the backside?’ and answering, ‘Yes, see that you give him a nick.’

But that demon who was talking to my guide, turned round quickly, and said: ‘Be quiet, be quiet, [Scarmiglione](#).’ Then he said to us: ‘It will not be possible to go any further along this causeway, since the sixth arch is lying broken at the base, and if you desire still to go forward, go along this ridge, and nearby is another cliff that forms a causeway. Yesterday, five hours later than [this hour](#), twelve hundred and sixty-six years were completed, since this path here was destroyed.

I am sending some of my company here to see if anyone is out for an airing: go with them, they will not commit treachery.’ Then he began speaking: ‘Advance, [Alichino](#) and [Calcabrina](#), and you, [Cagnazzo](#): let [Barbariccia](#) lead the ten. Let [Libicocco](#) come as well, and [Draghignazzo](#), tusked [Ciriatto](#), [Graffigane](#), [Farfarello](#), and [Rubicante](#) the mad one. Search round the boiling glue: see these two safe, as far as the other cliff that crosses the chasms, completely, without a break.’

I said: ‘O me! Master, what do I see? Oh, let us go alone, without an escort, if you know the way: as for me, I would prefer not. If you are as cautious as usual, do you not see how they grind their teeth, and darken their brows, threatening us

with mischief? And he to me: 'I do not want you to be afraid: let them grin away at their will: since they do it for the boiled wretches.'

They turned by the left bank: but first, each of them had stuck his tongue out, between his teeth, towards their leader, as a signal, and he had made a trumpet of his arse.

Inferno Canto XXII:1-30 The Poets view more of the Fifth Chasm

I have seen cavalry moving camp, before now, starting a foray, holding muster, and now and then retiring to escape; I have seen war-horses on your territory, O Aretines, and seen the foraging parties, the clash of tournaments, and repeated jousts; now with trumpets, now with

bells, with drums and rampart signals, with native and foreign devices, but I never yet saw infantry or cavalry, or ship at sight of shore or star, move to such an obscene trumpet.

We went with the ten demons: ah, savage company! But, they say: ‘In church with the saints, and in the inn with the drunkards.’ But my mind was on the boiling pitch, to see each feature of the chasm, and the people who were burning in it. Like dolphins, arching their backs, telling the sailors to get ready to save their ship, so, now and then, to ease the punishment, some sinner showed his back, and hid as quick as lightning.

And as frogs squat, at the edge of the ditchwater, with only mouths showing, so that their feet and the

rest of them are hidden, so the sinners stood on every side: but they instantly shot beneath the seething, as [Barbariccia](#) approached.

Inferno Canto XXII:31-75
Ciampolo

I saw, and my heart still shudders at it, one linger, just as one frog remains when the others scatter: and [Graffiacane](#), who was nearest him, hooked his pitchy hair, and hauled him up, looking, to me, like an otter. I already knew the names of every demon, so I noted them well as they were called, and when they shouted to each other, listened out.

‘O [Rubicante](#), see you get your clutches in him, and flay him,’ all the accursed tribe cried together. And I: ‘Master, make out if you can,

who that wretch is, who has fallen into the hands of his enemies.’ My guide drew close to him, and asked him where he came from, and he answered: ‘I was born in the kingdom of Navarre. My mother placed me as a servant to a lord, since she had borne me to a scurrilous waster of himself and his possessions. Then I was of the household of good King Thibaut, and there I took to selling offices, for which I serve my sentence in this heat.’

And Ciriatto, from whose mouth a tusk, like a boar’s, projected on each side, made him feel how one of them could rip. The mouse had come among the evil cats: but Barbariccia caught him in his arms, and said: ‘Stand back, while I fork him!’ And, turning to my Master, he

said: ‘Ask away, if you want to learn more from him, before someone else gets at him.’

So my guide said: ‘Now say, do you know any of the other sinners under the boiling pitch that is a Latian?’ And [Ciampolo](#) replied: ‘I separated, just now, from one who was a neighbour of theirs over there, and I wish I were still beneath him, since I should not then fear claw or hook!’ And [Libicocco](#) cried: ‘We have endured this too long!’ and grappled Ciampolo’s arm with the prong, and, mangling it, carried away a chunk. [Draghignazzo](#), too, wanted a swipe at the legs, below: at which their leader twisted round and round on them with an evil frown.

Inferno Canto XXII:76-96
Ciampolo names other Barrators

When they had settled a little, without waiting, my guide asked [Ciampolo](#), who was still gazing at his wound: ‘Who was he, from whom you say you unluckily separated, to come on land?’ He replied: ‘It was Friar [Gomita](#), he of Gallura, in Sardinia, the vessel of every fraud, who held his master’s prisoners in his hands, and treated them so that they all praise him for it, taking money for himself, and letting them go, quietly: and in his other roles, he was a high, and not a low, barrator.

With him, Don [Michel Zanche](#) of Logodoro, keeps company, and their tongues never tire of speaking of Sardinia. O me! See that other

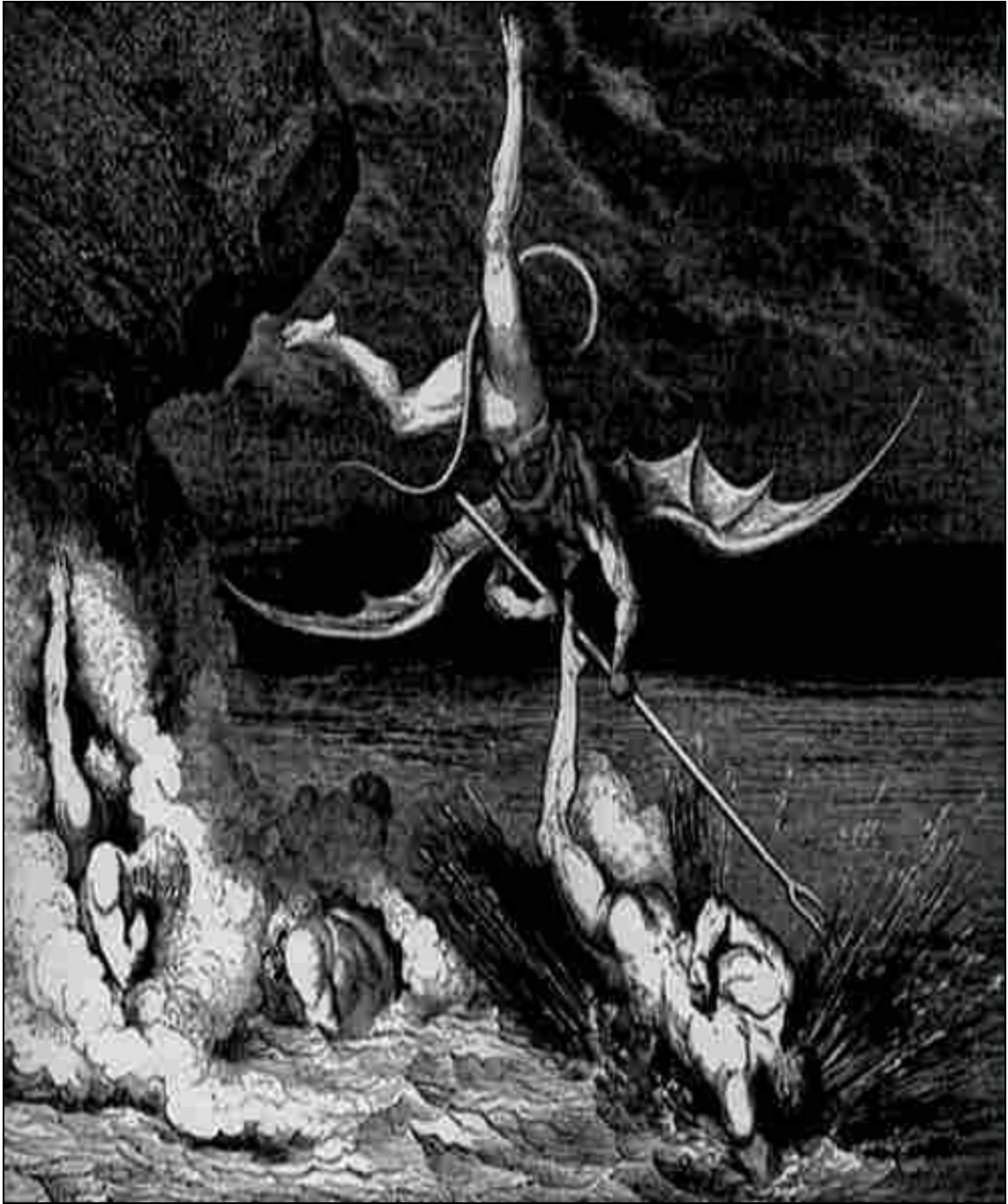
demon grinning: I would speak more, but I fear he is getting ready to claw my skin.’ And their great captain, turning to [Farfarello](#), who was rolling his eyes to strike, said: ‘Away with you, cursed bird.’

Inferno Canto XXII:97-123
Ciampolo breaks free of the Demons

The scared sinner then resumed: ‘If you want to see or hear Tuscans or Lombards, I will make them come, but let the Malebranche hold back a little, so that the others may not feel their vengeance, and sitting here, I, who am one, will make seven appear, by whistling, as we do, when any of us gets out.’ [Cagnazzo](#) raised his snout, at these words, and, shaking his head, said:

‘Hear the wicked scheme he has contrived to plunge back down.’ At which [Ciampolo](#), who had a great store of tricks, replied: ‘I would be malicious indeed, if I contrived greater sorrow for my companions.’

[Alichino](#), could contain himself no longer, and contrary to the others said to him: ‘If you run, I will not charge after you, but beat my wings above the boiling pitch: forget the cliff, and let the bank be a course, and see if you alone can beat us.’ O you that read this, hear of this new sport! They all glanced towards the cliff side, he above all who had been most unwilling for this. The Navarrese picked his moment well, planted his feet on the ground, and in an instant plunged, and freed himself from their intention.



Inferno Canto XXII:124-151 The Malebranche quarrel

Each of the demons was stung with guilt, but [Alichino](#) most who had caused the error: so he started up and shouted: ‘You are caught!’ But it helped him little, since wings could not outrun terror: the sinner dived down: and Alichino, flying, lifted his breast. The duck dives like that when the falcon nears, and the hawk flies back up, angry and thwarted.

[Calcabrina](#), furious at the trick, flew on after him, wanting the sinner to escape, in order to quarrel. And when the barrator had vanished, he turned his claws on his friend, and grappled with him above the ditch. But the other was sparrow

hawk enough to claw him thoroughly, and both dropped down, into the centre of the boiling pond.

The heat, instantly, separated them, but they could not rise, their wings were so glued up. [Barbariccia](#), lamenting with the rest, made four fly over to the other bank, with all their grappling irons, and they dropped rapidly on both sides to the shore. They stretched their hooks out to the trapped pair, who were already scaled by the crust, and we left them, like that, embroiled.

Inferno Canto XXIII:1-57 The Sixth Chasm: The Hypocrites

Silent, alone, and free of company, we went on, one in front, and the other after, like minor friars

journeying on their way. My thoughts were turned, by the recent quarrel, to [Aesop](#)'s fable of the frog and mouse, since 'Si' and 'Yes' are not better matched, than the one case with the other, if the thoughtful mind couples the beginning and end.

And as one thought springs from another, so another sprang from that, redoubling my fear. I thought of this: 'Through us, these are mocked, and with a kind of hurt and ridicule, that I guess must annoy them. If anger is added to their malice, they will chase after us, fiercer than snapping dogs that chase a leveret.' I felt my hair already lifting in fright, and was looking back intently, as I said: 'Master, if you do not hide us both, quickly, I am afraid of the

Malebranche: they are already behind us: I imagine I can hear them now.'

And he: 'If I were made of silvered glass, I could not take up your image from outside more rapidly than I fix that image from within. Even now your thoughts were entering mine, with similar form and action, so that, from both, I have made one decision. If the right bank slopes enough, that we can drop down, into the next chasm, we will escape this imaginary pursuit.' he had not finished stating this resolve, when I saw them, not far off, coming with extended wings, with desire to seize us.

My guide suddenly took me up like a mother, wakened by a noise, seeing flames burning in front of her eyes, who takes her child and runs,

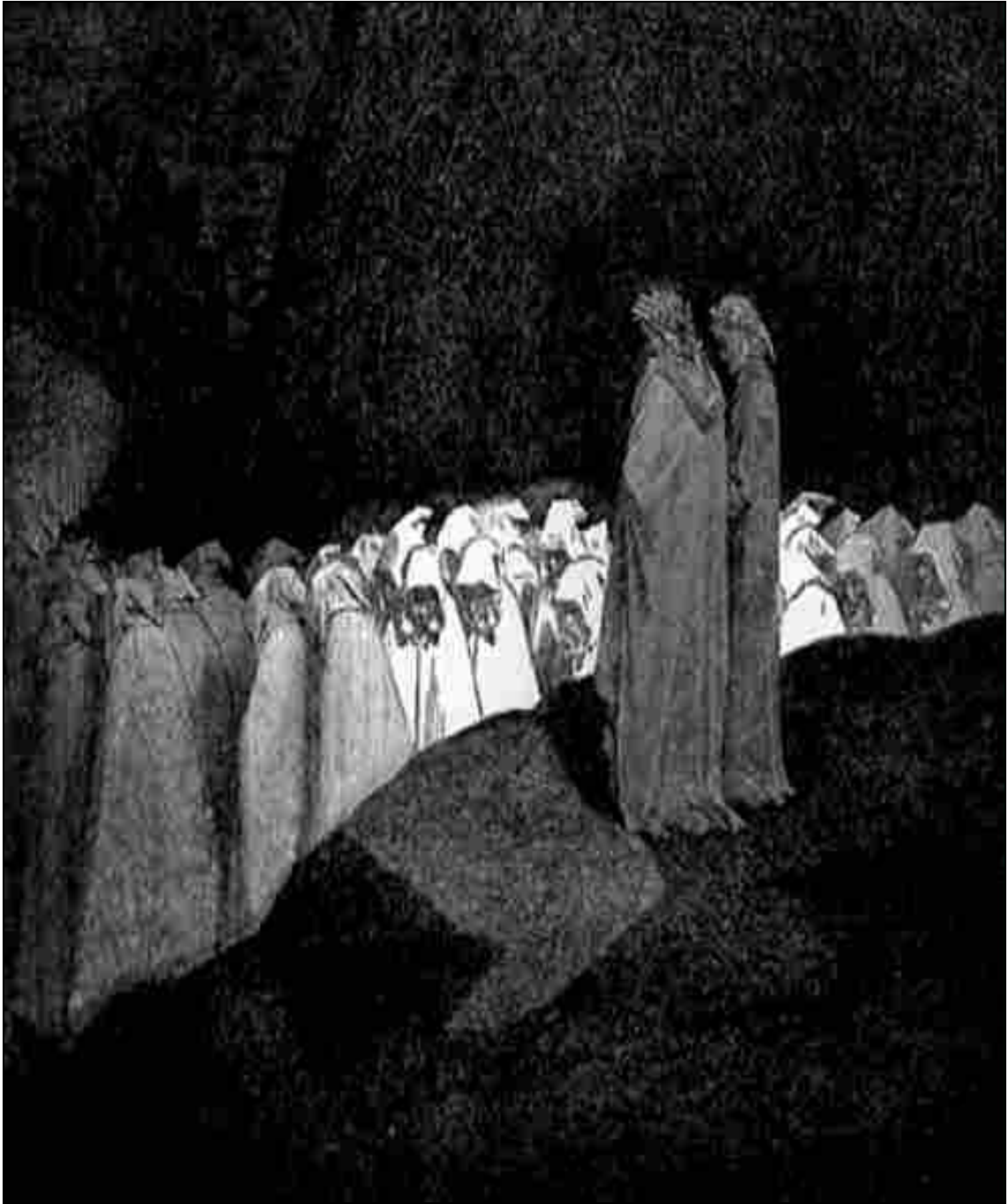
and caring more about him than herself, does not even wait to look around her. Down from the ridge of the solid bank, he threw himself forward on to the hanging cliff that dams up the side of the next chasm. Water never ran as fast through the conduit, turning a mill-wheel on land, when it reaches the paddles, as my Master, down that bank, carrying me, against his breast, like a son, and not a companion.

His feet had hardly touched the floor, of the depth below, before the demons were on the heights above us, but it gave him no fear, since the high Providence, that willed them to be the guardians of the fifth moat, takes, from all of them, the power to leave it.

Inferno Canto XXIII:58-81 The Hypocrites

Down below we found a metal-coated tribe, weeping, circling with very slow steps, and weary and defeated in their aspect. They had cloaks, with deep hoods over the eyes, in the shape they make for the monks of Cologne. On the outside they are gilded so it dazzles, but inside all leaden, and so heavy, that compared to them [Frederick](#)'s were made of straw.

O weary mantle for eternity! We turned to the left again, beside them, who were intent on their sad weeping, but those people, tired by their burden, came on so slowly that our companions were new at every step. At which, I said to my guide: 'Make a search for someone known



to us, by name or action, and gaze around as we move by.’ And one of them, who understood the Tuscan language, called after us: ‘Rest your feet, you who speed so fast through the dark air, maybe you will get from me what you request.’ At which my guide turned round and said: ‘Wait, and then go on, at his pace.’

Inferno Canto XXIII:82-126 The Frauti Gaudenti: Caiaphas

I stood still, and saw two spirits, who were eager in mind to join me, but their burden and the narrow path delayed them. When they arrived, they eyed me askance, for a long time, without speaking a word, then they turned to one another and said: ‘This one seems alive, by the

movement of his throat, and if they are dead, by what grace are they moving, free of the heavy cloaks?’

Then they said to me: ‘O Tuscan, you have come to the college of sad hypocrites: do not scorn to tell us who you are.’ And I to them: ‘I was born, and I grew up, by Arno’s lovely river, in the great city: and I am in the body I have always worn. But you, who are you, from whom such sadness is distilled, that I see, coursing down your cheeks? And what punishment is this, that glitters so?’ And one of them replied: ‘Our orange mantles are of such dense lead, that weights made of it cause the scales to creak.

We were *Fraudi Gaudenti*, of that Bolognese order called the ‘Jovial Friars’: I am [Catalano](#), and he is [Loderingo](#), chosen by your city, as

usually only one is chosen, to keep the peace: and we wrought such as still appears round your district of Gardingo. ‘O Friars, your evil’ I began, but said no more, because one came in sight, crucified, on the ground, with three stakes. When he saw me he writhed all over, puffing into his beard, and sighing, and Friar Catalano, who saw this, said to me: ‘That one you look at, who is transfixed, is [Caiaphas](#), the high priest, who counselled the Pharisees, that it was right to martyr one man for the sake of the people. Crosswise and naked he lies in the road, as you see, and feels the weight of everyone who passes: and his father-in-law [Annas](#) is racked, in this chasm, and the others of that Council, that was a source of evil to the Jews.’

Then I saw Virgil wonder at him,
stretched out on the cross, so vilely,
in eternal exile.

Inferno Canto XXIII:127-148 The Poets leave the Sixth Chasm

He addressed these words to the
Friars, afterwards: ‘If it is lawful for
you, may it not displease you, to tell
us if there is any gap on the right, by
which we might leave here, without
forcing any of the black angels to
come and extricate us from this
deep.’ He replied: ‘There is a
causeway that runs from the great
circular wall and crosses all the
cruel valleys, nearer at hand than
you think, except that it is broken
here and does not cover this one:
you will be able to climb up among

its ruins, that slope down the side, and form a mound at the base.’

Virgil stood, for a while, with bowed head, then said: ‘[Malacoda](#), who grapples sinners over there, told us the way wrongly.’ And the Friar said: ‘I once heard the Devil’s vices related at Bologna, amongst which I heard that he is a liar, and the father of lies.’ Then my guide went striding on, his face somewhat disturbed by anger, at which I parted from the burdened souls, following the prints of his beloved feet.

Inferno Canto XXIV:1-60 The Poets climb up: Virgil exhorts Dante

In that part of the new year, when the sun cools his rays under Aquarius, and the nights already

shorten towards the equinox; when the hoar-frost copies its white sister the snow's, image on the ground, but the hardness of its tracery lasts only a little time; the peasant, whose fodder is exhausted, rises and looks out, and sees the fields all white, at which he strikes his thigh, goes back into the house, and wanders to and fro, lamenting, like a wretch who does not know what to do; then comes out again, and regains hope, seeing how the world has changed its aspect, in a moment; and takes his crook, and chases his lambs out to feed; so the Master made me disheartened, when I saw his forehead so troubled: but the plaster arrived quickly for the wound.

For, when we reached the shattered arch, my guide turned to me with that sweet aspect, that I

first saw at the base of the mountain. He opened his arms, after having made some plan in his mind, first looking carefully at the ruin, and took hold of me. And like one who prepares and calculates, always seeming to provide in advance, so he, lifting me up towards the summit of one big block, searched for another fragment, saying: 'Now clamber over that, but check first if it will carry you.'

It was no route for one clothed in a cloak of lead, since we could hardly climb from rock to rock, he weighing little, and I pushed from behind. And if the ascent were not shorter on that side than on the other, I would truly have been defeated, I do not know about him. But as Malebolge all drops towards the entrance to the lowest well, the

position of every valley implies that the one side rises, and the other falls: at last, we came, however, to the point at which the last boulder ends.

The breath was so driven from my lungs, when I was up, that I could go no further: in fact, I sat down when I arrived. The Master said: 'Now, you must free yourself from sloth: men do not achieve fame, sitting on down, or under coverlets; fame, without which whoever consumes his life leaves only such trace of himself, on earth, as smoke does in the air, or foam on water: so rise, and overcome weariness with spirit, that wins every battle, if it does not lie down with the gross body. A longer ladder must be climbed: to have left these behind is not enough: if you

understand me, act now so it may profit you.’

I rose then, showing myself to be better filled with breath than I thought, and said: ‘Go on, I am strong again and ardent.’

Inferno Canto XXIV:61-96 The Seventh Chasm: The Thieves

We made our way along the causeway, which was rugged, narrow, difficult, and much steeper than before. I went, speaking, so that I might not seem weak, at which a voice came from the next moat, inadequate for forming words. I do not know what it said, though I was already on the summit of the bridge that crosses there, but he who spoke seemed full of anger. I had turned to look downwards, but my



living eyes could not see the floor, for the darkness, so that I said: 'Master, make sure you get to the other side, and let us climb down the wall, since as I hear sounds from below, but do not understand them, so I see down there, and make out nothing.' He said: 'I make you no answer, but by action, since a fair request should be followed, in silence, by the work.'

We went down the bridge, at the head of it, where it meets the eighth bank, and then the seventh chasm was open to me. I saw a fearful mass of snakes inside, and of such strange appearance, that even now the memory freezes my blood. Let Libya no longer vaunt its sands: though it engenders chelydri, and jaculi; pareae; and cenchres with amphisbaena; it never showed pests

so numerous or dreadful, nor did Ethiopia, nor Arabia, the land that lies along the Red Sea. Amongst this cruel and mournful swarm, people were running, naked and terrified, without hope of concealment, or of that stone, the heliotrope, that renders the wearer invisible.

They had their hands tied behind them, with serpents, that fixed their head and tail between the loins, and were coiled in knots in front.

Inferno Canto XXIV:97-129
Vanni Fucci and the serpent

And see, a serpent struck at one who was near our bank, and transfixed him, there, where the neck is joined to the shoulders. Neither ‘*o*’ nor ‘*i*’ was ever written

as swiftly as he took fire, and burned, and dropped down, transformed to ashes: and after he was heaped on the ground, the powder gathered itself together, and immediately returned to its previous shape. So, great sages say, the phoenix dies, and then renews, when it nears its five-hundredth year. In its life it does not eat grass or grain, but only tears of incense, and amomum: and its last shroud is nard and myrrh.

The sinner when he rose was like one who falls, and does not know how, through the power of a demon that drags him down to the ground, or through some other affliction that binds men, and, when he rises, gazes round himself, all dazed by the great anguish he has suffered, and as he gazes, sighs. O how heavy

the power of God, that showers down such blows in vengeance!

The guide then asked him who he was, at which he answered: ‘I rained down from Tuscany into this gully, a short while back. Brutish, not human, life pleased me, mule that I was: I am [Vanni Fucci](#), the wild beast, and Pistoia was a fitting den for me.’ And I to the guide: ‘Tell him not to move: and ask what crime sank him down here, since I knew him as a man of blood and anger.

Inferno Canto XXIV:130-151
[Vanni Fucci’s prophecy](#)

And the sinner, who heard me, did not pretend, but turned his face and mind on me, and gave a look of saddened shame. Then he said: ‘It

hurts me more for you to catch me, trapped, in the misery you see me in, than the moment of my being snatched from the other life. I cannot deny you what you ask. I am placed so deep down because I robbed the sacristy of its fine treasures, and it was once wrongly attributed to others. But, so that you might not take joy from this sight if you ever escape the gloomy regions, open your ears, and hear [what I declare](#):

Pistoia first is thinned of Blacks: then Florence changes her people and her laws. Mars brings a vapour, from Valdimagra cloaked in turbid cloud, and a battle will be fought on the field of Piceno, in an angry and eager tempest, that will suddenly tear the mist open, so that every

White is wounded by it. And I have said this to give you pain.'

Inferno Canto XXV:1-33 Cacus

At the end of his speech, the thief raised his hands, both making the fig, the obscene gesture, with thumb between fingers, shouting: 'Take this, God, I aim it at you.' From that moment the snakes were my friends, since one of them coiled itself round his neck, as if hissing: 'You will not be able to speak again.' Another, round his arms, tied him again, knotting itself so firmly in front, that he could not even shake them.

Ah, Pistoia, Pistoia, why do you not order yourself to be turned to ash, so that you may remain no longer, since you outdo your seed in evil-doing? I saw no spirit so

arrogant towards God, through all the dark circles of the Inferno, not even, [Capaneus](#), he who fell from the wall at Thebes. Vanni Fucci fled, saying not another word, and I saw a Centaur, full of rage, come, shouting: ‘Where is he, where is the bitter one?’

I do not believe Maremma has as many snakes, as he had on his haunches, there, where the human part begins. Over his shoulders, behind the head, lay a dragon with outstretched wings, and it scorches every one he meets. My Master said: ‘That is [Cacus](#), who often made a lake of blood, below the rocks of Mount Aventine. He does not go with his brothers on the same road, above, because of his cunning theft from the great herd of oxen, pastured near him: for which his

thieving actions ended, under the club of [Hercules](#), who gave him a hundred blows perhaps with it, and he did not feel a tenth.

Inferno Canto XXV:34-78 Cianfa and Agnello

While he said this, the Centaur ran past, and three spirits came by, also, beneath us, whom neither I, nor my guide, saw, until they cried: ‘Who are you?’ Our words ceased, then, and we gave our attention to them, alone.

I did not know them, but it happened, as it usually does for some reason, that one had to call the other, saying: ‘Where has [Cianfa](#) gone?’ At which I placed my finger over my mouth, in order to make my guide stop and wait.

Reader, if you are slow to credit, now, what I have to tell, it will be no wonder, since I who saw it, scarcely credit it myself. While I kept looking at them, a six-footed serpent darted in front of one of them, and fastened itself on him, completely. It clasped his belly with its middle feet, seized his arms with the front ones, and then fixed its teeth in both his cheeks. The rear feet it stretched along his thighs, and put its tail between them, and curled it upwards round his loins, behind.

Ivy was never rooted to a tree, as the foul monster twined its limbs around the other. Then they clung together, as if they were melted wax, and mixed their colours: neither the one nor the other seemed what it had at first: just as in front of the flame on burning paper, a brown



colour appears, not yet black, and the white is consumed.

The other two looked on, and each cried: ‘Ah me, [Agnello](#), how you change! See, you are already not two, not one!’ The two heads had now become one, where two forms seemed to us merged in one face, and both were lost. Two limbs were made of the four forearms, the thighs, legs, belly and chest became such members as were never seen before. The former shape was all extinguished in them: the perverse image seemed both, and neither, and like that it moved away with slow steps.

Inferno Canto XXV:79-151 Buoso degli Abati and Francesco

As the lizard, in the great heat of the Dog days, appears like a flash of lightning, scurrying from hedge to hedge, if it crosses the track, so [a little reptile](#) came towards the bellies of the other two, burning with rage, black and livid as peppercorn. And it pierced that part, in one of them, where we first receive our nourishment from our mothers: then fell down, stretched out in front of him. The thief, transfixed, gazed at it but said nothing, but with motionless feet, only yawned, as if sleep or fever had overcome him. He looked at the snake: it looked at him: the one gave out smoke, violently, from his wound, the other from its mouth, and the smoke met.

Let [Lucan](#) now be silent, about [Sabellus](#) and [Nasidius](#), and wait to

hear that which I now tell. Let Ovid be silent about Cadmus and Arethusa: if he in poetry changes one into a snake, and the other into a fountain, I do not envy him, since he never transmuted two natures, face to face, so that both forms were eager to exchange their substance.

They merged together in such a way, that the serpent split its tail into a fork, and the wounded spirit brought his feet together. Along with them, the legs and thighs, so stuck to one another, that soon the join left no visible mark. The cleft tail took on the form lost in the other, and its skin grew soft, the other's hard. I saw the arms enter the armpits: and the two feet of the beast that were short, lengthened themselves by as much as the arms were shortened. Then the two hind

feet twisted together, and became the organ that a man conceals, and the wretch, from his, had two pushed out.

While the smoke covers them both with a new colour, and generates hair on one part, and strips it from another, the one rose up, erect, and the other fell, prostrate: not by that shifting their impious gaze, beneath which they mutually exchanged features. The erect one drew his face towards the temples, and from the excess of matter that swelled there, ears came, out of the smooth cheeks. That which did not slip back, but remained, formed a nose from the superfluous flesh, and enlarged the lips to their right size. He that lay prone, thrust his sharpened visage forward, and drew his ears back into his head, as the

snail does its horns into its shell, and his tongue, which was solid before, and fit for speech, splits itself. In the other the forked tongue melds, and the smoke is still.

The soul that had become a beast, sped, hissing, along the valley, leaving the other, speaking and spluttering, behind him. Then the second turned his new-won shoulders towards him, and called to the other: '[Buoso](#) shall crawl, as I did, along this road.' So I saw the seventh chasm's bodies mutate and transmutate: and let the novelty of it be the excuse, if my pen has gone astray.

Though my sight was somewhat confused, and my mind dismayed, they could not flee so secretly, but that I clearly saw [Puccio Sciancato](#): and it was he, alone, of the three

companions, who had first arrived, who was not changed. One of the others, [Francesco](#), was he who caused you, the people of Gaville, to weep.

Inferno Canto XXVI:1-42 The Eighth Chasm: The Evil Counsellors

Rejoice, Florence, that, since you are so mighty, you beat your wings over land and sea, and your name spreads through Hell itself. So, among the thieves, I found five of your citizens: at which I am ashamed, and you do not rise to great honour by it either. But if the truth is dreamed, as morning comes, you will soon feel what [Prato](#), and others, wish on you. And, if it were come already, it would not be too

soon: would it were so, now, as indeed it must come, since it will trouble me more, the older I am.

We left there, and my guide remounted by the stairs that the stones had made for us to descend, and drew me up: and, following our solitary way, among the crags and splinters of the cliff, the foot made no progress without the hand.

I was saddened then, and sadden now, again, when I direct my mind to what I saw, and rein in my intellect more than I am used, so that it does not run where virtue would not guide it, and so that, if a good star, or some truer power, has granted me the talent, I may not abuse the gift.

The eighth chasm was gleaming with flames, as numerous as the fireflies the peasant sees, as he rests



on the hill, when the sun, who lights the world, hides his face least from us, and the fly gives way to the gnat down there, along the valley, where he gathers grapes, perhaps, and ploughs.

As soon as I came to where the floor showed itself, I saw them, and, as [Elisha](#), the mockery of whom by children was avenged by bears, saw [Elijah](#)'s chariot departing, when the horses rose straight to Heaven, and could not follow it with his eyes, except by the flame alone, like a little cloud, ascending, so each of those flames moved, along the throat of the ditch, for none of them show the theft, but every flame steals a sinner.

Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84

Ulysses and Diomede

I stood on the bridge, having so risen to look, that if I had not caught hold of a rock I should have fallen in without being pushed. And the guide, who saw me so intent, said: ‘The spirits are inside those fires: each veils himself in that which burns him.’ I replied: ‘Master, I feel more assured from hearing you, but had already seen that it was so, and already wished to say to you, who is in that fire, that moves, divided at the summit, as if it rose from the pyre where [Eteocles](#) was cremated with his brother, [Polynices](#)?’

He answered me: ‘In there, [Ulysses](#) and [Diomede](#) are tormented, and so they go, together in punishment, as formerly in war:

and, in their fire, they groan at the ambush of the Trojan horse, that made a doorway, by which Aeneas, the noble seed of the Romans issued out. In there they lament the trick, by which Deidamia, in death, still weeps for Achilles: and there, for the Palladium, they endure punishment.’

I said: ‘Master, I beg you greatly, and beg again so that my prayers may be a thousand, if those inside the fires can speak, do not refuse my waiting until the horned flame comes here: you see how I lean towards it with desire.’ And he to me: ‘Your request is worth much praise, and so I accept it, but restrain your tongue. Let me speak: since I conceive what you wish, and because they were Greeks they might disdain your Trojan words.’

When the flame had come, where the time and place seemed fitting, to my guide, I heard him speak, so: ‘O you, who are two in one fire, if I was worthy of you when I lived, if I was worthy of you, greatly or a little, when on earth I wrote the high verses, do not go, but let one of you tell where he, being lost through his own actions, went to die.’

Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142
Ulysses’s last voyage

The greater horn of the ancient flame started to shake itself, murmuring, like a flame struggling in the wind. Then moving the tip, as if it were a tongue speaking, gave out a voice, and said: ‘When I left Circe, who held me for more than a year, near to Gaeta, before Aeneas

named it, not even my fondness for my son, [Telemachus](#), my reverence for my aged father, [Laërtes](#), nor the debt of love that should have made [Penelope](#) happy, could restrain in me the desire I had, to gain experience of the world, and of human vice and worth.

I set out on the wide, deep ocean, with only one ship, and that little company, that had not abandoned me. I saw both shores, as far as Spain, as far as Morocco, and the isle of Sardinia, and the other islands that sea washes. I, and my companions, were old, and slow, when we came to that narrow strait, where [Hercules](#) set up his pillars, to warn men from going further. I left Seville to starboard: already Ceuta was left behind on the other side.

I said: ‘O my brothers, who have reached the west, through a thousand dangers, do not deny the brief vigil, your senses have left to them, experience of the unpopulated world beyond the Sun. Consider your origin: you were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.’ With this brief speech I made my companions so eager for the voyage, that I could hardly have restrained them, and turning the prow towards morning, we made wings of our oars for that foolish flight, always turning south.

Night already saw the southern pole, with all its stars, and our northern pole was so low, it did not rise from the ocean bed. Five times the light beneath the moon had been quenched and relit, since we had entered on the deep pathways, when

a mountain appeared to us, dim with distance, and it seemed to me the highest I had ever seen. We rejoiced, but soon our joy was turned to grief, when a tempest rose from the new land, and struck the prow of our ship. Three times it whirled her round, with all the ocean: at the fourth, it made the stern rise, and the prow sink, as it pleased another, till the sea closed over us.'

Inferno Canto XXVII:1-30 Guido Da Montefeltro

The flame was now erect and quiet, no longer speaking, and was going away from us, with the permission of the sweet poet, when another, that came behind forced us to turn our eyes towards its summit,

since a confused sound escaped there.

As the Sicilian bull, that first bellowed with the groans of Perillus, who had smoothed it with his file (and that was right) bellowed with the sufferer's voice, so that, although it was bronze, it seemed pierced with agony, so here, the dismal words, having, at their source, no exit from the fire, were changed into its language. But when they had found a path out through the tip, giving it the movement that the tongue had given in making them, we heard it say: 'O you, at whom I direct my voice, and who, but now, was speaking Lombard, saying: "Now go: no more, I beg you", let it not annoy you to stop and speak with me, though perhaps I

have come a little late: you see it does not annoy me, and I burn.

If you are only now fallen into this blind world, from that sweet Latian land, from which I bring all my guilt, tell me if Romagna has peace or war, for I was of the mountains there, between Urbino and Monte Coronaro, the source from which the Tiber springs.'

Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57 The situation in Romagna

I was still leaning downwards eagerly, when my leader touched me on the side, saying: 'Speak, this is a Latian.' And I who had my answer ready, began to speak then without delay: 'O spirit, hidden there below, your Romagna is not, and never has been, without war in

the hearts of her tyrants: but I left no open war there now.

Ravenna stands, as it has stood for many years: Guido Vecchio da [Polenta](#)'s eagle broods over it, so that it covers Cervia with its claws. That city, Forlì, that withstood so long a siege, and made a bloody pile of Frenchmen, finds itself again under the paws of [Ordelaffi](#)'s green lion.

[Malatesta](#), the old mastiff of Verruchio, and the young one, [Malatestino](#), who made bad jailors for [Montagna](#), sharpen their teeth, where they used to do. Faenza, on the Lamone, and Imola on the Santerno, those cities lead out [Pagano](#), the lion of the white lair, who changes sides when he goes from south to north, and Cesena, that city whose walls the Savio

bathes, where it lies between the mountain and the plain, likewise lives between freedom and tyranny.

Now I beg you, tell us who you are: do not be harder than others have been to you, so that your name may keep its lustre on earth.'

Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136
Guido's history

When the flame had roared for a while as usual, it flickered the sharp point to and fro, and then gave out this breath: 'If I thought my answer was given to one who could ever return to the world, this flame would flicker no more, but since, if what I hear is true, no one ever returned, alive, from this deep, I reply, without fear of defamation.

I, Guido da Montefeltro, was a man of arms: and then became a Cordelier of Saint Francis, hoping to make amends, so habited: and indeed my hopes would have been realised in full, but for the Great Priest, Boniface, evil to him, who drew me back to my first sins: and how and why, I want you to hear from me.

While I was in the form of bones and pulp, that my mother gave me, my actions were not those of the lion, but of the fox. I knew all the tricks and coverts, and employed the art of them so well, that the noise went out to the ends of the earth. When I found myself arrived at that point of life, when everyone should furl their sails, and gather in the ropes, what had pleased me before, now grieved me, and with

repentance and confession, I turned monk. Ah misery! Alas, it would have served me well.

But the Prince of the Pharisees; that Pope waging war near the Lateran, and not with Saracens or Jews, since all his enemies were Christians, and none had been to conquer Acre, or been a merchant in the Sultan's land; had no regard for the highest office, nor holy orders, nor my habit of Saint Francis, that used to make those who wore it leaner; but as the Emperor [Constantine](#) sought out [Saint Sylvester](#), on Mount Soracte, to cure his leprosy, so this man called me, as a doctor to cure his feverish pride. He demanded counsel of me, and I kept silent, since his speech seemed drunken.

Then he said to me: ‘Do not be doubtful, I absolve you beforehand: and, you, teach me how to act, so that I may raze the fortress of Palestrina to the ground. I can open and close Heaven as you know, with the two keys, that my predecessor, Celestine, did not prize.’ Then the weighty arguments forced me to consider silence worse, and I said: ‘Father, since you absolve me of that sin, into which I must now fall, large promises to your enemies, with little delivery of them, will give you victory, from your high throne.’

Afterwards, when I was dead, Saint Francis came for me: but one of the Black Cherubim said to him: ‘Do not take him: do not wrong me. He must descend among my servants, because he gave a counsel

of deceit, since when I have kept him fast by the hair: he who does not repent, cannot be absolved: nor can one repent a thing, and at the same time will it, since the contradiction is not allowed.’ O miserable self! How I started, when he seized me, saying to me: ‘Perhaps you did not think I was a logician.’

He carried me to Minos, who coiled his tail eight times round his fearful back, and then, biting it in great rage, said: ‘This sinner is for the thievish fire’, and so I am lost here, as you see, and clothed like this, go inwardly grieving.’

When he had ended his speech, so, the flame went sorrowing, writhing and flickering its sharp horn. We passed on, my guide and I, along the cliff, up to the other arch,

that covers the next ditch, in which the reward is paid to those who collect guilt by sowing discord.

Inferno Canto XXVIII:1-21 The Ninth Chasm: The Sowers of Discord

Who could ever fully tell, even with repeated unimprisoned words, the blood and wounds I saw now? Every tongue would certainly fail, since our speech and memory have too small a capacity to comprehend so much. If all the people, too, were gathered, who once grieved for their blood, in the fateful land of Apulia, by reason of the Samnite War of the Romans, of Trojan seed; and those, from that long Punic War, that, as [Livy](#) writes, who does not err, yielded so great a wealth of rings,

from Cannae's battlefield; and those who felt the pain of blows by withstanding [Robert Guiscard](#); and the rest, whose bones are still heaped at Ceperano, where all the Apulians turned traitor, for [Charles](#) of Anjou; and there, at Tagliacozzo where old [Alardo](#)'s advice to Charles conquered without weapons: and some were to show pierced limbs, and others severed stumps; it would be nothing to equal the hideous state of the ninth chasm.

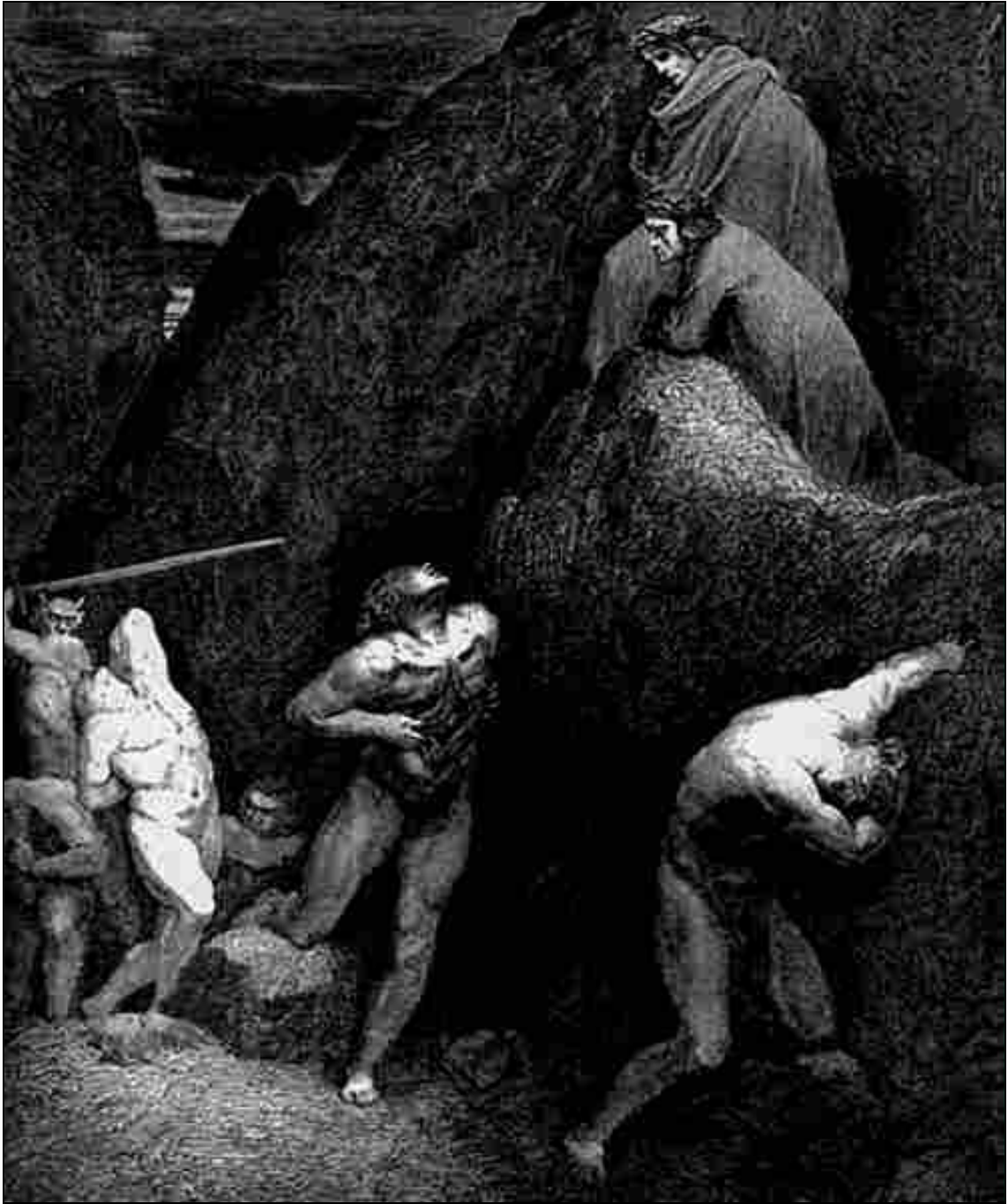
Inferno Canto XXVIII:22-54
Mahomet: the Caliph Ali

Even a wine-cask, that has lost a stave in the middle or the end, does not yawn as widely, as a spirit I saw, cleft from the chin down to the part that gives out the foulest sound:

the entrails hung between his legs: the organs appeared, and the miserable gut that makes excrement of what is swallowed.

While I stood looking wholly at him, he gazed at me, and opened his chest with his hands, saying: ‘See how I tear myself: see how Mahomet is ripped! In front of me, Ali goes, weeping, his face split from chin to scalp, and all the others you see here, were sowers of scandal and schism in their lifetimes: so they are cleft like this. There is a devil behind who tears us cruelly like this, reapplying his sword blade to each of this crowd, when they have wandered round the sad road, since the wounds heal before any reach him again.

But who are you, who muse there on the cliff, maybe to delay



your path to punishment, in sentence for your crimes?’

My Master replied: ‘Death has not come to him yet, nor does guilt lead him to torment, but it is incumbent on me, who am dead, to grant him full experience, and lead him, through the Inferno, down here, from circle to circle, and this is truth, that I tell you.’ When they heard him, more than a hundred spirits, in the ditch, halted, to look at me, forgetting their agony, in their wonder.

Inferno Canto XXVIII:55-90 Pier della Medicina and others

After lifting up one foot, to leave, Mahomet said to me: ‘Well now, you who will soon see the sun, perhaps, tell [Fra Dolcino](#) of the

Apostolic Brothers, if he does not wish to follow me, quickly, down here, to furnish himself with supplies, so that the snow-falls may not bring a victory for the Novarese, that otherwise would be difficult to achieve.’ Then, he strode forward to depart.

Another, who had his throat slit, and nose cut off to the eyebrows, and had only a single ear, standing to gaze in wonder with the rest, opened his wind-pipe, that was red outside, all over, and said: ‘You, that no guilt condemns, and whom I have seen above on Latian ground, unless resemblance deceives me, remember [Pier della Medicina](#), if you ever return to see the gentle plain, that slopes down from Vercelli to Marcabò. And make known to the worthiest two men in

Fano, Messer [Guido](#), and [Angiolello](#), also, that unless our prophetic powers here are in vain, they will be cast out of their boat, and drowned near Cattolica, by treachery. Neptune never saw a greater crime, between the isles of Cyprus and Majorca, not even among those carried out by pirates, or by Greeks. [Malatestino](#), the treacherous one, who only sees with one eye, and holds the land, that one, who is here with me, wishes he had never seen, will make them come to parley with him, then act so that they will have no need of vow or prayer to counter Focara's winds.

Inferno Canto XXVIII:91-111
Curio and Mosca

And I said to him: ‘If you would have me carry news of you, above, show me and explain who he is that rues the sight of it.’ Then he placed his hand on the jaw of one of his companions, and opened the mouth, saying: ‘ This is he: and he does not speak. This outcast quelled Caesar’s doubts at the Rubicon, saying that delay always harms men who are ready.’ O how dejected, Curio seemed to me, with his tongue slit in his palate, who was so bold in speech!

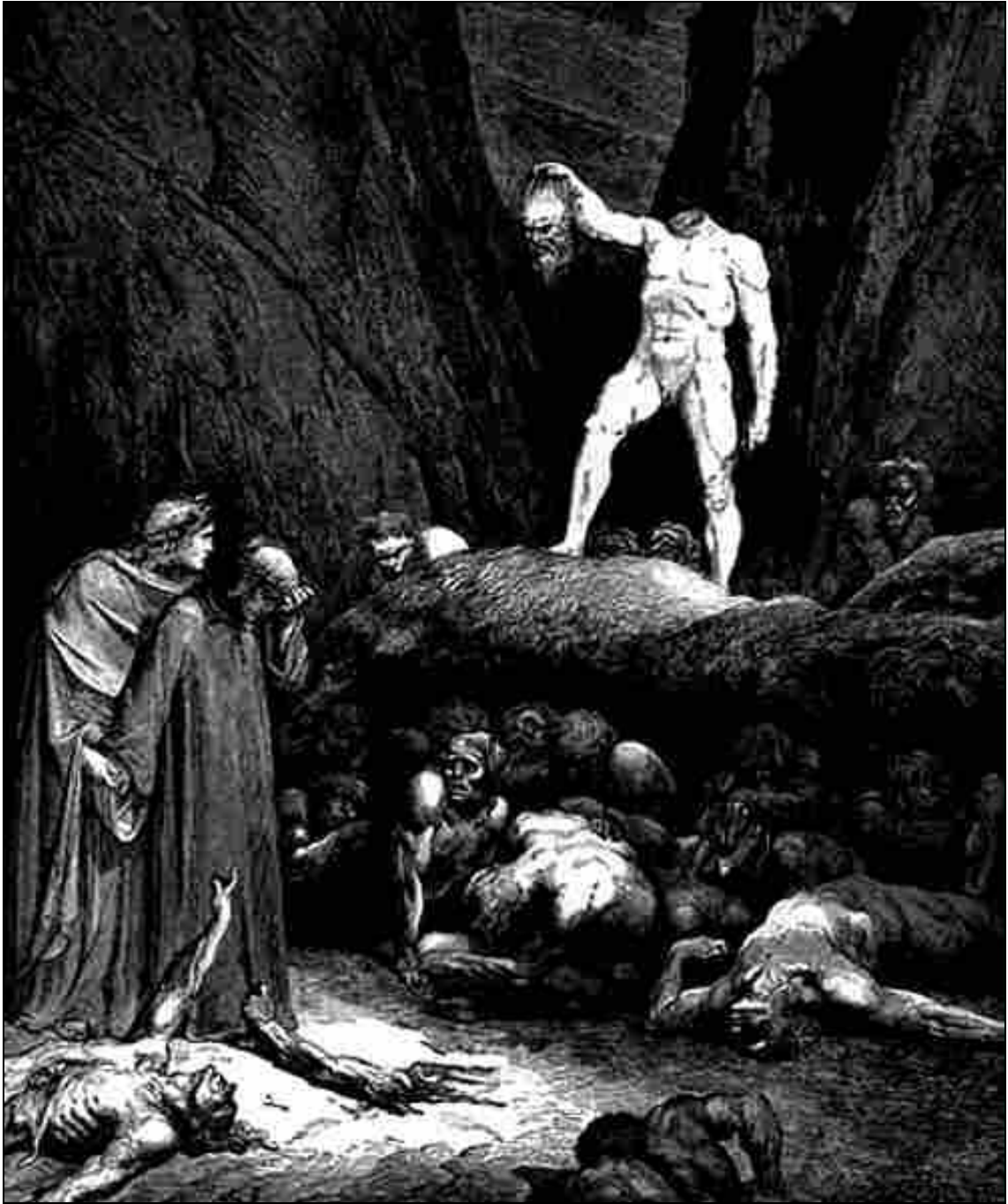
And one who had both hands severed, lifting the stumps through the dark air, so that their blood stained his face, said: ‘You will remember Mosca too, who said, alas, “A thing done, has an end” which was seed of evil to the Tuscan race.’ ‘And death to your

people,' I added, at which he, accumulating pain on pain, went away like one sad and mad.

Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142
Bertrand de Born

But I remained behind to view the crowd, and saw a thing, which, without more proof, I would be afraid to even tell, except that conscience reassures me, the good companion, that strengthens a man, under the armour of his self-respect.

I saw it clearly, and still seem to see, a headless trunk, that goes on before, like the others, in that miserable crew, and holds its severed head, by the hair, swinging, like a lantern, in its hand. It looked at us, and said: 'Ah me!'. It made a lamp of itself, to light itself, and



there were two in one, and one in two: how that can be he knows, who made it so.

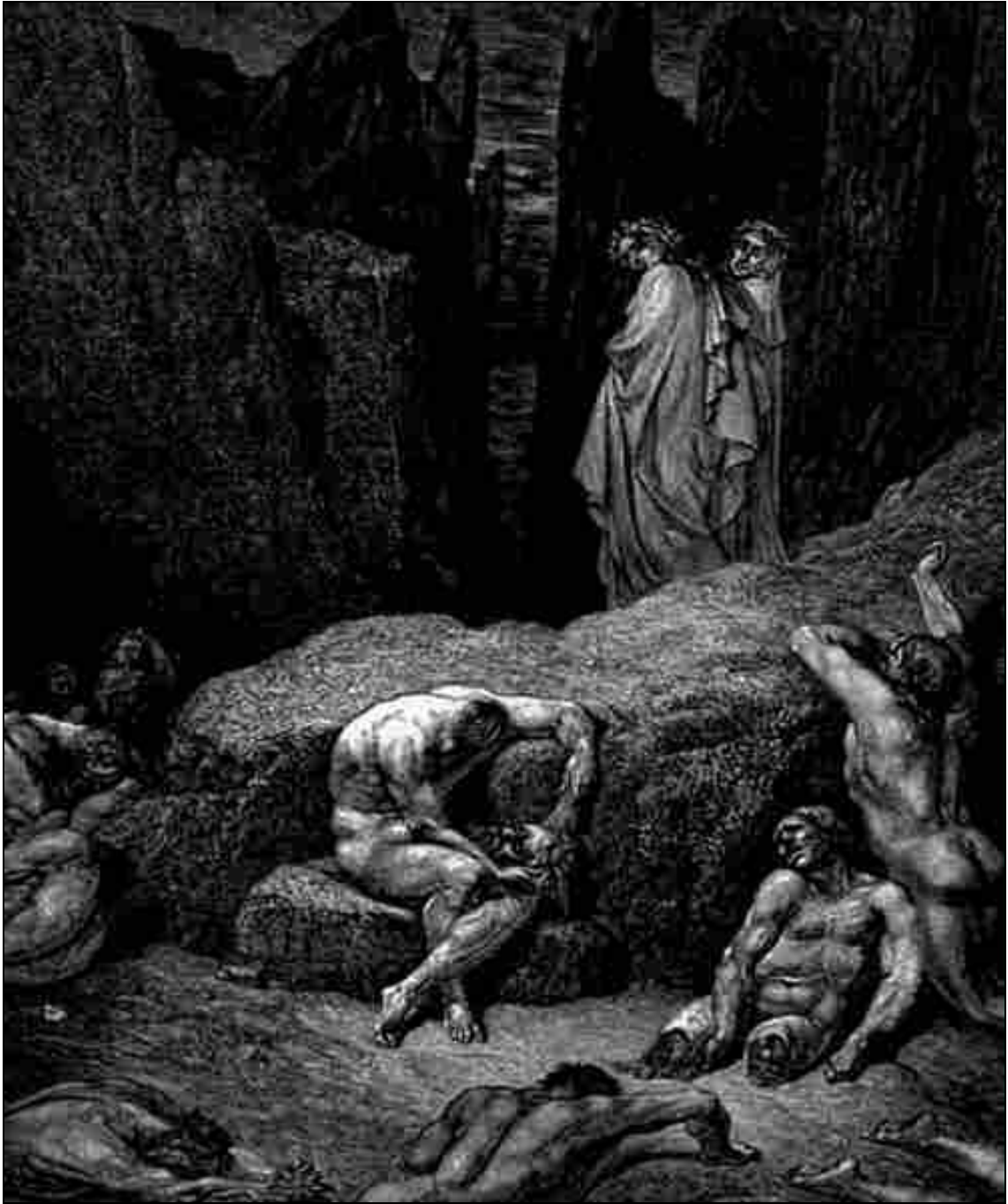
When it was right at the foot of our bridge, it lifted its arm high, complete with the head, to bring its words near to us, which were: ‘Now you see the grievous punishment, you, who go, alive and breathing, to see the dead: look if any are as great as this. And so that you may carry news of me, know that I am [Bertrand de Born](#), he who gave evil counsel to the [Young King](#). I made [the father](#) and the son rebel against each other: [Ahithophel](#) did no more for [Absalom](#) and [David](#), by his malicious stirrings.

Because I parted those who were once joined, I carry my intellect, alas, split from its origin in this

body. So, in me, is seen just retribution.

Inferno Canto XXIX:1-36 Geri del Bello

The multitude of people, and the many wounds, had made my eyes so tear-filled, that they longed to stop and weep, but Virgil said to me: ‘Why are you still gazing? Why does your sight still rest, down there, on the sad, mutilated shadows? You did not do so at the other chasms. Think, if you wish to number them, that the valley circles twenty-two miles, and the [moon is already](#) underneath our feet. The time is short now, that is given us, and there are other things to view, than those you see.’



I replied, then: ‘Had you noticed the reason why I looked, perhaps you might still have allowed me to stay.’ Meanwhile, the guide was moving on, and I went behind him, making my reply, and adding, now: ‘In the hollow where I held my gaze, I believe a spirit of my own blood, laments the guilt that costs so greatly here.’ Then the Master said: ‘Do not let your thoughts be distracted by him: attend to something else: let him stay there. I saw him point to you, at the foot of the little bridge, and threaten, angrily, with his finger: and I heard them call him Gerì del Bello. You were so entangled, then, with him who once held Altaforte, that you did not look that way, so he departed.’

I said: ‘Oh, my guide, his violent murder made him indignant, not yet avenged on his behalf, by any that shares his shame: therefore, I guess, he went away, without speaking to me: and, by that, has made me pity him the more.

Inferno Canto XXIX:37-72 The Tenth Chasm: The Falsifiers

So we talked, as far as the first place on the causeway that would have revealed the next valley, right to its floor, if it had been lighter. When we were above the last cloister of Malebolge, so that its lay brothers could be seen, many groans pierced me, whose arrows were barbed with pity, at which I covered my ears with my hands. Such pain there was, as there would be, if the

diseases in the hospitals of Valdichiana, Maremma and Sardinia, between July and September, were all rife in one ditch: a stench arose from it, such as issues from putrid limbs.

We descended on the last bank of the long causeway, again on the left, and then my sight was clearer, down to the depths, where infallible Justice, the minister of the Lord on high, punishes the falsifiers that it accounts for here. I do not think it would have been a greater sadness to see the people of [plague-ridden Aegina](#), when the air was so malignant, that every animal, even the smallest worm, was killed, and afterwards, as [Poets](#) say, for certain, the ancient race was restored from the seed of ants, than it was to see the spirits languishing

in scattered heaps through that dim valley. This one lay on its belly, that, on the shoulders of the other, and some were crawling along the wretched path.

Step by step we went, without a word, gazing at, and listening to, the sick who could not lift their bodies.

Inferno Canto XXIX:73-99
Griffolino and Capocchio

I saw two sitting, leaning on each other, as one pan is leant to warm against another: they were marked with scabs from head to foot, and I never saw a stable lad his master waits for, or one who stays awake unwillingly, use a currycomb as fiercely, as each of these two clawed himself with his nails, because of

the intensity of their itching, that has no other relief.

And so the nails dragged the scurf off, as a knife does the scales from bream, or other fish with larger scales. My Guide began to speak: ‘O you, who strip your chain-mail with your fingers, and often make pincers of them, tell us if there is any Latian among those here, inside: and may your nails be enough for that task for eternity.’ One of them replied, weeping: ‘We are both Latians, whom you see so mutilated here, but who are you who enquire of us? And the guide said: ‘I am one, who with this living man, descends from steep to steep, and mean to show him Hell.’

Then the mutual prop broke, and each one turned, trembling, towards

me, along with others that heard him, by the echo.

Inferno Canto XXIX:100-120 Griffolino's narrative

The good Master addressed me directly, saying: 'Tell them what you wish,' and I began as he desired: 'So that your memory will not fade, from human minds, in the first world, but will live for many suns, tell us who you are, and of what race. Do not let your ugly and revolting punishment make you afraid to reveal yourselves to me.'

The one replied: 'I was [Griffolino](#) of Arezzo, and [Albero](#) of Siena had me burned: but what I died for did not send me here. It is true I said to him, jesting, "I could lift myself into the air in flight," and

he who had great desire and little brain, wished me to show him that art: and only because I could not make him [Daedalus](#), he caused me to be burned, by one who looked on him as a son.

But to the last chasm of the ten, [Minos](#), who cannot err, condemned me, for the alchemy I practised in the world.'

Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139 The Spendthrift Brigade

And I said to the poet: 'Now was there ever a people as vain as the Sienese? Certainly not the French, by far.' At which the other leper, hearing me, replied to my words: 'What of [Stricca](#), who contrived to spend so little: and [Niccolo](#) who first discovered the costly use of

cloves, in that garden, Siena, where such seed takes root: and that company in which [Caccia](#) of Aciano threw away his vineyard, and his vast forest, and the [Abbagliato](#) showed his wit.

But so that you may know who seconds you like this against the Sienese, sharpen your eye on me, so that my face may reply to you: so you will see I am [Capocchio](#)'s shadow, who made false metals, by alchemy, and you must remember, if I know you rightly, how well I aped nature.

Inferno Canto XXX:1-48 Schicci and Myrrha

At the time when [Juno](#) was angry, as she had shown more than once, with the Theban race, because

of [Jupiter](#)'s affair with [Semele](#), she so maddened King [Athamas](#), that, seeing his wife, [Ino](#), go by, carrying her two sons in her arms, he cried: 'Spread the hunting nets, so that I can take the lioness and her cubs, at the pass,' and then stretched out his pitiless talons, snatching the one, named [Learchus](#), and, whirling him round, dashed him against the rock: and Ino drowned herself, and her other burden, [Melicertes](#). And after fortune had brought down the high Trojan pride, that dared all, so that [Priam](#) the king, and his kingdom were destroyed, Queen [Hecuba](#), a sad, wretched captive, having witnessed the sacrifice of [Polyxena](#), alone, on the sea-shore, when she recognised the body of her [Polydorus](#), barked like a dog, driven

out of her senses, so greatly had her sorrow racked her mind.

But neither Theban nor Trojan Furies were ever seen embodied so cruelly, in stinging creatures, or even less in human limbs, as I saw displayed in two shades, pallid and naked, that ran, biting, as a hungry pig does, when he is driven out of his sty. The one came to [Capocchio](#), and fixed his tusks in his neck, so that dragging him along, it made the solid floor rasp his belly. And the Aretine, [Griffolino](#), who was left, said to me, trembling: ‘That goblin is [Gianni Schicci](#), and he goes, rabidly, mangling others like that.’ I replied: ‘Oh, be pleased to tell us who the other is, before it snatches itself away, and may it not plant its teeth in you.’

And he to me: ‘That is the ancient spirit of incestuous Myrrha, who loved her father, Cinyras, with more than lawful love. She came to him, and sinned, under cover of another’s name, just as the one who is vanishing there, undertook to disguise himself as Buoso Donati, so as to gain the mare, called the Lady of the Herd, by forging a will, and giving it legal form.’

When the furious pair, on whom I had kept my eye, were gone, I turned to look at the other spirits, born to evil.

Inferno Canto XXX:49-90 Adam of Brescia

I saw one, who would have been shaped like a lute, if he had only had his groin cut short, at the place

where a man is forked. The heavy dropsy, that swells the limbs, with its badly transformed humours, so that the face does not match the belly, made him hold his lips apart, as the fevered patient does who, through thirst, curls one lip towards the chin, and the other upwards.

He said to us: ‘O you, who are exempt from punishment in this grim world (and why, I do not know), look and attend to the misery of [Master Adam](#). I had enough of what I wished, when I was alive, and now, alas, I crave a drop of water. The little streams that fall, from the green hills of Casentino, down to the Arno, making cool, moist channels, are constantly in my mind, and not in vain, since the image of them parches me, far more

than the disease, that wears the flesh from my face.

The rigid justice, that examines me, takes its opportunity from the place where I sinned, to give my sighs more rapid flight. That is Romena, where I counterfeited the coin of Florence, stamped with the Baptist's image: for that, on earth, I left my body, burned. But if I could see the wretched soul of Guido here, or Alessandro, or Aghinolfo, their brother, I would not exchange that sight for Branda's fountain. Guido is down here already, if the crazed spirits going round speak truly, but what use is it to me, whose limbs are tied?

If I were only light enough to move, even an inch, every hundred years, I would already have started on the road, to find him among this

disfigured people, though it winds around eleven miles, and is no less than half a mile across. Because of them I am with such a crew: they induced me to stamp those florins that were adulterated, with three carats alloy.'

Inferno Canto XXX:91-129 Sinon: Potiphar's wife

I said to him: 'Who are those abject two, lying close to your right edge, and giving off smoke, like a hand, bathed, in winter? He replied: 'I found them here, when I rained down into this pound, and they have not turned since then, and may never turn I believe.

One is the false wife who accused [Joseph](#). The other is lying [Sinon](#), the Greek from Troy. A

burning fever makes them stink so strongly.’ And Sinon, who perhaps took offence at being named so blackly, struck Adamo’s rigid belly with his fist, so that it resounded, like a drum: and Master Adam struck him in the face with his arm, that seemed no softer, saying to him: ‘I have an arm free for such a situation, though I am kept from moving by my heavy limbs.’ At which Sinon answered: ‘You were not so ready with it, going to the fire, but as ready, and readier, when you were coining.’ And he of the dropsy: ‘You speak truth in that, but you were not so truthful a witness, there, when you were questioned about the truth at Troy.’

‘If I spoke falsely, you falsified the coin,’ Sinon said, ‘and I am here for the one crime, but you for more

than any other devil.’ He who had the swollen belly answered: ‘Think of the Wooden Horse, you liar, and let it be a torment to you that all the world knows of it.’ The Greek replied: ‘Let the thirst that cracks the tongue be your torture, and the foul water make your stomach a barrier in front of your eyes.’ Then the coiner: ‘Your mouth gapes wide as usual, to speak ill. If I have a thirst, and moisture swells me, you have the burning, and a head that hurts you: and you would not need many words of invitation, to lap at the mirror of [Narcissus](#).’

Inferno Canto XXX:130-148
Virgil reproves Dante

I was standing, all intent on hearing them, when the Master said

to me: ‘Now, keep gazing much longer, and I will quarrel with you!’ When I heard him speak to me in anger, I turned towards him, with such a feeling of shame that it comes over me again, as I only think of it. And like someone who dreams of something harmful to them, and dreaming, wishes it were a dream, so that they long for what is, as if it were not; that I became, who, lacking power to speak, wished to make an excuse, and all the while did so, not thinking I was doing it.

My Master said: ‘Less shamefacedness would wash away a greater fault than yours, so unburden yourself of sorrow, and know that I am always with you, should it happen that fate takes you, where people are in similar conflict:

since the desire to hear it, is a vulgar desire.’

Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45 The Giants that guard the central pit

One and the same tongue at first wounded me, so that it painted both my cheeks with blushes, and then gave out the ointment for the wound. So I have heard the spear of [Achilles](#), and his father [Peleus](#), was the cause first of sadness, and then of a healing gift.

We turned our back on the wretched valley, crossing without a word, up by the bank that circles round it. Here was less darkness than night and less light than day, so that my vision showed only a little in front: but I heard a high-pitched horn sound, so loudly, that it would

have made thunder seem quiet: it directed my eyes, that followed its passage back, straight to a single point. Roland did not sound his horn so fiercely, after the sad rout, when Charlemagne had lost the holy war, at Roncesvalles.

I had kept my head turned for a while in that direction, when I seemed to make out many high towers, at which I said: ‘Master, tell me what city this is?’ And he to me: ‘Because your eyes traverse the darkness from too far away, it follows that you imagine wrongly. You will see, quite plainly, when you reach there, how much the sense is deceived by distance, so press on more strongly.’ Then he took me, lovingly, by the hand, and said: ‘Before we go further, so that the reality might seem less strange

to you, know that they are Giants,
not towers, and are in the pit, from
the navel downwards, all of them,
around its bank.’

As the eye, when a mist is
disappearing, gradually recreates
what was hidden by the vapour
thickening the air, so, while
approaching closer and closer to the
brink, piercing through that gross,
dark atmosphere, error left me, and
my fear increased. As
[Montereggione](#) crowns its round
wall with towers, so the terrible
giants, whom Jupiter still threatens
from the heavens, when he thunders,
turreted with half their bodies the
bank that circles the well.

Inferno Canto XXXI:46-81
Nimrod

And I already saw the face of one, the shoulders, chest, the greater part of the belly, and the arms down both sides. When nature abandoned the art of making creatures like these, she certainly did well by removing such killers from warfare, and if she does not repent of making elephants and whales, whoever looks at the issue subtly, considers her more prudent and more right in that, since where the instrument of mind is joined to ill will and power, men have no defence against it.

His face seemed to me as long and large as the bronze [pine-cone](#), in front of St Peter's in Rome, and his other features were in proportion, so that the bank that covered him from the middle onwards, revealed so much of him above that three Frieslanders would have boasted in

vain of reaching his hair, since I saw thirty large hand-spans of him down from the place where a man pins his cloak.

The savage mouth, for which no sweeter hymns were fit, began to rave: ‘*Rafel mai amech sabi almi.*’ And my guide turning to him, said: ‘Foolish spirit, stick to your hunting-horn, and vent your breath through that, when rage or some other passion stirs you. Search round your neck, O confused soul, and you will find the belt where it is slung, and see that which arcs across your huge chest.’ Then he said to me: ‘He declares himself. This is [Nimrod](#), through whose evil thought, one language is not still used, throughout the whole world. Let us leave him standing here, and not speak to him in vain: since every

language, to him, is like his to others, that no one understands.’

Inferno Canto XXXI:82-96
Ephialtes

So we went on, turning to the left, and, a crossbow-shot away, we found the next one, far larger and fiercer. Who and what the power might be that bound him, I cannot say, but he had his right arm pinioned behind, and the other in front, by a chain that held him tight, from the neck down, and, on the visible part of him, reached its fifth turn.

My guide said: ‘This proud spirit had the will to try his strength against high Jupiter, and so has this reward. [Ephialtes](#) is his name, and he made the great attempt, when the

Giants made the gods fear, and the arms he shook then, now, he never moves.’

Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145
Antaeus

And I said to him: ‘If it were possible, I would wish my eyes to light on vast [Briareus](#).’ To which he replied: ‘You will see [Antaeus](#), nearby, who speaks and is unchained, and will set us down in the deepest abyss of guilt. He whom you wish to see is far beyond, and is formed and bound like this one, except he seems more savage in his features.’ No huge earthquake ever shook a tower, as violently as Ephialtes promptly shook himself. Then I feared death more than ever, and the fear alone would have been



enough to cause it, had I not seen his chains.

We then went further on, and reached Antaeus, who projected twenty feet from the pit, not including his head. The Master spoke: ‘O you, who, of old, took a thousand lions for your prey, in the fateful valley, near Zama, that made [Scipio](#) heir to glory, when [Hannibal](#) retreated with his army; you, through whom, it might still be believed, the Giant sons of Earth would have overcome the gods, if you had been at the great war with your brothers; set us down, and do not be shy to do it, where the cold imprisons the River Cocytus, in the Ninth Circle.

Do not make us ask [Tityos](#) or [Typhon](#). Bend, and do not curl your lips in scorn: this man can give that

which is longed for, here: he can refresh your fame on earth, since he is alive, and still expects long life, if grace does not call him to her before his time.’ So the Master spoke, and Antaeus quickly stretched out both hands, from which [Hercules](#) of old once felt the power, and seized my guide. Virgil when he felt his grasp, said to me: ‘Come here, so that I may carry you.’ Then he made one bundle of himself and me.

To me, who stood watching to see Antaeus stoop, he seemed as the leaning tower at Bologna, the Carisenda, appears to the view, under the leaning side, when a cloud is passing over it, and it hangs in the opposite direction. It was such a terrible moment I would have wished to have gone by another route, but he set us down gently in

the deep, that swallowed Lucifer and Judas, and did not linger there, bent, but straightened himself, like a mast raised in a boat.

Inferno Canto XXXII:1-39 The Ninth Circle: The frozen River Cocytus

If I had words, rough and hoarse enough, to fit the dismal chasm, on which all the other rocky cliffs weigh, and converge, I would squeeze out the juice of my imagination more completely: but since I have not, I bring myself, not without fear, to describe the place: to tell of the pit of the Universe is not a task to be taken up in play, nor in a language that has words like ‘mother’ and ‘father’. But may the Muses, those Ladies, who helped

Amphion shut Thebes behind its walls, aid my speech, so that my words may not vary from the truth.

O you people, created evil beyond all others, in this place that is hard to speak of, it were better if you had been sheep or goats here on earth! When we were down, inside the dark well, beneath the Giants' feet, and much lower, and I was still staring at the steep cliff, I heard a voice say to me: 'Take care as you pass, so that you do not tread, with your feet, on the heads of the wretched, weary brothers.' At which I turned, and saw a lake, in front of me and underneath my feet, that, because of the cold, appeared like glass not water.

The Danube, in Austria, never formed so thick a veil for its winter course, nor the Don, far off under

the frozen sky, as was here: if Mount Tambernic in the east, or Mount Pietrapana, had fallen on it, it would not have even creaked at the margin. And as frogs sit croaking with their muzzles above water, at the time when peasant women often dream of gleaning, so the sad shadows sat, in the ice, livid to where the blush of shame appears, chattering with their teeth, like storks.

Each one held his face turned down: the cold is witnessed, amongst them, by their mouths: and their sad hearts, by their eyes.

Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69 The Caina: The degli Alberti: Camicion

When I had a looked around awhile, turning to my feet, I saw two, so compressed together, that the hair of their heads was intermingled. I said: ‘Tell me, you, who press your bodies together so: who are you?’ And they twisted their necks up, and when they had lifted their faces towards me, their eyes, which were only moist, inwardly, before, gushed at the lids, and the frost iced fast the tears, between them, and sealed them up again. No vice ever clamped wood to wood as firmly: so that they butted one another like two he-goats, overcome by such rage.

And one, who had lost both ears to the cold, with his face still turned down, said: ‘Why are you staring at us, so fiercely? If you want to know who these two are, they are the degli

Alberti, Allesandro and Napoleone: the valley where the Bisenzio runs down, was theirs and their father Alberto's. They issued from one body, and you can search the whole Caina, and will not find shades more worthy of being set in ice: not even Mordred, whose chest and shadow, were pierced, at one blow, by his father's, King Arthur's, lance: nor Focaccia: nor this one, who obstructs my face with his head, so that I cannot see further, who was named Sassol Mascheroni. If you are a Tuscan, now, you know truly what he was.

And so that you do not put me to more speech, know that I am Camicion de' Pazzi, and am waiting for Carlino, my kinsman, to outdo me.'

Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123 The Antenora: Bocca degli Abbati

Afterwards I saw a thousand faces, made doglike by the cold, at which a trembling overcomes me, and always will, when I think of the frozen fords. And, whether it was will, or fate or chance, I do not know: but walking, among the heads, I struck my foot violently against one face. Weeping it cried out to me: ‘Why do you trample on me? If you do not come to increase the revenge for Montaperti, why do you trouble me?’

And I: ‘My Master, wait here for me, now, so that I can rid me of a doubt concerning him, then you can make as much haste as you please.’ The Master stood, and I said to that shade which still reviled me bitterly:

‘Who are you, who reproach others in this way?’ ‘No, who are you,’ he answered, ‘who go through the Antenora striking the faces of others, in such a way, that if you were alive, it would be an insult?’

I replied: ‘I am alive, and if you long for fame, it might be a precious thing to you, if I put your name among the others.’ And he to me: ‘I long for the opposite: take yourself off, and annoy me no more: since you little know how to flatter on this icy slope.’ Then I seized him by the back of the scalp, and said: ‘You need to name yourself, before there is not a hair left on your head!’ At which he said to me: ‘Even if you pluck me, I will not tell you who I am, nor demonstrate it to you, though you tear at my head, a thousand times.’

I already had his hair coiled in my hand, and had pulled away more than one tuft of it, while he barked, and kept his eyes down, when another spirit cried: ‘What is wrong with you, Bocca, is it not enough that you chatter with your jaws, but you have to bark too? What devil is at you?’ I said: ‘Now, accursed traitor, I do not want you to speak: since I will carry true news of you, to your shame.’ He answered: ‘Go, and say what you please, but, if you get out from here, do not be silent about him, who had his tongue so ready just now. Here he regrets taking French silver. You can say, “I saw Buoso de Duera, there, where the sinners stand caught in the ice.”’

If you are asked who else was there, you have Tesauro de’

Beccheria, whose throat was slit by Florence. Gianni de' Soldanier is further on, with Ganelon, and Tribaldello, who unbarred the gate of Faenza while it slept.'

Inferno Canto XXXII:124-139 Ugolino and Ruggieri

We had already left him, when I saw two spirits frozen in a hole, so close together that the one head capped the other, and the uppermost set his teeth into the other, as bread is chewed, out of hunger, there where the back of the head joins the nape. Tydeus gnawed the head of Menalippus, no differently, out of rage, than this one the skull and other parts.

I said: 'O you, who, in such a brutal way, inflict the mark of your



hatred, on him, whom you devour,
tell me why: on condition that, if
you complain of him with reason, I,
knowing who you are, and his
offence, may repay you still in the
world above, if the tongue I speak
with is not withered.'

Inferno Canto XXXIII:1-90
Count Ugolino's story

That sinner raised his mouth
from the savage feast, wiping it on
the hair, of the head he had stripped
behind. Then he began: 'You wish
me to renew desperate grief, that
wrings my heart at the very thought,
before I even tell of it. But if my
words are to be the seed, that bears
fruit, in the infamy, of the traitor
whom I gnaw, you will see me
speak and weep together. I do not

know who you are, nor by what means you have come down here, but when I hear you, you seem to me, in truth, a Florentine.

You must know that I am Count Ugolino, and this is the Archbishop Ruggieri. Now I will tell you why I am a neighbour such as this to him. It is not necessary to say that, confiding in him, I was taken, through the effects of his evil schemes, and afterwards killed. But what you cannot have learnt, how cruel my death was, you will hear: and know if he has injured me.

A narrow hole inside that tower, which is called *Famine*, from my death, and in which others must yet be imprisoned, had already shown me several moons through its opening, when I slept an evil sleep that tore the curtain of the future for

me. This man seemed to me the lord, and master, chasing the wolf and its whelps, on Monte di San Giuliano, that blocks the view of Lucca from the Pisans. He had the Gualandi, Sismondi and Lanfranchi running with him, with hounds, slender, keen, and agile.

After a short chase the father and his sons seemed weary to me, and I thought I saw their flanks torn by sharp teeth. When I woke, before dawn, I heard my sons, who were with me, crying in their sleep, and asking for food. You are truly cruel if you do not sorrow already at the thought of what my heart presaged: and if you do not weep, what do you weep at?

They were awake now, and the hour nearing, at which our food used to be brought to us, and each of

us was anxious from dreaming, when below I heard the door of the terrible tower locked up: at which I gazed into the faces of my sons, without saying a word. I did not weep: I grew like stone inside: they wept: and my little [Anselm](#) said to me: ‘Father you stare so, what is wrong?’ But I shed no tears, and did not answer, all that day, or the next night, till another sun rose over the world. When a little ray of light was sent into the mournful gaol, and I saw in their four faces, the aspect of my own, I bit my hands from grief. And they, thinking that I did it from hunger, suddenly stood, and said: ‘Father, it will give us less pain, if you gnaw at us: you put this miserable flesh on us, now strip it off, again.’

Then I calmed myself, in order not to make them more unhappy: that day and the next we all were silent. Ah, solid earth, why did you not open? When we had come to the fourth day, Gaddo threw himself down at my feet, saying: ‘My father, why do you not help me?’ There he died, and even as you see me, I saw the three others fall one by one, between the fifth and sixth days: at which, already blind, I took to groping over each of them, and called out to them for three days, when they were dead: then fasting, at last, had power to overcome grief.’

When he had spoken this, he seized the wretched skull again with his teeth, which were as strong as a dog’s on the bone, his eyes distorted. Ah Pisa, shame among the

people, of the lovely land where ‘*si*’ is heard, let the isles of Caprara and Gorgona shift and block the Arno at its mouth, since your neighbours are so slow to punish you, so that it may drown every living soul. Since if Count Ugolino had the infamy of having betrayed your castles, you ought not to have put his sons to the torture. Their youth made [Uguccione](#) and [Brigata](#), and the other two my words above have named, innocents, you modern Thebes.

Inferno Canto XXXIII:91-157
Friar Alberigo and Branca d’Oria

We went further on, where the rugged frost encases another people, not bent down but reversed completely. The very weeping there

prevents them weeping: and the grief that makes an impediment to their sight, turns inward to increase their agony: since the first tears form a knot, and like a crystal visor, fill the cavities below their eyebrows. And though all feeling had left my face, through the cold, as though from a callus, it seemed to me now as if I felt a breeze, at which I said: ‘Master, what causes this? Is the heat not all quenched here below?’ At which he said to me: ‘Soon you will be where your own eyes, will answer that, seeing the source that generates the air.’

And one of the sad shadows, in the icy crust, cried out to us: ‘O spirits, so cruel that the last place of all is reserved for you, remove the solid veils from my face, that I might vent the grief a little that

chokes my heart, before the tears freezes again.’ At which I said to him: ‘If you would have my help, tell me who you are: and if I do not disburden you, may I have to journey to the depths of the ice.’

He replied to that: ‘I am [Friar Alberigo](#), I am he of the fruits of the evil garden, who here receive dates made of ice, to match my figs.’ I said to him: ‘O, are you dead already?’ And he to me: ‘How my body stands in the world above, I do not know, such is the power of this [Ptolomaea](#), that the soul often falls down here, before [Atropos](#) cuts the thread. And so that you may more willingly clear the frozen tears from your face, know that when the soul betrays, as mine did, her body is taken from her by a demon, there and then, who rules it after that, till

its time is complete. She falls, plunging down to this well: and perhaps the body of this other shade, that winters here, behind me, is still visible in the world above.

You must know it, if you have only now come down here: it is Ser [Branca d'Oria](#), and many years have passed since he was imprisoned here.' I said to him: 'I believe you are lying to me: Branca d'Oria is not dead, and eats and drinks, and sleeps, and puts on his clothes.' He said: '[Michel Zanche](#) had not yet arrived, in the ditch of the Malebranche above, there where the tenacious pitch boils, when this man left a devil in his place in his own body, and one in the body of his kinsman who did the treachery with him. But reach your hand here: open my eyes.' And I did not open them

for him: and it was a courtesy to be rude to him.

Ah, Genoese, men divorced from all morality, and filled with every corruption, why are you not dispersed from off the earth? I found the worst spirit of Romagna was one of you, who for his actions even now bathes, as a soul, in [Cocytus](#), and still seems alive on earth, in his own body.

Inferno Canto XXXIV:1-54 The [Judecca](#): Satan

‘Vexilla Regis prodeunt inferni,
the banners of the King of Hell
advance towards us: so look in front
of you to see if you discern him,
’ said my Master. I seemed to see a
tall structure, as a mill, that the wind
turns, seems from a distance, when

a dense mist breathes, or when night falls in our hemisphere, and I shrank back behind my guide, because of the wind, since there was no other shelter.

I had already come, and with fear I put it into words, where the souls were completely enclosed, and shone through like straw in glass. Some are lying down, some stand upright, one on its head, another on the soles of its feet, another bent head to foot, like a bow.

When we had gone on far enough, that my guide was able to show me [Lucifer](#), the monster who was once so fair, he removed himself from me, and made me stop, saying: ‘Behold [Dis](#), and behold the place where you must arm yourself with courage.’ Reader, do not ask how chilled and hoarse I became,

then, since I do not write it, since all words would fail to tell it. I did not die, yet I was not alive. Think, yourself, now, if you have any grain of imagination, what I became, deprived of either state.

The emperor of the sorrowful kingdom stood, waist upwards, from the ice, and I am nearer to a giant in size than the giants are to one of his arms: think how great the whole is that corresponds to such a part. If he was once as fair, as he is now ugly, and lifted up his forehead against his Maker, well may all evil flow from him. O how great a wonder it seemed to me, when I saw three faces on his head! The one in front was fiery red: the other two were joined to it, above the centre of each



shoulder, and linked at the top, and the right hand one seemed whitish-yellow: the left was black to look at, like those who come from where the Nile rises. Under each face sprang two vast wings, of a size fit for such a bird: I never saw ship's sails as

wide. They had no feathers, but were like a bat's in form and texture, and he was flapping them, so that three winds blew out away from him, by which all Cocytus was frozen. He wept from six eyes, and tears and bloody spume gushed down three chins.

Inferno Canto XXXIV:55-69
Judas: Brutus: Cassius

He chewed a sinner between his teeth, with every mouth, like a grinder, so, in that way, he kept three of them in torment. To the one in front, the biting was nothing compared to the tearing, since, at times, his back was left completely stripped of skin.

The Master said: 'That soul up there that suffers the greatest

punishment, he who has his head inside, and flails his legs outside, is Judas Iscariot. Of the other two who have their heads hanging downwards, the one who hangs from the face that is black is Brutus: see how he writhes and does not utter a word: and the other is Cassius, who seems so long in limb. But night is ascending, and now we must go, since we have seen it all.’

Inferno Canto XXXIV:70-139 The Poets leave Hell

I clasped his neck, as he wished, and he seized the time and place, and when the wings were wide open, grasped Satan’s shaggy sides, and then from tuft to tuft, climbed down, between the matted hair and frozen crust.

When we had come to where the thigh joint turns, just at the swelling of the haunch, my guide, with effort and difficulty, reversed his head to where his feet had been, and grabbed the hair like a climber, so that I thought we were dropping back to Hell. ‘Hold tight,’ said my guide, panting like a man exhausted, ‘since by these stairs, we must depart from all this evil.’ Then he clambered into an opening in the rock, and set me down to sit on its edge, then turned his cautious step towards me.

I raised my eyes, thinking to see [Lucifer](#) as I had left him, but saw him with his legs projecting upwards, and let those denser people, who do not see what point I had passed, judge if I was confused then, or not.

My Master said: ‘Get up, on your feet: the way is long, and difficult the road, and the sun already returns to mid-tierce.’ Where we stood was no palace hall, but a natural cell with a rough floor, and short of light. When I had risen, I said: ‘My Master, before I leave the abyss, speak to me a while, and lead me out of error. Where is the ice? And why is this monster fixed upside down? And how has the sun moved from evening to dawn in so short a time?’

And he to me: ‘You imagine you are still on the other side of the earth’s centre, where I caught hold of the Evil Worm’s hair, he who pierces the world. You *were* on that side of it, as long as I climbed down, but when I reversed myself, you passed the point to which

weight is drawn, from everywhere: and are now below the hemisphere opposite that which covers the wide dry land, and opposite that under whose zenith [the Man](#) was crucified, who was born, and lived, without sin. You have your feet on a little sphere that forms the other side of the Judecca.

Here it is morning, when it is evening there: and he who made a ladder for us of his hair is still as he was before. He fell from Heaven on this side of the earth, and the land that projected here before, veiled itself with the ocean for fear of him, and entered our hemisphere: and that which now projects on this side, left an empty space here, and shot outwards, maybe in order to escape from him.'

Down there, is a space, as far from [Beelzebub](#) as his cave extends, not known by sight, but by the sound of a stream falling through it, along the bed of rock it has hollowed out, into a winding course, and a slow incline. The guide and I entered by that hidden path, to return to the clear world: and, not caring to rest, we climbed up, he first, and I second, until, through a round opening, I saw the beautiful things that the sky holds: and we issued out, from there, to see, again, the stars.

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Purgatorio Canto I:1-27 Dante's Invocation and the dawn sky

The little boat of my intellect now sets sail, to course through gentler waters, leaving behind her a sea so cruel. And I will speak of that second region, where the human spirit is purged, and becomes fit to climb to Heaven. But, since I am yours, O sacred Muses, here let dead Poetry rise again, and here let Calliope sound, a moment, accompanying my words with that mode, of which the Pierides felt the power, so that they despaired of pardon.

The sweet colour of eastern sapphire, that gathered on the skies clear forehead, pure as far as the first sphere, restored delight to my eyes, as soon as I had issued from

the dead air, which constrained my eyes and heart. The lovely planet that encourages us to love, was making the whole east smile, veiling the Fishes that escorted her. I turned to the right, and fixed my mind on the southern pole, and saw four stars, never seen, until now, except by the first peoples.

The sky seemed to be joyful at their fires. O widowed northern region, denied the sight of them!

Purgatorio Canto I:28-84 The Poets meet Cato

When I had left gazing at them, and turned a little towards the other pole, there, where Bootës had already vanished, I saw a solitary old man, with a face worthy of such great reverence, that

no son owes his father more. He wore his beard long, flecked with white, like his hair, of which a double strand fell to his chest. The rays, of the four sacred stars, filled his face, with such brightness, that I saw him as if the sun were in front of him.

Stirring that noble plumage, he said: ‘Who are you, who have fled the eternal prison, against the dark stream? Who has led you, or who was a light to you, issuing out of that profound night, that always blackens the infernal valley? Are the laws of the abyss shattered, or is there some new counsel taken in Heaven that you come to my mountain, being damned?’

Then, my leader took hold of me, and made me do reverence with my knees and forehead, using his words

and hand. Then he replied: 'I did not come of my own will. A Lady came down from Heaven, and, because of her prayers, I helped this man, with my companionship. But since it is your wish that more be told about our true state, it cannot be my wish to deny you. He has never witnessed the last hour, but, because of his folly, was so near it, that there was little time left for him to alter. As I said, I was sent to rescue him, and there was no other path but this, along which I have come.

I have shown him all the sinful people, and now intend to show him those spirits that purge themselves, in your care. It would be a long tale to tell, how I have brought him here: virtue descends from above, that helps me to guide him, to see and to hear you. Now, let it please you to

grace his coming here: he seeks freedom, which is so dear to us, as he knows, who gives his life for it. You know: since death was not bitter to you in Utica for its sake, where you left the body that will shine so bright, at the great day.

The eternal law is not violated by us, since he lives, and [Minos](#) does not bind me: but I am of the circle where the chaste eyes of your [Marcia](#) are, who in her aspect begs you, O sacred one, to hold her as your own: lean towards us, for love of her. Allow us to go through your seven regions: I will report, to her, our gratitude to you, if you deign to be mentioned there below.'

Purgatorio Canto I:85-111 Cato tells Virgil to bathe Dante's eyes

He replied, then: ‘Marcia was so pleasing to my eyes while I was over there, that I performed every grace she asked of me. Now that she is beyond the evil stream, she can move me no longer, by the law that was made when I issued out. But there is no need for flattery, if a heavenly lady moves and directs you: let it be sufficient that you ask me in her name.

Go, and see that you tie a smooth rush round this man, and bathe his face, so that all foulness is wiped away, since it is not right to go in front of the first minister of those who are in Paradise, with eyes darkened by any mist.

This little island nurtures rushes, in the soft mud, all round it, from deep to deep, where the wave beats on it. No other plant that puts out

leaves, or stiffens, can live there, because it would not give way to the buffeting. Then, do not return this way: the sun, that is now rising, will show you where to climb the mountain, in an easier ascent.'

So he left: and I rose without speaking, and drew back towards my leader, and fixed my eyes on him.

Purgatory Canto I:112-136 Virgil obeys

He began: 'Son, follow my steps: let us turn back, since the plain slopes down, this way, to its low shore.' The dawn was vanquishing the breath of morning, which fled before her, so that, from afar, I recognised the tremor of the sea.

We walked along the solitary plain, like those, who turn again towards a lost road, and seem to go in vain, until they reach it. When we came where the dew fights with the sunlight, being in a place where it disperses slowly in the cool air, my Master gently placed both hands, outspread, on the sweet grass: at which, I who understood his intention, raised my tear-stained face towards him: there he made my true colour visible, that Hell had hidden.

Then we came onto the deserted shore that never saw a man sail its waters, who, could, afterwards, experience his return. There he tied the rush around me, as the other wished: O marvellous: as he pulled out the humble plant, so it was suddenly replaced, where he tore it.

Purgatorio Canto II:1-45 The Angel of God

The sun, had already reached the horizon, whose meridian circle, at the zenith, covers Jerusalem: and night, that circles opposite him, was rising, out of Ganges, with the Scales, Libra, that fall from night's hand, when the days shorten: so that, where I was, the pale and rosy cheeks of beautiful Aurora, through age, were turned deep orange.

We were still near the ocean, like people who think about their journey, who go on in spirit, but remain in body; and behold, as Mars reddens through the heavy vapours, low in the west, over the waves, at the coming of dawn, so a light appeared, and may I see it yet,

coming over the sea, so quickly, that no flight equals its movement, and when I had taken my eyes from it for a moment to question my guide, I saw it, once more, grown bigger and brighter. Then something white appeared on each side of it, and, little by little, another whiteness emerged from underneath it.

My Master still did not speak a word, until the first whitenesses were seen to be wings: then, when he recognised the pilot clearly, he cried: ‘Kneel, bend your knees: behold the Angel of God: clasp your hands: from now on you will see such ministers. See how he disdains all human mechanism, not needing oars, or any sails but his wings, between such far shores. See how he has them turned towards the sky, beating the



air, with eternal plumage, that does not moult like mortal feathers.’

Then as the divine bird approached, nearer and nearer, to us, it appeared much brighter, so that my eyes could not sustain its closeness: but I looked down, and it came towards the shore, in a vessel so quick and light that it skimmed the waves. At the stern stood the celestial steersman, so that blessedness seemed written in his features, and more than a hundred souls sat inside.

Purgatorio Canto II:46-79 The Crowd of Souls

They all sang, together, with one voice: ‘*In exitu Israel de Aegypto: When Israel went out of Egypt,*’ and the rest of the psalm that comes

after. Then he made the sign of the sacred cross towards them, at which they all flung themselves on shore, and, as quickly as he came, he departed.

The crowd that were left seemed unfamiliar with the place, looking round like those who experience something new. The sun, who had [chased Capricorn from the height](#) of heaven with his bright arrows, was shooting out the light on every side, when the new people raised their faces towards us, saying: ‘If you know it, show us the way to reach the Mount.’ And Virgil answered: ‘You think, perhaps, we have knowledge of this place, but we are strangers, as you are. We came, just now, a little while before you, by another route so difficult and rough,

that the climbing now will seem like play to us.’

The spirits, who had noticed I was still alive, by my breathing, wondering, grew pale, and as the crowd draws near the messenger, who carries the olive-branch, and no one is wary of trampling on others, so those spirits, each one fortunate, fixed their gaze on my face, almost forgetting to go and make themselves blessed.

I saw one of them move forward to embrace me, with such great affection, that he stirred me to do the same.

Purgatorio Canto II:79-114
Casella, the musician

O vain shades, empty except in aspect! My hands met three times

behind him, and returned, as often, empty, to my breast. I paled, with wonder, I believe, at which the shade smiled, and drew back, and I hurried forward, following. It asked me, gently, to pause: then I knew who it was: and begged him to stop a while, and speak to me. He replied: ‘Just as I loved you in the mortal body, so I love you, freed: so I stay: but you, where are you going?’

I said: ‘My [Casella](#), I make this journey, in order to return here again, where I am, but how have so many hours been stolen from you?’ And he to me: ‘If he who carries whom he pleases, when he pleases, has denied me this crossing many times, no wrong is done to me, since his will is full of justice. In truth, for three months past, since the

beginning of the Jubilee, he has taken, in all peace, those who wish to enter. So I, who was on the shore where Tiber's stream becomes saltwater, was accepted by him, in kindness. He has set his winged course to that river-mouth now, because those who do not sink to Acheron, are always gathering there.'

And I: 'If some new law has not taken your memory, or your skill in that song of love, that used to calm all my desires, may it please you to console my spirit a while, with it, my spirit, that, coming here in its own person, suffers so.' He then began to sing: '*Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*: Love that, in my mind, discourses with me,' so sweetly, that the sweetness of it sounds, in me, yet.

Purgatorio Canto II:115-133 Cato exhorts the spirits to go on

My Master and I, and the people who were with him, seemed so delighted, that they thought of nothing else. We were all focused and intent on his notes: when, behold, the venerable old man, cried: ‘What is this, tardy spirits? What negligence, what idling is this? Run to the mountain, and strip the scales from your eyes, that prevent God being revealed to you.’

As doves, gathering corn or seeds, collected at their meal, quietly, and without their usual pride, stop pecking, straight away, if anything appears they are afraid of, since they are troubled by a more important concern, so I saw that

new crowd leave the singing, and
move towards the hillside, like those
who go, but do not know where they
will emerge: nor was our departure
slower.

**Purgatorio Canto III:1-45 Virgil
stresses the limitations of
knowledge**

Although their sudden flight was
scattering them over the plain, I
drew close to my faithful
companion, turning to the mountain,
where reason examines us: and how
would I have fared without him?
Who would have brought me to the
Mount?

He seemed to me to be gnawed
by self-reproach. O clear and noble
conscience, how sharply a little fault
stings you! When his feet had

slowed from that pace that spoils the dignity of every action, my mind, which was inwardly focused before, widened its intent, as if in search, and I set my face towards the hillside that rises highest towards heaven from the water.

The sunlight, that flamed red behind us, was broken, in front of me, in that shape in which I blocked its rays. I turned aside from fear of being abandoned, seeing the earth darkened, only in front of me. But my comforter began speaking to me, turning straight round: ‘Why so mistrustful? Do you think you are not with me, or that I do not guide you?’

It is already evening, there, where the body with which I cast a shadow, lies buried: Naples has it, and it was taken from Brindisi.

Now, if no shadow goes before me, do not wonder at that, any more than at the heavenly spheres, where one does not hide the light of any other. That power, that does not will that its workings should be revealed to us, disposes bodies such as these to suffer torments, fire and ice. He is foolish who hopes that our reason may journey on the infinite road, that one substance in three persons owns. Stay, content, human race, with the *'what'*: since if you had been able to understand it all, there would have been no need for [Mary](#) to give birth: and you have seen the fruitless desire, granted to them as an eternal sorrow, of those whose desire would have been quenched, I mean [Aristotle](#), [Plato](#), and many more.' And here he bent his head,

and said nothing more: remaining troubled.

Purgatorio Canto III:46-72 The Excommunicated

Meanwhile we reached the mountain's foot: there we found the cliff was so steep that even nimble feet would be useless. The most desolate, and the most solitary track, between Lerici and Turbia, in Liguria, is a free and easy stair compared to that. My Master, halting his feet, said: 'Now, who knows which way the cliff slopes, so that he who goes without wings, may climb?' And while he kept his eyes downwards, searching out the way in his mind, and while I was gazing up, across the rocks, a crowd of spirits, appeared to me, on the



left, who moved their feet towards us, but did not seem to, they came so slowly.

I said: 'Master, raise your eyes, behold one there who will give us advice, if you cannot give it yourself.' He looked at them, and with a joyful face, answered: 'Let us go there, since they come slowly, and confirm your hopes, kind son.' That crowd were still as far off, after a thousand paces of ours I mean, as a good thrower would reach, with a stone, from the hand, when they all pressed close to the solid rock of the high cliff, and stood, motionless together, as people stop to look around, who travel in fear.

Purgatorio Canto III:73-102 They are troubled by Dante's shadow

Virgil began: 'O spirits, who ended well, already chosen: by the same peace that, I believe, is awaited by you all, tell us where the mountain slopes allow us to go upwards, since lost time troubles those most, who know most.' As sheep come out of their pen, in ones, twos, and threes, and others stand timidly, with eyes and nose towards the ground, and what the first does, the others also do, huddling to her if she stands still, foolish and quiet, and not knowing why, so I saw, then, the head of that fortunate flock, of modest aspect, and dignified movement, make a move to come forward.

When those in front saw the light on the hillside, broken, on my right, by my shadow, falling from me as far as the rock, they stopped, and drew back, a little: and all the others that came after them, did the same, not understanding why. My Master said: ‘Without your asking, I admit, to you, that this is a human body that you see, by which the sunlight is broken on the ground. Do not wonder, but believe, that he does not try to climb this wall, without the help of power that comes from Heaven.’ And the worthy people said: ‘Turn, then, and go in front of us,’ making a gesture with the backs of their hands.

Purgatorio Canto III:103-145
Manfred

And one of them began to speak: ‘You, whoever you are, turn your face, as we go, and think if you ever saw me over there.’ I turned towards him, and looked hard: he was blond and handsome, and of noble aspect, but a blow had split one of his eyebrows.

When I had denied, humbly, ever seeing him, he said: ‘Now look’, and he showed me a wound at the top of his chest. Then, smiling, he said: ‘I am Manfred, grandson of the Empress Constance: and I beg you, when you return, go to my lovely daughter, Costanza, mother of James and Frederick, Sicily’s and Aragon’s pride, and tell her this truth, if things are said differently there. After my body had been pierced, by two mortal wounds, I rendered my spirit to him, who

pardons, willingly. My sins were terrible, but infinite goodness has such a wide embrace it accepts all those who turn to it. If the [Bishop of Cozenza](#), who was set on by [Clement](#) to hound me, had read that page of God's rightly, the bones of my corpse would still be at the bridgehead, by Benevento, under the guardianship of the heavy cairn.

Now, the rain bathes them, and the wind moves them, beyond the kingdom, along the River Verde, where he carried them, *a lume spento*, with quenched tapers. But no one is so lost by the malediction, of that excommunication, that eternal love may not turn back to him, as long as hope is green. It is true that those who die, disobedient to the Holy Church, even though they repent at the end, must remain

outside this bank for thirty times the duration of their life of insolence, unless such decree is shortened by the prayers of the good.

See now, if you can give me delight, by telling my good Costanza how you saw me, and also of my ban, since much benefit arises, here, through the prayers of those who are still over there.

Purgatorio Canto IV:1-18 The unity of the soul

When the soul is wholly centred, on one of our senses, because of some pleasure or pain, that it comprehends, it seems that it pays no attention to its other powers, and this contradicts [Plato](#)'s error, that has it, that one soul is kindled on another, inside us. So, when

something is seen or heard, that holds the soul's attention strongly fixed, time vanishes and man is unaware of it, since one power is that which notices time, and another that which occupies the entire soul: the former is as if constrained, the latter free.

I had a genuine experience of this, while listening to that spirit and marvelling, since the sun had climbed fully fifty degrees, and I had not noticed it, when we came to where those souls, with a single voice, cried out to us: 'Here is what you wanted.'

Purgatorio Canto IV:19-51 The narrow path.

When the grape is ripening, the peasant often hedges up a larger

opening, with a little forkful of thorns, than the gap through which my leader climbed, and I behind him, two alone, after the group had parted from us. You can walk at Sanleo, near Urbino, and descend to Noli, near Savone: you can climb Mount Bismantova, south of Reggio, up to the summit, on foot: but here a man had to fly: I mean with the feathers and swift wings of great desire, behind that leader, who gave me hope, and made himself a light.

We were climbing inside a rock gully, and the cliff pressed against us on either side, and the ground under us needed hands as well as feet. Once we were on the upper edge of the high wall, out on the open hillside, I said: 'My Master, which way should we go?' And he to me: 'Do not let your steps drift

downward, always win your way, up the mountain, behind me, until some wise escort appears to us.'

The summit was so high it was beyond my sight, and the slope far steeper than the forty-five degrees a line from mid-quadrant makes with the circle's radius. I felt weary, and began to say: 'O sweet father, turn and see how I am left behind if you do not stop.' He said: 'My son, make yourself reach there,' showing me a terrace, a little higher up, that goes round the whole mountain, on that side. His words spurred me on, greatly, and I forced myself on, so far, creeping after him, that the ledge was beneath my feet.

Purgatorio Canto IV:52-87 The sun's arc south of the equator

There we both sat down, turning towards the east, from which we had climbed: since it often cheers men to look back. I first fixed my eyes on the shore below, then raised them to the sun, and wondered at the fact that it struck us on the left side. The poet saw clearly that I was totally amazed at that chariot of light, rising between us, and the north. At which he said to me: ‘If that mirror, the sun, that reflects the light, from above, downwards, were in Castor and Pollux, the Gemini, you would see the Zodiac, glowing round him, circle still closer to the Bears, unless it wandered from its ancient track.

If you wish the power to see that, for yourself, imagine Mount Zion, at Jerusalem, and this Mountain, placed on the globe so that both

have the same horizon, but are in opposite hemispheres: by which you can see, if your intellect understands quite clearly, that the sun's path, that [Phaëthon](#), sadly, did not know how to follow, has to pass to the north here, when it passes Zion on the south.'

I said: 'Certainly, Master, I never saw as clearly as I now discern, there, where my mind seemed at fault, that the median circle of the heavenly motion, that is called the Equator in one of the sciences, and always lies between the summer and the winter solstice, is as far north here, for the reason you say, as the Hebrews saw it, towards the hot countries.

But if it please you, I would like to know, willingly, how far we have

to go, since the hillside rises higher than my eyes can reach.’

Purgatorio Canto IV:88-139
Belacqua

And he to me: ‘This mountain is such, that it is always troublesome at the start, below, but the more one climbs up, the less it wearies. So, you will feel at the end of this track, when it will seem so pleasant to you, that the ascent is as easy as going downstream, in a boat. Hope to rest your weariness there. I answer you no more, and this I know is true.’

And when he had his say, a voice sounded nearby: ‘Perhaps, before then, you may have need to sit.’ At the sound of it, we each turned round, and saw a great mass of rock

on the left, that neither he nor I had noticed before. We drew near it: and there were people lounging in the shade, behind the crag, just as one settles oneself to rest, out of laziness. And one of them, who seemed weary to me, was sitting and clasping his knees, holding his head down low, between them.

I said: ‘O my sweet sire, set your eyes on that one, who appears lazier than if Sloth were his sister.’ Then he turned to us, and listened, only lifting his face above his thigh, and said: ‘Now go on up, you who are so steadfast.’ Then I knew who he was, and that effort, which still constrained my breath a little, did not prevent me going up to him, and, when I had reached him, he hardly lifted his head, to say: ‘Have you truly understood why the sun

drives his chariot to the left?’ His indolent actions and the brief words, moved me to smile a little: then I began: ‘[Belacqua](#), I do not grieve for you now: but tell me why you are sitting here? Are you waiting for a guide, or have you merely resumed your former habit?’

And he: ‘Brother, what use is it to climb? God’s winged Angel, who sits at the gate, will not let me pass through to the torments. First the sky must revolve, round me, outside, for as long a time as it did in my life: because I delayed my sighs of healing repentance to the end: unless, before then, some prayer aids me, that might rise from a heart that lives in grace: what is the rest worth, that is not heard in Heaven?’ And the poet was already climbing, in front of me, saying:



‘Come on, now, you see the sun, touches the zenith and night’s feet have already run from the banks of the Ganges to Morocco.’

Purgatorio Canto V:1-63 The Late-Repentant

I had already parted from those shadows, and was following my leader’s footsteps, when someone, behind me, pointing his finger, called out: ‘See, the light does not seem to shine, on the left of him, below, and he seems to carry himself like a living man.’ I turned my eyes, at the sound of these words, and saw them all gazing in wonder, at me alone, at me alone and at the broken sunlight.

My Master said: ‘Why is your mind so ensnared that you slacken

pace? What does it matter to you what they whisper here? Follow me close behind, and let the people talk: stand like a steady tower, that never shakes at the top, in the blasts of wind: since the man, in whom thought rises on thought, sets himself back, because the force of the one weakens the other.’ What could I answer, except: ‘I come?’ This I said, blushing a little, with that colour that often makes someone worthy of being pardoned.

And, across the mountain slope, meanwhile, a crowd, in front of us, a little, came, chanting the *Miserere*, alternately, verse by verse. When they saw I allowed no passage to the sun’s rays because of my body, they changed their chant to a long, hoarse ‘Oh!’: and two of them ran to meet us as messengers and demanded:

‘Make us wise to your state.’ And my Master said: ‘You can go back, and tell those who sent you, that this man’s body is truly flesh. If they stopped at seeing his shadow, as I think, that answer is enough: let them honour him, and he may be precious to them.’

I never saw burning mists at fall of night, or August clouds at sunset split the bright sky, so quickly, but they in less time, returned, up the slope, and arrived there while the others wheeled round us, like a troop of cavalry riding with loosened reins. The poet said: ‘This crowd that presses us is large, and they come to beg you, but go straight on, and listen while you go.’

They came, crying: ‘O spirit, who goes to joy, with the limbs you were born with, pause your steps a

while. Look and see if you ever knew one of us, so that you can bear news of him, over there: oh, why are you leaving?: oh, why do you not stay? We were all killed by violence, and were sinners till the last hour: then light from Heaven warned us, so that, repenting and forgiving, we left life reconciled with God, who fills us with desire to see him.’

And I: ‘However much I gaze at your faces, I recognise no one: but if I can do anything to please you, spirits born for happiness, speak, and I will do it, for the sake of that peace, which makes me chase after it, from world to world, following the steps of such a guide.’

Purgatorio Canto V:64-84

Jacopo del Cassero

And one began to speak: ‘Each of us trusts in your good offices, without your oath, if only lack of power does not thwart your will.

So, I, who merely speak before others do, beg you to be gracious to me, in your prayers, at Fano, if ever you see that country again, that lies between Romagna, and Charles the Second’s Naples, so that the good may be adored through me, and I can purge myself of grave offence. I sprang from there, but the deep wounds from which the blood flowed, that bathed my life, were dealt me in the embrace of Paduans, those Antenori, there, where I thought that I was safest. Azzo of Este had it done, he who

held a greater anger against me, than justice merited.

Though, if I had fled towards La Mira, when I was surprised at Oriaco, I would still be over there, where men breathe. I ran to the marshes, and the reeds, and mire, swamped me so that I fell, and there I saw a pool grow on the ground, from my veins.’

Purgatorio Canto V:85-129
Buonconte da Montefeltro

Then another said: Oh, so the desire might be satisfied, that draws you up the high mountain, aid mine with kind pity. I was of Montefeltro, I am Buonconte: Giovanna has no care for me, nor the others, so I go among these, with bowed head.’ And I to him: ‘What violence or

mischance made you wander so far from Campaldino, that your place of burial was never known?’ He replied: ‘Oh, at the foot of Casentino, a stream crosses it, called the Archiano, that rises in the Apennines, above the Monastery of Camoldoli. There, at Bibbiena, where its name is lost in the Arno, I arrived, pierced in the throat, fleeing on foot, and bloodying the plain.

There I lost vision, and ended my words on [Mary](#)’s name, and there I fell, and only my flesh was left. I will speak truly, and do you repeat it among the living: the Angel of God took me and one from Hell cried: ‘O you from Heaven, why do you rob me? You may carry off the eternal part of this man from here, because of one little teardrop of repentance, that snatches him from



me, but I will deal differently with the other part.”

You well know how damp vapour collects in the air, which turns to water again, when it rises where the cold condenses it. He joined that evil will, which only seeks evil, with intelligence, and stirred the wind, and fog, by the power his nature gives him. Then, when day was done, he covered the valley, from Pratomagno to the great Apennine chain, with mist, and made the sky above it so heavy, that the saturated air turned to water: rain fell, and what the earth did not absorb, came to the fosses: and, as it merged into vast streams, it ran with such speed, towards the royal river, that nothing held it back.

The raging Archiano found my body, near its mouth, and swept it

into the Arno, and loosed the cross that my arms made on my chest, when pain overcame me. It rolled me along its banks and through the depths, then covered me, and closed me in its spoil.’

Purgatorio Canto V:130-136 Pia da Tolomei

A third spirit, followed on the second: ‘Ah, when you return to the world, and are rested after your long journey, remember me who am La Pia: Siena made me: Maremma undid me: he knows, who having first pledged himself to me, wed me with his ring.’

Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24 The spirits crowd round

When the gambling game breaks up, the one who loses stays there grieving, repeating the throws, saddened by experience: the crowd all follow the winner: some go in front, some snatch at him from behind, or, at his side, recall themselves to his mind. He does not stop, and attends to this one and that one. Those, to whom he stretches out his hand, cease pressing on him: and so he saves himself from the crush. Such was I in that dense throng, turning my face towards them, now here, now there, and freeing myself from them by promises.

There was [Benincasa](#), the Aretine, who met his death by [Ghin di Tacco's](#) ruthless weapons, and the other Aretine,

Guccio de' Tarlati, who was drowned as he ran in pursuit at Campaldino. Federigo Novello was there, praying with outstretched hands, and Farinata Scornigiani, he of Pisa, whose father Marzucco showed such fortitude on his behalf.

I saw Count Orso: and the spirit severed from its body through envy and hatred, and not for any sin committed, or so it said, Pierre de la Brosse, I mean. And here let Lady Mary of Brabant take note, while she is still on earth, so that she does not end with the viler crowd, for it.

Purgatorio Canto VI 25-48 Virgil on the efficacy of prayer

When I was free of all those shades, whose only prayer was that others might pray, so that their path

to blessedness might be quickened, I began: ‘O, you who are a light to me, it seems that you deny, in a certain passage of [your Aeneid](#), that prayer can alter Heaven’s decree: and yet these people pray only for this. Can it be they hope in vain? Or is your meaning not clear to me?’

And he to me: ‘My writing is clear, and, if you think about it rationally, their hopes are not deceptive, since the nobility of justice is not lessened because a moment of love’s fire discharges the debt each one here owes, and in my text, where I affirmed otherwise, faults could not be rectified by prayer, because prayer, then, was divorced from God.

Truly, you must not suffer such deep anxiety, unless she tells you otherwise, she, who will be the

light, linking truth to intellect. I am not sure you understand: I speak of [Beatrice](#). You will see her, above, on this mountain's summit, smiling, blessed.

Purgatorio Canto VI:49-75
Sordello

And I said: 'My lord, let us go with greater speed, since I am already less weary than before, and look the hillside [casts a shadow](#) now.' He replied: 'We will go forward with this day, as far as we still can: but the facts are other than you think. Before you are on the summit, you will see the sun return, that is hidden now by the slope such that you do not break his light.

But, there, see, a soul, set solitary, alone, gazes at us: it will

show us the quickest way.’ We reached him. O Lombard spirit, how haughty and scornful, you were, how majestic and considered in your manner! He said nothing to us, but allowed us to go by, only watching, like a couchant lion. But Virgil drew towards him, begging him to show us the best ascent: though the spirit did not answer his request, but asked us about our country and our life.

And the gentle guide began: ‘Mantua,’... and the spirit all pre-occupied with self, surged towards him from the place where it first was, saying: ‘O Mantuan, I am [Sordello](#), of your city.’ And the one embraced the other.

Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151
Dante's speech on the sad state of Italy

O Italy, you slave, you inn of grief, ship without helmsman in a might tempest, mistress, not of provinces, but of a brothel! That gentle spirit was quick, then, to greet his fellow-citizen, at the mere mention of the sweet name of his city, yet, now, the living do not live there without conflict, and, of those, that one wall and one moat shuts in, one rends the other.

Wretched country, search the shores of your coastline, and then gaze into your heart, to see if any part of you is at peace. What use is it for Justinian to have renewed, the law, the bridle, if the saddle is empty? The shame would be less if

it were not for that. Ah, race, that should be obedient, and let [Caesar](#) occupy the saddle, if only you understood what God has told you! See how vicious this creature has become, through not being corrected by his spurs, since he has set his hand to the bridle. O

[Albert of Germany](#), you abandon her, she, who has become wild and wanton, you, who should straddle her saddle-bow: may just judgement fall on your blood, from the stars, and let it be strange and obvious, so that your successor may learn to fear it, since you and your father, held back by greed, over there, have allowed the garden of the Empire to become a wasteland.

Careless man, come and look at the [Montagues](#) and [Capulets](#), the [Monaldi](#) and [Filippeschi](#): those who

are already saddened, and those who fear to be. Come, cruel one, come and see the oppression of your nobles, and tend their sores, and you will see how secure Santafiora of the [Aldobrandeschi](#) is. Come and see your Rome, who mourns, widowed and alone, crying night and day: ‘My Caesar, why do you not keep me company?’ Come and see how your people love each other: and if pity for us does not stir you, come, and be ashamed, for the sake of your fame.

And, if it is allowed for me to say, [O highest Jupiter](#), who was crucified on earth for us, are your just eyes turned elsewhere, or are you preparing some new good, that is completely hidden from our sight? For the cities of Italy are full of tyrants, and every peasant, that

comes to take sides, becomes a [Marcellus](#), against the Empire.

My Florence, you may well rejoice at this digression, which does not affect you, thanks to your populace that reasons so clearly. Many people have justice in their hearts, but they let it fly slowly, since it does not come to the bow without much counsel: yet your people have it always at their lips. Many people refuse public office: but your people answer eagerly without being called, and cry: 'I bend to the task.'

Now be glad, since you have good reason for it: you who are rich, at peace, full of wisdom. If I speak truly, the fact will not belie it. Athens and Sparta that framed the ancient laws, and were so rich in civic arts, gave a mere hint of how

to live well, compared to you, who makes such subtle provision that what you spin in October does not last till mid-November. How often in the time you remember, you have altered laws, money, offices and customs, and renewed you limbs! And if you consider carefully, and see clearly, you will see yourself like the sick patient, who finds no rest on the bed of down, but by twisting about, escapes her pain.

Purgatorio Canto VII:1-39 Virgil declares himself to Sordello

After the noble and joyful greetings had been exchanged three or four times, Sordello drew himself back and said: ‘Who are you?’ My leader answered, then: ‘Before those spirits worthy to climb to God were

turned towards this Mount, my bones had been buried by [Octavian](#). I am Virgil, and I lost Heaven for no other sin than for not having faith.

Sordello seemed like someone who suddenly sees something, in front of him, that he marvels at, and believes, and does not believe, saying: ‘It is, is not,’ and he bent his forehead, and turned back, humbly, towards my guide, and embraced him as the inferior person does. He said: ‘O Glory of Latin, through whom our language showed its power, O eternal praise of the place from which I sprang, what merit or favour will you show me? If I am worthy to hear your words, tell me if you come from Hell, and from what circle.’

He answered him: ‘I came here, through all the circles of the



mournful kingdom. Virtue from Heaven moved me, and with that I come. Not for the done, but for the undone, I lost the vision of the high Sun, you seek, and who was known too late by me. Down there, there is a place not saddened by torment, but only darkness, where the grief does not sound as moaning, only sighs. There, I am, with the innocent babes, who were bitten by the teeth of death, before they were baptised and exempt from human sin. There I am, with those who did not clothe themselves with the three holy virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, but without sin, knew the others and followed them all.

But if you know, and can, give us some indication of how we might come most quickly to the place

where Purgatory has its true beginning.’

Purgatorio Canto VII:40-63
Sordello explains the rules for ascent

He answered: ‘No fixed place is set for us: I am allowed to go up and round: I act as guide, beside you, as far as I may go. But see now how [the day is declining](#), and we cannot climb by night, therefore it would be well to think of a good place to rest. Here are some spirits, on the right, apart: if you allow me I will take you to them, and they will be known to you, not without joy.’

Virgil replied: ‘How is that? Would he who wished to climb by night be prevented by others, or would he not climb because he

could not?’ And the good Sordello drew his finger along the ground, saying: ‘See, you could not even cross this line after sunset, not because anything other than the darkness of night hinders you from going upwards, which obstructs the will through the will’s powerlessness. Truly, you could return downwards at night, and walk, straying, along the mountainside while the horizon shuts up the day.’

Then my lord, as if wondering, said: ‘Take us, then, where you say we might have joy in resting.’

Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136 The Valley of the Negligent Rulers

We had gone a short distance, when I saw that the mountain was

scooped out, in the way that valleys are hollowed out here. The shade said: 'We will go there, where the mountainside makes a cradle of itself, and wait for the new day. The winding track, that led us to the side of the hollow, there where the valley's rim more than half-fades out, was neither steep nor flat. Gold and fine silver; crimson and white cloth; bright, clear Indian wood; freshly mined emerald at the moment it is split; would all be surpassed in colour by the grass and flowers, set inside that fold of ground, as the lesser is surpassed, by the greater.

Not only had Nature painted there, but had made there, one unknown and indefinable perfume, from the sweetness of a thousand scents. There I saw souls, sitting

among the grass and flowers, singing *Salve Regina*, who could not be seen from outside, because of the valley's depth.

The Mantuan, who had led us aside, began to speak: 'Do not wish me to lead you among them, before the little sun sinks to its nest. You will see the faces and actions of them better from this terrace, than if received among them down in the valley.

He who sits highest, and has the aspect of having left undone what he should have done, and does not move his lips to the others' singing, was the Emperor Rudolph, who might have healed the wounds that meant Italy's death, so that she is helped, too late, by another. The next, who seems to be comforting him, ruled Bohemia, the land where

the water rises that the Moldau carries down to the Elbe, and the Elbe to the sea. He was named [Ottocar](#), and, even in his swaddling clothes, was far better than bearded [Wenceslas](#) his son, whom lust and sloth consume,.

And that snub-nosed one, Philip the [Third](#), who seems so deep in counsel with, [Henry of Navarre](#), who has so kindly a manner, died fleeing, and withering the lily: look at how he strikes his chest. See, the other, sighing, has made a rest for his cheek with the palm of his hand. They are the father and the father-in-law of [Philip the Fair](#), the plague of France: they know his wicked and sordid life, and from that the grief comes that so pierces them.

He who seems so stout of limb, [Peter of Aragon](#), who blends his

singing with Charles of Anjou, him of the prominent nose, was cinctured with the cord of every virtue. And if the young man, who sits behind him, had remained king after him, the worth would have flowed from vessel to vessel: which may not be said of his other heirs. James and Frederick have the kingdoms: but no one has the better heritage. Human worth rarely increases through its branches: and this He wills who creates it, so that it may be asked for of him.

My words apply to Charles, the large-nosed one, as well, no less than to Peter the other, who sings with him: because of his son Apulia and Provence now groan. So is that plant more degenerate in its seed, by as much as Constance, Peter's wife, still boasts of her husband, more

than [Beatrice](#) or [Margaret](#) do of the other.

See the king of the simple life, sitting there alone, [Henry the Third](#) of England: he had a better increase in his branches. That one, looking up, who humbles himself lower among them, is William the [Marquis](#) of Montferrat, because of whom the town of Alessandria, in Piedmont, and its war, made Montferrat, and Canavese, weep.

Purgatorio Canto VIII:1-45 The Two Angels descend

[It was now that hour](#) which makes the thoughts, of those who voyage, turn back, and melts their hearts, on the day when they have said goodbye to their sweet friends; and which pierces the new pilgrim

with love, when he hears the distant chimes, that seem to mourn the dying day; when I began to neglect my sense of hearing, and to gaze, at one of the spirits, who rose, and begged a hearing with his hand.

He joined his palms, and raised them, fixing his eyes on the east, as though saying, to God: 'I care for nothing else.' '[Te lucis ante,](#)' issued so devotedly from his mouth, and with such sweet notes, that it rapt me from my thoughts. And then the others accompanied him through the whole hymn, sweetly and devoutly, with their eyes locked on the eternal spheres.

Reader, focus your eyes here on the truth, since the veil is now so thin, that surely to pass within is easy. I saw that noble troop gaze upwards after that, silently, pale and

humble, as if in hope: and I saw two Angels come out from the heights, and descend with two burning swords, that were cut short, and blunted. Their clothes were green as tender newborn leaves, trailing behind, stirred and fanned, by their green wings.

One came to rest a little way above us, and the other descended on the opposite bank, so that the people were between them. I saw their blonde hair, clearly: but the eye was dazzled, by their faces, like a sense confounded by excess. Sordello said: ‘Both come from [Mary](#)’s breast, to guard the valley, because of the serpent that will now come.’ At which I, who did not know which way it would come, turned, and, icy cold, placed myself beside the trusted shoulders. And

Sordello again said: ‘Now we go into the valley, among the great souls, and we will talk with them: it will be a great joy to them to see you.

Purgatorio Canto VIII:46-84 Nino de’ Visconti

I only think I went down three paces, and was down, and saw one who gazed at me, solely, as though he wished to know who I was.

It was now the time when the air was darkening, but not so dark that was what hidden from both our eyes before, now grew clear. He approached me, and I said to him: ‘Noble Judge Nino, how it pleased me when I knew you, and knew that you were not among the damned!

No kind greeting was left unsaid between us: then he asked: ‘How long is it since you came, over the distant waters, to the foot of the Mount? I said: ‘O, I came from the depths of the sad regions this morning, and I am in my first life, though by this journey I hope to gain the other.’

And when they heard my answer, Sordello and he shrank back, like people who are suddenly bewildered. One turned to Virgil, and the other to someone seated there, saying: ‘Conrad, rise: come and see what God, in his grace, has willed.’ Then, turning to me: ‘By that singular grace, you owe to him who hides his first cause so deep, there is no path to it, tell my [Giovanna](#), when you are over the wide waters, to pray for me, there,

where the innocent are heard. I do not think her mother, [Beatrice](#), still loves me, since she has changed her widow's weeds, which, unhappily, she will long for once again. In her, it is easily known, how long the fire of love endures, in woman, if sight and touch do not relight it, often. The viper that [Galeazzo](#), the Milanese, emblazons on his shield, will not gain her as fair a tomb, as my Pisan cockerel would have done.' So he spoke, his face stamped with the mark of that righteous fervour, that with due reason, burns in the breast.

Purgatorio Canto VIII:85-108
The Serpent

My eager eyes were turned towards Heaven again, there, where the stars are slowest, like a wheel

close to the axle, and my leader said: ‘Son, what do you stare at, up there?’ And I to him: ‘At those three flames that the whole pole here is burning with.’ And he to me: ‘The four bright stars, you saw this morning, are low, on the other side, and these have risen where they were.’

As he was speaking, Sordello drew him towards himself, saying: ‘Look, there is our enemy,’ and pointed his finger, so that he would look in that direction. There was a snake, on that side, where the little valley has no barrier, perhaps such a one as gave Eve the bitter fruit. The evil reptile slid through the grass and flowers, now and again, twisting its head towards its tail, licking, like a beast grooming itself.



I did not see, and so I cannot tell, how the celestial falcons rose: but I saw both, clearly, in flight. Hearing the green wings cutting the air, the serpent fled, and the Angels wheeled round, flying as one, back to their places.

Purgatorio Canto VIII:109-139
Conrad Malaspina

The shade who had drawn close to the Judge when he called, was not freed from gazing at me, for even a moment, during all that threat. He began: ‘May that lamp that leads you higher, find as much fuel, in your will, as is needed to reach the enamelled summit: if you know true news of Valdimagra, or its region, tell it to me, who was once mighty, there. I was called [Conrad](#)

Malaspina: not the elder, but descended from him: I had that love for my own, that here is purified.’

I said to him: ‘O, I have never been through your lands, but where do men live throughout Europe, to whom they are not known? The fame that honours your house, proclaims its lords abroad, and proclaims their country, so that he, who has never been there, knows it. And, as I pray that I may go above, I swear to you, that your honoured race does not impair the glory of the coffer and the sword. Nature and custom grant it such privilege, that it alone walks rightly, and scorns the evil way, for all that a guilty head twists the world.’

And he: ‘Now go, since the sun will not rest, seven times, in Aries, that couch that the Ram covers, and

straddles with all four feet, before this courteous opinion is fixed in your brain, with a deeper pinning than other men's words, if the course of justice is not halted.'

Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33 Dante dreams he is clasped by an Eagle

Now the moon's aurora, mistress of ancient Tithonus, was whitening at the eastern terrace, free of her lover's arms; her forehead glittering with jewels, set in the form of the chill creature that stings people with its tail; and, where we were, Night had climbed two of the steps by which she mounts, and the third was already furling its wings; when I who had in me something of the old Adam, overcome by sleep, sank

down on the grass, where all five of us were already seated.

At the hour, near dawn, when [the swallow](#) begins her sad songs, in memory, perhaps, of her former pain, and when the mind is almost prophetic, more of a wanderer from the body, and less imprisoned by thought, I imagined I saw an eagle, [in a dream](#), poised in the sky, on outspread wings, with golden plumage, and intent to swoop. And I seemed to be there when [Ganymede](#) left his own, snatched up by Jupiter, to the high senate.

I thought, inwardly: ‘Perhaps, through custom, he only strikes here, and perhaps he disdains to carry anyone away in his talons from any other place.’ Then it seemed to me, that wheeling for a while, terrible as lightning, he



descended, and snatched me upwards, as far as the sphere of fire. There he and I seemed to burn, and the flames of vision so scorched me, that my sleep was broken.

Purgatorio Canto IX:34-63 Virgil explains

Achilles was no less startled, turning his waking eyes about, not knowing where he was, when Thetis, his mother, carried him away, in her arms, as he slept, from Chiron to the island of Scyros, the place from which the Greeks, later, made him go to the Trojan war, than I was as soon as sleep had left my face: and I grew pale, like a man chilled with fear. My comforter was the only one with me, and the sun was already more than two hours

high, and my eyes were turned towards the sea.

My lord said: 'Have no fear, be assured, since we are in a good position: do not shrink back, but put out all your strength. You have now reached Purgatory: there, see, the cliff that circles it: see the entrance, there, where it seems cleft.

Before, in the dawn, that precedes the day, when your spirit was asleep in you, among the flowers, with which it is all beautified below, a Lady came, and said: I am [Lucia](#): Let me take this man, who sleeps, and I will help him on his way.' Sordello was left behind with the other noble forms. She took you, and came on upwards, as day brightened, and I followed in her track. Here she placed you, and her lovely eyes first

showed me that open passage: then she, and sleep, together, vanished.’

Purgatorio Canto IX:64-105 The Angel at the Gate of Purgatory

I felt changed, as a man in fear does who is reassured, and who exchanges comfort for fear, when the truth is revealed to him. When my leader saw me freed from anxiety, he moved up by the cliff, and I followed, towards the heights.

Reader, you know, clearly, that I must enrich my theme, so do not wonder if I support it with greater art. We drew close, and were at a point, just there where a break, like a fissure, that divides the cliff, first appeared to me. I saw a gate, and three steps, of various colours, below it, to reach it, and a keeper,

who as yet said nothing. And as I looked closer, there, I saw that, seated as he was on the top step, there was that in his face I could not endure. He held a naked blade in his hand, that reflected the sun's rays towards us, so that I turned my eyes towards it, often, but in vain.

He began to speak: 'Say, what you want, from where you stand: where is your escort? Be careful that coming up here does not harm you!' My master answered: 'A heavenly Lady, who has good knowledge of these things, said to us, just now: 'Go there, that is the gate.' 'And may she quicken your steps towards the good,' the courteous doorkeeper began again: 'come then, towards our stair.'

Where we came, the first step was of white marble, so smooth and

polished that I was reflected there, as I appear. The second was darker than a dark blue-grey, of a rough, calcined stone, cracked in its length and breadth. The third, which is massed above them, seemed like red porphyry to me, fiery as blood spurting from an artery. God's Angel kept both his feet on this, seated at the threshold, which seemed, to me, to be of adamantine stone.

Purgatorio Canto IX:106-145 The Angel opens the Gate

My guide led me, willingly, up the three steps, saying: 'Ask humbly for the bolt to be drawn.' I flung myself, devoutly, at the sacred feet: I begged him for pity's sake to open

the gate to me: but first I struck myself three times on the breast.

He inscribed seven letter P's on my forehead, with the tip of his sword, and said: 'Cleanse these wounds when you are inside.' Ashes, or dry earth, would be at one with the colour of his robe, and he drew two keys out from under it. One was of gold, and the other of silver: he did that to the gate that satisfied me, first with the white, and then the yellow. He said: 'Whenever one of these keys fails, so that it does not turn in the lock correctly, the way is not open. The one is more precious, but the other needs great skill and intellect, before it works, since it is the one that unties the knot. I hold them, for Peter, and he told me to err by opening it, rather than keeping it

locked, if people humbled themselves at my feet.’

Then he pushed the door of the sacred gateway, saying: ‘Enter, but I let you know, that whoever looks behind, returns outside, again.’ The doors of the Tarpeian treasury, did not groan as harshly, or as much, when good [Metellus](#) was dragged from them, so that it remained poor afterwards, as the pivots of that sacred door, which are of strong and ringing metal, when they were turned in their sockets.

I turned, listening for a first sound, and seemed to hear [*Te Deum Laudamus*](#), in a voice intermingled with sweet music. What I heard gave me just the kind of feeling we receive when people sing to the accompaniment of an

organ, when the words are now clear, and now lost.

Purgatorio Canto X:1-45 The First Terrace: The Frieze: The Annunciation

When we were beyond the threshold of the gate, which the soul's worse love neglects, making the crooked way seem straight instead, I heard it close again, with a ringing sound: but if I had turned my eyes towards it, what could have excused the fault?

We climbed through a broken rock, which was moving on this side and on that, like a wave that ebbs and flows. My leader began: 'Here we must use a little skill, in keeping near, now here, now there, to the side that is receding' And this made

our steps so slow that the wandering circle of the moon regained its bed to sink again to rest, before we were out of that needle's eye.

But when we were free, and in the open, above, where the Mount is set back, I, being weary, and both of us uncertain of our way, we stood still, on a level space, more lonely than a road through a desert. The length of three human bodies would span it, from its brink where it borders the void, to the foot of the high bank that ascends sheer. And this terrace appeared to me like that, as far as my eye could wing in flight, now to the left, and then to the right.

Our feet had not yet moved along it, when I saw that the encircling cliff, which, being vertical, lacked any means of ascent, was pure white

marble, and beautified with friezes, so that not merely Polycletus, but Nature also, would be put to shame by it.

In front of us, so vividly sculpted, in a gentle attitude, that it did not seem a dumb image, the Angel Gabriel, appeared, who came to earth, with the annunciation of that peace, wept for, in vain, for so many years, that opened Heaven to us, after the long exile. You would have sworn he was saying: ‘*Ave*,’ since She was fashioned there, who turned the key to open the supreme Love. And these words were imprinted in her aspect, as clearly as a figure stamped in wax, *Ecce ancilla Dei*: behold the servant of God.

Purgatorio Canto X:46-72 King David dancing before the Ark

‘Do not keep your attention on one place alone’ said the sweet master, who had me on that side of him where the heart is: at which I moved my eyes about, and saw another story set in the rock, behind Mary, on the side where he was, who urged me onwards.

There, on the very marble, the cart and oxen were engraved, pulling the sacred Ark of the Covenant, which makes us fear, by [Uzzah](#)’s example, an office not committed to us. People appeared in front, and the whole crowd, divided into seven choirs, made one of my senses say ‘No’ they do not sing,’ another say ‘Yes, they do.’ Similarly, eyes and nose disagreed,

between yes and no, over the smoke of incense depicted there.

There [King David](#), the humble Psalmist, went, dancing, girt up, in front of the blessed tabernacle: and he was, in that moment, more, and less, than King. [Michal](#), [Saul's](#) daughter, was figured opposite, looking on: a woman sad and scornful. I moved my feet from the place where I stood, to look closely at another story, which shone white in front of me, beyond Michal.

Purgatorio Canto X:73-96 The Emperor Trajan

There the high glory of the Roman prince was retold whose worth moved [Gregory](#) to intercession, and to great victory: I speak of the Emperor [Trajan](#): and at

his bridle was a poor widow, in the attitude of tearfulness and grief. A crowd, of horsemen, trampling, appeared round him, and the gold eagles, above him, moved visibly in the wind. The poor woman, among all these, seemed to say: 'My lord, give me vengeance for my son who was killed, at which my heart is pierced.' And Trajan seemed to answer her: 'Now, wait, till I return.' And she, like a person, urgent with sorrow: 'My lord, what if you do not return?' And he: 'One who will be in place of me will do it.' And she: 'What merit will another's good deed be to you, if you forget your own?' At which he said: 'Now be comforted, since I must fulfil my duty before I go: justice wills it, and pity holds me here.'

He who never sees anything unfamiliar to him, made this speech visible, which is new to us, because it is not found here.

Purgatorio Canto X:97-139 The Proud and their Punishment

While I was joying in seeing the images, of such great humility, precious to look at, for their Maker's sake, the poet murmured: 'See, here, many people, but their steps are few: they will send us on to the high stairs.' My eyes, that were intent on gazing to find new things, willingly, were not slow in turning towards him.

Reader, I would not wish you to be scared away from a good intention, by hearing how God wills that the debt is paid. Pay no

attention to the form of the suffering: think of what follows it: think that, at worst, it cannot last beyond the great Judgement.

I began: 'Master, those whom I see coming towards us do not seem like persons, but I do not know what they look like, my sight errs so much.' And he to me: 'The heavy weight of their punishment, doubles them to the ground, so that my eyes, at first, were troubled by them. But look steadily there, and disentangle with your sight what is coming beneath those stones: you can see, already, how each one beats his breast.'

O proud Christians, weary and wretched, who, infirm in the mind's vision, put your trust in downward steps: do you not see that we are caterpillars, born to form the angelic

butterfly, that flies to judgement without defence? Why does your mind soar to the heights, since you are defective insects, even as the caterpillar is, in which the form is lacking?

As a figure, with knees joined to chest, is sometimes seen, carved as a corbel, to support a ceiling or a roof, which though unreal, creates a real discomfort in those who see it, even so, I saw these, when I paid attention. Truly, they were more or less bent down, depending as to whether they were weighted more or less, and the one who had most patience in its bearing, seemed to say, weeping: 'I can no more.'



Purgatorio Canto XI:1-36 The Proud paraphrase the Lord's Prayer

‘O our Father, who are in Heaven, not because of your limitation, but because of the greater love you have for your first sublime works, praised be your name and worth by every creature, as it is fitting to give thanks for your sweet outpourings. May the peace of your kingdom come to us, since we cannot reach it by ourselves, despite all our intellect, if it does not come to us itself. As Angels sacrifice their will to yours, singing *Hosanna*: so may men sacrifice theirs. Give us this day our daily bread, without which he who labours to advance, goes backward, through this harsh desert. And forgive in loving-

kindness, as we forgive everyone, the evil we have suffered, and judge us not by what we deserve. Do not test our virtue, that is easily conquered, against the ancient enemy, but deliver us from him who tempts it. And this last prayer, dear Lord, is not made on our behalf, since we do not need it, but for those we have left behind.'

So those shades, praying good speed to us and themselves, went on beneath their burdens, like those that we sometimes dream of, weary, and unequal in torment, all around the first terrace, purging away the mists of the world.

If ever a good word is said, there, for us, by those who have their will rooted in the good, what can we say or do for them, here? Truly we should help them wash away the



stain, that they have carried from here, so that, light and pure, they might issue to the starry spheres.

Purgatorio Canto XI:37-72
Omberto Aldobrandeschi

Virgil said: ‘Ah, that justice and mercy might soon disburden you, so that you might spread your wings, that will lift you as you desire, show us, now, in which direction we might go, most quickly, to the stairway: and if there is more than one way, tell us which one ascends least steeply, because he, who comes along with me, is slow in climbing, despite his will, because of the burden of the flesh of [Adam](#), he is clothed with.’

It was not obvious where the words came from, which were

returned to those that he, whom I followed, had said, but this was the reply: ‘Come with us, to the right, along the cliff, and you will find the pass that a living man can ascend. And if I were not obstructed by the stone that weighs my proud neck down, so that I have to carry my head low, I would look at him, who is yet alive, who does not name himself, to see if I know him, and to make him pity this burden.

I was Italian, and the son of a great Tuscan: my father was [Guglielmo Aldobrandesco](#): I do not know if his name was ever known to you. My ancestors’ ancient blood and noble actions, made me so arrogant that I held all men in such scorn, not thinking of our common mother, that it was the death of me, as the Sienese, and every child in

Campagnatico, know. I am Umberto, and it is not me alone that pride does ill to, because it has dragged all my companions to misfortune. And here, until God is satisfied, I must carry this burden among the dead, since I did not do so among the living.’

Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117
Oderisi of Gubbio: The Vanity of Fame

Listening, I had bent my head down, and one of them, not he who was speaking, twisted himself beneath the weight that obstructed him: and saw me, and knew me, and was calling out, keeping his eyes fixed on me, who all bent down was moving along with them, with difficulty.

I said to him: ‘O, are you not Oderisi, the glory of Gubbio, and the glory of that art which in Paris they call ‘Illumination’?’ He said: ‘Brother, the leaves that Franco of Bologna paints are more pleasing: the glory is all his now, and mine in part. In truth, I would not have been so humble while I lived, because of the great desire to excel, that my heart was fixed on. Here the debt is paid for such pride: and I would still not be here, if it were not that, having power to sin, I turned to God.

O empty glory of human power: how short the green leaves at its summit last, even if it is not buried by dark ages! Cimabue thought to lead the field, in painting, and now Giotto is the cry, so that the other’s fame is eclipsed. Even so, one

Guido, Cavalcanti, has taken from Guinicelli, the other, the glory of our language: and perhaps one is born who will chase both from the nest.

Worldly Fame is nothing but a breath of wind, that now blows here, and now there, and changes name as it changes direction. What more fame will you have, before a thousand years are gone, if you disburden yourself of your flesh when old, than if you had died before you were done with childish prattle? It is a shorter moment, in eternity, than the twinkling of an eye is to the orbit that circles slowest in Heaven.

All Tuscany rang with the noise of him who moves so slowly in front of me, along the road, and now there is hardly a whisper of him in

Siena, where he was lord, when Florence's fury was destroyed, when she was prouder then, than she is now degraded. Your Reputation is like the colour of the grass, that comes and goes, and he through whom it springs green from the earth, discolours it.'

Purgatorio Canto XI:118-142
Provenzan Salvani

And I to him: 'Your true speech fills my heart with holy humility, and deflates my swollen pride, but who is he whom you were speaking of just now?' He answered: 'That is [Provenzan Salvani](#), and he is here because he presumed to grasp all Siena in his hand. So he goes, and has gone, without rest, since he died: such coin they pay, to render

satisfaction, who were too bold over there.’

And I: ‘If spirits who wait until the brink of death, before they repent, are down below, and do not climb up here, unless holy prayers help them, till as much time has passed as they once lived, how has his coming here been allowed him?’ He replied: ‘When he lived in highest state, he stationed himself in the marketplace at Siena, of his own free will, putting aside all shame, and made himself quiver in every vein, to deliver a friend from the pain he was suffering, in [Charles’s](#) prison.’

I will say no more, and I know that I speak darkly, but a short time will pass and your neighbours will act such that you will be able to understand the beggar’s shame. That

action released him from those confines.’

Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63 Many examples of Pride

I went alongside the burdened spirit, in step, like oxen under the yoke, as long as the sweet teacher allowed it. But when Virgil said: ‘Leave him, and press on, since here it is best if each drives on his boat with sail and oars, and all his strength,’ I stood erect, as required for walking, although my thoughts remained bowed down and humbled.

I had moved, and was following, willingly, in my master’s steps, and both of us were already showing how much lighter of foot we were, when he said to me: ‘Turn your eyes

downward: it will be good for you to look beneath your feet, to ease the journey. As tombstones in the ground, over the dead, carry the figures of who they were before, so that there may be a memory of them, and often cause men to weep for them, through that thorn of memory that only pricks the merciful, so I saw all the roadway that projects from the mountainside, sculpted in relief there, but of better likeness, because of the artistry.

On one side, I saw [Satan](#), who was created far nobler than any other creature, falling like lightning from Heaven.

On the other side I saw [Briareus](#), transfixed by the celestial thunderbolt, lying on the ground, heavy with the chill of death. I saw [Apollo](#) Thymbraeus: I saw [Mars](#) and

Pallas [Athene](#), still armed, with [Jupiter](#) their father, gazing at the scattered limbs of the Giants.

I saw [Nimrod](#) at the foot of his great tower of Babel, as if bewildered, and looking at the people, who shared his pride, in Shinar.

O [Niobe](#), with what sorrowful eyes I saw you sculpted in the roadway, between your seven dead sons and seven dead daughters!

O [Saul](#), how you were shown there, dead by your own sword, on Gilboa, that never felt rain or dew after!

O foolish [Arachne](#), already half spider, so I saw you, saddened, amongst the tatters of your work, woven by you to your own harm!



O [Rehoboam](#), now your image seems to threaten no longer, but a chariot carries you away, terrified, before chase is given!

Again, the hard pavement showed, how [Alcmaeon](#) made the gift of the luckless necklace costly to his mother [Eriphyle](#).

It showed how [Sennacherib](#)'s sons flung themselves on him in the Temple, and how they left him there, dead.

It showed the cruel slaughter and destruction that [Tomyris](#) generated, at the time when she said, to the dead [Cyrus](#): 'You thirsted for blood, now take your fill of blood!'

It showed how the Assyrians fled in a rout, after [Holofernes](#) was killed, and also the remains of the murder.

I saw Troy in ashes and ruin: O Ilium, how low and debased, the sculpture, that is visible there, showed you.

Purgatorio Canto XII:64-99 The Angel of Humility

What master was it, of the brush, or the engraving tool, who drew the lines and shadows that would make every subtle intellect gaze at them? The dead seemed dead, and the living, living: he who saw the reality of all the tales I trod on, while I went by, bent down, saw no better than me. Be proud then, children of, Eve and on with your haughty faces, and do not bow your heads, in case you see your path of sin!

Already we had circled more of the Mount, and more of the sun's

path was spent, than the un-free mind judged so, when he, who was always going on, alert, in front of me, began to say: ‘Lift your head up, this is no time to go absorbed like that: see an Angel there who is preparing to come towards us: look how the sixth handmaiden is returning from her hour’s service. Be reverent in your bearing, and in your look, so that it may gladden him to send us on upward: consider, that this day never dawns again.

I was well used to his warnings never to lose time, so that he could not speak to me unclearly on that matter. The beautiful creature came to us, robed in white, and, in his face, the aspect of the glimmering morning star. He opened his arms, and then spread his wings. He said: ‘Come: here are the steps, nearby,

and the climb now is easily made.’
Few are those who do come, at this
invitation. O human race, born to
soar, why do you fall so, at a breath
of wind?

He led us to where the rock was
cleft: there he beat his wings against
my forehead: then he promised me a
safe journey.

Purgatorio Canto XII:100-136
The first letter *P* is now erased

As the ascent is broken on the
right by steps, made in the times
when the public records, and the
standard measure, were safe, that
climb the hill where San Miniato
stands, looking down on Florence,
that well-guided city, over the Ponte
Rubaconte, so is this gully made
easier, that here falls steeply from

the next terrace, but so that the high rock grazes it on either side.

While we were changing our direction, voices sang, so sweetly no speech could describe it:

‘*Beati pauperes spiritu*, blessed are the poor in spirit.’ Ah! How different these openings are from Hell’s: here we enter with songs, and, down there, with savage groaning.

Now we were climbing by the sacred stair, and it seemed to me that I was much lighter, than I seemed to be on the terrace, at which I said: ‘Master, say, what heavy weight has been lifted from me, so that I hardly feel any effort in moving?’ He answered: ‘When the letter *P*’s, that have stayed on your face, but are almost invisible, shall be erased completely, like that first one, you feet will be so permeated

by goodness, that not only will they not feel it as effort, but it will be a pleasure to them to be urged on.’

Then, like someone who goes along with something on their face, unknown to them, except when another’s gestures make them guess, so that the hand lends its help to make sure, searches, and finds, and carries out the task that cannot be done by looking, I, with the fingers of my right hand outspread, found only six letters, of those that he, the key-holder, had cut on me, over the temples: at which my guide, seeing it, smiled.

**Purgatorio Canto XIII:1-45 The
Second Terrace: The voices in the
air**

We were at the summit of the stairway, where the Mount, that frees us from evil by our ascent, is terraced for a second time. There a cornice, like the first, loops round the hill, except that its curve is sharper. There is no shadow there, or decoration: the cliff appears so naked, and the path level, with the livid colour of the stone.

The poet was saying: 'If we wait here for people to ask our way of, I am afraid our decision may be delayed too long.' Then he set his eyes intently on the sun: he made his right a pivot, and turned his left side, saying: 'O sweet light, trusting in whom I enter on the new track, lead us on, as we, would be led, within ourselves: you give the world warmth, you shine upon it: if no

other reason urges otherwise, your rays must always be our guide.’

We, by our eager will, in a short time, had already gone as far, there, as counts for a mile here, when we heard, not saw, spirits flying towards us, granting courteous invitations to love’s feast. The first voice that passed by in flight said loudly: ‘*Vinum non habent*: they have no wine,’ and went by, repeating it behind us.

And before it was completely lost to hearing, due to distance, another voice passed by, crying: ‘I am Orestes,’ and also did not stay. I said: ‘O, father, what voices are these,’ and as I asked, there was a third voice saying: ‘Love those who have shown you hatred.’ And the good master said: ‘This circle scourges the sin of Envy, and so the

cords of the whip are made of Love. The curb or bit is of the opposite sound: I think you will hear it, I believe, before you reach the Pass of Forgiveness.

But fix your gaze steadily through the air, and you will see people seated in front of us, along the cliff.'

Purgatorio Canto XIII:46-84 The Envious and their Punishment

Then my eyes opened wider than before: I looked in front and saw shades with cloaks of the same colour as the stone. And when we were a little nearer, I heard a cry: 'Mary, pray for us,' and a cry: 'Michael, Peter, and all the Saints.'

I do not believe there is anyone on earth so hardened, that they

would not be pierced with compassion, at what I saw then: when I had come near them so that their features were clear to me, heavy tears were wrung from my eyes. They seemed to me to be covered with coarse haircloth: each supported the other with a shoulder: and each was supported, by the cliff.

Like this, the blind, lacking means, sit near the confessionals, begging for alms, and sink their heads upon one another, so that pity may be stirred quickly in people, not only by their words, but by their aspects, that plead no less. And as the sun does not help the blind, so Heaven's light will not be generous to the shades I speak of, since an iron wire pierces their eyelids, and stitches them completely shut, just



as is done to a wild hawk, that will not stay still.

By seeing others, and not being seen, I felt I did them a wrong as I went by, at which I turned to Virgil. He knew well what the dumb would say, and so he did not wait for my question, but said: ‘Speak, and be brief, and to the point.’

My counsellor was with me on the side of the terrace where one might fall, since there is no parapet surrounding it: the devout shades were on the other side, who were squeezing out tears, through the terrible seam, so that they bathed their cheeks.

Purgatorio Canto XIII:85-154
Sapia de’ Saracini

I turned to them and began: ‘O people, certain to see the light, above, the only thing your desire cares for, may grace quickly clear the dark film of your conscience, so that memory’s stream may flow through it clearly: tell me, since it will be gracious and dear to me, if any soul among you is *Italian*, and perhaps it will bring him good if I know it.’

I seemed to hear this for answer, some way further on than where I was: ‘O my brother, we are all citizens of a true city: you mean those who lived as *wanderers in Italy*.’ So I made myself heard more distinctly towards that side. I saw a spirit among the others, hopeful in look, and if you ask: ‘How?’ its chin was lifted higher in the manner of a blind person.

‘Spirit,’ I said, ‘that does penance, in order to climb, if you are the one who replied, make yourself known to me by place or name.’ She answered: ‘I was of Siena, and purge my sinful life, with these others here, weeping to Him, that he might lend his grace to us. Sapia, I was named, though sapient I was not, and I was far happier in other’s harm, than in my own good fortune. And so that you do not think I mislead you, listen, and see if I was as foolish as I say.

Already when the arc of my years was declining, my townsmen were engaged in battle with their enemies, near to Colle, and I prayed God for what he had already willed. They were routed there, and rolled back in the bitterness of flight, and I joyed, above all, in watching the

chase, so much so that I lifted my impudent face, crying out to God: “Now I no longer fear you,” as the blackbird does at a little fine weather.

I wished to make peace with God, at the end of my life, and my debt would not be reduced, even now, by penitence, had it not been that [Pier Pettignano](#) remembered me in his holy prayers, and grieved for me out of charity. But who are you, who go asking about our state, and, as I believe, have your eyes unsewn, and breathing, speak?’

I said: ‘My eyes will yet be darkened here, but for only a short time, since they did little offence through being turned to envy. My soul is troubled by a far greater fear of the torment just below, since even now the burden there weighs

on me.’ And she to me: ‘Who has led you then, up her, among us, if you expect to return below?’ And I: ‘He who is with me, here, and is silent: and I am alive, and so, spirit elect, ask something of me, if you wish me to move my mortal feet for you, over there.’

She answered: ‘Oh, this is such a strange thing to hear, that it is a sign that God loves you: so help me sometimes with your prayers. And I beg you, by all you most desire, if ever you tread the soil of Tuscany, renew my fame amongst my people. You will see them among that vain race, that put their faith in the harbour of Talamone, and will know more lost hopes there, than in searching for the stream of Diana: but the admirals will lose most.’

Purgatorio Canto XIV:1-27 Guido del Duca and Rinieri da Calboli

‘Who is this, that circles the Mount, before death has allowed him flight, and who opens and closes his eyelids at will?’ ‘I do not know who he is, but I know he is not alone. You, who are nearest, question him, and greet him gently, so that he might speak.’

So two spirits talked of me there, on the right, one leaning on the other: then held their faces up to speak to me: and one said: ‘O soul, still trapped in the body, journeying towards Heaven, out of charity, bring us consolation, and tell us where you come from, and who you are, since you make us wonder greatly at your state of grace, as a

thing does that was never known before.’

And I: ‘A river runs through the centre of Tuscany, rising at Falterona, in the Apennines, and is not sated by a course of a hundred miles. I bring this body from its banks. It would be useless to tell you who I am, since my name does not sound much, as yet.’ Then, he who had spoken first, answered me: ‘If I penetrate your meaning clearly with my intellect, you are talking about the Arno.’ And the other said to him: ‘Why did he hide the name of the river, as one does with a dreadful thing?’

Purgatorio Canto XIV:28-66 The Valley of the Arno

And the shade who was asked the question replied as follows: ‘I do not know, but truly it is fit that the name of such a valley should die, since from its head, where the alpine chain from which Cape Faro in Sicily is separated, is so extensive, that there are few places where it exceeds that breadth, as far as Pisa, where it yields that which the sky absorbs from the sea, restoring that water that provides the rivers with what flows in them, Virtue, like a snake, is persecuted as an enemy, by them all, either because of the evil place, or the evil customs that incite them; so that the people, who live in that miserable valley, have changed their nature, until it seems as if [Circe](#) had them in her sty.

It first directs its feeble channel, among the Casentines, filthy hogs,

more fitted for acorns than any other food created for man's use. Then descending, it reaches the Aretines, curs that snarl more than their power merits, and turns its current, scornfully, away from them.

On it goes in its fall, and the greater the volume in its accursed ditch the more it finds the dogs grown to Florentine wolves. Having descended then, through many scooped-out pools, it finds the Pisan foxes, so full of deceit that they fear no tricks that might trap them.

I will not stop speaking even if this other hears me, and it would be well for him if he reminds himself, again, of what true prophecy unfolds to me. I see [Fulcieri](#), his grandson, who is becoming a hunter of those Florentine wolves on the bank of the savage river, and who

fills them all with terror. He sells their flesh while they are still alive, then slaughters them like worn-out cattle: he deprives many of life, and himself of honour. He comes out, bloodied, from the sad wood. He leaves it so that, a thousands years from now, it will not regenerate to its primal state.'

Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123
Guido's diatribe against Romagna

I saw the other shade, who had turned round to hear, grow troubled and sad, after it had heard these words, as the face of him who listens is troubled, at the announcement of heavy misfortunes, as to which side the danger might attack him from. The speech of the one, and the look of

the other, made me long to know their names, and I asked them, mixing the request with prayers. At this the spirit who first spoke to me, began again: ‘You want me to condescend to do that for you, that you will not do for me, but, since God wills so much of his grace to shine in you, I will not be reticent with you: therefore know that I am [Guido del Duca](#).

My blood was so consumed by envy, that you would have seen me suffused with lividness, if I saw a man render himself happy. I reap the straw of that sowing. O humankind, why set the heart there, where division of partnership must follow?

This is [Rinier](#): this is the honour and glory of the House of Calboli, in which no one, since him, has

made themselves heir to his worth. And not only is his bloodline devoid of the goodness demanded of truth and chivalry between the River Po and the mountains, the Adriatic shore and Reno, but the Romagna, that is within these boundaries, is choked with poisonous growth, that cultivation would now root out with difficulty.

Where is the good [Lizio](#), and [Arrigo Mainardi](#), Pier [Traversaro](#) or [Guido di Carpigna](#)? Oh, you Romagnols, turned to bastards, when will a [Fabbro](#) again take root in Bologna: when, in Faenza, a [Bernadin da Fosco](#), scion of a low-born plant?

Do not wonder, Tuscan, if I weep, when I remember [Ugolin d'Azzo](#), and [Guido da Prata](#), who lived among us; [Federico Tignoso](#),

and his fellows, the Houses of [Traversari](#), and [Anastagi](#), both races now without an heir, the ladies and the knights, the toils and the ease, that love and courtesy made us wish for, there, where hearts are grown so sinful.

O town of Bertinoro, famous for your hospitality, why do you not vanish, since your noble families, and many of your people, are gone, to escape guilt? It is good that [Bagnacavallo](#) produces no more sons, and bad that [Castrocaro](#), and worse that [Conio](#), still trouble to beget such Counts. The Pagani will do well when [Mainardo](#), their devil, is gone: but not, indeed, in that true witness of their lives will remain.

O [Ugolin de' Fantolin](#), your name is safe, since there is no more

chance of there being any heir to
blacken it through degeneration.

Purgatorio Canto XIV:124-151

Examples of Envy

Now, go your ways, Tuscan,
since it delights me more to weep
than talk, our conversation has so
wrung my spirit.’ We knew that
those dear shades heard us leave, so,
by their silence, they gave us
confidence in our road.

When we were left, journeying
on, alone, a voice struck us, like
lightning when it splits the air,
saying: ‘Everyone who findeth me
shall slay me’, and vanished like a
thunderclap, that dies away when
the cloud suddenly bursts.

When our hearing was free of it,
behold, a second, with such a loud

crash, that it was like thunder, following on quickly: ‘I am Aglauros, she, who was turned to stone.’ Then I made a backward step, not a forward one, to press close to the poet.

Now the air was quiet on all sides, and he said to me: ‘That was the harsh curb, that ought to keep humankind within its limits. But you take the bait, so that the old enemy’s hook draws you towards him, and the bridle and the lure are little use. The Heavens call to you, and circle round you, displaying their eternal splendours to you, but your eyes are only on the ground: for which, he who sees all things, chastises you.’

Purgatorio Canto XV:1-36 The Angel of Fraternal Love

As much of the sun's course seemed left before evening, as we see between dawn and the third hour of the day, on the zodiacal circle that is always skipping up and down like a child: it was Vespers, evening, there in Purgatory, and midnight here. And the sun's rays were striking us mid-face, since we had circled enough of the Mount, to be travelling due west, when I felt my forehead far more burdened, by the splendour, than before, and the unknown nature of it stunned me, so that I lifted my hands above my eyes, and made that shade which dims the excess light.

Just as when a ray of light bounces from the water's surface

towards the opposite direction, ascending at an equal angle to that at which it falls, and travelling as far from the perpendicular line of a falling stone, in an equal distance, as science and experiment show, so I seemed struck by reflected light, in front of me, from which my eyes were quick to hide.

I said: ‘Sweet father, what is that, from which I cannot shade my sight enough to help me, that seems to be moving towards us?’ He answered: ‘Do not be amazed if the heavenly family still dazzles you: it is a messenger that comes to invite us to climb. Soon, seeing these things will not be painful to you, but a joy as great as nature has equipped you to feel.’

When we had reached the blessed Angel, it said, in a pleasant

voice: ‘Enter a stairway, here, much less steep than the others.’

Purgatorio Canto XV:37-81 The Second Beatitude: Dante’s doubts

We were climbing, and already leaving, and, behind us, ‘*Beati misericordes*: blessed are the merciful,’ was sung, and, ‘Rejoice you who conquer.’

My master, and I, the two of us, alone, were climbing, and I thought to derive profit from his words while we went, and I addressed him, saying: ‘What did the spirit from Romagna mean by mentioning *division* and *partnership*?’ At which he said to me: ‘He knows the harm of his great defect, and therefore let no one wonder if he condemns it, so

that the harm, he mourns for, is lessened.

Inasmuch as your desires are centred where things are diminished by partnership, it is Envy moving the bellows, with your sighs. But if the love of the highest sphere drew your desire upward, envious fear would not be core to your heart, since each possesses that much more of the good by the measure of how many more say *ours*, and so much more love burns in that cloister.’ I said: ‘I am hungrier by being fed than if I had kept silent from the start, and I have added more confusion to my mind.

How can it be that a shared good makes a greater number of possessors richer by it than if it is owned by a few?’ And he to me: ‘Because you fix your eyes, again,

only on earthly things, you produce darkness from true light. That infinite and ineffable good, that is up there, rushes towards love as a ray of light rushes towards a bright body. The more ardour it finds, the more it gives of itself, so that, however far love extends, eternal good causes its increase: and the more people there are up there who understand each other, the more there are to love truly, and the more love there is, and, like a mirror, the one increase reflects the other.

And if my explanation does not satisfy your hunger, you will see Beatrice, and she will free you completely from this and from every other longing. Only work, so that the other five wounds that are healed by our pain are soon erased, as two have been.'

Purgatorio Canto XV:82-145 The Third Terrace: Examples of Gentleness

As I was about to say: ‘You have satisfied me,’ I saw I had arrived on the next terrace, so that my eager gaze made me silent. There I seemed to be suddenly caught up in an ecstatic dream, and to see many people in a temple, and a [lady](#) about to enter, saying, with the tender attitude of a mother: ‘My son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I sought thee sorrowing,’ and as she fell silent that which had appeared at first, now disappeared.

Then another woman appeared to me, with those tears on her cheeks, that grief distils, and that well up in

someone because of great anger, saying: ‘O [Pisistratus](#), if you are lord of Athens, the city from which all knowledge shines, and whose naming made such strife between the gods, take revenge on those audacious arms that clasped our daughter.’ And her lord, kindly and gently, seemed to answer her, with a placid look: ‘What shall we do to those who wish harm to us, if we condemn him who loves us?’

Then I saw people, blazing with the fire of wrath, killing [a youth](#) with stones, and calling continually and loudly to each other: ‘Kill him, kill him! And I saw him sinking to the ground in death, which already weighed him down, but he made of his eyes, all the while, gateways to Heaven, praying to the Lord on high, in such torment, with that



look, that unlocks pity, of forgiveness towards his persecutors.

When my spirit returned outwards, to find the true things outside it, I understood my visions did not lie. My guide who could see me acting like a man who frees himself from sleep, said: ‘What is wrong with you, that you cannot control yourself, but have come almost two miles, with your eyes covered, and your legs staggering, like someone overcome by wine or sleep? I said: ‘O sweet my father, if you listen, I will tell you what appeared to me, when my legs were pulled from under me.’

And he said: ‘If you had a hundred masks on your face, your thoughts, however slight, would not be hidden from me. What you saw was to prevent you having an

excuse for not opening your heart, to the waters of peace, that are poured from the eternal fountain. I did not ask “What is wrong” for the reason one does, who only sees with the eye, that cannot see when the body lies senseless, but I asked in order to give strength to your feet: so the slothful, who are slow to employ the waking hour when it returns, have to be goaded.’

We were travelling on, through the evening, straining our eyes ahead, as far as we could, against the bright sunset rays, and behold, little by little, a smoke, dark as night, moving towards us, and there was no space to escape it. This stole away our sight, and the clear air.

Purgatorio Canto XVI:1-24 The Wrathful and their Punishment

The gloom of Hell, and a night deprived of every planet, under a scant sky, darkened by cloud, as far as it could be, did not make as thick a veil for my sight, or as harsh a texture to the touch, as the smoke that enveloped us there, since it did not even allow the eyes to remain open, at which my wise and faithful escort came near, and offered me his shoulder.

As a blind man goes behind his guide, in order not to wander, and not to strike against anything that may harm him, or perhaps kill him, so I went, through the foul and bitter air, listening to my leader, who kept saying: ‘Be careful not to get cut off, from me.’

I heard voices, and each one seemed to pray to the Lamb of God, who takes away sin, for peace and mercy. ‘*Agnus Dei*,’ was their only commencement: one word and one measure came from them all: so that every harmony seemed to be amongst them. I said: ‘Master, are those spirits, that I hear?’ And he to me: ‘You understand rightly, and they are untying the knot of anger.’

Purgatorio Canto XVI:25-96
Marco Lombardo: Free Will

A voice said: ‘Now, who are you, who divide our smoke, and talk of us, as if you still measured time by months?’ At which my Master said to me: ‘You, answer, and ask if we should go upwards by this path.’

And I said: ‘O creature, who purge yourself to return to him who made you, beautified, you will hear a wonder if you follow me.’ He answered: ‘I will follow you, as far as is allowed me, and if the smoke prevents us seeing, hearing will allow contact between us, instead.’ So I began: ‘I am travelling upwards, with those garments that death dissolves, and came here through the pain of Hell, and if God has so far admitted me to his grace, that he wills I should see his court, in a manner wholly outside modern usage, do not conceal from me who you were before death, but tell me, and tell me, also, if I am heading straight for the pass: and your words will be our escort.’

He answered: ‘I was called [Mark](#), and I was a Lombard: I knew



the world, and loved that worth, at the sight of which every one now unbends their bow: you go the right way to ascend,' and he added, 'I pray you to pray for me, when you are above.'

And I to him: 'By my faith, I promise you, to do what you ask of me, but I am wrung within by doubt if I cannot free myself of it. First it was simple doubt, and now it is redoubled by your speech, strengthening it in me here, along with that which I couple to it from elsewhere. The world is indeed so wholly destitute of every virtue, even as you say, and covered and weighed down with sin: but I beg you to show me the cause, so that I can see it, and tell others, since some people place the cause in the sky, and others here below.'

He first gave a deep sigh, which grief shortened to ‘Ah!’ and then began: ‘Brother the world is blind, and you come from there, indeed. You, the living, refer every cause to the heavens, as though they carried all along with them by necessity. If it were so, free will would be destroyed in you, and there would be no justice in taking delight in good, and lamenting evil. The heavens initiate your movements: I do not say all, but even if I said it, you are given a light to know good from evil: and you are given free will, which gains the victory, completely, in the end, if it survives the stress of its first conflict with the heavens, and is well nurtured.

Free, you are subject to a greater force, and a better nature, and that creates *Mind* in you, that the sky

does not have control of. So if the world today goes awry, the cause is in yourselves, search for it in yourselves, and I will be a true guide to you in this.

From His hands, who loves her dearly before she exists, issues the soul, in simplicity, like a little child, playing, in laughter and in tears, and she knows nothing, but that, sprung from a joyful Maker, she willingly turns towards what delights her. She savours, at the start, the taste of childish good, and is beguiled by it, and chases it, if her love is not curbed or misguided. That is why it was necessary to create Law as a curb, and necessary to have a ruler, who might at least make out the towers of the true city.'

Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145 The Error of the Church's temporal power

‘There are laws, but who sets their hand to them? No one: because the Shepherd who leads his flock may chew the cud, may meditate, but does not have a divided hoof, and confuses spiritual and temporal. So the people, seeing their Guide only aiming at that benefit he is eager for, feed on that, and do not question further. You can see clearly that bad leadership is the cause of the world's sinfulness, and not that nature, corruptible within you.

Rome, that made the civilised world, used to have two Suns, that made the two roads visible, that of the world, and that of God. One has

quenched the other: and the sword and the shepherd's crook are joined: and the one linked to the other must run to harm, since, being joined, one will not fear the other. If you do not believe me, look closely at the crop, since every plant is known by its seed.

Worth and courtesy used to be found, in Lombardy, that land the rivers Po and Adige water, before [Frederick](#) faced opposition. Now it can only be crossed, in safety, by those who, through shame, have ceased to talk to good men, or live near them. True there are three elder statesmen, in whom the ancient times reprove the new, and it feels a long time to them before God takes them to a better life: Corrado da [Palazzo](#), and the good Gherardo da [Camino](#), and [Guido da Castel](#), who

is better named in the French way, the *honest* Lombard. As of now, say that the Church of Rome, confusing two powers in herself, falls in the mud, and fouls herself and her charge.'

I said: 'O my Mark you reason clearly, and now I see why the priests, [the sons of Levi](#), were not allowed to inherit. But who is that Gerard, who you say remains as an example of the vanished race, to reprove this barbarous age?' He answered: 'Your speech is either meant to deceive me or to test me, since, speaking in Tuscan, you seem to know nothing of the good Gherard. I know him by no other name, unless I were to take one from his daughter [Gaia](#). God be with you, since I come, with you, no further. See the light, whitening,

shining through the smoke: the Angel is there, and I must go before he sees me.'

So he turned back, and would no longer listen.

Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39 **Examples of Anger**

Reader, if a mist has ever caught you in the mountains, through which you saw as a mole does, through the skin, remember how the sun's sphere shone, feebly, through the dense, damp, vapours as it began to melt away, and your imagination will easily understand how I saw the sun again, which was now setting. So, measuring by steps by my faithful Master's, I issued from that cloud to the sunlight, already dead on the low shore.

O imagination, that takes us out of ourselves, sometimes, so that we are conscious of nothing, though a thousand trumpets echo round us, what is it that stirs you, since the senses place nothing in front of you? A light stirs you, which takes its form from heaven, by itself, or by a will that sends it downwards.

The traces of Procne's impiety appeared in my imagination, she, who changed her form to a nightingale's, the bird that most delights in singing, and here my mind was so absorbed in itself, that nothing from outside came to it, or was received in it.

Then in my high fantasy a crucified man, scornful and haughty of aspect, appeared, and it was Haman, so dying. Round about him were the great Ahasuerus, Esther,

his wife, and the just [Mordecai](#), who was so sincere in speech and actions.

And, as this imagining burst like a bubble does, when the water surface it is made of breaks, a girl, [Lavinia](#), weeping pitfully, rose to my vision, saying: ‘O Queen [Amata](#), why have you willed yourself to nothingness, through anger? You have killed yourself in order not to lose me: now you *have* lost me. I am she, who mourns, Mother, for *your* loss, rather than for his.’

Purgatorio Canto XVII:40-69 The Angel of Meekness: Third Beatitude

As sleep is broken, when a new light suddenly strikes on the closed eyelids, and hovers, brokenly,

before it completely vanishes, so my imaginings were destroyed, as soon as light struck my face, light far greater than that which we are used to. I was turning about to see where I was, when a voice which snatched me from any other intention, said: ‘Here, you can climb’, and it made me want to see who it was who spoke, with that eagerness that never rests till it confronts the other.

But my powers failed me there, as at the sun that oppresses our vision, and veils his form, through excess of light. My leader said: ‘This is a Divine Spirit, that points us towards the path to climb, without our asking, and hides itself in its own light. It does towards us what a man does towards himself: since he who sees the need, but waits for the request, has set himself

malignly towards denial. Now let our feet fit the invitation: let us try to ascend before nightfall, since we cannot, then, until day returns.’ I turned my steps, with him, towards a stairway, and as soon as I was on the first step, I felt something like the touch of a wing, and my face was fanned, and I heard someone say: ‘Beati pacifici: blessed are the meek, who are without sinful anger.’

Purgatorio Canto XVII:70-139
Virgil explains
the structure of Purgatory

Now the last rays, that night follows, were angled so high above us that the stars were appearing, on every side. ‘Oh, my powers, why do you ebb away from me like this?’ I

said inside myself, since I felt the strength of my legs vanish.

We stood where the stairway went no further, and were aground, like a boat, that arrives at the shore: and I listened for a while to see if I could hear anything in the new circle: then turned to my Master, and said: 'My sweet father, say what offence is purged in this circle, where we are? Though our feet are stopped, do not stop your speaking.' And he to me: 'The love of good, that fell short of its duties, restores itself just here: here the sinfully lazy oar is plied again. But so that you might understand more clearly, turn your mind on me, and you will gather some good fruit from our delay.'

He began: 'Son, neither creature nor Creator, was ever devoid of

love, natural or rational, and this you know. The natural is always free of error: but the rational may err because of an evil objective, or because of too much or too little energy.

While it is directed towards the primary virtues, and moderates its aims in the secondary ones, it cannot be the cause of sinful delight, but when it is turned awry, towards evil, or moves towards the good with more or less attention than it should, the creature works against its Creator. So you can understand, that love is the seed of each virtue in you, and its errors the seeds of every action that deserves punishment. Now, in that love can never turn its face away from the well being of its object, everything is safe from self-hatred. And, because no being can

be thought to exist apart, standing separate in itself, from the First Cause, all affection is prevented from hating Him.

It follows, if I judge well in my classification that the evil we desire is due to the presence of our neighbours, and this desire has three origins, in your clay.

There are those who hope to excel through their neighbour's downfall, and because of this alone want them toppled from their greatness. This is Pride.

There are those who fear to lose, power, influence, fame or honour because another is preferred, at which they are so saddened they desire the contrary. This is Envy.

And there are those who seem so ashamed because of injury, that they become eager for revenge, and so

are forced to wish another's harm.
This is Wrath.

This three-fold desire is lamented, below. Now, I want you to understand the other desires which aim towards love in an erroneous manner.

Everyone vaguely apprehends a good, where the mind finds rest: and desires it: so everyone labours to attain it.

If inadequate love draws you on to sight or attainment of that good, this terrace torments you for it, after just repentance. This is Sloth.

There is another good, which does not make men happy: it is not happiness: it is not the essential good, the root and fruit of all goodness.

The love that abandons itself to it, excessively, is lamented above

us, on three terraces: but how it is separated into three divisions, I will not say, in order that you search it out for yourself.’

Purgatorio Canto XVIII:1-48 **Virgil on the Nature of Love**

The high-minded teacher had ended his discourse, and was looking at my face, attentively, to see if I was satisfied, and I, who was tormented by a new thirst, was outwardly silent, but inwardly said: ‘Perhaps the extent of my questions annoys him.’ But that true father, who noticed the hesitant wish, that did not show itself, gave me courage to speak, by speaking himself.

At which I said: ‘Master, my vision is so invigorated, by your light, that I understand, clearly,

what all your reasoning means and describes. I beg you, therefore, sweet, dear father, to define Love for me, to which you reduce every good action and its opposite.’ He said: ‘Direct the keen eyes of the intellect towards me, and the error of the blind who make themselves their guides, will be apparent to you.

The spirit, that is created ready for love, is moved by everything pleasing, as soon as it is stirred into action by pleasure.

Your sensory faculties take an impression from real objects, and unfold it inside you, so that the spirit turns towards those objects. And if it is attracted to them, being turned, that attraction is Love: that is Nature, newly confirmed in you by pleasure.

Then, as fire rises, because of its form, whose nature is to climb to where it can live longest in its fuel, so the mind, captured, enters into desire, which is a movement of the spirit, and never rests until the object of its love gives it joy.

Now it may be apparent to you, how deeply truth is concealed from those people, who say that every act of love is praiseworthy in itself, since love's material may always be good, perhaps, but every seal is not good, even though the wax is good.'

I replied: 'Your words, and my wits following you, have made Love clear to me, but it has made me more pregnant with doubts, since if Love is offered to us from outside ourselves, and the spirit has no other foot of her own to walk on, it is no

merit of hers whether she walks straight or slantwise.’

And he said to me: ‘I can tell you merely what Reason sees: beyond this point, wait only for Beatrice, since it is a question of Faith.’

Purgatorio Canto XVIII:49-75 Virgil on Freewill

‘Every living form, which is distinct from matter, but is united to it, has a specific virtue, contained in it, that is not seen except in its operation, or manifest except by what it effects, as life is manifest in a plant in the green leaves.

Therefore human beings do not know where knowledge of primary sensations comes from, or attraction to the primary objects of appetite: they are in you, as the drive in bees

to make honey: and this primary volition merits neither praise nor blame.

Now, in order that every other volition may be related to this one, the virtue, which allows judgement, is innate in you, and ought to guard the threshold of assent. This is the source from which the cause of merit, in you, derives, according to how it gathers and sieves good and evil desires.

Those who went to the foundations in their reasoning, recognised this innate freedom, and so left their Ethics to the world.

Therefore, even if you suppose that every love, which burns in you, rises out of necessity, the power to control it is within you. [Beatrice](#) takes Freewill to be the noble virtue, so take care to have that in mind, if

she sets herself to speak of it, to you.

Purgatorio Canto XVIII:76-111
The Slothful and their
Punishment

The moon, almost at midnight, shaped like a burning pail, made the stars appear fainter to us, and her track across the heavens, in the east, was on those paths, in Sagittarius, that the sun inflames, when in Rome they watch its setting between Sardinia and Corsica. And that noble shade, whose birthplace, Andes, is more renowned than any other Mantuan town, had laid down the burden I had put on him, so that I who had gathered clear, plain answers to my questions, stood like one who wanders, drowsily.

But this drowsiness was suddenly snatched from me, by people who had already come round on us, from behind our backs. And just as the Rivers Ismenus and Asopus, saw, a furious rout, at night, along their banks, when the Thebans called on the help of [Bacchus](#), so, along that terrace, quickening their steps, those were approaching, who, by what I saw of them, good will and just desire rode. They were soon upon us, since all that vast crowd was moving at a run, and two in front were shouting, tearfully: ‘[Mary](#) ran with haste to the hill country,’ and: ‘[Caesar](#) lanced Marseilles, and then raced to Spain, to subdue Lerida in Catalonia.’

The rest shouted, after that: ‘Hurry! Hurry! Do not let time be



wasted, through lack of love, so that labouring to do well may renew grace.’

My guide said: ‘O people, in whom an eager fervour now makes good, perhaps, the negligence and tardiness shown by you, in being lukewarm at doing good, this one who lives wishes to climb, if the sun only shines for us again, and indeed I do not lie to you, so tell us where the ascent is nearest.’

Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145 **The Slothful: Examples of Sloth**

One of the spirits said: ‘Come behind us, and you will find the gully. We are so full of desire for speed, we cannot stay: so forgive us if you take our penance as an offence. I was the [Abbot of San](#)

Zeno in Verona, under the rule of the good Barbarossa, of whom Milan still speaks with sorrow. And one I know, Alberto della Scala, who already has one foot in the grave, will soon mourn because of that monastery, and will be saddened at having held power there, because he has appointed his son there, Giuseppe, deformed in body, and more so in mind, and born of shame, instead of a true shepherd.

I do not know if he said more, or was silent, he had raced so far beyond us, already, but I heard that and was pleased to remember it. And he who was my help when I needed it, said: ‘Turn this way, and see two that come, showing remorse at Sloth.’

Last of them all, they cried: ‘The people for whom the Red Sea opened, were dead before Jordan saw their heirs,’ and: ‘Those who did not endure the labour with Aeneas, Anchises’s son, until the end, gave themselves to an inglorious fate.’

Then a new thought rose in me, when those shadows were distant from us, so far they could no longer be seen, from which many other diverse thoughts sprang: and I wandered so much, from one to another, that I closed my eyes in wandering, and transmuted thought to dream.’

Purgatorio Canto XIX:1-36
Dante’s Second Dream: The Siren

In the hour, before dawn, when the day's heat, lost by Earth, or quenched by Saturn, no longer offsets the moon's coldness; when the geomancers see their Fortuna Major, formed of the last stars of Aquarius, and the first of Pisces, rise in the east, on a path which is only dark for a little while, a stuttering woman, came to me in a dream, her eyes squinting, her feet crippled, with maimed hands, and sallow aspect. I gazed at her, and my look readied her tongue, and straightened her completely, in a few moments, as the sun comforts the cold limbs that night weighs down, and her pale face coloured, as love wills.

When her tongue was freed, she began to sing, so that I could hardly turn my attention away. 'I am,' she

sang, ‘I am the sweet Siren: I am so pleasing to hear that I lead seamen astray, in mid-ocean. With my song, I turned Ulysses from his wandering path, and whoever rests with me, rarely leaves, I satisfy him so completely.’ Her lips had barely closed, when a lady appeared, near me, saintly and ready to put her to confusion. She said, angrily: ‘O Virgil, Virgil what is this?’ And he came, with his eyes fixed on that honest one.

He seized the Siren, and, ripping her clothes, revealed her front, and showed me her belly, that woke me with the stench that came from it. I turned my eyes away, and the good Virgil said: ‘I have called you at least three times, rise and come with me, let us find the opening by which you may climb.’

Purgatorio Canto XIX:37-69 The Angel of Zeal: The Fourth Beatitude

I rose, and all the circles of the holy mountain were now filled with the high day, and we went with the new sun at our backs. I was following him, with my forehead wrinkled like someone burdened by thought, and who makes half a bridge's arch of his body, when I heard words, spoken, in so gentle and kind a voice, as is not heard in this mortal world: 'Come, here is the pass.'

He, who spoke to us, directed us upwards, between two walls of solid stone, with his outspread wings, that seemed like a swan's. Then he

stirred his feathers, and fanned us, affirming that they who mourn, *qui lugent*, are blessed, whose spirits shall be richly consoled.

My guide began to speak to me, both of us having climbed a little higher than the Angel: ‘What is wrong with you, that you are always staring at the ground?’ And I: ‘A strange dream, that draws me towards it, so that I cannot stop thinking of it, makes me go in such dread.’ He said: ‘Did you see, that ancient witch, through whom alone those above us now weep? Did you see how man escapes from her? Let that be enough for you, and spurn the Earth with your heels, turn your eyes towards the lure, that the King of Eternity spins, in the great spheres.’

I became like a falcon, that, at first, is gazing at his feet, then turns



at the call, and spreads his wings, with longing for the food, that draws him towards it, and so I went, as far as the rock is split, to allow passage, to him who climbs up, to where the terrace begins.

Purgatorio Canto XIX:70-114 The Avaricious: Pope Adrian V

When I was in the open, in the fifth circle, I saw people around it, lying on the ground, who wept, all turned face downwards. I heard them say: *Adhaesit pavimento anima mea*, my soul cleaveth unto the dust' with such deep sighing the words were hardly understood. 'O God's elect, whose sufferings justice and hope make easier, direct us towards the high ascents.' So the poet prayed, and so, a little in front



of us, there was an answer: ‘If you come longing to find the quickest way, and are safe from having to lie prostrate, let your right hand be always towards the outer edge.’ At that I noted what was hidden in the words, and turned my eyes towards my lord, at which he gave assent, with a sign of pleasure, to what my look of longing desired.

When I was free to do what my mind wished, I went forward, standing over that creature whose previous words made me note them, saying: ‘Spirit, delay your greater business, a while, for me, you, in whom weeping ripens that without which one cannot turn towards God. If you would have me obtain anything for you, over there, where I come from, living, tell me, who

you are, and why you have your backs turned upwards.’

And he to me: ‘You will know why Heaven turns our backs towards it, but first *scias quod ego fui successor Petri*: know that I was [Pope Adrian V](#), a successor of Peter. A fair river, the Lavagna, flows down to the Gulf of Genoa, between Sestri and Chiaveri, and my people’s title takes its name from it.

For little more than a month, I learnt how the great mantle weighs on him, who keeps it out of the mire, so much so, that all other burdens seem light as feathers. Alas, my conversion was late, but when I was made Pastor of Rome, then I discovered the false life. I saw that the heart was not at peace there, nor could one climb higher in that life: so that love of this one was kindled

in me. Until that moment I was a wholly avaricious spirit, wretched, and parted from God: now, as you see, here, I am punished for it.'

Purgatorio Canto XIX:115-145
The Avaricious: Their Punishment

'Here, what Avarice does is declared, in the purgation of the down-turned spirits, and the Mount has no bitterer penalty. Just as our eyes did not lift themselves up to the heights, but were fixed on earthly things, so here justice has sunk them towards the earth. Just as Avarice killed our love for all good, so that our efforts were lost, so here justice holds us fast, taken and bound, by hands and feet, and as long as it is

the good Lord's pleasure, we will lie here outstretched and unmoving.'

I had knelt, and was about to speak, but he detected my reverence, merely by listening, and as I began, he said: 'Why do you bend your knees?' And I to him: 'My conscience pricked me, for standing, knowing your high office.' He answered: 'Straighten your legs, and rise, brother: do not err: I am a fellow servant, of the one Power, with you and the others. If you ever understood the words of the holy gospel, *neque nubent*, there 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage' you will understand, clearly, why I say so.

Now go: I do not wish you to stay longer, since your remaining disturbs my weeping, by means of which I ripen what you spoke of. I

have a niece, [Alagia](#) by name, over there, who is good in herself, if only our house does not make her evil by example, and she is the only one left to me, over there.’

Purgatorio Canto XX:1-42
Examples of Poverty and
Liberality

The will fights ill against a finer will: so, to please him, but against my pleasure, I drew the unsaturated sponge from the water. I went on, and my leader went on, also, through the free space, along the rock, as you go by the wall close to the battlements, because those people, who distil, from their eyes, drop by drop, the evil that fills the whole world, were too close to the edge for us to pass on the other side.

Accursed be you, Avarice, ancient she-wolf, who, to satisfy your endless hunger, take more prey than any other beast! O Heaven, by whose circling, it appears to be believed, conditions down here are altered, when will one come by whose actions Avarice will vanish?

We journeyed on, with slow, meagre paces, and I paying attention to the spirits, that I heard weeping piteously, and complaining: and, by chance, I heard one calling, tearfully, in front of us: ‘Sweet [Maria](#)’, like a woman in labour, and continuing to speak: ‘you were so poverty-stricken as can be seen by that inn where you laid down your sacred burden.’

Following that I heard: ‘O good [Caius Fabricius](#), you wished to possess virtue in poverty, rather

than great riches with vice.’ These words were so pleasing to me that I moved forward, to make contact with the spirit, from whom they seemed to emerge.

It went on to speak of the gifts, that [Bishop Nicholas](#) gave to the young girls, to lead their youth towards honour.

I said: ‘O spirit, who speaks of good so much, tell me who you are, and why you alone repeat this praise of worthiness? If I return, to complete the short space of a life that flies to its end, your words will not be un-rewarded.’ And he: ‘I will tell you, not because I expect any comfort from over there, but because so much grace shines in you before your death.’

Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96 Hugh Capet and the Capetian Dynasty

‘I was the root of the evil tree, that overshadows all Christian countries, so that good fruit is rarely obtained there. But if Douay, Lille, Ghent and Bruges can, they will soon take revenge on it, and I beg this of Him who judges all. I was called Hugh Capet, over there: from me the ‘Philip’s and ‘Louis’s derive by whom France is ruled of late.

I was the son of a Paris butcher. When the line of ancient kings was ended, except for one who was clothed in the grey robe, I found the reins of the kingdom’s government held tight in my hands, and had so much power in new acquisitions, and was so rich in friends that the widowed crown was placed on

my son's head, he, with whom the Capetian dynasty's consecrated bones begin.

Before the dowry of Provence, took away all sense of shame from my race, the line was worth little, but did little harm. Its rapaciousness began there in force and fraud, and then to make amends, Ponthieu, Normandy and Gascony were seized. Charles of Anjou came to Italy, and to make amends, made a victim of Conradin: and then sent Thomas Aquinas back to heaven, to make amends.

I see a time, not far distant from now, that will bring another

Charles, of Valois, out of France, rendering him and his people better known. He comes alone, without an army, and with the lance of treachery Judas jousted with, and

couches it so as to make the guts of Florence spill. From that he will gather sin and shame, not land, so much the more grave for him, because he treats such wrongs so lightly.

I see the other [Charles, the lame](#), who was once taken captive in his ship, selling his daughter [Beatrice](#), and haggling over her, as pirates do over other hostages. O Avarice, who more can you do to us, since you have so attracted my tribe to you, that it does not care about its own flesh and blood?

To make the ill that is past and to come, seem lesser, I see the fleur-de-lys enter Anagni, and Christ taken captive in the person of [Boniface](#), his Vicar. I see him mocked for a second time: I see the gall and vinegar renewed, and see him killed, between living thieves. I see the new [Pilate](#), [Philip](#) the

Fourth, acting so cruelly, that even this does not satisfy him, but he must carry his sails of greed, lawlessly, against the Temple. O my Lord, when will I rejoice to see the sweet vengeance, which, hidden, your anger forms in secrecy?’

Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151
Examples of Avarice: The Earthquake

‘What I was saying, concerning the only Bride of the Holy Spirit, that made you turn towards me for explanation, such is the burden of all our prayers as long as daylight lasts, but when the night comes, we adopt a different strain instead.

Then we rehearse the history of Dido’s brother Pygmalion, whose insatiable lust for gold made him

traitor, thief and parricide, and avaricious [Midas](#)'s misery, that followed on his greedy wish, for which he must always be derided.

Then each remembers foolish [Achan](#), who stole the consecrated treasure, so that [Joshua](#)'s anger still seems here to rend him.

Then we accuse [Sapphira](#) and [Ananias](#) her husband; we praise the kicks from the hooves that struck [Heliodorus](#): and the whole Mount echoes with the infamy of [Polymnestor](#) who murdered [Polydorus](#).

Last of all, here, we cry out: “[Crassus](#), tell us, since you know, what does gold taste like?”

Sometimes one speaks high and another low, now with greater or lesser force, according to the impulse prompting us to speak: so I

was not alone, before, in speaking of the good, as we do, by day, but no one else was raising his voice near here.’

We had already left him, and were labouring to conquer the path, as far as it was in our power to do, when I felt the mountain tremble, like something falling, at which a coldness seized me, as it seizes him who goes to death. Surely Delos was not shaken as violently, before [Latona](#), there, made her nest give birth to the twin eyes of Heaven.

Then a shout went up on every side, so that the Master drew near me, saying: ‘Have no fear, while I am your guide.’ All were saying: ‘[Gloria in excelsis Deo](#): Glory to God in the highest,’ from what I understood of those nearby, whose words I could hear. We stood,

immobile, still as those shepherds who first heard that hymn, till it ceased when the quake ended. Then we took up our holy path again, gazing at the spirits lying on the ground, already returned to their usual laments.

If my memory makes no mistake in this, no lack of knowledge ever assaulted me with such a desire to know, as I appeared to feel then, as I reflected, and because of our haste, I was not keen to ask, nor could I see any cause for it there, myself: so I went on, fearful, and thoughtful.

Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33 The Poets meet Statius

The natural thirst for knowledge that is never quenched, except by that water's grace the woman of

Samaria asked for, troubled me, and haste was driving me along the impeded path behind my leader, and I was grieving at the spirits' just punishment, and behold, just as Luke writes that Christ, already risen from the mouth of the tomb, appeared to two who were on the road, so a shade appeared to us, and came on behind gazing at the prostrate crowd at its feet, and we did not see it until it spoke, saying: 'My brothers, God give you peace.' We turned quickly, and Virgil gave the appropriate sign in reply, then said: 'May the true Court, that holds me in eternal exile, bring you in peace to the Council of the Blessed.'

As we went forward, strongly, the spirit said: 'How is this: if you are shadows that God does not allow here above, who has escorted

you as far as this, by his stairways?’
And my teacher said: ‘If you look at the marks this man carries on his forehead, and which the Angel traced, you will see clearly that it is right for him to reign among the good. But since Lachesis, she who spins, night and day, had not yet drawn out the thread, fully, that Clotho places and winds on the distaff, for each of us, his soul which is sister to yours and mine, coming up here, could not come alone, since it does not understand as we do: so I was sent from the wide jaws of Hell to guide him, and as far as my knowledge can lead, I will guide him upwards.’

Purgatorio Canto XXI:34-75 The Cause of the Earthquake

‘But, if you know, tell us why the Mount shook so much before, and why everyone appeared to shout with one voice, right down to its soft base.’ So by asking he threaded the true needle’s eye of my wish, and my thirst was less fierce through hope alone.

That spirit began: The sacred rule of the mountain allows nothing without purpose, or beyond what is customary. Here we are free from earthly changes: Here, what Heaven accepts from its own self can operate as a cause, nothing else: and rain, hail, snow, dew, and frost cannot fall higher than the brief stair with three steps. Thin or dense cloud does not appear, nor lightning, nor the rainbow, [Iris](#), Thaumás’s daughter, who over there often changes zone. Dry vapours rise no

higher than the top of the three steps I spoke of, where [Peter](#)'s vicar has his feet.

Perhaps it trembles lower down, more or less, because of the winds hidden underground, I do not know, it never trembles here. Here it quakes when some soul feels itself purged so that it can rise, or set out to soar above, and such shouting follows it. The will alone gives evidence of the purging, seizing the soul, completely free to change her convent, and helping her in willing. True, she had will before, but the eagerness that Divine Justice creates for the punishment, where before there was eagerness for the sin, counters the will, inhibiting it.

And, only now, I, who have undergone this torment for five hundred years and more, feel free

will towards a better threshold. So, you felt the earthquake, and heard the pious souls around the mountain render praise to the Lord, that he might soon send them above.’

So he spoke to us, and since we enjoy the drink more, the greater the thirst we have, I could not convey how much he refreshed me.

Purgatorio Canto XXI:76-136 Statius and Virgil

And the wise leader said: ‘Now, I see the net that traps you here, and how one breaks through it; why the mountain quakes; and why you rejoice together at it. Now may it please you to tell me who you are, and let me learn from your words, why you have been here so many centuries.’

The spirit answered: ‘When the good Titus, with the help of Heaven’s King, avenged the wounds, from which the blood, that Judas sold, issued, I was famous, with the name of poet, that endures longest, and gives most honour, but not yet of the faith. The music of my words was so sweet, that Rome drew me, from Toulouse, to herself, where I merited a myrtle crown for my forehead. The people, there, still call me Statius: I sang of Thebes, and then of great Achilles: but I fell by the wayside with the second burden.

The sparks that warmed me, from the divine flame, which has kindled more than a thousand fires, were the seeds of my poetic ardour: I talk of the *Aeneid*, that was a mother to me, and a poetic nurse,

without which I would not have been worth a drachm. And I would agree to endure one sun more than I owe, before coming out of exile, to have lived over there when Virgil was alive.’

These words made Virgil turn towards me with a silent look that said: ‘Be silent.’ But the virtue that wills is not all-powerful, since laughter and tears follow the passion, from which they spring, so closely, that, in the most truthful, they obey the will least. I merely smiled, like someone who signals, at which the shade fell silent, and looked me in the eyes, where the soul is most present. And he said: ‘So that great effort might achieve its aim, say why your face just now showed me a flash of laughter?’

Now I am caught on both sides: one forces me to stay silent, the other demands I speak: at which I sigh, and am understood by my master, and he says to me: ‘Do not be afraid to speak, but speak and tell him what he asks with such great desire.’ At which I said: ‘Ancient spirit, perhaps you wonder at the laugh I gave, but I wish a greater wonder to seize you. He, who leads my vision on high, *is* that Virgil from whom you derived the power to sing of men and gods. If you think there was any other reason for my laughter, set it aside as untrue, and believe it was the words you spoke about him.’

He was already stooping to embrace my teacher’s ankles: but Virgil said: ‘Brother, do not, since you are a shadow, and it is a shadow

that you see.’ And Statius, rising, said: ‘Now you can understand the depth of love that warms me towards you, when I forget our nothingness, and treat shadows as solid things.’

Purgatorio Canto XXII:1-24 The Angel of Liberality: The Fifth Beatitude

The Angel was already left behind, the Angel who had directed us to the sixth circle, having erased the mark from my forehead, saying that those whose desire is for righteousness are blessed, and accomplishing it with the word *sitiunt*, ‘they thirst’, and nothing more.

And I went on, lighter than when I left the other stairways, so

that I was following the swift souls upwards, without effort, when Virgil began to speak, to Statius: ‘Love, fired by virtue, has always fired further love, when its flame has been revealed. From that moment when Juvenal descended amongst us in the Limbo of Hell, and made your affection known to me, my good will towards you has been more than has ever tied anyone to an unseen person, so that this stairway will seem short to me.

But tell me, now, and, if too great a confidence looses the reins, forgive me, as a friend, and speak to me, as a friend: ‘How could Avarice find a place in your heart, amongst such wisdom as you were filled with, by your efforts?’

Purgatorio Canto XXII:25-54
Statius's error was Prodigality not
Avarice

These words, at first, moved Statius to smile a little, then he answered: 'Every word of yours is a precious mark of affection to me. In truth, things often appear that provide false food for doubt, because of the true reasons that are hidden. Your question shows me that you thought *I* was avaricious in the other life, perhaps because of the terrace you found me on. Know now that Avarice was too far distant from me, and my excess, in the other direction, thousands of moons have punished. And I would feel the grievous butting, where they roll the weights in Hell, had I not straightened out my inclinations,

when I noted the lines in your [Aeneid](#) where you, as if angered against human nature, exclaimed: ‘O sacred hunger for gold, why do *you* not rule human appetite?’ Then I saw that our hands could open too far, in spending, and I repented of that as well as other sins.

How many will rise with shorn heads, through ignorance, which prevents repentance for this sin, in life and at the last hour? And know that the offence that counters the sin with its direct opposite, here, together with it, withers its growth. So, if I, to purge myself, have been among those people who lament their Avarice, it has happened to me, because of its contrary.’

Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93
Statius's Conversion to
Christianity

Virgil, the singer of the pastoral songs, said: ‘Now, when you sang, in your *Thebaid*, of the savage warfare between [Jocasta](#)’s twin sorrows, from the pagan nature of what [Clio](#) touches on there, with you, it seems that Faith, without which goodness is insufficient, had not yet made you faithful. If that is so, what sunlight or candlelight illuminated the darkness for you, so that after it you set sail to follow the [Fisherman](#)?’

And he replied: ‘You first sent me towards Parnassus, to drink in its caverns, and then lit me on towards God. You did what he does who travels by night, and carries a lamp

behind him, that does not help him, but makes those who follow him, wise, when you said: ‘The Earth renews: Justice returns, and the first Age of Mankind: and a new race descends from Heaven.’

I was a poet, through you, a Christian, through you, but so you may see what I outline more clearly, I will extend my hand to paint it in. The whole world was already pregnant with true belief, seeded by the messengers of the eternal kingdom, and your words, mentioned above, were so in harmony with the new priests, that I took to visiting them. Then they came to seem so holy to me, that when Domitian persecuted them, their sighs were combined with tears of mine. And I aided them, while I trod the earth over there, and their

honest customs made me scorn all other sects, and I received baptism, before I had got the Greeks to the rivers of Thebes in my poem, but was a secret Christian out of fear, pretending to Paganism for a long while: and this diffidence sent me round the fourth terrace, for more than four centuries.'

Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114

The Pagans in Limbo

'Now you, who lifted the veil that hid me from the great good I speak of, when we have time to spare from the climb, tell me where the ancients, [Terence](#), [Caecilius](#), [Plautus](#) and [Varro](#) are, if you know: say if they are damned, and in what circle.' My leader answered: 'They, and I, and [Persius](#), and many others,

are with that Greek whom the Muses nursed above all others, in the first circle of the dark gaol. We often speak of the mountain that always holds the goddesses, our foster-mothers.

Euripides and Antiphon are there with us, Simonides, Agathon, and many other Greeks who once covered their foreheads with laurel. Of the people celebrated in your poems, Antigone, Deiphyle, and Argia are seen, and Ismene, as sad as she was. There Hypsipyle, is visible, who showed the fountain, Langia. Tiresias's daughter is there, and Thetis, and Deidamia with her sisters.'

Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154

Examples of Temperance

Now both the poets were silent, newly intent on looking round, free of the ascent and the walls, and four handmaidens of the day were already left behind, and the fifth was by the pole of the sun's chariot, which still had its fiery tip slanted upwards, when my leader said: 'I think we must turn our right shoulders towards the edge, and circle the mountain as we did before.' So custom was our guide, even there, and we followed the way with less uncertainty, because of the other noble spirit's assent.

They went on in front, and I, alone, behind: and I listened to their conversation, which increased my understanding of poetry. But soon the sweet dialogue was interrupted, by our finding a tree, in the middle of the road, with wholesome, and

pleasant smelling fruit. And as a pine tree grows so that its branches lessen as the trunk goes upwards, so that did downwards: I think so that no one can climb up. On the side where our way was blocked, a clear stream fell from the high cliff, and spread itself over the canopy above.

The two poets went near to the tree, and a voice inside the leaves cried: ‘Be chary of this food,’ and then it said: ‘Mary thought more about how the marriage-feast might be made honourable, and complete, than of her own mouth, which now intercedes for you all. And the Roman women in ancient times were content to drink water: and Daniel despised food and gained wisdom. The First Age was beautiful, like gold: it made acorns tasty, to the hungry, and every

stream, nectar, to the thirsty. Honey and locusts were the meat that fed [John the Baptist](#) in the desert, and so he is glorious and great, as the Gospel shows you.’

Purgatorio Canto XXIII:1-36 The Gluttonous and their Punishment

While I was gazing through the green leaves, like a man does who wastes his life chasing wild birds, my more-than-father said to me: ‘Son, come on now, since the time we have been given must be spent more usefully.’ I turned my face, and my steps as quickly, towards the wise pair, who were talking; making it no penalty to me to go.

And ‘[Labia mea Domine](#): O Lord open thou my lips,’ was heard, in singing and weeping, producing joy

and pain. I began to speak: ‘O sweet father, what do I hear?’ And he: ‘Shadows who perhaps go freeing the knot of their debts.’ Just as thoughtful travellers, who pass people unknown to them on the road, turn to look, but do not stop, so a crowd of spirits, coming on more quickly behind us, passed us by, silent and devout, gazing at us.

Their eyes were all dark and cavernous, their faces pale, and so wasted that the skin took shape from the bone. I cannot believe [Erysichthon](#) was as withered to the skin by hunger, even when he felt it most. I said in my inward thought: ‘See, the people who lost Jerusalem at the time when the woman, [Mary](#), devoured her own child.’

The sockets of their eyes seemed gem-less rings: those who see

the letters ‘omo’ in a man’s face, would clearly have distinguished the ‘m’ there. Who, if they did not know the cause, would believe that merely the scent of fruit and water had created this, by creating desire?

Purgatorio Canto XXIII:37-90
Forese Donati

I was still wondering what famished them, since the reason for their leanness, and their skin’s sad scurf, was not obvious yet, when a shadow turned its eyes towards me from the hollows of its head, and stared fixedly, then cried out loudly: ‘What grace is this, shown to me?’ I would never have recognised him by his face, but what was extinguished in his aspect, was revealed by his voice. This spark



kindled the memory in me of the altered features, and I recognised Forese's face.

‘Oh, do not stare at the dry leprosy that stains my skin,’ he begged, ‘nor at any lack of flesh I may have, but tell me truly about yourself, and who those two spirits are there, who escort you: do not stop without speaking to me.’ I replied: ‘Your face I once wept over at your death, gives me no less grief now, even to weeping, seeing it so tortured. Then tell me, in the name of God, what strips you of flesh: do not make me speak while I am wondering, since he talks badly who is filled with another longing.’

And he to me: ‘A power flows down, into the water, and into the tree we have left behind, from the Eternal Will, the cause of my

wasting. All these people who weep and sing, purify themselves again, through hunger and thirst, for having followed Gluttony to excess. The perfume that rises from the fruit, and from the spray that spreads over the leaves, kindles, in us, the desire to eat and drink. And our pain is not merely renewed the once as we circle this road: I say pain, but ought to say solace, since that desire leads us to the tree which led [Christ](#) to say ‘*Eli*’, when he freed us with his blood.’

And I said to him: ‘Forese, less than five years have revolved since the day when you left the world for a better life. If the power to sin ended in you before the hour of sacred sorrow came, that marries us again to God, how have you come here? I thought I would still find

you below, where time is repaid, for time alive.’ And he to me: ‘My [Nella](#), by her river of tears, has enabled me, so soon, to drink the sweet wormwood of affliction: by her devout prayers and her sighs she has drawn me from the shores of waiting, and freed me from the other terraces.’

Purgatorio Canto XXIII:91-133
The Immodesty of the Florentine Women

‘My widow, whom I loved deeply, is the more precious and dear to God the more solitary she is in her good works, since the savage women of mountainous Barbagia in Sardinia are far more modest, than those of that Barbagia, Florence, where I left her. O sweet brother,

what would you have me say? Already I foresee a time to come, to which this time will not be too distant, when, from the pulpits, the brazen women of Florence will be forbidden to go round displaying their breasts and nipples.

When was there ever a Saracen woman, or woman of Barbary, who needed disciplining spiritually or otherwise, to force her to cover herself? But the shameless creatures would already have their mouths open to howl, if they realised what swift Heaven is readying for them, since, if prophetic vision does not deceive me, they will be crying before he, who is now calmed with a lullaby, covers his cheeks with soft down.

Brother, I beg you, do not hide your state from me any longer: you

see that all these people, not only I, are gazing at where [you veil the sun.](#)' At which I said to him: 'If you recall to mind what you have been with me, and I have been with you, the present memory alone will still be heavy. He who goes in front of me, turned me from that life, the other day, when the Moon, the sister of that Sun, shone full for you,' (and I pointed to the sun).

'This one has led me through the deep night, from the truly dead, in this true flesh, that follows him. From there his companionship has brought me, climbing and circling the mountain, which straightens you, whom the world made crooked.

He speaks of my being his comrade, till I am there where Beatrice is: there I must remain without him. Virgil it is who tells

me so (and I pointed to him), and this other shade is one for whom every cliff of your region, that now frees him from itself, shook, before.

Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33 The Gluttonous

Speech did not make the journey go more slowly, nor the journey speech, but we went strongly, like a ship driven by a favourable wind. And the shades, that seemed doubly dead, drew their amazement from me through the pits of their eyes, knowing I lived.

And I, continuing my conversation, said: 'Perhaps Statius climbs more slowly than he might, because of the other. But tell me where [Piccarda](#) is, if you know: tell me if I can see anyone of note,

amongst the people who stare at me.’ He said, first: ‘My sister - I do not know if she was more beautiful or more good - now triumphs, rejoicing in her crown on high Olympus,’ and then: ‘It is not forbidden to name anyone here, since our features are so shrivelled by hunger.

This (and he pointed with his finger) is [Bonagiunta](#), Bonagiunta of Lucca: and that face beyond him, leaner than the rest, is [Martin](#), who held the Holy Church in his embrace: he was from Tours, and purges the eels of Bolsena, and the sweet wine.’

He named many others to me, one by one, and all seemed pleased to be named, so that I did not see a single black look. I saw [Ubalдино](#), della Pilsnapping his teeth on the



void, out of hunger, and [Bonifazio](#) who was pastor to many peoples with his crozier. I saw Messer [Marchese](#), who had time before, at Forlì, to drink, with less reason for thirst, and yet was such that he was never sated.

Purgatorio Canto XXIV:34-99
Bonagiunta

But like he who looks, and then values one more than another, so I did him of Lucca, who seemed to know me. He was murmuring, what sounded like '[Gentucca](#)', there where he was undergoing the wounds of justice, which pares them so. I said: 'O spirit, who seem longing to talk with me, speak so that I can understand you, and satisfy us both with your speech.'

He began: ‘A woman is born, and is not yet married, who will make my city pleasing to you, however men may reprove the fact. You will go from here with that prophecy: if you have understood my murmuring wrongly, the real events will yet make it clear to you.

But tell me if, here, I see him who invented the new verse beginning: “*Donne, ch’avete intelletto d’Amore*: Ladies, who have knowledge of Love.” ’ And I to him: ‘I am one who, when Love inspires him, takes note, and then, writes it in the way he dictates within.’ He said: ‘Brother, O I see, now, the knot that held back Jacopo da Lentino, Fra Guittone, and me, from the *dolce stil nuovo*, the new sweet style I hear. Truly, I can see how your pens closely

follow him who dictates, which certainly was not true of ours. And he who sets out to search any further, cannot distinguish one style from the other,' and he fell silent, as if satisfied.

As birds that winter on the Nile, sometimes crowd into the air, then fly more quickly and in files, so all the people there, turning round, quickened their steps, made swift by leanness and longing. And as someone tired of running lets his companions go by, and walks, until the heaving of his chest has eased, so Forese let the sacred flock pass, and came on behind them, with me, saying: 'When will I see you again?'

I answered him: 'I do not know how long I may live, but my return will not be soon enough for my

longing not to be before me, at the shore, since the place appointed for me there, is, day by day, more naked of good, and seems condemned to sad ruin.’ Now go, he said, for I see him, who is most guilty, [Corso Donati](#), dragged at the tail of a beast towards the valley where sin is never purged. The beast goes faster at every pace, ever increasing, until it smashes him, and leaves his body vilely broken.

Those gyres above (and he lifted his eyes towards the sky) do not have long to turn before what my words may no longer say is clear to you. Now stay behind, since time is precious in this region, and I lose too much of it, matching my pace to yours.’ He left us, with greater strides, as a horseman sometimes issues at a gallop from a troop riding

past, and goes to win the honour of the first encounter: and I was left by the road, with the two who were such great marshals in the world.

Purgatorio Canto XXIV:100-154
Examples of Gluttony: The Angel

And when he had gone so far in front of us that my eyes chased after him, as my mind did his words, the green and laden boughs of another fruit-tree appeared, and not far off, since I had just come round to it. I saw people under it lifting their hands, and calling out to the leaves, like spoilt, greedy, children begging, and the one they plead with does not reply, but holds up high what they want, and does not hide it, to make their longing more acute.

Then they went away, undeceived, and now, we came, to that great tree that denies all those prayers and tears. ‘Go on, without coming near: higher up there is a tree that Eve ate from, and this was grafted from it.’ So a voice spoke, among the branches: at which Virgil, Statius, and I went on by the cliff side. It said: ‘Remember the accursed Centaurs formed in the clouds, who fought Theseus, with their bi-formed bellies sated with food and wine: and remember the Hebrews who appeared fastidious when drinking, so that Gideon would not have them for his comrades when he came down from the hills to Midian.’

So we passed, close to one of the two sides, hearing sins of Gluttony, followed once by woeful victories.

Then, a thousand steps or more took us forwards, scattered along the empty road, each reflecting in silence.

‘What do you journey considering so deeply, you solitary three?’ a voice said suddenly, so that I started, as timid creatures do when scared. I lifted my head to see who it was, and glass or metal was never seen as red and glowing in a furnace as the one I saw, who said: ‘If it please you to climb, here you must turn: they go from here, who wish to journey towards peace.’

His face had robbed me of sight, so I turned back towards my teachers, like one who follows the instructions he hears. And, as the May breeze, announcing the dawn, moves and breathes, impregnated with herbs and flowers, so I felt a

wind on my forehead, and I clearly felt the feathers move, that blew an ambrosial perfume to my senses: and I heard a voice say:

‘Blessed are those who are so illumined by grace, that the love of sensation does not fire too great a desire in their hearts, and who only hunger for what is just.’

Purgatorio Canto XXV:1-79
Human Embryology and
Consciousness

It was an hour when nothing prevented our climbing, since the Sun had relinquished the meridian circle to Taurus, while night held Scorpio. So we entered the gap, one behind the other, climbing the stair, whose narrowness separates the climbers, as men do who do not

stop, but go on, whatever happens to them, when the spur of necessity pricks them. And like the young stork that raises its wing, wanting to fly, and drops it again, not daring to leave the nest, so my longing to question was lit and quenched, getting as far as the movement one makes when preparing to speak.

My sweet father did not stop, even though the pace was quick, but said: ‘Fire the arrow of your speech, that you have drawn to the notch.’ Then I opened my mouth confidently, and began: ‘How can one become lean, there, when food is unnecessary?’ He said: ‘If you recall how [Meleager](#) wasted away, as the firebrand was consumed, it would not seem so hard for you to understand: or if you thought how your insubstantial image, in the

mirror, moves with your every movement, what seems hard would seem easy to you. But in order for you to satisfy your desire, Statius is here, and I call on him, and beg him, to heal your wounds.’

Statius replied: ‘If I explain the eternal justice he has seen, even though *you* are here, let my excuse be that I cannot refuse you anything.’ Then he began: ‘Son, if your mind listens to and considers my words, they will enlighten you about what you ask.

Perfect blood, which is never absorbed by the thirsty veins, and remains behind, like food you remove from the table, acquires a power in the heart sufficient to invigorate all the members, as does the blood that flows through the veins to become those members.

Absorbed again it falls to the part, of which it is more fitting to be silent than speak, and, from that part, is afterwards distilled into the partner's blood, in nature's vessel. There one blood is mingled with the other's: one disposed to be passive, the other active because of the perfect place it springs from: and mixed with the former, begins to work, first coagulating, then giving life, to what is has formed for its own material.

The active power having become a spirit, like a plant's, different in that it is developing, while the plant's is developed, now operates so widely that it moves and feels, like a sea-sponge, and then begins to develop organs, as sites for the powers of which it is the seed. Now, son, the power that flows from the

heart of the begetter, expands, and distends, into human members as nature intends: but you do not yet understand how it becomes human, from being animal: this is the point which made one wiser than you, [Averroës](#), err, so that he made the intellectual faculty separate from the spirit, because he found no organ that it occupied.

Open your mind to the truth which follows, and understand that as soon as the structure of the brain is complete in the embryo, the First Mover turns to it, delighting in such a work of nature, and breathes a new spirit into it, filled with virtue, that draws into its own substance what it finds already active, and forms a single soul, that lives and feels, and is conscious of itself. And so that you wonder less at my

words, consider the heat of the sun, which becomes wine when joined to the juice of the grape.

Purgatorio Canto XXV:80-108
The Soul after death: The Shadows

And when Lachesis has no more thread to draw, the soul frees itself from the flesh, taking both the human and divine powers: the other faculties falling silent: memory, intellect, and will far keener in action than they were before. It falls, by itself, wondrously, without waiting, to one of these shores: there it first learns its location.

As soon as that place encircles it, the formative power radiates round, in quantity and form as in the living members: and as saturated air

displays diverse colours, by the light of another body reflected in it, so the surrounding air takes on that form that the soul, which rests there, powerfully prints on it: and then, like the flame that follows fire wherever it moves, the spirit is followed by its new form.

Since it is in this way that it takes its appearance, it is called a shadow: and in this way it shapes the organs of every sense including sight. In this way we speak, and laugh, form tears, and sighs, which you might have heard, around the mountain. The shade is shaped according to how desires and other affections stir us, and this is the cause of what you wondered at.'

Purgatorio Canto XXV:109-139

The Lustful and their Punishment

And now we had reached the last turn, and had wheeled round to the right, and were conscious of other things. There the cliff hurls out flames, and the terrace breathes a blast upwards that reflects them, and keeps the path free of them, so that we had to go by the side that was clear, one by one: and I feared the fire on one side, and on the other feared the fall. My leader said: ‘Along this track, a careful watch must be kept, because an error can easily be made.’

I heard: ‘*Summae Deus clementiae*: God of supreme mercy’ sung then, in the heart of the great burning, that made me no less keen to turn away: and I saw spirits walking through

the flames, so that I looked at them, and at my steps, with a divergent gaze, from time to time. After the end of that hymn, they shouted aloud: ‘*Virum non cognosco*: I know not a man,’ then they softly recommenced the hymn. At the end they shouted again: ‘Diana kept to the woods, and chased Callisto away, who had known the taint of Venus.’

Then they returned to singing: then cried the names of women and husbands who were chaste, as virtue and marriage demand. And I believe this mode is sufficient for the whole time that the fire burns them: the last wound must be healed, by this treatment, and this diet.



Purgatorio Canto XXVI:1-66 The Lustful

While we were going along the brink, like this, one behind the other, the good Master often said: ‘Take care, let me caution you.’

The sun was striking my shoulder, his rays already changing the whole aspect of the west from azure to white, and I made the flames appear redder in my shadow, and many spirits I saw, noted, even so slight a sign, as they passed. This was the cause that gave them a reason to speak about me, and they began to say, one to another: ‘He does not seem to be a substantial body.’

Then some of them made towards me, as far as they could, always careful not to emerge, to where they would be no longer

burning. ‘O you who go behind the others, perhaps out of reverence not tardiness, answer me who burn in thirst and fire: and your reply is needed not by me alone, since all these thirst for it, more than Indians or Ethiopians do for water. Tell us how it is that you make a wall against the sunlight, as if you were not held in death’s net.’ So one of them spoke to me, and I would have revealed myself then and there, had I not been intent on something strange that appeared, since people were coming through the middle of the fiery road, their faces opposite these people, and it made me pause, in wonder.

There I see, each shadow hurry to kiss someone on the other side, without staying, satisfied by a short greeting: ants, in their dark

battalions, embrace each other like this, perhaps to know their path and their luck. As soon as they break off the friendly clasp, before the first step sends them onwards, each one tries to shout the loudest: the newcomers: ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ and the others: ‘[Pasiphaë](#) enters the wooden cow, so that the young bull may run to meet her lust.’

Then like cranes that fly, some to the northern mountains, others towards the desert: the latter shy of frost, the former of the sun: so one crowd passes on, and the other comes past, and they return, weeping, to their previous singing, and to the cries most suitable to them: and those same voices that entreated me, before, drew closer to me, showing their desire to listen, in their aspect.

I who had seen this desire, twice,
began: ‘O spirits, certain, sometime,
of reaching a state of peace, my
limbs have not remained over there,
green or ripe in age, but are here,
with me, with all their blood and
sinews. I go upwards from here, in
order to be blind no longer: there is
a lady there above who wins grace
for us, by means of which I bring
my mortal body through your world.
But - and may your desires may be
satisfied quickly, and Heaven house
you, which stretches furthest, filled
with love – tell me who you are, so
that I may write it on paper, and
who that crowd are, vanishing
behind your backs?’

Purgatorio Canto XXVI:67-111
Guido Guinicelli, the poet

Each shadow in appearance seemed as troubled as the dazed mountain man becomes, when he enters the city, staring about speechlessly, in his roughness and savagery, but when they had thrown off their amazement, which is soon quenched in finer hearts, the first shade who had made his request to me, began: ‘Blessed spirit, who are gathering knowledge of our borders, to achieve the holier life! The people who do not come along with us, offended in that way that made [Caesar](#) hear ‘*Regina:Queen*’ called after him in his triumph, so they leave us, shouting: “Sodom” reproving themselves, as you have heard, and helping the burning with the heat of their shame.

Our sin was heterosexual, but because we did not obey human

law, and followed our appetites like beasts, when we part from them, to our infamy we call *her* name, Pasiphaë, that made herself a beast, in the beast-like framework.

Now you know our actions, and what we were guilty of: if you want to know, perhaps, who we are, by name, there is not time enough to tell you, nor could I. But I will indeed make your wish to know me wane: I am [Guido Guinicelli](#), and am purging myself already, because I made a full repentance, before the end.’

As in the midst of [Lycurgus](#)’s sorrow, her two sons were on seeing their mother [Hypsipyle](#) again, so I was, though I cannot rise to those heights, when I heard my ‘father’, and the ‘father’ of others who are my betters, name himself, he, who

always made use of the sweet and graceful rhymes of love: and without speaking or hearing, I went on, thinking, gazing at him for a long while, and did not move closer there because of the fire.

When I was filled with gazing, I offered my services to him, eagerly, with that strength that compels belief in the other. And he said to me: ‘I hear that you leave tracks so deep and clear, that Lethe cannot remove or dim them. But if your words just now expressed truth, tell me why you demonstrate, in looks and speech, that you hold me so dear.’

Purgatorio Canto XXVI:112-148
Arnaut Daniel, the poet

And I to him: ‘Your sweet lines, whose very ink is precious, as long as the modern style shall last.’ He said: ‘O my brother, this one whom I indicate with my finger,’ (and he pointed to a spirit in front) ‘was the better craftsman of his mother tongue. He surpassed all who wrote love-verses and prose romances, and let those fools talk who think that Giraut de Borneil, he of Limoges, excels. They turn their faces towards rumour rather than truth, and confirm their opinions before they listen to art or reason. So, many of our fathers did, with Guittone, shouting praise after praise of him, but truth has won at last, with most people.

Now if you have such breadth of privilege, that you are allowed to go to that cloister, where Christ is head

of the college, say a *Pater Noster* there for me, as much of one as is as needed by us, in this world, where the power to sin is no longer ours.’ Then, perhaps in order to give way, to another following closely, he vanished through the fire, like a fish diving, through water, to the depths.

I drew forward, a little, towards the one Guido had pointed to, and said that my longing was preparing a place of gratitude for his name. And, freely, he began to speak:

*‘Tan m’abelis vostre cortes
deman,
qu’ieu no-m puesc, ni-m vueil a
vos cobrire.*

*Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau
cantan;
consiros vei la passada falor,*

*e vei jausen lo jorn, qu'esper,
denan.*

*Ara vos prec, per aquella valor
que vos guida al som de
l'escalina,
sovgna vos a temps de ma dolor.'*

‘Your sweet request of me is so
pleasing,
that I cannot, and will not, hide
me from you.

I am [Arnaut](#), who weeping goes
and sings:
seeing, gone by, the folly in my
mind,
joyful, I hope for what the new
day brings.

By that true good, I beg you, that
you find,

guiding you to the summit of the
stairway,
think of my sorrow, sometimes,
as *you* climb.'

Then he hid himself in the
refining fire.

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45
The Angel of Chastity

So the sun stood, as when he
shoots out his first rays, there at
Jerusalem, where his Maker shed
his blood; as when Ebro's river falls
under heaven-borne Libra's scales,
and Ganges's waves are scorched by
mid-day heat: so there the daylight
was fading when God's joyful
Angel appeared to us. He was
standing beyond the flames, on the
bank, and singing: Beati mundo:

corde. Blessed are the pure in heart,' in a voice more thrilling than ours. Then, when we were nearer to him, he said: 'You may go no further, O sacred spirits, if the fire has not first bitten you: enter it, and do not be deaf to the singing beyond,' at which, on hearing him, I became like someone laid in the grave.

I bent forward, over my linked hands, staring at the fire, and, powerfully conceiving human bodies, once seen, being burnt alive. The kindly guides then turned to me, and Virgil said: 'My son, there may be torment here, but not death. Remember, remember.....if I led you safely, on [Geryon](#)'s back, what will I do now, closer to God? Believe, in truth, that if you lived in this womb of flames, even for a thousand years, they could not

scorch a single hair: and if you think, perhaps, that I deceive you, go towards them, and gain belief, by holding the edge of your clothes out, in your hands. Now forget, forget all fear: turn this way, and go on, in safety.’

And I, still rooted to the spot: and conscience against it. When he saw me standing there still rooted, and stubborn, troubled a little, he said: ‘Now, see, my son, this wall lies between you and [Beatrice](#).’

As [Pyramus](#) opened his eyes on the point of death, at [Thisbe](#)’s name, and gazed at her, there, where the mulberry was reddened, so, my stubbornness softened, I turned to my wise leader, on hearing that name that always stirs in my mind. At which, he shook his head, and said: ‘What? Do we desire to stay

on this side?’ Then he smiled, as one smiles at a child, won over with an apple.’

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:46-93

The Passage through the Fire

Then he went into the fire, in front of me, begging Statius, who, for a long distance before, had separated us, to come behind.

When I was inside, I would have thrown myself into molten glass to cool myself, so immeasurable was the burning there. My sweet father, to comfort me, went on speaking only of Beatrice, saying: ‘I seem, already, to see her eyes.’

A voice guided us, that was singing on the far side, and, only intent on it, we came out, there, where the ascent begins. ‘Venite

benedicti patris mei: Come ye blessed of my father,' sounded from inside a light that shone there, so bright it overcame me, and I could not look at it. It added: 'The sun, is sinking and the evening comes: do not stay, but quicken your steps, while the west is not yet dark.'

The way climbed straight through the rock, in such a direction that I blocked the light, of the already low sun, in front of me. And we had attempted only a few steps, when I, and the wise, saw, because of the shadow, which vanished, that the sun had set behind us. And before night held all sovereignty, and the horizon, through all its immense spaces, had become one colour, each of us made a bed, of a step: since the law of the Mount

took the power, not the desire, to climb, from us.

As mountain goats, that have been quick and wanton on the summits, before they are fed, become tame, ruminating, silently in the shade, when the sun is hot, guarded by the shepherd leaning on his staff, and watching them as he leans: and as the shepherd lodging in the open, keeps quiet vigil, at night, near his flock, guarding it, in case a wild beast scatters it: so were we, all three, I, the goat, and they, the shepherds, closed in by the high rock, on both sides.

Little could be seen there of the outside world, but through that little space I saw the stars, brighter and bigger than they used to be. As I ruminated, like this, and gazed at them, sleep came to me: sleep that

often knows the future, before the fact exists.

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:94-114 **Dante's third dream**

In that hour, I think, when Cytherean Venus, who always seems burning with the fire of love, first shone from the east towards the Mount, a lady appeared to me in a dream, young and beautiful and going along a plain gathering flowers: and she said, singing: 'Whoever asks my name, know that I am Leah, and go moving my lovely hands around to make a garland. I adorn myself here, to look pleasing in the glass, but my sister, Rachel, never moves from her mirror, and sits there all day long. She is as happy to gaze at her lovely

eyes, as I am to adorn myself with my hands: action satisfies me: her, contemplation.’

And now, at the pre-dawn splendour, which grows more welcome to travellers, when, returning, they lodge nearer home, the shadows of night were vanishing, on all sides, and my sleep with them, at which I rose, seeing the great Masters had already risen.

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:115-142 Virgil’s last words to Dante

‘That sweet fruit, that mortal anxiety goes in search of, on so many branches, will give your hunger peace today.’ Virgil employed such words to me, and there were never gifts equalling these in sweetness. Such deep

longing, on longing, overcame me,
to be above, that afterwards, I felt
my wings growing, for the flight, at
every step.

When the stairway, below us,
was done, and we were on the
topmost step, Virgil fixed his eyes
on me, and said: ‘Son you have seen
the temporal and the eternal fire,
and have reached a place where I,
by myself, can see no further. Here I
have led you, by skill and art: now,
take your delight for a guide: you
are free of the steep path, and the
narrow. See, there, the sun that
shines on your forehead, see the
grass, the flowers and the bushes,
that the earth here produces by
itself.

While the lovely, joyful eyes,
that, weeping, made me come to
you, are arriving, here you can sit



down, or walk amongst all this. Do not expect another word, or sign, from me. Your will is free, direct and whole, and it would be wrong not to do, as it demands: and, by that, I crown you, and mitre you, over yourself.’

Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:1-51
Matilda gathering flowers

Now, eager to explore, within and round, the dense green of the divine wood, that moderated new daylight to my eyes, I left the mountainside without delay, crossing the plain, slowly, slowly, over the ground, perfumed on every side. A sweet breath of continuous air, struck my forehead, with no more force than a gentle wind, before which the branches,

immediately shaking, were all leaning towards that western quarter where the sacred Mount casts its first shadow, not bent so far from their vertical that the little birds, in the treetops, left off practising their art: but singing, in true delight, they welcomed the first breezes among the leaves, that murmured a refrain to their songs: such as gathers, from bough to bough, through the pine-woods on Chiassi's shore, when [Aeolus](#) frees the Sirocco.

Already my slow steps had taken me into the ancient wood, so far that I could not see where I had entered: and, see, a stream prevented my going further, that, with its little waves, bent the grass that issued from its shore, towards the left. All the waters that seem purest, here, would appear tainted, compared to

that, which conceals nothing: though it flows dark, dark in perpetual shade, that never allows the sun or moonlight there.

I rested my feet, and, with my eyes I passed beyond the stream, to stare at the vast multitude of fresh flowers of May, and, just as something suddenly appears, that sets all other thoughts aside, through wonderment, [a lady](#), all alone, appeared to me, going along singing, gathering flowers on flowers, with which all her path was painted. I said to her: ‘I beg you, lovely lady, who warm yourself at Love’s rays, if I can believe appearances, so often witness to the heart, may it please you to come nearer to the stream, so that I can know what you sing. You make me think of where, and how, [Proserpine](#)

seemed, when Ceres, her mother,
lost her, and she, the Spring.

Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:52-138
The Garden's winds, plants and
waters

As a lady, who is dancing, turns,
with feet close to each other, and to
the ground, and barely placing foot
in front of foot, she turned to me,
among the red and yellow flowers,
as a virgin who looks downwards,
modestly: and satisfied my prayer,
drawing so near, that the sweet
sound, and its meaning, reached me.

As soon as she was there, where
the grass is already bathed by the
waves of the lovely stream, she
granted me the gift of raising her
eyes. I do not think as bright a light
shone, beneath Venus's eyelids,

when she was, accidentally, wounded by her son, [Cupid](#), against his wish. [Matilda](#) smiled, from the right bank, opposite, gathering more flowers in her hands, which the high ground bears without seeds. The river kept us three steps apart, but the Hellespont, that [Xerxes](#) crossed, a check to human pride to this day, was not hated more by [Leander](#), because of its turbulent wash, between Sestos and Abydos, than this stream was by me, because it did not open then, for me.

She began: ‘You are new, and perhaps because I am smiling here, in this place chosen as a nest for the human race, wonderingly, you have some doubts: but the psalm “[Delectasti](#): you have made me glad” sheds light that might un-fog your intellect. And you, who are in

front, and entreated me, say if you want to hear anything more, since I came ready to answer your questions, until you are sated.'

'The water,' I said, 'and the sound of the forest, are struggling in me with a new belief, in something, I have heard, contrary to this.' At which she said: 'I will tell you the cause of what you wonder at, and I will clear away the fog that annoys you.'

The highest Good, who is his own sole joy, created Man good, and for goodness, and gave him this place as a pledge of eternal peace. Through Man's fault, he did not stay here long: through Man's fault, he exchanged honest laughter, and sweet play, for tears and sweat. So that the storms, caused below this Mount, by the exhalations of water

and earth, following the heat as far as they can, should not hurt Man, it rose this far towards Heaven, free of them, from beyond where it is closed off.

Now, since the whole of the air turns in a circle with the primal circling, unless its motion is blocked in some direction, that motion strikes this summit, which is wholly free in the clear air, and makes the woods resound because they are so solid: and a plant that is struck has such power, that it impregnates the air with its virtue, and the air, in its circling, scatters it round: and the other soil, depending on its quality and its situation, conceives, and produces various plants, with various virtues.

If this were understood, over there, it would not seem strange

when some plant takes root without obvious seed. And you must know that the sacred plain, where you are, is full of every kind of seed, and bears fruit in it that is not gathered over there.

The water you see does not rise from a spring, fed by the moisture that the cold condenses, as a river does that gains and loses volume, but issues from a constant, unfailing fountain, that, by God's will, recovers as much as it pours out freely, on every side.

On this side it falls with a power that takes away the memory of sin: on the other, with one that restores the memory of every good action. On this side it is called Lethe, on that side Eunoë, and does not act completely unless it is tasted first on this side, and then on that. It

surpasses all other savours, and though your thirst to know may be fully sated, even though I say no more to you, I will give you this corollary, out of grace, and I do not think my words will be less precious to you, because they go beyond my promise to you.

Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:139-148 The Golden Age

Perhaps, in ancient times, those who sang of the Golden Age, and its happy state, dreamed of this place, on Parnassus. Here the root of Humanity was innocent: here is everlasting Spring, and every fruit: this is the nectar of which they all speak.'

Then I turned straight back towards the poets, and saw that,

with smiles, they had heard the last elucidation. Then I turned my face to the lovely lady.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:1-36 The Divine Pageant

She continued, from the end of her words, singing, like a lady in love: *‘Beati, quorum tecta sunt peccata:* Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.’ And, like the nymphs who used, alone, to wander through the woodland shadows, one wishing to see the sun, another to flee it, she moved then, walking along the bank, against the stream, and I across from her, one small step answering the other.

Her steps, with mine, were not a hundred, when both banks curved alike, so that I turned eastwards.

And our journey was not far yet, when the lady turned completely to me, saying: ‘My brother, look and listen.’ And see a sudden brightness flooded, through the great forest, on every side, so that I was unsure if it was lightning. But since lightning vanishes, as it comes, and that shone brighter and brighter, lasting, I said, in my mind: ‘What is this thing?’

And a sweet melody ran through the glowing air, at which righteous zeal made me condemn [Eve](#)’s boldness, who a woman, alone, and newly created, there, where Heaven and Earth were obedient, could not bear to be under any veil, which if she had borne, devoutly, I would have known these ineffable delights earlier, and for longer.

While I was moving among such first fruits of the eternal bliss,

enraptured and still longing for greater joys, the air turned to blazing fire, under the green branches in front of us, and the sweet sound was distinguished as a song.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:37-61
The Seven Branched Candlesticks

O sacred, virgin Muses, if ever I endured hunger, cold or vigil for you, the occasion spurs me on to ask my reward. Now I need Helicon to stream out for me, and Urania to aid me with her choir, to put into words, things that are hard to imagine.

A little further on, the illusion of seven golden trees appeared, caused by the great space still between us and them: but when I had come nearer, so that the common object,

that can deceive the senses, had not lost any of its details, the power that creates matter for reasoning, realised that branched candlesticks were what they were, and the content of the singing was: ‘Hosanna.’ The lovely pageant was blazing out, above, far brighter than the mid-month moon, at midnight.

I turned full of wonder, towards the good Virgil, and he replied with a face no less stunned. Then I turned my face back towards the sublime things, which moved towards us, so slowly, that they would be out-paced by a new bride.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:61-81
The Seven Banners

The lady cried to me: ‘Why are you only so ardent for the sight of

the bright lights, and pay no attention to what comes behind them?’

Then I saw people, dressed in white, following as if behind their leader: and there was never such whiteness, here, among us. The water shone brightly on my left, and reflected my left side, like a mirror, if I gazed into it. When I was situated on the edge, so that the river alone separated me from them, I stopped to see better, and I saw the flames advance, leaving the air behind them tinted, and they had the appearance of trailing banners, so that the air above remained coloured in seven bands, of the hues in which the sun creates his bow, and Diana, the Moon, her halo.



These banners streamed to the rear, way beyond my sight, and, as far as I could judge, the outermost ones were ten paces apart.

Purgatorio CantoXXIX:82-105
The Elders: The Four Beasts

Under as lovely a sky as I could describe, came twenty -four Elders, two by two, crowned with lilies. They were all singing: ‘Blessed art thou among the daughters of Adam, and blessed to all eternity be thy beauties.’ When the flowers, and the other fresh herbs, on the other bank opposite, were free of all those chosen people, four creatures came after them, each one crowned with green leaves, as star follows star in the sky.

Each was plumed with six wings, the feathers full of eyes, and the eyes of [Argus](#), if they were living, would be like them. Reader, I will scatter no more words, to describe their form, since other duties constrain me, so that I cannot be lavish here, but read [Ezekiel](#), who pictures them as he saw them, coming from the icy firmament in whirlwind, cloud and fire, and as you will find them in his pages, so they were here, except that [John, the Divine](#), is with me as to the wings, and differs from him.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:106-132
The Chariot: The Grifon: The
Virtues

The space within the four of them contained a triumphal, two-

wheeled, chariot drawn by a Grifon, harnessed at the neck. And the Grifon stretched each wing upwards between the centre and three of the banners, so that he did no harm by cutting across them. The wings rose so high their tips could not be seen. Its members were golden, where he was birdlike, and the rest white mixed with brilliant red. Neither Scipio Africanus nor, indeed, Augustus ever gladdened Rome with so magnificent a chariot, and the Sun's would be poor by comparison, the Sun's, that was consumed when Phaethon strayed, at Earth's devout request, when Jupiter was darkly just.

Three ladies came dancing, in a circle, by the right hand wheel: one was so red she would scarcely be visible in the fire: the next was as if

her flesh and bones were made of emerald: the third seemed of newly fallen snow: and now they seemed led by the white, and now by the red, and from her song the others took their metre, slow or quick.

By the left hand wheel, four dressed in purple, made festive, following the lead of the one who had three eyes in her face.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154 Luke, Paul and others

Behind the group I have described, I saw two aged men, of similar bearing, but dissimilar clothing, grave and venerable: one was Luke, showing himself to be of the school of that supreme Hippocrates, whom nature made physician to the creatures she most

cares for: the other, Paul, displayed the opposite role, with a sharp, gleaming sword, so that it made me afraid, even on this side of the stream.

Then I saw four, of humble aspect: and behind them all, a solitary old man, John the Divine, coming by, with a visionary face, as if dreaming. And all these seven were costumed like the first company, but had no garland of lilies round their heads, rather one of roses and other crimson flowers, so that someone who saw them close to would have said they were all on fire above their eyes.

And when the chariot was opposite me, a clap of thunder was heard: and those noble people seemed to have their further

progress stopped, and halted there with the first banners.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:1-48
Beatrice

When those Seven Lights of the first Heaven had halted, that never knew setting or rising, or the veil of any other mist but sin, and which made all aware of their duty, just as the lower seven, Ursa Minor, guide the helmsman towards port, the people of truth, who had first appeared, between them and the Grifon, turned towards the chariot, as if towards their place of peace: and one of them, as if sent from Heaven, lifted his voice, three times, singing: *Veni sponsa de Libano:* Come with me from Lebanon, my

spouse,’ and all the others sang after him.

As the Saints at the Last Judgment will rise, ready, each one, from his tomb, singing Halleluiah, with renewed voice, so a hundred rose, in the divine chariot, *ad vocem tanti senis*, at the voice of so great an Elder, the ministers and messengers of eternal life. All were saying: ‘*Benedictus qui venis*: Blessed art thou that comest’ and, scattering flowers above and around, ‘*Manibus o date lilia plenis*: O give lilies with full hands.’

I have seen, before now, at dawn of day, the eastern sky all rose-red, and the rest of the heavens serene and clear, and seen the sun’s face rise, veiled, so that because of the moderating mists, the eye, for a long while, endured him: and so, in a

cloud of flowers, that lifted from the angelic hands, and fell again, inside and beyond, a lady appeared to me, crowned with olive-leaves, over a white veil, dressed in colours of living flame, beneath a green cloak.

And my spirit, that had endured so great a space of time, since it had been struck with awe, trembling, in her presence, through the hidden virtue that issued from her, and without having greater knowledge through my eyes, felt the intense power of former love.

As soon as that high virtue struck my sight, which had already transfixed me, before I was out of my childhood, I turned to the left, with that faith with which a little boy runs to his mother, when he is afraid or troubled, saying to Virgil: ‘There is a barely a drop of blood in

me that does not tremble: I know the tokens of the ancient flame.’

Purgatorio Canto XXX:49-81
Virgil has left: Dante is filled with Shame

But [Virgil](#) had left us, bereft of himself, Virgil, sweetest father, Virgil to whose guidance I gave myself: and all the beauties, that our ancient mother lost, did not prevent my dew-washed cheeks from turning dark again with tears.

‘[Dante](#), do not weep, because Virgil goes, do not weep yet, not yet, since you must weep soon for another reason.’ Like an admiral, who stands, at stern and prow, to inspect the crews who man the other ships, and encourage them to brave action, so I saw the lady who first

appeared to me, veiled, beneath the angelic festival, directing her gaze towards me on this side of the stream, from the left of the chariot, when I turned at the sound of my own name, that I write here, from necessity.

Although the veil which draped her head, crowned with [Minerva](#)'s olive leaves, did not allow her to appear clearly, she continued to speak, regally, and severely, like someone who holds back the sharpest words till last.

'Look at me, truly: I truly am, I truly am Beatrice. How did you dare to approach the Mount? Did you not know that here Man is happy?' My eyes dropped to the clear water, but seeing myself there, I looked back at the grass, so much shame bowed my forehead down. As the mother

seems severe to her child, so she seemed to me: since the savour of sharp pity tastes of bitterness.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:82-145
Her Mission to help him

She fell silent, and immediately the Angels sang: '*In te, Domine, speravi*: In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust..' but did not sing beyond the words: '*pedes meos*: my feet.'

As the snow is frozen, among the living rafters, along Italy's back, under the blast and stress of Slavonic winds, then, melting, trickles down inside its mass, if the ground, free of shadow, breathes, so that the fire seems to melt the candle, so I was frozen, without sighs or tears, before they, who always harmonise their notes with



the melody of the eternal spheres, sang: but when I heard the compassion for me in their sweet harmony, greater than if they had said: ‘Lady, why do you shame him so?’ the ice that had closed around my heart became breath and water, and issued from my chest, in anguish, through my mouth and eyes.

She, still standing on that side of the chariot I spoke of, directed her words, then, to the pitying Angels: ‘You are vigilant in the eternal day, so that night or sleep do not hide one measure of the earth’s journey along its way, from you: therefore I answer with greater care, so that he who weeps there can understand, so that his sorrow and his sin can be measured together.

Not merely by the motion of the vast spheres, that direct each seed to some objective, according to the stars' attendance, but by the generosity of divine graces, that yield their rain from such lofty vapours our eyes do not reach near them, this man, potentially, was such in his *vita nuova*, his new life, that every true skill would have grown miraculously in him. But the more good qualities the earth's soil has, the more wild and coarse it becomes with evil seed, and lack of cultivation.

For a while I supported him with my face: showing him my young eyes, I drew him with me, directed towards the right goal. But, as soon as I was on the threshold of my second age, and changed existences, he left me and gave himself to

others. I was less dear to him, and less pleasing, when I rose from flesh to spirit, and beauty and virtue increased in me: and he turned his steps to an untrue road, chasing false illusions of good, that never completely repay their promise.

Nor was it any use to me to gain inspiration to call him back to himself, in dreams, or otherwise: he valued them so little. He sank so low, that all means to save him were already useless, except that of showing him the lost people. To achieve that, I visited the gates of the dead, and, weeping, my prayers carried to him who guided him upwards.

God's highest law would be broken, if Lethe were gone by, and such food was tasted, without some tax of penitence, that sheds tears.'

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:1-42
Dante confesses his guilt

She began again, continuing without delay, directing her speech with its sharp point towards me, whose edge had seemed keen to me: ‘O you, who are on that side of the sacred stream, say, say if it is true: your confession must meet the charge.’

My powers were so confused, that the voice sounded and was gone before it emerged from its agent. She suffered a pause, then said: ‘What are you thinking of? Reply to me: the sad memories, you have, are not yet erased by the water.’ Confusion and fear, joined together, drove a ‘Yes’ from my mouth, so

quietly that eyes were needed to interpret it.

As a crossbow breaks, in string and bow, when fired at too high a tension, and the bolt hits the mark with lessened force, so I broke under this heavy charge, pouring out a flood of tears and sighs, and my voice died away in transit. At which she said to me: ‘In your desire for me, that led you to love that good, beyond which there is nothing to aspire to, what pits did you find in your path, or chains to bind, that you had to despoil your hope of passing upward? And what allurements, or attractions were displayed in others’ faces, to make you stray towards them?’

After heaving a bitter sigh, I had hardly voice to answer, and my lips gave it shape with effort. I said,

weeping: ‘Present things with false delights turned my steps away, as soon as your face had vanished.’ And she: ‘If you had stayed silent, or denied what you have confessed, your fault would be no less noted, such is the judge who knows of it. But when self-accusation of sin bursts from the mouth, in our Court, the grindstone blunts the edge.’

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:43-69
Beatrice rebukes him

‘However, in order that you might be ashamed of your errors, and might be more steadfast, on hearing the [Siren](#) sing next time, stifle the source of your weeping, and listen: then you will hear how my entombed flesh should have led you towards the opposite goal.

Art and Nature never presented such delight to you, as the lovely body I was enclosed by, now scattered into dust: and if the greatest delight was lost to you, by my death, what mortal thing should have led you to desire it? Truly, at the first sting of false things, you should have risen after me, who was no longer such. Some young girl, or other vanity, of such brief enjoyment, should not have weighted your wings, to wait for more arrows. The young bird stays for two or three, but the net is spread, and the shaft fired, in vain, in front of the eyes of the fully-fledged.

As children stand, mute with shame, listening with eyes on the ground, repentant, and self-confessing, so I stood, there. And

she said: ‘Since you are grieving at what you hear, lift your bearded head, and you will have greater grief from what you see.’

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:70-90
Dante’s remorse

A strong oak-tree is uprooted with less resistance by our northern winds, or the southerlies from [Iarbas](#)’s Africa, than I lifted my face, at her command. And when she spoke of my beard, as a man I knew the venom behind her words.

And when my head was stretched forward, my eyes saw those primal creatures resting from strewing flowers, and my eyes, not yet quite in my control, saw Beatrice, turned towards the Grifon,

which is Christ, one sole person in two natures.

Under her veil, and beyond the stream, she seemed to me to exceed her former self, more than she exceeded others when she was here. The nettle of repentance stung me so fiercely, that the thing that drew me most to love of it, of all other things became most hateful to me. Such great remorse gnawed at my heart, that I fell, stunned, and what I became then she knows, who gave me cause.

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:91-145
Lethe: Beatrice unveiled

Then, when my heart restored the power of outward things, I saw Matilda bending over me, that lady whom I had found alone, and she

said: ‘Hold to me! Hold to me!’ She had drawn me into the river, up to my neck, and she went along, over the water, light as a shuttle, pulling me behind her.

When I was near to the shore of the blessed, I heard: ‘*Asperges me*: cleanse me’ sung so sweetly, I cannot remember it, nor can I describe it. The lovely lady opened her arms, clasped my head, and submerged me so that I had to swallow water, then pulled me out, and led me, cleansed, in among the dance of the four lovely ones, and each took my arm, and singing, they began: ‘Here we are nymphs, and in heaven we are stars: before Beatrice descended to your world, we were ordained to be her helpers. We will take you to her eyes: but the three on the other side, who look more



deeply, will sharpen your vision to the joyful inward light.’

Then they lead me, with them, up to the Grifon’s breast, where [Beatrice](#) stood, turned towards us. They said: ‘See that you do not spare your eyes: we have set you in front of the bright emeralds, from which Love once shot his arrows at you.’ A thousand desires, hotter than flame, kept my eyes fixed on those shining eyes, that in turn stayed fixed on the Grifon. The dual-natured creature was reflected in them, just like the sun in a mirror, with the attributes now of the human, now of the divine. Reader, think how I marvelled, in my mind, to see the thing itself remain unmoving, and yet its image changing.

While my spirit, filled with delight and wonder, was tasting that food, that satisfies and causes hunger, the other three ladies, revealing themselves to be of highest nobility in their aspect, came forward, dancing to their angelic measure. ‘Turn Beatrice, turn your sacred eyes, to your faithful one,’ was their song, ‘he, who has trodden so many steps to see you. By your grace, grace us, by unveiling your face to him, so that he may see the second beauty that you conceal.’

O splendour of eternal living light, who of us is there, grown pale in the shadow of Parnassus, a drinker from its well, whose mind would not seem hampered, trying to render you as you appeared, there, where Heaven in harmony outlines

you, when you showed yourself in
the clear air?

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:1-36
The Pageant moves eastward

My eyes were so fixed on
satisfying their ten-year thirst, that
all my other senses were dulled, and
there was a wall of disinterest either
side of them, so that her holy smile
drew my vision in, towards itself,
into its ancient net: at which my
face was turned of necessity to my
left to those goddesses, because I
heard them say: 'Too intensely.'

And the state of vision the eyes
are in, struck, just now, by the sun,
left me sightless for a while: but
once my sight adjusted to lesser
things (I mean lesser compared to
the greater object of perception, that

I turned away from, of necessity) I saw the glorious pageant had turned round on the right and was returning, with the sun and the seven flames in its front.

As a detachment turns to retreat, behinds its shields, and wheels, with the standard, before it can fully change fronts, that militia of the heavenly region, that led, passed us all by, before the chariot-pole had turned. Then the ladies returned near to the wheels, and the Grifon moved the holy burden forwards, without ruffling a plume.

The lovely lady who drew me across the ford, and Statius, and I, were following the right wheel that made its turn following a tighter arc. So, an angelic melody accompanied our steps, passing through the tall forest that was empty, because of

her who believed the serpent. We had gone as far, perhaps, as an arrow would travel in three flights, when Beatrice descended from the chariot.

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:37-63
The Mystic Tree

I heard them all mutter: ‘Adam!’ Then they surrounded a tree, with every branch stripped of blossom, and foliage. The height of its canopy, that stretches out further the higher it reaches, would be marvelled at by the people of India, in their forests.

‘Blessed, are you, Grifon, who tears nothing sweet-tasting from this tree, with your beak, because the stomach is wrenched by it.’ So the others shouted, round the solid tree;

and the creature of two natures said: 'So the seed of righteousness is preserved.' And turning to the pole he had dragged, he pulled it to the foot of the denuded trunk, and left, bound to it, the Cross, that came from it.

As our trees bud, when the great light falls, mixed with the light that shines from Aries, following Pisces, the heavenly Fish, and each is newly dressed with colour, before the sun yokes his horses under the light of the following constellation, opening tinted more than rose and less than violet, so that tree renewed itself, that had naked branches before.

I did not understand the hymn the people sang then, nor is it sung here, and I could not withstand its burden to the end.

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99
Dante sleeps: Beatrice guards the chariot

If I could depict how [Argus](#)'s pitiless eyes closed in sleep, hearing the tale of [Syrinx](#), those eyes, whose greater power to watch, cost him so dear, I would paint how I fell asleep, as an artist does from a model: but who can truly show drowsiness? So, I move on, to when I woke, and say that a bright light tore the veil of sleep, and there was a cry: 'Rise, what are you about?'

As, at the Transfiguration, [Peter](#), [John](#), and [James](#) were brought, to behold the blossom of [Christ](#), the apple-tree, that makes the Angels eager for its fruit, and makes a perpetual marriage in Heaven, and came to themselves, having been

overcome, at the word by which Lazarus's deeper sleep had been broken, and saw that Moses and Elias had vanished, and their Master's white raiment changed, even so I came to myself, and saw the compassionate one, who guided my steps, before, along the stream, bending over me.

And all bemused I said: 'Where is Beatrice?' and Matilda replied: 'See her sitting under the new foliage, at its root. See, the company that surround her: the rest are rising after the Grifon, with sweeter and deeper song.' And I do not know if her words went on, because now She was in front of my eyes, whose presence prevented me from attending to other things. She sat, alone, on the bare earth, left there as the guardian of the chariot, that I

had seen the dual-natured creature anchor to the tree.

The seven nymphs made a ring, encircling her, carrying those lights, which are secure from the north and south winds, in their hands.

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:100-160 **The Church's Past, Present and** **Future**

Beatrice spoke: 'You will not be a forester long, here, and will be with me, a citizen, eternally, of that Rome of which Christ is a Roman. So, to help the world that lives wrongly, fix your gaze on the chariot, and take care to write what you see, when you return, over there.' And I, completely obedient to her commands, set my mind and eyes where she desired.

Fire never fell so swiftly from dense cloud, falling from that region that is most remote, as I saw Jupiter's eagle swoop down through the tree, tearing its bark, its flowers, and its new leaves, and he struck the chariot with all his power, at which it swayed like a ship in a storm, beaten by the seas, now to larboard, then to starboard.

Then I saw a vixen that seemed starved, of all decent food, leap into the body of the triumphal car. But my Lady put her to a flight as swift as fleshless bones could sustain, rebuking her for her foul sins.

Then I saw the eagle drop into the body of the chariot from the place where he had first swooped, and leave it feathered with his plumage. And a voice came from Heaven, as it comes from a

sorrowing heart, and it said: O my little boat, how badly you are freighted!’

Then it seemed to me that the ground opened, between the two wheels, and a dragon emerged pointing his tail upwards through the chariot, and drawing his spiteful tail towards himself, like a wasp withdrawing her sting, he wrenched away part of its base, and slid away.

What was left, covered itself, with those feathers, just as fertile land is covered with grass, offered perhaps with true and benign intent, and the chariot-pole and both wheels were covered by them, in less time than a mouth is open for a sigh. The holy structure, transformed, grew heads above its members, three above the pole and one at each corner. The first three

were horned like oxen, but the other four had a single horn on the forehead: such a Monster was never seen before.

Seated on it, secure as a tower on a high hill, a shameless Whore appeared, looking eagerly round her. And I saw a Giant standing by her side, so that she could not be snatched from him, and each kissed the other, now and then: but because she turned her lustful, wandering eye on me, her fierce lover scourged her from head to foot. Then full of jealousy and vicious with anger, he loosed the Monster, and dragged it so far, through the wood, that he made a screen between me, and the Whore and Monster.



Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57 Beatrice's prophetic words

Now as three, then four, alternately, and weeping, the ladies began a sweet psalmody, singing: '*Deus, venerunt gentes*: O God, the heathen are come,' and Beatrice, compassionate and sighing, was listening to them, so altered in aspect, that Mary was no less altered at the foot of the Cross. But when the virgins gave way for her to speak, standing upright she replied, colouring like fire: *Modicum, et* '*non videbitis me, et iterum*, my beloved sisters, *modicum, et vos videbitis me*: a little while, and ye shall not see me, my beloved sisters, and again, a little while, and ye shall see me.'

Then she set all seven of them in front of her, and, merely with a nod of the head, motioned myself, the Lady and the Sage who had stayed, behind her. So she went on, and I believe that hardly a tenth step touched the ground, until her eyes struck my eyes, and she said to me, quietly: ‘Come along, faster, so that, if I speak to you, you are well placed to listen.’

As soon as I, dutifully, was next to her, she said: ‘Brother, why when you come along with me, do you not venture to question me?’ I was like those, who are too humble in speech in front of their elders, who do not raise their voice fully to their lips, and short of full volume, I began: ‘Madonna, you know my needs, and what is good for them.’ And she to me: ‘I want you to free yourself,

now, from fear and shame, so that you no longer speak like one who dreams.

Learn that the chariot that the serpent shattered was, and is not: and let him, whose fault it is, know that God's vengeance cannot be evaded. The eagle, that left its feathers on the car, to make it a Monster, to be preyed on, shall not be without heirs for ever, since I see, with certainty, and so I tell you, stars are already nearing, safe from all barriers and impediments, that will bring us times in which a five-hundred, a ten, and a five (DVX, a leader) sent by God, will kill the Whore, and the Giant, who sins with her.

And perhaps my prophecy, as obscure as Themis and the Sphinx, persuades you less, because it

darkens the mind, after their fashion, but the fact is that Oedipus, will solve this difficult question, without damage to flocks or harvest.

Take note of it: and just as these words carry from you to me, tell them to those who live the life that is a race towards death, and remember when you write, not to hide that you have seen the tree, now twice spoiled, here.’

Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:58-102

The Tree of Empire

‘Whoever robs it, and tears at it, in a blasphemous act, offends God, who created it sacred to his sole use. Adam, the first soul, longed for Him, in torment and desire, for more than five thousand years: He who punished the bite of the apple

in Himself. Your intelligence is asleep if it does not judge that tree to be so high, and widened towards its summit, from some special cause. And if your idle thoughts had not been like the waters of the River Elsa round your mind, petrifying it, and their delights had not stained it as Pyramus's blood the mulberry, you would have recognised in the tree, by these many circumstances alone, that, morally, God's justice is in the injunction.

But since I see your mind made of stone, and like a stone, stained, so the light of my words dazes you, I want you to carry my words away with you as well, if not written at least in symbolic form, for the same reason that the pilgrim's staff returns wreathed with palm-branches. And I said: 'My brain is

now stamped by you, like wax by the seal, whose imprint does not change. But why do your words, I longed for, soar so far beyond my vision, that the more it strains after them, the more they vanish?

She said: 'So you may know the School you followed, and see whether its teachings follow my words, and may see that your way is as far from the divine way, as the swiftest Heaven is from the earth.' At which I replied: 'I do not remember that I was ever estranged from you, nor does conscience gnaw me, regarding it.' She answered, smiling: 'And, if you cannot remember it, think, now, how you drank Lethe's water today: and if fire is deduced from smoke, this forgetfulness clearly proves the guiltiness of your desire, intent on

other things. But now my words will be naked, as far as is needed to show them to your dull vision.'

Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:103-145 Dante and Statius drink from Eunoë

The sun was holding the noon, circle which varies here and there, as location varies, shining more brightly, travelling more slowly, when, like those who act as escorts for people, who stop if they find strange things or their traces, those seven ladies stopped, at the edge of a pale shadow, such as the Alps cast over their cool streams, under green leaves and dark branches.

I seemed to see Euphrates and Tigris, welling from one spring, in front of them, and parting, like

lingering friends. I said: ‘O light, O glory of human kind, what waters are these that pour from one source, here, and separate themselves?’ At my prayer, she said: ‘Beg Matilda, to explain,’ and that lovely Lady answered her, like one who absolves herself from blame: ‘I have told him about this, and about other things, and I am sure Lethe’s water does not hide them from him.’ And Beatrice said: ‘Perhaps some greater care, that often robs us of memory, has dimmed the eyes of his mind. But see, Eunoë, that flows from there: lead him to it, and as you are used to do, revive his flagging virtue.’

Like a gentle spirit, that does not make excuses, but forms her will from another’s will, as soon as it is revealed, by outward sign, so that



lovely Lady, set out, after taking charge of me, and said to Statius, in a ladylike way: ‘Come, with him.’

Reader, if I had more space to write, I would speak, partially at least, about that sweet drink, which would never have sated me: but because all the pages determined for the second Canticle are full, the curb of art lets me go no further.

I came back, from the most sacred waves, remade, as fresh plants are, refreshed, with fresh leaves: pure, and ready to climb to the stars.

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Paradiso Canto I:1-36 Dante's Invocation

The glory of Him, who moves all things, penetrates the universe, and glows in one region more, in another less. I have been in that Heaven that knows his light most, and have seen things, which whoever descends from there has neither power, nor knowledge, to relate: because as our intellect draws near to its desire, it reaches such depths that memory cannot go back along the track.

Nevertheless, whatever, of the sacred regions, I had power to treasure in my mind, will now be the subject of my labour.

O good [Apollo](#), for the final effort, make me such a vessel of your genius, as you demand for the

gift of your beloved laurel. Till now, one peak of Parnassus was enough, but now inspired by both I must enter this remaining ring. Enter my chest, and breathe, as you did when you drew [Marsyas](#) out of the sheath that covered his limbs.

O Divine Virtue if you lend me your help, so that I can reveal that shadow of the kingdom of the Blessed, stamped on my brain, you will see me come to your chosen bough, and there crown myself with the leaves, that you, and the subject, will make me worthy of. Father, they are gathered, infrequently from it, for a Caesar's or a Poet's Triumph, through the fault, and to the shame, of human will: so the leaves of [Daphne](#)'s tree, the [Peneian](#) frond, should light joy in the joyful Delphic god, when it makes

someone long for them. A great flame follows a tiny spark: perhaps, after me, better voices will pray, and Parnassus will respond.

Paradiso Canto I:37-72 The Sun

The Light of the World rises, for mortals, through different gates: but he issues on a happier course, and is joined to happier stars, and moulds and stamps the earthly wax more in his manner, when his rising joins four circles in three crosses. It had made it morning there, when it was evening here: and now that hemisphere was all bright, at noon, and this one dark, when I saw Beatrice, turned towards her left, gazing at the sun. No eagle ever fixed its eyes on it so intently.

And even as the reflected ray always issues from the first, and rises back upwards, like a pilgrim wishing to return, so my stance took its form from hers, infused through the eyes into my imagination, and I fixed my eyes on the sun, beyond our custom. Much is allowed to our powers there, which is not allowed here, through the gift of that place, made to fit the human species.

I could not endure it long, but enough to see him sparkle all round, like iron poured, molten, from the furnace. And suddenly, it seemed that day was added to day, as though He who has the power, had equipped Heaven with a second sun.

Beatrice was standing, with her gaze fixed on the eternal spheres, and I, removing my sight from above, fixed it on her. In that aspect

I became, inwardly, like Glaucus,
eating the grass that made him one
with the gods of the sea.

To go beyond Humanity is not to be
told in words: so let the analogy
serve for those to whom grace,
alone, may allow the experience.

Paradiso Canto I:73-99 The Harmony of the Spheres

Love, who rules the Heavens,
you know, who lifted me upwards,
with your light, whether I was only
that which you created, new, in me.

When the sphere, which you
make eternal through the world's
longing, drew my mind towards
itself with that harmony which you
tune and modulate, so much of the
Heavens seemed to me then lit by
the sun's flame, that no rainfall or

river's flow ever made so wide an expanse of lake. The novelty of the sound, and the great light, lit a greater longing in me than I had ever felt, desiring to know their cause. So that She, who saw me as I see myself, opened her lips, to still my troubled mind, before I could open mine to ask, and said: 'You make yourself stupid with false imaginings, and so you do not see, what you would see, if you discarded them.'

You are no longer on earth, as you think, but lightning leaving its proper home, never flew as quickly as you, who are returning there.' If my first perplexity was answered by the brief smiling words, I was more entangled by a second, and I said: 'Content, and already free of one

great wonder, now I am startled as to how I lift above lighter matter.’

Paradiso Canto I:100-142
Beatrice explains Universal Order

At that, after a sigh of pity, she turned her eyes towards me, with that look a mother gives to her fevered child, and began: ‘All things observe a mutual order among themselves, and this is the structure that makes the universe resemble God. In it the higher creatures find the signature of Eternal Value, which is the end for which these laws were made, that I speak of.

In that order, I say, all things are graduated, in diverse allocations, nearer to, or further from, their source, so that they move towards diverse harbours, over the great sea

of being, each one with its given instincts that carry it onwards. This instinct carries the fire towards the moon; that one is the mover in the mortal heart; this other pulls the earth together and unifies it. And this bow does not only fire creatures that are lacking in intelligence, but also those that have intellect and love.

The Providence that orders it so, makes [the Empyrean](#), in which the ninth sphere whirls with the greatest speed, quiet, with its light: and the power of the bowstring, that directs whatever it fires towards a joyful target, carries us towards it now, as if to the appointed place. It is true that, as form is sometimes inadequate to the artist's intention, because the material fails to answer, so the creature, that has power, so

impelled, to swerve towards some other place, sometimes deserts the track (just as fire can be seen, darting down from a cloud) if its first impulse is deflected towards earth by false pleasures.

You should not wonder more at your ascent, if I judge rightly, than at rivers falling, from mountains to their foot. It would be a marvellous thing, in you, if without any obstruction, you had settled below; just as stillness would be marvellous, on earth, in a living flame.’ At that She turned her gaze back towards Heaven.

Paradiso Canto II:1-45 The First Sphere: The Moon: Inconstancy

O you, in your little boat, who, longing to hear, have followed my

keel, singing on its way, turn to regain your own shores: do not commit to the open sea, since, losing me, perhaps, you would be left adrift.

The water I cut was never sailed before: [Minerva](#) breathes, [Apollo](#) guides, and the nine [Muses](#) point me toward the Bears.

You other few, who have lifted your mouths, in time, towards the bread of Angels, by which life up here is nourished, and from which none of them come away sated, you may truly set your ship to the deep saltwater, following my furrow, in front of the water falling back to its level. The glorious Argonauts who sailed to Colchis, who marvelled when they saw [Jason](#) turned ploughman, did not marvel as much as you will.

The inborn, perpetual thirst for the divine regions lifted us, almost as swiftly as you see the Heavens move. Beatrice was gazing upwards, and I at her: and I saw myself arriving, in the space of time perhaps it takes an arrow to be drawn, released, and leave the notch, there, where a marvellous thing engaged my sight: and therefore She, from whom nothing I did was hidden, turning towards me, as joyful as she was lovely, said: ‘Turn your mind towards God in gratitude, who has joined us with [the first planet.](#)’

It seemed to me that a cloud covered us, dense, lucid, firm, and polished, like diamond struck by sunlight. The eternal pearl accepted us into it, as water accepts a ray of light, though still, itself, unbroken.

If we cannot conceive, here, how one dimension could absorb another, which must be the case, if one body enters another, and if I were then a body, the greater should be our longing to see that Essence, where we see how our own nature, and God's, were once unified.

There, what we take, on trust, will be shown us, not demonstrated, but realised in ourselves, like a self-evident truth in which we believe.

Paradiso Canto II:46-105 The Shadows on the Moon

I replied to her: 'Lady, I thank Him who has raised me from the mortal world, as devoutly as I can, but tell me what are those dark marks on this planet, that make the

people down there on earth make fables about [Cain](#)?’

She smiled a moment, and then said: ‘If human opinion errs, where the key of the senses cannot unlock it, the arrows of amazement should certainly not pierce you, since you see that Reason’s wings are too short, even when the senses can take the lead. But tell me what you yourself think about it.’ And I: ‘I think what appears variegated to us up here, is caused by dense and rare bodies.’

And she: ‘You will see that your thought is truly submerged in error, if you listen attentively to the argument I will make against it.’

The eighth sphere, the Stellar Heaven, shows many lights to you, which can be seen to have diverse appearance, in quantity and quality.

If rarity and density alone produced that effect, there would be one quality in all of them, more or less equally distributed. Different qualities must be the result of different formal principles, and on your reasoning, only one could exist.

Again, if rarity were the cause of those dark non-reflecting patches you ask about, this planet would be short of matter in one part, right through: or, as a body layers fat and lean, it would have alternate pages in its volume.

If the first were true, it would be revealed by solar eclipses, when the light would shine, through the less dense parts, as it does when falling on anything else that is translucent. That is not so: so we must consider the second case, and if I can show

this is false also, your idea will have been refuted.

If this less dense matter does not go right through, there must be a boundary, beyond which its denser opposite must prevent light travelling on, and from that boundary the rays would be reflected, as coloured light returns from glass that hides lead behind it. Now you will say that the ray is darker here than elsewhere because it is reflected from further back. Experiment can untangle you from that suggestion, if you will try it, which is always the spring that feeds the rivers of your science.

Take three mirrors, and set two equidistant from you, and let the third, further away, be visible to your eyes, between the other two. Turn towards them, and have a light

behind you, reflected from the three mirrors, back towards you. Though the more distant has a smaller area, you will see it shine as brightly as the others.

Paradiso Canto II:106-148 The Diffusion of the Divine Spirit

Now, I wish to illuminate you, who are stripped in mind, as the surface of the snow is stripped of colour and coldness by the stroke of the sun's warm rays, with light so living it will tremble, as you gaze at it.

In the Empyrean, the heaven of divine peace, a body whirls, the Primum Mobile, in whose virtue rests the existence of everything it contains. The Stellar Heaven that follows next, within and below it, which shows many lights, divides

this existence among diverse essences, which it separates out, and contains. The other seven, lower Heavens circling, dispose the distinct powers they have, in themselves, by various differentiations, to their own seeds and ends.

These organs of the universe fall, as you can see, from grade to grade, since they receive from above, and work downwards. Now, note well how I thread this pass, to the truth you long for, so that afterwards you may know how to keep the ford alone.

The motion and power, of the sacred lower gyres, must be derived from the Angels, who are their movers and are blessed, as the hammer's art derives from the blacksmith. And the Stellar Heaven,

that so many lights beautify, takes its imprint from the profound mind, of the Cherubim, that turn it, and from that forms the seal. And as the soul, in your dust, diffuses itself through your different members, and melds to diverse powers, so the Divine Intelligence deploys its goodness, multiplied throughout the stars, still turning round its own unity. Each separate Angelic virtue makes a separate alloy with the precious body it vivifies, in which it is bound, as life is bound in you. Because of the joyful nature it flows from, the Angelic virtue, mingled with the body, shines through it, as joy shines through the living eye.

From this, come the differences, between light and light, not from density or rarity: this is the formal principle that, according to its own

excellence, produces the turbid and the clear.

Paradiso Canto III:1-33 The Spirits manifested in the Moon

That sun, which first warmed my heart with love, had unveiled lovely truth's sweet aspect to me, by proof and refutation: and I lifted up my head to speak, to confess myself corrected and believing, as was needed. But something appeared, that forced me to look at it, so that I stopped thinking of my confession.

As the outlines of our faces are reflected, from transparent, polished glass, or from clear, tranquil water that is not deep enough for the bottom to be darkened, and are so faint that a pearl on a white forehead is not distinguished more slowly by

our eyes, so I saw many faces, eager to speak: at which I fell into the opposite error to that which sparked love between [Narcissus](#) and the pool. I was no sooner aware of them, than, thinking they were reflected images, I turned my eyes round to see whose they were: and I saw nothing, and turned them back again, straight to the light of my sweet guide whose holy eyes glowed, as she smiled.

She said: ‘Do not wonder if I smile, in the presence of your childish thought, since it does not trust itself with the truth, but turns, as it usually does, to emptiness. Those you behold are truly substantial, consigned here for failing in their vows. So speak to them, and listen, and believe, since the true light that satisfies them,

does not allow them to turn their steps away from itself.’

Paradiso Canto III:34-60
Piccarda Donati

And I turned to the shadow who seemed to long to speak to me most, and, like someone whom too great a desire seizes, I began: ‘O spirit, happily created, who feels, in the rays of the eternal life, that sweetness, never understood till it is tasted, it would please me, if you would grace me with your name and your story.’

At which she replied, eagerly, with smiling eyes: ‘Our love no more closes the gate on a valid request, than does that Love which would make all its courts like itself. I was a virgin sister in the world,

and if your memory is searched deeply, my greater beauty, now, will not hide me from you, but you will know me again, as [Piccarda](#), who am blessed in this sphere that moves the slowest, placed here with these others, who are blessed. Our affections that are only inflamed by the pleasure of the Holy Spirit, delight to be informed under his guidance. And this fate, which seems so humble, is given us because our vows were neglected and missing certain cantos.’

At that I said to her: ‘In your marvellous aspect, something divine shines out again, that transmutes you from my previous concept of you. That is why I was slow to recall you to mind: now what you tell me gives me such assistance, that I remember you more clearly.’

Paradiso Canto III:61-96 God's Will

‘But tell me, you who are happy here, do you wish for a higher place, to see further, or to make yourself dearer?’ She smiled with the other shadows first, a little, then replied to me so joyously she seemed to be burning with the first fire of love: ‘Brother, the power of love quiets our will, and makes us only long for what we have, and gives us no other thirst. If we desired to be higher up, our wishes would be at odds with his will, who assigns us here, and there is no room for that discord in these circles, if you think again about love’s nature, and that we *of necessity* have our being in Love.

No, it is the essence of this *being blessed* to keep ourselves to the Divine Will, through which our own wills are unified. So that our being as we are, from step to step, throughout the kingdom, is a joy to all the kingdom, as it is to the king, who draws our wills towards what he wills: and in his will is our peace, *la sua volontate è nostra pace*: it is the sea, to which all things flow, that it creates, and nature forms.’ It was clear to me then how every part of Heaven is Paradise, even though the grace of the Highest Good does not pour down to it in only one way.

But even as it happens that, if one kind of food satisfies us, while the appetite for another kind persists, and giving thanks for that one, we ask for this one, so by word and gesture I learned from her what

that warp was, through which she had not drawn the shuttle, to its end.

Paradiso Canto III:97-130 St Clare: The Empress Constance

She said: ‘A life perfected, and great merit, set a lady, [Saint Clare](#), higher in Heaven, and there are those, in your world, who dress and veil themselves, according to her rule, so that they might sleep and wake, till death, with the Spouse who accepts every vow, which Love has made conformable with his pleasure. I fled from the world, while still a girl, to follow her, and shut myself in her habit, and promised to pursue the way of her company.

After that, men, who were more used to evil than good, tore me

away from that sweet cloister, and God knows what my life became then.

And this other splendour, who shows herself to you, on my right side, and who burns with all the light of our sphere, says what I say, of myself, about herself. She was a sister, and, in a similar way, the shadow of the holy veil was snatched from her head. But, turned back towards the world as she was, against her will, and against right dealings, she was never torn from her heart's veil. This is the light of the great Constance, who by Henry the Sixth, the second stormwind of Suabia, conceived Frederick, the third and final power.' So she spoke to me, and then began singing: 'Ave Maria', and, singing, vanished like a heavy



weight through deep water. My vision, which followed her as far as it could, turned, when it lost her, to the mark of a greater longing, and fastened its look wholly on Beatrice: but she flashed into my gaze so brightly, that my sight could not at first endure it, and this made me slower with my questioning.

Paradiso Canto IV:1-63 Dante's doubts: The Spirits: Plato's Error

Death from starvation would come to a man, between two foods, equally distant and equally appetising, before a free man set his teeth in either. So a lamb would stand, equally fearful, between the appetites of two fierce wolves, or a dog stand still between two hinds. So I do not blame or commend

myself for keeping quiet, caught in the same way, suspended between doubts, because I was forced to.

I kept quiet, but my longing was pictured on my face, and my questioning also, in far warmer colours than speech could show. And Beatrice took the part that [Daniel](#) took, when he lifted [Nebuchadnezzar](#)'s cloud of anger that had made him cruel, unjustly, and she said: 'I can see clearly how this desire and that one stirs you, so that your anxiety constricts itself, and cannot breathe itself out.

You argue: 'If the right intent is still there, how can another's violence lessen my measure of worth?' And you are given further cause for perplexity, by the souls returning to the stars, in [Plato](#)'s doctrine. These are the two

questions that weigh equally on your will, so I will take that first which contains the most dangerous error.

He of the Seraphim nearest to God, [Moses](#), [Samuel](#), [John](#), [either](#), one you may choose, and [Mary](#), none of them take their places in any different Heaven than the spirits who appeared to you just now, nor do they have more years or less of existence. But all beautify the first sphere, the Empyrean, and share sweet life, but differently, by feeling the eternal spirit more, or less.

They have shown themselves here, not because this sphere is theirs, but to signify the least steep celestial ascent for you. Such speech needs to match your faculties that can only make fit matter, for your intellect, from what is apprehended

by your senses. So the Scriptures also bend to your capacity, attributing hands and feet to God, symbolically, and Holy Church represents [Gabriel](#) and [Michael](#), and [Raphael](#) who made [Tobit](#) complete again, in human form.

What Timaeus argues concerning spirits, is not what can be seen here, since he seems to believe what he says, and says the soul returns to its star, thinking it was split from it, when nature gave it form, though perhaps his meaning is different than the words say, and may have an intention that should not be derided. If he means that the honour and the blame, ascribed to their influence, returns to these spheres, perhaps his arrow hits some mark of truth.

This principle, badly understood, almost wrenched the whole world awry, so that it rushed to call upon the names of Jupiter, Mars and Mercury.’

Paradiso Canto IV:64-114
Response to Violence: The Dual Will

‘The other source of doubt which troubles you, is less venomous, because its evil influence could not lead you away from me, elsewhere. That our justice appears an injustice to mortal eyes, is a question for faith, not for heretical error. But since your intellect has the power to penetrate easily to this truth, I will satisfy you, as you desire.

If violence occurs when those who suffer it do nothing to

contribute, to what displays force towards them, well then, these souls did not have that excuse: since, the will cannot be overcome if it does not will to be, but behaves like nature in the flames, though a thousand times wrenched away by violence. But if it wavers, more or less, it helps the force against it: and they wavered, since they had the power to return later to the sacred place.

If their will had remained entire, like that which held [Saint Lawrence](#) on the grid, and made [Mucius Scaevola](#) treat his right hand with severity, it would have pushed them back towards the path, from which they were taken, as soon as they were free: but such strong will is all too rare.

Now, if you have gleaned what you should have from these words, the difficulty that would have troubled you, many more times, has been resolved. But now another gulf across your track, meets your eyes, which would make you weary, before you crossed it, alone.

I have surely instilled in your mind that spirits who are blessed cannot tell a lie, because they live close to the First Truth, and also you might have understood, from Piccarda, that Constance maintained her devotion to the veil, so that Piccarda appears to contradict me. Brother, many times before, things have been done to escape danger, that were against the grain, and not fitting: so [Alcmaeon](#), moved by his father's prayer, killed his own

mother, and to be pious, rendered himself impious.

At this point, I want you to remember that violence is allowed by the will, and they work together, so that the offence cannot be excused. The absolute will does not consent to evil, but it does consent, in as much as it fears that, if it does not, it will encounter worse. So, when Piccarda expresses this, she is speaking of the absolute will, and I of the practical will, so that, together, we both speak the truth.'

Paradiso Canto IV:115-142

Dante's desire for Truth

Such was the flow, from that holy stream, that rose from the fountain from which all truth derives: and was such that it brought

peace to both my desires. Then I said: ‘O divine lady, loved by the First Lover, you whose speech floods through me, and warms me, so that it makes me more and more alive, my affections have not the depth to be able to return grace for grace but may He who sees it, and has the power, respond to it.

Now I see that our intellect can never be satisfied unless the Truth, which no truth goes beyond, shines on it. It rests there, like a wild creature in its lair, as soon as it has reached it: and it can, otherwise all longing would be in vain. So inquiry grows, like a new shoot at the base of truth, a natural thing that rises towards the summit, from ridge to ridge. That invites me, and gives me confidence, to question you lady,

reverentially, about another truth hidden from me.

I wish to know if Man can give you such satisfaction, by other good intentions, for his broken vows, as not to weigh short on your scales.’

Beatrice looked at me, with eyes so filled with divine sparks of love, that my faculties turned away, overcome, and I felt lost, with downcast eyes.

Paradiso Canto V:1-84 Free Will: Vows: Dispensations

‘If I flame at you, in the heat of love, beyond the degree of it seen on earth, and, in so doing, overcome the power of your eyes, do not wonder, since it arises from perfect vision, that, as it understands, advances in the good it understands.

I note clearly how the eternal light, already, shines back from your intellect, that, which, once seen, always sets love alight, and if anything else seduces your love, it is nothing but a trace of this light, wrongly comprehended, that shines through in it.

You wish to know whether reparation may be made, for broken vows, by means of some other service, great enough as to render the soul secure from disputation.’ So Beatrice began this canto, and like someone who does not pause, continued the sacred progress, like this: ‘The greatest gift that God made at the Creation, out of his munificence, the one that most fitted his supreme goodness, and which he values most, is Free Will, with

which intelligent creatures, all and sundry, were, and are, endowed.

Now the high value placed on vows will be clear to you, if they are made such that God consents, when you consent: since, in confirming the pact between God and Man, the guilty party is rendered such by this treasure of Free Will, just as I say, and by their own act. What can be done then, in recompense? If you thought to make good use of what you once consecrated, you would be doing good with stolen evil. You are now clear on the major point.

But since Holy Church grants dispensations, that seem to run counter to the truth I have revealed, you must still sit at table for a while, as the tough fibres, you have eaten, require further help to aid digestion. Open your mind to what I unfold for

you, and fix it inwardly, since to understand and not retain, is not knowledge.

Two things appertain to the essence of this self-sacrifice: the first is its content: the second is the vow itself. The latter can never be cancelled, except by being kept: and it is about this that my previous discourse is so precise: so it was necessary, always, for the Hebrews to make sacrifice, though, as you ought to know, the thing sacrificed might sometimes be altered.

The content, the other aspect of the matter being explained to you, may indeed be such that there is no offence if it is substituted by other content. But let no one shift the burden from his shoulder at his own discretion, without a turn of the gold and silver keys (of knowledge and

authority). And let him consider any change as foolish, unless the thing that is lapsed from bears a proportion of four to six, to the thing replacing it. And so whatever weighs so heavily in respect of its value, that it exceeds every scale, can never be replaced by any other means.

Human beings should never take vows lightly: be faithful, and not perverse, as [Jepthath](#) was perverse in his first vow, whom it would have been more fitting to have said: '*Mal feci*: I did wrong,' than keep the vow and do worse: and you may accuse the great leader of the Greeks, [Agamemnon](#), of the same foolishness, that made [Iphigenia](#) weep that her face was lovely, and made the wise and foolish weep for her, hearing tell of such a rite.

Be more cautious in action, you Christians, not like a feather blown by every wind: and do not think that all water purifies. You have the Old and New Testaments, and the shepherd of the Church to guide you: let that be enough for your salvation. If evil greed declares otherwise, be men not mindless sheep, so that the Jews among you do not deride you. Do not do as the lamb does that leaves its mother's milk, capricious and silly, sporting with itself for pleasure.'

**Paradiso Canto V:85-139 The
Second Sphere: Mercury:
Ambition**

So Beatrice spoke to me, as I write it: then she turned, all in longing, to that region where the

universe is most alive. Her silence, and her changed aspect, demanded reticence from my eager intellect that already had new questions to ask. And like an arrow, that hits the target, before the bowstring is still, we rose to the second sphere.

There I saw my Lady, so delighted, at committing herself to the light of this heaven, that the planet itself grew brighter. And if the star was altered, and smiled, what did I, who am, by my very nature, changeable in every way!

As the fish in a still, clear pool swim towards whatever falls from above that they consider something to feed on, so I saw more than a thousand radiances draw towards us, and in each one was heard: *‘Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori*: Behold someone who will increase our



love.’ And as each one came to us, the shadow seemed filled with delight, judging by the bright glow that came from it.

Reader, think how you would feel an anguished craving, to know more, if what I start now did not continue, and you will see yourself how I longed to hear from them about their state, as soon as they were manifested to my sight.

‘O fortunately-born one, you, to whom grace concedes the right to see the thrones of eternal triumph, before you abandon the place of militancy, we are fired by the light that burns through all the heavens, and therefore if you want to be lit by us, satisfy yourself at pleasure.’ So one of the spirits said to me, and Beatrice said: ‘Speak, speak in

safety, and believe, as you would gods.’

Turned to the light that had spoken to me first, I said: ‘Truly, I see how you are nested in your own light, and that you draw it through your eyes, since they sparkle as you smile, but I do not know who you are, noble spirit, or why you are graded in this sphere, that is veiled, for mortals, in the sun’s rays,’ at which it glowed more brightly even than before.

Like the sun, which hides itself in excess light when heat has eaten away the moderating effect of the thick clouds, so the sacred figure, through greater delight, hid himself in his own rays, and so, enclosed, enclosed, replied to me, as the following canto declares.

Paradiso Canto VI:1-111
Justinian: The Empire

‘When Constantine had turned the Imperial eagle eastwards, against the sky’s course which it had followed in the wake of Aeneas, who took Lavinia from her father, the Bird of God held court at the extremity of Europe, for two hundred years and more, near to the mountains of Troy that he had first issued from: and there he ruled the world, under the shadow of his sacred wings, from reign to reign, until by the passage of time, rule fell to me.

Caesar I was, Justinian I am, who pared excess and ineffectiveness from the Law, at the wish of the First Love I now feel: and when I first fixed my mind on that labour, I

held that Christ had one nature, and no more, and I was content in that belief: but [Agapetus](#), the blessed, who was Pope, pointed me to the true faith, by his words. I believed him, and now I see the content of his faith, as clearly as you see that in every [contradictory pair](#), if one statement is false, the other is true. As soon as I was in step with the Church, it pleased God, in his grace, to inspire me to that high task, and I gave it my all, and committed my weapons to [Belisarius](#), whom Heaven's right hand was so wedded to, it was a sign that I should rest from them. Now here is the end, already, of my answer to your first question: who I am: but its context forces me to follow with some additions.

So you may know how much reason is on the side of those who oppose the sacred banner of Empire, as well as those who embrace it, see how great a nobility has made it worthy of reverence, [beginning](#) from the time when Evander's son, [Pallas](#), died to ensure its rule.

You know it rested in [Alba Longa](#) for more than three hundred years, until the end, when the [three Horatii](#) and the [three Curiatii](#) fought for it. And you know what it enacted, from the wrong to the [Sabine](#) women, to [Lucretia](#)'s grief, through the reigns of seven kings who conquered the neighbouring peoples.

You know what it did, carried against [Brennus](#) the Gaul, against Greek [Pyrrhus](#), and against the other princes and powers, from which

Torquatus, and Cincinnatus, named for his curling hair, the Decii, and the Fabii, earned the fame that I delight in remembering.

It threw down the Arab pride that followed Hannibal over the Alps, from which the River Po rises. Scipio and Pompey triumphed beneath it, while still young, and it was bitter to Fiesole, in those hills, under which you were born.

Then, near the time when Heaven wished to lead the world to its own peaceful mode, Caesar laid hands on it, at Rome's wish, and the Isère and Arar, the Seine, and every valley filled by the Rhone, know what it achieved, then, from Var to Rhine.

What it did then, when he left Ravenna and crossed the Rubicon, was so great that tongue and pen

could not describe it. It wheeled the armies towards Spain, and then Durazzo, and struck Pharsalia so fiercely that the pain was felt as far as the hot Nile. It saw Trojan Antandros and Simois again, from which it first came, and saw the place where Hector lies, and then, alas for Ptolemy, soared again, and afterwards swooped on Juba in a lightning flash, then wheeled to the west where it heard the Pompeian trumpets.

Brutus and Cassius howl in Hell because of its support for Augustus who followed, and it made Modena and Perugia mourn. Miserable Cleopatra still suffers because of it, who, as she fled from the eagle, took dark sudden death from the viper.

It ran with Augustus to the

Red Sea coast, and with him brought the world to such a peace that Janus saw his temple gates closed.

But what the Eagle, that I speak of, did before, what it was yet to do throughout the subject mortal world, becomes a dull and insignificant thing to see, if the standard is viewed, with clear eye and pure heart, in Tiberius's, the third Caesar's, hand, since the living Justice, that was my inspiration, granted it the glory of taking vengeance for his anger, in the hands of which I speak.

Now see the wonder in the twofold thing I tell you! It rushed to wreak vengeance, on that vengeance for the ancient sin, afterwards, under Titus.

And much later when the Lombard tooth gnawed at the Holy Church, [Charlemagne](#), victorious, sheltered her under its wings.

Now you may judge those I accused just now, and their sins, which are the cause of all your troubles. One faction, the Guelphs, oppose the golden lilies of France to the people's Eagle, and the other, the Ghibellines, appropriate it to their party, so that it is difficult to see which one offends the most. Let the Ghibellines deploy their skills under some other banner, since he who divorces it from justice always follows it to disaster. And do not let that new [Charles](#), of Naples, beat it down, with his Guelphs, but let him fear the talons, that have torn the hide from greater lions than him. Many a time, before now, the

children have grieved for the father's sin, and do not let Charles imagine that God will change his coat of arms for royal lilies.'

Paradiso Canto VI:112-142
Romeo of Villeneuve

'This little planet adorns herself with good souls, who actively searched for honour and fame, and when desire, swerving, tends towards that, the rays of true love shine upwards with less life. But part of our delight is in the matching of our reward to our merit, because we see them neither magnified nor lessened. By this, the living Justice so sweetens our affections, that they may never be twisted to any malice.

On earth a diversity of voices creates sweet harmony, and in the

same way the different degrees in this life make sweet harmony among the spheres.

And, here, in this pearl, the light of [Romeo of Villeneuve](#) shines, whose fine, and extensive efforts were so badly rewarded. But the Provençals who harmed him, cannot smile, and he who makes his own ruin out of another's goodness, takes a bad road. Raymond [Berenger](#) had four daughters, and every one a queen, and this was achieved, on his behalf, by Romeo of Villeneuve, a humble pilgrim wanderer: then muttered words made Raymond demand account from this just man, who gave him twelve for every ten: and Romeo went his way again, old and poor: and if the world knew the heart he had in him, who begged, crust after

crust, to stay alive, much as it praises him, it would praise him more.’

Paradiso Canto VII:1-54 The Fall of Man and the Crucifixion

‘Osanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth, superillustrans claritate tua felices ignes horum malachoth! Hosanna, Holy God of Sabaoth, illuminating the blessed fires of these kingdoms, with your brightness from above! So I saw him, singing, to whom the double lustre, of Law and Empire, adds itself, revolving to his own note, and he and the others moved in dance, and like the swiftest of sparks, suddenly veiled themselves from me, in the distance.

I said, hesitating: ‘Speak to her, Speak,’ in myself, ‘Speak to my

Lady who quenches my thirst, with the sweetest drops.’ But that reverence that completely overcomes me, even at the sound of *Be* or *ice*, bowed me again, like a man who slumbers. Beatrice only let me be like that for a moment, and began to direct the rays of her smile towards me, that would make a man happy in the flames: ‘According to my unerring perception, those words about how just vengeance was revenged, with justice, have set you thinking: but I will quickly relieve your thoughts: and listen closely since my words will grant you the gift of a noble statement.

Adam, that man who was not born, condemned his whole race because he would not suffer a rein on his will, for his own good. Therefore Humanity lay in sickness

down there, and in great error, for many ages, until it pleased God's Word to descend, when he joined that nature that had wandered from its Creator, to his own person, solely by an act of his eternal Love.

Now turn you vision to what I now say: this nature, joined to its maker, was pure and good, as it was when first created, but it had been exiled from Paradise, by its own action, by turning from the way of truth, and its own life. Measured by the nature assumed, no penalty was ever exacted so justly, as that one, inflicted on the Cross, and if we gaze at the [Person](#) who endured it, in whom that nature was incarnate, by the same measure no punishment was ever so unjust. So contrary effects came from one cause: God and the Jews were satisfied by the

same death: and Earth shook, and Heaven opened at it.

Now, it should not seem a difficulty to you, to hear it said that just revenge was taken by the Court of Justice. But now I see your mind tangled in knots, from thought to thought, which it greatly longs for release from.'

Paradiso Canto VII:55-120 The Redemption: The Incarnation

'You are saying to yourself: Yes, I understand what I hear, but why God only willed this method of our redemption, is hidden from me. Brother, this decree is buried from the sight of everyone whose intellect is not ripened in Love's flame. But I will reveal why this method was the

most valuable, since it is knowledge often aimed at, but little understood.

The Divine Good, that rejects all envy, fires out such sparks from its inner fire as to show forth the eternal beauty. What distills from it, without mediation, is eternal, because the print cannot be removed, once it has stamped the seal. What rains down from it, without mediation, is total freedom, since it is not subject to the power of transient things. It conforms more closely to the Good, and is therefore more pleasing to it: since the sacred flame that lights everything, is most alive in what most resembles it.

The human creature has all these advantages, and if one fails, then that creature falls from nobility. Sin is the only thing that disenfranchises it, and makes it dissimilar to the

Highest Good, so that its light irradiates it less, and the creature may never return to dignity, unless it fills the place where guilt has made a void, with just punishment for sinful delight.

When your nature sinned in totality in the first seed, it was parted from dignity, as it was from Paradise: and they could not be regained, however subtly you search, except by crossing over one of these two fords: either that God out of his grace remitted the debt, or Man gave satisfaction for his foolishness.

Now fix your eyes on the abyss of Eternal Wisdom, following my speech as closely as you can.

Man had no power ever to be able to give satisfaction, in his own being, since he could not humble

himself, by new obedience, as deeply, as he had aimed, so highly, to exalt himself, through disobedience. This was the reason why man was shut out from the power to give satisfaction by himself. Therefore God had to return Man to his perfect life in his own way: that is, through mercy or through justice, or both. And since what is done by the doer is more gracious the more it shows us the goodness of the heart it comes from, the Divine Goodness, that imprints the world, was content to act in both ways, to raise you up again.

Between the first day and the last, there never was, nor ever will be again, so high and magnificent a progress on either of those roads, since God was more generous in giving of himself, to make Man

capable of rising again, than if he had only granted remission, from himself: and every other way fell short of justice, except that by which the Son of God humbled himself, to become incarnate.’

Paradiso Canto VII:121-148
Creation and Resurrection

‘Now to answer all your longings, I go back to explain a certain passage, so that you can understand it as I do. You are saying to yourself: I see the water, fire, earth, and air: and all their mixtures come to corruption, and do not last for long, and yet these things were creatures, and ought to be secure from corruption, if what I have said to you is true.

Brother, the Angels, and the pure region where you are, may be said to be created as they are, in their total being, but the elements you have named and all the compounds of them, have been inwardly *formed* by a created power. The matter that they hold was created: the formative power in those stars which circle round them was created.

The life of every wild creature and every plant is drawn from compounds gaining power by the rays and motion of the sacred lights. But your life is breathed into you without mediation, by the supreme beneficence that makes life love it, so that it always longs for it. And from this you can deduce your resurrection in the flesh, if you again consider how human bodies

were first made, when your first parents were both made.

Paradiso Canto VIII:1-30 The Third Sphere: Venus: Earthly Love

In its Pagan days the world used to believe that lovely Cyprian Venus used to beam down fond love, turning in the third epicycle, so that those ancient peoples, in ancient error, not only did her the honour of sacrifice and the votive cry, but honoured Dione as well, and Cupid, one as her mother, the other as her son, and told how Cupid sat in Dido's lap: and from her, from whom I take my start, they took the name of the planet, that courts the Sun, now setting in front, and now behind.

I had no sense of rising into her sphere, but my Lady's aspect gave me faith that I was there, because I saw her grow more beautiful. And as we see a spark in a flame, and as a voice can be distinguished from a voice, if one remains fixed and the other comes and goes, so, in that light itself, I saw other lamps, moving in circles, faster or slower, in accord, I believe, with the nature of their eternal vision.

Blasts never blew from a chill cold, visibly or invisibly, so rapidly that that they would not seem slow and hindered, to whoever had seen those divine lights coming towards us, leaving the sphere that has its first conception in the exalted Seraphim. And among those who appeared most in advance, Hosanna sounded, in such a manner that ever

since I have not been free of the desire to hear it again.

Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84
Charles Martel

Then one came nearer to us, and began alone: ‘We are all at your pleasure, so that you may have joy of us. We orbit with those celestial Princes in one circle, and one circling, and with one thirst, we, to whom you, from the world below, once said: *Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete*: You who by understanding move the third circle: and we are so filled with love, that a moment of rest, to give you pleasure, will be no less sweet to us.’

When my eyes had been lifted in reverence to my Lady, and she had

herself given them satisfaction and assurance, they turned back to the light that had offered itself so generously, and: ‘Say, who you are.’ were my words, stamped with great affection. Oh, how I saw it grow in size and splendour, at the new joy, added to its joys, when I spoke! Altered in that way, it said to me: ‘The world held me, held [Charles Martel](#), below for only a little while: if it had been longer, much of the evil that will happen would not happen. My joy, shining round me, keeps me hidden from you, concealing me like a silkworm cocooned in its own silk. You loved me greatly, and with good cause, since if I had stayed below I would have shown you greater love than the mere shoots of it.



That left bank, Provence, that the Rhone washes after its meeting with the Sorgue, waited for me to be its lord in time, so did Naples, that stretch of Ausonia, with its cities of Bari, Gaeta, and Catona, down from where Tronto and Verde discharge into the sea. The Crown of Hungary, that the Danube waters, when it has left its German banks, already shone on my forehead: and beautiful Sicily, Trinacria, over the gulf the east wind torments most, that is darkened between Pachynus and Pelorus, not by [Typhon](#), but by the sulphurous clouds, would still have looked for its kings born of the line through me from [Charles II](#) and the [Emperor Rudolph](#), if bad governance, that stirs the hearts of subject peoples, had not caused Palermo to cry out: “Death, Death.”

And if Robert of Calabria my brother had seen it in good time, he would already have avoided the greedy adventurers of Catalonia, before they do him wrong, and indeed he or another needs to make provision that a heavier load is not laid on his already laden boat. His nature, meanness descended from generosity, needs soldiers who do not care about stuffing their purses.’

Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148
Heredity and the Influence of the Heavens

I said: ‘Sir, because I believe you see the great joy your conversation floods me with, as I see it, there where every good has its beginning and end, it is more gratifying to me: and also I value that you see it by

gazing on God. You have given me delight, now enlighten me, since in speaking you have stirred me to question how bitter seed can be born from the sweet.' And he to me: 'If I can show you a truth, you will have the thing you ask, that is behind your back, in front of your eyes.

The Good, which turns, and makes content, the whole kingdom, that you climb, makes its providence a power in these great celestial bodies, and provision is not only made for the nature of things but for their welfare too, by that Mind that is perfection in itself. So whatever this bow fires moves towards its destined end, like an arrow fired at the mark. If that were not so, the Heaven you are crossing would bring its effects into being so that they would be chaos and not

art, and that cannot be unless the intellects that move these planets are defective, and the First Mover too, who failed to perfect them. Do you wish this truth to be clarified more?’

I said: ‘No, since I know it is impossible for Nature to fall short of what is needed.’ And he again: ‘Now, say, would it be worse for man if he were not a citizen, on earth, but left to his own sufficiency?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘and I do not need to ask the reason.’ ‘And can that be, unless men live various lives below, and with various tasks? Not if your master, [Aristotle](#), wrote truly for you.’ He reached this point, deducing, and then gave the conclusion: ‘Therefore the roots of your qualities must be diverse, so that one is born [Solon](#) the lawgiver, and another [Xerxes](#), the soldier, one

Melchizedek, the priest, and another Daedalus, the inventor, who lost his son, soaring through the sky.

Circling Nature, the seal on the mortal wax, is a good maker, and does not distinguish between one house and another. So that Esau differs from Jacob in the seed, and Romulus worshipped as Quirinus, comes from so lowly a father he is assigned to Mars instead. The nature at birth would always be like its parent, if Divine Providence did not overrule it.

Now what was hidden behind you is in front of you, but so you may know I am delighted with you, I will wrap you round with a corollary. Nature makes a poor fist of things, if she finds events out of harmony with herself, like any other seed out of its proper soil. If the

world below paid attention to the foundation Nature lays, and followed that, it would be satisfied with its citizens, but you drag him born to the sword into a religious order, and make a king of him who should be an orator, so that your path cuts across the road.’

Paradiso Canto IX:1-66 Cunizza da Romano

Lovely [Clemence](#), when your [Charles](#) had clarified things for me, he told me about the wrongs his seed was fated to encounter, but added: ‘Be silent, and let the years turn,’ so that I can say nothing except that well-justified grief will follow those wrongs.

And already the life of that holy light had turned towards the Sun

that illuminates it, as towards the Good which is sufficient to everything. O impious creatures! O deceived spirits who twist your hearts away from that Good, turning your minds to vanities!

And see, another of those splendours came towards me, and signified his desire to satisfy me, by an outer brightening. Beatrice's eyes, gazing at me, as before, assured me of happy assent to my wish. I said: 'Ah, give quick satisfaction to my will, spirit who are blessed, and show proof that I can reflect what I think from you.' At which the light which was still a stranger to me, from the depths, where it was, at first singing, continued by speaking, like one happy to do good: 'In that region of Italy, the depraved country, which

lies between Venice and the sources of the Brenta and Piave, rises a hill raised to no great height, from which, [Ezzelino da Romano](#), the burning brand, descended, who made a vicious assault on that land. I sprang with him out of the same root: [Cunizza](#) I am called, and I shine here because the light of this star conquered me. But I grant myself indulgence for my fate, and it does not grieve me, which perhaps would seem strange to the common man.

The great fame of this dear shining jewel in our Heaven, [Folco](#) of Marseilles, who is my nearest neighbour, remains, and before it dies this centenary year will be repeated five times. See how another life follows the first if a man achieves excellence! The present

crew in the March of Treviso, enclosed by the Tagliamento and the Adige, do not think of that, beaten but still unrepentant. But it will soon come to pass that Paduan blood will stain the water that bathes Vicenza, because the people rebel against their duty. And at Treviso, where the Sile meets the Cagnano, [Riccardo da Camino](#) holds sway, and goes with head held high, for whom the net to catch him is already woven.

From Feltro a wail of grief will rise yet, because of the sins of its impious pastor, [Alessandro Novello](#), so foul, that no one ever entered the prison of Malta for their equal. The dish that would be needed to receive Ferrara's blood, which this obliging priest will give up to show himself loyal, would be too large, and weary

whoever had to weigh it ounce by ounce: and such are the gifts that suit this country's way of life. There are mirrors above, you call them Thrones, from which God shines in judgement on us, so that these words prove good to us.'

Here she fell silent, and to me she seemed like one who turns to other things, giving herself to the wheel, so that she was as before.

Paradiso Canto IX:67-126 Folco of Marseilles

The other joyful light, which I had already noted as being distinguished, shone to my sight like a fine ruby, illuminated by the sun. Brightness comes from joy up there, as a smile does here on earth, while down below the spirits are dark

outside, just as the mind is saddened.

I said: ‘God sees it all, and your vision is in him, spirit of the blessed, so that no desire is hidden from you. Why then does your voice, which, with the singing of those devoted fires, the Seraphim, who make a cowl, with six wings, of themselves, gladdens Heaven endlessly, not satisfy my wishes? If I were in you, as you are in me, I would not have waited for your request till now.

Then he began to speak: ‘The Mediterranean, that greatest valley, into which water flows, from the ocean round the earth, extends so far between its opposite shores, eastwards, that its zenith is formed of what was horizon. I was an inhabitant of Marseilles’s shore, half

way between the Ebro and the Macra, which, with its short course, separates the Genoese and the Tuscans. The site of Bougia in Algeria is almost alike in sunrises and sunsets to the place I come from, whose harbour [Caesar](#) once warmed with that place's blood.

Those who knew me, called me [Folco](#), and I imprint this Heaven as it imprinted me, since [Dido](#), [Belus](#)'s daughter, wronging [Sichaeus](#) and [Aeneas](#)'s [Creüsa](#), burned no hotter than I, as long as it suited my youthfulness: nor did [Phyllis](#), the girl from Rhodope, who was deceived by [Demophoön](#), nor [Hercules](#) when his heart enclosed [Iole](#). But this is not a place of repentance, here we smile: not at the sin, which the mind does not dwell

on, but the Power that ordained and provided.

Here we gaze at the Art, which beautified so great a creation, and discern the Good, which returns the world below to the world above. But so that you might fully satisfy all the longings born in this sphere, I must continue. You will wish to know who is inside that light that gleams next to me, like the sun's rays in pure water. Know, now, that [Rahab](#), the prostitute, finds peace there, and when she joined our order, it sealed itself, in the highest rank, with her. Before any other soul, she was uplifted at [Christ](#)'s triumph, by this sphere, which is touched by the shadow your Earth casts into space. It was truly fitting to leave her in one of the Heavens as a symbol of the great victory achieved by those

two nailed hands: because she favoured [Joshua](#)'s first glorious campaign in the Holy Land, that land that scarcely touches [this Pope](#)'s memory.'

Paradiso Canto IX:127-142
Florence: The corruption of usury

'Florence, the city founded by [Mars](#), that [Satan](#) who first turned his back on his Maker, and from whose envy such great grief has come, coins and spreads that accursed lily flower, that has sent the sheep and lambs astray, since it has made a wolf of the shepherd.

So the Gospels and the Great Doctors are neglected, and only the Decretals, the law-books are studied, as can be seen by their margins. On that, [the Pope](#) and

Cardinals are intent: their thoughts do not stray to Nazareth, where [Gabriel](#)'s wings unfolded, But the Vatican and the other sacred parts of Rome, that cemetery for the soldiers who followed Peter, will soon be freed from the bond of adultery.'

**Paradiso Canto X:1-63 The
Fourth Sphere: The Sun:
Prudence**

The primal and unutterable Power, gazing at his Son, with the Love that both breathe out eternally, made whatever circles through mind and space with such order, that whoever knows them is not without some sense of Him. Then, Reader, raise you eyes with me to the distant wheels, directed to [that point](#) where the Celestial Equator and the

Ecliptic meet, and begin to view the art of that Master who loves it so much, within himself, that he never lets his eyes leave it.

See how the Ecliptic, the oblique circle that carries the planets, slants from that Equinoctial point, to satisfy the world's call for them: and if their path were not inclined, much of the power of the Heavens would be useless, and every potential dead on Earth: and if the slope from the level was greater or smaller, much would be lacking in Cosmic order below and above.

Now, Reader, stay on your bench, thinking back on this preamble, if you would delight in it before you weary. I have put the food in front of you, now feed yourself, since the matter I have set

myself to write of, now draws my complete attention to itself.

The Sun, the greatest minister of Nature, who stamps the world with the power of Heaven, and measures time for us by his light, was circling on the spiral where he shows himself earlier every day, joined to that Equinoctial point I recalled. And I was with him: but I was no more aware of my ascent than a man is aware of his first thoughts approaching. It is Beatrice who leads me from good to better, so suddenly that her action requires no time.

How bright, in itself, must that be, that shows itself in the Sun, which I had entered, not by colour, but by light! Though I might call on intellect, art and knowledge, I could never express it so as to make it

imaginable, but it may be believed, and desired to be seen. And if our imaginations are too base for such exaltation, it is no surprise, since no eye could ever transcend the Sun. Such was the fourth House of the supreme Father, who always contents it, by showing how he breathes and engenders.

And Beatrice began to speak: 'Give thanks, Give thanks to the Sun of the Angels, who, in his grace, has raised you to this visible sun.' The heart of man was never so disposed to devotion, and so eager to give itself to God with all its will, as I was at those words: and my love was committed to Him so completely, it eclipsed Beatrice from memory. That did not displease her: but she smiled at it so that the splendour, of her laughing

eyes, scattered my mind's coherence
amongst many things.

**Paradiso Canto X:64-99 Thomas
Aquinas: Albertus Magnus**

Then I saw many lights, living
and victorious, make a central point
of us, and a coronet, even sweeter in
voice than shining in appearance, of
themselves. So we sometimes see
the Moon, [Diana](#), [Latona](#)'s
daughter, haloed when the air is so
damp as to retain the rainbow thread
that weaves her zone. There are
many jewels so dear and lovely, in
the courts of Heaven I have returned
from, that they cannot be moved
from that region, and such was the
song of these lights: he who does
not wing himself to fly up to them,

may as well look for news of them from the speechless.

When those burning suns, so singing, had circled round us three times, like stars near the fixed poles, they seemed as ladies do, not released from the dance, but resting, silent, listening, until they hear the notes again. And in one I heard a voice begin to say: 'Since the light of grace glows in you, at which true love is lit, and then by loving is multiplied, so as to lead you on that stair, that no one descends except to climb again, whoever denied you the wine from his glass, to quench your thirst, would be as little at liberty to do so, as water to refuse to flow to the sea.

You wish to know with what flowers this garland is decorated that circles the lovely lady who

strengthens your resolve for Heaven. I was one of the lambs, of the sacred flock, that [Dominic](#) leads on the path *where there is good pasture*, if we do not stray. He, who is nearest to me on the right, was my master and my brother: he was [Albert of Cologne](#), and I, [Thomas Aquinas](#).’

Paradiso Canto X:100-129
Solomon: Dionysius: Boëthius

‘If you wish to know the rest as well, circling above around the garland, blessed, direct your sight according to my words. This next flamelet issues from [Gratian](#)’s smile, he who gave such help to the ecclesiastical and civil spheres as is acceptable in Paradise. The fourth, that adorns our choir next, was that

Peter Lombard, who, like the poor widow, offered his wealth to Holy Church. The fifth light, which is most beautiful among us, breathes from such a love, that all the world, below, thirsts to have news of it. In there is the noble mind of Solomon, to which was granted a wisdom so profound, that if truth be known, *no other ever achieved* so complete a vision.

Next look at that taper's light, Dionysius, who in the flesh down there, saw deepest into the Angelic nature and its ministry. In the seventh little light, Orosius, that pleader for the Christian Age, whose works Augustine made use of.

Now if you run your mind's eye from light to light, following my praise, you are already thirsting for

the eighth. In there, seeing every good, [Boëthius](#), the sainted soul rejoices, who unmasked the deceitful world to those who give him a careful hearing. The body from which it was chased out, lies down below in Cieldauro, and it came from exile and martyrdom to this peace.’

Paradiso Canto X:130-148
Isidore: Bede: Richard of St. Victor: Sigier

‘Next, see the glowing breath of [Isidore of Seville](#) flame out, of [Bede](#), and [Richard of SaintVictor](#), who in contemplation exceeded Man. The one from whom your glance returns to me, is the light of a spirit, who, of profound thought, seemed to himself to reach death too

slowly: it is the eternal light of [Sigier](#), who, lecturing in the Rue du Fouarre, syllogised truths that brought him hatred.’

Then, as the clock, that strikes the hour, when the bride of God rises, to sing her Matins, to the Bridegroom, so that he might love her, where one part pulls and pushes another, making a chiming sound, of such sweet notes, that the well-disposed spirit fills with love, so I saw the glorious wheel revolve, and answer voice to voice, in harmony, and with a sweetness that cannot be known except where joy renders itself eternal.

**Paradiso Canto XI:1-42 Saint
Dominic and Saint Francis**

O mindless mortal cares! How defective the reasoning that makes you beat your wings towards the earth! One person was chasing law, another medicine; one following the priesthood, another rule, by force or sophistry; one robbery, another civic business; one was involved in bodily pleasure, and another taking their ease: while I, free of all these things, was received, with Beatrice, so gloriously in Heaven.

When each spirit had returned to the place in the circle where he was before, he rested, like a candle in its holder. And I saw a smile begin inside the light that had first spoken, as it grew brighter, and [Thomas](#) said: ‘Just as I glow with its rays, so as I gaze into the Eternal Light I know the reason for your thoughts. You question, and wish to

understand my words, in such open and extended speech as will match your comprehension, the words I spoke just now, *where there is good pasture, and, no other ever achieved*, and here we need to draw careful distinctions.

The Providence that governs the world, with wisdom, that defeats every creature's understanding, before that creature can plumb its depths, ordained two Princes, to be guides, over there and over here, on behalf of the Church, the spouse of Him, who wedded Her, with great cries, in blessed blood, in order that She might go to [Christ](#), her delight, secure in Herself, and more faithful to Him.

The one Prince, Saint [Francis](#), was all Seraphic in his ardour, the other, [Dominic](#), was a splendour of

Cherubic Light, on earth. I will speak of the first, because whoever praises either, whichever he chooses, talks of both, since both their efforts were to the same end.’

Paradiso Canto XI:43-117 The Life of Saint Francis

‘A fertile slope falls from a high mountain, between the Tupino and the Chiascio, the stream that drops from the hill chosen by the blessed [Ubaldo](#), a slope from which Perugia feels the cold and heat, through the eastern gate of Porta Sole, and behind it the towns of Bocera and Gualdo bemoan the Angevin’s heavy yoke. From this slope, where it becomes least steep, a Sun was born into this world, even as our sun rises from the Ganges. So that

whoever speaks of that place, let him not say *Ascesi, I have ascended*, which is inadequate, but *Oriente*, if he wants to name it correctly.

He was not far from rising when he began to make the earth feel a certain comfort from his great virtue, since in his youth, he rushed to oppose his father, for such a Lady, to whom, like Death, no one opens the gate of his pleasure, and he was united to her in the spiritual court that had jurisdiction over him, and in his father's presence, and then loved her more deeply, from day to day.

She, deprived of her first husband for eleven hundred years and more, was obscure, despised, until he stood in front of her, uninvited. And the tale that she was found safe with [Amyclas](#), the

fisherman, when Caesar's voice sounded to terrify the world, had not helped her, nor to have been so faithful and unafraid that She mounted the Cross with Christ, when Mary remained below.

But lest I proceed too darkly, accept, in plain speech, that Francis and Poverty were these two lovers. Their harmony and their delighted appearance made love, wonder, and tender looks, the cause of sacred thought, so that the venerable Bernard first cast off his sandals, and ran to chase after so great a peacefulness, and thought himself all too slow, while he ran. O unnoted riches, O fertile Good! Egidius casts off his sandals, and Sylvester, following the Bridegroom, as the Bride delights to do.

This Master and this Father went his way, together with his Lady, and with that family already wearing the humble cord, nor did lowliness of heart weigh down his forehead, because he was [Pietro Bernardino](#)'s son, nor that he seemed to be so greatly despised. But he revealed his serious intention to Pope [Innocent](#), and took the seal of his Order from him. When the people of poverty, who followed his path, increased, his miraculous life sung more sweetly in Heaven's glory, then was this master shepherd's sacred will encircled with a second crown, from [Honorious](#)'s hands, by the Eternal Spirit.

And when, thirsting for martyrdom, he had preached Christ and his followers' message, in the proud Soldan's presence; and,

finding the people bitterly against conversion, had returned, to avoid a useless stay, to gather fruit from the Italian branches; then, on the harsh rock, between the Tiber and the Arno, he received the final wounds, from [Christ](#), that his limbs showed for two years.

When it pleased Him, who ordained him to such good effect, to raise him to the reward, which he had earned by humbling himself, he commended his Lady to his brotherhood, his rightful heirs, and asked that they should love her faithfully, and the illustrious spirit willed himself to leave her breast, turning to his own kingdom, yet wished for no other deathbed for his body.'

Paradiso Canto XI:118-139 Saint Dominic: The Dominicans

‘Now think what he must be, who was a worthy colleague, to maintain the course of [Peter](#)’s boat in the right direction! Such was our founder, [Dominic](#), so that whoever follows his commands, as you can see, freights himself with good cargoes. But his flock has grown so greedy for new food, it cannot do other than stray through strange pastures, and the more his distant, wandering sheep stray from him, the emptier of milk they return, to the fold. Indeed there are some of them who fear the loss, and keep close to the shepherd, but they are so few it needs little cloth to make cowls for them.

Now, if my words have not been weak, if you have listened closely, and if you recall what I have said, your wish must now be partly satisfied, since you can see the stem they whittle away, and can see the rebuke intended in the words: *where there is good pasture, if we do not stray.*'

Paradiso Canto XII:1-36 Saint Bonaventura

As soon as the flame of the spirit that was blessed had spoken the last word, the sacred mill began to turn, and had not fully revolved before a second, circling, clasped it, and harmonised movement with movement and song with song: song which is as far beyond our Muses, and our Sirens, in those sweet

pipings, as the first glory its reflection.

As two rainbows, parallel and identical in colour, arch through the thin mist, when [Juno](#) commands [Iris](#) her servant, the outer one born from the inner one, like the speech of [Echo](#), that wandering nymph, whom Love consumed as the sun the vapour, making people here on earth aware, that, through the covenant God made with [Noah](#), the world should never be drowned again: so the two garlands of those everlasting roses circled round us, and so the outer answered the inner.

As soon as the dance, and the great high-festival of song and radiance, of light with light, joyful and gentle, joined in point of time and will, had stilled them, like eyes which must close and open together

to the pleasure that stirs them, a voice came from the heart of one of the fresh lights that made me seem like the compass needle to the pole star, turning me towards it, and [Bonaventura](#) began: ‘The Love that adorns me, brings me to speak of the other leader, on whose account such noble words are spoken of my leader.

It is right that wherever the one is, the other should be presented, so that, just as they fought side by side, their glory might shine together.’

Paradiso Canto XII:37-105
Bonaventura speaks of Saint
Dominic

‘Christ’s army, whose re-arming cost so dear, followed the standard slowly, fearfully and sparsely, when

the Emperor, who reigns forever, of his own grace, and not because of that army's worth, made provision for the soldiers who were in danger, and, as has been said, He came to the aid of his Bride, with two champions, at whose works and words, the scattered ranks regrouped.

In Spain, towards that region, where sweet Zephyr rises, to unfold the new leaves Europe sees herself re-clothed with, not far from the crash of the waves, behind which because of their vast reaches, the sun sometimes conceals himself from all people, Calahorra, the fortunate, lies, under the protection of the noble shield of Castile, on whose arms, in the left quarters, the lion is below the castle, and on the right above.

There the loving servant of the Christian faith was born, the holy wrestler, kind to his followers and cruel to his enemies: and as soon as he was created his mind was so full of living virtue that in the womb it sent his mother a prophetic dream. When the marriage between him and the faith was completed at the holy font, where they dowered each other with mutual salvation, the lady, who gave the assent for him, saw, in her sleep, the marvellous harvest destined to issue from him and his heirs, and so that this might be known, in his very name, a spirit from above moved them to call him after the Lord, whose he was completely. Dominic, he was named: and I talk of him as I would of a labourer, whom Christ chose to nurture his orchard.

He showed himself truly a companion and messenger of Christ, since the first love he showed was for the first counsel of Christ, that of Poverty. Often his nurse found him, on the floor, silent and wakeful, as if to say: *It was for this I came*. Truly his father was [Felice](#), *favoured*, and his mother, [Giovanna](#), *graced by the Lord*, if the interpretation of their names is valid!

Soon, for love of the true *manna*, and not of the world, for whose sake men labour after [Henry of Susa](#), Ostia's bishop, and [Taddeo Alderotti](#)'s doctrines, he became a powerful teacher, so that he set himself to a circuit of the vineyard, which soon withers if the vine-dresser is at fault: and from the [Apostolic See](#), that once was more generous to the rightful poor, not

because it has altered in itself, but because of the one who holds it, degenerately, he demanded not a profit of a third or a half, not the grant of the next vacancy, not *decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei*, the tithe that belongs to God's poor, but leave to fight against the heretical world for that seed from which these twenty-four plants enleaf you.

Then he went forward, teaching and will as one, with the blessing of the Apostolic Office, like a torrent driven out of a deep fissure, and his force struck the roots of heresy most fiercely where the resistance was most obstinate. Then many streams sprang from his, so that the Catholic garden is watered, and its shrubs achieve a fuller growth.'

Paradiso Canto XII:106-145
Bonaventura names the spirits

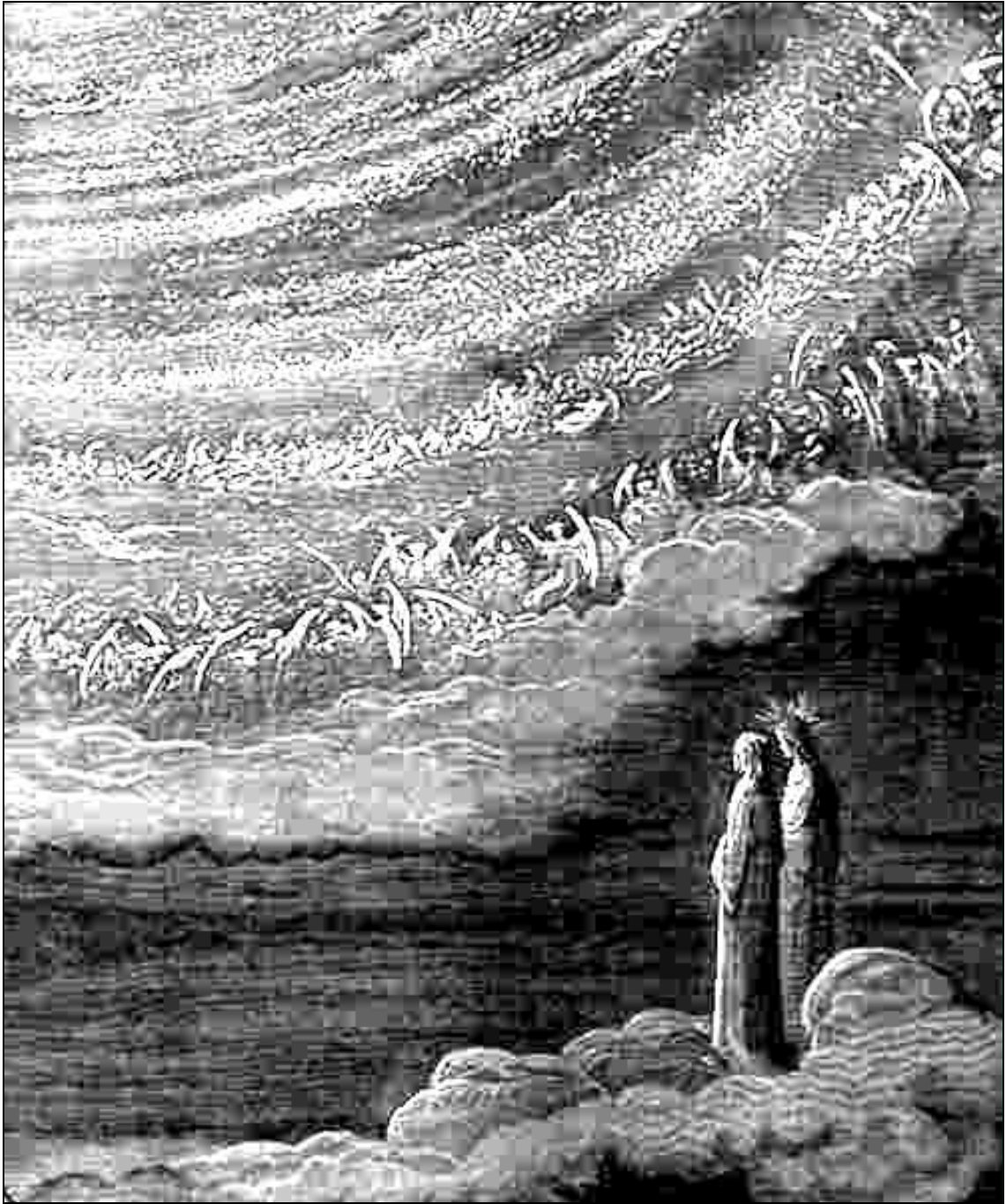
‘If this was one wheel of the chariot in which Holy Church defended herself, and won her civil war in open battle, the excellence of [Francis](#), the other, should be clear to you, about whom [Thomas](#) was so courteous, before I came to you. But the orbit, that touched the highest points of its circumference, is derelict, and now there is mould where there was once bread. His family, who walked directly in his footprints, have turned so that their toes strike his heel-prints, and soon the harvest of poor cultivation will be seen, when the tares will bemoan that the barn is closed to them.

I accept in truth that those who search page after page of our book,

might still find one page, reading: *I am as I was*, but it will not be one of [Ubertino da Casale's](#) or [Matteo d'Acquasparta's](#), from whom men come to our discipline, by relaxing it, or making it more severe.

I am the life of [Bonaventura](#) of Bagnoregio, who in the great offices always placed temporal cares behind. [Illuminato](#) and [Agostino](#) are here, who were Francis's first poor shoeless brothers, who made themselves friends of God by the cord.

[Hugh of Saint Victor](#) is here with them, Pietro [Mangiadore](#), and Pietro [Ispano](#), who gave Logic light, below there, in his twelve books; [Nathan](#) the Prophet, the metropolitan [Chrysostom](#), [Anselm](#), and that [Donatus](#) who deigned to set his hand to the first art of Grammar.



Rabanus is here, and Joachim of
Flora, the Calabrian abbot, imbued
with prophetic spirit, shines by my
side,

The bright courtesy of brother
Thomas, and his well-judged
speech, stirred me to praise of so
great a knight, and stirred this
company with me.'

Paradiso Canto XIII:1-51
Aquinas answers Dante's second
question

Let him, who would grasp
correctly what I now saw (and let
him retain the image while I speak,
as he holds a piece of rock) imagine
fifteen of those stars, which, in
various regions, vivify the Heavens,
with such brightness as to pierce the
interwoven air; let him also imagine

Ursa Major, that rests on the breast of our sky, night and day, so that it is never absent from the polar circle; and let him imagine the mouth of that horn, Ursa Minor, that starts from the axle of the primal circling, all making two wreathes in Heaven such as [Ariadne](#), [Minos](#)'s daughter made, when she felt the cold of death; and one ring of light, to lie inside the other, and both to revolve, in such a way that one leads and the other follows, and he will have only the shadow of the real constellation, and the twofold dance, that circled round the point where I was, since it goes as far beyond what we know, as the movement of the quickest sphere, exceeds our sluggish Chiana.

There they sang, not [Bacchus](#) and the [Paean](#), but three Persons in

one Divine Nature, and It, and Human Nature, in one Person. The singing and circling had completed their measure, and those sacred flames turned their attention to us, rejoicing as they turned, from one care to another. Then amongst the harmonious divinities, the silence was broken by that light, in which the wonderful life, of the poor man of God, had been described to me, saying: ‘Since the one sheaf has been threshed, and its seed already stored, sweet love invites me to thresh the other.

You know that whatever light human nature can receive was all infused, into that chest from which the rib was taken, to form the lovely face, for whose taste of the forbidden fruit all the world pays, and into that which, pierced by the

lance, gave satisfaction for the Past and the Future, so as to weigh the scales against all Sin, by that same Power that made them both.

And so you wonder at what I said before, when I said the good that was enclosed in the fifth light, [Solomon](#), never had an equal. Now open your eyes to my answer, and you will see your belief and my words, hit the truth, like the centre of a target.’

Paradiso Canto XIII:52-90
Creation and Emanation: Matter and Form

‘That which does not die, and that which can perish, is nothing but the glow of that Idea, which our Father engenders by Loving, since that living Light, which goes out

from its source, in such a way that it does not separate from it, nor from the Love which makes Trinity with those two, through its own goodness, focuses its rays, as though reflected in nine emanations, eternally remaining One.

So it descends to the lowest powers, down from act to act, becoming what forms the briefest of contingencies, by which I mean the things generated from seed, or seedlessly, by the moving Heavens. The wax, there, and what moulds it, is not in only one state, and so is more, or less, transparent, under the ideal seal, so that it happens that the same kind of tree fruits better or worse, and you are all born with varying genius. If the wax was moulded precisely, and the Heaven at its supreme point of Power, the

light of the seal would be completely apparent: but nature always makes it imperfectly, acting in a similar manner to the artist, who has the skill of his art, but a trembling hand.

Then, if warm Love places, and stamps, a clear vision of the primal Power, complete perfection is attained there. So your clay was once made worthy of utter physical perfection, and so the Virgin was made pregnant. From this I sanction your opinion that human nature never was, or will be, equal to those two persons. Now if I went no further' *'How then was he without equal?'* would still be your first words.'

Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142
Solomon's choice: his Wisdom:
Heretics

‘But so that you now see, what is not obvious, think who [Solomon](#) was, and what the motivation was, when he was told: ‘Choose’, to make his request. I have spoken so that you may see he was a king, who chose such wisdom as would make him an adequate king, not knowledge of the number of moving spirits here above; nor if a necessary premise, and a contingent premise, can ever give a necessary conclusion; nor whether we must accept a first movement, a *primum motum*; nor whether [a triangle](#) without a right angle in it can be constructed in a semicircle.

So, if you note this, and everything I have said, it is royal prudence, worldly wisdom, that is the unequalled insight that the arrow of my intent strikes. And if you turn your clear eyes to *achieved*, you will see it only applies to kings, of whom there are many, and the good ones rare. Take my words, according to these distinctions, and then they will agree with what you hold concerning the first Father, and [our Delight](#).

And let this always weight your feet down with lead, and make you go slowly, like a tired man, approaching the *yes* or *no* you do not grasp, since he is truly down there among the fools, who affirms or denies without distinguishing between cases, so that it often happens that a quick opinion leans

to the wrong side, and then Pride entangles the intellect. He leaves the shore less than uselessly, since he does not even return as he went, fishing for truth without the angler's skill, and open proof of this in the world, are [Parmenides](#), [Melissus](#), [Bryson](#), and the crowd who still went on, without knowing where.

So did [Sabellius](#) and [Arius](#), and those fools who were like gleaming swords applied to Scripture, in making straight faces crooked. Do not let people be too secure in their judgements, like those who count the ears of corn in the field before the crop ripens, since I have seen, all winter long, the thorn display itself, sharp and forbidding, and then on its summit bear the rose; and before now I have seen a ship run straight and sure over the sea for

her entire course, and sink in the end, entering the harbour mouth. Do not let Jack and Jill think, that if they see someone steal or another make offering they therefore see them as Divine Wisdom does, since the one may still rise, and the other fall.’

Paradiso Canto XIV:1-66
Solomon: The Resurrection

The water in a rounded dish vibrates from the centre to the rim, or from the rim to the centre, depending on how it is struck, from inside or out. Just as the glorious spirit of Thomas fell silent, this thought suddenly came into my mind, because of the analogy that sprang from his discourse, and Beatrice’s, whom it pleased to begin

speaking, after him: ‘This man has a need he has not told you, with voice or thought, namely to track another truth to its source.

Say if the light, with which your substance blossoms, will remain yours as it is now, and if it will, say whether, when you are visible again, at the last day, it will not cloud your vision.’ As if pierced, and drawn out by excess joy, those who circle in the dance, immediately lift up their voices, and gladden their aspect, so, at this eager and devout request, the sacred circles revealed new joy in their whirling, and their marvellous sound.

Whoever grieves that we must die here in order to live there, does not see, here, the refreshment from the eternal rain. Three times, each of those spirits sang that One and Two

and Three who lives forever, and reigns in Three and Two and One, not circumscribed, but circumscribing all things, sang with such melody as is a just reward for every kind of merit.

And I heard a modest voice, in the most divine light of the smaller circle, perhaps like [Gabriel](#)'s voice to [Mary](#), replying: 'Our Love will cast the rays of such a veil around us, as long as the festival of Paradise exists. Its brightness will match our ardour, our ardour our vision, as great as the grace of it exceeds our true worth.

When the cloak of the glorious and holy flesh shall be taken on again, our person will be more pleasing by being fully complete. So that the undeserved brightness which the Supreme Good gives us,

that light which allows us to see him, will grow: and then the vision must grow, and the ardour, also, which is lit by it, and the rays that leave it. But like the coal that gives out flame, and, by its own lively glow, shines through it, so that its own identity is maintained, so this glow which already veils us, will be penetrated by the glow of the flesh, which now the earth covers: and such intensity of light will not have strength to overpower us, since the body's faculties will be strong enough to withstand everything that delights us.'

The inner and outer choirs seemed so quick and eager to shout: '*Amen*', that they indeed revealed desire for their dead bodies, not only for themselves, perhaps, but for their fathers, mothers, and others

dear to them, before they became eternal flames.

Paradiso Canto XIV:67-139 The Fifth Sphere: Mars: Fortitude

Look around! A shining dawn, of equal brightness, beyond what was there, like a whitening horizon. And, as at twilight new things to see begin to appear, in the heavens, so that the vision seems real, and unreal, so, there, I began to see newly arrived beings, making a third circle, out beyond the other two rims. O true sparks of the sacred exhalation, how sudden and glowing, in front of my eyes, which, overcome, could not withstand it!

But Beatrice showed herself so lovely and smiling to me, it must be left among those sights that my

memory cannot follow. From that my eyes recovered their power to raise themselves, and I saw myself carried, along with my Lady, to a higher fortune. I saw clearly that I was lifted higher, by the burning smile of [that planet](#), which seemed to me redder than usual.

I made sacrifice to God, of my heart, and in that speech which is the same for all of us, as fitted this newly given grace: and the ardour of the sacrifice was not yet gone from my chest, before I knew the prayer had been accepted, and with favour, since splendours appeared to me, inside two rays, so radiant and red, that I exclaimed: ‘O Helios, who glorifies them so!’ As the Milky Way gleams between the poles of the Universe, decked with greater and lesser lights, so white as



to set the very sages questioning, so those constellated rays made the ancient sign, in the depth of Mars, that crossing quadrants make in a circle.

Here my memory outruns my ability, since [Christ](#) flashed out so on that Cross, that I can find no fitting comparison. But whoever takes up his cross and follows Christ, will forgive me for what I leave unspoken, when he sees Christ white within that glow. From cusp to cusp, from summit to base, there were lights moving, that sparkled intensely, in meeting one another, and passing. So we see, here, motes moving through a ray, that sometimes penetrates the shadow people contrive, with art and ingenuity, against the sunlight,

straight, curved, fast or slow, long or short, changing in appearance.

And as harp and viol, tuned in many-chorded harmony, make a sweet chime, to one who cannot separate the notes, so a melody enraptured me, from the lights that appeared, gathered along the Cross, though I could not follow the hymn. I clearly knew it was of high praise, since there came to me the words: '*Rise and conquer,*' as to one who hears but does not understand. And I was so enamoured of it, there, that there had been nothing, till then, that tied me in such sweet chains.

Perhaps it may be too bold to say so, as if it slighted the joy of those lovely eyes, gazing into which my longing finds rest, but he who recognises how those living seals of all beauty have ever greater effect

the higher the region, and that I had not yet turned towards them, may excuse me from my self-accusation, and can see I speak the truth: for that sacred joy is not excluded here, that as it climbs grows purer.

Paradiso Canto XV:1-36 Silence: Beatrice's eyes

The Benign Will, in which the Love that truly perfumes always distils itself, as greed does in the envious will, imposed silence on that sweet lyre, and stilled the sacred strings, that the right hand of Heaven plucks and loosens.

How can those beings be deaf to just prayers, who agreed to silence, so as to give me the will to pray? It is right that they should mourn endlessly who deprive themselves

of this love, eternally, for the love of what does not endure.

As a meteoric flame flashes through the pure and tranquil sky, from time to time, disturbing steady vision, and seems like a star changing place, except that no star is lost from where it flamed, and it itself does not last, so, from the horn stretching to the right, a star of the constellation that shines there darted to the foot of the cross, and did not leave the arc but coursed along the radial line, like fire shining through alabaster. With such tenderness [Anchises](#)'s shade came forward when he saw his son [Aeneas](#) in Elysium, if our greatest Muse is to be believed.

'O sanguis meus, O blood of mine, O superinfusa gratia Dei, O grace of God poured into you, sicut

*tibi, cui bis unquam coeli ianua
reclusa,* to whom was Heaven's
Gate ever opened twice, as to you?'
So the light spoke, at which I
directed my attention to him. Then I
turned my face towards my Lady,
and on this side and on that was
stunned, since such a smile was
blazing in her eyes, I thought with
mine I had reached the end, of my
grace, and my Paradiso.

**Paradiso Canto XV:37-87 All
things seen in God**

Then, gladdening sight and
hearing, the spirit added words to
his commencement that I did not
understand, his speech was so
profound: he hid himself from me,
not out of choice, but of necessity,
since his thought took place beyond

the power of mortals. And when the bow of ardent love was so tuned that his speech descended towards the power of our intellect, the first words I understood were: ‘Blessed be thou, Three and One, who are so noble in my seed,’ and continued: ‘My son, in this light where I now speak to you, you have assuaged a dear, long-cherished hunger, induced by the reading of that great volume where black and white never change: thanks be to her who clothed you with wings for this high ascent.

You believe that your thought finds its way to me, from the Primal Thought, as the numbers *five* and *six* issue from *one*, if seen correctly, and so you do not ask who I am, or why I seem to you more joyful than others in this festive crowd. You

believe rightly, since in this life great and lesser spirits, gaze in the mirror, where, before you think, your thought is seen. But so that the sacred love, in which I watch with uninterrupted vision, setting me thirsting with sweet longing, can be better fulfilled, let your voice sound out your will, your longing, safely, boldly, and delightedly, to which my answer is already given.'

I turned to Beatrice, and she heard me, before I spoke, and granted a sign to me that increased the wings of my desire. Then I began: 'Love and intelligence became equal in weight to you, as soon as the Primal equality was visible to you, because the Sun, which warmed and lit you, with its heat and brightness, has in it such equality that all comparisons fall

short. But for mortals, for reasons obvious to you, will and execution are unequally feathered wings. So that I, a mortal, feel the stress of this imbalance, and therefore only gave thanks with my heart, for your paternal greeting. But I can and do, beg you, living topaz, who are a gem of this precious jewel, to satisfy me with your name.'

Paradiso Canto XV:88-148
Cacciaguida

'Oh, I was your root, my leaf, whom I delighted in, while only anticipating you,' such were the opening words of his reply. Then he said: 'He, the first Aligieri, from whom your family takes its name, and who has circled the Mount on the first terrace, for more than a

hundred years, was my son, and your great-grandfather. It is fitting that you should lessen the long drawn-out labour, for him, with your works.

Florence, lived in peace, sober and chaste, behind the [ancient circle](#) of wall, from which she still hears the Badia's *tierce* and *nones*. There were no wreathes and gold-chains, no dressed-up women, no sash that set people staring at it, more than at she who wore it. The birth of a daughter did not yet dismay fathers. since dowry and bride's age were fitting, the one not too high, the other not too low. There were no empty mansions. [Sardanapalus](#) had not yet arrived to show what might be done to make a room luxurious. The first sight of Florence, from Ucellatoio, did not yet surpass

Rome's from Montemalo, which will be surpassed in the fall, as well as the rising.

I have seen [Bellincion Berti](#) dressed in leather, clasped with bone, and have seen his lady come from her mirror with her face unpainted. I have seen men of the [Nerlo](#) and [Vecchio](#) families, content with only clothing of skins, and their ladies themselves handling flax and spindle. Oh fortunate women! Each one certain of her burial place, and none deserted in their beds because of France. One kept watch over the cradle, and spoke in that soothing way, that is the first delight of fathers and mothers: another as she drew thread from the distaff, would tell her family about Troy, Rome, and Fiesole.

Then a shrew like Cianghella, or a corrupt lawyer like Lapo Salterello, would have been as amazing then as a Cornelia or a Cincinnatus now. Mary, called on, with deep moans, gave me to such a restful, lovely life among the citizens, to such faithful citizenship, such sweet being, and in your ancient Baptistery, I became, in the one, moment, Cacciaguida and a Christian.

Moronto and Eliseo were my brothers: my wife came to me from the valley of the River Po, and your surname was derived from hers, Alighiera. Then I followed the Emperor Conrad the Third, who made me a knight, since I advanced myself so greatly in his grace. I marched in his ranks, against the infamy of that religion whose infidel

people usurp, shame on your
pastors, that which is yours by right.
There, by those wretched folk, I was
disrobed of that deceitful world,
whose love corrupts many a spirit,
and came, from martyrdom, to this
peace.'

Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45
Cacciaguida's ancestry

O our little nobility of the blood!
If you make people glory in you
down here, where our affection
languishes, it will never make me
wonder again, since I gloried in it
there where appetite is uncorrupted,
I mean in Heaven. Yet, you are
indeed a cloak that shrinks, so that if
nothing is added, day by day, time
circles it with its shears. I began
again with that *voi*, for *you*, that

Rome first allowed for [Julius](#), which her families persevere with least, at which Beatrice, who was a little apart from us, smiled and seemed like the [Lady of Malehaut](#) who coughed at [Guinevere](#)'s first indiscretion, as it is written.

I began: 'You are my father, you give me full authority to speak, you lift me so that I am greater than myself. My Mind is filled with joy from so many springs, it delights in itself that it can suffer it and not be destroyed. Tell me then, dear source of me, what was your ancestry, and what did the years record in your youth. Tell me about the sheepfold of [Saint John](#), how great Florence was then, and who were the people worthy of highest places there.'

As a coal bursts into flame at a breath of wind, so I saw that light

shine out at my flattering words, and even as it grew more beautiful to my sight, so, in a voice sweeter and gentler, but not in this current dialect of ours, he said: ‘From the day that *Ave* was first spoken, to the day of my birth, when my mother, now a saint, unburdened herself of my weight, this burning planet returned to his own constellation of the Lion, five hundred and eighty times, to relight itself under his feet.

My predecessors and I were born in the place where he who runs in the Corso, your annual race, first encounters the last *sesto* of Saint Peter. Let that be enough about my ancestors, silence about who they were and where they came from is more fitting than speech.’



Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87 The growth of Florence

‘At that time, between [the statue](#), of Mars at the Ponte Vecchio, and the Baptistery, all who were capable of bearing arms were only a fifth of those living now. But the citizenship saw itself as pure in blood, down to the humblest worker, that is now contaminated by the blood of Campi, Certaldo and Figline, the towns of the [Contado](#).

O how much better it would be to have these people as your neighbours, and your boundary south at Galuzzo, and north at Trespiano, than to have them inside, and bear the foulness of that villain [Baldo](#) from Aguglion, or him of Signa, [Fazio](#), whose eye is keen for abuse of office! Had that race, the

most degenerate on earth, been benign, like a mother to her son, and not been a hostile stepmother to Caesar, one of those who is a Florentine now, merchant and moneychanger, would have been sent back to Simifonte, where his grandfather was a beggar. Montemurlo would still house the [Conti](#), the [Cerchi](#) would still be in Acone's parish, and the [Buondelmonti](#) perhaps still in Val di Greve.

Confusion of people was always the source of the city's sorrows, as mixed food is of the body's. And a blind bull falls more heavily than a blind lamb, and one sword often cuts keener, and deeper, than five. If you look how the cities of [Luni and Urbisaglia](#), are done for, and Chiusi and Sinaglia following

them, it will not seem strange or difficult to understand how families destroy themselves, since even cities have an end.

Everything of yours comes to an end, as you will, but in things which last a while, it is not noticed, because your lives are short. And as the turning of the lunar sphere covers and uncovers the shoreline, endlessly, so Fortune handles Florence, so that it should not seem remarkable when I speak of the noble Florentines, whose fame is buried by time.'

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154 The ancient families of Florence

'I have seen the [Ughi](#), seen the [Catellini](#), the [Filippi](#), [Grechi](#), [Ormanni](#) and [Alberichi](#), illustrious

families already on the wane. And with Sannella, as great as ancient, I have seen Arca, Soldanieri, Ardhingi and Bostichi.

Over the gate of Porta San Piero, which is now heavy with the Cerchi's new crimes, that will soon lead to shipwreck, the Ravignani lived, from whom the Conti Guidi are descended, and those who have since taken noble Bellincioni's name.

The Della Pressa already knew how to govern, and Galigaio, in his house, already had the gilded hilt and pommel of knighthood. The vair column of the Pigli was already great, the Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti and Barucci, the Galli, and the Chiaramontesi who blush for falsifying the measure.

The stock the Calfucci sprang from was great already, and the Sizii and Arrigucci were already civic dignitaries. Oh how great I have seen them, those Uberti, now destroyed by pride! And the Lamberti's device of the golden balls adorned Florence in all her great actions. So did their fathers, who, now, whenever the Bishop's See is vacant stand guzzling in the consistory.

The outrageous race, the house of Adimari, that is a dragon to those who flee it, and is as quiet as a lamb to those who show their teeth, or purse, was rising already, but from humble people, so that Ubertino Donati was not pleased when Bellincion his father-in-law made him a relative of them by marriage.

Caponsacco had already come down from Fiesole to the marketplace, and Giuda and Infangato were already good citizens. I will tell you something unbelievable but true, the little circle of walls was entered by a gate, named after the Della Pera.

Everyone who carries any of the fair device of the great Baron, Hugo of Brandenburg, whose name and worth is kept alive by the festival of Saint Thomas, derived knighthood and privilege from him, though the Della Bella who fringes it with gold, has now joined the party of the people.

There were Gualterotti and Importuni already, and the Borgo Santi Apostoli would be a quieter place if they did not have the Buondelmonti for new neighbours.

The house, the [Amidei](#), from which, O [Buondelmonte](#), your grief sprang, because of righteous anger which murdered you and put an end to your joyful life, was honoured, it, and its associates. How wrong you were to reject its marriage-rite at another's prompting! Many would have been happy who are now saddened, if God had committed you to the small stream, the Ema, the first time you crossed it to reach the city. But it was fitting that Florence should sacrifice a victim to that mutilated stone of [Mars](#), that guards the bridge, in her last time of peace.

I saw Florence in such calm repose, with these men and others like them, that she had no reason for grief. I saw her people, so glorious and just, with these men to serve

them, that her arms of the white lily were never reversed on the standard, nor the lily dyed red by division.’

Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99
Cacciaguida unfolds Dante’s
future

As [Phaethon](#), he who still makes father’s give grudgingly to their sons, came to his mother, [Clymene](#), to receive reassurance, of what he had heard thrown back at him, so I: and so did I seem to Beatrice, and that sacred flame, who had already changed his position for my sake. At which my Lady said: ‘Emit the heat of your desire, so that it may flow, truly stamped with the internal seal, not so that our knowledge increases by your speaking, but so that you

may learn how to speak of your thirst, so that men may quench it.’

‘Dear ground of myself, in which I am rooted, who are lifted up so high, that, gazing on that point, to which all time is present, you see contingent things, before they themselves exist, as [earthbound minds](#) see that two obtuse angles cannot exist in one triangle, heavy words were said to me, about my future, while Virgil accompanied me, descending through the dead world, and around the Mount that purifies souls: though I feel well set to resist Fortune’s blows, so that my mind would be content to hear what fate comes towards to me, since the arrow seen in advance arrives less suddenly.’ So I spoke, to that same light who had addressed me

previously, and confessed my wish, as Beatrice wanted.

That paternal love, revealed or hidden by its own smile, did not reply in dark prophecies that misled the foolish ancients, before the Lamb of God who takes away sin, was killed, but in clear words, and with precise statements: ‘Contingent things, which do not extend beyond your world of matter, are all outlined in the eternal gaze, though pre-determination does not follow from this, no more than a boat slipping downstream is driven by the eye in which it is reflected. From that, [what is in store](#) for you is visible to me, as a sweet harmony comes from an organ.

You must be exiled from Florence, as [Hippolytus](#) was exiled from Athens, through the spite and

lies of [Phaedra](#), his stepmother. It is already willed so, and already planned, and will be accomplished soon, by [Boniface](#) who ponders it, in that place where, every day, Christ is sold. The cry will put the blame on the injured party, as is usual, but truth will bear witness to itself, by the revenge it takes.

You will lose everything you love most dearly: that is the arrow that Exile's bow will fire. You will prove how bitter the taste of another man's bread is, and how hard it is to descend, and climb, another man's stair. And what will bow your shoulders down will be the vicious and worthless company with whom you will fall into this abyss, since they will all be ungrateful, fierce and disrespectful to you: but not long after, their cheeks, not yours

will blush for it. Their fate will demonstrate their brutishness, so that it will be to your credit to have formed [a party of one](#).

Your first refuge and first lodging will be by courtesy of the great Lombard, [Bartolomeo](#) della Scala, whose arms are the sacred eagle atop a ladder, since he will cast such a friendly gaze on you, that, between you, in request and fulfilment, that will be first, which between others comes last. With him will be [Can Grande](#), the one who was so marked at birth by this potent planet that his actions will be notable.

People have not yet taken due regard of him, because of his age, since these spheres have only revolved round him for nine years. But before Pope [Clement the Fifth](#),

the Gascon, has deceived the Emperor, Henry the Sixth, the gleam of his virtue will be apparent in his indifference to money or to hard labour. His generous actions will eventually be known, so that even his enemies will not be able to stay silent about them. Look to him and to his gifts. Many people will be changed by him their conditions altered, the wealthy and the poor: and you will carry it inscribed in your memory of him, but will not speak it': and he told me many things incredible even to those who shall see them.

Then he added: 'Son, these are my comments on what has been said to you: see the difficulties hidden by a few rotations. But I would not want you to be envious of your neighbours, since you will live far

beyond the punishment that will fall on their infamies.’

Paradiso Canto XVII:100-142 He urges Dante to reveal his Vision

When the sacred soul, by his silence, showed that he had finished passing the weft through the warp I had stretched out ready for him, I began, like a man who, doubting, longs for advice from one who sees straight, wills the right, and loves: ‘My father, I see clearly how time comes spurring at me, to give me such a blow, one heaviest to those who lose themselves, so that it is best for me to arm myself with foresight, so that if the dearest place is denied me, I do not lose all other refuge because of my writings.

Down in the world, endlessly bitter, and around the Mount from whose summit my Lady's eyes raised me, and, afterwards, through the Heavens from light to light, I have learnt things, that if I tell them again, will savour of acrid pungency to many: and if I am a shrinking friend to truth, I fear to lose life among those who will call this time ancient.'

That light, in which my treasure, that I had found there, was smiling, first coruscated like a golden mirror in the sun's rays, then answered: 'A conscience darkened by its own shame, or another's, will truly find your words harsh, but reveal all your Vision nonetheless, avoid all lies, and let them scratch if they find a scab, since though your words may be bitter at first tasting, they

will still be vital food afterwards when they digest them.

This outcry of yours, will do as the wind does, that strikes the highest summits hardest, and that will be no small cause of honour. So, only spirits known for their fame have been shown to you, in these spheres, along the Mount, and in the sad depths, since the souls of those who hear will not be content with, or truly believe in, examples that have unknown and hidden roots, nor any other obscure argument.'

Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57 The Warriors of God

That mirror of the blessed was already joying only in his own discourse, and I was tasting mine,

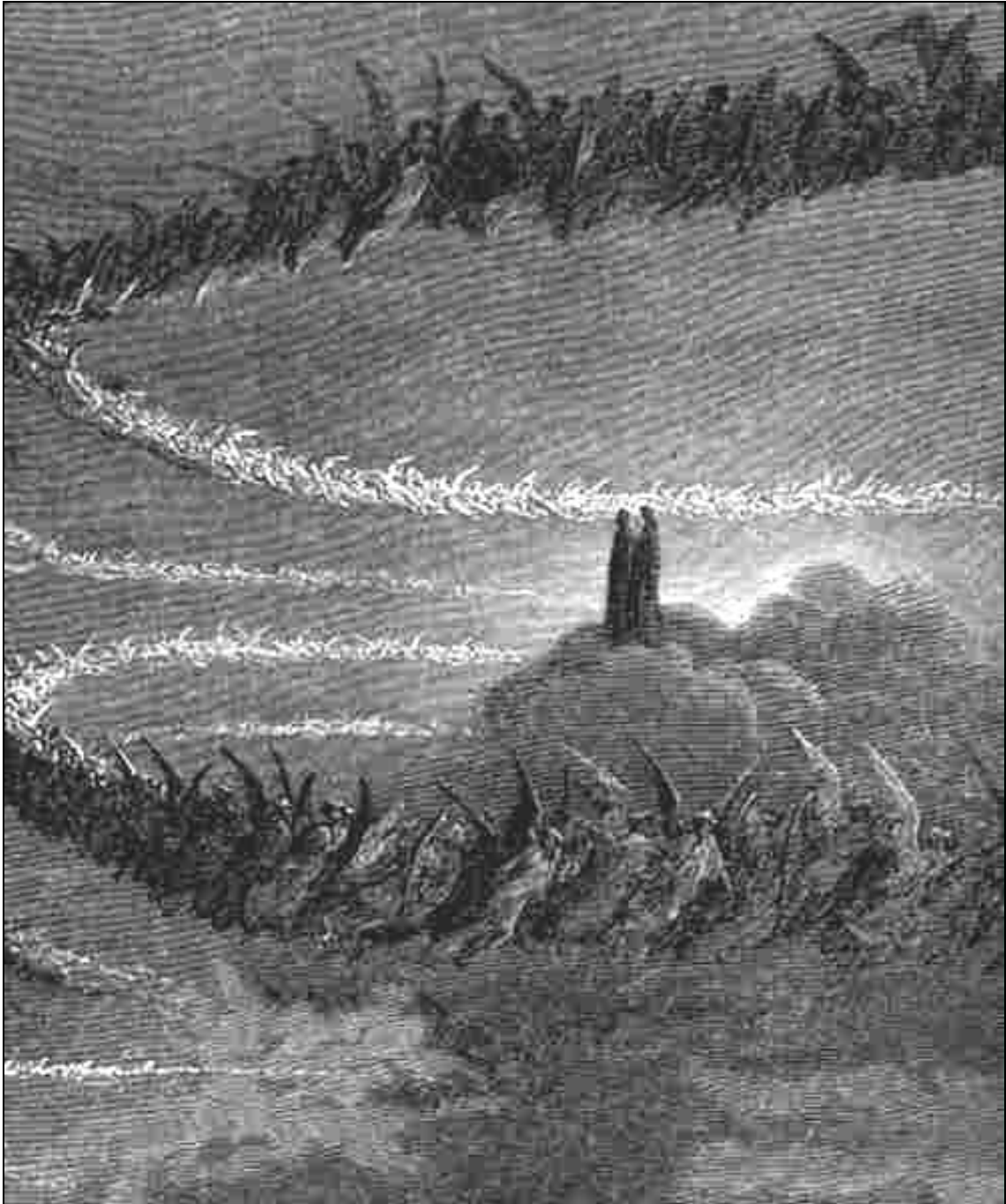
tempering the sweet with the bitter: and that Lady who was leading me to God said: Change your thoughts, remember that I am near to Him, who disburdens us of every wrong.’

I turned to the beloved voice of my comfort, and I forgo speaking here of what love I saw, in those sacred eyes: not merely because I am diffident about my words, but because of my memory which cannot climb again, so far beyond itself, unless another guides it. I can only say this much, about that moment, that as I gazed at her, my affections were free of any other desire, while the eternal joy that shone directly on to Beatrice, contented me with its reflection from her lovely face.

Overcoming me with the light of her smile, she said to me: ‘Turn

now, and listen, for not only in my eyes is Paradise.’ Just as we sometimes read affection, here, in a face, if it is so great that the whole mind is seized by it, so in the flaming of his sacred glow to which I turned, I knew the desire in him to speak to me still. He started: ‘In this fifth canopy of the tree, which takes life from its crown, and is always in fruit, never shedding leaves, are spirits, who are blessed, who had great names below, before they came to Heaven, so that every Muse would be made richer by them. So look at the horns of the cross, and he whom I will name, will there enact the lightning in a cloud.’

I saw a light traced along the cross, as [Joshua](#) was named, and the word was not complete for me before the action. And at the name



of the great Maccabeus, I saw another light move, revolving, and delight was like the whip to the spinning-top. So for Charlemagne and Roland, two more, followed by my keen gaze, as the eye follows a hawk in flight. Then William of Orange, Renard his brother-in-law, Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, and Robert Guiscard. At that the soul, Cacciaguida, who had spoken with me, moving, to mingle there, with the other lights, displayed the quality of his art to me, among Heaven's singers.

I turned to my right to know my duty, from Beatrice, indicated either by speech or sign, and I saw her eyes, so clear, so glad, that her appearance exceeded all previous form, even the last.

Paradiso Canto XVIII:58-99 The Sixth Sphere: Jupiter: Justice

As a man sees that, day by day, by feeling more delight in achieving good things, his virtue increases, so I saw that my circling, with the Heavens, had increased its orbit, while I watched the miraculous vision becoming more adorned. And the change that quickly crosses a lady's white face, when she throws off a weight of shame, was offered to my eyes, when I turned, because of the white radiance of Jupiter, the sixth, temperate planet, that had received me. In that joyous torch I saw the sparkle of the love inside it, signing letters, of our language, to my eyes.

And, as birds, rising from the river-bank, make flock in wheeling

or extended shapes, as if they were delighted by their pastures, so the sacred beings in the lights sang, flying, and formed now *d* or *i* or *l*. First they moved to the note they were singing, then, as they shaped one of these letters, would stop for a moment and stay silent. O [Muse](#), Goddess of the fount of Pegasus, who makes intellect glorious, and gives it enduring life, as it, with your help, does cities and countries, illuminate me with yourself, so that I can show their figures in relief, as I hold them in mind: let your power be shown in these brief words.

Then they showed themselves in thirty-five vowels and consonants, and I took note of the letters, as they appeared one by one to me: *diligite justitiam*: love righteousness, was the first verb and noun, of the whole

vision: *qui judicatis terram*: you judges over earth, was the last.

Then they remained, ordered, in the *m* of the fifth word, so that Jupiter seemed silver in that region, pricked out with gold: and I saw other lights descending where the summit of the *m* was, and come to rest there, singing, I think, of the good that moves them towards Himself.

Paradiso Canto XVIII:100-136
The lights form an Eagle

Then, as innumerable sparks rise from a blow to a burning log, from which foolish people make auguries, more than a thousand lights rose, it seemed to me, and some ascended steeply, some a little, just as the Sun, that lit them, ordained: and



when each one had come to rest in place, I saw an eagle's neck and head outlined by that pricked out fire.

He who depicts it, has no one to guide him, but he himself guides, and from him that power flows into the mind, that builds the eagle's nest: the other beatitudes, who seemed at first content to entwine the *m* with lilies, by a slight motion, in-filled the outline. O sweet planet, how great the quality and quantity of jewels, which made clear to me, that our justice is an effect, of that Heaven you bejewel!

So that I beg the Mind in which your motion and your power has source, to gaze at the place from which smoke rises to vitiate your light: and that the anger be roused once more, against the buying and

selling, in the Temple, whose walls were built by miracle and martyrdom. O soldiers of Heaven, whom I see, pray for those who have gone awry on earth, following bad examples. It was custom once to war with the sword, now it is done by holding back spiritual bread, here and there, that the tender Father denies to no one: but you, [Boniface](#), who only write in order to cancel out the lines, think that [Paul](#) and [Peter](#) are living still, who died for the vineyard you destroy. Though indeed, you may say: ‘I have so fixed my desires on him, en-coined, the [Baptist](#), who lived a solitary life, and was dragged to martyrdom to serve [Salome](#)’s dance, that I do not know Paul or the Fisherman.’

Paradiso Canto XIX:1-90 Divine Justice

The marvellous image, which those entwined spirits made, joying in their sweet fruition, appeared in front of me, with outstretched wings. Each soul appeared like a ruby, in which the sun's rays burn, so lit as to refract light to my eyes. And what I must tell now, pen never wrote, voice never spoke, nor was it ever known by imagination, since I saw and heard the eagle's beak speaking, saying in its voice, *I and Mine*, when, in its form, it was *We and Ours*.

And it began: 'I am exalted here to this glory, which does not allow itself to be overcome by longing, through being just and pious, and I have left a memory on Earth, so

constituted that even the evil approve it, though they do not follow its path.’ As we feel one glow from many coals, so there came a single sound, out of the image, from those many points of love.

At which I said quickly: ‘O perpetual flowers of eternal delight, you who make all your perfumes seem like a single one to me, relieve, as you breathe, the great fast which has held me hungering, for a long time, because I found no food to eat on Earth. I know, in truth, that whatever other realm, of Heaven, Divine Justice takes as its mirror, your realm comprehends it without a veil. You know how eagerly I ready myself to listen: you know what the question is, which has caused my fast to be so enduring.’

As the hawk divested of its hood shakes itself and claps its wings, demonstrating its will and beautifying itself, so I saw that symbolic eagle, woven from the praise of Divine Grace, with the songs that are known to whoever rejoices there. Then it began: ‘He who drew the compass round the edges of the Universe, and marked out, inside it, so much that is shown and hidden, could not impress his greatness on all the Universe without his Word being infinitely beyond us. And this is attested by Lucifer, that first proud being, who was a pinnacle of creation, falling abortive, because he could not wait for enlightenment: and so it appears that every minor nature is too small a vessel to hold that Good which is

endless, and measures itself by itself.

So our vision which must be one of the rays of that Mind by which all things are filled, cannot have such great power, without its origin seeing far beyond that which it itself can see. Therefore such perception as your world has, is lost with depth as our vision is in the ocean, since though it sees the seafloor by the shore, it cannot reach it in the open water, even though it is there, and the depth has hidden it. There is no light unless it comes from that Serenity which is never troubled: the rest is darkness, or the shadow of the flesh, or its poison.

Now the labyrinth is open enough for you, that labyrinth that hid the living justice from you, which you have questioned so

incessantly: since you said: “A man is born, on the banks of the Indus, and there is no one to speak to him about Christ, or read or write of Him, and all that man’s will and action are good, as far as human reason can tell, without sin in speech or life. He dies un-baptised, and without the faith. Where is the justice, in condemning him? Why is it his fault, that he is void of faith?”

Now, who are you, to sit on the judge’s seat, a thousand miles away, with sight that sees a short span? Certainly, to him who trades subtleties with me, it would be wonderful if there were no doubts, if the Scriptures were not set above them. O earthly creatures, O coarse minds! The Primal Will, which is goodness itself, never abandons its own self, which is the supreme

good. All that is in harmony with it is Just: no created goodness draws It, to itself, but It, by shining out, gives rise to it.'

Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148 The Christian Kings

As the stork sweeps over her nest when she has fed her chicks, and as the ones she fed look up at her, so did that eagle-form of the blessed, which moved its wings powered by so much wisdom, and so I raised my forehead. Wheeling it cried, and said: 'As my cries are to you, who do not understand them, such is eternal judgement to you mortals.'

When those glowing lights of the Holy Spirit were still, though still in the form of that insignia which gained the Romans the world's

reverence, it began again: ‘No one ever rose to this region, who did not believe in Christ, not before he was nailed to the tree, nor after. But see, many call out: “Christ, Christ” who shall be further from Him at the Judgement, than those who do not know of Christ: and the Ethiopians will condemn such Christians when the two crowds part, the one rich in eternity, the other naked. What would the Persians say to your kings, when they see that volume opened in which all their ill deeds are recorded?’

Amongst the actions of the Emperor [Albert](#), that one will soon set the pen in motion, that will make Prague’s kingdom of Bohemia a desert. There will be read the sorrow that [Philip the Fair](#) is bringing to the Seine, by falsifying the coinage, he

who will die by a wild boar's wound.

There the pride will be seen that parches, and makes the Scots and [Edward](#)'s English mad, so that they cannot keep the proper borders. The lechery and effeminate life of [Ferdinand](#) of Spain, will be seen, and that of [Wenceslaus](#) of Bohemia, who never knew or willed anything of worth. For [Charles the Second](#), 'the Cripple', King of Jerusalem will be seen marked with a 'One: *I*' against virtue, whereas a 'Thousand: *M*' sins will score the contrary charge.

The baseness and avarice of [Frederick](#) who holds Sicily, the Isle of Fire, where [Anchises](#) ended his long life, will be visible, and in order to understand the magnitude of his baseness, his record will be

kept in tiny writing, to fit a great deal in a little space. And the foul deeds of his uncle, [James](#) of the Balearic Isles, and his brother, [James of Aragon](#), will be shown clearly to all, who have bastardised a great nation and two crowns.

And [Dionysius](#) of Portugal, and [Hakon](#) of Norway, shall be recorded there, and [Stephen of Serbia](#), who sadly saw the coin of Venice only to counterfeit it. O happy Hungary if she no longer allows [Andrew](#) to maul her! And happy Navarre, if she could protect herself, with the Pyrenees, that border her! And all should know, as a warning to her, that Nicosia and Famagusta already moan, and cry, by reason of their beast, [Henry of Lusignan](#), who cannot be separated from the rest.'

Paradiso Canto XX:1-72 The Eagle celebrates the Just

When the Sun, that illumines all the world, descends so far below our hemisphere that day vanishes on every side, the sky, that was only lit by him before, now reappears in many lights, in which the one light shines. And this effect in Heaven came to mind when the insignia of the world and its leaders, closed its eagle's beak: because all those living lights, shining far brighter, began to sing things which must slip and fall from my memory.

O sweet Love, mantled in a smile, how ardent you seemed in those flutings, breathed out only in sacred thoughts!

When the dear, lucid stones with which I saw the sixth Heaven

gemmed, had rendered silent those angelic chimes, I seemed to hear the murmuring of a river which falls from rock to rock, and reveals the copiousness of its source. And as the sound takes form from the lute's neck, or the wind that enters from the unstopped pipe, so, the delay of anticipation over, the eagle's murmur rose through its neck, as if it were hollow. There it became a voice and issued out of its beak, in the form of words, that the heart waited for, on which I wrote them.

It began to speak to me: 'That part of me that sees and in mortal eagles endures the sun, must now be gazed at intensely, since the fires with which the eye in my head sparkles, are the most important, of all the crowd of those from which I construct my shape. He who shines

in the middle, as the pupil does in the eye, was [David](#), the singer of the Holy Spirit, who carried the ark from city to city. Now he knows the value of his song, in as much as it was produced by his own judgement, through the reward that matches it.

Of the five who make the arch of the profiled eyebrow, he who is closest to the beak is [Trajan](#) who consoled the widow for her son. Now he knows how dearly it costs not to follow Christ, from his experience of this sweet life and its opposite. And he who follows on the arch I speak of, on its upper arc, is [Hezekiah](#) who delayed death by his true penitence. Now he knows that the eternal judgement is not altered, when a pious prayer seems to delay today's event until

tomorrow. Constantine, the next who follows, with a good intention that produced evil consequences, made himself, the laws, and my Imperial self, Greek, in order to give way to the Shepherd. Now he knows that the evil flowing from his good action does not harm him, even though the world is destroyed by it.

And him you see on the downward slope of the arc, is William, of Sicily and Naples, which countries deplore his loss, while grieving that Charles and Frederick are alive. Now he knows how Heaven loves a righteous king, and he makes it visible still, by the appearance of his radiance.

Who would believe, down in the world of error, that the Trojan Ripheus is in this sphere, fifth of these holy lights? Now he knows

much about the Divine Grace, that the world cannot see, although his sight does not reach the end of it.’

Paradiso Canto XX:73-148 Trajan and Ripheus: Predestination

Like to the lark ascending, in the air, first singing and then silent, content with the final sweetness that sates her, so that image of the imprint of eternal pleasure, seemed to me, by which, in longing for it, each thing becomes what it is. And though I was to my doubt, like the transparent glass is to the colour it surrounds, it would still not wait and bide its time in silence, but it thrust ‘What are these things?’ from my mouth by its own pressure, at which I saw great sparkles of joy. Then immediately, the insignia, blessed

and with its kindling eye, replied to me, so that it would not keep me in amazed suspense: 'I see you believe in these things because I tell you, but do not see the *how*, so that they are obscure, though still believed in. You are like him who knows the thing by name, but cannot see its *quiddity*, its *whatness*, unless someone else brings it to light.

Regnum Coelorum, the Kingdom of Heaven, suffers the force of hot love and living hope, which overcomes the Divine Will, not in the sense in which man overcomes man, but overcomes that Will, because it wishes to be overcome, and once overcome, in turn overcomes, with its own kindness. The lives of the first and fifth lights, along the eyebrow, cause you to marvel, because you see them

decking this region of the Angels. They did not leave their bodies as Gentiles, but as Christians, with firm belief in those pierced feet, that to the first *would* suffer, and to the other *had already* suffered. Since the first, [Trajan](#), came back to his bones from Hell, where no one ever returns to the true will, and this was the reward for living **Hope**: the living Hope which added power to [Gregory](#)'s prayers to raise him, so that His will might have the power to be moved. That glorious soul, of which we speak, returning to the flesh where it lived a while, believed in Him who had the power to help, and, believing, kindled so great a flame of true Love, that it was worthy of coming here, to this rejoicing, on its second death.

Ripheus, the fifth light, set all his **Love** below on righteousness, by that grace which wells from so deep a fount that no creature ever set eyes on its last depth, so that God, going from grace to grace, opened his eyes to our redemption yet to come: and he believed in that, and from that time did not suffer the mire of Paganism, and reprov'd the stubborn peoples. Those three ladies, the Virtues, whom you saw at the right wheel, of the chariot, stood as sponsors at his baptising, more than a thousand years before baptism.

O Predestination, how remote your roots are from our vision that cannot see the First Cause *totally*! And you mortal creatures, keep yourselves from judging, since we who see God do not yet know all

those who will be elected, and such defective sight is sweet for us, because our good is refined by this good, that what God wills we also will.'

So sweet medicine was given me, by this divine image, to correct my short sight. And as a good harpist matches the quivering chord to a good singer, so that the song gives added pleasure, so, while he spoke, I remember that I saw those two sacred lights, make their fires quiver at the words, just as two eyes blink, together.

**Paradiso Canto XXI:1-51 The
Seventh Sphere: Saturn:
Temperance**

My eyes were already fixed on my Lady's face once more, and my

mind with them, free of every other intent, and she did not smile, but said: Were I to smile, you would be like [Semele](#), turned to ashes, since my beauty which burns more brightly, as you have seen, on the steps of the eternal palace, the higher we climb, if it were not moderated, glows so much, that your human powers, at its lightning flash, would be like the leaves the thunder shatters.

We have risen to [Saturn](#), the seventh planet, which beams downwards, in the breast of Leo, the fiery Lion, mingling with its power. Fix your mind in your eyes, and make them mirrors, to the figure that will be shown to you, in this mirror.' Whoever knows how my sight was fed by her blessed aspect when I changed to a different

concern, would know how great a joy it was to me to obey my heavenly guide, weighing contemplation's joy against the joy of obedience.

Inside the crystal planet, coloured like gold that reflects the ray, which, as it circles the world, carries the name of Saturn, its illustrious ruler, in whose Age every wickedness died, I saw a ladder erected so far upward my sight could not follow it. And I saw so many splendours descending the rungs that I thought every light that shines in Heaven had been poured downwards there. And as, according to their nature, the rooks set out in a flock, at dawn, to warm their cold feathers, and then some flap away, without returning, others come back to where they started, and the rest



wheel in flight, it seemed to me that was also the way among that glittering of spirits, that came in a crowd, as soon as they reached a particular rung, and the spirit that landed nearest to me, became so bright in my thoughts, that I said: ‘I clearly see the Love you signal to me. But She from whom I wait for the how, and when, of speech and silence, pauses, and therefore I ask no questions, counter to my own wishes.’ At which She who sees everything, saw my silence in his look, and said: ‘Let free your burning desire.’

**Paradiso Canto XXI:52-142 Peter
Damian**

And I began: ‘My lack of worth does not make me worthy of a reply,

except for her sake who allows me to make the request: O life, blessed, who live, hidden in gladness, tell me the reason why I am placed near you, and say why the sweet symphony of Paradise is silent here, when it sounded below through the other spheres, so devotedly.’ He replied: ‘You have mortal hearing, as you have mortal sight: there is no song here for the same reason that Beatrice does not smile. I have descended so far, on the steps of [the sacred ladder](#), only to give you joy with words, and with the light, which mantles me: nor did greater love make me swifter: since more and greater love burns higher there, as the flaming made clear to you, but the deep love, that keeps us, as ready servants to the wisdom that

controls the world, assigns me here, as you see.'

I said: 'Yes I see how love, freely, in this court, is sufficient to make you follow the eternal providence, but it is this which seems hard to me to understand: why you alone among your peers was predestined to this role.' I had not reached the last word before the light made a centre of its mid-point, and whirled itself around like a rapid millstone. Then the love that was inside it answered: 'Divine Light focuses itself on me from above, penetrating that in which I am involved: which power, joined to my vision, lifts me so far beyond myself, that I see the supreme essence from which it is extracted. From there comes the joy I flame with, equalling the clarity of my

sight with the brightness of my flame. But neither the most illuminated soul in Heaven, nor the Seraph with eyes most fixed on God, can satisfy you as to your question, because the thing you ask lies so deep in the abyss of the eternal law that it is hidden from created sight. And, when you return to the mortal world, report this: that it should no longer presume to set its feet towards so great a goal.

The Mind, that shines here, on earth is clouded, so think if it could have that power there, below, if it does not when Heaven takes it to itself.’ His words put such constraint on me I left the question, and restricted myself to asking, humbly, who he was himself.

‘Between Italy’s two coasts, the Apennine mountains rise, not far

from your native place, and so high that the thunder sounds far lower down, and make a hump called Catria, beneath which a monastery was consecrated, which used only to be given over to prayer.’ So he began his third speech to me, and then continued: ‘There I became so rooted in God’s service that I treated heat and cold lightly, ate Lenten-fare cooked with olive-oil, was satisfied with contemplative thought. That hermitage once yielded fruitfully to Heaven, and now is barren, so that before long it must be exposed.

I was [Peter Damian](#) in that place, and was Peter the Sinner, in the house of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore. Little of mortal life was left to me, when I was called and drawn to the cardinal’s hat, which passes

now from bad wearer to worse. Saint Peter, Cephas, came, and Saint Paul, the great vessel of the Holy Spirit, lean and unshod, taking their food from any place. Now the modern shepherds have to be buttressed on both sides, and have someone to lead them, they are so fat and heavy, and someone to support them from behind. They cover their ponies with cloaks, so that two creatures go under one hide: O patience that endures so much!’

At his voice, I saw more flames descend, gyring, from rung to rung, and every gyration made them more beautiful. They came and rested, and made a sound so deep, that there is nothing here to compare it to, and I did not understand its

meaning: its thunder overcame me
so.

Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99 Saint Benedict

I turned, oppressed by stupor, to
my guide, like a little child who
always goes for help where he has
most confidence, and She, like a
mother who, with her voice, which
sets him right, quickly aids her pale
and breathless child, said, to me:
'Do you not know you are in
Heaven? And do you not know that
Heaven is wholly sacred, and that
which is done here is done from
righteous zeal? Now you can
understand how the song, and my
smiling, have transmuted you, since,
that cry has so moved you, in which
the vengeance you shall see taken,

before you die, would already be known to you, had you understood their prayers.

The sword from above does not strike hastily, or reluctantly, except to his perception, who waits for it with longing, or in fear. But turn now to the others: since you will see many renowned spirits, if you direct your look according to my words.' I turned my eyes, as her wish commanded, and saw a hundred smaller spheres, which were made more beautiful by their collective rays.

I stood, like someone who represses the stirrings of desire in himself, who does not presume to ask, because he fears to exceed due bounds. And the greatest and most lustrous of these pearls came forward, to satisfy my wish about

him, Then I heard, inside there: ‘If you could see, as I can, the love which burns among us, your thought would have been spoken, but so that you do not miss the goal, by delay, I will answer only the thought which you were so cautious about.

That mountain, Monte Cairo, on whose slopes lies Monte Cassino, was once thronged by deceived and wrongly-directed worshippers of the Pagan gods. And I am Benedict, who first carried His name up there, He who brought that Truth, which raises us up so high, and such great grace shone over me, that I weaned the surrounding villages from the impious cults that seduced the world.

These other flames were all contemplatives, lit by the warmth that bears sacred fruits and flowers.

Here is Maccarius, here is Romoaldus, here are the brothers who stayed inside the cloisters and kept their hearts intact.’ And I to him: ‘The love you show, by speaking with me, and the benign aspect I see, and note, in all your fires, has increased my confidence as the Sun expands the rose, when it opens as far as is within its power, so that I beg to know, assure me father, as to whether I might receive such grace as to see your unveiled form.’

At which he said: ‘Brother, your noble desire, will be fulfilled in the last sphere, the Empyrean, where I, and all the rest, find fulfilment. There every desire is perfect, full and ripe: in it alone every part is where it always was, since it is not in space, and has no poles, and our

ladder reaches it at last, vanishing out of sight. The patriarch [Jacob](#) saw its upper rungs stretch up there, when he saw it filled with Angels. But no one leaves Earth to climb it now, and my rule, down there, remains a waste of parchment. The walls, that used to be a House of Prayer, are dens, and the cowls are sacks full of mouldy grain.

But even gross usury is not as contrary to God's wishes as the fruit, which maddens the monks' hearts. Since what the Church holds, in its keeping, belongs to the people who pray to God, not to kin, or to other viler uses. The flesh of mortals is so easily seduced, that down there, a good beginning does not last the time from the oak's sprouting to the acorn harvest. [Peter](#) began his flock, without gold or silver, I mine

with prayers and fasting, and [Francis](#) his with humility. And if you gaze at the start of each order, and look again at where it has failed, you will see the white darken.

But Jordan being rolled back, and the Red Sea separating when God willed, would be a less marvellous sight than alteration here.' So he spoke to me, and then returned to his companions, and the companions drew close together, then were all gathered upwards in a whirlwind.

Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154 **Dante enters Gemini**

The sweet Lady drove me, behind them, up the ladder, merely with a gesture, her power so

conquered my nature: and motion was never so quick down here, where we climb and fall by nature's law, as to match my flight.

O Reader, I swear by my hopes of ever returning to that sacred triumph, for which I, many a time, regret my sins, and beat my breast, you would not have put your finger in the fire, and drawn it back, in so short a time as it took me to see [the sign of Gemini](#), that follows Taurus, and to be inside it.

O glorious stars, O light pregnant with great power, from which I derive all my genius, whatever of it there is, He who is father of every human life, was rising and setting in your sign, when I first felt the air of Tuscany: and then, when grace was granted me, to enter the distant

sphere where you revolve, your region was assigned to me.

To you my soul breathes, devoutly, to gain the strength for the difficult passage, which draws her towards itself. Beatrice began to say: 'You are so near the highest blessedness, that your eyes should be sharp and clear. So, before you make your way deeper into it, look down, and see how great a world I have placed under your feet: in order that your heart may be presented, as joyfully as it can to the triumphant crowd which comes, delightedly, through this ethereal sphere.'

I turned my gaze back through each and every one of the seven spheres, and saw this globe, so that I smiled at its pitiful semblance, and I approve that wisdom greatest which

considers it least: since he whose thoughts are directed elsewhere may be called truly noble.

I saw the Moon, [Artemis](#), daughter of [Latona](#), lit without that shadow which gave me reason before to consider her rare or dense. I endured the face of [Helios](#), your son [Hyperion](#), and saw how [Mercury](#), son of [Maia](#), and [Venus](#), daughter of [Dione](#), move around and near him. Next, [Jupiter](#) appeared, moderate between [Saturn](#) his father's cold, and [Mars](#)'s his son's heat, and the changes in their position were clear to me. And all the seven were revealed to me, how large, how fast they are, and how distant from each other in orbit.

The threshing-floor that makes us so fierce, appeared to me from mountains to river-mouth, as I

revolved with the eternal Twins:
then I turned my eyes to the lovely
eyes again.

Paradiso Canto XXIII:1-48 The Vision of Christ

Like a bird among the beloved
leaves, who has brooded over the
nest of her sweet chicks, in the night
that hides all things from us, and
who, prematurely, takes to the open
branch, eager to see their longed-for
aspect, and to find food to feed
them, waiting the sun with ardent
love, watching fixedly for the dawn
to break, so was my Lady, standing,
erect and ready, turned towards the
region of the south where the sun
moves slowest, so that as I looked at
her in her anticipation and longing, I
became like him, desiring, who

wishes something new, and delights in hope.

But the time between one *when* and the next, for fixing my attention I mean, and for seeing the Heavens grow brighter and brighter, was short. And Beatrice said: ‘See the procession of Christ’s triumph, and all the fruits gathered by the wheeling of these spheres.’ Her face seemed alight, and her eyes so full of joy, that I have to pass it by, without description.

As [Diana](#) Trivia in the calm of full moons, smiles among the eternal nymphs who clothe the Heavens in every space, I saw one Sun, above a thousands lights, firing each and all, as our own sun does the things we see above: and the glowing substance shone so brightly through the living light that my

vision could not endure it. O Beatrice, sweet, dear guide! She said to me: ‘Nothing has defence against what overpowers you. Inside are the wisdom and the power that opened the path between Heaven and Earth, for which there had been such great desire before.’

Even as fire is released from cloud, because it expands so that there is no space inside, and rushes down to earth against its nature, so my mind, expanded by these feasts, issued out of itself, and cannot remember what it became.... ‘Open your eyes, and look at what I am: you have seen things that have made you strong enough to endure my smile.’

Paradiso Canto XXIII:49-87 The Virgin and the Apostles

When I heard that gift, worthy of great thanks, that can never be erased from the book that records the past, I was like someone who returns to himself, from an unremembered dream, and tries vainly to recall it to mind. If all of those tongues that Polyhymnia, and her sister Muses, enriched with their sweetest milk, sounded, the sound would not reach, to a thousandth part of the truth, in helping my singing of the sacred smile, and how it brightened her sacred face.

And so the sacred Poem must take a leap, in describing Paradise, like someone finding his way obstructed. But whoever thinks about the weighty theme, and the

human shoulder that has burdened itself with it, will not cast blame if the shoulder trembles beneath it. It is not a path for a little boat, that my bold keel cuts as it goes, nor a pilot who spares himself.

Beatrice spoke: ‘Why does my face so entrance you that you do not turn to the lovely Garden that flowers below the rays of Christ? There is [the Rose](#), in which the Divine Word made itself flesh: there are the Lilies within whose perfume the good way was taken.’ And I, who was eager for her wisdom, surrendered again to the struggle of my weak vision.

As I have seen, before now, a meadow filled with flowers, under the sun’s rays, shining pure through broken cloud, themselves covered in shadow, so I saw many crowds of

splendours, shone on from above by ardent rays, not seeing the source from which the glow came. O benign Power that so forms them! You had risen yourself, to make space for my vision that lacked strength.

Paradiso Canto XXIII:88-139
Gabriel: The Redeemed: The Apostles

The name of that lovely flower which I invoke, always, morning and night, drew my mind to gaze at the greatest flame, And when the quality and might of the living star, that overcomes there as it did down here, had been pictured in both my eyes, an encircled flame, formed like a coronet, fell from the Heavens and clothed her, and surrounded her.

Whatever melody sounds sweetest here, and draws the spirit most towards itself, would seem the thunder from a torn cloud, compared to that lyre, to whose sound the lovely sapphire was crowned, who en-sapphires the brightest Heaven. The circling melody named itself: 'I am [Gabriel](#), the Angelic Love, who circles the noble joy, that takes breathes from the womb, that was the Inn of our Longing: and Lady of Heaven, I will circle, until you follow your Son, and render the Highest Sphere more divine, by entering it.' Then all the other lights rang out with the name of [Mary](#).

The *Primum Mobile*, that royal mantle of all the folds of the Universe, that burns brightest, and is most alive, with the breath and

manner of God, had its inner shore so far above us that its appearance was not yet visible to me. So my eyes had not the power to follow the crowned flame as She climbed after her own Child. And like the babe, who stretches his arms up towards his mother, when he has suckled, because his mind flames out in external gesture, so each of those fires tapered its flame, so that the deep love they had for Mary was made clear to me. Then they rested there, in my sight, singing *Regina Coeli*: Queen of Heaven, so sweetly, that the delight has never left me.

O how great the wealth is, filling those rich coffers, spirits, which, on earth, were good sowers of its seed! Here they have life and joy, even from that treasure that was earned, weeping, in Exile, in Babylon,

where gold was rejected. Here he triumphs, with the ancient and the new synod, under the noble Son of God, and Mary, that [Peter](#) who holds the keys to such great glory.

Paradiso Canto XXIV:1-51 Saint Peter

O company, elected to the great feast of the Blessed Lamb, who feeds you in such manner that your hunger is always sated, if, by the grace of God, this man tastes what falls from your table before death has determined his time, take heed of his immeasurable yearning, and sprinkle him a little, you who always drink at the fountain, from which flows that on which his thought is fixed.' So Beatrice spoke: and those joyful souls, made

spheres, of themselves, with fixed axes, flaming out like comets.

And as wheels, in harmonious clockwork, turn so that the first seems still, to whoever inspects it, but the last to fly, so these dancers with their various gyres, fast or slow, made me consider their riches. I saw a blissful flame shoot from the one I thought most beautiful, such that none brighter remained: and it swept three times round Beatrice, with a song so divine that my imagination cannot repeat it, and my pen passes on, and I do not write, since our thought, and speech, is too grossly coloured to trace such folds.

‘O my holy sister, who begs us, so devotedly, you free me from this lovely sphere by your glowing love.’ As soon as the blessed flame had rested, the breath that spoke the

words I wrote, turned to my Lady. And she replied: ‘O eternal light of that great man to whom our Lord left the keys of this marvellous joy, which he brought to earth, test this man here on the points of faith, lesser or greater, as you choose, the faith that enabled you to walk the waves. Whether he loves well, and hopes truly, and believes, is not hidden from you, since you have sight of that place where everything is brought to light. But since this kingdom has made its citizens from those of true faith, it is fitting that he should be allowed to speak of it, to give it glory.’

Even as the student equips himself, but does not speak until the master sets out the question, to sanction it, and not decide it, so I armed myself with every thought,

while she spoke, so that I might be ready for such questioning and response.

Paradiso Canto XXIV:52-87
Faith: Saint Paul

‘Speak, good Christian, reveal yourself: what is Faith?’ At which I raised my forehead to the light that breathed those words: then turned to Beatrice, and she eagerly signed to me to pour out the water of my inner fountain. I began: ‘May the grace that allows me to confess myself to the noble fore-runner, make my thought achieve expression!’ And I went on: ‘As the true pen of your dear brother, [Paul](#), who with you set Rome on the better path, wrote for us: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the

evidence of things not seen: and this I take to be its essence.’ Then I heard: ‘You understand it truly, if you understand why he placed it among the substances, and then cited it as evidence.’ And I to that: ‘The deep things which grant me the privilege of appearing, in front of me, here, are hidden from the sight of those below, so that their existence is only a belief, down there, on which is built a high hope: and so it justifies the meaning of substance. And from this belief we need to reason, without any further insight: so it satisfies the meaning of evidence.’

Then I heard: ‘If everything that is learnt down there by teaching, were understood so clearly, there would be no room left for sophistry.’ So it breathed out from

that burning love: then it added: 'This coin's weight and alloy has been well tried: but tell me if you have it in your purse.' At which I said: 'Yes, I have it there, so bright and round, that there is no *perhaps* for me in its stamp.'

Paradiso Canto XXIV:88-114 The Source of Faith

Then this issued from the deep light that was burning there: 'From where did that dear gem, on which all virtue is founded, come to you?' And I: 'The profuse rain of the Holy Spirit which is poured over the Old and the New pages, is the reasoning that brought it to so clear a conclusion for me, so that compared with it, all argument seems coarse to me.' Then I heard: That Old and

New proposition, which leads to your conclusion, why do you take it for Divine discourse?’ And I: ‘The proof which reveals the truth to me, is in the miracles that followed, which nature never heated the iron for, or struck the anvil.’

The answer was: ‘Tell me, who assures you that these miracles took place? The writing, that seeks to be the proof of itself, no other, attests to them.’ I answered: ‘If the world turned to Christianity, without miracles, that would be such a miracle that the others would not rate a hundredth of it, since you entered, poor and hungry, on the field, to sow the plant that was once a vine, and is now a thorn.’

So ending, the high sacred court rang out a *Dio laudamo: We praise*

God, through the spheres, with that melody that is sung up there.

Paradiso Canto XXIV:115-154
Dante's Belief

That spirit, who had drawn me from branch to branch with his questioning, now we were near to the topmost leaves, began again: 'The grace, which holds loving speech with your mind, has opened your mouth, till now, as was appropriate, so that I sanction what emerged: but now you must say what you believe, and how it was offered to your belief.'

I began: 'O holy father, you spirit, who see now, what you once so believed, that you outstripped younger feet in entering the sepulchre, you would have me

declare the form of my eager faith, and also ask the source of it: to which I answer: I believe in one God, sole and eternal, who moves all the Heavens with love and desire, Himself unmoving. And I do not merely have physical and metaphysical proofs for such belief, but it is shown me also by the truth that flows from it, through Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, through the Gospel, and through you, who wrote, when the ardent Spirit had made you holy. And I believe in three Persons, eternal, and I believe they are One essence, and Threefold, in such a way as to allow *are* and *is* to be joined.

My mind is stamped more than once, by the evangelic teaching, with the profound Divine condition of which I speak. This is the Source:

this is the spark which then expands to living flame, and shines in me like a star in Heaven.’ Like the Master who hears what please him, and so clasps the servant, thanking him for his news, when he falls silent: so the apostolic light at whose command I had spoken circled me three times, blessing me as it sang, as soon as I had ceased, I pleased him so with my words.

Paradiso Canto XXV:1-63 Saint James and Saint Peter

If it should ever come to pass, that the sacred poem, to which Heaven and Earth have set their hand, so that it has made me lean through many a year, conquers the cruelty that bars me from the lovely fold, where I used to sleep as a lamb,

enemy of the wolves that war on it, I will return a poet, now, with altered voice and fleece, and will assume the wreath at my baptismal font, since it was there I entered the faith which makes souls visible to God, and afterwards Peter, for its sake, so encircled my brow. After which a light moved towards us, from the sphere out of which the first fruits of the vicars left by Christ on earth came. And my Lady, full of joy, said to me: ‘See! See! Behold James, the Saint for whose sake, down there, they search out Galicia.’

As a dove, taking his perch next to his companion, pours out his love for the other, billing and cooing, so I saw one great and glorious prince received by the other, praising the food that feasts them there. But when the greeting was over, each one

rested, silently, *coram me*:in my presence, so fiery, that they overcame my gaze. Then Beatrice, smiling, said: Noble life, by whom the generous gifts of our court were recorded, let Hope be sounded in this altitude: you know it, who described it all those times, when Jesus gave greater light to you three.’

‘Lift your head, and reassure yourself, since whatever comes here from the mortal world must ripen in our rays.’ Such comfort came to me from the second flame, at which I lifted up ‘mine eyes unto the hills’, which had been bowed before with excessive weight. The second light continued: ‘Since our Emperor, by his grace, wishes you to be confronted with his Saints, in his most secret court, before you die, so that having seen its truth, you might

increase the hope in yourself and others, which makes people on earth love the good, say what Hope is, and how your mind is en-flowered by it, and say from where it comes to you.’

And that gentle one, Beatrice, who guided my feathered wings to so high a soaring, anticipated me in speaking, saying: ‘The Church militant does not have a child more full of hope, as it is written in the Sun who shines on all our host, so it was granted to him to come out of Egypt to Jerusalem, to gaze on her, before the proper end of his struggle. Those two points, of hope and love, asked about not so that you might learn anything, but so that he can take back word of how much they give pleasure to you, I leave to him, since they will not be difficult for him, or a matter of boast: so let him

answer to them, and may God's grace allow him this.'

Paradiso Canto XXV:64-96 Hope: Saint James

Like a pupil following after his teacher, in what he is expert in, pleased and eager, for his knowledge to be shown, I said: 'Hope is the certain expectation of future glory, the product of Divine Grace and previous worth. This light comes to me from many stars: but [David](#), the highest singer of the highest leader, first distilled it in my heart. Let those who know your name, hope in you, he says in his divine song, and who does not know it, if they have my faith? You then rained it on me, with his rain, in [your Epistle](#), so that I am drenched

and pour your shower again over others.’

While I was speaking, a sudden flash like lightning trembled in the living heart of that flame. Then it breathed out: ‘The love, with which I am still on fire for virtue, that followed me to the palm of martyrdom and the leaving of the field of life, wills me to breathe on you who delight in her, and it is my further wish that you tell of what it is hope promises to you.’ And I: ‘The Old and the New scriptures display the sign, that points me once more to the thing itself. [Isaiah](#) says that, of the souls that God has made his friends, each one will be robed with double robes, in its own land, and its own land is this sweet life. And your brother [John](#) sets out this revelation for us, more clearly

worked through, where he treats of the white robes.

Paradiso Canto XXV:97-139
Love: Saint John

And not long after the ending of these words, *They hope in you* rang out above us, to which all the singers responded: then a light flashed out from among them, so that if Cancer, the sign of the Crab, contained a star like it, winter would have one month with unbroken daylight. And as a joyful virgin rises, and goes to join the dance, not from wrong motives, but only to honour the bride, so I saw that illumined splendour join the other two, who were turning in a ring, in such a manner as fitted their ardent love.

There it entered their song and its words, and my Lady fixed her gaze on them like a bride, silent and motionless, and my Lady said: ‘This is John, who at the last supper leaned on the breast of Christ, the Pelican, who chose him from the cross, and committed Mary to his care.’ So she spoke, but no more moved her eyes, from their fixed intent, afterwards than before.

Like one who strains and gazes at the sun’s brief eclipse, who loses his sight by looking, so was I at this last flame, until a word came: ‘Why does it dazzle you to see that which has no place here? My body is earth in the earth, and there it will be with the others, until our time suits the eternal purpose. Only the two lights which rose, Christ and the Virgin, wear both robes in this blessed



cloister, and this you can take back to your world.’

The inflamed circle quieted itself at this voice, together with the sweet harmony made by the sound of that triple breath, as oars, striking the water until then, all pause at the whistle’s sound, so as to stave off weariness or danger.

O, how I was stirred in my mind, turning to search for Beatrice, whom I was blind to, though I was near her, and in the world of bliss!

Paradiso Canto XXVI:1-69 Dante blinded temporarily speaks of Love

While I was doubtful of my darkened sight, I was made attentive by a breath that came from the glowing flame that had darkened it,

saying: ‘Until you regain the sense of sight you have spent on me, it would be well to compensate for it by speaking. Begin then, and say on what your mind is focused, and be assured that your vision is dazzled, and not destroyed: since the Lady who leads you through this divine region has the power to heal it, in her gaze, that [Ananias](#) had in his hands.’

I said: ‘Let help come sooner or later, at her wish, to these eyes that were the gates where she entered with the fire I always burn with. Love, the good, that satisfies this court, is the Alpha and Omega of all the scriptures which Amor reads to me, shallowly or deeply.’ That same voice which had erased my fear at the sudden dazzling, set my mind again to speech, and said: ‘Truly,

you must strain through a finer sieve: you must tell me what it was that aimed your bow at such a target.’

And I replied: ‘Such love must stamp itself on me, by philosophical arguments, and by authority that descends from them, since good, as good, in my understanding, lights the fire of love, and the more so, the more excellence it finds in itself. So the mind, of whoever sees the truth, on which this proof depends, must move, in love, towards that Essence, which has such advantage, that whatever is found good outside it, is nothing but a ray of its own light. And this same truth is made known, to my intellect, by [Aristotle](#), who shows me the primal love, of all eternal beings. It is made known to me by the voice of that true Author

who says to Moses, speaking of himself: *I will cause thee to see all worth*. It is made known to me by you as well, where you open the noble Revelation, that cries out the secrets of this place, to Earth, beyond all other speech.

And I heard: ‘Keep the highest of your loves for God, as urged by human reason, and by the authorities that concur with it, but tell me if you feel other strings drawing you towards Him, and say how many teeth this love grips you with.’ The sacred purpose of Christ’s eagle was not hidden but rather I saw in which direction he wished to lead my statements. So that I began again: ‘All those bitings that have power to make the heart turn towards God, work together on my love, since the world’s being

and my own being, the death that He suffered so that I might live, and what each believer hopes, as do I, together with the living consciousness I spoke of, have drawn me out of the sea of the perverse, and set me on the shore of true love. I love the leaves with which the whole Garden of the eternal Gardener is leafed, as greatly as good has been offered to them, by Him.'

As soon as I fell silent, the sweetest song resounded through the Heavens, and my Lady cried: 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' with them all.

Paradiso Canto XXVI:70-142
Dante regains his sight: Adam

And as a man wakes from sleep at a bright light, because his spirit of

sight runs to meet the glow, that pierces veil after veil of the eye, and he, waking, confuses what he sees, his sudden vision being so clouded, until thought comes to its aid, so Beatrice made the scales fall from my eyes, with the rays from hers, that would cast their glow a thousand miles, so that I saw more clearly afterwards than before, and, almost stupefied, I questioned as to a fourth light that I saw with us. And my Lady said: ‘In those rays, [Adam](#), the first soul that the primal Power ever made, holds loving converse with his Maker.’

As the branch bows its head when the wind passes over it, and then lifts itself by its own strength that holds it up, so I did, all dazed, while she was speaking, and then was re-collected by a desire to

speak, with which I burned, and I began: ‘O ancient Father, who has a daughter and a daughter-in-law in every bride, you, the only fruit of the harvest created fully mature, I beg you, devoutly as I can, to speak to me: you see my wish, and I do not say it, so that I can hear you sooner.’

Sometimes a creature struggles under a cloth, so that its intent is visible, because what covers it follows its movement: and similarly that primal soul made the joy, with which it came to serve my pleasure, apparent through its surface. And from it breathed: ‘Though you do not say it, I see your will, more clearly than you see what you are most certain of, because I view it in the true Glass, who makes Himself the Mirror of all things, and makes

nothing which completely reflects Him.

You wish to know how much time has passed since God set me in the exalted Garden in which She prepared you for this long stairway, and for how long its delights endured my presence, and the true cause of the great wrath, and about the language that I used, and made myself.

Know, my son, that it was not the eating of the Tree that was the cause, in itself, of such harsh exile, but solely the going beyond the bounds set. In that place, Limbo, from which your Lady sent Virgil to you, my longing for these courts lasted four thousand three hundred and two revolutions of the sun, and I had seen him pass through all the stars along his track nine hundred

and thirty times, while I was on Earth. The language, I spoke, was spent, long before the tower, that was never completed, was built, by Nimrod's people: since the products of Reason never last forever, because of human taste, that alters with the movement of the skies. It is nature's doing that Man should speak, but nature allows you to do it this way or that, as seems best to you.

Before I went down to infernal anguish, *Jah* was the name on earth of that Supreme Good, from which the delight comes, that clothes me: He was called *El* thereafter, and that is fitting, since mortal usage is like the leaf on the twig, that falls, and another opens.

In life, pure, and then disgraced, I was on the Mount, rising furthest

from the sea, from the first hour to that which follows the sixth hour, when the sun changes quadrant.’

Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66 Saint Peter denounces the Popes

‘Glory, to the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit,’ began through all of Paradise, so that the sweet song intoxicated me. I seemed to see the Universe’s smile: so that my drunkenness entered sight and hearing.

O joy! O ineffable happiness! O life of love and peace combined! O safest riches that are beyond longing! The four torches stood burning in front of my eyes, and the first one, that had neared me, began to grow more intense: and became like Jupiter, if he and Mars were



birds, and exchanged plumage, his silver-white for Mars's warlike red.

The Providence which assigns roles and offices there, had imposed silence on the choir of the blessed, on every side, when I heard: 'Do not wonder if I transform the colour of my light, since you will see all these others do the same, as I speak.

He who, on Earth, usurps my place, my place, my place, vacant in the presence of the Son of God, has made my burial-ground a sewer for that blood and filth whereby the perverse Angel who fell from above, is placated down there.' Then I saw Heaven tinged with that colour which paints the clouds at dawn or evening, from the opposing sun, and like a modest woman, who is certain of herself, but feels fear only at the hearing of another's

fault, so Beatrice changed in appearance, and such, I take it, was the eclipse in Heaven, when the Supreme Power suffered.

Then his speech continued, in a voice so far altered from itself, that even his appearance had not altered more greatly, saying: ‘The Church, the spouse of Christ, was not fed on my blood, and that of Saints [Linus](#) and [Cletus](#), so that she might be used to acquire gold: but it was to gain this joyful life that [Sixtus](#), [Pius](#), [Calixtus](#) and [Urban](#) gave their blood after many tears.

It was not our purpose for one part of Christianity to sit on the right side, and the other on the left of our successors; or that the keys given in trust to me should become the insignia on a banner making war on the baptised; or that I should

become the head on that seal which stamps false and mercenary privileges, at which I often blush and shoot out flames. From above, here, the ravening wolves are seen, dressed as shepherds, in all the pastures. O Help to God, why are you down? [Gascons](#) and [Cahorsines](#) prepare to drink our blood. O good beginning, what evil end must you fall to! But the high Providence, that defended the glory of the world for Rome, in Scipio, will soon bring aid, I think. And you, my son, who will return below, because of your mortal heaviness, open your mouth, and do not hide the things I do not hide.'

Paradiso Canto XXVII:67-96
Dante's view of Earth

As our air snows down frozen moisture in flakes when the horn of Capricorn, the heavenly Goat, is touched by the sun, so I saw the ether clothe itself and snow the flakes, of the triumphant lights that had rested with us, upwards. My vision was tracing their form, and followed them, until excess of space inhibited its power to see further. At which the Lady who saw me free now of straining upwards, said to me: ‘Look down, and see how you have orbited.’

I saw that, since the hour when I had first looked down, I had moved through the whole quadrant, which Gemini, in the upper part of the first *clima*, or division of latitude, makes from noon to evening, so that I could see beyond Cadiz that foolish track Ulysses took, and, on this side,

at evening, the near shore where Europa became the bull's sweet burden.

And the site of the threshing-floor would have been unfolded further to me, except that the sun was in advance under my feet, separated by a sign, Taurus, and more from me. My enamoured mind, which always held loving speech with my Lady, burned, more than ever, to bring my eyes back to her, and whatever food art, or nature, makes, to captivate the eyes, and so possess the mind, whether in human form, or in paintings, all brought together would seem nothing, compared to the divine delight which shone on me, when I turned towards her smiling face.

Paradiso Canto XXVII:97-148
The Primum Mobile: Time:
Degeneracy

And the power which that look
gifted me with, plucked me out of
[Leda](#)'s fair nest, of the Twins, and
thrust me into the swiftest Heaven.
Its regions, highest and most alive,
are so alike, that I cannot say in
which one Beatrice chose to place
me. But She, who saw my longing,
began to speak, smiling, so
delightedly that God seemed shining
in her face: 'The nature of the
universe which keeps the centre
fixed and moves the rest around it,
begins here, as if from its goal.

And this heaven has no other
place than in the Divine Mind, in
which the Love that moves it is
fired, and the Power that it

disperses. Light and Love clasp it in one circle, as it does all the other spheres, and only He who embraces it, understands this embrace. Its movement is not measured by any other: but all the rest are measured by it, as ten by halves and fifths. And it may now be clear to you how Time has its roots in this same sphere, and its leaves in the rest.

O Greed, that so corrupts mortals below, that not one of them has strength enough to draw his eyes away from your depths! It is true that human will is still strong: but the continuous rain turns ripe plums to cancerous growths. Faith and innocence are only found in little children: then both vanish before the cheeks are downy. Many a lisping babe keeps the fast, who when his tongue is free, afterwards, eats any

food, in any month: and many a lisping babe loves and listens to its mother, who when his speech is entire, afterwards, longs to see her buried.

So, at the first appearance, the white skin blackens, of the lovely daughter, of Him who brings the dawn, and leaves us evening. And you, lest you wonder at it, consider: there is no one governing on earth, so the human household wanders from the path.

But before January is all unwintered, by that hundredth of a day in the calendar year, ignored on earth, these upper spheres shall roar, so that the fated season, long awaited, will reverse stem to stern, so that the fleet can sail true: and ripe fruit will follow the flower.’

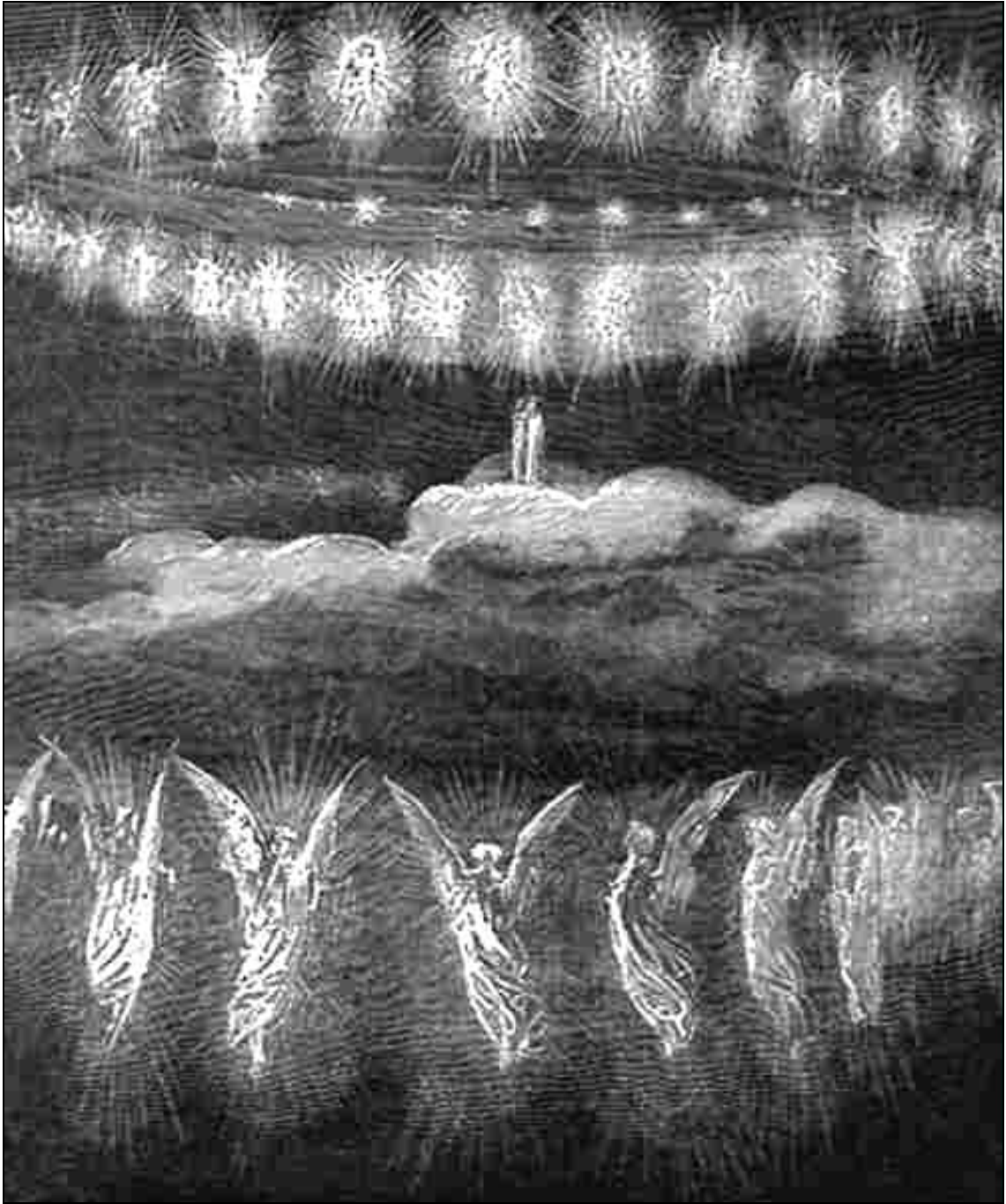
Paradiso Canto XXVIII:1-57 The Angelic Circles

When the truth had been revealed, by her who emparadises my mind, a truth in opposition to the present life of miserable humanity, my memory recalls that, gazing on the lovely eyes, from which Love made the noose to capture me, I saw, as a candle flame lit behind a man, is seen by him in a mirror, before it is, itself, in his vision or thought, so that he turns round, to see if the glass spoke true, and sees them agreeing, as song-words to their metre: and when I turned, and my own eyes were struck by what appears in that space, whenever the eyes are correctly fixed on its orbiting, I saw a point that beamed out a light so intense, that the eye it

blazes on, must be closed to its fierce brightness, and whatever star seems smallest from down here, would be a moon if it were placed alongside it, as star is placed alongside star.

Perhaps as near as a halo appears to be to the light that generates it, when the vapour in which it glows is thickest, at such a distance as that, round that point, a circle of fire revolved so quickly, it exceeded the speed of the fastest sphere, that surrounds the universe, and this circle was surrounded by another, that by a third, the third by a fourth, the fourth a fifth, the fifth a sixth.

After it the seventh followed, already so broad in its reach that if Juno's rainbow messenger were complete it would be too small to



contain it. And so the eighth and ninth, and each one moved more slowly as its number was further from unity: and the one from which the pure light source was least distant, had the clearest flame, because, I believe, it is more embedded in the light's truth.

My Lady, who saw me labouring in profound anticipation, said; 'Heaven and all Nature hangs from that point. Look at the circle which is most nearly joined to it, and learn that its movement is so fast because of the burning love which it is pierced by.' And I to her: 'If the universe was ordered in the sequence I see in these circlings, then I would be content with what I see in front of me. But, in the universe of the senses, we see the spheres as more divine the further

they are distant from Earth, the centre. So, if my desire is to find its goal in this marvellous, angelic Temple, that only has love and light as its limits, I must hear why the copy and the pattern are not identical in form, since, myself, I cannot see it.'

Paradiso Canto XXVIII:58-93
Beatrice reconciles the two orders

'And if your fingers are not skilled in untying such a knot, it is no wonder, it has become so difficult to achieve, from never being tried.' So my Lady spoke, and said: 'If you wish to be satisfied on this, take what I tell you, and wrap your mind around it.'

The earth-centred circles are wide or narrow, according to how

much virtue spreads through their region. Greater excellence has power to work greater benefit: and greater benefit is conferred, by the largest sphere, if all parts of it are equally perfect. So the sphere, that sweeps with it all the rest of the universe, corresponds to the circle that loves and knows most. Therefore, if you take your measure from the virtue, not the appearance, of the substances which appear to you in these circles, you will see a marvellous correspondence between greater and more, smaller and less, between every Heaven and its angelic Intelligence.’

As the hemisphere of air, shines serenely when Boreas blows a north-easterly, from his gentler cheek, so that the layer that covered it is purged and dissolved, and the

sky laughs with the beauties of all its regions, so I, when my Lady had replied to me with her clear answer, and the truth was seen as a star is in the sky.

And when her words ceased, the circles glittered as iron shoots out sparks when it is poured, and every scintillation followed their fire, and the quantity of sparks were thousands more than the doubling of [the chessboard](#) at every square.

Paradiso Canto XXVIII:94-139

The Angelic Hierarchies

I heard Hosanna sung from choir to choir, towards the fixed point, which holds, and will hold them forever, to the *where*, in which they have ever been: and She who saw the questions in my mind, said: ‘The

first circles have shown you the Seraphs and the Cherubs. They follow their loops so fast so that they can identify themselves as closely with the point as possible, and they succeed according to their sublimity of vision.

Those other Loves which circle round them are called Thrones of the Divine Aspect, because they bring the first triplet of circles to completion. And you must know that they all take delight, according as their vision sinks more deeply into the truth where every mind is stilled. So you can see how being blessed is founded on the act of seeing, not of loving, which follows from it: and the extent of vision is measured, by the merit that grace, and the right will, create: and so it goes from rank to rank.

The second triplet which flowers like this, in this eternal Spring, that Aries, by night, does not despoil, as it does in our autumnal and wintry skies, perpetually sing Spring's Hosannas, with three melodies that sound in the three ranks of joy, by which it is triply formed. In that hierarchy are the three divinities, the Dominations and Virtues, and the third order, Powers.

Then in the two penultimate dance-circles the Principalities and Archangels whirl: and the last consists all of Angelic play. These orders all gaze upwards, and have such all-conquering power downwards, that all are drawn towards God, and in turn draw. And Dionysius set himself to contemplate these orders with such longing, that he named them and

separated them as I do. But [Gregory](#) afterwards differed from him, such that when he opened his eyes in this Heaven, he smiled at himself.

And if such hidden truth was uttered by a man, on Earth, do not wonder at it, since [Paul](#), who saw it here, revealed it to him, with other truths about these circles.

Paradiso Canto XXIX:1-66 The Creation of the Angels

When [Apollo](#) and [Artemis](#), the Sun and Moon, the children of [Latona](#), one in Aries the Ram, the other in Libra the Scales, make the horizon their circle, and the zenith is the point from which both hang, till one rises, the other sets, removing themselves from that zone's scales, both changing hemispheres, so long

as that did Beatrice keep silent, with a smile pictured on her face, gazing intensely at the point whose light overcame me. Then she began to speak: ‘I do not ask, I say, what you wish to hear of, since I have seen the point of Creation, on which every *where* and *when* is focused.

In his Eternity beyond time, past all others’ understanding, the eternal Love showed himself, in new love, as he desired: not to gain any good for Himself, since that cannot be, but so that his reflected light, shining, might say: *I am*. He did not lie there, as if sleeping, before Creation: God’s movement over these waters was not a process of before or after. Form and matter, pure and conjoined, issued into being without flaw, like three arrows from a triple-strung bow,

and as a ray of light shines in glass, amber or crystal, so that no time passes between its entry and the illumination, so the triple effect of the Lord shone out instantly into being, without a separate beginning.

Order was co-created, and interwoven with substance: and they were the crown of the universe, in whom pure act was produced: potentiality held the lowest place: in the middle potentiality formed such a knot with act, as can never be untied. [Jerome](#) wrote for you about the vast stretch of time in which the created Angels existed, before the rest of the Universe was formed: but the contrary truth I speak is written on many pages of the writers of the Holy Spirit, and you will become aware of it if you look closely: and Reason also sees it in some degree,

which cannot allow that the movers of the spheres should exist so long without their spheres' perfection.

Now you know where and when these Loves were elected, and how, so that three flames of your longing are quenched already. Before one could count twenty, some of the Angels fell, stirring the foundation of your elements. The rest remained, and began the art you see, with such delight, that they never leave their circling. The source of the fall was the cursed pride of [Satan](#), him you saw imprisoned by the whole weight of the universe. Those you see here were humble, recognising themselves as being from that same excellence that made them so quick in understanding: so that their vision was exalted by illuminating grace, and their own virtue, so that they

have their will free and entire. And I want you to be certain, and not doubtful, that it is a virtue to receive grace, by opening the affections to it.’

Paradiso Canto XXIX:67-84 The Angels’ Faculties

‘Now, if my words have been absorbed, you can contemplate much of this court without further help. But I will go on, because, in your schools, it is taught, that the Angelic nature is such as understands, remembers and wills, and I wish you to see, in its purity, the truth that is confused down there, by the equivocations in such lectures.

These Angelic substances, since they first gathered joy from God’s

face, have never turned their eyes from that, from which nothing is hidden, so that their vision is never disturbed by any new object, and there is no need to recall anything to memory, because of divided thoughts. So humans dream, down there, when not asleep: certain that they speak the truth, or uncertain: and there is greater error and shame in the latter.’

Paradiso Canto XXIX:85-126
Ineffectual teaching and remission

‘You do not follow a single track when you philosophise down there: love of display, and the thought it produces, delights you so. But even this is tolerated here with less indignation than when Divine Scripture is twisted or discarded.

They forget how great the cost was in blood to sow its seed in the world, and how much he pleases, who keeps it by him, in humility.

Everyone strains his wits to make a display and show his inventiveness: the priests discuss these things, and the scriptures are left silent. One says the moon reversed when Christ suffered, and blocked the sun's light from shining below, and others that the light vanished by itself: so that the same eclipse occurred for Spain and India, as it did for the Jews. Florence does not have as many Tom, Dick, and Harry's as this sort of story, proclaimed, each year, from the pulpits here and there: so that the sheep, knowing nothing, return from the pasture fed on air,

and not to know their loss is no excuse.

Christ did not say: ‘*Go and preach nonsense to the world,*’ to his first gathering, but gave them the true foundation: that, and only that, was on their lips: so that they made the Gospels lance and shield in their fight to light the faith. Now a man goes to preach with jokes and grimaces, and if there is loud laughter, his cowl swells, and nothing else is needed. But such a devil is nesting in the hood, that if the crowd could see it, they would know what remission they were trusting in: and from this the foolishness has increased so much, on earth, that people would go with any promise, without proof of evidence. So that the pigs of [Saint Anthony](#), and others more

swinish than they, are fattened, by the gains of this false coinage.’

Paradiso Canto XXIX:127-145
The Number and Diversity of Angels

‘But, since we have wandered enough, turn your eyes back, now, to the true path, so that our time and journey may shorten. This Angelic nature has such deep-numbered ranks, that mortal speech and thought have never extended so far: and if you look at what [Daniel](#) reveals, you will see that determinate number is lost among his thousands.

The primal light that shines, above it all, is received by it in as many ways as the reflected splendours, with which it pairs. And

since affection follows the act of conception, the sweetness of Love is warm, or hotter in them, in various ways. See, now, the breadth and height of Eternal Value, since it has made so many mirrors of itself, in which it is reflected, remaining itself One, as it was before.'

Paradiso Canto XXX:1-45 Dante and Beatrice enter the Empyrean

Noon blazes, perhaps six thousand miles from us, and this world's shadows already slope to a level field, when the centre of Heaven, high above, begins to alter, so that, here and there, a star lacks the power to shine to this depth: and as the brightest handmaiden of the sun advances, so Heaven quenches star after star, till even the loveliest

are gone. In the same way, that Triumph, which always plays around the point that overcame me, appearing to be embraced by that which it embraces, faded, little by little, from my vision: so that my seeing nothing, and my love, forced me to turn my eyes towards Beatrice. If that which is said of her, above, were all condensed into one act of praise, it would be too little to answer to this case. The beauty I saw is beyond measure, not only past our reach, but I truly believe that only He, who made it, joys in it completely.

At this time, I hold myself more utterly vanquished, than ever his theme's weight overcame comic, or, tragic poet. Since, like the sun, in trembling vision, so the memory of the sweet smile, cuts off my

memory, from my deepest self. From the first day, in this life, when I saw her face, until this sight, my song has never failed to follow, but now my way must cease the tracking of her beauty through poetry, as every artist must at his furthest reach.

So, as I leave her, to a greater fanfare than my sounding brass, which sounds the close of its arduous subject, she began again to speak, with a leader's alert gestures and voice, saying: 'We have issued from the largest sphere, into the Heaven that is pure Light, intellectual Light, filled with Love, Love of true Goodness, filled with Joy, Joy that transcends every Sweetness. Here you will see the Redeemed, and the Angelic, soldiers of Paradise, and the former in their

forms that you will see at the Last Judgement.’

Paradiso Canto XXX:46-96 The River of Light

As a sudden flash of lightning destroys the visual powers, so as to rob the eye of strength to realise even the clearest objects, so a living light shone round me, leaving me bathed in such a veil of its brightness, that nothing was visible to me. ‘The Love, that stills Heaven, always accepts spirits, into itself, with such a greeting, to fit the candle for its flame.’

As soon as these few words entered me, I felt I surmounted my normal powers, and blazed with such new-created sight that there is no unalloyed light that my eyes

could not hold their own with. And I saw brightness, in the form of a river, shining, amber, between banks pricked out with miraculous Spring. Living sparks flashed from this river, and fell into the blossoms on all sides, like gold-set rubies. Then they plunged themselves, again, into the marvellous vortex, as if drunk with the perfumes, and as one entered, another issued out.

‘The high desire that burns and urges you now to acquire knowledge of the things you see, pleases me more the more it intensifies. But you must first drink of this water, before so great a thirst in you can be satisfied.’ So my eyes’ sun spoke to me, then added: ‘The river and the topazes that enter it and exit, and the smile of the grasses, are the shadowy preface to

their reality. Not because the things are crude in themselves, but the defect is in you, because you do not have such exalted vision yet.'

Never did infant turn so quickly towards the milk, waking much later than usual, as I did then, bending to the waters that are formed so that we may better ourselves, to make still truer mirrors of my eyes. And my eyelids' rims no sooner felt it, than their length seemed to alter into roundness. Then the flowers and the sparks changed in front of me into a fuller joyousness, as people, masked, seem other than before if they remove the image that hid them, not their own, and I saw both courts of Heaven, made manifest.

Paradiso Canto XXX:97-148 The Ranks of the Blest

O splendour of God, through which I saw the high Triumph of the kingdom of truth: give me the power to say what I saw.

There is a light, up there, that makes the creature visible to the Creator, who only in seeing him finds its peace: and it extends so far in a circle, that its rim would loosely contain the sun's light. Its whole appearance is formed of rays reflected from the surface of the *Primum Mobile*, which draws its life and power from them. And as a hillside reflects itself in the water at its foot, as if to view its own beauty, rich in grass and flowers, so, rising above the light, around, around, I saw all of us who have won their

way back up there, casting their reflection in more than a thousand ranks.

And if the lowest level attracts so great a light inside it, what of the intensity of the rose's outer petals? My sight was not lost itself in the height and breadth, but grasped the quality and quantity of joy. Near and far do not add or subtract there, since where God rules without mediation the laws of nature have no relevance.

Beatrice drew me, a man silent, who would speak, into the yellow glow of the eternal Rose, that rises layer on layer, and exudes the perfume of praise, towards the Sun, that makes eternal Spring, saying: 'Marvel at the vastness of the white-robed gathering! Our City, see how wide its circle! See our thrones,

filled, so that few spirits are still awaited there.

The soul, an imperial one on earth, of [Henry the Seventh](#), shall sit on that high seat, that you fix your eyes on because of the crown you already see placed over it, before you yourself dine at this wedding feast: he, who will come to set Italy straight before she is ready for it. Blind greed that mazes you has made you like a little child that chases away its nurse while dying of hunger: and he, [Clement](#), who will be Pope then in the court of divine things, will be such as will not tread the same path as him, openly or in secret. But God will not suffer him long in that sacred office, since he will be forced down where [Simon Magus](#) is, for his reward, and push

Boniface, him of Anagna lower still.’

Paradiso Canto XXXI:1-27 The Rose

That sacred army, that Christ espoused with his blood, displayed itself in the form of a white rose, but the Angel other, that sees and sings the glory, of him who inspires it with love, as it flies, and sings the excellence that has made it as it is, descended continually into the great flower, lovely with so many petals, and climbed again to where its love lives ever, like a swarm of bees, that now plunges into the flowers, and now returns, to where their labour is turned to sweetness.

Their faces were all of living flame, their wings of gold, and the



rest of them so white that snow never reached that limit. When they dropped into the flower, they offered, to tier on tier, the peace and ardour that they acquired with beating wings: and the presence of such a vast flying swarm between the flower and what was beyond it, did not dilute the vision or the splendour: because the Divine Light so penetrates the Universe, to the measure of its Value, that nothing has the power to prevent it. This kingdom, safe and happy, crowded with ancient peoples and the new, had sight and Love all turned towards one point.

Paradiso Canto XXXI:28-63 Saint Bernard

O triple Light that glitters in their sight, a single star, and so contents them: look down on our tempest! If the Barbarians, coming from those countries that [Callisto](#), the Bear, spans every day, orbiting with her son, [Arcas](#), the little Bear, whom she longs for, if they were stupefied on seeing Rome and her great works, at the time when her palaces exceeded mortal things, what then of me, who had gone to the divine, from the human, to the eternal, from time, and from Florence to a true and just people? With what stupor must I be filled! Truly, what with it, and with my joy, my wish was to hear nothing, and be dumb.

Like a pilgrim who renews himself, by gazing, in the Temple of his vows, and already hopes to retell how it looks, so I led my eyes,

crossing the living light, along the levels, up and down, and then around them, circling. I saw faces persuasive of Love, graced by another's light and their own smile, and with gestures adorned with all honour. My gaze had already taken in the general form of Paradise in its completeness, and my sight had not rested on any one part, and I turned, with re-illuminated will, to ask my Lady about things with which my mind was concerned. I intended that, but another sight answered mine: I thought that I would see Beatrice, but I saw an old man dressed like the glorious folk. His eyes and cheeks were full of gentle joy, with kindly gestures as fits a tender father.

Paradiso Canto XXXI:64-93
Beatrice crowned in Heaven

And I suddenly said: ‘Where is She?’ at which he replied: ‘[Beatrice](#) brought me from my place to lead your desire to its goal: and if you look up at the third circle from the highest level, you will see her again, on that throne her merit has marked out for her.’ I raised my eyes without answering, and saw her, making a crown for herself, by reflecting the eternal light from her person.

No human eye is further from the highest vaults of the thunder, though plunged to the sea’s depths, as my sight was from Beatrice, but that did not affect me, since her image came to me undiluted by any medium.

‘O Lady, in whom my hope has life, and who, for my salvation, suffered to leave your footprints in Hell, I recognise the grace and virtue of all I have seen, through your power and your goodness. You have brought me from slavery to freedom, by all those paths, by all those ways that you had power over. Guard your grace, in me, so that my spirit, which you have made whole, may be acceptable to you when it leaves my body.’ So I prayed: and she, far off though she appeared, smiled, and gazed at me, then turned towards the Eternal Fountain.

Paradiso Canto XXXI:94-142 The Virgin

And the holy man said: ‘Let your eyes fly around this Garden, so as to

consummate your journey perfectly, the mission for which prayer and sacred love sent me: since gazing at it will better fit your sight to climb through the divine light. And the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn wholly with love, will grant us all grace, because I am her loyal [Bernard](#).’

Like one who comes from Croatia perhaps to see our cloth of [Veronica](#), and is not sated with looking because of its ancient fame, but, as long as it is visible, says, in thought: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, true God, was this then your face?’ such was I gazing at the living love of him, who in this world tasted of that peace in contemplation.

He began: ‘Son of grace, this joyful being will not become known to you, merely by keeping your gaze

down here at the foot, but look at the circles, to the very farthest, until you see the enthroned Queen of Heaven, to whom this kingdom is subject, and devoted.’

I lifted my eyes, and as, at dawn, the eastern space of the horizon conquers that space where the sun declines, so, as if raising my eyes, from a valley to the mountain, I saw a space, at the edge, exceed all the rest of the ridge in light. And as down here that place where we expect the chariot, that Phaethon failed to guide, is most glowing, and the light is cut away on either side, so was She, that flame of peace, quickened in the centre, tempering the blaze on all sides. And at the mid-point I saw more than a thousand Angels, joying, with

outstretched wings, each Angel distinct, in glow and function.

I saw there, a Beauty that was delight, in the eyes of all the other saints, smiling at their dances and their songs. And if I had words as rich as my imagination, I would still not dare to attempt the smallest part of her delightfulness.

Bernard turned his eyes to her, with so much love, when he saw my eyes fixed and attentive gazing towards the source of his own light, that he made mine more eager to gaze again.

Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36 The Two Halves of the Rose

He, the contemplative, with his Love fixed on his Delight, freely assumed the office of a teacher, and

began these sacred words: ‘The wound, that Mary sealed and anointed, is that which Eve, who is so lovely, at her feet, opened and pierced. In the order, made by the third level, Rachel with Beatrice, sits below her, as you see. Even as I go down the rose, petal by petal, naming their proper names, you can see, descending from level to level, Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and Ruth, her from whom came David the singer, third in descent, who cried out, from grief at his sin: “*Miserere mei: Pity me.*’ And down from the seventh, and beyond, again the Hebrew women, separating the flower’s tresses, since they are the wall, that parts the sacred stairway, according to how faith in Christ was realised.

On this side, where the flower is full-blown, in all its petals, those, who believed in Christ to come, are sitting. On the other side, where there are empty seats among them, are the semi-circles of those whose eyes were turned towards the Christ who had come. And as the glorious throne of Heaven's Lady, and the seats below her, make such a partition, so, next to her, does that of the great Baptist, [John](#), who, ever holy, suffered the desert and a martyr's death, and then Limbo, for two years space, until Christ came there: and, below him, the separating line, assigned to [Francis](#), [Benedict](#), [Augustine](#), and the others from circle to circle, down to here.'

Paradiso Canto XXXII:37-84 The Children

‘Now marvel at the depth of Divine provision, since both aspects of the faith will fill this Garden equally. And know that, down from the level that cuts across the two divisions, the spirits have their places not because of their own merit, but another’s, given certain conditions, since these are all souls freed before they had exercised true choice.

You can see it by their faces, and their voices, those of children, if you look carefully and listen. Now you doubt, and are silent in your doubting: but I will untie the difficult knot for you, in which your subtle thoughts are entangling you. No chance point has place in all this

kingdom, no more than sadness, thirst, or hunger do, because what you see is established by Eternal Law, so that the ring corresponds exactly to the finger.

The ordering of these children, swiftly come to the true life, according to greater or lesser excellence, is not *sina causa*: without reason. The King, by whom this kingdom rests in such great love, such great delight that he will dares nothing more, when he creates minds, in his joyous sight, of his grace and at his pleasure, grants them diversity: and let the effect suffice as proof. And this is marked, clearly and expressly, in Holy Writ, concerning those twins who struggled in anger in [Rebecca's](#) womb.

So the Supreme Light must wreath them worthily, according to the colour of the tresses of such grace. Therefore they are placed at different levels, without regard for the externals, differentiated only by their primal keenness in seeing Him.

So, in ancient times, the parents' faith alone, combined with innocence, was enough to reach salvation. When those first ages were complete, males needed to gain power in their innocent wings, through the rite of circumcision. But when the time of grace came, then, lacking Christ's perfect baptism, such innocence was held, [there, below.](#)'

Paradiso Canto XXXII:85-114
Gabriel

‘Now see the face that is most like Christ’s, since its brightness, and no other, has the power to equip you to see Christ.’

I saw such gladness, borne in the sacred Angelic minds created to fly through that altitude, rain down on that face that nothing, I had seen before, seized me with such dumb admiration, or so revealed the semblance of God. And that Love which first came down to Her, singing: ‘Ave, Maria, gratia plena: Hail, [Mary](#), full of grace,’ now spread his wings in front of her. The Divine Canticle was responded to on every side by the court of the blest, so that every face found peace in it.

‘O holy Father, you who accept being here below for my sake, leaving that sweet place, where you

sit by eternal sanction, who is that Angel who looks our Queen in the eyes with such joy, so enamoured he seems all on fire?’ So I turned again to his teaching, he who gathered beauty from Mary, as the morning star does from the sun. And he to me: ‘The greatest exultation and chivalry that exists in Angel or in spirit, is all in him: and we would wish it so, since it is [Gabriel](#) who brought the palm down to Mary, when the Son of God willed that He should take on our burden.’

Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151
The Noble Souls

‘But now let your eyes come travel, even as I speak, and note the great noble souls, of this most just and pious empire. Those two who

sit up there, most blest by being nearest to the Empress, are like two roots of this Rose. Her neighbour on the left is [Adam](#), that father, through whose audacity in tasting the fruit, the human race tastes such bitterness. On the right is [Peter](#), that ancient father of Holy Church to whom Christ entrusted the keys of this beloved flower. And [John](#), sits by his side, who, before he died, saw all the dark prophetic seasons of that fair Bride, who was won with lance and nails: and by Adam's side, [Moses](#), that leader, rests, under whom the ungrateful, fickle, and mutinous people were fed with manna.

See [Saint Anne](#), sitting opposite Peter, so content to look at her daughter, that she does not remove her gaze to sing Hosanna. And

opposite Adam, the greatest father of our family, sits Lucy, who stirred your Lady, when you were bending your brow downwards to ruin.

But since the time of your vision flees, here let us stop, like the careful tailor who cuts the garment according to the cloth, and let us turn our eyes towards the Primal Love, so that gazing at Him, you might penetrate as far as possible into his brightness. Truly grace needs to be acquired by prayer (so that you do not by chance fall back as you beat your wings), grace from Her who has power to help you: and follow me with such affection that your heart is not separated from my words.’ And he began this sacred prayer.

Paradiso Canto XXXIII:1-48 The Prayer to the Virgin

‘Virgin mother, daughter of your Son, humbled, and exalted, more than any other creature, fixed goal of the Eternal Wisdom; you are She who made human nature so noble, that its own Maker did not scorn to become of its making. The Love, beneath whose warmth this flower has grown, in eternal peace, flamed again in your womb. Here you are the noonday torch of Love to us, and down there, among mortal beings, you are a living spring of hope.

Lady you are so great, and of such value, that if any who wishes for grace fails to resort to you, his longing tries to fly without wings. Your kindness not only helps those

who ask it, it often freely anticipates the request. In you is tenderness: in you is pity: in you is generosity: in you whatever excellences exist in the creature, combined together.

Now he, who has seen the lives of souls, one by one, from the deepest pool of the universe, even to here, begs you, of your grace, for enough strength to lift his eyes, higher, towards the final bliss: and I, who was never so on fire for my own vision, as I am for his, offer you all my prayers, and pray they may not be wanting, asking that, for him, you might scatter every cloud of his mortality, with your prayers, so that supreme joy might be revealed to him.

And more I beg you, Queen, who can do the things you will: after he has seen so deeply, keep his

affections sound. Let your protection overcome human weakness: see [Beatrice](#), with so many saints, folding her hands to pray with me.’

Those eyes, loved by God, and venerated, fixed on the speaker, showed us how greatly devout prayers please her. Then they turned themselves towards the Eternal Light, into which, we must believe, no other creature’s eye finds its way so clearly. And I, who was drawing near the goal of all my longing, quenched as was fitting the ardour of my desire, inside me.

Paradiso Canto XXXIII:49-145

The Final Vision

Bernard made a sign to me, and smiled, telling me to look higher,

but I was already doing as he asked me, because my sight, as it was purged, was penetrating deeper and deeper, into the beam of the Highest Light, that in itself is Truth.

My vision then was greater than our speech, which fails at such a sight, and memory fails at such an assault. I am like one, who sees in dream, and when the dream is gone an impression, set there, remains, but nothing else comes to mind again, since my vision almost entirely fails me, but the sweetness, born from it, still distils, inside my heart. So the snow loses its impress to the sun: so the [Sibyl](#)'s prophecies were lost, on light leaves, in the wind.

O Supreme Light, who lifts so far above mortal thought, lend to my mind again a little of what you

seemed then, and give my tongue such power, that it might leave even a single spark of your glory, to those to come: since by returning to my memory, in part, and by sounding in these verses, more of your triumph can be conceived.

I think that I would have been lost, through the keenness of the living ray that I suffered, if my eyes had turned away from it. And so, I remember, I dared to endure it longer, that my gaze might be joined with the Infinite Value. O abundant grace, where I presumed to fix my sight on the Eternal Light, so long, that my sight was wearied!

In its depths, I saw in-gathered, and bound by Love, into one volume, all things that are scattered through the universe, substance and accident and their relations, as if

joined in such a manner, that what I speak of is One, simplicity of Light. I think I saw the universal form, of that bond, because, in saying it, I feel my heart leap, in greater intensity of joy. A single moment plunged me into deeper stillness, than twenty-five centuries have the enterprise, that made [Neptune](#) wonder at [Argo](#)'s shadow.

So my mind gazed, fixed, wholly stilled, immoveable, intent, and continually inflamed, by its gazing. Man becomes such in that Light, that to turn away to any other sight is beyond the bounds of possibility. Because the Good, which is the object of the will, is wholly concentrated there, and outside it, what is perfect within it, is defective.

Now my speech will fall further short, of what I remember, than a babe's, who still moistens his tongue at the breast. Not that there was more than a single form in the Living Light where I gazed, that is always such as it was before, but by means of the faculty of sight that gained strength in me, even as it altered, one sole image quickened to my gaze.

In the profound and shining Being of the deep Light, three circles appeared, of three colours, and one magnitude: one seemed refracted by the other, like [Iris's](#) rainbows, and the third seemed fire breathed equally from both. O how the words fall short, and how feeble compared with my conceiving! And they are such, compared to what I

saw, that it is inadequate to call them merely feeble.

O Eternal Light, who only rest in yourself, and know only yourself, who, understood by yourself, and knowing yourself, love and smile! Those circles, that seemed to be conceived in you as reflected light, when traversed by my eyes, a little, seemed to be adorned inside themselves, with our image, in its proper colours, and, to that, my sight was wholly committed.

Like a geometer, who sets himself to measure, in radii, the exact circumference of the circle, and who cannot find, by thought, the principle he lacks, so was I, at this new sight: I wished to see how the image fitted the circle, and how it was set in place, but my true wings had not been made for this, if

it were not that my mind was struck by lightning, from which its will emerged.

Power, here, failed the deep imagining: but already my desire and *will* were rolled, like a wheel that is turned, equally, by the Love that moves the Sun and the other stars.

Index

Abati, Bocca degli

Bocca, though a Ghibelline, fought on the Guelph side at Montaperti in 1260 when the Florentine Guelphs went down to defeat. The battle turned on an incident where Bocca cut off the hand of the Florentine standard bearer at the critical moment.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Abati, Buoso degli

A noble Florentine, and a thief.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). He mutates into a serpent. (It may be [Buoso de' Donati](#) who is intended. See Blake's Watercolour 'Buoso Donati attacked by the Serpent', Tate Gallery, London.

Abbagliato

Bartolommeo de' Folcacchieri, nicknamed Abbagliato, 'the foolish'.

He was a member of the *Brigata Spendereccia*, the Spendthrift Brigade, a club founded by twelve wealthy Sieneese, in the second half of the thirteenth century, who vied with each other in squandering their money on riotous living.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139](#). He is in the tenth chasm.

Abel

The son of [Adam](#) and [Eve](#). His brother is [Cain](#). See the Bible, Genesis iv. Abel is the type of the righteous brother.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

Abraham

The Patriarch, from whom the Children of Israel derived. The father of Isaac by his wife Sarah. The type of faith, witness his preparedness to sacrifice his son Isaac. See the Bible, Genesis xi 25.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

Absalom

King [David](#)'s Gilonite counsellor from Giloh, [Ahitophel](#), see Second [Samuel](#) xv-xviii, conspired with David's son Absalom against the King, and subsequently hanged himself when his counsel was not followed. Absalom was killed at the battle in the wood of Ephraim, and David mourned for him, saying 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142.](#)

He is mentioned.

Accorso, Francesco d'

Francesco d'Accorso (1225-1293) a distinguished lawyer and professor, of Bologna, son of Accorso da Bagnolo, also a famous lawyer. He lectured at Oxford.

[Inferno Canto XV:100-124.](#) He is in Hell for sodomy.

Achan

He was stoned and burned for disregarding [Joshua](#)'s decree that the treasure from the capture of Jericho should be consecrated to the Lord. See Joshua vi 19 and vii.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151.](#) He is mentioned.

Achilles

Son of Peleus and the sea-nymph Thetis. Prince of the Myrmidons of Phthia in Thessaly in north-eastern Greece. The Greek hero of Homer's Iliad who avenges the death of Patroclus by killing [Hector](#), and dies from an arrow wound inflicted by [Paris](#) in his vulnerable heel. Offered the choice of glory or a long life he chose fame and a brief existence. [Ulysses](#) (Odysseus) meets his soul in Hades (Odyssey XI).

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). He is a carnal sinner in Limbo, for his love of [Polyxena](#), that brought about his death, according to later versions of the Trojan myths.

[Inferno Canto XII:49-99](#). He was tutored by [Chiron](#) the [Centaur](#).

[Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84](#). Purgatorio [Canto IX:34-63](#). Ulysses discovered Achilles hiding on Scyros, where his

mother [Thetis](#) had concealed him, at the court of Lycomedes, and took him to the Trojan War. [Deidamia](#) fell in love with him, and bore him a son, and died of grief when he left. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 162. For his amazement, see Statius *Achilles* i 247. [Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45](#). [Peleus](#)'s spear was given to him by [Chiron](#) the Centaur. It was cut from an ash on Mount Pelion. Hephaestus forged its blade, and Athene polished the shaft. At Troy Achilles wounded Telephus with it. He was a king of Mysia and the son of [Hercules](#) and the nymph Auge. Rust from the spear, rubbed on the wound, cured it. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XII 112 and XIII 171. [Purgatorio Canto XXI:76-136](#). The subject of [Statius](#)'s unfinished epic the *Achilleid*.

Acquasparta, Matteo da

Matteo, one of [Boniface](#)'s cardinals, Minister-General of the Franciscan Order from 1287, who relaxed the observances, and as Papal Legate interfered in the affairs of Florence in 1300-1301, with disastrous consequences.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is mentioned.

Adam

The first man, see Genesis ii. The Fall made Adam the father of evil, and the sinful human race, as [Eve](#) was its mother.

[Inferno Canto III:100-136](#). The dead souls are 'the evil seed of Adam'.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33](#). He is referred to, as the vessel of human infirmity.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:37-72](#). His flesh, the flesh of mortality, is a burden.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:58-102](#). According to Eusebius, Adam was on earth for 930 years and in Limbo for 4302 years, making more than five thousand years in all.

[Paradiso Canto VII:1-54](#). In Adam the whole human race fell.

[Paradiso Canto XXVI:70-142](#). Adam's exile was due to disobedience. His Life in Paradise endured only to the seventh hour. His existence on Earth, in exile, and in Limbo was more than five thousand years: see above.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151](#). He sits at the left hand of the [Virgin](#).

Adamo, of Brescia

Induced by Guido, Alessandro, and Aghinolfo the [Conti Guidi](#) of Romena, Master Adam of Brescia counterfeited the Florentine gold florin, stamped

with the figure of [St John the Baptist](#). He was burnt to death for the crime in 1281, on the Consuma, the pass that leads out of the Casentino towards Florence. The Conti Guidi escaped punishment. Conte Guido was dead by 1300, but the other two were still alive. Fonte Branda, the spring, is not the more famous one near Siena, but a lesser one near the castle of Romena, near where Adamo died.

[Inferno Canto XXX:49-90](#). He is in the tenth chasm.

[Inferno Canto XXX:91-129](#). He exchanges blows with [Sinon](#).

Adimari

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#). Filippo [Argenti](#) belonged to one branch of the family. [Ubertino Donati](#), the ancestor of Dante's wife Gemma, had married one of the daughters of [Bellincion](#)

Berti, a sister of [Gualdrada](#), and strongly objected to his father-in-law giving the hand of a third daughter to one of the Adimari. A fourth daughter may have been the wife of Dante's great-grandfather [Alighiero I](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned. Hostile to Dante.

Adrian V, Pope (Ottobuono de' Fieschi)

Ottobuono de' Fieschi of Genoa, sent to England while a Cardinal as Papal legate in 1268, was elected Pope as Adrian V on 12th July 1276, and died on August 18th. The Fieschi were Counts of Lavagna, taking their name from a little river that flows into the Gulf of Genoa between Sestri Levante and Chiavari. One niece was [Alagia](#) wife of [Moroello III Malaspina](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XIX:70-114](#). He is among the avaricious.

Aeneas

[Inferno Canto I:61-99](#). The legendary ancestor of the Roman people. The son of the Goddess Aphrodite and [Anchises](#). *See* Iliad XX. A Trojan noble he escaped the sack of Troy and sailed via Carthage (where he was loved by [Dido](#) but abandoned her) to Italy. His wife was [Creüsa](#), daughter of [Priam](#) by whom he had Ascanius (Iulus). His son is Silvius (Ascanius, or Iulus) in Inferno II. His visit to the underworld in Aeneid VI inspired Dante. Aeneas is the symbol of the Roman Empire achieved from the ruins of Troy, and the virtuous victor of the Wars in Latium against Turnus etc. As the ancestor of Rome's founder [Romulus](#), he is Dante's Imperial founder also.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). He is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84](#). The Trojan War indirectly led to the founding of Rome, and the origin of the Roman people.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142](#). He cremated his old nurse Caieta in Italy (at modern Gaeta, in Campania). See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIV157, 443 and XV 716, and Virgil's *Aeneid* vii 1-4.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). [Dido](#)'s love for him wrongs Creüsa's memory.

[Paradiso Canto XV:1-36](#). He saw his father's shade in the underworld. *Aeneid* vi 679.

Aeolus

The god of the winds, the son of Hippotas, and father of Alcyone and [Athamas](#), who kept the winds imprisoned in a cave in the Aeolian Islands between Sicily and Italy. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*- various references.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:1-51](#). He is mentioned as loosing the Sirocco, the south east wind, whose notes are heard in the pine-forests of Ravenna, on the Adriatic shore, at Chiassi, the Classis of the Romans, who used it as a naval station and harbour. There was a later fortress there. See Byron's 'Don Juan' iv 105.

Aesop

The quasi-historical author of the Fables. He may have been a Phrygian slave, Babrius, living about the 6th century BC, at the time of Croesus. He

was supposed to have been thrown over a cliff at Delphi for his ugliness, offensiveness or perhaps rectitude. Around his name a set of tales gathered, and were loosely attributed to him.

[Inferno Canto XXII:124-151](#). Dante quotes the Frog and the Mouse, in which the Mouse, living on land ([Alichino?](#)) is tied to the frog who offers to carry him over the stream ([Ciampolo?](#)), and who then leaps into the water, drowning the mouse. A hawk ([Calcabrina?](#)) then spies the mouse and snatches it up, snatching up the frog as well. Dante no doubt knew a variant that fitted the situation more closely.

Agamemnon

The King of Mycenae, son of Atreus, brother of Menelaus, husband of Clytemnestra, father of [Iphigenia](#),

Electra and [Orestes](#). The commander-in-chief of the Greek forces at Troy. He was told by an oracle to sacrifice his daughter, and vowed to do so, in order to gain favourable winds, when the Greek fleet was waiting at Aulis, to sail to Troy. He did so and brought down destruction on his house. See Aeschylus's Oresteian trilogy, and Ovid's Metamorphoses XII 30.

[Paradiso Canto V:1-84](#). He is mentioned as an example of the danger of rash vows.

Agapetus I, Pope

Pope 535-536 AD. He induced [Justinian](#) to depose Anthimus, Bishop of Constantinople, because of Anthimus's Monophysite leanings, and the other heads of the sect were likewise excommunicated. The Monophysite's accepted only the

divine and not the human nature of [Christ](#).

Agathon

The Greek tragic poet (c448-400BC).

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is in Limbo.

Aghinolfo of Romena

See [Guido Conte](#)

Aglauros

The daughter of Cecrops who envied her sister Herse because of Mercury's love for her. She was punished for treachery, when Pallas [Athene](#) (Minerva) sent the hag Envy to torment her, and changed to stone by Mercury. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* II 740, 752, 820.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:124-151](#). She is the second of the voices, signifying envy.

Agli, Lotto degli

[Inferno Canto XIII:130-151](#). Possibly the speaker is Agli, a judge who hanged himself after giving a false sentence for money, or [Rocco de' Mozzi](#).

Agnello, See [Brunelleschi](#)

Agostino, Friar

He entered the Franciscan Order in 1210, and died on the same day as [Francis](#) after a vision of Francis ascending into Paradise.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Aguglione, Baldo da

A lawyer who deserted the Whites from the Blacks in 1302. Baldo was a

prior in 1298 and 1311, in which year he drew up the decree recalling the exiles, but expressly excluding Dante. In 1299 he had been convicted of tampering with the public records of the Courts. See [Note](#) to the Purgatorio. [Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87](#). He is mentioned.

Ahasuerus

Ahasuerus, the Persian King, enriched [Haman](#), until he was accused by [Esther](#) of intending to take the life of [Mordecai](#). Haman was executed in Mordecai's place. See Esther iii-viii. [Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39](#). He is mentioned.

Ahitophel

King [David](#)'s Gilonite counsellor from Giloh, see Second [Samuel](#) xv-xviii, who conspired with David's son [Absalom](#), and subsequently hanged

himself when his counsel was not followed.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142](#). He is mentioned as an evil counsellor.

Alagia, see [Malaspina](#)

Alardo, Erard de Valéry

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:1-21](#). In 1268, at Tagliacozzo, Charles of Anjou defeated [Conradin](#), Manfred's nephew, using reserve troops, on the advice of Erard.

Alberichi

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Alberigo, Friar

Alberigo Manfredi of Faenza, one of the *Frati Gaudenti*, the Jovial Friars,

avenged a blow from his younger brother Manfred, in 1284, by inviting him, and his son, to a banquet in 1285, and at a given signal 'Bring the fruits' Manfred and his son were murdered. *Le male frutta* (the evil fruit) *di Frate Alberigo* became a proverb. He was still alive in 1300, the date of the Vision.

[Inferno Canto XXXIII:91-157.](#) He is in the Ninth Circle.

Albero of Siena

Griffolino of Arezzo obtained money from Albero by pretending he could teach him how to fly. On discovering the deceit, Albero induced the Bishop of Siena to have [Griffolino](#) burned as an Alchemist.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:73-99.](#)
Griffolino is in the tenth chasm.

Albert of Hapsburg, King of the Romans

Albrecht I of Hapsburg, King of the Germans, and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1298-1308), the son of the Emperor [Rudolph](#) (1273-91). To Dante, Albert represented both the invader of Italian soil, and the preserver of the Empire. As an absentee landlord, Dante berates him. He was murdered ultimately, as Dante predicts, by his nephew, John Parricida.

See [Ciaccio's prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151](#). Dante inveighs against [the state of Italy](#) and Albert's indifference to its plight.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). Albert carried out an aggressive campaign against Bohemia in 1304, confiscating

it as an expired fief of the crown. He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Alberti, Alberto, Alessandro and Napoleone degli

Alessandro and Napoleone, the two sons of Count Alberto degli Alberti, who held Vernia and Cerbaia in the Val de Bisenzio, quarrelled over their inheritance and killed each other, sometime after 1282.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69](#). They are in the Caïna in the Ninth Circle.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). Count Orso, the son of Napoleone was murdered by Alberto the son of Alessandro in the continuing vendetta. He is among the late-repentant.

Albertus Magnus

Albertus of Cologne (1193-1280), the ‘Universal Doctor’, one of the two great lights of the Dominican order.

Albertus, with [Thomas Aquinas](#) his pupil, ‘christianised’ [Aristotle](#) adapting his philosophy and making him a treasury of pagan learning.

[Paradiso Canto X:64-99](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Alcmaeon

The son of [Amphiaräus](#) and [Eriphyle](#). She was bribed with the necklace of Harmonia to betray the hiding place of her husband, who was compelled to go to the Theban War where he was killed. At the father’s request the son Alcmaeon killed his mother, and was pursued by the Furies, and was eventually killed himself. See Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* IX 408.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is depicted on the roadway.

[Paradiso Canto IV:64-114](#). He is mentioned as someone who grappled with conflicting duties.

Aldobrandesco, Guglielmo and Omberto

[Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151](#). The Aldobrandeschi, Ghibelline leaders, held Santafiora in the Sienese Maremma for almost five centuries. They warred with the commune of Siena until 1300 when a treaty was agreed.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:37-72](#). Omberto, Count of Santafiora, in the Sienese Maremma, was put to death at Campagnatico near Grosseto, by the Sienese in 1259, who resented the arrogance of the family with whom they had long been at war.

Aldobrandi, Tegghiaio

A Florentine Guelph who, with [Guido Guerra](#), tried to dissuade his party from the conflict that led to the Guelph disaster at Montaperti in 1260.

See [Farinata](#). He fought courageously and took refuge at Lucca with other defeated Guelphs.

[Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#). Dante asks after him.

[Inferno Canto XVI:1-45](#). He is in the seventh circle for sodomy.

Alessandro of Romena

See [Conte Guido](#).

Alexander the Great

The son of Philip the Second of Macedonia (Philip ruled 359-336 BC) who ruled from 336 to 323 BC. He created an Empire from Greece and Egypt in the west, to India in the east, proclaiming himself king of Asia, and burning Darius's Persian capital of Persepolis in 330BC. He married Roxane. He killed the historian Callisthenes, a nephew of [Aristotle](#) his former tutor, and Clitus, a friend of his

youth, in a fit of rage. He died of fever, aged 33, in 323BC, while preparing for campaigns against Carthage and the Western Mediterranean.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is placed in the seventh circle, in the ring of tyrants, unless the reference is to [Alexander of Pherae](#).

[Inferno Canto XIV:1-42](#). Dante's source may have been Albertus [Magnus](#)'s *De Meteoris*, which describes the apocryphal letter, popular in the Middle Ages, in which Alexander the Great sends an account of such marvels to [Aristotle](#) his tutor. The soldiers warded off the flames with their clothes.

Alexander of Pherae

The Thessalian tyrant who was killed by his own wife in 323BC.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is placed in the seventh circle in the ring of tyrants, unless the reference is to [Alexander the Great](#).

Alfonso III, King of Aragon

He succeeded his father [Peter III](#) of Aragon, and died in 1291.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is in Purgatory.

Ali, the Caliph

Ali (born c597AD) a cousin and son-in-law of [Mohammed](#), was his fourth successor, and moved the capital to Kufa after conflict with Mohammed's widow A'isha (First Islamic Civil War). He won the 'camel-battle' of Basra. He was murdered in 661AD after the indecisive battle of Siffin (657) and the arbitration of Adhroh (658).

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:22-54](#). He is in the ninth chasm of the eighth circle as a schismatic within Islam.

Alichino, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:97-123](#). He allows [Ciampolo](#) too much freedom.

[Inferno Canto XXII:124-151](#). He and [Calcabrina](#) quarrel.

Alighieri, Alighiero son of [Cacciaguida](#)

Dante's great-grandfather. His mother was [Cacciaguida](#)'s wife, Alighiera of the Aldighieri family of Ferrara.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). The derivation of Dante's name.

Alighieri, Bella, [Dante](#)'s mother

Amata

[Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39](#). Queen Amata, wife of King [Latinus](#), who hanged herself through anger at the death of the hero [Turnus](#), to whom her daughter [Lavinia](#) was originally betrothed, Lavinia being destined then to marry [Aeneas](#). The fate of Lavinia was part of the reason for the Wars in Latium. See Aeneid xii 595.

Amidei

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#) An ancient Florentine family. See the [note](#) to Paradiso Canto XVI. [Buondelmonte](#) broke his betrothal oath with a daughter of the family and his murder in retaliation was the root of the factional split within Florence.

Amphiaräus

A Greek seer, one of the heroes at the Calydonian Boar Hunt. He was the son

of Oecleus, and father of [Alcmaeon](#). His wife [Eriphyle](#) betrayed him for the golden necklace Aphrodite gave to Harmonia, wife of Cadmus,, and he enjoined on his son the duty of punishing her. Alcmaeon killed her, and was pursued by the Furies. In the War of the Seven against Thebes, Amphiaraüs was one of the seven champions, and fled along the banks of the river Ismenus in his chariot. He was on the point of being killed when Zeus cleft the earth with a thunderbolt, and he vanished from sight, chariot and all, and now reigns alive among the dead. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII 317, IX 407-410.

[Inferno Canto XX:31-51](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Amphion

The son of Jupiter and Antiope, and husband of [Niobe](#). He built the walls

of Thebes aided by the magical music of his lyre. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 176 and XV 427. He killed himself through grief at the loss of his sons.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:1-39](#). He is mentioned.

Amyclas

The fisherman who was unawed by [Caesar's](#) summons and indifferent to the tumult of the times, secure in his poverty. See Lucan's *Pharsalia* v 520-531.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He is mentioned.

Ananias, husband of Sapphira

He and his wife [Sapphira](#) sold possessions but kept back part of the price when other followers of Christ sold everything and gave everything into common ownership, to allow distribution according to need. They

were rebuked by [Peter](#) for hypocrisy and died. See Acts iv 32-37 and V 1-11.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXVI:1-69](#). The Ananias of Damascus who gives sight to the blind Saul of Tarsus ([Paul](#)), see Acts ix 10-18 is mentioned.

Anastagi

A Ghibelline family of Ravenna, virtually extinct by 1300. They were prominent in the latter half of the thirteenth century due to their strife with the Polentani and other Guelphs of Ravenna.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#).

They are mentioned.

Anastasius, Pope

Pope Anastasius II (469-498), who censured the non-dogmatic doctrines

of Origen, is here confused, by medieval writers before Dante, with the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (491-518), noted for his tolerance, who was induced by the deacon of Thessalonica, [Photinus](#), to adopt the Acacian (Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople) formula, which was an attempt to reconcile the Monophysite doctrine that Christ appeared as a man but not with human nature and substance, with the Chalcedonian definition of Christ as known in two natures, one human, and that without confusion, and in one person.

[Inferno Canto XI:1-66](#). Anastasius is with the heretics in the Sixth Circle.

Anaxagoras

The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, born at Clazomenae in Asia Minor about 500BC, and a Persian citizen

who went to Athens in the year of Salamis 480/79 BC. He taught the young Pericles, and was later brought to trial by Pericles's opponents, charged with impiety. He retired to Ionia where he settled at Lampsacus. He taught a doctrine of divisible particles of all types that individually combine together in proportions to produce unique wholes, 'in everything there is a portion of everything'. His primal force is Mind (*Nous*) present in all living things, and is present 'there where everything else is, in the surrounding mass' and this concept is his main contribution to philosophy. [Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

Anchises

[Inferno Canto I:61-99](#). The father of [Aeneas](#), who carried him from burning Troy on his shoulders.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145.](#) He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XV:1-36.](#) Aeneas saw his shade in the underworld.

Aeneid vi 679.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148.](#) He died and was buried at Drepanum in Sicily, the Isle of Fire because of Mount Aetna. See the Funeral Games episode in Aeneid V 40 et seq. and Anchises's death at III 700.

Andalo, Loderingo degli

See [Loderingo.](#)

Andrea, Giacomo (Jacomo) da Sant'

A Paduan, who wasted his own and other people's fortunes, employing arson and other extraordinary methods. He appears to have been executed by [Ezzelino da Romano](#) in 1239, presumably after courting death.

[Inferno Canto XIII:109-129](#). He is in the seventh circle.

Andrew III, King of Hungary

He ruled Hungary in 1300, having usurped the crown that belonged to Carobert the son of [Charles Martel](#).

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Annas

The father-in-law of [Caiaphas](#), the high priest among the Pharisees, see John xi 47-53, who said: ‘it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should perish not’. Annas sent Christ bound to Caiaphas. See John xviii 24.

[Inferno Canto XXIII:82-126](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Anne, Saint

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151](#). The mother of the [Virgin](#). She sits near her, and opposite Saint [Peter](#) in Heaven.

Anselm, Saint

St Anselm (1033-1109) Archbishop of Canterbury, who wrote treatises on the Trinity and the Incarnation. He is known as the second father of Scholasticism, Scotus Erigena in the ninth century being the first. Both tried to show the coincidence of natural reason and revealed truth.

[Paradiso Canto VII:55-120](#). Beatrice's argument follows Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*. [Adam](#)'s disobedience injured himself not God, and what was demanded was not a propitiation, but restoration. Man was required to give back what he owed, to match what he had taken that he did not own, but could not since he owes everything

and owns nothing. Therefore God who owes nothing and owns everything had to become Man to achieve restoration. See *Cur Deus homo* passim, and specifically Bk i, chapter 15.

[Paradiso Canto VII:121-148](#). Again Anselm's argument is used: that since God made [Adam](#) and [Eve](#) flesh directly, man's body will be restored at the Last Judgement when redemption is complete for the saved.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Anselmo della Gherardesca

See [Ugolino della Gherardesca](#).

Antaeus

One of the Giant sons of Earth and Tartarus. He is unchained in Hell because he kept out of the battle against the gods of Olympus. The details of him Dante takes from

Lucan's *Pharsalia* iv 593-660.
[Hercules](#) lifted him in the air, whereby he lost his strength as he no longer touched the earth, and crushed him. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX 184.
[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). He sets the poets down in the Ninth Circle.

Antenor

The Trojan, who, according to medieval tradition betrayed Troy to the Greeks. (See *Dictys Cretensis*, *Dares Phrygius*, and the later *Roman de Troie*) He escaped to Italy after the fall of Troy and founded Padua, see *Aeneid* i 242 et seq.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). The [Antenora](#) is named after him.

Anthony, Saint

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:85-126](#). Saint Anthony (251-356). His symbol was the pig, and he was therefore the

patron of the pigs that infested Florence, and its neighbourhood, belonging to the monks. They were fed on the fraudulent gain made from selling remissions (indulgences).

Antigone

The daughter of Oedipus, by [Jocasta](#), and sister of [Eteocles](#) and [Polynices](#). See Sophocles's Antigone.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry.

Antiochus

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#). Antiochus IV, ruler of the Seleucid Empire (175-164BC), whose self-conferred title was *Theos Epiphanes*, the evident God. He accepted a bribe from [Jason](#) to make him high-priest of Judea.

Antiphon

The Greek tragic poet, praised by [Aristotle](#) and Plutarch.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is in Limbo.

Apollo

The son of [Jupiter](#) and [Latona](#) (Leto), born on the island of Delos. The sun-god and god of art and music, prophecy and healing, the archer's bow, and the lyre. He was present at the battle with the Giants. He is called Thymbraeus from his temple at Thymbra in the Troad. [Artemis](#)-Diana was his sister.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is depicted on the roadway.

[Paradiso Canto I:1-36](#). He equates to the Sun, as the sun-god, and to [Christ](#) and the Father as the Divine presence. Dante believed that the Muses occupied one peak of Mount

Parnassus, and Apollo the other, which Dante calls Cirra.

Apollo flayed [Marsyas](#) for challenging his skill in music, and Dante asks for the inspirational breath with which Apollo played on that occasion. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 382.

Apollo loved [Daphne](#), the daughter of the river-god Peneus, who was changed into a laurel-tree by the river-god, as Apollo pursued her. He then adopted her laurel as the sacred tree whose leaves would crown his lyre etc. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I 452-548.

[Paradiso Canto II:1-45](#). Apollo guides the poet.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:1-51](#). His name as God of Healing, and the religious hymn of praise in his honour.

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:1-66](#). The sun.

Arachne

A Lydian girl, the daughter of Idmon, famous for her weaving, who challenged Pallas [Athene](#) to a contest, was defeated, and was changed by Pallas into a spider. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 42 etc.

[Inferno Canto XVII:1-30](#). [Geryon's](#) body is adorned with more decoration than her weaving.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). She is depicted on the roadway.

Arca, dell'

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Arcas

The son of Callisto or Helice, an Arcadian nymph, a favourite of [Artemis](#)-Diana, raped by [Jupiter](#).

Diana expelled her from her company, and she was changed by [Juno](#) into a bear, and hunted by her son. Jupiter placed her in the sky as the constellation of the Bear, Ursa Major, and Arcas as the constellation of the little Bear, Ursa Minor, at the pole, towards which the 'pointers' Dubhe and Merak, of the Great Bear, or Plough, point as it circles on Polaris the pole-star. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* II 409-528

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:28-63.](#)

Circles over the northern latitudes.

Ardinghi

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI.](#)

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.](#)

Mentioned.

Arethusa

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). A nymph of Elis, one of Diana's maidens, who was loved by the river-god Alpheus. She was pursued by him, and was turned into a fountain. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* V 572.

Argenti, Filippo (Adimari)

A Florentine noble who appears with [Ciaccio](#) in Boccaccio's *Decameron* IX 8. He was notorious for his fierce temper and overbearing conduct. He and the Adimari family may also have been hostile to Dante.

[Inferno Canto VIII:31-63](#). He is rent by the people in the mud.

Argia

The wife of [Polynices](#), sister of [Deiphyle](#), and daughter of King Adrastus of Argos.

Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114. She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by Statius in his epic poetry.

Argogliosi, Marchese degli

One of the Argogliosi or possibly the Ordelauffi family of Forlì, who was Podestà of Faenza in 1296. When told that he was always drinking he replied that he was always thirsty.

Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33. He is among the gluttonous.

Argus

[Purgatorio CantoXXIX:82-105](#). The monstrous son of Arestor, set by [Juno](#) to guard Io (transformed to a heifer). He had a hundred eyes, but was lulled to sleep by [Mercury](#), and killed. Juno set his eyes in the peacock's tail. See Ovid's Metamorphoses I 624-723.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99](#). Mercury lulled him by telling the tale of [Syrinx](#).

Ariadne

The daughter of [Minos](#), King of Crete, who helped [Theseus](#) kill her half-brother the [Minotaur](#), and was then abandoned by him on Naxos. Dionysus rescued her and married her, setting [Thetis](#)'s crown on her head, which was later made a constellation, the Corona Borealis, or Northern Crown, thrown by Dionysus (Bacchus) into the sky to mark their nuptials. The

constellation consists of an arc of seven stars between Hercules and Bootes. Dante follows the myth that makes the constellation Ariadne herself, set there after her death.

[Inferno Canto XII:1-27](#). She helped Theseus escape the labyrinth.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:1-51](#). Her crown.

Aristotle

The Greek philosopher, 384-322 BC, the philosopher par excellence for Dante and the medieval period. Aristotle was born at Stageira in Chalcidice near Salonica. His father was a doctor. He became a member of [Plato](#)'s Academy at Athens, though he was later to differ from Plato in his thinking. He was Alexander the Great's 'tutor' and founded the Lyceum at Athens, and his teaching while walking in the garden, the Peripatos, led to its being called the

‘Peripatetic Philosophy’. On a wave of anti-Macedonian feeling after Alexander’s death, Aristotle retired to his mother’s property at Chalcis where he died.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He leads the philosophers in Limbo.

Inferno Canto XI:67-93. Virgil refers to his Nichomachean Ethics. See VII i ‘...those qualities of character to be avoided, which may be taken as three in number, and we call them incontinence (= *lack of self-control*), brutishness or bestiality(= *violence*) and vice (= *fraud*).’ (*My bracketed expansion*). See also VII vi ‘...it is thought more excusable to follow the natural impulses, which all men feel, than those which are peculiar to certain persons....bestiality is a lesser evil than vice.

Inferno Canto XI:94-115. Virgil refers to Aristotle's Physics II ii '.. if Art mimics Nature.'

Purgatorio Canto III:1-45. The pagan philosophers cannot hope to understand the 'why' of God's works, and are condemned to an unsatisfied desire for supreme knowledge. (Aquinas: 'the one demonstrates by means of the cause and is called *propter quid*.... the other by means of the effect and is called the demonstration *quia*.)

Paradiso Canto IV:64-114. Dante follows Aristotle's theory of the dual will, an absolute will that does not consent to evil coupled with a practical will that chooses the lesser of two evils. The former may remain intent on its goal, while the latter compromises, and that is a failing. See Aristotle's Ethics III, where the example of Alcmaeon is also mentioned.

Paradiso Canto VI:1-111. Dante refers to Aristotelian logic, where the propositions that this is so, and this is not so, cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time. Related propositions are termed contradictories e.g. if 'some swans are not white' is true, then 'all swans are white' is false, since a black swan would be white, and not white, if both statements were true simultaneously.

Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148. Aristotle taught that human society requires varied conditions and qualifications amongst its members. In the Politics he shows that the individual is not self-sufficient but a part of a whole, and a State is a group of citizens providing all the necessary variety for a complete life. Functions and duties are distributed so that the State can be self-sufficient where the individual is not.

[Paradiso Canto XXVI:1-69](#). He taught that God is the supreme object, towards whom the Heavens yearn. In the Metaphysics the Prime Mover is the object of longing or of intellectual apprehension.

Arius

The presbyter of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria (early 4th Century). The Arian heresy denies that the incarnate Son is one substance with the transcendent First Cause of creation, though differing in Person. The heresy created dissension until the end of the fourth century.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142](#). He is mentioned.

Arnaut Daniel

The Provençal poet. He flourished between 1180 and 1200 and Richard Coeur de Lion was among his patrons.

(See Ezra Pound's poem 'Near Perigord' in his collection *Lustra*). Arnaut was a master of form, the *trobar clus* or hidden style, inventing the sestina form, and it was for this above all that Dante and others regarded him so highly, rather than his sentiment.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:112-148](#). He is among the lustful. In the Provençal poem Dante invents for him, he refers to the style that *hides*, and is here open, and reminds Dante to consider his *own* punishment to come, for Lust, as Dante himself goes onward.

Arrigo, de' Fifanti(?)

His family is uncertain. He is said to have been one of [Mosca](#) de' Lamberti's accomplices in the murder of [Buondelmonte](#) de' Buondelmonti, that initiated the Guelf and Ghibelline factional alignments in Florence.

Inferno Canto VI:64-93. Dante asks after him.

Arrigucci

An ancient Florentine family. See the note to Paradiso Canto XVI.

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.
Mentioned.

Artemis, Diana, Delia

The daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and twin sister of Apollo, born on the island of Delos (hence Delia). She is a moon-goddess, and goddess of the chase.

Purgatorio Canto XXV:109-139. She expelled Callisto (Helice) from her company, after Callisto was raped by Jupiter. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* II 409-528.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:61-81.
Paradiso Canto X:64-99. She has a

rainbow-coloured girdle (the Moon's halo) in her Moon incarnation.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). The moon-goddess and daughter of Latona.

[Paradiso Canto XXIII:1-48](#). Called Diana Trivia by the Romans, identifying her with Hecate, as an underworld aspect of the Triple-Goddess, worshipped where three ways meet. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* II 416.

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:1-66](#). The moon.

Arthur, King of Britain

The mythical King of Britain, after the Roman withdrawal, around whose name medieval legends gathered. See Malory's 'Le Morte D'Arthur'.

[Mordred](#) his nephew and son, attempted to usurp his kingdom. In the last battle Arthur pierced Mordred with his lance, at the same time

receiving his own death-wound. According to an Old French version of the theme, which differs from Malory's version 'after the lance was withdrawn a ray of sunlight passed through the wound...'

[Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69](#). He is mentioned in the Ninth Circle.

Aruns

The Etruscan seer who in [Lucan's Pharsalia](#) i 584-638 prophesied the Civil War in Rome that ended in [Julius Caesar](#) defeating [Pompey](#) the Great.

[Inferno Canto XX:31-51](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Asciano, Caccia de' Cacciaconti

See [Caccia](#).

Asdente

A shoemaker of Parma. Asdente, 'the toothless', whose real name was Benvenuto, practised as a soothsayer. He died c1284.

[Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#) He is in the eighth circle.

Athamas

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). [Juno](#) was angered because of [Jupiter](#)'s adultery with [Semele](#), whom she punished, and took vengeance on the house of [Cadmus](#) of Thebes, her father. She pursued [Ino](#), Semele's sister by driving her husband Athamas mad. He killed their son [Learchus](#), and drove Ino to throw herself over a cliff, with their son [Melicertes](#). Ino and Melicertes became sea-gods, namely Leucothea, the White Goddess, and Palaemon. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 261 and IV 519.

Athene, Minerva, Pallas

Pallas Athene (the Roman Minerva), the daughter of [Jupiter](#), sprung from his head, and the goddess of wisdom, intelligence, technical skill, and women's arts. The olive was her gift to mankind. Often depicted as a warrior goddess. Present at the battle with the Giants.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). She is depicted on the roadway.

[Purgatorio Canto XXX:49-81](#). The olive is sacred to her. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 335, VIII 275 and 664.

[Paradiso Canto II:1-45](#). Minerva breathes intellectual inspiration into the poet.

Atropos

The third of the three Fates, or Moerae, in Greek myth. They were

begotten by Erebus on Night. Their names are Clotho, 'the spinner', Lachesis, 'the measurer', and Atropos, 'she who cannot be avoided or turned'. Clotho spins the thread of a life, Lachesis measures it out, and Atropos cuts the thread. Moera means a phase, and they are yet another incarnation of the triple Moon-goddess.

[Inferno Canto XXXIII:91-157](#). She is mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33](#). The other two are mentioned.

Attila

Attila the Hun, the scourge of God (*flagellum dei*), king of the Huns (433-453) who advanced into the Eastern Roman Empire, and on to the west, but was turned back at Chalôns in the Battle of the Catalaunian Fields in 451. He retreated to Hungary (the plains of Tisza) and died there.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is in the seventh circle.

[Inferno Canto XIII:130-151](#). The historians, and Dante, confused him with Totila, the leader of the Goths, who reputedly sacked Florence. Totila gained Italy (542-552) excluding Ravenna, and resisted Belisarius from 544 to 549, but died fighting Narses at Tadiinae.

Augustine, Saint

Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Christian Saint and influential theologian. The Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, and one of the four Latin (western) fathers of the Church with [Jerome](#), [Gregory](#), and Ambrose. He was born at Tagaste in Numidia, and was given religious instruction by Monica, his mother. He wrote the famous *Confessions*, and *The City of God*.

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXIV:115-154](#). Dante echoes Augustine, that the conversion of the world without miracles, would have been a greater miracle than any recorded, attesting to their reality.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). He is seated below [John the Baptist](#) in Heaven.

Augustus, Caesar

[Inferno Canto I:61-99](#). Generally known as Octavian (Octavius) until 27BC when he became the Roman Emperor Augustus. The adopted son of [Julius Caesar](#). The founder of the Imperial system and first Roman Emperor who was Caesar from 31BC to AD14. Virgil lived in his reign.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:1-39](#). He ordered [Virgil](#)'s remains to be brought from

Brindisi to Naples, after Virgil's death in 19BC, and interred there.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:106-132](#). His Triumph is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Aurora

[Purgatorio Canto II:1-45](#). The goddess of the dawn, daughter of the Titan Pallas, and wife of [Tithonus](#), for whom she won eternal life but not eternal youth..

Averroës

Ibn Rushd, 1128-1198 AD. An Arabian physician and commentator on [Aristotle](#). He espoused a sceptical philosophy, and as '*the Commentator*' in Latin translation c. 1250 made Aristotle's philosophy supreme in the Middle Ages.

Inferno Canto IV:130-151. He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Purgatorio Canto XXV:1-79. He taught, in error, that the human intellect being potential not actualised, discursive rather than intuitive like the angels, could not have its seat in the actual organs in the way that animals have intelligence, and so existed independently of physical form. He does however make self-consciousness a characteristic of the rational or intellectual soul, as life is of the vegetable soul, and sensation of the animal soul. 'The action of the intellect is likened to a circle, because it turns round upon itself, and comprehends itself.'

Avicenna

An Arabian physician and commentator on Aristotle 979-1037

AD. He codified [Galen](#) with smatterings of [Hippocrates](#), and was translated into Latin, for European use, by Gerard of Cremona c. 1180.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Azzo, see [da Este](#)

Azzo, see Ugolino d'Azzo degli [Ubaldini](#)

Azzolino (Ezzelino)

Ezzellino III da Romano, the tyrant (1194-1259), lord of Verona, Vicenza and Padua, called 'the son of the devil', imperial vicar under [Frederick II](#). Pope Alexander IV declared a crusade against him, and he was defeated at Cassano on the Adda, and subsequently died. He was the head of the Ghibellines in Northern Italy.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is in the seventh circle, first ring.

[Paradiso Canto IX:1-66](#). His mother dreamed she had given birth to a firebrand that scorched the land.

[Cunizza](#) was his sister.

Bacchus

The god of the vine, the son of [Jupiter](#) and [Semele](#), was worshipped ecstatically at Thebes in Boeotia (See Ovid's Metamorphoses III 528). The banks of the neighbouring rivers, Ismenus and Asopus, were crowded with worshippers, when the midnight rituals were enacted, that were designed to ensure the fruitfulness of the crop. The worship of Bacchus (Dionysus) was introduced into Greece from Asia Minor.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:76-111](#). The rites are mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:1-51](#). He is mentioned in the context of the shouts of praise cried out at his rites.

Barbariccia, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:1-30](#). The sinners hide from him.

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). He protects [Ciampolo](#) from the other demons so that Virgil can speak to him.

[Inferno Canto XXII:124-151](#). He is left rescuing [Calcabrina](#) and [Alichino](#) from the boiling pitch.

Barbarossa, see [Frederick I, Emperor](#)

Barucci

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.
Mentioned.

Battifolle, *see* Federigo Novello of

**Beatrice, daughter of Raymond
Berenger**

The daughter of Raymond Berenger,
and wife of Charles I of Anjou.

Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136. She
is mentioned.

Beatrice, d'Este Visconti

Beatrice d'Este, daughter of Obizzo
d'Este II of Ferrara, married Nino de'
Visconti by whom she had a daughter
Giovanna, voted a pension by the
Guelphs in 1328. After Nino's death
Beatrice married Galeazzo Visconti of
Milan, a separate branch. The
Milanese Visconti suffered misfortune
in 1302. Giovanna married
Riccardo da Cammino of Treviso. The

arrangements for Beatrice's marriage were in progress at Easter 1300, and the wedding took place in the June.

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:46-84](#). She is mentioned.

Beatrice, of Anjou

The youngest daughter of [Charles](#) the Lame, Charles I of Anjou. She married [Azzo VIII d'Este](#) in 1305.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96](#). She is mentioned.

Beatrice, = divine philosophy

A personification, but also the real Beatrice who Dante first saw as a child of eight in May 1274 when he was nine years old. His love for her inspired the Vita Nuova and the Divine Comedy. She was Bice, or Beatrice, Portinari daughter of Folco de' Portinari who died in 1288. She died young in June of 1290. (See

Rossetti's painting Beata Beatrix – Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, England)

[Inferno Canto I:61-99](#). [Virgil](#) says she will be Dante's guide in Paradise.

[Inferno Canto II:43-93](#). She asks Virgil to aid Dante.

[Inferno Canto X:94-136](#). She will, through [Cacciaguida](#), reveal Dante's future to him.

[Purgatorio Canto VI 25-48](#). Virgil tells Dante he will see her again, when they reach the summit of the Mount of Purgatory.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:1-48](#). Her Divine philosophy goes beyond Virgil's human philosophy, entering into matters of Faith.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:49-75](#). As Divine Philosophy she takes Freewill to be the noble virtue.

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45. Dante must pass through the purifying fire to reach her.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:1-48. She appears to Dante, wreathed in the olive sacred to Pallas Athene-Minerva, dressed in the white, green and red of Faith, Hope and Charity. Line 48 is a translation of Virgil's Aeneid iv 23 'Agnosco veteris vestigia flammae: I recognise the tokens of the ancient flame.'

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:91-145. For Beatrice's attributes, note *Vita Nuova* xxi the sonnet: 'My lady bears Love in her eyes,' and *Convito* III vv 55-58 of the canzone: 'Her aspect shows the joy of Paradise, seen in her eyes and in her smiling face: Love brought them there as as to his dwelling-place.' Beatrice's first beauty, her eyes, is that of the cardinal virtues, her *seconda bellaza*,

her second beauty, her smile, is the beauty of the theological virtues.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57.](#)

Beatrice employs [Christ](#)'s words to his disciples. See John xvi 16.

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:64-93.](#) Dante sees Beatrice crowned in Heaven, and his final prayer to her.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36.](#) She, Divine Philosophy, sits with [Rachel](#) (Contemplation) in Heaven, in the third rank, below the [Virgin](#).

[Paradiso Canto XXXIII:1-48.](#) She prays, with [Bernard](#), to the [Virgin](#), that Dante finds the strength to persevere in his affections.

Beccaria, Tesauo de' Beccheria

Tesauo de' Beccheria of Pavia, Abbot of Vallombrosa, and Legate of Pope Alexander IV in Florence, plotted against the Guelphs, after the

Ghibellines had been expelled in 1258 and was executed.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Bede, The Venerable

Bede (c673-735) the English Ecclesiastical historian who died in Jarrow.

[Paradiso Canto X:130-148](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Belacqua

A Florentine maker of musical instruments, a friend of Dante's, noted for his laziness.

[Purgatorio Canto IV:88-139](#). He is among the late-repentant.

Belisarius

Belisarius (c505-565) restored the authority of the Empire in Italy by his campaigns against the Ostrogoths. He

fell into disfavour, and, according to legend, beggary. See Robert Grave's historical novel 'Count Belisarius.'

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). He is mentioned.

Bella, Giano della

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Bellincion, Berti de' Ravignani

The father of 'the good [Gualdrada](#)' one of the honoured knights of ancient Florence.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#). The [Conti Guidi](#) were descended from him through Gualdrada.

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.

Mentioned as marrying one of his daughters to one of the Adimari.

Bello, Geri del

A first cousin of Dante's father, who was killed for sowing discord among the Sacchetti family, and was not revenged until thirty years after the vision, when Geri's nephews, the sons of Messer Cione del Bello Alighieri killed one of the Sacchetti in his own house. The families were reconciled in 1342.

Inferno Canto XXIX:1-36. He is in the ninth chasm.

Belus

Paradiso Canto IX:67-126. King Belus of Sidon, the Phoenician, father of Dido.

Benedict, Saint

The Christian Saint (c480-543) the founder of the oldest Western monastic order, the Benedictines. He was born at Nursia in Umbria, and went to Rome to study. He lived as a hermit for several years near Subiaco. He founded the famous monastery at Monte Cassino on a mountain between Rome and Naples, a spur of Monte Cairo, a few miles from Aquino in the north of Campania. It was once crowned by altars to [Apollo](#) and [Venus](#)-Aphrodite. The Rule of his Order demanded poverty, chastity and obedience, manual labour, and irrevocable vows. He was remembered for his many acts of healing.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99](#). He is manifest in the seventh sphere.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). He is seated below [John the Baptist](#) in Heaven.

Benincasa of Arezzo

Benicasa da Laterina, judge to the Podestà of Siena. He condemned a relative of [Ghin di Tacco](#), a highwayman, to death, and Ghino took his revenge by murdering him while he was sitting as a magistrate in Rome.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). He is among the late-repentant.

Berenger, Raymond Count of Provence

His daughter [Margaret](#) married [Louis IX](#) of France, [Eleanor](#) married [Henry III](#) of England, [Sancha](#) married Richard of Cornwall, and [Beatrice](#) married [Charles of Anjou](#), bringing Provence as her dowry, after her father's death.

[Paradiso Canto VI:112-142](#). Danter refers to the fable of his chamberlain, [Romeo of Villeneuve](#).

Bernard of Quintavalle

A wealthy citizen of Assisi who gave up his possessions to follow

[Saint Francis](#), and became his first disciple.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He is mentioned.

Bernard, Saint

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) the Cistercian monk and theologian, son of a noble Burgundian family, who founded the great monastery at Clairvaux in France and was Abbot there till his death. He had a particular devotion to the Virgin, expressed in his *De Laudibus Virginis matris* and his nine sermons for the feasts of the Purification, Assumption, Nativity etc. He opposed the celebration of her Immaculate Conception. He dedicated all the monasteries of the Cistercian

Order to her. He is the type of contemplation.

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:94-142](#). He guides Dante to the final Vision.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:37-84](#). Bernard is made to express the orthodox view that the unbaptised child must remain in Limbo (See [Inferno IV](#)), where spirits live ‘without hope, in longing’. However Bernard himself in his treatise addressed to [Hugh](#) of Saint Victor, holds back from this terrible conclusion. ‘We must suppose that the ancient sacraments were efficacious as long as it can be shown that they were not notoriously prohibited. And after that? It is in God’s hands. Not mine be it to set the limit.’

Bernadin di Fosco

His father was a field labourer. Bernadin distinguished himself at the siege of Faenza against the Emperor

Frederick II in 1240. He was a Guelph, and died c1250 having become one of the mobility of Faenza.

Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123. He is mentioned.

Bernadone, Pietro

The father of Saint Francis, to whom Francis gave all his worldly possessions, in order to pursue Poverty.

Paradiso Canto XI:43-117. He is mentioned.

Bertrand de Born

Bertrand (c1140-1215), The Lord of the Castle of Hautefort (Altaforte), near Périgord, who spent his life in feudal warfare, ended it in the Cistercian monastery of Dalon, nearby. He was one of the most individual of the Provençal troubadours. One of his finest poems

(*‘Si tuit li dohl elh plor elh marrimen’*) is his song of lament on the death of Prince Henry Plantagenet, the elder brother to Richard Coeur de Lion, and named the ‘Young King’, the son of Henry II of England, and twice crowned in his father’s lifetime. Bertrand was accused of stirring up the strife whereby Henry II refused to grant the sovereignty of England or Normandy to his son, and which lasted until the Young King’s death in 1183. (See Ezra Pound’s poem ‘Near Périgord’ from *Lustra*, and his translation of the lament ‘Planh for the Young English King’ in *Personae*: also his translation of *‘Dompna pois de me no’us cal’* in *Lustra*, where Bertrand makes ‘a borrowed lady’, *‘una dompna soiseubuda’* or *‘una donna ideale’*, out of the best characteristics of the noble women he knows, and its

companion piece ‘*Na Audiart*’ in *Personae*.)

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142](#). He is in the ninth chasm of the eighth circle, as a ‘stirrer up of strife’.

Bocca, see [Abati](#), Bocca degli

Boëthius

Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus Boëthius (c475-525), Roman consul and philosopher who was condemned to death by Theodoric, at Pavia. He wrote the *Consolation of Philosophy* while in prison, defending the virtuous life and the ways of God. He stressed revealed truth, and the earthly life, and though a Pagan with Christian connections was accepted as a Christian teacher. He argued the timelessness of God’s view of existence, and the validity of Human Freewill. Cieldauro (Golden Ceiling)

is St. Peter's Church in Pavia where he was buried. Since his opponents were Arian heretics, he is claimed as a Catholic martyr.

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Bonatti, Guido

The private astrologer to [Guido da Montefeltro](#). He came from Forlì and was a tiler by trade. He wrote '*Liber Introductorius ad Judicia Stellarum*' (c1170) and was credited with aiding Guido's victory over the French Papal forces at Forlì in 1282.

[Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Bonaventura, Saint

Giovanni Fidanza, the Franciscan 'Seraphic Doctor' Saint Bonaventura (1221-1274). He was born at Bagnoregio near Bolsena. He was a

friend and colleague of Thomas [Aquinas](#), and minister-general of the Franciscan Order from 1256. He wrote the official life of Saint Francis, and shortly before his death was made a Cardinal and Bishop of Albano by Pope Gregory X.

[Paradiso Canto XII:1-36](#). He is in the fourth sphere of the Sun.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). His extended speech to Dante.

Boniface VIII, Pope

Benedetto Gaetani who succeeded [Celestine V](#) in 1294, and imprisoned him after his abdication until his death. His political manoeuvres are the background to the critical three years of Dante's political life, leading to his exile from Florence, and described in [Ciaccio's prophecy](#). For Dante, he represented the corrupt Papacy, placed in Hell for his vindictiveness; falsity;

profligate simony; an ultramontane sacerdotalism, that saw the Empire as subordinate to the Church, with only a derived authority; and his destructive policies that led to French control of Florence. Boniface died in October 1303, and was succeeded by Benedict XI. Boniface is therefore **the Pope** at the time of the Vision in 1300.

See [Ciaccio's prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

[Inferno Canto XV:100-124](#). He is mentioned, indirectly, regarding his translation of [Andrei dei Mozzi](#) from Florence to Vicenze in 1295.

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#). His place in Hell is reserved for him in the eighth circle with the [Simonists](#).

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136](#). He persuaded [Guido da Montefeltro](#) to leave his religious retreat in order to advise him on the razing of Palestrina,

giving him absolution in advance, which Dante explicitly rejects, as unacceptable, logically and morally. (Acre is mentioned as the last possession of the Christians in the Holy Land, lost to the Saracens in 1291.)

Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96. In the name of Philip IV, the Fair, Sciarra Colonna and William de Nogaret seized Boniface at Anagni his birthplace, forty miles south east of Rome, in September 1303 and treated him with such cruelty that he died at Rome, a month after his release from their hands, on October 11th 1303.

Paradiso Canto IX:67-126. His indifference to the fate of Acre and the Holy Land is mentioned.

Paradiso Canto IX:127-142. His reign has caused the abandonment of the study of the Gospels, for the study of

the law-books, the Decretals, since that study brings preferment.

[Paradiso Canto XII:37-105](#). The ideal of Poverty has been abandoned by the Holy See.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). He engineered Dante's exile.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:100-136](#). Dante deems him in love with the gold coins of Florence that carried the figure of the [Baptist](#), as well as the lily, the florins, that he has forgotten the meaning of his office.

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66](#). He is denounced as a corrupt usurper of the Papal Office.

[Paradiso Canto XXX:97-148](#). When Clement V arrives in Hell (1314), Boniface will be pushed further down.

Bonifazio, de' Fieschi, Archbishop of Ravenna

Archbishop of Ravenna from 1274 to 1295. Dante refers to the ornamental rook like a chess-piece set at the top of the ancient pastoral staff of the Archbishops of Ravenna.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33](#). He is among the gluttonous.

Bonturo, *see* [Dati](#)

Boreas

The north wind personified as a god. The north-westerlies are classically cloud-bearing winds, the north-easterlies sky-clearing winds.

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:58-93](#). He is mentioned.

Borsiere, Guglielmo

A retired purse-maker who entered the aristocracy. There is a story about him

in Boccaccio's Decameron I, 8 where he is noted for refinement, and eloquence. He died shortly before 1300.

[Inferno Canto XVI:46-87](#). He is in the seventh circle for sodomy.

Bostichi

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Botaio, Martino

One of the elders of Lucca.

[Inferno Canto XXI:31-58](#). He is in Hell.

Brennus

Chief of the Sennonian Gauls who sacked Rome in 390BC.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Briarius, Briareus

One of the Giant sons of Earth and Tartarus who fought against the gods of Olympus. See Virgil's Aeneid x 565-568, where he is described as having fifty heads and a hundred arms. See also Statius Theb. ii 596.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). He helps guard the central pit.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is depicted on the roadway.

Brigata, Nino della Gherardesca

See [Ugolino della Gherardesca](#).

Brosse, Pierre de la

The surgeon and afterwards chamberlain of [King Philip III](#) of France. [Mary of Brabant](#) was accused by Pierre and others of having murdered Louis, Philip's son by his first wife, with poison, in 1276. She

destroyed Pierre by falsely accusing him of an attempt on her honour, and of treasonable correspondence with Alfonso X of Castile, Philip's enemy. Pierre was hanged for this in 1278.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). He is with the late-repentants.

Brunelleschi, Agnolo

A Florentine noble, and a thief.

[Inferno Canto XXV:34-78](#). He merges with [Cianfa](#) as a serpent.

Brunetto, see [Latini](#)

Brutus, Junius, who expelled Tarquin

The type of a noble Roman of the Republic. Lucius Junius Brutus conquered [Tarquinius Superbus](#), whose son had raped [Lucretia](#), Collatine's wife, in 510 BC. (See Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*)

Inferno Canto IV:106-129. He is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

**Brutus, Marcus, who assassinated
Julius Caesar**

Marcus Junius Brutus, who with Gaius Cassius plotted to assassinate Julius Caesar, fearful of Caesar's increasing power, and the death of the Republic. Caesar, who had loved Brutus's mother Servilia, according to Suetonius, so that Brutus was perhaps his own child, was murdered on the Ides of March in 44BC, in the Hall of Pompey where the Senate were due to meet. One of the Casca brothers struck the first blow, with a sweep of his dagger just below the throat. Twenty-three dagger thrusts went home, and it was said that when he saw Brutus about to deliver the second blow, Caesar reproached him in Greek,

saying: ‘You too, my child?’ In the ensuing Civil War, Octavian, later [Augustus](#) Caesar, and Mark Antony, defeated Brutus at the Second Battle of Philippi in 42BC. Brutus’s head was sent to Rome to be thrown at the foot of Caesar’s divine image. Dante holds him in special opprobrium, because of his murder of the founder of the Roman Empire, and because no doubt of the close relationship between Brutus and Caesar, making the betrayal more bitter.

[Inferno Canto XXXIV:55-69](#). He is tormented in one of [Satan](#)’s mouths.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Bryso, Bryson

The Greek philosopher, considered by [Aristotle](#) an example of the powers of false-reasoning.

Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142. He is mentioned.

Buiamonte, Giovanni

Inferno Canto XVII:31-78. A knight of the Bicchi family of Florence, still alive in 1300 at the time of the Vision. His arms were 'three eagles' beaks or on field azure'.

Buonaccorsi, Pinamonte

The Brescian Counts of Casalodi held Mantua in 1272 but were unpopular and threatened with expulsion. Pinamonte de Buonaccorsi, obtained control, by advising Alberta da Casalodi to banish the powerful nobles, as a source of trouble. He then took over, massacred any opponents, expelled Alberta, and held Mantua until 1291.

Inferno Canto XX:52-99.
Mentioned regarding Mantuan
history.

Buonagiunta, Orbicciani

Bonagiunta Orbicciani degli Overardi, a notary and poet, of Lucca, who died between 1296 and 1300.

Jacopo da Lentino (*il Notaio*, the Notary), Guittone del Viva known as Fra Guittone, of Arezzo (1230-1294: one of the *Frati Gaudenti*) in his first poetic period, and Bonagiunta were prominent members of the Sicilian school of Poetry, continued in Central Italy, based on Provençal traditions. Their style lacked the spontaneity and sweetness of the *dolce stil nuovo* developed by Guido Guinicelli of Bologna, Guido Cavalcanti and Dante. Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33. He is among the gluttonous.

Buonconte, see [Montefeltro](#)

Buondelmonti, Buondelmonte de'

[See Mosca](#). Buondelmonti was betrothed to a daughter of the [Amidei](#), but broke faith at the instigation of [Gualdrada Donati](#). In the debate as to whether he should be killed Mosca said the evil word, 'A thing done has an end.' Buondelmonte was murdered, at the foot of the statue of Mars, on the Ponte Vecchio, in 1215. The family divisions created the Guelph and Ghibelline factional conflicts.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87](#). They are mentioned among the ancient Florentine families.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#). The family originated from Valdigreve and settled in the Borgo Saint Apostoli. To reach Florence they would have crossed the small stream called Ema.

Buoso, see [Donati](#)

Caccia de' Cacciaconti of Asciano

A member of the *Brigata Spendereccia*, the Spendthrift Brigade, a club founded by twelve wealthy Sieneese, in the second half of the thirteenth century, who vied with each other in squandering their money on riotous living.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139](#). He is in the tenth chasm.

Cacciaguida

Dante's great-great-grandfather, whose son was [Alighiero](#) I. Cacciaguida's wife was [Alighiera](#) of the Aldighieri family of Ferrara.

He took part in [Saint Bernard](#) of Clairvaux's crusade of 1147 under Emperor [Conrad III](#), and was killed. His brother's name [Eliseo](#) suggests a connection with the Elisei family.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). He is in the Fifth sphere of Mars.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45](#). He was born, according to Dante in 1091, calculated from the period of Mars orbit, 687 days, multiplied by the the 580 orbits mentioned. He was then forty-one when he joined the crusade.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He leaves Dante to rejoin the other spirits, in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Caccianimico, Venedico de'

His father Alberto was head of the Bolognese Guelphs. He himself was a leading Guelph, exiled in 1289, and a follower of Marquis [Obizzo II d'Este](#) of Ferrara. He assisted the Marquis in the seduction of his own sister, [Ghisola](#), who later married Niccolò de Fontana of Ferrara in 1270. Dante met him in exile, possibly in Florence.

[Inferno Canto XVIII:40-66](#). He is in the eighth circle, first chasm, of pimps, go-betweens, and panders.

Cacus

The three-headed shepherd, son of Hephaestus and [Medusa](#). He lived in a deep cave in the Aventine forest. He stole two of [Hercules](#)'s prize bulls, and four heifers, after Hercules had taken the cattle of King [Geryon](#) in his Tenth Labour. Hercules battered him to death. Dante follows Livy i. 7, and Virgil Aeneid viii 193-267, where Virgil calls him *semihominis*, leading to Dante confusing him with the Centaurs, who guard the Violent higher up, in the seventh circle.

[Inferno Canto XXV:1-33](#). He is in the eighth circle, with the thieves.

Cadmus

The son of the Phoenician King Agenor, who searches for his sister Europa, stolen by Jupiter in the form of a bull. He sows the serpent's teeth, and founds Thebes, but offends the sacred Serpent of Mars. He and his wife Harmonia are ultimately turned into snakes. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IV 563 et al.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#).

Mentioned, as an example of mutation.

Caecilius

Caecilius Statius the comic poet (d. 168 BC)

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is in Limbo.

Cagnano, Angelo or Angiolello da

See [Carignano](#)

Cagnazzo, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:97-123](#). He does not trust [Ciampolo](#).

Caiaphas

The high priest among the Pharisees, see John xi 47-53, who said ‘it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should perish not’. His father-in-law was [Annas](#), see John xviii 13.

[Inferno Canto XXIII:82-126](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Cain

The son of [Adam](#) and [Eve](#), who killed his brother [Abel](#). He was expelled from Eden to the land of Nod. See Genesis iv.

[Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#).

[Paradiso Canto II:46-105](#). The Man in the Moon in popular superstition, was Cain carrying a bundle of thorns as he went to sacrifice.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:124-151](#). He is the first of the voices, signifying envy.

Calboli, Fulcieri da

The grandson of [Rinieri](#), and Podestà of Milan, Parma, and Modena, but notorious for his tenure at Florence, from January to November 1303, by favour of the Blacks, when he proved a bitter enemy of the Whites.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:28-66](#). He is mentioned, adversely.

Calboli, Rinieri da

Rinieri a Guelph of Forlì, was Podestà of Faenza in 1247, Parma in 1252, and Ravenna in 1265 and 1292. He attacked Forlì in 1276 but had to retire to Calboli in the valley of Montone,

where he surrendered to [Guido da Montefeltro](#), the Captain of Forlì, who razed the stronghold. When Rinier was re-elected Podestà of Faenza in 1292 [Mainardo Pagano](#) was Captain. The citizens opposed a tax levied on them by the Count of Romagna, and successfully opposed him. In 1294 the da Calboli were expelled by the Ghibellines, but returned with other Guelphs in 1296, when their enemies were away fighting against Bologna. Shortly after this the Guelphs were routed again and expelled by the Ghibellines, and the aged Rinier was killed.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:1-27](#). He is among the envious.

Calcabrina, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:124-151](#). He and [Alichino](#) quarrel.

Calchas

The Greek augur, the brother of Leucippe and Theonoë. At Aulis, where the Greek ships waited for a favourable wind to sail to Troy, Calchas interpreted the appearance of a snake that killed a sparrow and her eight fledglings, and then was turned to stone. It signified that Troy would be taken in the tenth year after a long struggle. He also prophesied that they must pacify Artemis by sacrificing [Agamemnon](#)'s daughter, [Iphigenia](#). After that the north-east wind dropped and the fleet was able to set sail for Troy.

[Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#). He is mentioned in the eighth circle.

Calfucci

An ancient Florentine family, a branch of the [Donati](#). See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Calliope

The Muse of Epic Poetry, the mother of [Orpheus](#), and the eldest sister of the Muses (see the fuller entry under [Muses](#)). She took the lead in the competition with [the Pierides](#).

[Purgatorio Canto I:1-27](#). Dante asks her to accompany his words.

Callisto, or Helice

An Arcadian nymph, a favourite of [Artemis-Diana](#), raped by [Jupiter](#). Diana expelled her from her company, and she was changed by [Juno](#) into a bear, and hunted by her son [Arcas](#). Jupiter placed her in the sky as the

constellation of the Bear, Ursa Major, and Arcas as the constellation of the little Bear, Ursa Minor, at the pole, towards which the 'pointers' Dubhe and Merak, of the Great Bear, or Plough, point as it circles on Polaris the pole-star. See Ovid's Metamorphoses II 409-528.

[Purgatorio Canto XXV:109-139](#). She is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:28-63](#). The Great Bear, circling over the northern latitudes.

Callixtus I, Saint and Pope

Saint Callixtus I, Pope (217-222AD).

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66](#). He died for the faith.

Camiccione

See [Pazzi](#).

Camilla

[Inferno Canto I:100-111](#). A virgin warrior, the Roman version of an Amazon, whose death is described in Aeneid XI.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

Camino, Gaia da

The daughter of [Gherardo da Camino](#). The reference to her is unclear, and may refer to her virtue or her lack of it. [Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145](#). She is mentioned.

Camino, Gherardo da

Captain-General of Treviso from 1283 till his death in 1306 when he was succeeded by his son [Riccardo](#). Gerard's daughter Gaia died in 1311. The allusion to her is not understood.

[Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145](#). He is mentioned.

Camino, Riccardo da

The brother of [Gaia](#), and husband of [Giovanna Visconti](#), who was treacherously murdered at Treviso where the rivers Sile and Cagnano meet, in 1312.

[Paradiso Canto IX:1-66](#). His death is prophesied.

Cancellieri, Focaccia de'

One of the Cancellieri family of Pistoia, who fomented an internal feud in which many of his kinsmen died. This feud was the source of the Blacks and Whites, the Neri and Bianchi factions, introduced into Florence also. [Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69](#). He is in Caïna, in the Ninth Circle.

Capaneus

[Inferno Canto XIV:43-72](#). An Argive chief in the war of the seven against Thebes who scaled the wall, and was struck down by [Jupiter](#)'s lightning bolt. He was a symbol of pride. (See Aeschylus: Seven against Thebes)

[Inferno Canto XXV:1-33](#). [Cacus](#) outdoes him in pride and arrogance.

Capet, Hugh

King of France (987-996) here confused with his father Hugh the Great (Duke of the Franks, Count of Paris, died 956) who was the supposed son of a butcher. When Louis V died in 987, and the Carolingian Dynasty ended it was Hugh who succeeded, and founded the Capetian Dynasty, not his son and successor [Robert I](#). On Louis V's death, his uncle Duke [Charles of Lorraine](#), son of Louis IV, was the only survivor of the

Carlovingian line. He was captured by Hugh and imprisoned till his death in 991. He was not a monk, and Dante may have confused him with the last of the Merovingians Childeric III who was deposed by Pepin le Bref in 751 and compelled to become a monk. Between 1060 and 1300 four Philip's (I-IV) and four Louis's (VI-IX) ruled France between them.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96.](#) He is among the avaricious.

Capocchio

A Florentine alchemist, known to Dante, burnt alive at Siena in 1293.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139.](#) He is in the tenth chasm.

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48.](#) He is attacked by [Gianni Schicci.](#)

Caponsacco

An ancient Florentine family.

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.

Mentioned.

Capulets, the Cappelleti of Verona

Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151. Feuded with the Montagues, see Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet for a fictitious re-creation of the feuding.

Carignano, Angiolello da

Malatestino Malatesta of Rimini, the 'one-eyed traitor', 'the young mastiff', obtained possession of Fano, and added it to Rimini. He invited the two chief nobles Guido del Cassero, and Agniello to meet him at La Cattolica on the Adriatic between Fano and Rimini. Their boat was intercepted and they were drowned off the headland of Focaro, between Fano and La Cattolica. The headland was notorious for its dangerous winds, so much so

that sailors made vows and prayers for safe passage.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:55-90](#). Their death is prophesied.

Carlino, see [Pazzi](#)

Carpigna, Guido da

Renowned for his liberality. A member of a noted family near Montefeltro. He died between 1270 and 1289.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Casalodi, Alberta da

The Brescian Counts of Casalodi held Mantua in 1272 but were unpopular and threatened with expulsion. [Pinamonte](#) de Buonaccorsi, obtained control, by advising Alberta to banish the powerful nobles, as a source of trouble. He then took over, massacred

any opponents, expelled Alberta, and held Mantua until 1291.

[Inferno Canto XX:52-99](#). Mentioned regarding Mantuan history.

Casella

A musician of Florence or Pistoia, and a personal friend of Dante's, whose poetry he set to music, including perhaps this second canzone which Dante annotated in the Convito. He died between 1283 and 1300. He gathers with the dead souls who are not condemned to the Acheron, at Rome, the portal of salvation. Since the Jubilee, which began on Christmas day 1299, all those who have wished for grace have been carried to Purgatory, by the Angel.

[Purgatorio Canto II:79-114](#). He is entering Purgatory.

Cassero, Guido del

[Malatestino Malatesta](#) of Rimini, the ‘one-eyed traitor’, ‘the young mastiff’, obtained possession of Fano, and added it to Rimini. He invited the two chief nobles Guido, and [Agniello da Carignano](#) to meet him at La Cattolica on the Adriatic between Fano and Rimini. Their boat was intercepted and they were drowned off the headland of Focaro, between Fano and La Cattolica. The headland was notorious for its dangerous winds, so much so that sailors made vows and prayers for safe passage.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:55-90](#). Their death is prophesied.

Cassero, Jacopo del

A Guelph from Fano, in the mark of Ancona, between Romagna and the Kingdom of Naples, ruled by [Charles II of Anjou](#). He was Podestà

of Bologna in 1296. He frustrated the designs on the city of [Azzo VII d'Este](#), Marquess of Ferrara, incurring Azzo's wrath, and exchanged his office for that of Milan, in 1298. He was murdered on Azzo's orders at Oriaco, near the River Brenta, between Venice and Padua, and died in the marshes there, while fleeing to La Mira would have taken him to drier land. The Paduans are called Antenori from their founder [Antenor](#). [Riccardo da Camino](#) was one of the assassins.

[Purgatorio Canto V:64-84](#). He is one of the late repentants.

Cassius

With Marcus Junius [Brutus](#), Gaius Cassius plotted to assassinate [Julius Caesar](#), fearful of Caesar's increasing power, and the death of the Republic. Caesar was murdered on the Ides of March in 44BC, in the Hall of

Pompey where the Senate were due to meet. One of the Casca brothers struck the first blow, with a sweep of his dagger just below the throat. In the ensuing Civil War, Octavian, later [Augustus](#) Caesar, and Mark Antony, defeated Cassius at the First Battle of Philippi, and Brutus at the Second Battle of Philippi, in 42BC. Dante holds him in special opprobrium, because of his complicity in the murder of the founder of the Roman Empire.

[Inferno Canto XXXIV:55-69](#). He is tormented in one of [Satan](#)'s mouths.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Castello, Guido da

A gentleman of Treviso, noted for his hospitality and generosity. To the French the Lombards were tricky, and often usurers, perhaps the source of his

name, being in contrast, the ‘honest one’, *simplice*.

[Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145](#). He is mentioned.

Castor and Pollux

[Purgatorio Canto IV:52-87](#). The Twins, the Dioscuri, the Gemini, represented by that constellation of the Zodiac. They were the twin sons of Tyndareus and Leda, famous for their horsemanship, though Pollux (Polydeuces) may have been Zeus’s swan-son, and [Helen](#)’s brother, while Castor was mortal and Clytaemnestra’s brother. Pollux refused immortality unless his brother could share it, and Zeus set them among the stars. They are the saviours of shipwrecked sailors, and were worshipped by the Spartans

Castrocaro, Counts of

Ghibellines, based in the stronghold of Castrocaro, near Forlì

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123.](#)

They are mentioned.

Catalano, Catalini or Malavolti

One of the *Frati Gaudenti*, or Jovial Friars, a derisive name for the *Cavalieri di S. Maria (Ordo militae beatae Mariae)* founded at Bologna in 1261, with the approval of Urban IV, to act as mediators, and protect the weak. It was disbanded due to its laxity. Catelano de' Catalini (or de' Malavolti) c.1210-1285, and [Loderingo](#) degli Andalò, a Ghibelline, were called to Florence, from Bologna, in 1266 to act together as Podestà, and reform the government. They were accused of hypocrisy and corruption and expelled. The Gardingo district (*Piazza di Firenze*) the site of the

Uberti Palace, was destroyed in a rising against the Ghibellines.

[Inferno Canto XXIII:82-126](#). They are in the eighth circle.

Catilini

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Cato, of Utica

Marcus Portius Cato, the Younger (95-46BC), the Republican opponent of [Julius Caesar](#). He supported [Pompey](#) as the lesser of two evils, and was noted for his honesty and moral stance. After the battle of Thapsus, in 46 BC, he committed suicide while governor of Utica near Carthage rather than fall into enemy hands. This was regarded as an act of supreme devotion to liberty. Cato the lawgiver is

depicted with the righteous in Virgil's Aeneid VIII 670. Dante derived his knowledge of Cato from [Lucan's Pharsalia II 373](#). Cato's wife was [Marcia](#).

[Inferno Canto XIV:1-42](#). Cato crossed the Libyan desert in 47BC, at the head of [Pompey's](#) army, to meet up with [Juba](#), King of Numidia. The march is described by Lucan in Pharsalia IX 411 et seq.

[Purgatorio Canto I:28-84](#). The Poets meet him. The Mount of Purgatory is in Cato's care.

Cavalcanti, Cavalcante de'

The father of the poet [Guido Cavalcanti](#), is mentioned in Boccaccio's Decameron VI 9, in a tale which concerns Guido.

[Inferno Canto X:52-72](#). He is in the Sixth Circle as a heretic.

Cavalcanti, Francesco (Guercio) de'

Francesco, who changes from serpent to man, and back, was killed by the villagers of Gaville, in the upper Val d'Arno, the murderers and others being summarily executed by his kinsmen.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Cavalcanti, Guido de'

The poet, son of [Cavalcante Cavalcanti](#), born between 1250 and 1259, was [Farinata](#)'s son-in-law, and a prominent White (Bianchi) Guelf. He married Farinata's daughter, Beatrice, during one of the attempts to forge peace through marriage alliances. He, 'the first of my friends', and Dante are the chief poets of the Florentine School of the *dolce stil nuove* style of lyric poetry that superseded the Bolognese school of

[Guido Guinicelli](#). The Vita Nuova was dedicated to Guido. He was exiled with the Whites (a decision Dante was party to) in June 1300 to Sarzana in the Lunigiana. Allowed to return to Florence, due to illness, caused by the unhealthy locality, he died in the August and was buried on August 29th, but was still alive at the time of the Vision itself. He is mentioned in Bocaccio's Decameron VI 9.

[Inferno Canto X:52-72](#). His father Cavalcante asks after him. Dante mentions Guido's disdain of Virgil, through poetic preference, political allegiance, Epicurean principles, preference for Italian over Latin, or some other reason.

See [Ciacco's prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117](#). Dante expresses the view that he has

surpassed the poetic school of [Guido Guinicelli](#). (The earlier poet who wrote the lines ‘Love was not before the gentle heart, nor the gentle heart before love’)

Celestine V, Saint and Pope

Pietro da Morrone, a saintly hermit from the Abruzzi, was compelled to become Pope by the Cardinals in 1294, at the age of eighty. Five months later, worn out, he abdicated. He was confined by his successor [Boniface VIII](#) till his death in 1296. He was canonised in 1313.

[Inferno Canto III:58-69](#). Celestine is the likeliest candidate, as attested by Petrarch and others, for he who made ‘il gran rifiuto’.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136](#). Dante again refers to Celestine’s indifference to the Papal honour.

Centaur

Fabulous creatures, living in the mountains of Thessaly, half man and half horse. They were the sons of Ixion, and a cloud, in the form of [Juno](#). They fought violently at the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs, at the marriage feast of Pirithoüs and Hippodamia, at which [Theseus](#) was present. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XII 210. Virgil calls them *furentes* in *Georgics* ii 45-456.

[Inferno Canto XII:49-99](#). They guard the river of blood in the seventh circle.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:100-154](#). The battle is referred to.

Cerberus

The triple headed hound of Hell, with snakes for hair, and barbed tail, that guarded the gates of Tartarus. The foam from his mouth was poisonous. He was born of Echidne by [Typhon](#).

Associated with the Egyptian god Anubis, by the Greeks. He was dragged from Hell by [Hercules](#) (The Twelfth Labour) and the foam from his mouth gave birth to the poisonous plant aconite.

[Inferno Canto VI:1-33](#). He guards the third circle of the gluttonous.

[Inferno Canto IX:64-105](#). His throat is still scarred from Hercules assault on him.

Cerchi

See [Ciaccio's prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87](#). They are mentioned among the ancient Florentine families. Leaders of the Whites they originated from Acone in the Val di Sieve. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.

Mentioned indirectly.

Charlemagne, Emperor

Charles (Born 742, Ruled 768-814 AD), the son of Pepin the Short , King of the Franks. He conquered the Langobard kingdom in 773-774, and extended his empire into Slav territory. As the Founder of the Holy Roman Empire, Pope Leo III (795-816) crowned him Emperor 23-24 December 800, with the Imperial title '*Romanorum gubernans imperium*'. By the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 812, the Eastern Roman Emperor, Michael I, recognised Charlemagne as Emperor in exchange for the surrender of Istria, Venetia, and Dalmatia. He died at Aix-la-Chapelle in 814 and was entombed in the Dome. He was the legendary rebuilder of Florence.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45](#) [Roland](#) (Orlando) Charlemagne's nephew, and the hero of the battle of Roncesvalles, went down to defeat with his Franks, fighting against the Saracens, while attempting to hold the valley in 778AD. He blew his horn in desperation, to alert his uncle eight miles away, but Charlemagne was misled by the advice of the traitor [Ganelon](#), and did not provide aid. The epic is told in the Old French *Chanson de Roland*, the 'Song of Roland', where the intensity of Roland's blast on the horn shattered it. The defeat allowed Arab incursions into Narbonne in 793.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history, as having protected the Church by use of Imperial force and right.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Charles of Lorraine

See [Hugh Capet](#).

Charles I of Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily

The brother of [Louis IX](#) of France, and Count of Provence. He defeated [Manfred](#) King of Sicily, at Benevento, in 1265, and seized Naples and Sicily, supported by [Pope Clement IV](#). He was described as silent, serious and cold, though not uncultured. He schemed to bring down the Eastern Emperor Michael Paleologus, but was opposed by [King Pere II](#) of Aragon whose wife Constance ([Constanza](#)) was Manfred's daughter. On Easter Monday 1282 the approaches of a young French soldier to a young Sicilian woman in Palermo provoked his murder by her husband, and, while the bells called Vespers, it led to a

chain reaction of anti-French massacres in Sicily. Pere was able to take advantage of a power vacuum, and ousted Charles from Sicily. It was the beginning of the ninety-year 'War of the Vespers'. He and Peter (Pere) both died in 1285.

[Inferno Canto XIX:88-133](#). Charles refused to accept one of Pope [Nicholas III's](#) nieces as a wife for his nephew, and Nicholas deprived Charles of the office of Senator of Rome, and accepted money from Michael Paleologus, helping to fuel Charles's anti-Byzantine policy.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:1-21](#). [Manfred](#) trusted the pass of Ceperano (on the Liris) to the barons of Apulia, in 1266. They betrayed the pass to Charles, leading to Manfred's defeat and death at Benevento.

In 1268, at Tagliacozzo, Charles defeated [Conradin](#), Manfred's nephew,

using reserve troops, on the advice of Erard de Valéry ([Alardo](#)). He married [Beatrice of Provence](#), and then [Margaret](#) of Burgundy.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers. His son [Charles II of Anjou](#) and Naples, is inferior to him.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:118-142](#). He imprisoned a friend of Provenzan [Salvani](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96](#). He received Provence as a dowry, on marrying Beatrice in 1246, after the death of her father Raymond [Berenger](#). He defeated [Conradin](#), last of the Swabians, at Tagliacozzo. On Oct 29th 1268 two months after his defeat the seventeen-year-old Conradin was beheaded, on Charles's orders. Charles's son was [Charles the lame](#), who assisted him in trying to retake Sicily. He was supposed to have had

[Thomas Aquinas](#) poisoned in 1274, though this is spurious.

Charles II, King of Naples

Carlo Zoppo, Charles the lame, the son of [Charles I of Anjou](#). King of Naples (Apulia) and Count of Anjou and Provence (1243-1309), and alive at the time of the Vision. Titular King of Jerusalem, and head of the Italian Guelphs in 1300.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). Dante regards him as far inferior to his father.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96](#). Attempting with his father to regain Sicily he was captured by Roger di Loria, the admiral of [Peter III](#) of Aragon, near Naples in a naval battle, and taken prisoner, in June 1284. His life was spared on the instigation of [Manfred](#)'s daughter [Costanza](#). He was still in captivity in 1285 when he

succeeded his father as King of Naples. In 1305 he married his younger daughter [Beatrice](#) to [Azzo VIII](#) of Este, Marquis of Ferrara, of evil reputation, and her senior by many years, presumably for a consideration. [Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history, with disdain.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84](#). [Charles Martel](#) was his son, who died before him.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is a burden to Naples.

Charles Martel

Charles (1271-1295) the eldest son of [Charles II](#) of Naples and Mary of Hungary, the daughter of Stephen IV. Dante probably met him in March 1295 when he visited Florence, and

was popular. He died in the August. He was married to [Clemenz](#), or Clementina, the daughter of Emperor [Rudolph](#) of Hapsburg, and his line might have reconciled the Guelph and Ghibelline factions, but his early death quenched Dante's hopes. His brother was [Robert](#) Duke of Calabria. His daughter Clemenza married Louis X of France. His wife Clemenz died in 1296. His son [Caroberto](#) became heir to Naples but was ousted by Robert, his uncle.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84](#). He describes the regions over which he would have held power including Provence, of which the Angevin kings of Naples were Counts; Hungary of which he had already been crowned king in 1290 at Naples, holding it from his mother; and Sicily, which would already have been his had it not been for the Sicilian Vespers, in 1282, the

rising in Palermo against the French that led to rule by the House of Aragon.

Charles of Valois

See [Ciacco's prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

[Inferno Canto XXIV:130-151.](#)

[Vanni Fucci's prophecy](#), covers his involvement in the entry of the Blacks into Florence in November 1301.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96.](#) The brother of [Philip IV](#), the Fair, nicknamed Senzaterra (Lackland, so called as a younger son or because of his failures in Sicily in 1302) who entered Florence in November 1301, and left in the following April. He supported the Neri (Blacks) at [Boniface's](#) instigation, using treachery and perjury to coerce the Signoria, and left the city, covered with disgrace,

and loaded with plunder, leaving the Neri in control. The treachery of he and Philip his brother towards the Count of Flanders in 1299 was revenged three years later at Courtrai, where the Flemish ('Douay, Lille, Ghent and Bruges') routed the French.

Charles Robert (Carobert)

[Paradiso Canto IX:1-66](#). The son of [Charles Martel](#) and [Clemenza](#). See the entry for Charles.

Charon

The ferryman of the River Acheron in the Underworld. His price for ferrying a dead spirit across the river was an *obolus*, a coin, without which the spirit was doomed to wander the deserted shore without refuge. The Greeks placed an *obolus* in the mouths of the dead, as their fare. Acheron, the son of Gaea, quenched the thirst of the Titans

and was thrown by Zeus into the Underworld, where he was changed into the river bearing his name. The other rivers of the Underworld were the Cocytus a tributary of the Acheron, with its tributary the Phlegethon, the Lethe, and the Styx.

[Inferno Canto III:70-99](#). He tells Dante to depart since he is still living.

[Inferno Canto III:100-136](#). He ferries the dead souls over the Acheron.

Charybdis

The whirlpool in the straits of Messina. She was the daughter of Neptune and Earth hurled, by Jupiter's thunderbolt, into the sea. The rock Scylla not mentioned here was nearby in the other cliff, a dog-like monster with six heads. To be between Scylla and Charybdis was to be in dire straits. (See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 730)

[Inferno Canto VII:1-39](#). Dante compares the dance of the Avaricious to the waves of Charybdis's whirlpool.

Chiaramontesi, Durante de'

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#). Mentioned in connection with falsification of the measures. See [note to Purgatorio](#).

Chiron

The wise [Centaur](#), son of [Saturn](#) and Philyra, to whom Apollo entrusted his son Aesculapius, and who variously reared [Jason](#), and [Achilles](#). He was wounded by one of [Hercules's](#) poisoned arrows, but could not die because he was immortal. Prometheus accepted immortality in his stead to allow him to end his suffering.

Inferno Canto XII:49-99. Chiron appoints Nessus to guide them in the seventh circle.

Purgatorio Canto IX:34-63. He is mentioned.

Christ

Inferno Canto IV:1-63. The Saviour, whose name is not mentioned explicitly in the Inferno. Dante follows the legend that Christ descended to Hell in the year 33AD (fifty two years after Virgil's death and entry into Limbo).

Inferno Canto XII:28-48. The earth shook at his death, prior to his descent into Hell. See Matthew xxvii 51.

Inferno Canto XXXIV:70-139. Christ is the symbol of Divine Humanity, sinless from birth.

Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151. Dante calls God, incarnate in Christ, the highest Jove (Jupiter), thereby

identifying supreme Empire and law with the Deity, while superseding the Pagan Gods.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96](#). The Pope is his Vicar on earth. His trial and crucifixion is referred to.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33](#). He offered water to the [woman of Samaria](#). See John iv 7-15.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33](#). He appeared at Emmaus after the Resurrection. See Luke xxiv 13-15.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:37-90](#). On the cross, Christ cried out: '*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Matthew xxviii 46, Mark xv 34.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXI:70-90](#). He is represented by the Grifon in the [Divine Pageant](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99](#). At the Transfiguration, see Matthew xviii 1-8 Christ shone like the sun in white

raiment, and [Moses](#) and [Elias](#) appeared talking with him, and after they were overcome he said ‘Arise, and be not afraid’. Christ is the apple-tree, in accord with the Song of Solomon ii 3, ‘As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.’

[Paradiso Canto VII:1-54.](#) The Crucifixion was both supreme justice exacted on human nature for the Fall, and supreme injustice when the person on whom it fell is considered.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126.](#) [Rahab](#), the prostitute, symbol of the Church, who was the first to welcome [Joshua](#) into what became Israel, was the first spirit snatched up to Heaven at Christ’s triumph.

[Paradiso Canto XI:1-42.](#) As the Bridegroom of the Church.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117.](#)
[Saint Francis](#) exhibited the five

wounds of Christ, as stigmata, and bore the marks for two years.

Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142. Christ is Humanity's delight and joy.

Paradiso Canto XIV:67-139. Dante's vision of Christ on the Cross.

Paradiso Canto XXV:1-63. He is referred to as Jèsu.

Paradiso Canto XXV:97-139. The Pelican, supposed to feed its young with its own blood, is a symbol of Christ. He with the Virgin alone ascended to Heaven in body as well as in spirit. Enoch and Elijah were only elevated to the Earthly Paradise.

Chrysostom, Saint John

John Chrysostom, or Golden Mouth (c 344-407) Archbishop of Constantinople, of fearless eloquence, who denounced the vices of the Court and was persecuted and exiled by the Empress Eudoxia.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Ciacco

A Florentine, Ciacco (*hog*), was a contemporary of Dante. He was renowned for his gluttony, and is mentioned in a story in Boccaccio's Decameron (ix.8). He is said to have died in 1286.

[Canto VI:34-63](#). He is punished in the third circle, of the gluttonous.

Ciampolo

A member of the household of, Teobaldo II, [Thibaut](#) V Count of Champagne, King of Navarre (1253-1270), son of the poet-king Thibaut I mentioned by Dante in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. (see Blake's engraving, 'Ciampolo tormented by Devils', British Museum, London)

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). He is in the eighth circle of barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:76-96](#). He names other barrators with him.

[Inferno Canto XXII:97-123](#). He tricks the demons.

Cianfa, *see* [Donati](#)

Ciangella, della Tosa

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). A notorious shrew who married an Imolese.

Cimabue

Giovanno Cimabue, the great Florentine painter (c1240-c1302).

[Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117](#). He was surpassed by his pupil [Giotto](#).

Cincinnatus

Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, dictator 458 and 439BC. His name derives

from the word *cincinnus*, a curl of hair.
He conquered the Aequians.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). The type of the good citizen.

Cinyras

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). [Myrrha](#) the daughter of Cinyras, a Cyprian king, the son of [Pygmalion](#), conceived an incestuous passion for him, and in darkness, using an assumed name, entered his bed. She conceived Adonis, and was changed into the myrrh-tree from which Adonis was born. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X 299.

Circe

The witch, the daughter of Titan and Perse, who lived on the 'island' of Aea (Cape Circeo, on the coast of

western Italy). She bewitched the followers of [Ulysses](#), and delayed him on her island. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIV 247, and Homer's *Odyssey*.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142](#).

She is mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:28-66](#). She is mentioned.

Ciriatto, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). He torments [Ciampolo](#).

Clare, Saint

Chiari Scifi of Assisi, now known as Santa Clara, Saint Clare (c1194-1253), the friend and disciple of [Saint Francis](#) of Assisi, who founded the order of Franciscan nuns known as the 'Poor

Clares' (The Order wore a grey habit, with white coif covered with black veil)

[Paradiso Canto III:97-130](#). She is higher in Heaven than [Piccarda](#).

Clement IV, Pope

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145](#). He had [Manfred](#)'s body disinterred and reburied, with the rites of excommunication, outside the Papal territory.

Clement V, Pope

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#). Bertrand de Got (Goth), Archbishop of Bordeaux, elected Pope in 1305, through the support of [Philip IV](#), the Fair, of France. He transferred the Papal See to Avignon where it remained until 1377. He died eleven years after Boniface VIII in 1314.

Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99.

Encouraged the Emperor Henry VII's expedition to Italy but was disloyal to him.

Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66. An

indirect reference to the Gascon Pope.

Paradiso Canto XXX:97-148.

Supported Henry VII and then turned away from him. His place in Hell is reserved.

Clemenzen, wife of Charles Martel

Paradiso Canto IX:1-66. Dante

addresses her, living, though she is assumed to have died in 1295. She was the daughter of the Emperor Rudolph. She was the mother of Caroberto.

Cleopatra

Cleopatra VII, Queen of Ptolemaic Egypt(68-30BC, r.51-30BC). Of Macedonian origin. She had a child Caesarion with Julius Caesar and

married Mark [Antony](#), committing suicide on his death following the lost battle of Actium. She had twins by Antony, namely Cleopatra Selene, and Alexander Helios.

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). She is a carnal sinner in Limbo.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Cletus, Saint and Pope

Saint Cletus, Pope (76-88AD).

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66](#). He died for the faith.

Clio

The Muse of History, one of the nine Musae the daughters of [Jupiter](#) and Mnemosyne (Memory), and patronesses of the liberal arts. Their haunts were Mount Helicon and Mount Parnassus, and their sacred springs were Aganippe and

Hippocrene on Helicon, and Castalia on Parnassus. [Statius](#)'s Thebaid begins with an invocation to her, setting the Pagan, not Christian, tone of the poem. [Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93](#). She is mentioned.

Clotho

One of the Three Fates, the Moerae, whom Erebus and Night conceived: Clotho, [Lachesis](#) and [Atropos](#). Atropos is the smallest but the most terrible. Clotho spins the thread of life, Lachesis measures it out, and Atropos 'she who cannot be avoided or turned' shears it. At Delphi only two fates were worshipped of Birth and Death. Dante here has Lachesis as the spinner, and Clotho apparently as the measurer, or Clotho is both and the syntax is misleading.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33](#). She is mentioned.

Clymene

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99.](#) The daughter of Oceanus and Tethys. The wife of the Ethiopian king Merops. She was loved by [Apollo](#) and bore him [Phaethon](#), who came to her to ask for the truth about his paternity. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I 756 et seq.

Conio, Counts of

Ghelphs, based in the stronghold of Conio, near Forlì. Conio was ruled by the Barbiano family, and Count Alberigo da Barbiano of Conio was a famous condottiere in the next epoch, who won the battle of Marino in 1379. One of St Catherine's letters is addressed to him.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123.](#)

They are mentioned.

Conrad, see [Malaspina](#) and [Palazzo](#)

Conrad III, Emperor

The son of Rudolph II of Burgundy, raised at the Saxon Court. Hohenstaufen leader of the Second Crusade (1147-1149) with Louis VII of France . Emperor from 1137-1152.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148.](#)

[Cacciaguida](#) served him.

Conradin

The son of Conrad IV of Germany (1250-1254), he was defeated at Tagliacozzo in 1268 and executed at Naples, at the age of seventeen.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96.](#) He is mentioned.

Constance, Empress

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145.](#) The wife of [Frederick II](#), and grandmother of [Manfred](#). She was the daughter of

King Roger II, and heiress of the Norman House of Tancred that conquered Sicily and Southern Italy from the Saracens in the eleventh century, and so of the crown of ‘the Two Sicilies’ (Naples and Sicily).

[Paradiso Canto III:97-130](#). She had married Henry son of Frederick [Barbarossa](#) in 1186, who was afterwards Emperor [Henry VI](#), and bore him Frederick, later Emperor [Frederick II](#). Frederick Barbarossa, Henry and Frederick II were the three stormwinds of Suabia. She assumed the regency for her son, after Henry’s death at the early age of 32. She died in 1198. Dante follows the tradition that she had been a nun, and had been forced to make a political marriage against her will.

Constance, Costanza Queen of Aragon

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145](#). The daughter of [Manfred](#), and wife of [Peter](#) (Pere) III of Aragon, who avenged Manfred's death by conquering Sicily in 1282, after the Sicilian Vespers, taking it from [Charles of Anjou](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). She was the mother of [James](#) II, King of Aragon, and [Frederick](#) II, King of Sicily (both were reigning in 1300).

Constantine the Great

The ruler of the Western Roman Empire (lived c280-337) after his victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge on the Tiber in 312 AD. The son of Helena. He defeated Licinius at Adrianople and Chrysopolis in 324, becoming sole ruler of the eastern and western empire (*totius orbis imperator*). Byzantium was renamed

Constantinople in 330 and made the second Rome, and the Christian capital as he had embraced Christianity. He died in 337 after receiving baptism on his deathbed. He consolidated Diocletian's structure of the absolute state, to emphasise the divine nature of the Emperor.

[Inferno Canto XIX:88-133](#). The Donation of Constantine was a forged document of the Middle Ages, in which Pope [Sylvester](#) I was supposed to have cured Constantine of leprosy, he then resolving to transfer his capital to Constantinople, leaving the Pope with temporal power in Italy. Dante saw this as the source of the fatal involvement of the Church in temporal power, and as a consequence the Empire's involvement in coveting the spiritual power of the Church. He considered the Donation invalid as the Emperor could not relinquish temporal

power, nor could the Pope receive it.
(See Dante *De Monarchia* iii 10 etc)

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136](#). The
cure of his leprosy mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). He is
mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is in the
sixth sphere of Jupiter.

Conti Guidi, the

Lords of Montemurlo which they
sold to Florence in 1254.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87](#). They are
mentioned among the ancient
Florentine families.

Cornelia

The daughter of Scipio Africanus
(Publius Cornelius Scipio Major), and
the wife of Tiberius Sempronius
Gracchus, and mother of Tiberius and
Caius the two famous tribunes, the
Gracchi. A type of the noble Roman

woman. She claimed that ‘her sons were her jewels’.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). She is mentioned as a type of the good woman.

Corneto, Rinieri da

A notorious highwayman of Dante’s time.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#) He is in the seventh circle.

Cosenza, Bishop of

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145](#). He disinterred [Manfred](#)’s body from the cairn at Benevento and re-interred it across the Verde (Garigliano) outside the kingdom of Naples, with all the rites of excommunication, on the orders of Pope [Clement IV](#).

Costanza, see [Constance](#), Queen of Aragon

Crassus

Marcus Licinius Crassus, surnamed *Dives*, the Wealthy, triumvir with [Caesar](#) and [Pompey](#) in 60BC. He was notorious for his love of gold, and being killed in battle with the Parthians, their King Orodes (Hyrodes) poured molten gold down his throat. (Florus, *Epitome* iii 2)

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

Creüsa

The wife of [Aeneas](#), lost at Troy. See Virgil's *Aeneid* II 735.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). [Dido](#)'s love for Aeneas wrongs her memory.

Cunizza, see [Romano](#)

Cupid

The love-god, the son of [Venus-Aphrodite](#). Called Cupido or Amor. The archer whose arrows cause desire in those they hit.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:1-30](#). He is mentioned.

Curio

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:91-111](#). Advised by Curio, according to [Lucan](#) (see Pharsalia i. 281) [Caesar](#) crossed the Rubicon (*'iacta alea est – the die is cast'*), near Rimini, and declared war by that act against the Republic in 49BC. The Rubicon was at that time the boundary between Italy and Cisalpine Gaul.

Cyclopes

A fabulous race of giants on the coast of Sicily, with one eye in the centre of their foreheads.

[Inferno Canto XIV:43-72](#). They forged [Jupiter](#)'s lightning bolts in the fires of Mount Aetna on Sicily.

Cyrus

King of the Medes and Persians, defeated by the Massagetae in 529 BC.

[Tomyris](#), the Scythian Queen, cut off his head and threw it into a cauldron of blood. See the entry for Tomyris.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is mentioned.

Daedalus

[Inferno Canto XVII:79-136](#). The Athenian artificer who made the labyrinth at Cnossos, for the Cretan king [Minos](#). The father of [Icarus](#), he made waxen wings, in order for them

to escape from Crete. Flying too near the sun Icarus's wings melted and he fell into the sea. He was buried on the island of Icaria, and the Icarian Sea and the island, were named after him. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII 195. [Inferno Canto XXIX:100-120](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148](#). The type of the artificer, the inventor and craftsman.

Damian *see* [Peter](#)

Daniel

An Israelite, taken up by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, after his capture of Jerusalem. He interpreted the king's dreams and himself saw prophetic visions. He initially refused the king's meat and wine. See Daniel i 8 and 17.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He divined the king's dream and interpreted it as well, as Beatrice divines and answers Dante's doubts. See Daniel ii.

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:127-145](#). Daniel vii 10 indicates the vastness of the Angel multitude.

Dante

For the history of the period immediately after the Vision, involving Dante's exile, see [Ciacco's](#) prophecy.

[Inferno Canto X:73-93](#). [Farinata](#) warns him of his long exile, telling him that not fifty moons will pass before he learns how hard it is to return from banishment. The date of the Vision is April 1300, and Dante's efforts at return were thwarted by the failure of Pope Benedict XI, who succeeded

Boniface to achieve reconciliation in early 1304. Benedict visited Florence but left on June 4th leaving the rebellious city under an interdict. It was less than fifty one lunar months before Dante's efforts at return failed, suggesting a communication with Benedict (Dante was acting as secretary then to Alessandro da Romano, of the old Ghibelline family of the Counts Guidi, who was the leader of the Ghibellines in exile) some time in March or early April.

Inferno Canto XIX:1-30. Dante broke one of the *pozzetti* or round holes that surrounded the font in the Baptistery (St John) in Florence, to help a child (said to have been Antonio the son of Balduccio de' Cavicciuoli). Dante explains here, to counter charges, presumably of sacrilege made against him.

Inferno Canto XXI:59-96. Dante indicates he was present at the surrender of the Pisan fortress of Caprona, besieged by the Tuscan Guelphs in August 1289. He fought at Campaldino later that year.

Inferno Canto XXII:1-30. He indicates that he saw the campaigning in Aretine territory (in 1289 also?).

Purgatorio Canto XXIV:34-99. Bonagiunta quotes the opening line of the famous first canzone of the *Vita Nuova*.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:49-81. Beatrice speaks his name.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:82-145. She refers indirectly to his work the *Vita Nuova*, his early tribute to her memory. He first saw her in May 1274, and she died in June 1290 in her twenty-fifth year on the threshold of her second age of life.

[Paradiso Canto V:85-139](#). Dante, entering the sphere of [Mercury](#) that rules Gemini his birth-sign, comments on his own mercurial nature, subject to change and inconstancy.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84](#). The spirit of [Charles Martel](#) quotes Dante's own opening line of the first canzone of the *Convivio*.

[Paradiso Canto XXIV:115-154](#). In the *Metaphysics* [Aristotle](#) shows that the prime Mover, which causes motion but is not itself moved, must be eternal, must be substantial, and actual, the prime object of desire, and of intellectual apprehension. From these five attributes [Aquinas](#) builds his five proofs of the existence of God.

Dante confirms his belief in the Trinity. The sources in the Testaments are chiefly: in the OT the plural form of the word for God, the use of the plural in Genesis i 26, the threefold cry

in Isaiah vi 3: in the NT the baptism formula in Matthew xviii 19, the text of the three heavenly witnesses in First Epistles of John v 7 (Vulgate and AV), and the threefold formula in Romans xi 36: but the Unity of the Trinity is the breath behind the word throughout according to Petrus Lombardus and others.

Paradiso Canto XXV:1-63. Dante refused to accept a laurel crown at Bologna in 1318, invited to do so by Giovanni del Virgilio, hoping to return still to Florence, and be crowned there.

Daphne

Paradiso Canto I:1-36. Apollo loved Daphne, the daughter of the river-god Peneus (hence Peneian), who was changed into a laurel-tree by the river-god, as Apollo pursued her. He then adopted her laurel as the sacred tree

whose leaves would crown his lyre etc.
See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I 452-548.

Dati, Bonturo de'

[Inferno Canto XXI:31-58](#). Head of the popular party in Lucca, and the worst barrator or abuser of office in the city. Dante's comment is ironic, presumably since Bonturo was loudest to deny the offence.

David

The King of Israel. The son of Jesse, anointed by [Samuel](#). See the Bible, First and Second Samuel, and First Kings. The type of the pious King.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142](#). King David's Gilonite counsellor from Giloh, [Ahitophel](#), see Second [Samuel](#) xv-xviii, conspired with David's son [Absalom](#) against the King, and

subsequently hanged himself when his counsel was not followed. Absalom was killed at the battle in the wood of Ephraim, and David mourned for him, saying ‘O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!’

[Purgatorio Canto X:46-72](#). He danced before the Ark of the Covenant, in an act of humility and worship. See the Second Book of Samuel vi 6.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is in the sixth sphere of Jupiter. David is the earthly ancestor of Christ, born at the time when [Aeneas](#) came into Italy, so making manifest the Divine ordination of the Roman Empire.

[Paradiso Canto XXV:64-96](#). Dante refers to the Vulgate, the Psalm of David ix 10.

Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36. The great-grandson of Ruth. The ‘singer’ of Psalm 51, the Miserere.

Decii, the

See Justinians’ Empire.

Deianira

The daughter of Oeneus, king of Calydon, and the sister of Meleager. She was wooed and won by Hercules, and unwittingly caused the death of Hercules, through the shirt of Nessus.
Inferno Canto XII:49-99. She is mentioned.

Deidamia

Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84 Achilles was discovered in hiding on Scyros, where his mother Thetis had concealed him, at the court of Lycomedes. Deidamia fell in love with him there,

and bore him a son, and died of grief when he left.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry.

Deiphile, Deiphyle

The daughter of King Adrastus of Argos, wife of Tydeus, and mother of [Diomedes](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry.

Democritus

The Greek philosopher, of Abdera, d.361 BC, who developed Leucippus's ideas of Atomism. Aristotle said that 'they make all things number, and produce them from numbers', indicating a quantitative theory which did not require a 'prime mover'. He was influential in the development of

the theory of knowledge, and of ethics, where he maintained a theory of the harmony of well being of the ethical man, who chooses 'the goods of the soul'. Dante regards him as having taught that the world arises from chance arrangements of atoms.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

Demophoön

[Phyllis](#), the daughter of the Thracian King Sithon (living near Mount Rhodope in Thrace) was loved by Demophoön, King of Melos, the son of [Theseus](#) and [Phaedra](#). He failed to keep his promise to return to her, and when he did eventually return to find her she had committed suicide, but had been transformed into an almond tree by [Athene](#). (See Burne-Jones painting 'The Tree of Forgiveness', Lever Art

Gallery, Port Sunlight, Merseyside, England) See Ovid's Heroides.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). He is mentioned.

Diana, see [Artemis](#)

Dido

The mythical Queen of Phoenician Carthage, probably an incarnation of Astarte the Great Goddess, who loved Aeneas and committed suicide when he deserted her. She broke faith with the memory of her dead husband [Syphaeus](#) for him. (See the Aeneid i of [Virgil](#), and Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage.)

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). She is a carnal sinner in Limbo.

[Inferno Canto V:70-142](#). Paolo and [Francesca](#) are among her companions.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). Her brother was [Pygmalion](#), King of Tyre.

See Aeneid i 350 where he is the murderer of Sychaeus.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:1-30](#). [Cupid](#) sat in her lap disguised as [Aeneas](#)'s son, Ascanius, and inspired her with love for Aeneas. See Virgil's Aeneid I 650.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). Her love of Aeneas wronged the memory of Sychaeus and Aeneas's wife [Creüsa](#).

Diogenes

The Cynic, Diogenes of Sinope d. 323 BC a follower of Antisthenes, who was the founder of the School of the Dog, and who taught in the Gymnasium known as the Kynosarges. He spent most of his life in Athens after being banished and died in Corinth. He called himself the Dog and held up animal life as a model for human beings, and the barbarians as better than the civilised. His task was the *recoining* of values. He advocated

a positive asceticism in order to attain freedom, and deliberately flouted convention doing in public what should be done in private. He called himself a *citizen of the world*, and famously replied to Alexander's request as to what he needed 'for you to stand out of my light'.

Dione

The daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, or of Earth and Air, and the mother of [Venus](#)-Aphrodite. Originally an oak-goddess at Dodona.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:1-30](#). She is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). The mother of Venus-Aphrodite.

Diomede

The Greek hero, the son of Tydeus, King of Argos, and the companion of [Ulysses](#) at Troy. See Homer, *The Iliad*,

and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIV, XV et al.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84](#). He is in the eighth circle, eighth chasm.

Dionysius, King of Portugal

King of Portugal (1279-1325).

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Dionysius, the Aeropagite

See Acts vii, to whom were ascribed certain mystical writings, especially one on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, which were possibly composed in the fifth or sixth century.

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:94-139](#). The mystical sixth century writings of the pseudo-Dionysius were ascribed to the Aeropagite, Saint [Paul](#)'s convert on Mars's hill. Dionysius was supposed

to have learned of the hierarchies and other matters from Saint Paul, who had seen them when rapt up into the third heaven.

Dionysius, the Tyrant of Syracuse

The Elder, tyrant of Syracuse (405-367BC). He led the Greek cities of Sicily in resistance to the Carthaginians.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is in the seventh circle, the first ring.

Dioscorides

The Greek physician and author of a work on *Materia Medica* particularly botany, who lived about 50AD.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Dis, see [Satan](#)

Dolcino, Friar

A native of Novara, he became head of the sect of The Apostolic Brothers, after the death of its founder Segarelli in 1300. They were purists, but were accused of heresies, such as the treating of women and goods as common. [Clement V](#) ordered a crusade against the sect in 1305, and they fled to the hills between Novara and Vercelli, but were forced into surrender. Dolcino and Margaret of Trent, held to be his mistress, were burned alive at Vercelli in June 1307. [Inferno Canto XXVIII:55-90](#). He is in the ninth chasm as a sower of dissent.

Dominic, Saint

Saint Dominic (Guzman) (1170-1221) the founder of the Order of Preachers, called Dominican or Black Friars. He was born at Calahorra in Spain of noble parentage. As a young man he

became a canon and preached against heresy. He was active among the Albigensians, trying to convert by persuasion, as Simon de Montfort was perpetrating his massacres. He preached throughout Europe and died in Bologna.

Paradiso Canto X:64-99. He is mentioned.

Paradiso Canto XI:1-42. He is mentioned. Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican.

Paradiso Canto XI:118-139. He is mentioned.

Paradiso Canto XII:37-105. His mother Giovanna Guzman dreamed before his birth that she was whelping a dog with a burning torch in his mouth that would set the world on fire. His godmother had a dream in which she saw a star on his forehead illuminating the earth. He founded the Order of Dominicans or Friars

Preachers at Toulouse in 1215. He tried to convert the Albigensian heretics, and stimulated the study of theology in the universities.

Domitian

The Roman Emperor (81-96AD) who completed the conquest of Britain. His initially benevolent rule became despotic (he claimed the title *Dominus et Deus*, Master and God) and led to his murder after a palace conspiracy. He took action (for 'atheism and Jewish sympathies' says Dio) against Titus Flavius Clemens, consul in 95, and his wife Domitilla whom the fourth century Christian tradition counted as a Christian. Domitian was accused by Eusebius and Tertullian of Christian persecution, but there is little or no evidence extant.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93](#). He is mentioned, adversely.

Donati, Buoso

A noble Florentine, and a thief.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). He mutates into a serpent. See Blake's Watercolour 'Buoso Donati attacked by the Serpent', Tate Gallery, London. (It may be [Buoso degli Abati](#) who is intended.)

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). His son Simone caused [Gianni Schicci](#) to impersonate his father, Buoso, and forge a will.

Donati, Cianfa

A Florentine noble, and a thief.

[Inferno Canto XXV:34-78](#). He appears as a six-footed serpent.

Donati, Corso

See [Ciacco's prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

Purgatorio Canto XXIV:34-99. Forese Donati, his brother, predicts his end. Corso was Podestà of Bologna, in 1283 and 1288, and of Pistoia, in 1289, and leader of the Florentine Neri. He went to Rome in 1300, and induced Boniface to bring in Charles de Valois to broker a peace in Florence between the exiled factions. Charles favoured the Blacks, and Corso then tried to gain supreme power. Suspected of intrigue with his father-in-law Ugucione della Faggiuola the Ghibelline captain, and the papal legate Napoleone Orsini, to overthrow the government, and become lord of Florence, he was condemned to death when the plot was discovered (on October 6th 1308). He fled through the Porta Santa Croce but was overtaken and killed by Catalan mercenaries in the service of the King of Naples. He was said to have thrown

himself from his horse and been lanced to death on the ground. Dante develops this.

Donati, Forese

Dante's friend, Forese di Simone Donati, the brother of [Corso](#) and [Piccarda](#). He was nicknamed Bicci Novello, and died on July 28th 1296. He was a distant relative of Dante's wife Gemma Donati.

His own wife was [Nella](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:37-90](#). He is among the gluttonous.

Donati, Piccarda

The daughter of Simone Donati, and the sister of [Forese Donati](#), Dante's friend, and of [Corso Donati](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33](#). She is mentioned, as being in Paradise.

[Paradiso Canto III:34-60](#). She is in the sphere of the Moon, placed there for

neglect of her vows. She had taken the habit of the Poor [Clares](#) in the convent at Florence, and was forcibly abducted from there by Corso her brother in 1288 or thereabouts, and compelled to marry Rosselino della Tosa, a turbulent noble of the Black faction. She died shortly afterwards.

Donati, Ubertino

Ubertino Donati, the ancestor of Dante's wife Gemma, had married one of the daughters of [Bellincion Berti](#), a sister of [Gualdrada](#), and strongly objected to his father-in-law giving the hand of a third daughter to one of the [Adimari](#). A fourth daughter may have been the wife of Dante's great-grandfather [Alighiero I](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Donatus

Aelius Donatus wrote an elementary Latin Grammar in the fourth century.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Doria (D'Oria), Branca

The son-in-law of [Michel Zanche](#), whom he murdered. He was a member of the famous Ghibelline family from Genoa, and the murder took place at a banquet to which he had invited his father-in-law. He was still alive in 1300, the date of the Vision.

[Inferno Canto XXII:76-96](#). Zanche is in the eighth circle.

Draghignazzo, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). He wants to torment [Ciampolo](#).

Duca, Guido del

A Ghibelline of Bertinoro, of the Onesti family of Ravenna, who was judge to the Podestà of Rimini in 1199. He was a follower of the Ghibelline leader [Pier Traversaro](#). Pier, aided by the Mainardi of Bertinoro, obtained power in Ravenna and drove the Guelphs out. The Guelphs then attacked Bertinoro, destroyed the Mainardi houses, and expelled Pier's followers. Guido was one, following Pier to Ravenna, and still alive there in 1229.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:1-27](#). He is among the envious.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). His invective against Romagna.

Duera, Buoso da

Bribed by the French, Buoso leader of the Cremonese, treacherously allowed

[Charles of Anjou](#) entry to Parma, in 1266, at the beginning of his campaign against [Manfred](#), who had organised its resistance.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Echo

A nymph who loved [Narcissus](#), who was deprived of the ability to initiate speech by [Juno](#), and wasted away with unrequited love until she became a mere voice repeating the last words she heard uttered. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 358-493.

[Paradiso Canto XII:1-36](#). She is mentioned.

Edward I, King of England

King of England (1272-1307) in 1300, the date of the Vision.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). Dante refers to the wars against the Scots.

Edward claimed the crown of Scotland and suppressed William Wallace's popular uprising. Later Scotland obtained national independence under Robert the Bruce, at Bannockburn, in 1314. Edward is held as an example of poor kingship.

Egidius, Giles, Friar

The third companion of [Saint Francis](#). His sayings were collected in the *Verba Aurea*. He died in 1261. [Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He is mentioned.

Eleanor, wife of Henry III of England

See [Henry III](#).

Electra

The Pleiad, and mother by Zeus of Dardanus founder of Troy. She was, in one version, the seventh star of the

Pleiades that was said to have disappeared in grief for the destruction of Troy and the house of Dardanus. The Palladium, or effigy of Pallas Athene was cast down with Electra from Olympus by Athene, when Zeus had violated Electra and she had defiled the statue with her touch. Electra gave it to her son Dardanus. [Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

Elias

A name for [Elijah](#), used in the Gospels.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99](#). At the Transfiguration, see Matthew xviii 1-8, Christ shone like the sun in white raiment, and [Moses](#) and [Elias](#) appeared talking with him.

Elijah, the Prophet

The prophet, who opposed the cult of Baal among the Israelites. He lived as a hermit on Mount Carmel, according to legend, and was regarded by the Carmelites as a founder of their order. He mounted to Heaven in a fiery chariot. See Second Kings ii 11

[Inferno Canto XXVI:1-42](#). He is mentioned.

Eliseo, brother of Cacciaguida

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). He is mentioned.

Elisha

The Old Testament prophet, who witnessed [Elijah](#)'s ascension to Heaven. He was mocked by little children near Beth-el, and cursed them, and two she bears came out of the wood and ate forty-two of them. See Second Kings ii 23-24.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:1-42](#). He is mentioned.

Empedocles

The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, a citizen of Akragas, or Agrigentum, in Sicily. He was alive in 443/44 BC, and gave rise to a number of apocryphal stories about his magical abilities as a Pythagorean. He taught that matter is indestructible, and invented the idea of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water. Objects are a mingling of the four elements, but the elements themselves are indestructible. He taught the ideas of world-cycles, of the war of opposites, or discord of the elements, and the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. His root forces in nature, are Love and Hate, that generate the discord of the elements. ('Empedocles has thrown all things about.' Yeats: 'The Gyres' line 6)

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

[Inferno Canto XII:28-48](#). He taught that harmony, replacing discord, among the elements would result in a state of chaos.

Ephialtes

The Giant son of Neptune, and his brother Otus, warred against the gods, and tried to pile Pelion on Ossa, and both mountains on Olympus, but were killed by Apollo.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:82-96](#). He helps guard the central well.

Epicurus

The Greek philosopher of Samos (341-270BC) founder of *the Garden*, taught that the true happiness was an absence of pain, and gave a code of conduct for avoidance of mental and physical pain, concentrating on simple and moral

essentials of the good life. The Epicureans were atomists, and denied the evidence for divine intervention in human affairs. [Cicero](#) was a student of the Epicurean Phaedrus. Dante expounds his philosophy in *Convivio* iv. 6:100-110.

The neo-Epicurean Catari and Paterini heretics of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries may have denied the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. Epicurus certainly concentrated on life in this world, and like Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-Tzu was reticent about the afterlife.

[Inferno Canto X:1-21](#). He and his followers are entombed in the Sixth Circle. For the valley of Jehoshaphat see the Bible, Joel iii 2.

Erichtho

A Thessalian sorceress mentioned by [Lucan](#) in the Pharsalia vi 507-826, where she summons up the spirit of a dead soldier for Sextus [Pompeius](#) before the battle. Dante's reference is to some further unknown tradition about her presence in the lowest regions of Hell, the Giudecca (See Inferno Canto XXXIV)

Inferno Canto IX:1-33. She had previously sent [Virgil](#) to Hell proper to bring out a soul from the Giudecca, the circle of [Judas](#).

Erinyes, the Furies

The Eumenides or Kindly Ones, a euphemism for the Erinyes, the three sisters, the Furies, who live in Erebus. They punish crimes by hounding the wrongdoer, and acting as the unremitting conscience. They are crones with dog's heads and bat's

wings, snakes for hair, and black bodies, and torment their victims. Their names are Tisiphone, Alecto, and Megaera. For Dante they symbolise remorse, as [Medusa](#) symbolises despair. The recollection of past sins is a potential source of despair, delaying penitence and turning the soul back to wrongdoing. [Inferno Canto IX:34-63](#). They challenge the poets.

Eriphyle

The wife of [Amphiaräus](#), who betrayed him, bribed with the necklace of Harmonia, and was killed by her son [Alcmaeon](#) in retribution.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). She is mentioned.

Erysichthon

The son of the Thessalian King Tropias. He committed sacrilege

against the goddess Ceres by cutting down her sacred tree, and was punished with an inappeasable hunger. He consumed his own flesh until he starved. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII 738-878.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:1-36](#). He is mentioned.

Esau

[Jacob](#)'s brother, the son of Isaac and [Rebecca](#), a hunter, a man of the fields. The brothers' rivalry was seen as an analogy of Church and Synagogue. Jacob deprived Esau of his father Isaac's blessing by guile, and Esau, the man of Edom, sold Jacob his birthright for 'a mess of pottage'. See Genesis xxv 19-34.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148](#). Jacob and Esau as contrasting types.

Este, Azzo da

Azzo VIII of Este, Lord of Ferrara (1293-1308) married [Beatrice](#), daughter of [Charles II of Anjou](#) and Naples, in 1305.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He was the son of [Obizzo II](#) whom he was said to have murdered.

[Purgatorio Canto V:64-84](#). He ordered the murder of [Jacopo del Cassero](#).

Este, Beatrice da

See [Beatrice d'Este](#).

Este, Obizzo da

Obizzo II of Este, fourth Marquis of Ferrara and the March of Ancona (from 1264-1293), the grandson of Azzo VII called Azzo Novello, who had led the Guelf crusaders against Ezzelino. Obizzo, dying in 1293, was said to have been murdered by his son and successor [Azzo VIII](#) (from 1293-

1308), whom Dante calls his stepson in reference to the unnatural nature of the crime. His daughter [Beatrice](#) married [Nino de' Visconti](#) of Pisa, then [Galeazzo](#) Visconti of Milan.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is placed in the seventh circle in the first ring, of tyrants.

[Inferno Canto XVIII:40-66](#). His follower [Venedico Caccianimico](#), a leading Guelph, exiled in 1289, assisted him in his seduction of Venedico's own sister, [Ghisola](#), who later married Niccolò de Fontana of Ferrara in 1270.

Esther

[Ahasuerus](#), the Persian King, enriched [Haman](#), until he was accused by Esther of intending to take the life of [Mordecai](#). Haman was executed in Mordecai's place. See Esther iii-viii.

[Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39](#). He is mentioned.

Eteocles

The son of Oedipus and [Jocasta](#), and brother of [Polynices](#). They fought over the succession, in the war of the Seven against Thebes. Both brothers were killed and, according to [Statius](#) in the Thebaid xii 429 et seq. the flames of their funeral pyre itself were divided.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84](#). They are mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93](#). They are indirectly mentioned.

Euclid

The Greek mathematician and founder of geometry. He flourished c.300 BC.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142. Dante quotes an example from Euclid's *Elements*.

Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99. A further geometric analogy.

Euripides

The Greek tragic playwright (480-441BC).

Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114. He is in Limbo.

Europa

The daughter of the Phoenician king Agenor, abducted by Jupiter disguised as a bull. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* II 858, VI 104.

Paradiso Canto XXVII:67-96. Her abduction from the Phoenician shore, near Tyre, at the longitude of Jerusalem is mentioned.

Euryalus

[Inferno Canto I:100-111](#). The close comrade of [Nisus](#) in the Aeneid, noted for his beauty. His death is described in Aeneid IX.

Eurypylus

The son of Telephus, sent by the Greeks to the oracle of [Apollo](#), according to [Sinon](#), to ask for a favourable wind to return home to Greece. The oracle replied by reminding them of the incident at Aulis, and telling them to shed blood again. At Aulis, where the Greek ships waited for a favourable wind to sail to Troy, [Calchas](#) interpreted the appearance of a snake that killed a sparrow and her eight fledglings, and then was turned to stone. It signified that Troy would be taken in the tenth year after a long struggle. He also prophesied that they must pacify

Artemis by sacrificing [Agamemnon](#)'s daughter, [Iphigenia](#). After that the north-east wind dropped and the fleet was able to set sail for Troy. Eurypylus's trip to the oracle is described by Virgil in his high 'Tragedía', the Aeneid ii 110 et seq. [Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#). He is mentioned in the eighth circle.

Eve

The first woman, the wife of [Adam](#) the first man, created after him, who, at the prompting of the serpent, ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and gave the apple to Adam who also ate of it. See Genesis ii and iii. This caused the Fall of Man, and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:85-108](#). The event is mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:64-99](#). Human beings are her flawed children.

Purgatorio Canto XXIX:1-36. By uncovering her nakedness, physically and spiritually, Eve sinned, and the sons of Adam inherited her guilt, and were denied the Earthly Paradise, without prior purgation and redemption.

Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36. She is at the feet of the Virgin in Heaven.

Ezekiel

Purgatorio CantoXXIX:82-105. The priest, the son of Buzi, and visionary prophet of the Jews in Chaldea. He was among the Hebrews exiled to Babylon in 579BC, where he saw visions beside the river Kebar. Dante uses imagery from his Old Testament writings for the Divine Pageant.

Fabii, The

See Justinian's Empire.

Fabricius

Caius Frabricius Luscinus, the Consul (282BC) and Censor (275BC) who refused gifts from the Samnites at the time of the peace settlement with them, and bribes from King [Pyrrhus](#) of Epirus when negotiating an exchange of friends with him in 280BC. See Virgil's *Aeneid* vi 844, and Lucan's *Pharsalia* x 151.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:1-42](#). He is mentioned.

Fantolini, Ugolino de'

A nobleman of Faenza who led an honourable retired life and died in 1278 leaving two sons Ottaviano and Fantolino. The one was killed at Forlì in 1282, fighting for the Guelphs against Guido da [Montefeltro](#), and the other died a few years later, before 1291, ending the family line.

Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123. He is mentioned.

Farfarello, a demon

Inferno Canto XXI:97-139. A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

Inferno Canto XXII:76-96. He wants to attack Ciampolo.

Farinata, *see* Scornigiani and Uberti

Federigo Novello of Battifolle

A member of the Conti Guidi family, killed while assisting the Tarlati, after Campaldino in 1289. He was a grandson of Count Ugolino della Gherardesca.

Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24. He is with the late-repentants.

Federigo Tignoso

A nobleman of Rimini, noted for his generosity, who lived in the first half of the thirteenth century.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Felice Guzman, father of Saint Dominic

The father of Saint Dominic, his name interpreted to mean 'favoured by fortune'.

[Paradiso Canto XII:37-105](#). He is mentioned.

Feltre, Alessandro Novello Bishop of

See [Alessandro Novello](#).

Ferdinand IV, King of Castile

Ferdinand IV King of Castile and Leon (1295-1312) noted for his

luxurious style of living at the expense of his kingdom.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Fieschi, Ottobuono de' *see* [Adrian V](#)

Fieschi, Alagia de'

See Alagia de' Fieschi [Malaspina](#).

Fieschi, Bonifazio de'

See [Bonifazio](#), Archbishop of Ravenna.

Fifanti, the

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Filippeschi of Orvieto

[Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151](#).
Feuded with the [Monaldi](#).

Filippi of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Flaccus, see [Horace](#)

Focaccia see [Cancellieri](#)

Folco, or Folquet

Folco of Marseilles (fl 1180-1195), or Folcetto, a troubadour, a Genoese by origin, born at Marseilles shortly before 1160. A famous lover he became a Cistercian monk and was made Bishop of Toulouse in 1205. He was a friend of Saint [Dominic](#), and persecuted the Albigensian heretics till his death in 1231. (Marseilles is on the same meridian as Bougia in Algeria. At Gibraltar where the Mediterranean

runs out of the Atlantic the sun is on the horizon when it is noon in the Levant, so the Mediterranean makes zenith at its eastern end of what was horizon at its western end. i.e. it extends over a quadrant.)

[Paradiso Canto IX:1-66.](#)

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126.](#) He is in the third sphere, of Venus.

Forese, see [Donati](#)

Francesca da Rimini

She loved [Paolo](#) Malatesta, Il Bello, and was unfaithful to her husband [Gianciotto](#), the son of [Malatesta da Verucchio](#), Lord of Rimini. Gianciotto, brave but possibly deformed, stabbed to death the unfaithful Francesca, along with, Paolo about 1285. (He was still alive in 1300, the date of the vision, so that Caïna, the first ring of the ninth circle,

reserved for murderers of their kin, is 'waiting' for him according to Francesca.) According to legend she thought that Paolo was her intended husband when he stood proxy for his brother in the marriage. She was born in Ravenna, the daughter of [Guido Vecchio da Polenta](#), and aunt of Guido Novello at whose court in Ravenna Dante found his last refuge. (See Rossetti's watercolour Paolo and Francesca Da Rimini – Tate Gallery, London, and Blake's engraving 'The Whirlwind of Lovers', Plate 10 of his illustrations to the Divine Comedy, British Museum)

[Inferno Canto V:70-142](#). She tells her story to Dante, in Limbo.

Francis of Assisi, Saint

Giovanni, later Francesco, of Assisi (c1182-1226) the Founder of the Order of Friars Minor or Franciscans.

(Brown or Grey habit, with three knots in the girdle representing the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.) The son of a wool and cloth merchant. Assisi is between the Rivers Tevere and Chiascio rising in the mountains near Gubbio where St Ubaldo chose a hermitage (Bishop of Gubbio 1160). *Ascesi* an old form of Assisi may be translated 'I have ascended'. Francis was often compared to the rising Sun. He renounced his possessions before the Bishop, of Assisi in the presence of his father Pietro Bernardone. The Franciscan Rule was approved by Pope [Innocent III](#) in 1210 and confirmed by [Honorius III](#) in 1223. In 1219 he went to the East to try and convert the Sultan. Christ gave him the third confirmation of his work in 1224 on the 'hard rock' of La Verna where he received the stigmata, the five wounds of the Passion. He died at

Assisi on October 4th 1226 stretched naked on the ground in the arms of 'his dearest lady' Poverty. The Seraphim are associated with Love and therefore Francis is the Seraphical Saint. Saint Dominic was associated with the Cherubim and Wisdom. The popular stories of him are the *Fioretti*. [Paradiso Canto XI:1-42](#). [Aquinas](#) speaks of him.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136](#). The Cordeliers, from the wearing of a black habit with a cord tied round it, was a name for the Order of Saint Francis.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). He is seated below [John the Baptist](#) in Heaven.

Franco of Bologna

An illuminator and painter of miniatures. Vasari says he was at Rome in 1295, to illuminate manuscripts, in the Vatican Library, for Pope [Boniface VIII](#), and the work was shared with [Oderisi](#) of Gubbio.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117](#). He is among the proud.

Frederick I, Barbarossa, Emperor

Emperor (1152-1190). Initial leader of the Third Crusade (1189-1192). He won a brilliant victory at Iconium, but drowned in the River Saleph, on 10th June 1190. He had campaigned in Italy (1154-55, 1158-62, 1163-64, 1166-68, 1174-78 and 1184-86: Milan was razed in 1162, and rebuilt in 1169) achieving a series of shifting alliances, and several peace treaties. During the third campaign, the Veronese league of cities was formed, which later

joined with the Lombard league, but eventually agreed peace with Frederick in 1183 (The Peace of Constance). He took the cross in 1188, the year of the Diet of Worms.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145.](#)

He is mentioned.

Frederick II, Emperor

Frederick (1194-1250), ‘*Stupor Mundi*’, the wonder of the world, became King of Sicily and Naples in 1197 and Emperor in 1212. He was crowned Emperor in Rome in 1220. He agreed to lead a crusade in 1227 but was turned back by an epidemic, and as a result was excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX despite continuing with the crusade in 1228-9. He was granted absolution in 1230, but excommunicated again in 1239 and declared a heretic at the First Council of Lyon and deposed. He struggled

against Henry VII of Germany, and died in Apulia in 1250. He was by reputation an Epicurean, and a sensualist.

Inferno Canto X:94-136. He is among the heretics in the Sixth Circle.

Inferno Canto XIII:31-78. Pier delle Vigne was his minister.

Inferno Canto XXII:76-96. Enzo was his natural son.

Inferno Canto XXIII:58-81. He punished malefactors by coating them with lead and roasting them over a fire.

Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145. He is mentioned.

Paradiso Canto III:97-130. The son of Constance and Henry VI, and called the 'third stormwind of Swabia'.

Frederick II, King of Sicily

King of Sicily(1296-1337). and therefore alive at the time of the Vision.

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145](#). The son of [Peter](#) (Pere) III of Aragon, and [Constanza](#), daughter of [Manfred](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). Dante regards him as inferior to his father.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is a burden to Sicily.

Fucci, Vanni

The illegitimate son of a noble family, and a turbulent Black Guelph from Pistoia who, in 1293, together with two accomplices, stole the treasure of San Jacopo from the church of San Zeno. Rampiono de' Foresi was held in prison for the crime, while the culprits went undetected for a year.

[Inferno Canto XXIV:97-129](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Gabriel, the Archangel

The Archangel who made the Annunciation to the [Virgin Mary](#). See Luke i.

[Purgatorio Canto X:1-45](#). The Annunciation is sculpted on the Frieze, indicating humility that corrects pride.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He is shown with human form though beyond the human.

[Paradiso Canto IX:127-142](#).

[Paradiso Canto XIV:1-66](#). The Annunciation, at Nazareth, is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXIII:88-139](#). Circles the Virgin in the Stellar Heaven.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:85-114](#). Shows his adoration for the [Virgin](#), he the height of celestial chivalry.

Gaddo della Gherardesca

See [Ugolino](#).

Gaia, see [Camino](#)

Galen

The Roman experimental physician and the main authority on medicine and physiology throughout the Middle Ages. He lived c.130-200 AD. His doctrines concerned ‘*natural*’, ‘*vital*’ and ‘*animal*’ spirits. Blood charged with ‘*natural*’ spirits in the liver, meets air charged with ‘*pneuma*’, the ‘*world spirit*’ in the lungs, creating ‘*vital*’ spirits in the blood of the arteries, which in the brain become ‘*animal*’ spirits. He identified muscle and bones as levers. He examined the pituitary and thyroid glands, but incorrectly identified their purpose. He sectioned the ocular nerves and spinal cord and roughly localised several

nervous functions, but was an inveterate teleologist, and thus became the *bible* for the Medieval period.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Galeotto

Gallehaut was the go-between for [Lancelot](#) and [Guenever](#), who urged the queen to give Lancelot the first kiss that initiated their love. His name was therefore synonymous with '*pandar*'. The story is found in the old French romance of *Lancelot du Lac*.

[Inferno Canto V:70-142](#). His role of *pandar* is mentioned by [Francesca](#).

Galigai, Galigaio de'

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Galli

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Ganellon, Ganelon

[Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45](#) [Roland](#) (Orlando) [Charlemagne](#)'s nephew, and the hero of the battle of Roncesvalles, went down to defeat with his Franks, fighting against the Saracens, while attempting to hold the valley in 778AD. He blew his horn in desperation, to alert his uncle eight miles away, but Charlemagne was misled by the advice of Ganelon, and did not provide aid. The epic is told in the Old French *Chanson de Roland*, the 'Song of Roland', where the intensity of Roland's blast on the horn

shattered it. The defeat allowed Arab incursions into Narbonne in 793.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Ganymede

The son of Tros, and brother of Ilus and Assaracus, who was loved by Jupiter because of his great beauty, and snatched up to the Heavens, by Jupiter disguised as an eagle, where he became Jupiter's cupbearer. Tros was an ancestor of [Aeneas](#), so linking to Ganymede to Rome. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X 155, XI 756.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33](#). He is mentioned.

Gentucca, Morla

The beautiful wife of Cosciorino Fondora of Lucca. She was a friend to Dante between 1314 and 1316, when he was at Lucca. She was still

unmarried in 1300 (and did not wear the *benda*, or headdress reserved for married women, and, when white, for widows.)

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:34-99](#). She is mentioned as a future friend of Dante.

Geryon

The type of fraud or malice, as the [Minotaur](#) is of brutishness and bestiality. He is compounded of the mythical (three-bodied in the myth, but not here) and monstrous King of Spain whom [Hercules](#) killed for the sake of his herd of cattle (Virgil's Aeneid VIII 202, and Ovid's Metamorphoses IX 184), and the creatures of the bottomless pit in Revelations ix.

[Inferno Canto XVI:88-136](#). He appears to the poets from below the seventh circle.

[Inferno Canto XVII:79-136](#). He carries them down to the eighth circle on his back.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45](#). Virgil reminds Dante of him.

Gherardesca, Count Ugolino

A leading Guelph of Pisa. He led one party while his grandson [Nino de' Visconti](#) led the other. In 1288 Ugolino intrigued with [Ruggieri degli Ubaldini](#) the Archbishop, the nephew of Cardinal [Ottaviano degli Ubaldini](#), and leader of the Ghibellines in Pisa, who was supported by the [Lanfranchi](#), [Sismondi](#), [Gualandi](#) and other families, and Nino was expelled. The Archbishop however betrayed him and had Ugolino and four of his sons and grandsons (his sons were **Gaddo**, and **Uguccione**, his grandsons **Nino**, called **Brigata**, and Anselmuccio or 'little

Anselm's) imprisoned in the Torre dei Gualandi in July 1288. When [Guido da Montefeltro](#) took command of the Pisan forces, in March 1289, the keys were thrown into the river Arno and the prisoners left to starve to death, even a priest being denied them. The tower was known afterwards as the *Torre della Fame*, the Tower of Famine. Ugolino had previously acquired a reputation by the surrender of certain castles to the Florentine and Lucchese after the defeat of the Pisans by the Genoese at Meloria in 1284. (The islands of Caprara and Gorgona mentioned, north-west of Elba, and south-west of Livorno respectively, were held by Pisa at the time.)

[Inferno Canto XXXIII:1-90](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Gherardo da Camino

See [Camino](#).

Ghino da Tacco

[Benicasa da Laterina](#), judge to the Podestà of Siena condemned a relative of Ghin di Tacco, a highwayman, to death, and Ghino took his revenge by murdering him while he was sitting as a magistrate in Rome.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). He is mentioned.

Ghisola, da Fontana, née de' Caccianimico

[Inferno Canto XVIII:40-66](#). Her father Alberto was head of the Bolognese Guelphs. Her brother [Venedico](#) was a leading Guelph, exiled in 1289, and a follower of Marquis [Obizzo II d'Este](#) of Ferrara. He assisted the Marquis in her seduction. She later married Niccolò de Fontana of Ferrara, in 1270.

Gianfigliuzzi

[Inferno Canto XVII:31-78.](#) The Florentine Gianfigliuzzi family belonged to the Black Guelphs. Their arms were ‘a lion azure on field or’.

Gideon

The son of Joash, instructed by the angel to save Israel from the Midianites. He selected men to fight based on how they drank water at the pool of Harod: ‘as a dog lappeth’. Dante regards the example of their greed as a sin, since it later leads Israel astray. See Judges vii 1-7 and 24-33.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:100-154.](#) The incident is mentioned.

Giotto

Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337) painter, sculptor and architect. Found by [Cimabue](#), according to the legend, as a shepherd boy, drawing on stones.

He liberated Florentine painting from Byzantine stasis. Both painters are said to have been friends of Dante's, and the Bargello portrait of Dante is attributed to Giotto.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117](#). He surpassed his master Cimabue.

Giovanna, mother of Saint [Dominic](#), *see* [Joanna](#)

Giovanna Guzman, mother of Dominic, whose name was interpreted to mean 'grace of the Lord', who dreamed she was about to give birth to a whelp with a blazing brand in its mouth which would light the world.

[Paradiso Canto XII:37-105](#). She is mentioned.

Giovanna, wife of Buonconte da Montefeltro

Her family name is not known.

[Purgatorio Canto V:85-129](#). She is mentioned by [Buonconte](#).

Giovanna Visconti da Camino

The daughter of [Nino de' Visconti](#), and [Beatrice d'Este](#). She married [Riccardo da Cammino](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:46-84](#). She is mentioned.

Giraut de Borneil

Giraut de Bornelh of Limoges (c1170-c1220), the Provençal poet, 'master of the troubadours' as his contemporaries called him.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:112-148](#). He is alluded to.

Giuda

An ancient Florentine family.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Giouchi

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Glaucus

A fisherman of Anthedon in Boeotia, who was changed into a sea-god after eating magic grass. He fell in love with Scylla, and was loved by [Circe](#). See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII 233.

[Paradiso Canto I:37-72](#). He is mentioned.

Godfrey of Bouillon

Duke of Lorraine. A descendant of Charlemagne who led the First Crusade which captured Jerusalem in 1099. (Friday July 15th: He was the first Crusader to drop down from the wall into the city, close by Herod's Gate) The capture was followed by

indiscriminate massacre of the inhabitants, ‘the knights riding up their knees in blood, in the Haram enclosure, where the Mahomedans sought refuge’. He ruled there, as king, until his death of illness the following year, but refused the royal crown and title. He was buried in the Holy Sepulchre where his tomb (and sword) survived until the great fire of 1808. Despite the massacre, he was remembered as the best and wisest of the Christian leaders.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Gomita, Friar

A Sardinian friar, chancellor of Nino [Visconti](#) of Pisa, judge of Gallura, one of the four jurisdictions of Sardinia (Cagliari, Logodoro, Gallura, and Arborea) which belonged at the time

to Pisa. He took bribes to release prisoners etc. Visconti hanged him.

[Inferno Canto XXII:76-96](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Graffiacane, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). He hauls [Ciampolo](#) out of the boiling pitch.

Gratianus, Franciscus

Gratian (fl. c. 1150), and Italian Benedictine monk, brought ecclesiastical and civil war into harmony with each other. His *Decretum* was the first systematic treatise on Canon Law.

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Greci

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Gregory the Great, Saint and Pope

Pope Gregory I, the Great (?540-604), the first monastic Pope, who called himself *Servus Servorum Dei*, the servant of God's servants. He was the founder of the worldly power of the Papacy in Italy. He was one of the four Latin (western) Fathers of the Church, with Ambrose, [Augustine](#) and [Jerome](#). He established the form of the Roman liturgy and its music (Gregorian Chant). He instituted the rule of celibacy for the clergy.

[Purgatorio Canto X:73-96](#). He interceded through prayer to obtain the deliverance of [Trajan](#) from Hell, because of this act of clemency and

justice to the widow, so that Trajan might have a respite for repentance.

[Paradiso Canto XX:73-148](#). The prayers were **predestined** to save Trajan, since prayers for the truly damned have no effect, according to [Aquinas](#) and to Gregory himself.

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:94-139](#). He gave a different account of the Angelic Hierarchies to that of [Dionysius](#) the Areopagite.

Griffolino of Arezzo

He obtained money from [Albero](#) of Siena by pretending he could teach him how to fly. On discovering the deceit, Albero induced the Bishop of Siena to have Griffolino burned as an Alchemist.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:73-99](#). He is in the tenth chasm.

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). He names the spirits for Dante.

Gualandi, Ghibellines of Pisa

See [Ugolino](#).

Gualdrada de' Ravignani

The virtuous and lovely daughter of [Bellincion Berti](#) was the ancestress of the Conti Guidi, the great feudal nobles of the Casentino. She married Guido Guerra IV at the instigation, it was said, of Emperor Otto IV. The Guido Guerra, one of many of that name, mentioned here was the son of her fourth son, Marcovaldo of Dovadola.

[Inferno Canto XVI:1-45](#). The mother of [Guido Guerra](#).

Gualterotti

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Guenever

The wife of [King Arthur](#) of Britain, who in the Arthurian Legends conceived an illicit love for Sir [Lancelot](#), which led, fatally, to the dissolution of the Round Table and the death of Arthur. See Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*.

[Inferno Canto V:70-142](#). Reading about their love corrupts [Paolo](#) and [Francesca](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45](#). Her first words to Lancelot in public are referred to.

Guido, Conte

Guido, Alessandro, and **Aghinolfo** the Conti Guidi of Romena, induced Master [Adam of Brescia](#) to counterfeit the Florentine gold florin, stamped with the figure of [St John the Baptist](#). He was brunt to death for the crime in

1281, on the Consuma, the pass that leads out of the Casentino towards Florence. The Conti Guidi escaped punishment. Conte Giudo was dead by 1300, but the other two were still alive. Fonte Branda, the spring, is not the more famous one near Siena, but a lesser one near the castle of Romena, near where Adamo died.

[Inferno Canto XXX:49-90.](#)

Adamo is in the tenth chasm.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.](#) The family was descended from the [Ravignani](#) through [Bellincion Berti's](#) daughter [Gualdrada](#).

Guido Guerra

The grandson of [Gualdrada](#), a leading Guelf in Tuscany from 1250 to 1266, appointed Vicar of Tuscany by [Charles of Anjou](#). He died in 1272. He played a distinguished part at Benevento in 1265, where [Manfred](#)

died, and before the disaster at Montaperti in 1260, when the Guelfs went down to defeat, he was one of the nobles who had voted with [Tegghiaio Aldebrandi](#) against the expedition, knowing the Sienese had been reinforced with German mercenaries.

[Inferno Canto XVI:1-45](#). He is in the seventh circle for sodomy.

Guido of Romena

See [Conte Guido](#)

Guinicelli (or Guinizelli), Guido

The poet (c1235-1276), who was valued highly by Dante and his companions, as 'their' philosopher. He was a member of the Ghibelline Principi family of Bologna, and was Podestà of Castelfranco in 1270 and exiled in 1274 with the Lambertazzi. he began as an imitator of the later

Guittone d'Arezzo. His best work, including the canzone of the Gentle Heart (*'Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore*: Love always shelters in the gentle heart, as birds do in the green shade of the trees. No love in nature before the gentle heart, nor the gentle heart before love.'), inspired the Florentine School of the *dolce stil nuovo*.

Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117. Dante expresses the view that he has been surpassed, by the poetic school of Guido Cavalcanti. (Who wrote the famous *ballatetta*: 'Because I do not hope to turn again', *'Perch'i' no spero di tornar giammai'*)

Purgatorio Canto XXVI:67-111. He is among the lustful.

Guiscard, Robert

The founder (d 1085) of the Norman dynasty in southern Italy and Sicily. The Son of Tancred de Hauteville.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:1-21](#). He waged war in Sicily and Southern Italy from 1059 to 1080, against the Greeks and Saracens. He won the title Duke of Apulia from Pope Nicholas II in 1059, and died in 1085 having rescued Gregory VII, and sacked Rome in the previous year.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Guittone d'Arezzo, Fra

[Jacopo da Lentino](#) (*il Notaio*, the Notary), Guittone del Viva known as Fra Guittone, of Arezzo (1230-1294: one of the *Frati Gaudenti*) in his first poetic period, and [Bonagiunta](#) were prominent members of the Sicilian school of Poetry, continued in Central

Italy, based on Provençal traditions. Their style lacked the spontaneity and sweetness of the *dolce stil nuovo* developed by [Guido Guinicelli](#) of Bologna, [Guido Cavalcanti](#) and Dante.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:34-99.](#)

He is mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:112-148.](#)

Dante considers him to have been over-praised, and now superseded.

Haman

[Ahasuerus](#), the Persian King, enriched Haman, until he was accused by [Esther](#) of intending to take the life of [Mordecai](#). Haman was executed in Mordecai's place. See Esther iii-viii.

[Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39.](#) He is mentioned.

Hannibal

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145.](#) The eldest son of Hamilcar, who became

the commander-in-chief of the Carthaginian fight against Rome in the Punic wars. He crossed the Pyrenees and defeated the Romans at Cannae in 216 BC, but was defeated in turn by [Scipio](#) at Zama in 202BC. He ultimately committed suicide in 183 BC.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Hakon V, King of Norway

King of Norway (1299-1319)

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Harpies

Virgil's Aeneid III 209-267 describes how the Harpies, monstrous birds with the faces of girls, fouled the Trojans banquet on the Strophades Islands (The clashing islands) in the Ionian Sea, and drove off Aeneas and his

companions. Celaeno (*infelix vates*), the Harpies's leader, prophesies that the Trojans will reach Italy but only after being reduced to starvation.

[Inferno Canto XIII:1-30](#). They nest in the wood of suicides.

[Inferno Canto XIII:79-108](#). They feed on the leaves of the trees, giving pain to the spirits imprisoned in them.

Hector

The Trojan prince, son of [Priam](#) and [Hecabe](#) (Hecuba), a hero of the Iliad, who was killed by [Achilles](#) in revenge for the death of Patroclus.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). He is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). His grave is mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Hecuba

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). The wife of [Priam](#) King of Troy. At the fall of Troy she witnessed the death of her daughter [Polyxena](#), sacrificed at the tomb of [Achilles](#), and found the body of her son [Polydorus](#), done to death by [Polymestor](#), her son-in-law. She went mad and became a dog, Maera, barking on the shore. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 423 et seq.

Helen of Troy

The wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, daughter of Zeus by Lede. Her abduction by [Paris](#) initiated the Trojan War. She spent nineteen years in Troy and, after the ten-year war and the city's destruction, she went to Egypt with Menelaus. (according to [Homer](#), see the *Iliad* XXIV and *Odyssey* IV)

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). She is a carnal sinner in Limbo.

Helice, see [Callisto](#)

Heliodorus

The treasurer of King Seleucus, who went to the Temple to remove its treasure, and was met by a rider on a horse, which struck at him with its hooves. See Second Maccabees iii 25.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

Helios

The Sun-god, the son of Euryphessa or Theia, and the Titan [Hyperion](#). Identical for Dante with [Apollo](#)-Christ. [Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). The Sun.

Henry VI, Emperor

[Paradiso Canto III:97-130](#). The son of [Frederick Barbarossa](#). He married [Constance](#), the daughter of Roger II in

1186 and inherited the Norman kingdom in 1194. He was Emperor from 1190 to 1197, and crowned, by Pope [Celestine](#) in 1191, during his first Italian campaign. He united Germany and Sicily after his second Italian campaign in 1194-5, '*unio regni ad imperium*' but died at the age of 32. Constance assumed the regency for [Frederick II](#), their son.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). Supported in his Italian expedition, but afterwards secretly opposed by [Pope Clement V](#).

Henry VII, Emperor

Henry of Luxembourg, the Emperor Henry VII (1308-1313). Of insignificant wealth and background he hoped to establish his prestige by his coronation in Rome (1312), and revival of the Imperial claims south of the Alps. Pope [Clement V](#) attempted to

use him to further his own ambitions. Henry was in Italy between 1310 and 1313, and was hailed by Dante as the Liberator. He reached Milan in December 1310, but failed as honest broker to reconcile the Guelph and Ghibelline factions. He was driven into leadership of the Ghibelline party and aligned himself with Federico III of Sicily. Clement then swung back to the Guelphs, and repudiated the alliance. Henry died at Buonconvento of disease in 1313, as he was marching on Florence and planning a campaign against Naples, ending the dreams of Dante and the Florentine exiles.

[Paradiso Canto XXX:97-148](#). A throne is reserved for him in Heaven.

Henry II of England

Henry II (reigned 1154-89) held England, Normandy, Brittany, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Aquitaine.

Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered in 1170, with Henry's tacit consent, and Henry did penance at the grave in 1174. He oversaw the development of the royal courts and the common law, and initiated the conquest of Ireland. He refused to grant the sovereignty of England or Normandy to his son, and the resulting strife lasted until the 'Young King's', Henry Plantagenet's, death in 1183. (See Ezra Pound's translation of the lament 'Planh for the Young English King' in *Personae*) [Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142](#). He is mentioned, in connection with [Bertrand de Born](#), who fomented the strife with his son.

Henry III of England

King of England (1226-1272). The pious father of the warlike [Edward I](#) (1272-1307). His wife [Eleanor](#) of

Provence was a daughter of [Raymond Berenger](#) and sister of [Beatrice](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers.

Henry I, King of Navarre

Henry the Fat (1270-1274), brother of [Thibaut II](#). His daughter Joan married [Philip IV, the Fair](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers

Henry II of Lusignan, King of Cyprus

King of Cyprus (died 1324), whose bad rule Dante cites as a warning to Joanna wife of [Philip the Fair](#), concerning her separate kingdom of Navarre.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Henry, 'The Young King'

Prince Henry Plantagenet, the elder brother to Richard Coeur de Lion, and named the 'Young King', the son of [Henry II](#) of England, and twice crowned in his father's lifetime. Henry II refused to grant the sovereignty of England or Normandy to his son, and the resulting strife lasted until the Young King's death in 1183. (See Ezra Pound's translation of the lament 'Planh for the Young English King' in *Personae*)

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:112-142](#). He is mentioned, in connection with [Bertrand de Born](#), who fomented the strife.

Henry, son of Richard of Cornwall

See [Guy de Montfort](#).

Heraclitus

The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, an Ephesian nobleman who flourished about the 69th Olympiad 504-501BC, according to [Diogenes](#). His gnomic and pithy style contains ideas of the flux of existence, the instability of sensation and experience. His key concept is of unity in diversity and diversity in unity, a theme that Dante often plays with. The One exists as a tension of opposites, in the Many, Identity in Difference.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

Hercules

The mythical Greek hero of Thebes, son of Jupiter, and Alcmena. He was driven to perform Twelve Labours, at Juno's instigation. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX et al. Called

Alcides, as a descendant of Alceus, through his mother Amphitryon.

[Inferno Canto XXV:1-33](#). He stole the cattle of King [Geryon](#) (the Tenth Labour), and battered [Cacus](#) to death for stealing some of them in turn.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142](#). His pillars, at the entrance to the Mediterranean, were, in ancient times, the limits of the western world (namely Mount Abyla in North Africa, near Ceuta, and Mount Calpe, Gibraltar, well south-east of Seville).

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). He lifted the Giant [Antaeus](#) from the ground, and crushed him. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX 184.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). He loved [Iole](#), daughter of Eurytus, King of Oechalia. He had captured her. The love caused the jealousy of [Deianira](#), his wife, who sent him, unknowingly, the fatal shirt of [Nessus](#) the Centaur,

that caused his death. Nessus had been killed by Hercules after trying to carry off and rape Deianira, and steeped the shirt in his blood, containing the poison of the Hydra from the wound caused by Hercules's poisoned arrow, telling Deianira the shirt was a love charm to win back Hercules's affections. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX 13 et seq.

Hezekiah

The King of Judah, whose life was extended by the Lord, for the sake of his past sincerity and virtue. The word of God came to him through the mouth and actions of [Isaiah](#). See *Second Kings* xx.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is in the sixth sphere of Jupiter. [Aquinas](#) taught that God's decrees are consistent with prayer, because prayer does not alter

the Divine plan, but fulfils what God ordained to be fulfilled by prayer.

Hippocrates

The Greek physician of Cos, c460-360 BC, and founder of the medical school there. He initiated an experimental method which discarded teleology. He identified the healing properties of plants. He articulated the principle of *vis medicatrix naturae*, that nature is the best healer, and that the wise physician only tries to remove the obstacles in her path.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154](#). St Luke in the [Divine Pageant](#) is of his school, but a *spiritual* physician.

Hippolytus

The son of [Theseus](#), and the Amazon Hippolyte, whom [Phaedra](#) his stepmother fell in love with. Repulsed, she lied about the situation and accused him to his father, indirectly bringing him to his death.

See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XV 492 et seq.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). A victim of lies.

Holofernes

One of Nebuchadnezzar's captains, who besieged Bethulia. [Judith](#), the Jewish widow, gained access to his tent and cut off his head, which was displayed on the walls of Jerusalem, at which the Assyrians fled, pursued by the Jews. See *Judith* x-xiv.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is depicted on the roadway.

Homer

The author of the Iliad and the Odyssey, the great epic poems of Ancient Greece, telling the story of the Trojan War and [Ulysses's](#) (Odysseus's) wanderings and return.

[Inferno Canto IV:64-105](#). He leads the great Classical poets in Limbo.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is mentioned.

Honorius III, Pope

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He reconfirmed the Franciscan Order in 1223.

[Paradiso Canto XII:37-105](#). He sanctioned the Dominican Order in 1216.

Horace, Flaccus

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, the Roman poet, 65-8BC, who wrote odes and epodes in various metres derived from

the Greek poets; satires; and epistles. He was on the losing side at Philippi but won the patronage of Maecenas from whom he received his beloved Sabine farm. He is the type of a moralist, rather than satirist, for Dante. [Inferno Canto IV:64-105](#). He is among the great poets in Limbo.

Hugh of St Victor

Hugo (c1097-1141), one of the great mystics of the Abbey of Saint Victor at Paris. It was the centre of the conservative learning as opposed to the scholastic Aristotelian learning of the progressives. He was the master of [Peter the Lombard](#) and [Richard of Saint Victor](#).

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Hyperion

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). The Titan of the Sun, father of [Helios](#).

Hypsipyle

[Inferno Canto XVIII:67-99](#). The daughter of King Thoas of Lemnos, who saved him when the women of the island killed their menfolk. She was loved and abandoned by [Jason](#). See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 399.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry. She was sold into slavery by the women of Lemnos, and acted as nurse to [Lycurgus](#) of Nemea's son Archemorus (Opheltes). She showed the Seven Champions against Thebes the pool of Langia, and in her absence a serpent killed the child. Lycurgus would have killed her, but she was rescued by her sons.

Purgatorio Canto XXVI:67-111. Her children's joy at seeing her again is mentioned. See Statius's Thebaid iv and v.

Iarbas

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:70-90. The Libyan king, one of Dido's suitors, hence Iarbas's land is Libya, and the winds that blow from there are the southerly winds off the African Coast.

Icarus

Inferno Canto XVII:79-136. The son of Daedalus, who made waxen wings in order for them to escape from Crete. Flying too near the sun Icarus's wings melted and he fell into the sea. He was buried on the island of Icaria, and the Icarian Sea and the island, were named after him. See Ovid's Metamorphoses VIII 195.

Illuminato, Friar

Bishop of Assisi in 1282. He had joined the Order in 1210 and accompanied [Francis](#) in his mission to the Soldan.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Importuni

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Infangato

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Innocent III, Pope

Pope from 1198 to 1216, he called himself Christ's Vicar, from whom

worldly rulers received their kingdoms as fiefs. He operated an interventionist policy. Power was centralised through the Papal legates. He became the guardian of [Frederick II](#) after [Constance](#)'s death. After the murder of the Papal legate Peter of Castelnau, he initiated the vicious Albigensian Crusade against Provençal heretics.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He confirmed the Franciscan Order in 1210.

Ino

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). [Juno](#) was angered because of [Jupiter](#)'s adultery with [Semele](#), whom she punished, and took vengeance on the house of [Cadmus](#) of Thebes, her father. She pursued Ino, Semele's sister, by driving her husband [Athamas](#) mad. He killed their son [Learchus](#), and drove Ino to throw herself over a cliff, with

their son [Melicertes](#). Ino and Melicertes became sea-gods, namely Leucothea, the White Goddess, and Palaemon. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 261 and IV 519.

Interminei, Alessio degli

A member of a prominent family of Luccan Whites, alive in the year 1295. [Inferno Canto XVIII:100-136](#). He is in Hell for flattery.

Iole

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). Iole, daughter of Eurytus, King of Oechalia, was loved by [Hercules](#) who had captured her. The love caused the jealousy of [Deianira](#), his wife, who sent him, unknowingly, the fatal shirt of [Nessus](#) the Centaur, that caused his death. Nessus had been killed by Hercules after trying to carry off and rape Deianira, and steeped the shirt in

his blood, containing the poison of the Hydra from the wound caused by Hercules's poisoned arrow, telling Deianira the shirt was a love charm to win back Hercules's affections. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX 13 et seq.

Iphigenia

The daughter of [Agamemnon](#) King of Mycenae, and Clytemnestra, and the sister of Electra and [Orestes](#). She was sacrificed, at Aulis, by her father, to gain favourable winds, for the Greek expedition to Troy. [Diana](#) substituted a hind for her, and carried her to Tauris, as her priestess. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XII 28 and 184, and Aeschylus's *Oresteian Trilogy*.

[Paradiso Canto V:1-84](#). She is mentioned, as the victim of her father's rash vow.

Iris

The goddess of the rainbow, the daughter of Thaumas and Electra, [Juno](#)'s messenger. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IV 480 etc.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:34-75](#). She is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XII:1-36](#). The phenomenon of the double rainbow is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXXIII:49-145](#). The double rainbow is again used.

Isaiah

The prophet (one of the four great prophets of the Old Testament with Jeremiah, [Ezekiel](#), and [Daniel](#)).

[Paradiso Canto XXV:64-96](#). Dante refers to Isaiah lxi 7,10 where the prophecy that the redeemed shall possess double things implies joy of the body as well as joy of the soul.

Isidore of Seville, Saint

Isidore (c560-636) is the author of the *Cyclopaedia*, the main Medieval Encyclopedia.

[Paradiso Canto X:130-148](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Ismene

The daughter of Oedipus, by [Jocasta](#), and sister of [Eteocles](#) and [Polynices](#). See Sophocles's Theban Trilogy.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry.

Jacob

The son of Isaac, the son of [Abraham](#). He is called Israel, after wrestling with the Lord at Peniel where he saw God 'face to face', see the Bible Genesis xxxii. His wife is [Rachel](#). His brother [Esau](#), whom he followed from the womb, clutching Esau's heel as a sign

that he would supplant him, sold Jacob his birthright for ‘a mess of pottage’, and Jacob by guile robbed Esau the elder of his father Isaac’s blessing. Jacob is the type of the settler, Esau of the hunter. See Genesis xxv and xxvii. Their rivalry was used as an analogy for Church and Synagogue.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148](#). The brothers as contrasting types.

[Paradiso Canto XXI:52-142](#).

[Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99](#). Jacob’s vision of the ladder is echoed by Dante’s vision. See Genesis xxviii 11-12.

James, Saint

The disciple of Christ. James the Greater, son of Zebedee, a fisherman of Galilee, and the brother of [John the Evangelist](#). He was tried in

Jerusalem in 44 AD by Herod Agrippa and executed. His supposed tomb at Santiago de Compostella in Galicia, discovered in the 9th century, became a place of worship, by the 11th century, next in importance to Jerusalem and Rome, and he became the patron saint of Spain.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154.](#)

He appears in the [Divine Pageant.](#)

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99.](#) He was present at the Transfiguration, see Matthew xviii 1-8 when [Christ](#) shone like the sun in white raiment, and [Moses](#) and [Elias](#) appeared talking with him, and after they were overcome Christ said 'Arise, and be not afraid'. Christ is the apple-tree, in accord with the Song of Solomon ii 3, 'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.'

[Paradiso Canto XXV:1-63](#). He appears to Dante in the Stellar Heaven. Dante ascribes to him the authorship of the Epistle more usually attributed to the apostle James the Less, the ‘brother of the Lord’, which talks of God giving liberally in i 5. He was of the group with [Peter](#) and [John](#) whom Christ allowed nearer his presence, at the Transfiguration, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the Agony at Gethsemane.

[Paradiso Canto XXV:64-96](#). Dante refers to James i 12.

James, King of the Balearic Islands
King of the Balearic Islands (1276-1311), brother of [Peter III](#) of Aragon and therefore uncle of [Frederick II](#) King of Sicily.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

James II, King of Aragon

King of Sicily(1285-1296), and King of Aragon(1291-1327) and therefore alive at the time of the Vision. The elder brother of [Frederick II](#) of Sicily.

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145](#). The son of [Peter](#) (Pere) III of Aragon, and [Constanza](#), daughter of [Manfred](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). Dante regards him as inferior to his father.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Jason, the Argonaut

The son of Aeson, who was sent by his uncle Pelias, from Iolchos in Thessaly, to bring back the Golden Fleece from Colchis. He sailed the Argo, the first ship, with the Argonauts, the Greek heroes. [Medea](#) the witch, the king's daughter, fell in love with him, and helped him, but he abandoned her for [Creusa](#). See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

VII and VIII. He also abandoned [Hypsipyle](#), the daughter of King Thoas of Lemnos, whom she had saved when the women of the island killed the male inhabitants. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 399.

[Inferno Canto XVIII:67-99](#). He is in the eighth circle, first chasm.

[Paradiso Canto II:1-45](#). To win the Golden Fleece he had to yoke the bronze-footed fire-breathing bulls, plough the field of Ares, and sow the serpent's teeth. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII 1 et seq.

[Paradiso Canto XXXIII:49-145](#). The voyage of the Argo is mentioned. Dante dates it to 1200BC.

Jason, the high-priest

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#). The brother of Onias. He induced [Antiochus](#) IV ruler of the Seleucid Empire (reigned 175-164 BC), whose self-conferred

title was ‘*Theos Epiphanes*’, ‘the evident God’, and who was the brother of Seleucus IV whom he succeeded, to make him high-priest through bribery, and allow the introduction of pagan customs. See 2 Maccabees iv 7.

Jephthah

[Paradiso Canto V:1-84](#). The Gileadite who sacrificed his daughter, after vowing to offer whatever came out of his gates to meet him, when he returned from fighting the children of Ammon.

See Judges xi.

Jerome, Saint

Eusebius Hieronymous Sophronius (342-420), born at Stridon in Dalmatia. With Ambrose, [Augustine](#) and [Gregory](#) he is one of the four Latin (western) Fathers of the Church. He retired into the Syrian desert for four

years where he studied Hebrew. He settled in Bethlehem in 386. His translation of the Bible, the Vulgate, into Latin was eventually declared the official version, by the Council of Trent.

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:1-66](#). He spoke of the Angels being created long before the rest of the universe, which was contradicted by [Aquinas](#).

Joachim of Flora

Of Fiore, in Calabria (c1130-1202), a Cistercian monk, who founded a monastery there. He claimed to have the power to interpret the prophetic books of the Bible with special reference to the History of the Church. A new dispensation (of the Holy Spirit, after the Father's, and the Son's), the third epoch, was at hand, he said, of perfect love and spiritual freedom. This was known as the

Eternal Gospel. The spiritual party among the Franciscans seized on it, and Fra Gherardo da Borgo San Donnino (Gerardua) wrote an Introduction to the Eternal Gospel which was condemned as heresy in 1256. [Bonaventura](#) helped to suppress these Joachists.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Joanna, mother of Saint Dominic

[See Giovanna](#).

Jocasta

The wife of Laius King of Thebes. The mother, and, unintentionally, wife of Oedipus, King of Thebes, who killed his father. Her children [Eteocles](#) and [Polynices](#) fought over the kingship in the War of the Seven against Thebes, the subject of [Statius](#)'s Thebaid.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93](#). She is mentioned.

John the Baptist, Saint

The desert prophet who baptised Christ. See the Gospel of St Luke 3.

[Inferno Canto XIII:130-151](#). The Florentines adopted St John the Baptist as their patron, displacing the Roman Mars, whose statue had stood on the site of the Baptistery. The statue was then set up by the Arno. When Florence was destroyed by the Goths ([Attila](#) is confused with Totila the Goth leader), according to legend, the statue fell into the Arno. Florence could not be rebuilt, it was believed, until the statue had been reinstated, and it was rescued and set on a pillar on the Ponte Vecchio when the city was restored, according to legend again, by Charlemagne. It remained there till the great flood of 1333

carried away the bridge and statue. The rejection of Mars was believed by Florentines to be at the root of the endless factional conflict in their city.

[Inferno Canto XXX:49-90](#). Master [Adam of Brescia](#) counterfeited the Florentine gold florin, stamped with the figure of St John.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154](#). He ate locusts and honey in order to survive in the desert. See Matthew iii 4, Mark i 6. For his greatness see Matthew xi 11 and Luke vii 28.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He exists with God in the Empyrean.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45](#). Patron Saint of Florence.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:100-136](#). He was figured on one side of the Florentine gold florin. His beheading, to fulfil [Salome](#)'s request to Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, son of Herod the Great, (engineered by her

mother Herodias) is mentioned. See Mark vi 21-28.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). His seat in Heaven and the ranks below him indicate one half of the Rose, where those who acquired faith after Christ's coming are seated. He corresponds to the [Virgin](#), beneath whom rank those with faith in the Christ to come.

John the Apostle, Saint

The disciple of Christ, son of Zebedee, and brother of James. Presumed author of the Fourth Gospel and, by tradition, of the Apocalypse, and therefore identified with [John the Divine](#). His emblem in art is an eagle. (See Revelation iv 7. The four beasts are identified with Matthew, Mark, [Luke](#), and John, the fourth beast being a flying eagle.)

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154](#).

He appears in the [Divine Pageant](#).

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99. He was present at the Transfiguration, see Matthew xviii 1-8 when Christ shone like the sun in white raiment, and Moses and Elias appeared talking with him, and after they were overcome Christ said 'Arise, and be not afraid'. Christ is the apple-tree, in accord with the Song of Solomon ii 3, 'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.'

Paradiso Canto IV:1-63. He exists with God in the Empyrean.

Paradiso Canto XXV:97-139. At the Last Supper he was 'leaning on Jesus's bosom'. See John xiii 23. Christ, on the cross, committed Mary to his charge. See John xix 26-27.

John the Divine, Saint

The author of the Book of Revelation. Exiled by Domitian to the Aegean

island of Patmos, and traditionally identified with [John the Evangelist](#), the Apostle.

[Inferno Canto XIX:88-133](#). Dante refers to the vision of the Great Whore, in Revelation xvii. The seven heads are interpreted as the seven virtues or sacraments, and the ten heads as the Ten Commandments, kept as long as the Popes were virtuous.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:82-105](#). Dante uses his imagery for the [Divine Pageant](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154](#). He appears in the Divine Pageant.

[Paradiso Canto XXV:64-96](#). Dante refers to Revelation vii 9 where the redeemed are robed in white, and Dante links this to Isaiah's statement that they shall possess double things implying joy of the body as well as joy of the soul.

[Paradiso Canto XXVI:1-69.](#)

Revelation i 8. 'I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the ending.'

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151.](#) He sits to the right of [Peter](#) in Heaven.

John XXI, Pope, Peter of Spain

Petrus Hispanus who succeeded [Adrian V](#) for a few months, and was killed in 1277, by the fall of the Papal Palace at Viterbo. He wrote a much-used treatise on Logic in twelve books. The well-known *Memoria Technica* verses *Barbara Celarent* etc are derived from it.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145.](#) He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

John XXII, Pope

John XXII, Pope (1316-1334) A native of Cahors.

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66.](#)

Indirectly referred to.

Joseph

The son of [Jacob](#), his best-beloved, the son of his old age. His brothers cast him into a pit, stripping him of his coat of many colours, and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. There he became an overseer in Potiphar's household, whose wife tried to seduce him. He refused, and she perjured herself, blaming him, and causing him to be imprisoned. See Genesis xxix.

[Inferno Canto XXX:91-129.](#)
Potiphar's wife is in the tenth chasm.

Joshua

The son of Nun, [Moses](#)'s minister, and successor, who crossed the Jordan and led the Israelites in taking the Promised Land.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151.](#) He is mentioned.

Paradiso Canto IX:67-126. Rahab aided his spies, allowing Jericho to be taken.

Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57. He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Juba

King Juba of Numidia who sided with Pompey against Caesar and was defeated. He was compelled to commit suicide in 46BC.

Paradiso Canto VI:1-111. Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Judas Iscariot

The Disciple of Christ who betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. See Matthew xxvi 14 and 47, Mark xiv 43, Luke xxii 21, and xxii 47, John xviii 2. He afterwards repented, threw the thirty pieces of silver in front of the chief priests and elders, and then hung himself. See Matthew xxvii 3. The

thirty pieces of silver bought the potter's field, called the field of blood, to bury strangers in. See Matthew xxvii 7-10.

[Inferno Canto XIX:88-133.](#) He forfeited his place among the Disciples, and was replaced by [Matthias.](#)

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145.](#) The poets are set down in the Ninth Circle that swallowed him.

[Inferno Canto XXXIV:55-69.](#) He is tormented in one of [Satan](#)'s mouths.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96.](#) A byword for treachery.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:76-136.](#) He who sold Christ.

Jude

The brother of James. Author of the General Epistle of Jude.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154.](#)
He appears in the [Divine Pageant](#)

Judith

The Jewish patriotic heroine and a symbol of The Jewish struggle against oppression. She is usually shown holding the head of [Holofernes](#), the Assyrian general whom she decapitated with a sword. See Apocrypha.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). She is seated in Heaven, below the Virgin.

Julia

There are many Julias in the Imperial Roman families. Here it is [Julius Caesar](#)'s daughter by Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, that is meant. She married [Pompey](#). She is mentioned as a type of the noble Roman woman.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

Julius Caesar

Gaius Julius Caesar, Roman General, Consul and Dictator from 49 to 44 BC when he was assassinated by [Brutus](#), [Cassius](#) and the other conspirators. He married Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, and had a daughter [Julia](#).

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). He is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:91-111](#). Advised by [Curio](#), according to [Lucan](#) (see Pharsalia i. 281) Caesar crossed the Rubicon (*'iacta alea est – the die is cast'*) near Rimini and declared war by that act against the Republic in 49BC. The Rubicon was at that time the boundary between Italy and Cisalpine Gaul.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:76-111](#). He delegated the siege of Marseilles to [Brutus](#) in 49BC to attack [Pompey's](#)

lieutenants Afranius and Petreius at Lerida (Ilerda) in Catalonia.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:67-111.](#)

Suetonius (Caesar 49) says that Caesar was accused of being King Nicomedes's bedfellow, (Nicomedes was King of Bithynia), and that his soldiers chanted ribald songs about his predilections during his Gallic Triumph.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111.](#) His

campaigns and assassination mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126.](#) His fleet won a victory over the [Pompeians](#) near Marseilles in 49BC.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117.](#) He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45.](#) He was, according to legend, addressed in the plural as *voi* instead of *tu* when he

achieved pre-eminence. A Roman custom, disused there in Dante's time.

Juno

The divine daughter of [Saturn](#) and [Rhea](#), who married her brother [Jupiter](#). The Queen of the Gods. She is the Roman equivalent of Hera, as he is of Zeus.

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). Juno was angered because of [Jupiter](#)'s adultery with [Semele](#), whom she punished, and took vengeance on the house of [Cadmus](#) of Thebes, her father. She pursued [Ino](#), Semele's sister by driving her husband [Athamas](#) mad. He killed their son [Learchus](#), and drove Ino to throw herself over a cliff, with their son [Melicertes](#). Ino and Melicertes became sea-gods, namely Leucothea, the White Goddess, and Palaemon. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 261 and IV 519.

[Paradiso Canto XII:1-36](#). [Iris](#), the rainbow, is her messenger.

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:1-57](#). The rainbow.

Jupiter

The divine son of [Saturn](#) and [Rhea](#), born in Crete and watched over in his infancy by the priests of Ida. With his brothers Neptune and [Pluto](#) he dethroned Saturn, and ruled the Heavens, Neptune winning the oceans, and Pluto the underworld. His wife was Juno.

[Inferno Canto XIV:43-72](#). The Giants made war on the gods, and were overthrown by Jupiter's lightning bolts and buried under Sicily. [Vulcan](#) the son of Juno was the god of fire and the blacksmith of the gods, who with the [Cyclopes](#) forged Jupiter's lightning bolt in the fires of Mount Aetna on Sicily. He struck [Capaneus](#), an Argive

chief, with lightning in the war of the seven against Thebes, for scaling the wall (an allegory of pride).

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). Juno was angered because of Jupiter's adultery with [Semele](#), whom she punished, and took vengeance on the house of [Cadmus](#) of Thebes, her father. She pursued [Ino](#), Semele's sister by driving her husband [Athamas](#) mad. He killed their son [Learchus](#), and drove Ino to throw herself over a cliff, with their son [Melicertes](#). Ino and Melicertes became sea-gods, namely Leucothea, the White Goddess, and Palaemon. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 261 and IV 519.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is depicted on the roadway.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:106-132](#). He destroyed [Phaethon](#) to save the Earth, a judgment questioned by Sol, Phaethon's father.

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:100-160. The Imperial eagle, the bird of power, is his symbol.

Paradiso Canto IV:1-63. The idea that He and other gods inhered in the planets named after them, led to the influence of the stars, and of Pagan Gods being confused, and both falsely worshipped (Paganism and Astrology).

Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154. The son of Saturn and father of Mars, by Hera, regarded as temperate between Saturn's cold, and Mars's heat.

Justinian, Emperor

The Byzantine Emperor (527-565AD), husband of Theodora (d. 548) who ended the draining effects of the war with the Sassanid Persians, enabling him to concentrate on regaining the western Empire (N.Africa 535, Italy 553, Southern Spain 554) through his generals Belisarius and Narses. He

codified the Roman Law (*Corpus juris civilis*). However Italy was lost to the Langobards in 568. Dante looks back to him as providing legal and imperial continuity with Ancient Rome.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). He expands on the [History of the Empire](#). He manifests himself to Dante in the second sphere.

Juvenal

The Roman satirist (c60-140AD) who wrote during the reigns of the Emperors [Trajan](#) and Hadrian. He was a friend of Martial.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:1-24](#). He is in Limbo.

Lachesis

One of the Three Fates, the Moerae, whom Erebus and Night conceived,

Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. Atropos is the smallest but the most terrible. Clotho spins the thread of life, Lachesis measures it out, and Atropos ‘she who cannot be avoided or turned’ shears it. At Delphi only two fates were worshipped of Birth and Death. Dante here has Lachesis as the spinner, and Clotho apparently as the measurer, or Clotho is both and the syntax is misleading.

Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33. She is mentioned.

Purgatorio Canto XXV:1-60. She is mentioned.

Laërtes

The father of Ulysses.

Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142. He is mentioned indirectly.

Lambertazzi, Fabbro de'

A Ghibelline of Bologna, and Podestà of several cities. His sons feuded with the Geremei after his death in 1259.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Lamberti, Mosca de'

One of the initiators of the murder of [Buondelmonte](#) de' Buondelmonti, who was betrothed to a daughter of the Amidei, but broke faith at the instigation of Gualdrada Donati. In the debate as to whether he should be killed Mosca said the evil word, 'A thing done has an end.' Buondelmonte was murdered, at the foot of the statue of Mars, on the Ponte Vecchio, in 1215. The family divisions created the Guelph and Ghibelline factional conflicts.

[Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#). Dante asks after him.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:91-111](#). He is in the ninth chasm of the eighth circle, as a sower of dissent.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#). The family mentioned and their device of the golden balls.

Lancelot

The knight of the round table in the Arthurian legends who loves Queen [Guinevere](#), [Arthur](#)'s consort, illicitly, and indirectly brings about the destruction of the Round table, and the death of Arthur.

[Inferno Canto V:70-142](#). Reading about his love corrupts [Paolo](#) and [Francesca](#).

Lanfranchi, Ghibellines of Pisa

See [Ugolino](#).

Lano, see [Maconi](#)

Latini, Brunetto

A Florentine Guelf, Latini (ca1210-1294) politician and philosopher, was the author of a prose encyclopaedia *Li Livres dou Trésor* written in French (he was in exile in France in 1260 after Montaperti) and the *Tesoretto*, a popular didactic poem in Italian, containing similar matter, in the form of an allegorical journey, a kind of Pilgrim's Progress, that clearly influenced Dante, opening with the poet lost in a wood of error. An ardent Guelf, he introduced the art of oratory and the study of political science into Florence. In the *Tesoretto* he speaks against the homosexuality that condemns him to Hell. He influenced and possibly taught Dante.

[Inferno Canto XV:1-42](#). He is in the seventh circle, last ring.

Inferno Canto XV:43-78. He prophesies Dante's fame, and the enmity of the Florentines against him, as one who tries to revive the ancient Roman order.

Inferno Canto XV:100-124. He recommends his Trésor to Dante, and Dante compares his departure to one running the race at Verona, held on the first Sunday in Lent, for which the prize was a piece of green cloth, a mantle, or *palio*.

Latinus

King of Latium, and an ancestor of the Roman people through his daughter Lavinia the third wife of Aeneas.

Inferno Canto IV:106-129. He is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

Latona (Leto)

The daughter of Coeus the Titan, and the mother by [Jupiter](#), of [Apollo](#) and [Artemis](#). She was refused a place on earth to rest by [Juno](#), who was jealous, and found refuge, and bore the divine twins, on the floating island of Delos, in the Aegean, which Jupiter anchored so that she could give birth. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 160 et passim.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). She is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto X:64-99](#).

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). The mother of the moon-goddess, Artemis-Diana.

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:1-66](#). The mother of the sun and moon.

Laurence, Saint

[Paradiso Canto IV:64-114](#). The Christian martyr of Spanish birth who

was roasted on a gridiron over a fire, in Rome, in 258AD. He was ordained deacon by Pope Sixtus II, and met his death shortly after the Pope's own martyrdom. He was said to have displayed the poor and sick around him as 'the treasures of the Church' when those treasures were demanded of him. He was one of the patron saints of Florence, with John the Baptist.

Lavinia

The daughter of [Latinus](#) and third wife of [Aeneas](#). She was betrothed to [Turnus](#) initially. She is an ancestress of the Roman people.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39](#). She laments the death of her mother Queen [Amata](#), wife of King [Latinus](#), who hanged herself through anger at the

death of the hero [Turnus](#), to whom Lavinia was originally betrothed, Lavinia being destined then to marry [Aeneas](#). The fate of Lavinia was part of the reason for the Wars in Latium. See Aeneid xii 595.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). She is mentioned.

Lazarus

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99](#). His resurrection from the dead is alluded to, John xi, as is the raising of Jairus's daughter, Luke viii 49. He was the brother of Martha and Mary.

Leah

The daughter of Laban, and sister of [Rachel](#), whom [Jacob](#) was deceived into marrying, after he worked seven years to win Rachel. See Genesis xxix and xxx. She is the fertile sister, and the symbol of the active life. Her New

Testament equivalent is Martha. See Luke x 38-42.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:94-114](#). She appears in [Dante's dream](#).

Leander

A young man of Sestos, separated from his lover Hero, at Abydos, by the straits of the Hellespont (Dardanelles). He swam across to her repeatedly, and was ultimately drowned. See Ovid's *Heroides* xviii, xix, and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:52-138](#). He is mentioned.

Learchus

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). [Juno](#) was angered because of [Jupiter's](#) adultery with [Semele](#), whom she punished, and took vengeance on the house of [Cadmus](#) of Thebes, her father. She pursued [Ino](#), Semele's sister, by

driving her husband [Athamas](#) mad. He killed their son Learchus, and drove Ino to throw herself over a cliff, with their son [Melicertes](#). Ino and Melicertes became sea-gods, namely Leucothea, the White Goddess, and Palaemon. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 261 and IV 519.

Leda

The daughter of Thestius, and wife of the Spartan king Tyndareus, who was raped by [Jupiter](#) in the form a swan, and gave birth to the Gemini, the Twins Castor and Pollux. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 109.

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:97-148](#). She is mentioned.

Lentino, Jacopo da

Jacopo da Lentino (*il Notaio*, the Notary), [Guittone del Viva](#) known as Fra Guittone, of Arezzo (1230-1294:

one of the *Frati Gaudenti*) in his first poetic period, and [Bonagiunta](#) were prominent members of the Sicilian school of Poetry, continued in Central Italy, based on Provençal traditions. Their style lacked the spontaneity and sweetness of the *dolce stil nuovo* developed by [Guido Guinicelli](#) of Bologna, [Guido Cavalcanti](#) and Dante. [Purgatorio Canto XXIV:34-99](#). He is mentioned.

Levi, The Tribe of

The Levites were the priestly tribe, among the ten tribes of Israelites, inhibited from inheriting from others, and given the tithe as an inheritance themselves, in order to dedicate themselves to spiritual matters. See Numbers xviii 20, Deuteronomy xviii 2, Joshua xiii 14.

[Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145](#). They are mentioned.

Libicocco

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). He wants to torment [Ciampolo](#).

Linus

The mythological poet, the brother of Orpheus, and son of King Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope (of epic poetry). Alternatively he was the son of Apollo and the Muse Urania (astronomy). He was killed by jealous Apollo. He composed poems honouring Dionysus and a Creation epic. He is said to have invented melody and rhythm. The lament for him was widespread and is the theme of the Egyptian song of Maneros. His portrait was carved in the rock on Helicon near the grove of

the Muses. He was claimed to have been buried at Thebes.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Linus, Saint and Pope

Saint Linus, Pope (66-76AD).

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66](#). He died for the faith.

Livy

Titus Livius, the Roman historian.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:1-21](#). He records (xxiii 11, 12) that at the battle of Cannae in 216 BC in the Second Punic war, where [Hannibal](#) defeated the Romans, he showed the senate at Carthage, three bushels of gold rings taken from the corpses.

Lizio di Valbona

A Guelph noble of Bertinoro, and follower of [Rinier da Calboli](#). He died between 1279 and 1300.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Loderingo

One of the *Frati Gaudenti*, or Jovial Friars, a derisive name for the *Cavalieri di S. Maria (Ordo militae beatae Mariae)* founded at Bologna in 1261, with the approval of Urban IV, to act as mediators, and protect the weak. It was disbanded due to its laxity. [Catelano](#) de' Catalini (or de' Malavolti) c.1210-1285, and Loderingo degli Andalò, a Ghibelline, were called to Florence, from Bologna, in 1266 to act together as Podestà, and reform the government. They were accused of hypocrisy and corruption and expelled. The Gardingo district

(*Piazza di Firenze*) the site of the Uberti Palace, was destroyed in a rising against the Ghibellines.

[Inferno Canto XXIII:82-126.](#)

They are in the eighth circle.

Lombardo, Marco

A learned Venetian courtier, noted for his breadth of mind, and profundity. He flourished in the latter half of the thirteenth century.

[Purgatorio Canto XVI:25-96.](#) He is among the wrathful.

Louis IX, Saint and King of France

See [Raymond Berenger.](#)

Lucan

Marcus Annaeus Lucanus, AD 39-65, the Roman writer, born in Cordova in Spain and educated at Rome. He served under Nero, fell into disfavour, and committed suicide at Nero's

command. His unfinished epic, the Civil War, or 'Pharsalia' after its climactic battle, was a poetical guide to Dante in his ideas of Roman history.

[Inferno Canto IV:64-105](#). He is among the great poets in Limbo.

[Inferno Canto XXIV:61-96](#). His Pharsalia ix 708 et seq. and 805 provided Dante with the list of snakes.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). His Pharsalia ix 763, and 790, provides the tale of the two soldiers stung by serpents.

Lucia, Saint Lucy

The virgin martyr of Syracuse, in the third Century AD, traditionally associated with light and vision. She is Dante's patron Saint (he had weakened eyesight) and is for him the symbol of Illuminating Grace.

[Inferno Canto II:94-120](#). The [Virgin](#) sends her to [Beatrice](#).

[Purgatorio Canto IX:34-63](#). She carries Dante up to the entrance to Purgatory proper, while Virgil follows.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151](#). She sits to the right of the Virgin opposite [Adam](#).

Lucifer, see [Satan](#)

Lucretia

The wife of the Roman Collatine, raped by Tarquin, son of Tarquinius Superbus. A type of the noble, wronged wife. See Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Luke, Saint

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33](#). Luke xxiv 13-15 writes of the appearance of [Christ](#) at Emmaus after the Resurrection.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154](#). He appears in the [Divine Pageant](#).

Lycurgus

King of Nemea. [Hypsipyle](#) left his son, Opheltes (later Archemorus) on a river-bank where he was bitten by a snake. Statius Thebaid iv and v.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:67-111](#).

He is mentioned.

Macarius, Saint

Macarius the Egyptian (301-391) a disciple of Saint [Anthony](#), one of the monks of the Sinaitic desert.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99](#). He is in the seventh sphere.

Maccabeus, Judas

One of the five sons of Mattathias, Judas Maccabeus, 'The Hammerer', resisted the enforced Hellenization of the Jewish people practised under Antiochus IV of Syria (175-164). He took Jerusalem and re-consecrated the Temple (25 *Kislev*, 165BC, remembered by the *Chanukah* festival) Peace was achieved in 163BC and the enforced Hellenization halted. He and his brothers died in the continual fighting until, in 143, Simon, the last survivor expelled the Syrians. Simon became the first High Priest and civil ruler of the newly established state, with the title *Nasi*.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Maconi, Lano

Lano Maconi of Siena squandered his fortune, then allowed himself to be

killed at the battle of Pieve del Toppo where the Aretines defeated the Sienese in 1288.

[Inferno Canto XIII:109-129](#). He is in the seventh circle.

He was a member of the *Brigata Spendereccia*, the Spendthrift Brigade, a club founded by twelve wealthy Sienese, in the second half of the thirteenth century, who vied with each other in squandering their money on riotous living.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139](#). Other members of the club are mentioned.

Maghinardo

See [Pagani](#).

Mahomet

Mohammed (c570-632AD), the founder of Islam. He made his 'Hegira', the flight to Medina, the city of the prophet, on 15 June 622, the

beginning of the Islamic calendar. He returned to Mecca on November 1st 630, purified the city, and eliminated idolatry in the Kaaba, the ancient Arab shrine of the black stone. His teaching spread throughout Arabia. He died in Medina. Dante treats him as a schismatic within the Biblical context. [Inferno Canto XXVIII:22-54](#). He is in the ninth chasm of the eighth circle, with the schismatics.

Maia

One of the Pleiades, the seven daughters of Atlas, and the ocean-nymph Pleione. Their stars form the constellation in the neck of Taurus. She was loved by [Jupiter](#) and gave birth to [Mercury](#).

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). The mother of Mercury, and a name for Mercury.

Mainardi, Arrigo

A Ghibelline of Bertinoro, and follower of [Pier Traversaro](#). He was captured with Pier by the people of Faenza in 1170, and was still alive in 1228.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Malacoda, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:59-96](#). The chief of the demons in the eighth circle, chasm five of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#) and [Inferno Canto XXIII:127-148](#). He misleads Virgil, claiming the causeway was impassable at the sixth chasm.

Malaspina, Alagia de' Fieschi

The wife of [Moroello III Malaspina](#). One of her sisters, Fiesca, married Alberto of a different Malaspina

branch, and the other, Jacopina, was the wife of [Obizzo II of Este](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XIX:115-145.](#)

She is mentioned.

Malaspina, Corrado

Corrado II (d.c.1294) grandson of Corrado I, the elder, who married an illegitimate daughter of [Frederick II](#) and died about 1225. This Conrad's cousins were [Moroello III](#) (d.c.1315) the addressee of Dante's third letter accompanied by Canzone xi, and Franceschino who was Dante's host (d. between 1313 and 1321) at Sarzana in Lunigiana in the autumn of 1306, less than seven years, the sun being already in Aries, from the moment of the Vision. The Malaspini were Ghibellines but Moroello III was a notable exception. Valdimagra, in Lunigiana, north-west of Tuscany, was part of their territory. Conrad is

mentioned in Boccaccio's Decameron (ii. 6)

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:109-139.](#)

He is among the negligent rulers.

Malaspina, Moroello

[Inferno Canto XXIV:130-151.](#)

[Vanni Fucci's prophecy](#) covers his involvement in the defeat of the Whites in and around Pistoia in 1302-6. He died c 1315. His wife was [Alagia](#) de' Fieschi.

Malatesta, Francesca da Polenta,
see [Francesca da Rimini](#)

Malatesta, Gianciotto

Elder brother of [Paolo](#), Il Bello, and husband of [Francesca](#) da Rimini. Son of [Malatesta da Verucchio](#), Lord of Rimini. Brave but possibly deformed, he slew the unfaithful Francesca along with Paolo about 1285. According to

legend she thought that Paolo was her intended husband when he stood proxy for his brother in the marriage. Giuncotto died in 1304.

Malatesta, da Verucchio

Father of [Gianciotto](#) and [Paolo](#). Lord of Rimini, ruling from the castle of Verucchio (1293-1312)

[Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57](#). He was ‘the old mastiff’, and his son [Malatestino](#) ‘the young mastiff’, noted for their ferocious cruelty. Guelphs, they imprisoned (1295) and murdered, the Ghibelline leader in Rimini, Montagna de’ [Parcitati](#).

Malatesta, Malatestino

The brother of [Gianciotto](#) and [Paolo](#), and son of [Malatesta](#) de Verucchio, Lord of Rimini. Malatestino ruled Rimini 1312-1317.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57.](#) His father was ‘the old mastiff’, and he was ‘the young mastiff’, noted for their ferocious cruelty. Guelphs, they imprisoned (1295) and murdered, the Ghibelline leader in Rimini, Montagna de’ [Parcitati](#). In 1314 Cesena lost its freedom and came under Malatestino’s rule.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:55-90.](#) He obtained possession of Fano, and added it to Rimini. He invited the two chief nobles Guido del [Cassero](#), and Agniello da [Carignano](#) to meet him at La Cattolica on the Adriatic between Fano and Rimini. Their boat was intercepted and they were drowned off the headland of Focaro, between Fano and La Cattolica. The headland was notorious for its dangerous winds, so much so that sailors made vows and prayers for safe passage.

Malatesta, Paolo il Bello

Loved [Francesca da Rimini](#) and was killed by his brother [Gianciotto](#), her husband, along with her in 1285. He was himself married, to Orabile Beatrice di Ghiacciuolo, and was known as Il Bello for his personal beauty.

[Inferno Canto V:70-142](#). He weeps while Francesca tells Dante her story in Limbo.

Malavicini

The Malavicini, Counts of Bagnacavallo, between Imola and Ravenna, were Ghibellines, who in 1249 drove [Guido da Polenta](#) and his fellow Guelphs from Ravenna. They were subsequently notorious from their frequent changes of allegiance.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#).
Bagnacavallo is mentioned.

Malehaut, the Lady of

‘At these words which the queen spoke to him, the lady of Malehaut coughed, of a set purpose, and lifted her head that had been bowed.’ *Romance of Lancelot*. The moment was [Guinevere](#)’s first open acknowledgement of [Lancelot](#). [Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45](#). The incident is referred to.

Manfred, King of Naples and Sicily
Manfred (c1231-1266), the illegitimate son of Emperor [Frederick II](#) (died 1250), grandson of the Emperor [Henry VI](#) and his wife [Constance](#). He married Beatrice of Savoy whom bore him a daughter [Constanza](#), who in 1262 married [Peter III](#) of Aragon. Manfred was *manus Frederici*, the hand of Frederick, heir to his graces and virtues. In 1258 he usurped the rights of his nephew [Conradin](#) and

became King of Sicily. He entered into conflict, as a Ghibelline, with the Papacy of [Urban IV](#), and was again excommunicated (ultimately by three Popes in succession). [Clement IV](#) invited [Charles of Anjou](#) to Italy, and he was crowned as the alternative King of Sicily. Manfred was defeated by Charles, on the plain of Grandella, near Benevento (some thirty miles northeast of Naples) on February 26th 1266. He was killed there, and, refused Christian rites, was buried under a cairn, on the battlefield, each surviving soldier adding a stone. His body was disinterred by the [Bishop of Cosenza](#) on the Pope's orders, and carried across the River Verde (Garigliano) outside the boundary of the Kingdom of Naples, and the Papal States, so that he might not rest in the usurped realm, and with the rites used in excommunication. He was a poet and

patron of letters, accused of many things in his lifetime, including incest, by the Guelphs.

[Purgatorio Canto III:103-145](#). He is among he excommunicated.

Manfredi, Friar Alberigo de'

See [Alberigo](#).

Manfredi, Tebaldello

See [Tribaldello](#).

Mangiadore, Pietro

Petrus Comestor, 'Peter the Eater of Books' (d. 1179) who wrote the *Historia Scholastica*, a History of the Church from Genesis to Acts, paraphrasing the Scriptures. He belonged to the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris, and became Chancellor of the University of Paris in 1164.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Manto

The daughter of [Tiresias](#), and Apollo's prophetic priestess, the Pythoness, at Delphi, who married Rhacius, King of Caria, and bore him (or [Apollo](#)) a son Mopsus who was a famous soothsayer. [Inferno Canto XX:52-99](#). Her association with the founding of Mantua, Virgil's birthplace, is given. Virgil described an alternative version of Mantua's founding in Aeneid X198-200.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry. If this is Manto, then Dante has already placed her among the prophetesses in the Inferno.

Marcellus

Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the Roman consul, who opposed [Caesar](#),

pushing for him to be relieved of his military command when peace was declared, after the Gallic War, and for the disbandment of the army, and asking that Caesar should lose the privilege of standing for the consulship in absentia.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151](#). He is mentioned.

Marcia, wife of [Cato](#) of Utica

Noted for her integrity and nobility. For Dante (and for Chaucer, as *Marcia Catoun*) a type of the noble Roman wife. She was Cato's second wife who yielded her to his friend Quintus Hortensius. When he died she married Cato again. Dante's *Convito* treats her return to Cato as an allegory of the soul's return to God.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

[Purgatorio Canto I:28-84](#). Virgil tells Cato so, and invokes her love for him.

[Purgatorio Canto I:85-111](#). Separated from Cato, by the stream that separates Purgatory from Hell, she can no longer move him.

Marco, *see* [Lombardo](#)

Margaret of Burgundy

The second wife of [Charles I of Anjou](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). She is mentioned.

Margaret of Provence, wife of [St Louis](#)

Mars

The son of [Jupiter](#) and [Juno](#). The god of War. He was present at the battle with the Giants.

Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63. He is depicted on the roadway.

Paradiso Canto IV:1-63. The idea that He and other gods inhered in the planets named after them, led to the influence of the stars, and of Pagan Gods being confused, and both falsely worshipped in Paganism and Astrology.

Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148. The nominal father of Romulus.

Paradiso Canto IX:127-142. The founder and patron god of Florence, identified by Dante with Satan.

Paradiso Canto XIV:67-139. Dante's vision of Christ on the Cross.

Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45. Mars is identified with the constellation Leo, though not its astrological ruler, because of Dante's cluster of associations, around the idea of courage and fortitude, among them the animal, and the planet.

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154. A statue of Mars stood by the Ponte Vecchio. Buondelmonte was killed at its foot. Mars was the patron of the Florentines in Pagan days and his temple with a highly venerated statue stood on the site of the present Baptistery. When John the Baptist was adopted as the Christian patron saint of Florence, the statue of Mars was moved to a site by the Arno, where it was revered as protecting the State though the factionalism in the city was attributed to its influence. When Florence was destroyed by the Goths, the statue fell into the Arno, and it was held that Florence could not be rebuilt from the ruins unless the image was found. It was rescued from the Arno and set on a pillar at the north side of the Ponte Vecchio, when the city was restored by Charlemagne. It was lost in the

great flood of 1333 when the Ponte Vecchio was destroyed.

Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154. The hot-blooded son of Jupiter.

Marsyas

Paradiso Canto I:1-36. A satyr of Phrygia who competed with Apollo in a contest of musical skill, pipes against lyre. Marsyas was defeated, by the god. Apollo flayed him for challenging his skill, and Dante asks for the inspirational breath with which Apollo played on that occasion. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 382.

Martin IV, Pope

Simon de Brie of Tours, Pope from 1281 to 1285 with the name of Martin IV. He had been papal legate in France and was elected by the influence of Charles of Anjou. He died of eating too many eels from the lake of

Bolsena, stewed in Vernaccia wine. He was buried at Viterbo.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33](#). He is among the gluttonous.

Mary of Brabant, Queen of France

Mary of Brabant was accused by [Pierre de la Brosse](#), the surgeon and afterwards chamberlain of [King Philip III](#) of France, and by others, of having murdered Louis, Philip's son by his first wife, with poison, in 1276. She destroyed Pierre by falsely accusing him of an attempt on her honour, and of treasonable correspondence with Alfonso X of Castile, Philip's enemy. Pierre was hanged for this in 1278.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). She is advised by Dante to repent.

Mary of Jerusalem

A woman, who devoured her own child, rather than endure famine, during the terrible siege of Jerusalem, by Titus, the son of Vespasian, in AD70. Titus subsequently razed the city and the Temple, and robbed the inner sanctuary of its sacred objects, including the Scroll of the Law.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:1-36](#). She is mentioned.

Mary the Blessed Virgin

The Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus of Nazareth, for Dante the symbol of Divine Mercy. She took on much of the symbolism of the pre-Christian Great Goddesses, including that of Isis, consort of the Egyptian god Osiris. Isis had a wide following in the Roman Empire. She was depicted with the infant Horus on her

knee, and was the ‘stella maris’ of Mediterranean seamen.

Her name and that of Christ are never mentioned in the Inferno, where she is ‘*un possente*’ a powerful spirit.

Inferno Canto II:94-120. She sends Lucia to Beatrice to aid Dante.

Purgatorio Canto III:1-45. The virgin birth brought revealed truth into the world, to increase humanity’s incomplete knowledge.

Purgatorio Canto V:85-129.

Buonconte da Montefeltro one of the late-repentants died with her name on his lips.

Purgatorio Canto VIII:1-45. The guardian Angels with burning swords come from Mary’s breast.

Purgatorio Canto X:1-45. Gabriel’s Annunciation to her is sculpted on the frieze, indicating humility as a corrective to pride.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:1-45.](#) The first voice repeats the words Mary spoke at the Marriage feast at Cana. See John ii 3.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:46-84.](#) The shades repeat the Litany of the Saints.

[Purgatorio Canto XV:82-145.](#) Her words in the temple to [Christ.](#)

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:76-111.](#) After the Annunciation ‘Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda.’ See Luke 1.39.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:1-42.](#) ‘And laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn’ See Luke ii 7.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151.](#) She is described as the only Bride of the Holy Spirit.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154.](#) The Marriage in Cana, John ii 3, is again

referenced. Mary intercedes for mankind in Paradise.

[Purgatorio Canto XXV:109-139.](#) At the Annunciation Mary said: ‘How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? (*virum non cognosco*)’ See Luke i 31-34.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57.](#) Her vigil at the foot of the Cross, as the *mater dolorosa*, is mentioned. See John xix 25-27.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63.](#) She exists with God in the Empyrean.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117.](#) Her presence at the Crucifixion is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:52-90.](#) The supreme perfection of female Human Nature.

[Paradiso Canto XIV:1-66.](#) The Annunciation is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148.](#) Called on in childbirth. Madonna del Parto.

[Paradiso Canto XXIII:49-87](#). The Vision of her as the sacred Rose, coupled with the vision of the Apostles as the sacred Lilies.

[Paradiso Canto XXIII:88-139](#). The crowned Queen of Heaven.

[Paradiso Canto XXV:97-139](#). On the cross, Christ committed her to the care of Saint [John](#). See John xix 26-27. She and Christ, alone, rose to Heaven in body as well as spirit.

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:94-142](#). Dante, with Saint [Bernard](#), gazes at the Virgin enthroned in Heaven.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). The Virgin heads the descending line, through the Rose, that separates those who believed before Christ, from those who acquired faith after his coming. Below her are the ranks of Hebrew women who were ancestresses of Christ, and types of his Church.

Corresponding to her on the other side is [John the Baptist](#).

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:85-114](#). [Gabriel](#) in Heaven shows his adoration for her.

Marzucco, see [Scornigiani](#)

Mascheroni, Sassol

One of the Florentine Toschi family, killed his nephew, or perhaps his brother, to obtain the inheritance.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69](#). He is in Caïna, in the Ninth Circle.

Matilda

The type of the active life, equivalent to [Leah](#). Historically, Matelda, the Grancontessa of Tuscany (1046-1115) supporter of Pope Gregory VII was probably intended.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:1-51](#). Dante meets her.

Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:52-138. She explains features of the Garden of Eden, the Earthly Paradise to him.

Matthias, Saint

Inferno Canto XIX:88-133. See Acts i 13-26. Matthias was chosen by the Apostles, by lot, to fill the place among the Disciples forfeited by Judas.

Medea

Inferno Canto XVIII:67-99. The daughter of Aeetes, King of Colchis, who fell in love with Jason, helped him with her witchcraft, and was abandoned by him for Creusa. See Ovid's Metamorphoses VII 406.

Medicina, Piero Biancucci da

The family were lords of Medicina, about twenty miles east of Bologna. Pier was deprived of a praetorship by

[Frederick II](#), and his family were driven out of Romagna in 1287. He sowed dissent among the rulers of Romagna, setting [Polenta](#) and [Malatesta](#) against each other. The city of Vercelli in Piedmont and the castle of Marcabò near Ravenna, at the mouth of the Po, are the western and eastern extremities of old Romagna, the plain of Lombardy.

[Inferno Canto XXVIII:55-90](#). He is in the ninth chasm of the sowers of discord.

Medusa

The daughter of Phorcys, she is one of the Gorgons. The other two are Euryale and Stheino. Medusa was raped by Neptune(Poseidon) in the temple of Minerva(Athene), who changed her to a winged monster with snakes for hair, her gaze turning anyone who looked at her to stone.

Perseus decapitated her, looking at her reflection in his shield, and used her head to turn Atlas to stone. Pegasus the winged horse and Chrysaor a warrior sprang from her blood. She symbolises oduracy, delaying repentance.

[Inferno Canto IX:34-63](#). The [Erinyes](#) (Furies) invoke her, in order to be able to turn Dante to stone (harden his heart).

Melchisedek

The king and high-priest who received Abraham at Salem (Jerusalem) and blessed him. Abraham paid him a tithe of his spoils of victory. See Genesis xiv 18-24.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148](#). The type of the priest.

Meleager

The son of Oeneus, King of Calydon and Althaea daughter of Thestius. His life depended on a brand of wood that was burning in the fire at his birth, and that was rescued by his mother. He killed the Calydonian Boar and gave the skin to Atalanta (of Calydon) and when his uncles took it from her, killed them. Althaea burned the brand to revenge her son's murder of her two brothers. He then died as it was consumed. One of his sisters was [Deianira](#). See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII 445-525.

[Purgatorio Canto XXV:1-79](#). He is mentioned.

Melicertes

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). [Juno](#) was angered because of [Jupiter](#)'s adultery with [Semele](#), whom she punished, and took vengeance on the house of

[Cadmus](#) of Thebes, her father. She pursued [Ino](#), Semele's sister, by driving her husband [Athamas](#) mad. He killed their son [Learchus](#), and drove Ino to throw herself over a cliff, with their son Melicertes. Ino and Melicertes became sea-gods, namely Leucothea, the White Goddess, and Palaemon. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 261 and IV 519.

Melissus

The Greek philosopher, considered by [Aristotle](#) an example of the powers of false-reasoning.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142](#). He is mentioned.

Manalippus

See [Tydeus](#).

Mercury

The messenger God, son of Jupiter and Maia, one of the Pleiades.

Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99. He lulled Argus to sleep, and killed him at the request of Jupiter.

Paradiso Canto IV:1-63. The idea that He and other gods inhered in the planets named after them, led to the influence of the stars, and of Pagan Gods being confused, and both falsely worshipped in Paganism and Astrology.

Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154. Called Maia, as the son of Maia.

Metellus

Purgatorio Canto IX:106-145. A follower of Pompey, who tried to protect the Roman Treasury in the Temple of Saturn on the Tarpeian (Capitoline) Hill, from Caesar's plundering of it. Lucan in Pharsalia iii

153-168 stresses the sound of the Temple gates being opened.

Michael, the Archangel

[Inferno Canto VII:1-39](#). He warred against the dragon of Revelation XII, ‘that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world’. Satan fell through pride, and is the great falsifier, deceiver, and adulterator of God’s universe. I take that as the sense of ‘*superbo strupo*’.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:46-84](#). The shades repeat the Litany of the Saints.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He is shown with human form though beyond the human.

Michel, see [Zanche](#)

Michal

[Purgatorio Canto X:46-72](#). The daughter of [Saul](#) who saw King [David](#)

leaping and dancing and despised him in her heart. See Second Samuel vi 16.

Midas

The King of Phrygia, son of Gordius and Cybele, granted a wish by Bacchus, for helping his companion Silenus, and who wished that everything he touched might turn to gold. He soon regretted his greed. He was also given ass's ears for challenging Tmolus's judgement which preferred Apollo's lyre to Pan's pipes. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XI 106 et seq.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

Minos

The mythical King of Crete, son of Zeus and Europa, brother of Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon, lawgiver and builder of the Labyrinth at

Cnossus, [Daedalus](#) being the architect. He was appointed by Zeus as one of the three judges of the dead, with Rhadamanthys and Aeacus, and lived in the Elysian Fields in the Underworld. He ruled over ninety Cretan cities and controlled navigation of the Mediterranean. He is the judge of the infernal regions in [Virgil's Aeneid](#) and is for Dante a symbol of the sinner's guilty conscience.

[Inferno Canto V:1-51.](#)

[Inferno Canto XIII:79-108.](#) He sentences the sinners in Hell.

[Inferno Canto XX:31-51.](#) He is already in Hell to receive [Amphiaräus](#).

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136.](#) He coils his tail eight times, to indicate that [Guido da Montefeltro](#) should be sent to the eighth chasm of the eighth circle.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:100-120.](#) He is an infallible judge.

Purgatorio Canto I:28-84. Virgil is not bound by him, being in Limbo, not Dis.

Paradiso Canto XIII:1-51. Ariadne was his daughter.

Minotaur

Asterion, the bull-headed son produced by Minos's wife Pasiphaë's mating with 'a white bull from the sea', sacred to Poseidon. He was imprisoned in the Labyrinth of Cnossos, and killed by Theseus, who was helped by Asterion's half-sister Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë. He is for Dante, the type of bestiality, violence and brutishness. (See also Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII 132-169)

Inferno Canto XII:1-27. He guards the descent to the seventh circle.

Monaldi, of Orvieto

Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151. Feuded with the Filippeschi.

Montagna, see Parcitati

Montagues, Montecchi of Verona

Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151. Feuded with the Capulets, see Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet for a fictitious recreation of the feuding.

Montefeltro, Buonconte da

The son of Guido da Montefeltro, and like him a Ghibelline leader. He was in command of the Aretines when they were defeated at Campaldino by the Florentine Guelphs on June 11th 1289, and was killed there. Dante is supposed to have taken part on the Florentine side. Giovanna was his wife. Campaldino is in the upper Val d' Arno, or district of Casentino,

bounded by the mountains of Pratomagno to the west and the Apennine chain on the east. It lies between Poppi and Bibiena, where the River Archiano, which rises in the Apennines ,above the Monastery of Camaldoli, flows into the Arno, about an hour's walk from the battlefield. The mist and fog is a common feature of the valley.

[Purgatorio Canto V:85-129](#). He is among the late repentant killed by violence.

Montefeltro, Guido da

The Lord of Urbino, and one of the great Ghibelline captains. He became a Franciscan friar in 1296. [Boniface VIII](#) summoned him from his retreat in 1297 to consult with him about the razing of Palestrina (Penestrino) twenty-five miles east of Rome, held by the Colonna family, who were in

rebellion against the Church. Guido, finding it impregnable, advised Boniface to promise immunity and then break it, inducing the Colonna to surrender, (in September 1298), then razing the fortress to the ground. Dante regarded Guido highly for his entering the Franciscan order (See his *Convivio* iv 28). Guido was born in 1223 and died in 1298. His son [Buonconte](#) appears in the Purgatorio.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Montferrat, Marquis William of

See [William](#).

Montfort, Guy de

The son of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. He avenged the death of his father at the battle of Evesham (1265) where Edward (later Edward I) defeated the English barons, when, in

1271, while vicar general of Tuscany he murdered **Henry**, his cousin, the son of Richard Earl of Cornwall, the nephew of the English king, in the church of San Silvestro at Viterbo. Henry's heart was placed in a gold casket, and set on a pillar by London Bridge, or in the hand of his statue in Westminster Abbey.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is placed in the seventh circle of the violent, first ring.

Mordecai

[Ahasuerus](#), the Persian King, enriched [Haman](#), until he was accused by [Esther](#) of intending to take the life of Mordecai. Haman was executed in Mordecai's place. See Esther iii-viii.

[Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39](#). He is mentioned.

Mordred

The nephew and son of King [Arthur](#), who attempted to usurp his kingdom. In the last battle Arthur pierced Mordred with his lance, at the same time receiving his own death-wound. According to an Old French version of the theme, which differs from Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, 'after the lance was withdrawn a ray of sunlight passed through the wound...'

[Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69](#). He is in Caïna, in the Ninth Circle.

Moronto, brother of [Cacciaguida](#)

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). He is mentioned.

Mosca, *see* [Lamberti](#)

Moses

The lawgiver, who led Israel out of Egypt. See the Bible Exodus ii. The

type of the faithful man who does not swerve from service to the God of Israel.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99](#). At the Transfiguration, see Matthew xviii 1-8, [Christ](#) shone like the sun in white raiment, and Moses and [Elias](#) appeared talking with him.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He exists with God in the Empyrean.

[Paradiso Canto XXIV:115-154](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXVI:1-69](#). The Lord says to Moses ‘I will make all my goodness pass before thee’ Exodus xxxiii 19. The Vulgate says *ego ostendam omne bonum tibi*.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151](#). He sits to the left of [Adam](#) in Heaven.

Mozzi, Andrea de'

Andrea dei Mozzi, was made Bishop of Florence in 1287 and transferred to the see of Vicenza on the River Bacchiglione, in 1295, by Pope [Boniface VIII](#). He died there the following year. *Servus servorum Dei* was one of the Popes official titles, from [Gregory I](#) (590-604) onwards. [Inferno Canto XV:100-124](#). He is in Hell for sodomy.

Mozzi, Rocco de'

[Inferno Canto XIII:130-151](#). Possibly the speaker is Rocco, who hanged himself, as a bankrupt, or alternatively Lotto degli [Agli](#).

Muses

The Nine Muses, the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne (Memory), the patronesses of the liberal arts. Their names were Clio (History),

Melpomene (Tragedy), Thalia (Comedy), Euterpe (Lyric poetry), Terpsichore (Dance), Calliope (Epic poetry), Erato (Love poetry), [Urania](#) (Astronomy, and the Music of the Spheres), and Polyhymnia (Sacred Song). [Calliope](#), the mother of [Orpheus](#), is the eldest sister of the Muses. They lived on Mount Helicon and Mount Parnassus, where their sacred springs were Aganippe and Hippocrene on the first, and Castalia on the second. They are ‘doctae sorores’ the ‘learned sisters’. See Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* V.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:1-39](#). Dante invokes their help.

[Purgatorio Canto I:1-27](#). Dante declares his allegiance to them.

The Muses took up the challenge issued by the nine daughters of King Pierus, the Emathides, also called the Pierides, a name for the Muses

themselves, from Pieria, the earliest site of their worship. The Emathides were defeated and were turned into magpies. [Calliope](#) lead the singing. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* V 300 etc. [Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). They (and their mountain Parnassus) are mentioned, as the foster-mothers of the pagan poets.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:37-61](#). Dante invokes the Muses, and the streams of Helicon, and calls on [Urania](#).

[Paradiso Canto II:1-45](#). The Muses show the poet his means of guiding himself.

[Paradiso Canto XII:1-36](#). They are mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:58-99](#). The fountain of Hippocrene on Helicon, sprang from a blow of the hoof of Pegasus, the winged horse, born from the blood of [Medusa](#). He and his brother Chrysaor the warrior were

sired by Neptune. See Ovid's Metamorphoses IV 768, V 257.

Paradiso Canto XXIII:49-87. Dante mentions Polyhymnia.

Myrrha

Inferno Canto XXX:1-48. The daughter of Cinyras who conceived an incestuous passion for her father, and in darkness, using an assumed name, entered his bed. She conceived Adonis, and was changed into the myrrh-tree from which Adonis was born. See Ovid's Metamorphoses X 489.

Narcissus

Inferno Canto XXX:91-129. The son of the naiad Liriope and the river-god Cephissus who fell in love with his own beautiful image in a still pool, and was loved by Echo in vain. He was changed to a flower, *the narcissus*, and she wasted away to become an

echoing voice. See Ovid's Metamorphoses III 407.

[Paradiso Canto III:1-33](#). He is mentioned.

Nasidius

[Lucan](#), in Pharsalia ix 763 and 790, tells of the two soldiers of [Cato](#)'s army who were stung by snakes while marching across Libya. Nasidius swelled so that his coat of mail gave way, while the other melted.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). The story is mentioned.

Naso, =[Ovid](#)

The Roman poet, Publius Ovidius Naso, born at Sulmo in 43 BC. He was exiled from Augustan Rome in AD8 (for a poem, probably the Ars Amatoria, and an error, probably an indiscretion concerning Augustus's wayward daughter Julia) and died at

Tomis on the Black Sea in AD 17. His greatest work is the *Metamorphoses*, a retelling of Myths down to his own time, based on the theme of change. This, the '*Ovidio Maggiore*' was the main source for Dante's knowledge of Mythology, along with Virgil's *Aeneid*. (For a modern English translation of the *Metamorphoses*, browse or download from [OVID AND OTHERS.](#))

[Inferno Canto IV:64-105](#). He is among the great poets in Limbo.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). He is mentioned by name, his *Metamorphoses* providing stories of transformations.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:37-72](#). The Plague at Aegina is retold in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII 523-657. Jupiter restored the population after the plague sent by Juno, by transforming ants into men, called the Myrmidons from the

Greek word for an ant. Valdichiano and Maremma in Tuscany, and the island of Sardinia, are also mentioned here for their unhealthiness in summer.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154.](#)

Dante refers to the Golden Age, described by Ovid in the Metamorphoses I 103 et seq.

Nathan the Prophet

He denounced [David](#)'s sins. See Second Samuel xii.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145.](#) He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Nebuchadnezzar

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63.](#)

Nebuchadnezzar I, King of the Babylonian Empire, (flourished 1137 BC) who liberated the country from Elamite rule. He besieged and took Jerusalem, and figures in the Book of [Daniel](#).

Nella, wife of Forese Donati

Purgatorio Canto XXIII:37-90.

She is mentioned.

Neptune

The sea-god, the son of Saturn and brother of Jupiter and Pluto. He is the Greek Poseidon.

Paradiso Canto XXXIII:49-145. He is mentioned.

Nerli, of Florence

Paradiso Canto XV:88-148. One of the ancient Guelph families.

Nessus

The Centaur, son of Ixion, killed by Hercules, with an arrow poisoned with the Hydra's blood, for his attempt to steal and rape Deianira. He dipped his fatal shirt in his own, poisoned, blood, and gave it as a gift (a supposed love

charm) to Deianira, who thereby, unwittingly, brought about Hercules's death.

[Inferno Canto XII:49-99](#). He displays his usual rashness in the seventh circle.

Niccolo, Salimbeni or Buonsignori

A member of the *Brigata Spendereccia*, the Spendthrift Brigade, a club founded by twelve wealthy Sieneese, in the second half of the thirteenth century, who vied with each other in squandering their money on riotous living. He appears to have invented a costly dish using cloves.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139](#). He is in the tenth chasm.

Nicholas, Bishop and Saint

The fourth century Bishop of Myra in Lydia who saved the honour of three poor daughters of a fellow-townsmen, by secretly throwing bags of gold

through their window at night, enabling them to marry with a dowry. He is known as St Nicholas of Bari where his shrine is. (See *Legenda Aurea*)

[Purgatorio Canto XX:1-42](#). He is mentioned.

Nicholas III, Pope

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#). Nicholas III, Giovanni Guatani Orsini, Pope from 1277 to 1280. The [Orsini](#) family emblem was a she-bear. He had to wait 23 years in Hell until the death of [Boniface](#) his successor in 1303, who would in turn wait only eleven years for the death of [Clement V](#). (Benedict XI, in between them, Pope from 1303-1304 was not given to simony.)

Nimrod

The mighty hunter, son of Cush, grandson of Ham the son of Noah, and

ruler of Babel (Babylon), see Genesis x 9, under whose rule Dante places the building of the tower of Babel, in the land of Shinar, which God frowned on, confounding their language, see Genesis xi 4. So Dante has Nimrod speak in an unintelligible mixture of tongues.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:46-81](#). He is a Giant guarding the central pit.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). He is depicted on the roadway.

Nino, see [Visconti](#)

Ninus

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). The Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad V, King of Assyria, whom his wife [Semiramis](#) (Sammuramat) was believed to have succeeded, as regent during the minority of her son from 810-805BC.

Niobe

The daughter of the Phrygian king Tantalus, and Dione, one of the Pleiades. The wife of [Amphion](#), king of Thebes. She roused the wrath of Latona through boasting of her seven sons and seven daughters. They were slaughtered, and she was turned to stone on Mount Siphylus in Asia Minor where her statue weeps tears. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Vi 172 et seq.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). She is depicted on the roadway.

Nisus

[Inferno Canto I:100-111](#). The son of Hyrtacus, comrade of [Euryalus](#) in the *Aeneid*. He dies avenging the death of Euryalus in *Aeneid* IX.

Noah

The builder of the ark, by which mankind survived the great flood. See the Bible Genesis vi. The type of the pious man.

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes his spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

[Paradiso Canto XII:1-36](#). God's covenant with him, Genesis ix 8.

Novello, Alessandro

Bishop of Feltre, who in 1314 surrendered certain gentlemen of Ferrara, in his protection, to Pino della Tosa who then governed Ferrara as vicar of [King Robert](#), by whom they were killed. Malta was a tower near Padua where [Ezzelino](#) held his prisoners, or a Papal prison for criminal priests either at Viterbo, or on the Lake of Bolsena.

[Paradiso Canto IX:1-66](#). He is mentioned.

Obizzo, see [Este](#)

Oderigi (Oderisi) of Gubbio

An illuminator and painter of miniatures. Vasari says he was at Rome in 1295, to illuminate manuscripts, in the Vatican Library, for Pope [Boniface VIII](#), and the work was shared with [Franco](#) of Bologna. [Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117](#). He is among the proud.

Oedipus

The son of Laius, and [Jocasta](#) who killed his father Laius and married his mother. See Sophocles Theban Trilogy. [Themis](#) was the goddess of Justice, daughter of Heaven and Earth, with oracular powers, and the [Sphinx](#) was her oracular priestess, who set Oedipus the famous riddle ‘ What goes on four legs in the morning, two at

midday, and three in the evening?’ which he answered correctly with ‘Mankind’. Themis in anger at the riddle being solved sent a wild beast to ravage the countryside. Dante says *Naiades*, instead of *Laiades* for Oedipus the son of Laius, following a textual corruption of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* VII 759 et al where the story is referred to.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57.](#)

She is mentioned.

Omberto, see [Aldobrandesco](#)

Ordelaffi, Sinibaldo degli

[Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57.](#) Sinibaldo held Forlì in 1300, which had endured a long siege by the French soldiers of [Pope Martin IV](#), who were finally routed with great slaughter by [Guido da Montefeltro](#) himself. The

family arms were a lion rampant vert on a field or.

Orestes and Pylades

The son of [Agamemnon](#) and Clytaemnestra, and brother of [Electra](#), and [Iphigenia](#), who killed the usurper Aegisthus, and his mother Clytaemnestra to avenge his father's murder at their hands. His friendship with Pylades, the son of Strophius was proverbial. Pylades offered to take his place when he was condemned to death, see [Cicero](#) De Amicitia 7.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:1-45](#). His is the second voice.

Orlando, Roland

[Charlemagne](#)'s nephew, and the hero of the battle of Roncesvalles, who, went down to defeat with his Franks, fighting against the Saracens, while attempting to hold the valley in

778AD. He blew his horn in desperation, to alert his uncle eight miles away, but Charlemagne was misled by the advice of the traitor [Ganelon](#), and did not provide aid. The epic is told in the Old French *Chanson de Roland*, the ‘Song of Roland’, where the intensity of his blast on the horn shattered it. The defeat allowed Arab incursions into Narbonne in 793. [Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Ormanni, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Orosius, Paolus

An early fifth century writer, whose *Historia adversus Paganos* was an apologetic treatise written at the suggestion of [Augustine](#) to show that Christianity had not ruined the Empire, as Pagans contended.

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Orpheus

The mythical son of the Thracian King Oeagrus and the Muse Calliope (of epic poetry). He was both poet and musician. He attempted to rescue his wife Eurydice from Hades but lost her when he broke the injunction not to look back. He taught the sacred mysteries of the Goddess in defiance of Dionysus and was torn to pieces by the Maenads. His head floated down the river Hebrus and was carried to the island of Lesbos. The Muses buried his

limbs at Leibethra at the foot of Olympus where the nightingales sing more sweetly than anywhere else on earth.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Orsini, of Rome

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#). The family emblem was a she-bear. The Pope [Nicholas III](#) was of the family.

Orso, see [Alberti](#)

Ostiense, Henry of Susa

Henry of Susa became Cardinal Bishop of Ostia in 1261, and was a commentator on the Decretals. He died in 1271. Studied by those seeking professional standing.

[Paradiso Canto XII:37-105](#). He is mentioned.

Ottaviano, see [Ubalдини](#)

Ottocar, King of Bohemia

King of Bohemia (1253-1278), but forced to serve under [Rudolph I](#) who asserted his supremacy, when elected Emperor. Ottakar paid homage, but refused to return Imperial lands, and died at the battle of the Marchfeld near Vienna in 1278. Ottocar's son [Wenceslas II](#) (1278-1305)(*not* the earlier king and Saint) was allowed to retain Bohemia and Moravia, but had to give up Austria and Styria (Rudolph's sons [Albert](#) and Rudolph were invested with these), Carinthia and Carniola.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers.

Ovid, see [Naso](#)

Pagani, Maghinardo de'

[Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57](#). Mainardo Pagano, or Maghinardo Pagano da Susinana, lord of Faenza on the River Lamone; Imola, near the Santerno; and Forlì. His arms were a lion azure on a field argent. He was a Ghibelline in the north ('*state*') and a Guelph in Florence ('*verno*'). He died in 1302.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned. He was called 'the devil' because of his cunning.

Palazzo, Corrado da

A Ghelph of Brescia, Vicar for [Charles of Anjou](#) in Florence (1276), Podestà of Siena (1279) and of Piacenza (1288).

[Purgatorio Canto XVI:97-145](#). He is mentioned.

Pallas, son of Evander

An Arcadian prince, the son of Evander, who ruled a city on the site of Rome, formed an alliance with [Aeneas](#) and was killed by [Turnus](#). See Virgil's Aeneid viii-x.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Pannocchiesci, Paganello de'

[Purgatorio Canto V:130-136](#). The husband of Pia de Tolomei, who caused her death. [See La Pia](#).

Parcitati, Montagna de'

[Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57](#). He was the Ghibelline leader in Rimini, imprisoned by [Malatesta da Verrucchio](#) in 1295, and murdered by his son [Malatestino](#).

Paris, son of Priam

The Trojan Prince whose abduction of Helen from Sparta initiated the Trojan War. (See Homer's Iliad.) The son of Priam and Hecuba. Paris was involved in judging the merits of the three goddesses Hera, Athene, and Aphrodite, choosing Aphrodite, Goddess of Love, as supreme. (The Judgement of Paris). To Dante and the Middle Ages the type of the great (pagan) lover.

Inferno Canto V:52-72. He is a carnal sinner in Limbo.

Parmenides

The Greek philosopher, considered by Aristotle an example of the powers of false-reasoning.

Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142. He is mentioned.

Pasiphaë

The wife of [Minos](#) of Crete, and mother of the [Minotaur](#), Asterion, whom she conceived by coupling, concealed in a wooden framework made to look like a heifer, with a white bull from the sea. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII 132 and IX 736. [Inferno Canto XII:1-27](#). Mentioned indirectly.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:1-66](#). Mentioned as an example of lust.

Paul, Saint

Saul of Tarsus, born about 10AD, Jewish by birth but a Roman citizen. He underwent conversion on the road to Damascus. Acts ix 1-9. He preached at Paphos, Philippi, Athens, Ephesus etc., and was martyred in Rome with [Saint Peter](#) on the same day.

[Inferno Canto II:1-42](#). In the medieval Vision of St Paul he enters Hell. He is called the Chosen Vessel in Acts ix 15. [Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154](#). He appears in the [Divine Pageant](#) carrying a sword (of the spirit, and of his martyrdom)

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:100-136](#). He is alive in the living religion.

[Paradiso Canto XXI:52-142](#). He was a 'Chosen Vessel'. See Acts ix 15.

[Paradiso Canto XXIV:52-87](#). Faith is an intellectual virtue to the Catholic Church, and Dante here quotes Saint Paul's definition in Hebrew xi 1 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:94-139](#). He was supposed to have revealed the Angelic Hierarchies to [Dionysius](#) the Aeropagite.

Pazzi, Carlino and Camiccione

Camicione, one of the Pazzi of Valdarno, killed his kinsman, Ubertino. Carlino, still living at the time of the Vision, held the castle of Piantravigne for the Whites of Florence against the Blacks of Florence and Lucca, but was bribed to surrender it treacherously to the enemy, causing the deaths of many of the Bianchi.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:40-69](#). He has a place reserved for him in the Antenora, in the Ninth Circle, as a traitor against his country.

Pazzo, Rinieri

A notorious highwayman of Dante's time.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#) He is in the seventh circle.

Peleus

The son of Aeacus, and father of [Achilles](#) by [Thetis](#) the sea-goddess. [Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45](#). Peleus's spear was given to him by [Chiron](#) the Centaur. It was cut from an ash on Mount Pelion. Hephaestus forged its blade, and Athene polished the shaft. At Troy Achilles wounded Telephus with it. He was a king of Mysia and the son of [Hercules](#) and the nymph Auge. Rust from the spear, rubbed on the wound, cured it. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XII 112 and XIII 171.

Penelope

The wife of [Ulysses](#).
[Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142](#). She is mentioned.

Penthesilea

The Amazon queen, the daughter of Otrere and Ares, killed by [Achilles](#)

when she fought for the Trojans during the Trojan War. The type of a noble woman. She had sought refuge at Troy from the Furies after accidentally killing her sister Hippolyte.

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). She is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

Pera, della of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Perillus

He made the bronze bull for Phalaris, the tyrant of Sicily. Heated by fire victims were roasted inside it, Perillus himself being the first victim.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:1-30](#). He is mentioned, indirectly.

Persius

Persius Flaccus, the Roman satirist
(34-62AD)

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114.](#)

He is in Limbo.

Peter, Saint, the Apostle

[Inferno Canto I:112-136.](#) Christ entrusted the keys of the Church to Peter, as the ‘rock’ on which the Church would be built (Matthew xvi,18). The Angel at the Gate of Purgatory holds the keys. Peter died at Rome as a martyr in the persecutions under Nero. His memorial monument at the cemetery on the Vatican Hill was built about AD160-170. The Bishops of Rome (from Stephen onwards, bishop AD 254-256), and the Popes, were his successors.

[Inferno Canto XIX:88-133.](#) Dante refers to [Christ](#)’s injunction to Peter,

‘Follow me’, see Matthew iv 19, and John xxi 19.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:106-145.](#)

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:34-75.](#) The Angel at the Gate of Purgatory hold his two keys to Confession on Peter’s behalf, with instructions to err on the side of leniency with the truly contrite.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:46-84.](#) The shades repeat the Litany of the Saints.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93.](#) He is Simon Peter, called the Fisherman. See Mark i 16. (‘I will make you to become fishers of men’)

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154.](#) He appears in the [Divine Pageant.](#)

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99.](#) He was present at the Transfiguration, see Matthew xviii 1-8 when [Christ](#) shone like the sun in white raiment, and [Moses](#) and [Elias](#) appeared talking with him, and after they were overcome Christ said ‘Arise, and be not afraid’.

Christ is the apple-tree, in accord with the Song of Solomon ii 3, 'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.'

[Paradiso Canto XI:118-139](#). The Church and Papacy is Peter's 'boat'.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:100-136](#). He is alive in the living religion.

[Paradiso Canto XXI:52-142](#). He was Simon Peter the son of Jona, called Cephas, 'a stone' by Christ. See John i 42.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto XXIII:88-139](#). He holds the keys of the Faith.

[Paradiso Canto XXIV:115-154](#). See John xx 3-6. Though the other disciple runs more quickly to the tomb of Christ, it is Peter, according to John, who enters it before him.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:115-151](#). He sits at the right hand of the [Virgin](#).

Peter Damian, Saint

Saint Peter Damian, of Ravenna, some time Abbot of the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana in the Apennines, beneath Monte Catria, near Gubbio. (Dante is said to have found refuge there after the death of [Henry VII](#).) His parents' poverty lead to him being exposed as an infant, but he was rescued and educated by his brother Damian, taking the name Damiani, 'Damian's Peter', He was made Cardinal Bishop of Ostia in 1058, against his will, by Pope Stephen IX. He styled himself Peter the Sinner, *Petrus peccator*, and visited the monastery of Pomposa on an island at the mouth of the Po, near Commachio. He was an ardent reformer of Church discipline and one

of the chief ecclesiastical writers of the eleventh century. He was a friend and ally of Hildebrand afterwards Saint Gregory VII. He died at Faenza in 1072.

[Paradiso Canto XXI:52-142](#). He is in the seventh sphere.

Peter of Spain, see [Pope John XXI](#)

Peter the Lombard

Peter (c1100-1160) an Augustinian, known as ‘the Master of the *Sentences*’ wrote his four books on God, the Creation, Redemption, and the Sacraments and Last Things, as the chief summary of medieval theology before [Aquinas](#), who commented on it. In the prologue he speaks of himself as ‘desiring with the poor widow (Luke xxi 1-4) to cast something out of our poverty into the treasury of the Lord.’

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Peter III, King of Aragon

Pere III (1276-1285), took Sicily from [Charles I of Anjou](#) after the Sicilian Vespers in 1282. He had married [Manfred](#)'s daughter [Costanze](#). He and Charles both died in 1285. He was succeeded by his son [Alfonso III](#) who died in 1291. Aragon and Sicily were ruled by his younger sons, [James](#) and [Frederick](#) at the time of the Vision. Dante regards them as degenerates, but Manfred calls them the honour of Aragon and Sicily in Purgatorio III. [Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers.

Pettignano, Piero

A Franciscan friar (and comb-seller) from Chianti who settled in Siena, where he died in 1289. He was

renowned for his piety, and venerated as a saint, being recognised officially in 1328.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:85-154](#). He prayed for [Sapia](#).

Phaedra

The daughter of [Pasiphae](#) and [Minos](#), sister of [Ariadne](#). She married [Theseus](#), but loved [Hippolytus](#) her stepson. Repulsed by him she accused him to his father, and so brought about his death. See Racine's *Phaedra*. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XV 500 et seq. [Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). She is mentioned as being one who accused another of a crime, which they themselves were guilty of.

Phaëton, Phaëthon

[Inferno Canto XVII:79-136](#). The son of Phoebus [Apollo](#) and [Clymene](#), the wife of the Ethiopian king Merops,

and the grandson of Tethys. He asked Phoebus for proof of his paternity, and, being granted a wish, requested to drive the chariot of the sun. He could not control it, and was killed by Jupiter's thunderbolt to prevent the earth being destroyed. He was buried, by the Naiads, on the banks of the River Po. The Milky Way was supposed by the Pythagoreans to be the sign of his journey, still visible in the heavens. (See Dante's *Convivio* ii) See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I 751, and II passim.

[Purgatorio Canto IV:52-87](#). He is mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:106-132](#). His death is mentioned, when [Jupiter](#) for the good of all destroyed the one.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). He asked his mother to tell him the truth about his paternity.

Paradiso Canto XXXI:94-142. He is mentioned.

Philip III, King of France

Philip the Bold (1270-1285) attempted to seize the throne of Peter III of Aragon on behalf of his son Charles de Valois, with the connivance of Pope Martin IV. He was defeated by Roger di Loria, Peter's admiral at Gerona, and died at Perpignan. His son was Philip IV.

Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136. He is one of the negligent rulers.

Philip IV, the Fair, King of France

King of France (1285-1314), son of Philip III, he strengthened the monarchy, and dissolved the Knights Templars in 1307. He supported the Avignon Papacy, and won Champagne, Flanders and other territories for the Crown. He married

Joan, the daughter of [Henry I of Navarre](#), ‘the Fat’.

See [Ciaccio’s prophecy](#) and [Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#) for an indirect reference.

[Inferno Canto XIX:31-87](#) He reputedly accepted a bribe from Bertrand de Goth, to make him Pope (as [Clement V](#)).

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is mentioned, adversely.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96](#). Dante calls him the new Pilate, because he delivered [Boniface](#) to his enemies the Colonnese, as [Pilate](#) delivered [Christ](#) to the Council of the Jews. He caused the Templars to be persecuted from 1307, greedy, it was said, for their immense wealth.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He debased the coinage by two-thirds in 1302 to defray the cost of his Flemish

campaign. He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Phlegyas

Avenged his daughter Coronis, raped by [Apollo](#), by burning down the god's temple at Delphi for which he was condemned to Tartarus.

In the Aeneid vi 618-620 he issues a warning against scorning the gods.

[Inferno Canto VIII:1-30](#). He is the ferryman of the marsh in the Fifth Circle.

Pholus

A [centaur](#) who entertained [Hercules](#) and was accidentally killed by one of his arrows. He was present at the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs.

[Inferno Canto XII:49-99](#). He is in the seventh circle.

Photinus

[Inferno Canto XI:1-66](#). Deacon of Thessalonica. See [Anastasius](#).

Phyllis

The daughter of the Thracian King Sithon (living near Mount Rhodope in Thrace) who was loved by [Demophoön](#), King of Melos, the son of [Theseus](#) and [Phaedra](#). He failed to keep his promise to return to her, and when he did eventually return to find her she had committed suicide, but had been transformed into an almond tree by [Athene](#). (See Burne-Jones painting 'The Tree of Forgiveness', Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, Merseyside, England) See Ovid's Heroides.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#). She is mentioned.

Pia, de' Tolomei

The traditional story is that La Pia belonged to the Tolomei of Siena, and married Nello d'Inghiramo dei [Pannocchiesci](#), the Podestà of Volterra in 1277, of Lucca in 1314, the captain of the Tuscan Guelphs in 1284 and still alive in 1322. He put her to death at the Castello della Pietra, in the marshes of the Sienese Maremma, in 1295, throwing her from a window, or alternatively she died of disease in that unhealthy place. He was said to be jealous, or to want rid of her in order to marry the Countess Margherita degli Aldobrandeschi, the widow of [Guy de Montfort](#). The identification of La Pia may well be wrong, but the story survives.

[Purgatorio Canto V:130-136](#). She is with the late repentants who died of violence.

(See D. G. Rossetti's Oil painting – La Pia de' Tolomei – University of Kansas.) In La Pia's words to Dante there is an echo of the lines on Virgil's tomb, at Naples, 'MANTUA ME GENUIT, CALABRI RAPUERRE, TENET NUNC PARTHENOPE : CECINI PASCUA, RURA, DUCES.'

Piccarda, see [Donati](#)

Pigli, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned. Their arms barred with ermine=vair.

Pilate

Pontius Pilate the Governor of Judea, before whom Christ was arraigned. See Matthew xxvii 11.

Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96. He is mentioned.

Pinamonte, see Buonaccorsi

Pisistratus

Purgatorio Canto XV:82-145. The lord of Athens, who gave this answer, when urged by his wife to put to death a young man, who had kissed their daughter in public. *‘Si eos, qui nos amant, interficimus, quid his faciemus, quibus odio sumus?’* (Valerius Maximus) The right to name the city of Athens was disputed by Pallas Athene (Minerva) and Poseidon (Neptune). See Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* VI 70.

Pius I, Saint and Pope

Saint Pius I, Pope (140-155AD).

Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66. He died for the faith.

Plato

The Greek Philosopher, 428/7?-348/7BC, born at Athens of a distinguished family. His father was named Ariston, his mother Perictione was the sister of Charmides and niece of Critias who both figured in the Oligarchy of 404/3. He was a follower of [Socrates](#), and developed the search for universals with his concept of the Ideas, or the Doctrine of Forms. He made massive contributions to the theory of knowledge, moral theory and politics (The Republic).

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

[Purgatorio Canto III:1-45](#). The pagan philosophers cannot hope to understand the '*why*' of God's works, and are condemned to an unsatisfied desire for supreme knowledge. ([Aquinas](#): 'the one demonstrates by

means of the cause and is called *propter quid*.... the other by means of the effect and is called the demonstration *quia*.)

[Purgatorio Canto IV:1-18](#). Dante gives a refutation of the doctrine of the multiplicity of souls, ascribed to Plato by [Thomas Aquinas](#). If souls were plural, we would not become so absorbed as to neglect the passage of time.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). Dante refers to Plato's *Timaeus*, available to him in Chalcidius's Latin paraphrase. The doctrine he repeats, as understood by Dante, gives excessive power to the stars, fatal to freewill.

Plautus

The Roman playwright and poet (254-184BC). His plays were adapted from Menander and other Greek writers.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114.](#)

He is in Limbo.

Plutus, Pluto

Pluto was the son of [Saturn](#) and the brother of Jupiter and Neptune, and was assigned the rule of the Underworld. Dante merges him with Plutus, god of the riches dug from the ground, and therefore the source of the sin of avarice, and the '*great enemy*'.

[Inferno Canto VI:94-115.](#) Dante and Virgil find him at the start of the descent to the Fourth Circle of Hell.

[Inferno Canto VII:1-39.](#) He mutter words in an unknown language, that Virgil understands, and collapses at Virgil's reply.

Polenta, see [Francesca Malatesta](#) da

Polenta, Guido Vecchio

The lord of Ravenna, father of [Francesca](#) da Rimini, and grandfather of Guido Novello, who employed Dante on various missions (See Dante: Epistolae viii) and may have assisted him to find a last refuge in Ravenna, where Dante's tomb is sited. The family arms were an eagle, half argent, on an azure field, half gules on field or.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:31-57](#). He ruled Ravenna, and Cervia, twelve miles south, in 1300.

Polycletus

The Greek sculptor (c452-412BC), mentioned by Aristotle and others, and of the same generation as Pheidias. He made the gold and ivory statue of Hera, in the Heraion near Mycenae, famous for its grandeur and beauty, and it was engraved in miniature on

the coins of Argos. See Pausanias II xvii 3.

[Purgatorio Canto X:1-45](#). He is mentioned.

Polydorus

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). The son of [Priam](#) and [Hecuba](#), sent by Priam to the court of [Polymestor](#) of Thrace, and done to death by Polymestor, Priam's son-in-law. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 432 et seq. and Virgil's *Aeneid* iii 49.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

Polymnestor

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). The son-in-law of [Priam](#) and [Hecuba](#), who sent their son [Polydorus](#) to his court in Thrace. He murdered Polydorus and threw his body into the sea to be found

subsequently by Hecuba. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XIII 430 et seq.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

Polynices

The son of Oedipus and [Jocasta](#), and brother of [Eteocles](#). They fought over the succession, in the war of the Seven against Thebes. Both brothers were killed and, according to [Statius](#) in the *Thebaid* xii 429 et seq. the flames of their funeral pyre itself were divided.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84](#). They are mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93](#). They are indirectly mentioned.

Polyxena

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). The Trojan princess, daughter of [Priam](#) and [Hecuba](#). According to Ovid (*Metamorphoses* XIII 448) she is

slaughtered at [Achilles](#)'s tomb after the fall of Troy, but according to later versions of the myths his love for her brought about his death, when he was killed by [Paris](#) in a temple where he had gone to marry her, after being promised her hand if he would join forces with the Trojans.

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). She is mentioned.

Pompeius Magnus, Cneius, Pompey the Great

Consul, General, Julius [Caesar](#)'s son-in-law having married [Julia](#). Defeated by Caesar in the Civil War, ended by the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly. Fled to Alexandria. Murdered by [Ptolemy XIII](#).

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Pompeius, Sextus

The son of Pompey the Great (died 35BC). He was defeated by [Julius Caesar](#) at Munda in 45BC and by Octavian's ([Augustus](#)'s) admiral Agrippa at Mylae and Naulochus off Sicily in 36BC. Lucan gives him a very bad press.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is in the seventh circle.

Prata, Guido da

A native of Ravenna. He died c1245.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Prato, cardinal Niccolo of

Cardinal Nicholas of Prato was sent to Florence by Pope Benedict XI in early 1304 to attempt a reconciliation between the warring factions. He failed, and laid the city under an

interdict, excommunicating several citizens. Several local disasters at the time, such as a fire caused by a factional fight, destroying many houses, and a bridge collapse during a May day festival (the wooden Ponte Carraia) were attributed to divine disapproval.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:1-42](#). He is mentioned.

Pressa, della of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Priam

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). King of Troy, during the Trojan War. The son of Laomedon, and husband of [Hecuba](#). He was killed by [Pyrrhus](#), at the fall of Troy.

Priscian

A Latin grammarian of the early sixth century AD.

[Inferno Canto XV:100-124](#). He is in Hell for sodomy.

Procne and Philomela

The daughter of Pandion, wife of Tereus, mother of Itys, and sister of Philomela. Her sister is raped and mutilated by Tereus, and the two sisters together conspire to kill the son, Itys, and serve his flesh to Tereus at a banquet. In Latin sources (Virgil's *Georgics* etc) she is changed into the swallow, Philomela into the nightingale, and Tereus into the hoopoe. See also Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VI 428 et seq. In Greek sources of the myth, Procne is the nightingale and Philomela the swallow. Ovid does not clarify the

point. Dante hints at the Greek sources, Procne being the more impious of the two sisters.

Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33. The swallow sings its sad songs in memory of the pain.

Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39. The nightingale is mentioned in the context of impiety, suggesting Procne. Procne killed Itys, though Philomela immediately slit his throat, so that both committed an impiety, but Procne more so, since it was her own child.

Proserpine, Persephone, Kore

The daughter of Demeter(Ceres), seized by Pluto(Dis) on the plain of Enna in Sicily. Ceres-Demeter searched for her. Because Persephone had eaten food in Hades, pomegranate seeds, she was allowed to return to earth for only six months of the year, and spent the other six in Hell. The

vegetation rituals of Ceres-Demeter and Persephone formed the essence of the secret mysteries at Eleusis. Persephone is one of the incarnations of the triple moon-goddess. (See Skelton: 'Diana in the leaves green, Luna who so bright doth sheen, Persephone in Hell.')

See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* V 376-564.

[Inferno Canto X:73-93](#). [Farinata](#) mentions her moon-incarnation.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:1-51](#). Dante, seeing [Matilda](#), recalls her.

Provenzano Salvani

Ptolemy, the astronomer

Claudius Ptolemaeus, fl.127-51 AD, codified astronomical knowledge in his work the *Almagest*. He was the authority throughout the Middle Ages. His earth-centred theory was

subsequently overturned by the heliocentric theory of Copernicus.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Ptolemy, King of Egypt

Ptolemy XII of Egypt, overthrown by [Caesar](#) in 47BC.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Pygmalion

King of Tyre, brother of [Dido](#), who murdered her husband, their uncle, [Syphaeus](#), out of greed for gold. See Virgil's Aeneid i 350.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). He is mentioned.

Pyramus

A Babylonian, who in Ovid's story (Metamorphoses IV 55-166) believes

that a lion has killed his lover [Thisbe](#) when he reaches their meeting place, He kills himself, and then Thisbe, finding him, kills herself also. The mulberry tree under which they were to meet has red fruit thereafter, its leaves and roots being soaked with his blood. The story is one of true love, and Shakespeare used it as a basis for the ending of Romeo and Juliet, despite his unfortunate ridiculing of the story in The Midsummer Night's Dream.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45](#). The story is mentioned.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:58-102](#). He is mentioned.

Pyrrhus, King of Epirus

King of Epirus (318-272BC) who campaigned against the Carthaginians in Sicily, and against the Romans (his costly victory at Asculum led to the

expression ‘a Pyrrhic victory’) was defeated by the Romans under Curius Dentatus at Beneventum in 275BC.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is in the seventh circle, unless [Pyrrhus the son of Achilles](#) is intended.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Pyrrhus, son of Achilles

Neoptolemus, called Pyrrhus, who killed [Priam](#) and sacrificed [Polyxena](#) on [Achilles](#)'s grave. Virgil stresses his cruelty in Aeneid ii 469.

[Inferno Canto XII:100-139](#). He is placed in the seventh circle unless the reference is to [Pyrrhus, King of Epirus](#).

Rabanus Maurus

Bishop of Mayence (c766-856) compiled a cyclopaedia *De Universo*

in twenty-two books, and was in favour of orthodoxy to the point of unwitting heresy. He was a Benedictine and pupil of Alcuin. He wrote voluminously, summarising ninth century learning.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145](#). He is in the Fourth Sphere of the Sun.

Rachel

The wife of [Jacob](#) in the Bible (Genesis 29), for whom he served Laban her father seven years, and the sister of [Leah](#). She is for Dante the type of Contemplation. See Genesis xxix and xxx. Her New Testament equivalent is Mary the sister of Martha. See Luke x 38-42.

[Inferno Canto II:94-120](#). [Beatrice](#) is sitting with her. (Divine Philosophy sits with Contemplation)

[Inferno Canto IV:1-63](#). [Christ](#) takes her spirit from Limbo into Paradise.

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:94-114. She is mentioned in Dante's dream.

Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36. She sits with Beatrice in Heaven, below the Virgin, in the third rank. See above.

Rahab

The prostitute of Jericho who helped Joshua's spies. They in turn swore to save her and her family ('our life for yours'). She was told to fasten a scarlet thread to her window so that she and her family could be identified at the taking of the city. She was converted to the Israelite cause, and became a symbol of the Church, the scarlet cord signifying the blood of Christ, and the two spies the two Testaments. See Joshua ii and vi 23-25.

Paradiso Canto IX:67-126. She is in the third sphere, of Venus.

Raphael, the Archangel

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He is shown with human form though beyond the human. He helped Tobias to cure his father Tobit's blindness. See Apocrypha, Book of Tobit. His name means 'God heals'. He is traditionally identified with the Angel who stirred the waters of the pool of Bethesda, John v 1-15.

Ravignani, of Florence, *see* [Bellincion](#) and [Gualdrada](#)

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Rebecca

The wife of Isaac. An ancestress of [Christ](#). See Genesis.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). She is seated in Heaven, below the Virgin.

Paradiso Canto XXXII:37-84. Dante refers to Genesis xxv 22-27 where Jacob and Esau struggle in her womb, representing ‘two nations, and two manner of people’. Jacob was a tent-dweller and Esau a hunter, a man of the field, representing the ancient struggle between the raw and the cooked, civilisation and the wild, and ‘the elder shall serve the younger’, the wild shall serve the civilised, at the foundation of Jewish and Christian culture.

Rehoboam

The ten tribes revolted against Rehoboam, king of Israel, because he refused to lighten their taxes. He fled to Jerusalem. See First Kings xii 1-18.

Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63. He is depicted on the roadway.

Renard or Renouard

A converted Saracen, the mythical brother-in-law of [William of Orange](#) and his companion in battle, retiring with him to become a monk.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

Rhea

The sister of [Saturn](#) (Cronus) whom he married.

[Inferno Canto XIV:73-120](#). He swallowed his children to avoid them dethroning him. Enraged she bore [Jupiter](#) at night in Arcadia and he was carried to Crete and hidden in the cave of Dicte. The armed Curetes (Corybantes) stood round his golden cradle clashing weapons to hide his cries. She gave Cronus a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes which he swallowed thinking it was Jupiter (Zeus).

Richard of St Victor

The Augustinian mystic (died 1173), and friend of Saint [Bernard](#) who wrote a treatise called *De Contemplatione*.

[Paradiso Canto X:130-148](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Rimini, see [Malatesta](#)

Rinieri, see [Calboli](#), [Corneto](#), [Pazzo](#)

Ripheus

A Trojan, who was killed at the fall of Troy. Virgil in Aeneid ii 426 et seq. says ‘he the most just of the Trojans, who never wavered from right, though the gods did not recognise his righteousness.’

Dante connects this incident with Acts x 34 ‘God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him,

and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.’

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is in the sixth sphere of Jupiter.

[Paradiso Canto XX:73-148](#). [Aquinas](#) suggests that the good unbeliever will receive inspiration, or a teacher, from God to achieve his conversion. This opens the door to the virtuous Pagans, but note Paul’s weeping over Virgil’s tomb (traditionally), which suggests Virgil could not be saved in this way. Dante struggled with the whole concept, regarding its natural justice.

Robert, *see* [Guiscard](#)

Robert, Duke of Calabria, afterwards King of Naples

The son of [Charles II](#) of Naples, and brother of [Charles Martel](#). After Charles Martel’s early death, Robert ousted the son Caroberto from the

throne of Naples, in 1309 after the date of the Vision. Robert and his brothers Louis and John were hostages in Spain after the release of their father Charles in 1288 (see the entry for Charles II) until 1295. Robert was accompanied back to Italy by certain greedy Catalonian adventurers who he have office to when he succeeded to the throne of Naples, and their greed made they and him detested in Apulia. He was shipwrecked in 1301.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84.](#)

Robert, King of France

Robert I, the son of [Hugh Capet](#), whom he succeeded in 996.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96.](#) He is mentioned.

Roland, see [Orlando](#)

Romano, Cunizza da

The sister of [Ezzolino](#) the tyrant. She was born in the castle of Romano between Venice and the sources of the Brenta and Piave. She was famous for her love affairs, had four husbands and many paramours, of whom [Sordello](#) was one. In 1265 (when she was about 67 years old) and the last survivor of her father's family, in the house of [Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti](#), she executed a deed of manumission liberating her father's serfs. She died in Florence in 1279 or 1280. Dante suggests she was a penitent.

[Paradiso Canto IX:1-66](#). She is in the third Heaven of those who yielded to earthly love.

Romano, Ezzolino da

[See Azzolino](#).

Romeo

Romeo of Villeneuve (1170-1250) was the seneschal, or chamberlain of Count [Raymond Berenger](#) IV of Provence, who died in 1245 leaving his lands to his youngest daughter [Beatrice](#), whom he had made heiress under Romeo's guardianship. According to the legend Romeo (which simply means *pilgrim*) came to Raymond's court, managed his business, and arranged the marriages of Raymond's four daughters. The Provençal Barons persuaded Raymond to demand account of Romeo, at which he asked for his mule, staff and scrip, and vanished, as poor as he had come. The story is probably fable.

The eldest daughter [Margaret](#) married [Louis IX](#) of France, [Eleanor](#) married [Henry III](#) of England, [Sancha](#) married Richard of Cornwall, titular King of

the Romans, and Beatrice, who inherited, married [Charles of Anjou](#), King of Naples and Sicily, and, through her inheritance, King of Provence, in Dante's view a fitting revenge on the Provençal barons!

[Paradiso Canto VI:112-142](#). He is in the second sphere, of Mercury, and of those who were ambitious for honour.

Romualdus

A member of the Onesti family of Ravenna. He was a monk of Camaldoli in the Casentino district, who saw a vision of the heavenly ladder, and founded the Camaldolese Order, a white-robed stricter branch of the [Benedictines](#). He died in 1027.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:1-99](#). He is in the seventh sphere.

Romulus, or Quirinus

The founder and first king of Rome (the city was traditionally founded on 21st April 753BC, Roman dates were recorded from the founding of the city, *ab urbe condita*). He was the brother of Remus, and the son of [Mars](#) and Ilia, called *genitor*, father, of the Roman people. The two brothers were reared by a she-wolf. Romulus united the Latins and Sabines ('The Rape of the Sabine Women') He was received into the company of the gods, as Quirinus and worshipped by the Romans. The name Rome derives from the Etruscan *gens ruma*.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148](#). The type of a great man born from obscure origins.

Rubicante

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

[Inferno Canto XXII:31-75](#). The other demons urge him on.

Rudolph of Hapsburg, Emperor

The Emperor (1273-1291) who served under Ottocar II, King of Bohemia (1253-1278), but asserted his supremacy, when elected Emperor. [Ottakar](#) paid homage, but refused to return Imperial lands, and died at the battle of the Marchfeld near Vienna in 1278. Ottocar's son [Wenceslas II](#) (1278-1305) (*not* the earlier king and Saint) was allowed to retain Bohemia and Moravia, but had to give up Austria and Styria (Rudolph's sons [Albert](#) and Rudolph were invested with these), Carinthia and Carniola.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84](#). His daughter Clemenz married [Charles Martel](#).

Ruggieri, see [Ubalдини](#)

Rusticucci, Jacopo

A Florentine who was driven to immoral practices by an unhappy marriage.

[Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#). Dante asks after him.

[Inferno Canto XVI:1-45](#). He is in the seventh circle for sodomy.

Ruth

A Moabite woman, the wife of Boaz, and great grandmother of [David](#). See the Book of Ruth.

[Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). She is seated in Heaven, below the Virgin.

Sabellius

Sabellius (3rd century). The Sabellian heresy identified the Son with the Father as one Person differing only in name. (It is later called Patripassianism ie. the Father suffers, and Modalism)

[Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142](#). He is mentioned.

Sabellus

[Lucan](#), in Pharsalia ix 763 and 790, tells of the two soldiers of [Cato](#)'s army who were stung by snakes while marching across Libya. Sabellus melted, while the other swelled.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). The story is mentioned.

Sachetti, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.

Mentioned.

Saladin

The Sultan or Soldan, Salhad-din, 1137-1193 AD, the Kurdish founder of the Ayyubid Dynasty of Egypt. He took Jerusalem in 1187AD, after defeating the Christians earlier at the battle of *The Horns of Hattin*. He is Dante's type of Islamic nobility and magnificence. (See Scott's 'Ivanhoe' for an image of how Saladin was perceived in terms of chivalry.)

Inferno Canto IV:106-129. He is among the heroes and heroines in Limbo.

Salome

The daughter of Herodias, who was married to Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, who was therefore Salome's stepfather. She danced before him and

he granted her a request. Her mother Herodias whom [John the Baptist](#) had reproved for marrying Herod, her previous husband Philip's brother, took her revenge by telling Salome to ask for his head. Herod reluctantly fulfilled the wish, and Salome danced naked, holding the Baptist's head on a dish. See Mark vi 21-28.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:100-136](#). The incident is alluded to.

Salterello, Lapo

A corrupt political lawyer, exiled with Dante and the Whites in 1302.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). He is mentioned.

Salvani, Provenzano

The leading Ghibelline among the Sienese, at Montaperti, in 1260, where the Florentines were defeated. He was the strongest advocate for the

destruction of the city at the subsequent council, held at Empoli, after the battle. He is said to have once humbled himself by dressing as a beggar to procure the money to ransom a friend imprisoned by [Charles of Anjou](#). He was defeated and killed at Colle, in Valdelsa, in June 1269, leading a mixed body of Tuscan Ghibellines and foreign mercenaries. He was captured by French cavalry under [Guy de Montfort](#), and murdered by an exiled Guelph of the Tolomei family. ‘Siena’s plain’ is the famous piazza known as the Campo in front of the palace of the Commune.

[Purgatorio Canto XI:73-117.](#)

[Purgatorio Canto XI:118-142.](#) He is among the proud.

Samaria, The Woman of

A woman of Samaria, who came to draw water at the well, to whom [Christ](#)

offered water, even though the Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with each other. 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.' See John iv 7-15.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:1-33](#). She is mentioned.

Samuel

The prophet. The son of Elkanah and Hannah, called by God. See First Samuel iii.

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). He exists with God in the Empyrean.

Sancha, daughter of
[Raymond Berenger](#)

Sannella, della of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Sapia, de' Saracini

A noble lady of Siena, the wife of Viviano dei Saracini, lord of Castiglioncello. She was one of the Guelph exiles, at Colle in the Val d'Elsa, who watched the rout of the Siennese Ghibellines, under [Provenzan Salvani](#), who died there, on June 11th 1269. In 1265 she had assisted her husband in founding a hospice for travellers, and, after his death in 1269, gave his castle to the commune of Siena. [Piero Pettignano](#), a Franciscan, who was beatified, prayed for her. The Siennese purchased the harbour of Talamone in 1303, for 8000 florins from the Abbot of San Salvatore, hoping to create a viable port. Talamone is on the Tyrrhenian Sea, southwest of the Siennese Maremma. It consumed vast sums of money, but could not be kept clear,

and was in an unhealthy area, which caused the death of a number of the admirals (contractors) directing the dredging. Previously, in 1295, the Sieneese had spent money, searching, in vain, for the stream of Diana, that was supposed to flow beneath the city.

[Purgatorio Canto XIII:85-154](#). She is among the envious in Purgatory.

Sapphira

She and her husband [Ananias](#) sold possessions but kept back part of the price when other followers of Christ sold everything and gave everything into common ownership, to allow distribution according to need. They were rebuked by [Peter](#) for hypocrisy and died. See Acts iv 32-37 and V 1-11.

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). She is mentioned.

Sarah

The wife of [Abraham](#). An ancestress of [Christ](#). See Genesis. [Paradiso Canto XXXII:1-36](#). She is seated in Heaven, below the Virgin.

Sardanapalus

King of Assyria, the type of luxury.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). He is mentioned.

Satan, Dis, Lucifer

The rebellious angel, identified with Dis, and with Lucifer ‘the son of morning’ (an incarnation of Dionysus and the other consorts of the pre-Christian great Goddess, and sharing her ‘star’ Venus) who was banished from Heaven for his pride, and in his fall penetrated into the cavern of Hell, and threw up behind him the Mountain

of Purgatory. He tempted Christ in the wilderness, see Matthew iv.

[Inferno Canto VIII:64-81](#). The city of Dis is his city of the dead.

[Inferno Canto XI:1-66](#). His throne is in the ninth, the smallest circle, in the last ring, the Giudecca, of Cocytus.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). The poets are set down in the Ninth Circle that swallowed him.

[Inferno Canto XXXIV:1-54](#). Lucifer's banners (his wings) advance, in a parody of a Latin hymn by Fortunatus (6th century), *Vexilla regis prodeunt*. His red, yellow and black faces indicate Hate, Powerlessness, and Ignorance, contrasted to the attributes of the Holy Trinity, namely Love, Power, and Wisdom. He is triple-faced as a representative of the pagan triple-Goddess. The three winds produced by his wings are lust, pride and avarice. He is identified with Dis.

Inferno Canto XXXIV:70-139. He is also called Beelzebub. Virgil, carrying Dante, clambers downwards on Satan's body, towards his thighs, and then at the centre of the earth reverses. The poets now climb again upwards, through a tunnel under the hemisphere of the earth opposite Jerusalem, to emerge at the foot of the Mountain of Purgatory. They move from evening to dawn of Easter Monday, since the opposite hemisphere is twelve hours behind Jerusalem. The little stream, they climb up alongside, is Lethe, which takes away the memory of sin and evil.

Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63. He is depicted on the roadway.

Paradiso Canto IX:127-142. Identified by Dante with Mars, the patron god of Florence.

Paradiso Canto XIX:1-90. He fell through desiring what he did not have,

and ought not to have, at that time: by anticipating knowledge and God's Will.

[Paradiso Canto XXIX:1-66](#). Pride was the source of his fall, and he is imprisoned at the base of the universe.

Saturn

The son of heaven and Earth and ruler of the Golden Age. He was dethroned by his three sons. Warned of this he devoured his offspring at birth (see Goya's painting of the Giant) but [Rhea](#) hid [Jupiter](#) on Ida.

[Inferno Canto XIV:73-120](#). He ruled Crete in the Golden Age.

[Paradiso Canto XXI:1-51](#). His was the Golden Age. Saturn signifies duty, control and constriction in Astrology, and placed in the fire-sign Leo, noted for its expansiveness, and pride, Dante indicates the need for temperance and

moderation, the one force balancing the other, in a golden mean.

Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154. The father by Rhea of Jupiter (and of Ceres-Demeter, Juno-Hera, Dis-Hades and Neptune-Poseidon)

Saul

The son of Kish, and the first King of Israel, anointed so by Samuel at Mizpeh. See First Samuel. He was defeated by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, and fell on his sword. (First Samuel xxxi 1-4) David's lament on Saul says 'Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you' (Second Samuel i. 21)

Purgatorio Canto X:46-72. His daughter was Michal.

Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63. He is depicted on the roadway.

Scaevola

[Paradiso Canto IV:64-114](#). Caius Mucius Scaevola, an early Roman who demonstrated the strength of will of the Roman people, and their disregard for their own lives, to his enemies, by setting his right hand in the coals. He had penetrated the enemy lines to kill Lars Porsena, King of Clusium, but killed the king's secretary sitting beside him instead. He was afterwards called Scaevola, 'left-handed'. He signifies constancy in later art. See Livy 2:12-13.

Scala, Alberto della

Lord of Verona, and father of [Can Grande della Scala](#), he died the year after the Vision in 1301, having appointed his deformed and depraved, illegitimate son [Guiseppe](#) to the abbacy of San Zeno.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145.](#)

He is mentioned.

Scala, Bartolommeo della

Lord of Verona, his arms a ladder surmounted by the imperial eagle. Dante took refuge with him sometime between the summer of 1302 and Bartolommeo's death in March 1304.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99.](#) He is mentioned.

Scala, Can Grande della

[Inferno Canto I:61-99.](#) Francesco (1291-1329), probably the 'Greyhound' of Canto I, Dante's patron at Verona to whom the Paradiso was dedicated and who sheltered him from 1316. He received the last thirteen Cantos of the Paradiso, left unfinished at Dante's death, from Dante's son Jacopo. He was born in Verona (between Feltre in Venetia and

Montefeltro in Romagna *see* Canto I). He became lord of Verona in 1311, was an Imperial Vicar, and in 1318 the head of the Ghibelline party. He was an art patron, and kept a civilised and stately court. His elder brother was [Bartolommeo](#), who Dante took refuge with around 1303. Can Grande was one of the great military men of his age. In 1311 he showed his mettle by recovering Brescia and taking Vicenza.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). He is mentioned as being nine years old (nine years and one month in April 1300).

Scala, Giuseppe della

The illegitimate, deformed, and depraved son of [Alberto](#) della Scala who held the abbacy of San Zeno from 1291 to 1314. Dante may have known

him during his stay in Verona in 1303-4.

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145](#). He is mentioned.

Scarmiglione, a demon

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). A demon guarding the eighth circle, the fifth chasm, of the barrators.

Schicchi, Gianni

A Florentine of the Cavalcanti family, known for his powers of mimicry. He was induced by [Buoso Donati's](#) son, Simone, to impersonate his dead father and dictate a will in his favour, acquiring, in the process, the beautiful mare known as the *donna della torma*, the Lady of the Herd.

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). He is a rabid spirit in the tenth chasm.

Sciancato, Puccio

Puccio Sciancato, 'The Lame', de' Galigai A noble Florentine, and a thief.

[Inferno Canto XXV:79-151](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Scipio Africanus

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). Publius Cornelius Scipio, who conquered [Hannibal](#) at the battle of Zama near Carthage in 202 BC. He received the title Africanus. He opposed the razing of Carthage in 146 BC when the Carthaginian survivors of the Third Punic War were sold into slavery. He was ultimately accused of high treason by Cato the Elder, the censor, and others, and died in self-imposed exile in 183 BC.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:106-132](#). His Triumph is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Scornigiani, Farinata de'

The son of [Marzucco](#), whose father showed great fortitude when his son was murdered by pardoning the murderers.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). He is with the late-repentant.

Scornigiani, Marzucco de'

The father of [Farinata](#) who showed great fortitude when his son was murdered, by pardoning the murderers. He was a Pisan noble who became a Franciscan friar.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). He is mentioned.

Scot, Michael

Michael Scot of Balwearie (c1109-1250) studied at Oxford, Paris and

Toledo. He followed the Emperor [Frederick II](#) to his court, though he died in Scotland. He was a translator of [Aristotle](#), and a famous astrologer. [Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Scrovigni, Rinaldo degli

[Inferno Canto XVII:31-78](#). A Paduan usurer, said to have been the father of Enrico who had the Madonna of the Arena built at Padua (c1303) and was painted by [Giotto](#), offering up a model of the chapel, in Giotto's fresco of the Last Judgement. The family arms were 'an azure sow on field argent'.

Semele

[Inferno Canto XXX:1-48](#). The daughter of [Cadmus](#) of Thebes, loved by [Jupiter](#), and destroyed by [Juno](#) who tricked her into asking Jupiter to make love to her in the guise in which he

made love to Juno herself. His divine fire killed Semele. Their child was the 'twice born' Dionysus-Bacchus. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* II 261.

[Paradiso Canto XXI:1-51](#). She is mentioned.

Semiramis

Sammuramat, Queen of the New Assyrian Empire, ruled 810-805 BC, whose policies were successful during the minority of her son Abadnirari III. She was supposed to have succeeded her husband Shamshi-Adad V, [Ninus](#), (according to Orosius). Though Dante is correct in believing that the Assyrians held Egypt (the Soldan's land) it was not till much later under Esarhaddon. She surrounded Babylon with brick walls, and was the ancestress of Polydaemon. [Ovid](#) in the *Metamorphoses* links her to the Babylonian goddess Dercetis

worshipped in Syria as Atargatis, who was half-woman and half-fish and identified with Aphrodite by the Greeks. Semiramis was her daughter, and was said to have been cast out at birth, and tended by doves. Fish and doves were sacred to Dercetis who was the consort of the Babylonian great god Adad.

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). Dante takes her as a type of licentiousness, has her ruler of Egypt (the Sultan's land) and has her rule over many languages, presumably a reference to Babylon's identification with the Tower of Babel.

Seneca

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the Roman philosopher, moralist and senator, d.65 AD. He was a member of [Zeno](#)'s Stoic school, and tutor to the Emperor Nero who drove him to commit suicide.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151.](#) He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Sennacherib

King of Assyria was defeated by Hezekiah, King of Judah and killed by his own sons. See Second Kings xix 37.

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63.](#) He is depicted on the roadway.

Sextus I, Saint and Pope

Saint Sixtus or Sextus I, Pope (115-125).

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66.](#) He died for the faith.

Sibyl, The

[Paradiso Canto XXXIII:49-145.](#) The Sibyl at Cumae, the oracular voice of [Apollo](#), wrote her oracles on leaves,

which the wind scattered. See Aeneid iii 441 and vi 74.

Sichaeus

The husband of [Dido](#), and a Phoenician of Sidon, whom his brother, [Pygmalion](#) King of Tyre, killed, out of greed for gold. Roused by a vision of the dead Sychaeus, Dido fled from Sidon and founded Carthage in North Africa. See Virgil's Aeneid I 340.

[Paradiso Canto IX:67-126](#) Dido's love for [Aeneas](#) wrongs the memory of Sychaeus. See Virgil's Aeneid I 720.

Sigier of Brabant

Sigier (d. c. 1283) a professor in the University of Paris, where the 'straw-littered' Rue du Fouarre ran close to the river in the Latin Quarter, and was the centre of the Arts Schools at Paris. He disputed with the mendicant

orders, and [Aquinas](#) was one of his opponents. He was driven from his University chair, and was assassinated, or executed, at the papal Court at Orvieto.

[Paradiso Canto X:130-148](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

Signa, Bonifazio da

The Guelph, Fazio de' Mori Ubaldini da Signa, held several Florentine offices from 1310 onwards. He was a fierce opponent of the Whites.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87](#). He is mentioned.

Simon Magus

Simon of Samaria (Simon the Sorcerer) who was rebuked by [Saint Peter](#) for thinking that 'the gift of God may be purchased with money' in Acts viii 9-24. The Simonists or

Simonians, guilty of trading in holy offices, derive their name from him.

[Inferno Canto XIX:1-30](#). They are punished in the eighth circle.

[Paradiso Canto XXX:97-148](#). He is mentioned.

Simonides

The Greek lyric poet (c556-467BC).

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is in Limbo.

Sinon

A Greek, who allowed himself to be captured by the Trojans, and lied to them, convincing them to admit the Wooden Horse into Troy.

See Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid ii 57 et seq. (Dante, as a Tuscan considers himself of Trojan descent and opposed to the Greeks.)

Inferno Canto XXX:91-129. He is in the tenth chasm.

Siren

Purgatorio Canto XIX:1-36. The Sirens were the daughters of Acheloüs, companions of Proserpine, who were changed to birds in order to search for her over the seas. They inhabited three small rocky islands off Campania from which they lured sailors to destruction by their sweet songs. They had the heads of women and the bodies of birds. They lured Ulysses's sailors towards them. He resisted by having his ears plugged with wax, and having himself tied to the mast. See Homer's *Odyssey* XII, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, V 552 and XIV 88.

Purgatorio Canto XXXI:43-69. The Siren is mentioned, as the voice of temptation.

Paradiso Canto XII:1-36. They are mentioned.

Sismondi, Ghibellines of Pisa

See Ugolino.

Sizii, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the note to Paradiso Canto XVI.

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.

Mentioned.

Socrates

The Greek philosopher, 470?-399BC. He was born after the Persian defeat at Platea in 479, and in the flowering of Athenian splendour. His greatest pupil was Plato who in his dialogues portrays Socrates critical and analytical style of philosophy. Socrates fought at Potidaea and in other actions of the Peloponnesian War with Sparta. His philosophy according to Plato was

noted for his use of inductive arguments and the search for universal definitions, and his use of the conversational ‘dialectic’ to explore ideas. He died in prison, after drinking hemlock, being charged with the corruption of the State. See Plato, The Apology, Crito, etc.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

Soldanieri, Gianni de’

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned.

Gianni was a Ghibelline who nevertheless became leader of the Guelph commons of Florence, when they rebelled against the government of Guido Novello, and the Ghibelline nobles after [Manfred](#)’s defeat at Benevento in 1265.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Solomon

The King of Israel, son of [David](#) and Bathsheba, so wise, before Christianity, that there was a debate, here resolved, as to whether as a Jew he was damned or saved. See First Kings iii 12.

[Paradiso Canto X:100-129](#). He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:1-51](#). He is unequalled in earthly wisdom, ‘the understanding heart’.

[Paradiso Canto XIII:91-142](#). He chose as his gift, practical Wisdom. See First Kings iii 5-15.

Solon

Appointed Archon of Athens in 594BC and given dictatorial powers to serve as ‘conciliator’. He made laws

that brought about the emancipation of the individual, who became a member of the polity rather than his clan, and promoted trades and crafts. The laws were codified and each citizen was allowed to bring his case to court. The peasants were emancipated and the aristocracy curtailed. The Constitution was reformed providing for a Popular Assembly and Court elected by the people (in cross-class phyles) who also elected their Council of 400. The Archons and Treasurer were elected from the members of the first class by the Popular Assembly. The new laws unfortunately created internal division. [Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148](#). He is an archetypal lawgiver.

Sordello

Sordello, the poet, was born at Goito near Mantua c1200, and wrote in the Provençal language. He carried on an

affair with [Cunizza](#) da Romano, [Ezzelino](#) III's sister, and wife of Count Ricciardo di San Bonifazio, while staying at Treviso, and was obliged to flee to Provence in 1229. Sordello had abducted her for political reasons at her brother's request. He returned in 1265 as a knight in the service of [Charles of Anjou](#), and received possessions in the Kingdom of Naples. He died a violent death some time after June 1269. His finest poem, written about 1240, is a *planh* (lament) on the death of Blacatz, a Provençal baron, in the service of Count Raymond [Berenger](#) IV, in which he rebukes the kings and princes of Europe, and tells them to eat the dead man's heart, and be inspired to valiant action. Sordello inspires Dante to a similar invective.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:49-75](#). He is one of the late-repentant.

Sphinx

The monstrous daughter of Typhon and Echidne with woman's head, lion's body, serpent's tail, and eagle's wings. Themis was the goddess of Justice, daughter of Heaven and Earth, with oracular powers, and the Sphinx was her oracular priestess, who set Oedipus the famous riddle 'What goes on four legs in the morning, two at midday, and three in the evening?' which he answered correctly with 'Mankind'. Themis in anger at the riddle being solved sent a wild beast to ravage the countryside. Dante says *Naiades*, instead of *Laiades* for Oedipus the son of Laius, following a textual corruption of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (corrected by Heinsius) in VII 759 et al where the story is referred to.

Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57.

She is mentioned.

Statius

The poet Publius Papinius Statius, born at Naples c50AD, not Toulouse, and died there c96AD. He lived at Rome in Vespasian's and Domitian's reigns, and dedicated his *Thebaid* to the latter, an epic about the War of the Seven against Thebes. His *Achilleid*, dealing with the Trojan War, was left unfinished. His shorter poems the *Silvae* were unknown to Dante.

Purgatorio Canto XXI:76-136. He accompanies the Poets through the rest of Purgatory.

Stephen, Saint

Purgatorio Canto XV:82-145. The first Christian Martyr who was stoned to death. See Acts vii 54-60.

Stephen Ouros II, King of Servia

Stephen Ouros II (1275-1321) of Servia, called Rascia from its capital. He issued counterfeit Venetian coins.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148](#). He is held as an example of poor kingship.

Stricca of Siena

A member of the *Brigata Spendereccia*, the Spendthrift Brigade, a club founded by twelve wealthy Sienese, in the second half of the thirteenth century, who vied with each other in squandering their money on riotous living. Stricca was a noted spendthrift.

[Inferno Canto XXIX:121-139](#). He is in the tenth chasm.

Sylvester, Saint and Pope

[Inferno Canto XIX:88-133](#). The Pope, Sylvester I, who according to the forged document of the Middle Ages

called the Donation of [Constantine](#), received temporal power in Italy from the Emperor Constantine. Dante regarded this as a fatal confusion of the temporal and spiritual spheres.

[Inferno Canto XXVII:58-136](#). He lived on Mount Soracte, and was summoned by Constantine, to cure his leprosy.

Sylvester, Silvestro follower of St Francis

He was a priest of Assisi, a kinsman of [Saint Clare](#), and the only ecclesiastic among the first Franciscans. He is supposed to have tried to cheat Francis over some stone for his church, and was overcome by his unworldly generosity.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He is mentioned.

Syren, The

See [Siren](#).

Syrinx

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99.](#)

Mercury lulled [Argus](#), by telling her tale. She was pursued by Pan, and turned into a reed. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* i 568 et seq.

Sychaeus, Sichaeus

The mythical husband of [Dido](#), Queen of Carthage. See [Virgil](#)'s *Aeneid*.

[Inferno Canto V:52-72.](#) He is referred to as Dido's husband.

Taddeo, Alderotti

Taddeo (Thaddeus) was a writer on medicine who made a poor translation of [Aristotle](#)'s *Ethics* into Italian. He died in 1303.

[Paradiso Canto XII:37-105.](#) He is mentioned.

Tarlatti, Cino or Guccio de'

The head of the Ghibellines in Arezzo, who drowned in the Arno, while pursuing or being pursued by the Bostoli, a family of exiled Aretine Guelphs who had taken refuge in the Castel di Rondine, after the battle of Campaldino in 1289.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:1-24](#). He is with the late-repentant.

Tarquin

[Inferno Canto IV:106-129](#). The second of the two Etruscan Kings of Rome of that name, Tarquin the Tyrant, Tarquinius Superbus, who was expelled from Rome in a rising led by [Junius Brutus](#) in 510BC.

Tegghiaio, see [Aldobrandi](#)

Telemachus

The son of [Ulysses](#).

[Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142](#). He is mentioned indirectly.

Terence

The Roman playwright and comic poet (195-159BC).

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is in Limbo.

Thais

[Inferno Canto XVIII:100-136](#). A character in [Terence](#)'s play Eunuchus. Thraso, her lover, sent her a slave girl as a present by his servant Gnaso, and when asked she gave this flattering reply via Gnaso. [Cicero](#) quotes it in De Amicitia 38. Dante turns it into direct question and answer.

Thales

The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher of Miletus. He is said to have died shortly before the fall of Sardis in 546/5 BC.

The early scientific work ascribed to him included an almanac and the introduction of the Phoenician practice of navigating by Ursa Minor, the Little Bear. He postulated a primary element of matter, and chose *water*. He therefore raised the issue of the One and the Many, and is the first individual philosopher of Ionia, the cradle of Western thought.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

Themis

Themis was the goddess of Justice, daughter of Heaven and Earth, with oracular powers. The [Sphinx](#) was her oracular priestess, who set [Oedipus](#) the famous riddle ‘What goes on four legs in the morning, two at midday, and three in the evening?’ which he answered correctly with ‘Mankind’. Themis in anger at the riddle being

solved sent a wild beast to ravage the countryside. Dante says *Naiades*, instead of *Laiades* for Oedipus the son of Laius, following a textual corruption of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII 759 et al where the story is referred to.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57](#). She is mentioned.

Theseus

Legendary king of Athens who killed the [Minotaur](#), aided by [Ariadne](#) the daughter of King [Minos](#) of Crete. He also made an unsuccessful attempt to rescue [Proserpine](#). He was punished, by being placed in Hades, and, in the version of myth Dante follows, was rescued by [Hercules](#).

[Inferno Canto IX:34-63](#). The [Furies](#) seek a fuller revenge than they were able to take on Theseus, for his attempted rescue of Persephone.

[Inferno Canto XII:1-27](#). The killer of the Minotaur.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:100-154](#). He was present at the battle of the Lapiths and [Centaur](#)s.

Thetis

The sea goddess, the daughter of Nereus and Doris. The wife of [Peleus](#), and mother of Achilles.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:34-63](#). She hid her son [Achilles](#) on Scyros to try and save him from his fate at Troy.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). She is in Limbo. One of the people celebrated by [Statius](#) in his epic poetry.

Thibaut II, King of Navarre

Teobaldo II, Thibaut V Count of Champagne, King of Navarre (1253-1270), son of the poet-king Thibaut I mentioned by Dante in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.

Inferno Canto XXII:31-75. He is Ciampolo's master.

Thisbe

A Babylonian girl, who in Ovid's story (Metamorphoses IV 55-166) kills herself, when she finds that Pyramus, her lover, has, in turn, killed himself. He wrongly believes that a lion has savaged and taken her, on reaching their meeting place. The mulberry tree under which they were to meet has red fruit thereafter, its leaves and roots being soaked with his blood. The story is one of true love, and Shakespeare used it as a basis for the ending of Romeo and Juliet, despite his unfortunate ridiculing of the story in The Midsummer Night's Dream.

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45.

The story is mentioned.

Thomas, Saint, the Apostle

Didymus ‘twin’, doubting Thomas, the apostle who needed physical verification of the resurrection. (See Verrochio’s wonderful bronze in Florence which Leonardo may have had a hand in.)

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.](#)

Mentioned. His feast day is December 21st.

Thomas Aquinas, Saint

The ‘Angelic Doctor’ of theology, and medieval philosopher (c1225-1274). He entered the [Dominican](#) order, and sought to achieve a synthesis between Aristotelian philosophy and Christian thought. There was an erroneous tradition that he was poisoned in the Abbey of Fossanuova, at the instigation of [Charles of Anjou](#), while travelling to the Council of Lyons in 1274.

Purgatorio Canto XX:43-96. His death is mentioned.

Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154. He recommended sobriety to women and young people, quoting Valerius Maximus II i. 3 ‘*Vini usus olim romanis feminis ignotus fuit*: the use of wine was once unknown to young Roman women.’

Paradiso Canto X:64-99. He is in the fourth sphere of Prudence. He was the pupil of Albertus Magnus, and with him ‘christianised’ Aristotle. Aquinas completed the work in *Summa contra Gentiles*, and *Summa Theologica*. A man of sweetness and holiness he was canonized in 1323, two years after Dante’s death, and influenced Dante greatly.

Paradiso Canto XII:106-145. Paradiso Canto XII:106-145. He is mentioned.

Tiberius Caesar

The third Caesar (14-37AD) in whose reign [Christ](#) was crucified. He campaigned against the German tribes. He stifled the conspiracy of Sejanus, who was executed, and, embittered, retired to Capri in 27AD and died at Misenum.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Tiresias

The Theban seer. He spent seven years in the form of a woman after striking a pair of coupling snakes. On striking them again he was changed back. He was therefore called upon, by Jupiter, to judge an argument, between himself and Juno, as to whether men or women get the most pleasure from lovemaking. Deciding in favour of women, and so Jupiter, Juno struck him blind, Jupiter giving him the

power of prophecy to compensate for his blindness.

See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III 324-332.

[Inferno Canto XX:31-51](#). He is in the eighth circle.

Tithonus

The son of Laomedon, and husband of [Aurora](#), the goddess of the dawn. His wife gained eternal life for him, but not eternal youth. Dante makes the lunar aurora his mistress, while the solar aurora is his wife. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IX 421.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33](#). He is mentioned.

Titus

The Roman Emperor (79-81 AD), son of Vespasian, who captured Jerusalem and destroyed and looted the Temple

in 70AD. The eruption of Pompeii occurred in his reign.

[Purgatorio Canto XXI:76-136](#). He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history. Dante' views him as having revenged the death of [Christ](#), which was in turn God's vengeance on Mankind for the sin of the Fall.

Tityus, Tityos

A Giant, hurled into Tartarus beneath Mount Etna, by Jupiter.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). He helps guard the central pit.

Tobit

[Paradiso Canto IV:1-63](#). The Archangel [Raphael](#) helped his son Tobias to cure his blindness. See O.T. Apocrypha, the Book of Tobit.

Tomyris

The Scythian queen whose son was murdered by [Cyrus](#), the Persian King, and who in turn murdered Cyrus, throwing his head into a cauldron of blood, saying ‘*Satia te sanguine quem sitisti cuius per annos triginta insatiabilis perseverasti*’ ‘Be sated with the blood you thirsted for, that you insatiably persisted in drinking for thirty years.’ (Orosius ii 7, ch 6).

[Purgatorio Canto XII:1-63](#). She is depicted on the roadway.

Torquatus

Titus Manlius Torquatus ,dictator and consul 353-340BC.

[Paradiso Canto VI:1-111](#). Mentioned in the summary of Imperial history.

Tosinghi, Della Tosa, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.

Mentioned indirectly.

Trajan, Emperor

Adopted Emperor (98-117AD), after the mutiny of the Praetorian Guard (97). The first Emperor of Provincial origin. He was given the title *Optimus* by the Senate in 117. He oversaw the greatest extent of the Roman Empire, conquering Dacia, Armenia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia. Dante gives the popular story of Trajan and the widow derived from the *Fiore di Filosofi*. Pope [Gregory](#) supposedly interceded on his behalf through prayer, to bring about Trajan's deliverance from hell, to allow him time for repentance.

[Purgatorio Canto X:73-96.](#) The story is depicted on the frieze.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72.](#) He is in the sixth sphere of Jupiter.

[Paradiso Canto XX:73-148.](#) He returned from hell to his body at Gregory's intercession which was **predestined** and then was saved at the second death.

Traversari, Piero

A Ghibelline of Ravenna, (c1145-1225), and the most distinguished member of the Traversara family. He was repeatedly Podestà of Ravenna. From a family of noble Ghibellines, Pier's son Paolo turned Guelph on his father's death, and the family influence declined until the Traversari were virtually extinct by 1300.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123.](#) He is mentioned.

Tribaldello, Tebaldello

One of the Zambrasi of Faenza who had a spite against the Ghibelline Lambertazzi, a Bolognese family,

opened the gate to their enemies, the Geremei, a Bolognese Guelph family, after the Lambertazzi had taken refuge in Faenza in 1280.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Tristram, Tristan

The legendary lover of Isolde (Iseult) in the Medieval stories centred around King [Arthur](#). The type of the great lover. (See Gottfried Von Strassburg's Tristan). He was Tristan of Lyonesse, one of King Arthur's knights who loved Iseult (Yseult) the wife of King Mark of Cornwall, who subsequently killed him.

[Inferno Canto V:52-72](#). He is a carnal sinner in Limbo.

Tully, Cicero

Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43BC, the Roman orator and statesman, born at

Arpinum of a wealthy family. He was elected Consul in 63BC, and supported [Pompey](#). His writings were influential on medieval thinking.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151](#). He is among the group of wise men in Limbo.

Turnus

[Inferno Canto I:100-111](#). The young king of the Rutulians, an Italian people with their capital at Ardea, south of Rome, not far from modern Anzio. His death at the hands of [Aeneas](#) is described in Book XII of the Aeneid and concludes the work. Also see Ovid, The Metamorphoses Book XV. Aeneas married [Lavinia](#), Turnus's intended bride.

Tydeus

He killed Menalippus, in the war of the Seven against Thebes, though

mortally wounded by him. When Menalippus's head was brought to him he gnawed at the skull, in a frenzy of rage. See Statius, *The Thebaid* viii.

[Inferno Canto XXXII:70-123](#). He is mentioned.

Typhoeus, or Typhon

A Giant, hurled into Tartarus beneath Mount Etna, by Jupiter.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:97-145](#). He helps guard the central pit.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:31-84](#). He is mentioned in connection with Sicily.

Ubal dini, Ottaviano degli, Cardinal Cardinal Ottiaviano degli Ubaldini who died in 1273 was known simply as 'the Cardinal'. He is reported to have rejoiced at the outcome of Montaperti, the only one at the Papal Court to do so, and to have said: 'If I have a soul, I have lost it a thousand

times over on behalf of the Ghibellines.’ The Ghibellines were often unfairly accused of heresy for political reasons. Dante seems to assess individuals purely on spiritual grounds.

[Inferno Canto X:94-136](#). He is among the heretics in the Sixth Circle.

Ubalдини, Ruggieri degli, Archbishop of Pisa

In 1288 Ugolino della [Gherardesca](#) A leading Guelph of Pisa, who led one party while his grandson [Nino de’ Visconti](#) led the other, intrigued with Ruggieri, the Archbishop, the nephew of Cardinal [Ottaviano degli Ubalдини](#), and leader of the Ghibellines in Pisa, who was supported by the [Lanfranchi](#), [Sismondi](#), [Gualandi](#) and other families, and Nino was expelled. The Archbishop however betrayed him and

had Ugolino and four of his sons and grandsons (his sons were Gaddo, and Uguccione, his grandsons Nino, called Brigata, and Anselmuccio or ‘little Anselm’) imprisoned in the Torre dei Gualandi in July 1288. When [Guido da Montefeltro](#) took command of the Pisan forces, in March 1289, the keys were thrown into the river Arno and the prisoners left to starve to death, even a priest being denied them. The tower was known afterwards as the *Torre della Fame*, the Tower of Famine. (See Blake’s tempera illustration ‘Ugolino with his sons and grandsons in Prison’, Private Collection.) Ugolino had previously acquired a reputation by the surrender of certain castles to the Florentine and Lucchese after the defeat of the Pisans by the Genoese at Meloria in 1284. (The islands of Caprara and Gorgona mentioned, north-west of Elba, and

south-west of Livorno respectively, were held by Pisa at the time.)

[Inferno Canto XXXIII:1-90](#). He is in the Ninth Circle.

Ubaldini, Ubaldino dalla Pila degli

A member of the Tuscan Ghibelline family, and brother to Cardinal [Ottaviano](#), father of Archbishop [Ruggieri](#) of Pisa, and uncle of [Ugolino d'Azzo](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:1-33](#). He is among the gluttonous.

Ubaldini, Ugolino d'Azzo degli

A wealthy nobleman of Faenza. He married Beatrice Lanzia the daughter of [Provenzan Salvani](#) and died in 1293 at a great age.

[Purgatorio Canto XIV:67-123](#). He is mentioned.

Ubaldo, Saint

Bishop of Gubbio 1160, selected a hermitage site on the mountain nearby, but was unable ever to retire there.

[Paradiso Canto XI:43-117](#). He is mentioned.

Ubbriachi, of Florence

[Inferno Canto XVII:31-78](#). The Florentine Ubbriachi family were Ghibellines. Their arms were ‘a goose argent upon field gules’.

Uberti, Farinata degli

The head of the Uberti clan from 1239, who supported the Ghibellines, Dante’s party, annihilated the Florentine Guelfs at the battle of Montaperti (a village near Siena, on a hill near the River Arbia) on September 4th 1260. Farinata opposed the destruction of Florence urged by the Sieneese, and Pisans, but after the

final triumph of the Guelfs in 1266, the family were excluded from amnesty, and banished forever. When Arnolfo di Cambio built the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence he was forbidden to build where the rebel Uberti houses had stood. Farinata died around 1264.

[Inferno Canto VI:64-93](#). Dante enquires of him.

[Inferno Canto X:22-51](#). Farinata is in the Sixth Circle as a heretic, and recalls the overthrow of his Guelf enemies in 1248 and 1260, and their return in 1251 and 1266. The Uberti were forbidden to return, even after the pacification in 1280.

[Inferno Canto X:73-93](#). He prophesies Dante's failed attempt to return from exile, and then explains the knowledge the dead have of the world above, having prophetic vision, but unable to see things that actually happen, once they are dead.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.](#) The family and its pride mentioned.

Ubertino of Casale

Ubertino (1259-1138) leader of the *Spirituals*, the party of strict observance within the Franciscan Order.

[Paradiso Canto XII:106-145.](#) He is mentioned.

Ughi, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI.](#)

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154.](#)
Mentioned.

Ugo, Marquis of Tuscany

Hugo of Brandenburg, Imperial Vicar of Tuscany for Otho III, died on [Saint Thomas's](#) day. He had created many knights of the families who all retained his coat of arms (barry white

and red with divers charges). The [Della Bella](#) had a gold border to the arms.

[Paradiso](#) [Canto](#) [XVI:88-154](#).
Mentioned.

Ugolino, *see* [Fantolini](#),
[Gherardesca](#), [Ubaldini](#)

Uguccione della Gherardesca

See [Ugolino](#).

Ulysses

The Greek hero, from Ithaca, the son of Laërtes (or by repute Sisyphus, and the great-grandson of Mercury through his mother Anticlea, daughter of the thief Autolycus. He was noted for his cunning and intelligence. See Homer The Iliad, and The Odyssey, and Ovid's Metamorphoses XIII and XIV. He discovered [Achilles](#) hiding on Scyros, where his mother [Thetis](#) had

concealed him, at the court of Lycomedes, and took him to the Trojan War. [Deidamia](#) fell in love with him, and bore him a son, and died of grief when he left. Ulysses stole the Palladium, a wooden statue of Pallas Athene, the safety of which guaranteed the safety of Troy, and he invented the Trojan Horse, by which the Greeks entered Troy. However Troy's destruction led to [Aeneas's](#) wanderings and the later founding of Rome, by [Romulus](#). Dante is in that sense a Trojan descended from Aeneas, and therefore hostile to Greeks, and vice versa.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:43-84](#). He is in the eighth circle, eighth chasm.

[Inferno Canto XXVI:85-142](#). He makes a last voyage, Of Dante's invention, to the Mount of Purgatory, in the southern hemisphere, via

Gibraltar and the Atlantic, where he is wrecked.

[Purgatorio Canto XIX:1-36.](#) The [Siren](#)'s song seduced his sailors, and drove his ship off course. He resisted by having himself tied to the mast, and filling his ears with wax. See Homer's *Odyssey* XII.

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:67-96.](#) His voyage beyond Cadiz is mentioned.

Urania, the Muse

One of the Nine Muses, the mother of [Linus](#) the poet by [Apollo](#) (though some say otherwise). She was later the Muse of Astronomy, and heavenly things, including the music of the spheres.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:37-61.](#) Dante invokes her aid.

Urban I, Saint and Pope

Saint Urban I, Pope (222-230 AD).

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:1-66](#). He died for the faith.

Uzzah

[Purgatorio Canto X:46-72](#). Uzzah is referred to indirectly. He was the son of Abinadab who, when King [David](#) danced before the Ark of the Covenant, put his hand out to steady it, because the oxen shook it, and God struck him down, and he died there. See Second Samuel vi 6.

Valbona, Lizio di

See [Lizio](#).

Valéry, *see* [Alardo](#)

Vanni, *see* [Fucci](#)

Varro

Publius Terentius Varro Atacinus, the Roman author of epics and satires (82-36BC)

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:94-114](#). He is in Limbo.

Vecchiotti, of Florence

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). One of the ancient Guelph families. The Vecchio.

Venedico, *see* [Caccianimico](#)

Venus, Cytherea, Aphrodite

The daughter of [Jupiter](#) and Dione, and the goddess of Love. As Cytherea she sprang from the sea-foam near that Aegean island. (See Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence). She is the mother of Cupid, mother of [Aeneas](#) by [Anchises](#), lover of [Mars](#) and Adonis, and the dove is her sacred bird. As the

planet Venus, she is the morning and evening star, and an incarnation of Ashtaroth, or Ishtar, the Assyro-Babylonian goddess. Her attributes, assumed from that goddess, were inherited by the [Virgin Mary](#). She is *stella maris*, the star of the sea etc.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:94-114](#). The planet is called, Cytherea.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:52-138](#). Cupid accidentally wounded her, making her fall in love with Adonis. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X 524-735.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:1-30](#). She is called the Cyprian, the island of Cyprus being sacred to her. [Dione](#) is her mother, [Cupid](#) her son.

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). Dione's daughter.

Veronica

Saint Veronica gave her handkerchief to [Christ](#) to wipe his brow as he carried the Cross, and when he returned it to her it was said to carry the imprint of his features. It was exhibited at Rome each year at New Year and Easter.

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:94-142](#). It is mentioned.

Verrucchio, *see* [Malatesta](#)

Victor, Saint *see* [Hugh](#) and [Richard](#)

Vigne, Piero delle

Chancellor of the Two Sicilies, and minister to the Emperor Frederick II. (c1190-1249) He recast the laws, and was in Frederick's confidence until 1247, when he was accused of plotting with Pope Innocent IV, was blinded, and imprisoned, subsequently

committing suicide. He was born in poverty in Capua. He was a poet, and said to have composed the first Italian sonnet. He was compared, at the height of his power, to [St Peter](#), holding the keys of punishment and mercy.

[Inferno Canto XIII:31-78](#). He is in the seventh circle.

Virgil

Publius Vergilius Maro, the Roman poet, born at Andes near Mantua 70BC, author of the Aeneid, and Dante's guide from Inferno I to Purgatorio XXX. Julius Caesar died too early to be his patron, in 44BC. He is the type of Human Philosophy, which guides the mind from unworthiness to bliss. Virgil wrote the pastoral Eclogues, the philosophic Georgics, and the epic Aeneid, based on models provided by Theocritus,

Hesiod and Homer. He died 19BC and was buried at Naples. The Aeneid, the story of Aeneas, provided the link to Dante between the Greek world of Homer and Troy, and the Roman Empire.

[Inferno Canto I:61-99](#). He meets Dante and becomes his guide. His position is amongst the virtuous pagans, and he must turn back from Paradise.

[Inferno Canto XIII:31-78](#). In Aeneid iii 22, Virgil gives the episode of Polydorus from which Dante developed the wood of suicides.

[Purgatorio Canto III:1-45](#). Virgil's biographers, Suetonius and Donatus, record that [Augustus](#) ordered Virgil's body moved from Brindisi (Brundisium) in southeast Italy, where he died on an abortive journey to Greece, back to Naples (Parthenope). In [La Pia](#)'s words to Dante there is an echo of the lines on Virgil's tomb, at

Naples, **‘MANTUA ME GENUIT,
CALABRI RAPUERRE, TENET
NUNC PARTHENOPE : CECINI
PASCUA, RURA, DUCES.’** ‘Mantua
bore me, Calabria took me, Naples
holds me: I sang of pastures, farms,
and heroes.’

[Purgatorio Canto VI 25-48.](#) See
Aeneid vi 372 where [Aeneas](#), in the
underworld, guided by the [Sibyl](#),
meets his pilot Palinurus, who,
drowned at sea, and not properly
buried, cannot cross the Acheron for a
hundred years. He entreats Aeneas to
carry him across, at which the Sibyl
tells him: ‘Cease to imagine that
divine decree can be altered by
prayer.’ Virgil explains that the words
were uttered in a Pagan world, where
Christian prayer had as yet no efficacy,
since they were not uttered from a
state of grace.

Purgatorio Canto XXII:25-54. Statius refers to the lines from the Aeneid iii 56-57: '*quid non mortalia pectora cogis Auri sacra fames*: why do you not drive the human heart, accursed greed for gold?' Though Statius suffers for his prodigality, not avarice, he was alerted to his sin by all the dimensions of the power of gold.

Purgatorio Canto XXII:55-93. Statius refers to Virgil's Eclogue iv 5-7, The Golden Age renews. ('*Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto*: Now a new race descends from the high heavens.')

Purgatorio Canto XXVII:115-142. He speaks to Dante for the last time, is still present, but silent, in Canto XXIX 55-56, and Dante mourns his loss in Canto XXX 46-59. He crowns Dante as king and bishop over himself i.e. Dante is beyond earthly temporal and spiritual power and in the primal realm

beyond the worldly institutions of Empire and Church.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:1-48. Those in the chariot repeat words from Aeneid vi 884, '*Manibus o date lilia plenis: Give lilies from full hands! I too shall scatter scarlet flowers...*' the words said by Anchises regarding the funeral of Iulus (Ascanius) his grandson.

Purgatorio Canto XXX:49-81. Just prior to the appearance of Beatrice, Dante's guide in Paradise, Virgil, has turned back towards Limbo, his guidance no longer needed, or possible. Dante's last words directed towards him, though he has already departed, are a quotation from his own Aeneid.

Visconti, Galeazzo, of Milan

He married Beatrice d'Este, after the death of her first husband Nino de'

Visconti of Pisa. His arms were a viper.

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:46-84](#). He is alluded to.

Visconti, Nino

Nino Visconti of Pisa, judge of Gallura, one of the four jurisdictions of Sardinia (Cagliari, Logodoro, Gallura, and Arborea) which belonged at the time to Pisa. He hanged Friar [Gomita](#) who took bribes to release prisoners etc. He married [Beatrice d'Este](#), daughter of [Obizzo d'Este II](#) of Ferrara, by whom he had a daughter [Giovanna](#), voted a pension by the Guelphs in 1328. After Nino's death Beatrice married [Galeazzo Visconti](#) of Milan, a separate branch. The Milanese Visconti suffered misfortune in 1302. The arms of the Milanese Visconti was a viper, that of Nino, a cock. Giovanna married

[Riccardo da Cammino](#) of Treviso. The arrangements for Beatrice's marriage were in progress at easter 1300, and the wedding took place in the June.

[Inferno Canto XXII:76-96](#). Gomita is in the eighth circle.

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:46-84](#). Nino is with the negligent rulers.

Visdomini, of Florence

An ancient Florentine family. See the [note to Paradiso Canto XVI](#).

[Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154](#).

Mentioned indirectly.

Vitaliano, del Dente, or di Jacopo Vitalliani

[Inferno Canto XVII:31-78](#). One of these Paduan usurers may be intended here.

Vulcan

The son of Juno, who was the god of fire and the blacksmith of the gods, and with the [Cyclopes](#) forged [Jupiter](#)'s lightning bolt in the fires of Mount Aetna on Sicily.

[Inferno Canto XIV:43-72.](#)

Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia

[Ottocar](#)'s son Wenceslas II (1278-1305)(*not* the earlier king and Saint) was allowed to retain Bohemia and Moravia, after his father's death, but had to give up Austria and Styria ([Rudolph](#) I's sons [Albert](#) and Rudolph were invested with these), Carinthia and Carniola. He was seemingly noted for his sybaritic ways. He was still alive at the time of the Vision.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136.](#) He is mentioned, unfavourably.

[Paradiso Canto XIX:91-148.](#) He is held as an example of poor kingship.

William of Orange

The hero of French Romance, historically one of [Charlemagne's](#) knights, who, after fighting the Saracens, retired to die as a monk in 812.

[Paradiso Canto XVIII:1-57](#). He is in the Fifth Sphere of Mars.

William II, King of Sicily

William, the Good, Norman King of Sicily and Naples (1166-1189), the last king of the House of Tancred, reigning over 'The Two Sicilies'. He was the nephew of the Empress [Constance](#). He is considered a model ruler by Dante.

[Paradiso Canto XX:1-72](#). He is in the sixth sphere of Jupiter.

William, Marquis of Montferrat

William Longsword, Marquis of Montferrat and Canavese (1254-1292),

one of the most powerful and active warrior lords of his age. He also ruled Tortona, Pavia and Vercelli. He favoured [Charles of Anjou](#) but turned against him, joined by several towns including Alessandria in Piedmont. Alessandria rebelled against William himself in 1290. He was captured by the citizens, and exhibited in an iron cage until his death seventeen months later in 1292. His son John tried to avenge him, but failed, though causing great suffering in Alessandria, and Canavese, which was part of its territory.

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). He is one of the negligent rulers.

Xerxes

King of Persia (495-465BC) who crossed the Hellespont, the modern Dardanelles, at the gateway to the Black Sea, by a bridge of boats, and

returned, having lost an army and a navy, defeated by the Greek Alliance. See Orosius ii 9,10.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:52-138.](#) He is mentioned.

[Paradiso Canto VIII:85-148.](#) The type of the military leader.

Zanche, Michel

The Vicar in Logodoro, Sardinia, of Enzo, the natural son of [Frederick II](#), who made Enzo King of Sardinia. He married Adelasia di Torres, mistress of Logodoro and Gallura (northwest and northeast respectively). Enzo was captured by the Bolognese in 1249, and died a prisoner in 1271. Adelasia divorced him and married Zanche, who governed corruptly till his murder by his son-in-law [Branca d'Oria](#), about 1290.

[Inferno Canto XXII:76-96.](#) He is in the eighth circle.

[Inferno Canto XXXIII:91-157.](#) His murderer Branca is in the ninth.

Zeno, the philosopher

This is not Zeno the Eleatic philosopher, but Zeno of Cittium c.310BC, the founder of the Stoic school of which Seneca was a member.

[Inferno Canto IV:130-151.](#) He is among the philosophers in Limbo.

Zeno, Abbot of San.

Gherardo II (d 1187), Abbot of the church and monastery of San Zeno in Verona, who lived during the reign of Frederick [Barbarossa.](#)

[Purgatorio Canto XVIII:112-145.](#)

He is among the Slothful.

Zita, Santa

[Inferno Canto XXI:31-58.](#) The patron saint of Lucca. The cathedral there has

a crucifix with the face of Christ, *santo volto*, supposed to have been carved by Nicodemus, and finished by the Angels. Its help was invoked in times of need. (The River Serchio flows a few miles north)

Notes

Notes to Dante's Inferno

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InfNote 1. Structure

The regions of Dante's Hell are subdivided, mirroring his descent with Virgil, as follows. The conception derives from [Aristotle](#), [Cicero](#), and Christian teachings. There are **twenty-four** divisions in all. There are **three**

major groupings divided into **seven** Circles, consisting of those who failed to exercise self-control (Circles 2-5), the violent (Circle 7), and the fraudulent and traitorous (Circles 8-9). **Added to** these are the Heathen (Circle 1), the Heretics (Circle 6) and, outside the Acheron, the spiritually neutral. There are thus **nine** Circles, plus the region this side of Acheron, making **ten** major divisions. This pattern of **three**, divided to make **seven**, augmented to **nine** and then **ten**, is the fundamental architecture of Hell, [Purgatory](#) and [Paradise](#). The keynote of Hell is Charity or Pity, of the Purgatorio, Hope, and of the Paradiso, Faith.

Canto III. This side of Acheron. The Dark Plain.

The spiritually neutral, who lived 'without praise or blame' and the angels who 'were

neither faithful nor rebellious'. Their punishment is to 'have no hope of death' and to 'envy every other condition than their own'.

Canto IV. The First Circle. Limbo. The Heathens.

Those who lived before Christianity or were unbaptised. Their punishment is 'without hope to live in desire'

Canto V. The Second Circle. Hell proper. The first division of those lacking self-restraint. The Carnal sinners.

The carnal sinners, blown endlessly though the air in darkness.

Canto VI. The Third Circle. The second division of those lacking self-restraint. The Gluttonous.

The gluttons, drenched in hail, snow and dark water.

Canto VII. The Fourth Circle. The third division of those lacking self-restraint. The Avaricious and the Prodigal.

The misers and the spendthrifts, endlessly rolling heavy weights.

Canto VII. The Fifth Circle. The Styx. The fourth division of those lacking self-restraint. The Angry and the Sullen.

The angry and sullen, sunk in the Stygian marsh. On top are the wrathful struggling with each other, below under the bog are the sullen and lazy who 'sigh and make it bubble at the surface'.

Cantos IX and X. The City of Dis (Lucifer, Satan). The Sixth Circle. The Heretics.

The Heretics and their followers,
incarcerated in red-hot tombs.

Canto XII. The Seventh Circle of the Violent.
The First Round. The River of Blood. The
Violent against others.

The violent against others, the murderers,
tyrants, and assassins, sunk in the River of
Blood. They are guarded by Centaurs.

Canto XIII. The Seventh Circle of the
Violent. The Second Round. The Wood of
Suicides. The Violent against themselves.

The suicides, transformed to trees which
bleed etc.

Cantos XIV-XVII. The Seventh Circle of the
Violent. The Third Round. The Plain of

Burning Sand. The violent against God and Nature.

The violent against God, the blasphemers, lying supine on the burning sand. The violent against Nature, the sodomites, roaming the sand. The violent against Nature and Art, the usurers, crouched on the sand.

Canto XVIII. The Eighth Circle of the Fraudulent. Malebolge. The First Chasm. The pimps and seducers.

The pimps and seducers scourged by horned Demons.

Canto XVIII. The Eighth Circle of the Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Second Chasm. The flatterers.

The flatterers, smeared with filth and excrement.

Canto XIX. The Eighth Circle of the Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Third Chasm. The Simonists, those who sell spiritual offices.

The Simonists, the soles of their feet seared endlessly with fire.

Canto XX. The Eighth Circle of the Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Fourth Chasm. The augurers, diviners, astrologers and prophets.

The augurers, their faces twisted round, forced to walk backwards.

Cantos XXI-XXIII. The Eighth Circle of the Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Fifth Chasm. The Barrators, who exploited their public office.

The barrators, barterers, or speculators covered
in boiling pitch, and guarded and tormented
by Demons.

Canto XXIII. The Eighth Circle of the
Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Sixth Chasm.
The hypocrites.

The hypocrites, weighed down with
cloaks of gilded lead.

Cantos XXIV-XXV. The Eighth Circle of the
Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Seventh Chasm.
The thieves.

The thieves, in the ditch of dragons and
serpents.

Cantos XXVI-XXVII. The Eighth Circle of
the Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Eighth
Chasm. The evil counsellors.

The evil counsellors, wrapped in flames
of conscience.

Canto XXVIII. The Eighth Circle of the
Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Ninth Chasm.
The sowers of discord.

The sowers of dissension, discord, scandal,
sectarianism and schism. Their bodies are
split or mutilated in some way reflecting their
sin.

Cantos XXIX-XXX. The Eighth Circle of the
Fraudulent. Malebolge. The Tenth and last
Chasm. The forgers.

The forgers and falsifiers in things, actions
and words, tormented by disease and
putrefaction.

Canto XXXII. The Ninth Circle of the
Treachurous. Cocytus. The Central Pit or

Well. The First Ring. Caïna. Treachery against kin.

The traitors to their kin, frozen in the ice. The ring is named after [Cain](#), who murdered Abel.

Canto XXXII-XXXIII. The Ninth Circle of the Treacherous. Cocytus. The Central Pit or Well. The Second Ring. Antenora. Treachery against country.

The traitors to their city or country, frozen in the ice. The ring is named after [Antenor](#) who was supposed to have betrayed Troy to the Greeks.

Canto XXXIII. The Ninth Circle of the Treacherous. Cocytus. The Central Pit or Well. The Third Ring. Ptolomaea. Treachery against friends and guests.

The treacherous to friends and guests, frozen in the ice. The ring is named after Ptolemy the murderer of Simon Maccabeus.

Canto XXXIV. The Ninth Circle of the Treacherous. The Central Pit or Well. The Fourth and Last Ring. The Judecca. The traitors to their lords and benefactors.

The betrayers of their masters and benefactors, fixed solid under the ice. The winged form of the Arch Traitor Satan at the centre, towards whom all streams of Guilt flow, frozen from the chest downwards. The ring is named after [Judas](#), the disciple who betrayed Christ.

InfNote 2. Chronology, See also the Chronology of the [Purgatorio](#) and [Paradiso](#).

The Vision is set in **1300**, when Dante was **thirty-five**, in the middle of a seventy-year life-span (Inf I:1, Inf XVIII:28-33, Inf XXI:112-114, Purg II:98-99, Par IX: 40). It is **Easter**. The poem begins at the **Spring Equinox** and the sun's position remains fixed throughout, in Aries, as according to medieval tradition it was at the Creation. (Inf I:38-40, Par X:7-33, Par I:37-44).

The Inferno begins on the evening prior to **Good Friday** (Inf XXI:112-114) at the **full moon** (Inf XX:124-127, Inf XXI:112-114, Purg IX:1-9). The full set of conditions is imaginary, not corresponding to the actual equinox of 1300.

With the sun at the equinox, the sun will be in the following signs during the day:

Sunrise, 6-8am **Aries** 8-10am **Taurus** 10-12noon **Gemini**
12-2pm **Cancer** 2-4pm **Leo** 4-6pm, **Sunset** **Virgo**

The following signs will be rising in the east and setting in the west during the **night**:

Rising 6pm	Libra	8pm Scorpio	10pm Sagittarius
12midnight	Capricorn	2am Aquarius	4am Pisces
Setting 6pm	Aries	8pm Taurus	10pm Gemini
12midnight	Cancer	2am Leo	4am Virgo

Canto I.

[Inferno Canto I:1-60](#). The poem opens on the evening prior to Good Friday in the dark wood. Dante witnesses the dawn of Good Friday at 6am on the equinox with the sun rising in [Aries](#). He meets Virgil and travels with him until the evening of Good Friday.

Canto II.

[Inferno Canto II:1-42](#). The canto starts at the evening of Good Friday.

Canto VII:97-99

[Inferno Canto VII:67-99](#). At this point in the Fifth Circle it is past midnight since the stars of [Libra](#) (The scales of Justice) that were ascending in the evening sky are now falling

from the mid-heaven. It is now Saturday pre-dawn.

Canto XI:112-114

[Inferno Canto XI:94-115](#). At the end of the canto, before the descent to the Seventh Circle, [Pisces](#), the Fishes, is visible on the horizon and must have risen in the east at 4am some time before. Bootës, or the Wain, is (correctly: see a star chart for the northern hemisphere in April, or observe it) in the north-west. (Caurus is the north-west wind). It is therefore near dawn of Saturday.

Canto XX:124-129

[Inferno Canto XX:100-130](#). At the end of the canto, in the Fourth Chasm of the Eighth Circle, the moon is about to set over the Pillars of Hercules in the West. Being full it will have set at dawn on Good Friday and now a day later will set after dawn. Dante does take account of the moon's daily

movement (See Purg IX:1-11). The moon moves about 12 degrees a day, relative to the 'fixed' stars, which equates to 48 minutes, and has not yet set, though it is touching the horizon, so subject to Dante's astronomical sources, it is approximately 6.45am on Saturday morning, possibly a little earlier.

Canto XXI:112-114

[Inferno Canto XXI:97-139](#). At this point of the Fifth Chasm of the Eighth Circle it is five hours earlier than the time of Christ's death, at noon, so it is 7am Saturday. (At the Easter of the year 1300 =1266+34 full years from the crucifixion on Good Friday, supposing Christ to be incarnated in December of BC1 and to die at age 33, celebrating the anniversary of his 33rd year in December 33AD)

Canto XXIX:10

[Inferno Canto XXIX:1-36](#). The moon is at nadir, in the Tenth Chasm, and allowing for its daily movement it is therefore approximately 1pm on the Saturday.

Canto XXXIV:67

[Inferno Canto XXXIV:55-69](#). It is 6pm Saturday and night is falling as the poets leave Hell by clambering down Satan's sides then turning and climbing up to the little sphere which marks the reverse side of the deepest point of the Judecca. This takes them an hour and a half until 7.30pm Saturday.

Canto XXXIV:94-97 and 103-118

[Inferno Canto XXXIV:70-139](#). It is morning on the opposite side of the earth to Jerusalem, and **evening in Hell is dawn there**. It is now mid-tierce, the middle of the first of the four canonical divisions of the day. At the equinox each takes three hours, so tierce is 6am to 9am and we may take it that it is now 7.30am

Sunday as the poets begin their ascent by the channel cut there by the River Lethe. Their ascent to the foot of Mount Purgatory takes them all this Sunday and Sunday night, so that they complete it just before dawn on the morning of Easter Monday.

InfNote 3. The Salvation of Italy

There are various interpretations of Dante's imagery, for example that the leopard (panther) represents Florence and worldly pleasure, lust or envy; the lion the Royal House of France, and ambition or pride; the she-wolf the Papacy, and avarice. Lust, pride and avarice are the three roots of sin. The imagery of the three animals may come from Jeremiah (v.6). The she-wolf, the Papacy, made many alliances.

The Greyhound (*Veltro*) has been suggested to be [Can Grande della Scala](#), born in Verona, between **Feltro** in Venetia and **Montefeltro** in Romagna, the great Ghibelline leader.

Dante's later patron, he may have been regarded by Dante as the deliverer who would restore Imperial power, reinstitute Roman law, eliminate avarice, bring peace, and establish a reformed order of things.

Dante, whose father Aldighiero was a Guelf, and supporter of the papacy, traced his ancestry back to [Cacciaguیدا](#), a crusader under Emperor Conrad III, and identified with the Romans who had allied Florence to Imperial Rome. He was of the *populo vecchio*, the *populus*, the old inhabitants, not the *plebs*, from Fiesole etc. Dante's opposition however to the dishonesty and corruption of the Papacy under Boniface VIII aligned him with the Ghibelline pro-Imperial cause, and opposed him to the pro-Papacy Guelfs. The Florentine families also split between the local Bianchi (white) and Neri (black) factions. Dante's family belonged to the Bianchi. Ultimately the Bianchi combined with the old half-suppressed Ghibelline party,

and the Neri aligned with the Papacy, claiming to represent the old Guelph traditions of Florence.

Dante's personal ideals when fully developed were for an apolitical Church, and an earthly Empire, both enfranchised by God, supreme in their own spheres, one of spiritual and the other temporal power. He was therefore opposed to the Guelf principles of his father (the Ultramontanism of Gregory VII and Innocent III), and to the democracy and plutocracy of Florence. He was equally opposed to the supremacy of State over Church asserted by the Emperors Henry IV and Frederick II, by Henry II of England, and Philip the Fair of France. Dante therefore found himself 'a party of one' caught in the cross-currents of his time, supporting an autocratic view of the Imperial State, and a desire for a reformed, spiritual Papacy.

An alternative candidate for 'the Greyhound' is Ugucione della Faggiuola, head of the

Ghibelline forces at Lucca in 1315 when the Guelphs were driven out, and at the siege of Montecatini (within ten miles of Florence) where he gained a decisive victory. However Ugucione was eclipsed by 1316.

InfNote 4. Ciacco's prophecy in Canto VI.

Inferno Canto VI:64-93. Ciacco prophesies the events in Florence between April 1300, the date of the vision, and April 1303. Pope Boniface the VII exerted pressure on Florence to accept his authority. Dante was at Rome in May 1300, and returned quickly to Florence where he was appointed to the electoral body. Boniface then gave support to the Black (Neri) Guelphs against the White (Bianchi) Ghibellines who insisted on church reforms, and political liberty. The Whites lead by Vieri de' Cerchi, were 'the party of the woods' since the Cerchi came from the wooded Val di Sieve in the Mugello.

The city expelled both [Corso Donati](#), the leader of the Blacks, and the Cerchi (who included Dante's friend, the poet [Guido Cavalcanti](#).) This action, that Dante supported, led to life-long enmity against him. Corso Donati went to Rome, and allied himself to the Pope. [Boniface VII](#) allied himself in turn to [Philip the Fair](#), Philip the IVth, of France against the Empire of [Albert of Hapsburg](#). ('King of the Romans'), Dante called this the alliance of the new Pilate and the New Pharisees, or the giant and the harlot (the Papacy) embracing. [Charles of Valois](#), the French king's brother, crossed the Alps in August of 1301, and after treating with Florence, entered the city peaceably on November 1st. The banished Blacks followed him in large numbers. Corso Donati returned on November 5th. The houses of the Whites were sacked and burned, and the Prior, the magistrates were deposed. The Bianchi, the Whites were

condemned and exiled. Dante was aligned with a weak Ghibelline party supporting a weak and uncommitted Imperial presence, and opposed by a strong Guelf party (aligned with France, and therefore a caricature of Dante's Ghibelline beliefs) supporting a corrupt Papacy. What Dante desired was a reformed Papacy in the spiritual sphere, balanced with a strong Imperial presence derived from Roman Imperial history in the secular sphere. In different times he would have been a Guelph like his father in spirit, **and** a supporter of the Ghibelline Empire in secular practice. In April 1302 he heard that he had been exiled with the Whites, the Ghibellines. He never returned to Florence.

In March 1303 the exiled Whites under Scarpetta degli Ordelauffi (strangely a papal vicar, indicating a growing rift between Boniface and the French) tried to force an entry into Florence. It failed and many were taken prisoner and beheaded. France, the

‘giant’, had triumphed, and his ‘paramour’
Boniface VII died in October 1303, his policy
having led to Italian disaster.
See also [Vanni Fucci’s](#) prophecy.

InfNote 5. Arles and Pola.

[Inferno Canto IX:106-133](#). Dante compares
the plain of Dis full of heretic tombs with
Arles and Pola. Arles, in Provence, in
southern France, at the mouth of the River
Rhone, has at Aleschans (Les Alyscamps)
rows of tombs, the graves of Charlemagne’s
warriors, according to legend, buried there
after the rout at Roncesvalles (See ‘The Song
of Roland’), and of the Christian dead from
the battle of Aleschans where the Saracens
defeated William of Orange. (See Van
Gogh’s painting ‘Les Alyscamps’, Niarchos
Collection, Athens, and his letter to Theo,
no559, Nov 1888, where he talks of ‘rows of
old Roman tombs’.)

Pola (modern Pula) is a seaport, at the southern tip of Istria (modern Istra), that promontory, once belonging to Venice, and hence part of Italy, that hangs down into the Adriatic to the East of the Golfo di Venezia. The promontory on the East is bounded by the Gulf of Quarnaro (modern Kvarner). It is said that numbers of Slavonians were brought there for burial, and it has Roman remains.

InfNote 6. Sodom and Cahors.

[Inferno Canto XI:1-66](#). The city of Sodom represented unnatural vice (Genesis XIX), while Cahors in Guyenne (on the River Lot) in southern France was notorious for its usurers, in the Middle Ages, so that ‘Caorsinus’ was a synonym for ‘usurer’.

InfNote 7. The Old Man of Crete.

[Inferno Canto XIV:73-120](#). An allegory of human history. The concept is from Daniel ii. 32. The four metals are the four ages of man:

gold, silver, bronze, and iron (See also Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I). The iron and clay feet, are secular and spiritual authority, the latter foot being the one humanity looks to for support, but weakened and corrupted by temporal power. Crete in Virgil's *Aeneid* iii 104-5 is the 'cradle of our (Roman) race' traced back via Troy to Teucer. Damietta stands for Egypt, superseded by Rome. The golden age alone was free of tears.

InfNote 8. The Origins of Florence.

[Inferno Canto XV:43-78](#). According to tradition Catiline was besieged, by [Caesar](#), in Fiesole (Faesulae), in the hills, three miles north-west of Florence. When the town fell a new town was established, in the valley, by the River Arno. The inhabitants were a mixture of Fiesolans and Roman soldiers. The Florentine commoners (Whites) were held to be descended from the Fiesolans, the nobility (Blacks) from the Romans. This was regarded

as a source of the future conflicts. Dante was for a reformed Papacy and a strong (Holy Roman) Empire, and was active in the expulsion of both Whites and Blacks from Florence, he was therefore opposed by both parties, though ostensibly a Ghibelline (his father having been a Guelf) and courted and vilified by both. Dante is reconciled to this, and [Farinata](#)'s, prophecy, of a troubled exile.

InfNote 9. Vanni Fucci's prophecy.

[Inferno Canto XXIV:130-151](#). [Vanni Fucci](#) prophesies the defeat of the Ghibelline Whites (Bianci) by the Black Guelf (Neri) faction. The Blacks were expelled from Pistoia in May 1301. Dante was one of those who voted for the expulsions. In November 1301 the Blacks entered Florence, aided by [Charles de Valois](#), and in April 1302 made the city drive out the Whites (changing the people, and its laws). Pistoia became a rallying point for the Whites in Tuscany, until

their defeat by the Florentine and Lucchese Guelfs, under [Moroello Malaspina](#), Marquis of Giovagallo in Valdimagra (the extremity of Lunigiana). Piceno's field is the area between Serravalle and Montecatini. Malaspina took Serravalle in 1302, and reduced Pistoia in 1306. Pistoia was said to have been founded by the remnants of Catiline's army, leading to Dante's comment in the next Canto ('you outdo your seed in evil-doing')

See also [Ciaccio's Prophecy](#)

InfNote 10. Montereccione and the bronze pine-cone of St Peter's.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:1-45](#) The Giants appear like the twelve turrets of the castle of Montereccione eight miles north-west of Siena, between it and San Gimignano. They were the monstrous sons of Earth and Tartarus, with many arms, and serpent feet, who made war against the gods, scaling

heaven by piling mountains on one another (Mount Pelion on Mount Ossa, and both on Olympus.). They were overthrown by Jupiter's thunderbolts and buried under Sicily.

[Inferno Canto XXXI:46-81](#). The bronze pinecone, to which Dante compares the size of [Nimrod](#)'s head, once on the top of the Mausoleum of Adrian and then moved to the Vatican Gardens, stood in front of St Peter's, and was between seven and eight feet high.

Notes to Dante's Purgatorio

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PurgNote 1. Structure

The pattern of **three**, divided to make **seven**, augmented to **nine** and then **ten**, is the fundamental architecture of [Hell](#), Purgatory and [Paradise](#). (The keynote of Hell is Charity or Pity, of the Purgatorio, Hope, and of the Paradiso, Faith.)

When Satan fell into Hell, he threw up behind him the mountain of Purgatory, at the opposite side of the earth to Jerusalem. The ascent of Purgatory is an ethical journey to recover the life of Eden, the Garden of Eden and Earthly Paradise. Cato, the embodiment of moral virtue, is the guardian of the Mount, and Virgil, the embodiment of human philosophy is the guide. The Earthly Paradise is the goal, where Beatrice will appear to point the way onward, beyond the ethical towards spiritual Revelation.

There are **seven** circles of purgation of the deadly sins, arranged in **three** groupings, consisting of (see Canto XVII) those arising from a perverse desire to see others fail or suffer, namely pride, envy, and anger (Circles 3-5); that arising from inadequate desire, namely spiritual and intellectual sloth (Circle 6); and those arising from excessive desire, namely avarice, gluttony, and lust (Circles 7-9). **Added** to these are the excommunicated, at the base of the mountain, and the late-repentant below the gate. There are therefore **nine** major divisions, plus the Earthly Paradise, beyond Purgatory proper, at its summit, making **ten** in all.

Cantos III and IV. The Excommunicates.
Those disobedient against the Church.
They must wait for thirty times the period of their disobedience before ascending the mountain.

Cantos IV-VI. The Late-repentant.

They must live excluded from purgation for as long as they were impenitent on earth, unless aided by the prayers of souls in grace.

Cantos X-XII. The Proud.

They are bent, in humility, under the burden of huge stones.

Cantos XIII-XIV. The Envious.

Their eyelids are sealed, and they lean together in supportive love.

Cantos XV-XVI. The Angry.

They are covered in a dark fog.

Canto XVII. The structure of Purgatory.

Virgil explains the nature of defective, excessive and perverted love.

Canto XVIII. The Slothful.

They run in a great throng, to demonstrate new fervour.

Cantos XIX-XXI. The Avaricious (and the Prodigal).

They lie bound and motionless, as in life they were bound to earthly things.

Cantos XXII-XXIV. The Gluttonous.

They are wasted by hunger.

Cantos XXV-XXVI. The Lustful.

They exist in the flames of purgation.

Canto XXVII. Through the flames. Virgil's Departure.

Virgil sends Dante forward to meet Matilda in the Garden of Eden.

Cantos XXVIII-XXIX. Dante and Matilda.

The Divine Pageant.

Cantos XXX-XXXIII. The meeting with Beatrice.

Lethe. Beatrice. Dante's purification.

PurgNote 2. Chronology, See also the Chronology of the [Inferno](#) and [Paradiso](#).

Dante and Virgil reach the Mountain of Purgatory at dawn on Easter Monday.

Canto I:19-21 and 107-117

[Purgatorio Canto I:1-27](#). They reach the base of the mountain near sunrise (19-21) and it is near 6am as they leave [Cato](#) (107-117).

Canto II:55-57 and 67-68

[Purgatorio Canto II:46-79](#). The stars have vanished (55-57) but there are no shadows yet (67-68). The light of the rising sun in [Aries](#) has blotted out Capricorn in the mid-heaven which is ninety degrees from it on the zodiac.

Canto III:16-26

Purgatorio Canto III:1-45. The sun is up, and it is Vespers (3pm-6pm) the last of the four divisions of the day, that is evening, in Italy, when it is dawn in Purgatory.

Canto IV:15 and 137-139

Purgatorio Canto IV:1-18. The conversation with Manfred ends at about 9.20am, since the sun has climbed fifty degrees.

Purgatorio Canto IV:88-139. The conversation with Belacqua takes Dante to noon in Purgatory, where the midday sun is in the **north**. It is sunrise on the Ganges, and sunset in Spain. (In Dante's geography Jerusalem is the centre, with the Ganges at the extreme east, Gibraltar at the extreme west, and Rome midway between Jerusalem and Gibraltar.)

Canto VI:51

[Purgatorio Canto VI:49-75](#). The poets are on the east of the mountain, and the sun disappears behind the mountain, so that Dante casts no shadow.

Canto VII:43

[Purgatorio Canto VII:40-63](#). The day is declining as Virgil talks to [Sordello](#).

Canto VIII:1-18 and 43-51

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:1-45](#). The souls sing their hymn at sunset (1-18: sunset of Easter Monday).....

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:46-84](#) and the poets descend after sunset (they cannot ascend, see VII:58-59)

Canto IX:1-12 and 44

[Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33](#). It is just after 8.30pm on the Monday evening when Dante falls asleep (1-12). Full moon and **moonset** was at **sunrise** on the Friday morning, so

three days have passed (sunrise in Hell is sunset in Purgatory!). The moon moves 12 degrees, which equates to 48 minutes a day, so it is now approximately 2 and a half hours after **sunset**, and it is **moonrise**, in Purgatory, that is about 8.30pm, and the moon on the zodiac has passed through [Libra and is in Scorpio](#). The first stars of Scorpio and the lunar aurora are on the horizon.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:34-63](#) He is carried to the Gate by [Lucia](#), and wakes after 8am on Tuesday morning (44).

Canto X:13-16

[Purgatorio Canto X:1-45](#). It is moonset on Tuesday morning. The moon retardation now, after three and a half days, equates to about 42 degrees, or three hours so it is about 9am.

Canto XII:80-81

Purgatorio Canto XII:64-99. The sixth handmaiden (or hour that serves the day) is returning, indicating that it is noon on Tuesday, since sunrise was at 6am.

Canto XV:1-9 and 139

Purgatorio Canto XV:1-36. It is 3pm, Vespers, (1-9), i.e. as much of the sun's course is left to run on the zodiac before sunset (nominally at 6pm at the equinox) as it passes in the first three hours of the day between 6am and 9am. The poets are heading due west, and have reached the northern quarter of the mount from the east. It is still evening at line 139.

Canto XVII:12 and 70-75

Purgatorio Canto XVII:1-39. It is just after sunset on the Tuesday evening at the base of the mountain(12) and sets for the poets at the fourth circle.

Canto XVIII:76-81

Purgatorio Canto XVIII:76-111. Moonrise was at 9.12pm or so, and now, at midnight on the Tuesday the moon is in the east in Sagittarius.

Canto XIX:1-6 and 37-39

Purgatorio Canto XIX:1-36. It is some time (4am or so) before dawn when the last stars of Aquarius and the first of Pisces have risen (making the sign called Fortuna Major) (1-6).

Purgatorio Canto XIX:37-69. It is daylight of the Wednesday morning when Dante wakes and the poets travel west with the risen sun behind them.

Canto XXII:115-120

Purgatorio Canto XXII:115-154. It is after 10am in the sixth circle (four handmaidens of the sun have retired i.e. hours of the day, the fifth is in place. Sunrise is 6am).

Canto XXIII:114

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:91-133](#). Dante casts a shadow, and they are well to the west.

Canto XXV:1-3

[Purgatorio Canto XXV:1-79](#). It is after 2.0pm Wednesday. [Taurus](#) the Bull rises at 8.00am at the equinox and will be on the meridian six hours later, i.e. at 2.0pm. Its opposite sign Scorpio will be at the nadir.

Canto XXVI:1-9

[Purgatorio Canto XXVI:1-66](#). Dante walks due south with the sun on his right (due west) near sunset.

Canto XXVII:1-6 and 61-69 and 94-96 and 109-114 and 133

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45](#). The sun sets at approx. 6pm Wednesday at the base of the mountain.(1-6).

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:46-93](#). The sun sets higher up on the mountain where the poets are (61-69).

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:94-114](#). Before sunrise on Thursday, Dante sees [Leah](#) in his vision (94-96), and wakes at dawn (109-114).

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:115-142](#). The sun shines full on their faces as they enter the Earthly Paradise, facing east, from the west (133).

Canto XXXIII:103-105

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:103-145](#). It is noon Thursday as they reach the source of Lethe.

PurgNote 3. The planet Venus and the Southern Cross.

[Purgatorio Canto I:1-27](#). Venus is taken as being in Pisces at the time of the Creation, with the sun in Aries. Pisces was the sign of

the spring equinox during the Christian era. Venus is depicted in that position in the Collegiate Church at San Gimignano. The four stars of the Southern Cross (Note: Dante's obvious knowledge of it, but the freshness of that knowledge, suggests a recent report of its existence from a voyage south of the equator after 1300.) represent the four Cardinal moral virtues: Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude. The *prima gente* may be [Adam](#) and [Eve](#), driven out of the Earthly Paradise into the uninhabited world. [Purgatorio Canto I:28-84](#). Only part of the Wain, the constellation Bootës, is ever visible in the southern hemisphere, and it is never visible from Purgatory (latitude 32 degrees south, as Jerusalem, opposite it, is approximately 32 degrees north).

PurgNote 4. Dawn in Purgatory.

Purgatorio Canto II:1-45. Purgatory and Jerusalem are on the great circle that forms the horizon at dawn and the zenith meridian at noon for both places. It is midnight on the Ganges in India, sunset (notionally 6pm at the equinox) at Jerusalem, and dawn (notionally 6am) on the Mountain of Purgatory. Night falls on the Ganges with Libra rising, since the sun is rising in the opposite sign of Aries at the Visionary equinox. Libra falls from night's hand at the autumn equinox when the sun enters and blots out the constellation, and the days become shorter.

PurgNote 5. The singing in Purgatory, the Psalms and Beatitudes.

Purgatorio Canto II:46-79. *'In exitu Israel de Aegypto'*. Dante indicated the meaning of this Psalm 114, when 'the mountains skipped like rams' as being 'the exit of the sanctified soul, from the slavery of this corruption, to the

liberty of eternal glory.’ See Epistle to Can Grande della Scala X 7, Convitio ii. I:63-65.

[Purgatorio Canto V:1-63](#). The *Miserere* is a setting of Psalm 51, a psalm of repentance (‘wash me and I shall be whiter than snow’) beginning: ‘Have mercy upon me, O God,’

[Purgatorio Canto VII:64-136](#). The *Salve Regina* (*Salva Regina, mater misericordiae*) is the antiphon sung after Vespers, invoking the aid of the [Virgin](#).

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:1-45](#). *Te lucis ante terminum* is the Ambrosian hymn sung at Compline, the last office of the day.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:106-145](#). *Te Deum Laudamus* is the Ambrosian hymn sung at Matins and on solemn occasions. Saint Ambrose (c340-397AD) Bishop of Milan, opposed the Arian heresy, and chose simple metres to create hymns to help the uneducated understand the orthodox faith. (The favourite Ambrosian stanza, is an

unrhymed, four line stanza, of iambic dimeters).

[Purgatorio Canto XII:100-136.](#) '*Beati pauperes spiritu*, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven', the First Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount, see Matthew v 3.

[Purgatorio Canto XV:37-81.](#) '*Beati misericordes*, Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy', the Fifth Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount Matthew v 7. For the words 'Rejoice you who conquer' refer to Matthew v 12, Romans xii 21 and Revelation ii 7.

[Purgatorio Canto XVI:1-24.](#) The prayer from the Latin Mass, '*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis, dona nobis pacem*: Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, give us peace.' See John i 29.

[Purgatorio Canto XVII:40-69.](#) The Third Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew v 5, is spoken, not sung. ‘*Beati pacifici*: blessed are the meek’ (for they shall inherit the earth.)

[Purgatorio Canto XIX:37-69](#). The Second Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount Matthew v 4, is affirmed by the Angel of Zeal. ‘*Beati qui lugent*: blessed are they that mourn’ (for they shall be comforted.)

[Purgatorio Canto XIX:70-114](#). Psalm 119 v25. ‘*Adhaesit pavimento anima mea*, my soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word.’

[Purgatorio Canto XX:97-151](#). ‘*Gloria in excelsis Deo, pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to all men.’ See Luke ii 8-14.

[Purgatorio Canto XXII:1-24](#). ‘*Sitiunt*’: in the Fourth Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v 6, ‘*Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam*: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.’

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:1-36.](#) ‘*Labia mea Domine*: O Lord open thou my lips (and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise).’ Psalm 51 verse 15. A verse of the *Miserere*, see above.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIV:100-154.](#) A second reference, see above, to the Fourth Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v 6, ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.’

[Purgatorio Canto XXV:109-139.](#) The Matin hymn, with its opening words, as given prior to the revision of the Breviary by Pope Urban VIII in 1631: ‘*Summae Deus Clementae*: God of supreme mercy,’ which contains a prayer for protection against lustfulness.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:1-45.](#) ‘*Beati mundo corde*: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ The Sixth Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v 8.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:46-93.](#) The division of the sheep and goats at the last day, when the King shall say to the sheep on the right:

‘Venite benedicti patris mei: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew xxv 34.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVIII:52-138.](#) *‘Delectasti me, Domine in factura tua: For, thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work.’* Psalm 92 v4 is spoken by [Matilda](#).

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:1-36.](#) *‘Beati, quorum tecta sunt peccata: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.’* Psalm 32 verse 1.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:82-105.](#) ‘Blessed art thou among women’ are the words of the Angel [Gabriel](#), and of Elizabeth, to [Mary](#). See Luke i 28 and 42.

[Purgatorio Canto XXX:1-48.](#) The Elder representing the books of Solomon sings *‘Veni sponsa de Libano: Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon.’* from the Song of Solomon iv 8. Dante mentions that the Saints will sing

Alleluia, on the Day of Judgement, an untranslated Hebrew word used as a chant of praise, taken over from synagogue usage (the Hebrew *halleluyah* meaning ‘praise ye Jehovah’)

Those in the chariot, sing the Benedictus, prescribed for Lauds, the first day-hour, by St [Benedict](#): ‘*Benedictus qui venit*: Blessed is he that comest in the name of the Lord.’ See Matthew xxi 9, Mark xi 9, Luke xix 38, John xii 13.

[Purgatorio Canto XXX:82-145](#). Psalm 31 lines 1-8. ‘*In te, Domine, speravi*: In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, let me never be ashamed...thou hast set *my feet* in a large room.’

[Purgatorio Canto XXXI:91-145](#). ‘*Asperges me*: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’ Psalm 51 verse 7.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57](#). Psalm 79. ‘*Deus, venerunt gentes*: O God, the heathen

are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled..’

PurgNote 6. The sun’s position south of the equator.

[Purgatorio Canto IV:52-87](#). The sun, regarded as a planet, by Dante, here, is a mirror (*specchio*) that reflects the light from the divine source towards the earth below. It is in Aries, at the equinox, but Virgil explains that if it were in Gemini, the Twins, its (June) arc being higher in the sky would take it even nearer the north (Orse= the Great and Little Bears, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor). The poets, south of the equator, looking east, see the sun, rising towards the north, the converse of what is seen in the diametrically opposite hemisphere of Jerusalem, where the sun will be to the south, towards Arabia. The *strada*, is the ecliptic, the path of the sun. The

equator is equidistant between Mount Zion at Jerusalem, and the Mount of Purgatory.

PurgNote 7. Dante's speech concerning the state of Italy.

[Purgatorio Canto VI:76-151](#). Dante laments the state of Italy. The German Emperor [Albert](#) is absent, and indifferent. The power [Justinian](#) had to enforce the Roman Law has lapsed. The clergy have usurped secular power (the 'people who should be obedient'). Feuding is rife. Every petty partisan is a [Marcellus](#), an opponent of Caesar and the Empire. Florence is treated with irony and sarcasm, as a role model of how to sway backwards and forwards with the current, unstable and sick, like a patient tossing on a bed trying to find comfort. Dante shows his firm political stance, in favour of a strong Empire, enforcing the Roman legal code, with state and church separated, the

Church handling spiritual, and the state, secular matters.

PurgNote 8. The three stars.

[Purgatorio Canto VIII:85-108](#). The four bright stars of the [Southern Cross](#) signified the four Cardinal moral virtues Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. The constellation of the Southern Cross is now, after 6pm, low to their southeast, and obscured by the shoulder of the Mount. The three glowing stars that have risen signify Faith, Hope and Charity, the three Cardinal theological virtues, the keynotes to the three portions of the Comedy, but the ascent only continues in the morning when the other four are again in the sky, indicating the force of the moral virtues in the practical life. It is not clear whether the three stars were intended to indicate a real star grouping, known to Dante, low to the south-west, and near the Southern Pole, where the Southern Cross was just

before dawn: none is an obvious candidate.
(Note also: The Southern Cross is never visible in the northern latitudes if that is what is meant by *di là* in line 92)

PurgNote 9. Dante's three dreams.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:1-33](#). Dante is carried upwards by Lucia, and dreams he is being carried by an eagle, as [Ganymede](#) was by Jupiter. The eagle in the medieval Bestiaries flies into the circle of fire in its old age, its feathers are consumed, and it falls blinded into a fountain, where it is renewed. It is a symbol therefore of baptismal regeneration through Divine Grace. Ganymede was a son of Tros, and an ancestor of [Aeneas](#), linking the regeneration to Roman law and justice.

[Purgatorio Canto XIX:1-36](#). Dante dreams of the Siren, Sensual Pleasure, the basis of the three sins remaining to be purged, avarice, gluttony and lust. The lady who comes to warn him is the light of reason. [Ulysses](#)'s

sailors, and thus Ulysses himself, were drawn out of their way by the Sirens, but he, like Dante, resisted their lure.

[Purgatorio Canto XXVII:94-114](#). Dante dreams of [Leah](#), the symbol of the active life, who talks of [Rachel](#) her sister the symbol of the contemplative life. See Genesis xxix and xxx. [Matilda](#) and [Beatrice](#) are their equivalents in the Paradiso, as Martha and her sister Mary are in Luke's Gospel x 39-42. The active life, the way of service is good, but the way of contemplation is greater.

PurgNote 10. The Gate of Purgatory.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:64-105](#). The Gate of Purgatory has been interpreted as an allegory of the Sacrament of Penance. The Angel is the priestly confessor, while the three steps are the three stages of the Sacrament, Repentance, Confession, and Forgiveness. Repentance is cool marble, Confession rough and scorched, and breaking the stubbornness

of the heart, and Forgiveness red with Christ's blood. The adamantine threshold is the rock of the Church with its power to forgive sin, and the firmness and constancy of the confessor.

[Purgatorio Canto IX:106-145](#). The Angel inscribes seven letter *P*'s on Dante's forehead representing the seven capital sins, *peccata capitali*, to be purged on the Mount. The Angels's silver key is experience by which the confessor judges the penitent's repentance and worthiness, the golden key is the absolution he grants. His robes are ashen with the colour of humility, with which the confessor undertakes his role.

PurgNote 11. The public records and the standard measure.

In 1299 Messer Niccola Acciaiuoli, and Messer Baldo d'Aguglione stole a page of the public records of Florence, containing evidence of a shadowy transaction that they,

and the Podestà, had been involved in. At about the same time Messer Durante de' Chiramontesi, officer of the customs for salt, reduced the standard measure.

PurgNote 12. The letters OMO.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIII:1-36](#). The circles of the eyes stand *inside* the legs of the letter M, formed from the sides of the head, the forehead, and the nose. In the emaciated faces Dante sees, the sunken circles of the eyes accentuate the sharp outline of the M.

PurgNote 13. The Divine Pageant.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:37-61](#). The seven candlesticks are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Dante employs the imagery of Revelation i 12, 20 and iv 5. According to Isaiah (Vulgate xi 2,3) the gifts are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge, Pity and Fear of the Lord. The senses are not individually deceived by their 'proper'

objects - colour, sound, savour, scent, texture, according to [Aristotle](#), but can be deceived by the ‘common’ objects of the senses - motion, number, shape and size.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:61-81](#). The seven banners are the seven sacraments, or the working of the seven gifts. The rainbow may have been suggested by Revelation iv 3. The ten paces are probably the Ten Commandments.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:82-105](#). The twenty-four elders are the books of the Old Testament (the twelve minor prophets counted as one, First and Second Kings as one, and the same with Samuel, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah). The white garments are emblematical of Faith: see Hebrews xi. The basic concept is from Revelation iv 4. The lily crowns (fleur-de-luce is iris, but the French royal emblem is equated with a lily) suggest purity of faith and teaching.

The four beasts are described in [Ezekiel](#) i 4-14 and Revelation iv 6-9. Their faces of man, lion, ox and eagle represent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (and incidentally the four fixed Zodiacal signs of Aquarius, Leo, Taurus, and Scorpio). The green leaves indicate Hope. See I Timothy i 1. The six wings are the six laws (according to Pietro di Dante) Natural, Mosaic, Prophetic, Evangelical, Apostolic, and Canonical. The eyes indicate knowledge of past and future. John says the beasts have six wings, Ezekiel four. Dante follows [St John the Divine. Purgatorio Canto XXIX:106-132](#). The two wheels of the Church's chariot are the contemplative and active life (or the Old and New Testaments, or the Franciscan and Dominican orders, or all three in simultaneous and complex allegory.). The Grifon is Christ, half eagle and half lion in his divine golden, and human red-and-white aspects. The wings are Mercy, and Truth or

Justice. See Psalms 36 verses 5 7, and 10, and 57 verses 1 and 11. The three theological virtues Faith in white, Hope in green, and Charity in red, dance by the right hand wheel (They are also perhaps the Three Graces, Giving, Receiving and Thanking), Charity gives them their measure, See First Corinthians xiii 13 ‘but the greatest of these is Charity,’ while sometimes Faith leads.

The four moral or cardinal virtues Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, are by the left wheel. Prudence has the three eyes, which see Past, Present and Future, and the purple dress of the four moral virtues is that of the Imperial Law.

[Purgatorio Canto XXIX:133-154](#). The depiction of the Books of the New Testament continues. The two aged men are [Luke](#), considered as the author of Acts. Paul calls him ‘the beloved physician’ in Colossians iv 14, and he is regarded as a spiritual Hippocrates. [Paul](#) is shown with the sword of

his martyrdom, and of the spirit, see Ephesians vi 17 ‘the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.’ Behind them come [James](#), [Peter](#), [John](#) and [Jude](#), the authors of the four catholic, canonical Epistles. Finally comes [John the Divine](#), the author of Revelation, the visionary Apocalypse. (There are alternative interpretations.)

The roses, and other crimson flowers, they wear represent Charity, where the Old Testament Elders wore white lilies representing Purity.

PurgNote 14. The Mystic Tree.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:37-63](#). The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, see Genesis ii 9, is the symbol of the temporal power, of the Empire and obedience to it, since the prohibition to eat of it was the origin of law and duty. Justice is maintained when the Church follows [Christ](#) (the Grifon) by not

usurping the temporal power of the Empire, and vice versa. The chariot pole is the Cross, which, legend has it, was taken from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It links Church and Empire. The Empire blossoms in purple after the advent of Christianity (the sun, shining from Aries at the Nativity).

PurgNote 15. The Church past, present and future.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:64-99](#). **Beatrice**, Divine Philosophy and Heavenly Wisdom, is seated at the root of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is Rome, the seat of the Empire, and in the shadow of the new foliage that blossomed when the Church was united to the Empire. She watches over the chariot of the Church, attended by the Virtues, who still guard the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXII:100-160](#). The **eagle** represents the ten Imperial persecutions of the

Church instigated by the Emperors from Nero to Diocletian. See also Ezekiel xvii 3.

The **vixen** represents the heresies of the early Church, suppressed by the writings of the Fathers etc.

The **second descent of the eagle** represents the Donation of [Constantine](#), whereby temporal and spiritual powers were confused, the Church acquiring its earthly riches. See the entry for Constantine.

The **dragon** represents the Islamic schism, its form suggested by Revelation xii 3, or possibly [Simony](#).

The fresh feathers covering the chariot are those of temporal power and worldly wealth (increased by the Carolingian Emperors) and the Church becomes transformed into a **Monster** with the seven capital sins as **its heads** (suggested by Revelation xvii 3).

The **Whore** is the corrupted Papacy under [Boniface VIII](#), and [Clement V](#).

The **Giant** is the French dynasty, [Philip the Fair](#) specifically. His feud with Boniface ended in the death of the Pope, and he connived with Clement V at transferring the Papal Court to Avignon. If **Dante** here represents Florence and Italy, then the Pope was punished, and the Whore scourged, for her aspirations in Italy, that is for turning her eye towards him.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:1-57](#). Beatrice implies that the Church is no longer recognisable as the Church of God, but nothing can save the guilty from God's vengeance (Dante says no **sop** will help: referring to the custom where a murderer could escape vendetta if he contrived to eat a sop of bread and wine at the murdered person's grave, within nine days after the murder. The family kept watch to prevent it.)

Emperor [Frederick II](#) (d1250) was regarded by Dante as the last true Emperor before 1300, despite the reigns of [Rudolf](#),

Adolphus, and [Albert](#), so that the throne is empty. But a new heir to the **eagle** of Empire (Henry VII in 1308) will soon arrive, and a new leader (the Roman letters for five-hundred, ten and five, DXV, rearranged, stand for *dux*, a leader), Dante's 'greyhound' perhaps ([Can Grande](#) or Henry of Luxembourg) will rise to ride Italy of the corrupt Papacy, the **Whore**, and the false French Empire, the **Giant**.

The tree has been twice spoiled, once by [Adam](#) in the Garden of Eden, by taking the apple, secondly by the wood, the chariot pole, being taken to form the Cross.

[Purgatorio Canto XXXIII:58-102](#). It is **blasphemy** to usurp the Imperial prerogatives as the Empire is divinely ordained, and is a sin comparable in its disobedience with Adam's disobedience in eating the apple.

The height, and inverted cone of **the tree**, signifies the power and extent of the Empire, and its Divine origin.

Notes to Dante's Paradiso

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ParNote 1. Structure

The pattern of **three**, divided to make **seven**, augmented to **nine** and then **ten**, is the fundamental architecture of [Hell](#), [Purgatory](#) and Paradise. (The keynote of Hell is Charity

or Pity, of the Purgatorio, Hope, and of the Paradiso, Faith.)

Dante follows the earth-centred Ptolemaic view of the solar system, and the order of the planets is as our own with the earth and sun interchanged i.e. from the earth outwards, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. The other planets were not known. The Paradisial planetary orbits, through which Dante ascends, are concentric spheres, arranged in **three** groups, divided into **seven** spheres. These are the **infra-solar**, where Dante meets spirits weakened by some impairment of faith, hope, or love, namely (Spheres 1-3) of the Moon (Inconstancy), Mercury (Ambition), and Venus(Earthly Love); the **solar** (Sphere 4) that of the Sun (Prudence) the leader of the cardinal virtues; and the **supra-solar** spheres of the remaining cardinal virtues (Spheres 5-7) namely Mars (Fortitude), Jupiter (Justice) and Saturn (Temperance).

This pattern of seven is augmented to **nine** by the addition of the Stellar Heaven of souls, and the Primum Mobile of the Angels. Finally all symbolic places and times are subsumed in the ultimate vision of the Empyrean, the place of God and all spirits, in the eternal, completing the **tenfold** structure.

ParNote 2. Chronology, See also the Chronology of the [Inferno](#) and the [Purgatorio](#).

Canto I:43-44

[Paradiso Canto I:37-72](#). Dante will rise into Heaven at midday on Thursday (in Purgatory, it is midnight at Jerusalem). He then goes round the world with the day, so that, for him, it remains mid-day, and no ‘earth-time’ passes. The sun is in Aries throughout, since it is at the equinox.

Canto XXII:97-120 and 127-154

[Paradiso Canto XXII:100-154](#). Beatrice raises Dante into his sun-sign of Gemini. He looks down, from the sphere of Saturn, on earth and the preceding spheres, and sees the earth from 'ridge to river-mouth' from Jerusalem to the Ganges. (It is noon at Jerusalem, sunset on the Ganges).

Canto XXVII:79-87

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:67-96](#). Dante, in Gemini, is separated from the sun, in Aries, by the sign of Taurus. It is now sunset over Jerusalem. (Jupiter snatched Europa from Phoenician Tyre, the modern Lebanon, at the longitude of Jerusalem) Dante looking down sees from the dark of sunset at Jerusalem to sunlit Gibraltar.

The action of the Divine Comedy has therefore taken a week, as follows:
Prior to the Poem: Dante spends Thursday night in the wood.

Inferno: From Good Friday am, in Italy, to Easter Monday am, at the foot of the mountain of Purgatory, opposite Jerusalem.

Purgatorio: From Monday am to noon on Thursday, on the mountain, and in the Earthly Paradise (six hours).

Paradiso: From Thursday noon, in Purgatory, to Thursday noon, over Italy (Midnight in Jerusalem to the following sunset in Jerusalem.)

There is a switch in time from Inferno time to Purgatory time, of twelve hours, at the end of the Inferno, and a change in position from Purgatory opposite Jerusalem, to a position over Italy, occupying eighteen hours of earth-time, during the Paradiso, which compensates for the twelve hours gained, and takes the time from midday at Jerusalem (morning in Italy) at the start of the poem, to evening in Jerusalem (noon in Italy) at the end.

ParNote 3. Four circles in three crosses.

[Paradiso Canto I:37-72](#). At the equinox, at sunrise, the celestial circles of the Ecliptic, and the Equinoctial and Equatorial colures, cross the celestial circle of the Horizon at the same point. Each of the three then forms a cross with the Horizon. Allegorically, God most influences the world through the four Cardinal virtues (Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, and Fortitude) when they are joined to form the three theological virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity). The happiest constellation is Aries, the sign in which the Sun was at the Creation.

ParNote 4. Dante is lifted towards the Heavens.

[Paradiso Canto I:73-99](#). Dante is lifted into the Heavens at noon.

See Second Corinthians xii 2. The soul is a new creation of God's, not generated by nature.

According to [Aristotle](#), God causes the eternal movement of the celestial spheres through the love and longing he inspires in the universe.

The sphere of fire surrounds the sphere of air with 'a second atmosphere'. Air is relatively light, and fire absolutely light.

The seven planetary spheres produce divine harmonies like the seven strings of a lyre (expressly rejected by Aristotle).

[Paradiso Canto I:100-142](#). The Empyrean which is not spatial does not move, and has no poles, It surrounds the *Primum Mobile*, the ninth heaven, the outermost and swiftest of the spheres, with light and love.

ParNote 5. The Three Mirrors experiment.

Brightness is the ration of the quantity of light reaching the eyes to the apparent size of the object. These both diminish as the square of the distance, so the brightness remains constant. This ignores absorption by the

medium, and the reflective capability of a coarse surface like the moon.

ParNote 6. The Divine Influence.

[Paradiso Canto II:106-148.](#) Beatrice explains the diffusion of the Divine Spirit from the Empyrean where all space is *here* and time is *now*, and where God is, and the Angels, and Blessed spirits **truly are** (as opposed to merely **manifesting** themselves) down to the lowest sphere of the Moon. The Primum Mobile, or ninth Heaven, where the Angels **manifest** themselves (in symbolic meeting) contains all Nature. It receives the Divine influence and communicates it downwards to the eighth sphere of the Stellar Heavens, where the Blessed Souls are all **manifest**. The Stellar Heaven divides it among the stars. Each of the seven lower Heavens (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and Moon, in the Ptolemaic system) likewise receives the influence from the sphere above,

and passes it to the sphere below (as in the emanations of medieval mysticism). See the [General Structure, Note 1](#), for the attributes of the spheres. Each of the lower spheres virtue and motion derives from an Angelic presence, which is melded to each planetary body, and the mingled virtue of Angel and planet shines throughout that sphere. The Stellar Heaven is, likewise, animated by the deep spirit of the Cherubim. Each Angel is connected with its sphere, but still distinct within it. The combination is an alloy, a union, a mingling, a melding. The virtue that shines there is likewise the personality of the Angel mingled with the creative and inspirational power of God.

Groups of blessed spirits **manifest** themselves in the lower spheres as symbolic meeting places with Dante, appropriate to them.

Note that in Hell spirits are fixed in their location, below Limbo, ‘unable to go

forward, or to go back’: in Purgatory they progress through time, until the will is free: and in Paradise they are free and timeless, but manifest in the appropriate sphere, ‘all places being Paradise that are in Heaven’. The journey therefore allows increasing degrees of freedom, until freedom itself becomes an irrelevance within God’s will.

ParNote 7. The Singing in Paradise

Paradiso Canto III:97-130. Piccarda sings the ‘*Ave Maria*: Hail Mary’

From hereon the singing in Paradise is such that though Dante hears it, he cannot remember or describe it until he reaches the Stellar Heaven, when Mary is again the theme....

Paradiso Canto XXIII:88-139. *Regina Coeli laetare*: O Queen of Heaven: the Easter antiphon of the Blessed Virgin is sung by the Apostles in the Stellar Heaven.

ParNote 8. Justininian's speech concerning the Empire.

Paradiso Canto VI:1-111. Aeneas, coming from Troy, landed in Italy, took Lavinia as his bride, and fought Turnus. Aeneas was allied with Evander, whose kingdom was based on the seven hills of the site of Rome. Evander's son and heir **Pallas** led these allies and was killed by Turnus, and avenged by Aeneas.

Aeneas founded his kingdom at Lavinium, and it was transferred by his son Ascanius (Iulus) to **Alba Longa** where it remained for **more than three hundred years** till in the reign of Tullus Hostilius (670-638BC) Alba fell to Rome, when the **three** Curiatii, the Alban champions, were defeated by the survivor of the **three** Horatii, the Roman champions. Rome had been founded by Romulus, an Alban outcast, on the Palatine, one of the seven hills, and the Romans made wives of the **Sabine women**.

Under Romulus **and his six successors** Rome's power grew until Sextus Tarquinius, son of the last king, raped **Lucretia**, and the monarchy was ended in 510BC. Rome then became supreme in Italy. Lucius **Quintus** Cincinnatus (from *cincinnus*, a **curl**) called from the plough to the dictatorship conquered the Aequiana in 458BC. One of the **Fabii**, and Titus Manlius **Torquatus**, distinguished themselves against **Brennus** and his Gauls (390BC etc). The **Decii**, three generations, died fighting against the Latins in 340BC, the Samnites in 295BC and Pyrrhus the Greek invader in 280BC. The greatest of the **Fabii**, Quintus **Fabius** Maximus Cunctator, defeated **Hannibal**, who **crossed the Alps** in 218BC, and **Scipio** Africanus the Elder, **a boy of seventeen**, saved his father's life, at the defeat of Ticinus. He forced Hannibal's withdrawal from Italy. (Dante calls the northern Africans **Arabs**)

Pompey who conquered the east and defeated Marius celebrated a triumph, when **not yet twenty-five**, in 81BC. The Romans reduced Fiesole, **which overhangs Florence**, and was the refuge of Catiline.

Julius Caesar campaigned in Gaul (58-50BC), crossed the **Rubicon**, between Ravenna and Rimini, in 49BC, leaving his province, without the Senate's permission, and precipitating a Civil War. He overcame opposition in **Spain**, and besieged Pompey at **Dyrrachium**, defeating him at Pharsalia in **Thessaly**. Pompey escaped to Egypt, where he was murdered by Ptolemy. Caesar crossed the Hellespont, took **Egypt** from **Ptolemy** and gave it to Cleopatra, subdued **Juba**, King of Numidia, who had protected his opponents after Pharsalia, and returned to Spain in 45BC to fight **Pompey's sons**.

Caesar was assassinated, and Octavian (later Augustus) his adopted son defeated Mark Antony at **Modena** in 43BC. He then

defeated **Brutus** and **Cassius**, the leaders of the assassination plot, with Antony's help, at Philippi in 42 BC, and Lucius, Antony's brother at **Perugia** in 41BC. At Actium in 31BC he defeated Antony, who committed suicide, **Cleopatra** his consort dying by the sting of a **viper** (asp)

Augustus was master of the Empire to the **remotest ends of Egypt** and the gates of the **Temple of Janus** were **closed** for the third time in Roman history to signal the Empire at peace.

Christ was born, and crucified in the reign of Tiberius, Augustus's successor, and the sin of the Fall thereby avenged. Jerusalem fell to Titus and the sin of killing Christ was avenged on the Jews, with the destruction of the Temple.

The Church was defended by Charlemagne against the Lombard king Desiderius whom he dethroned in 774AD.

ParNote 9. The Sun's movement.

The Equatorial Circle, a circle projected from the earth's equator onto the Heavens, and the Ecliptic (Zodiac), the path of the sun against the 'fixed' stars, cross at the Equinoctial points (the first point of Aries, and the first point of Libra, at the Creation, with precession, the 'wobble' of the earth on its axis, ignored. The Spring equinox in fact now falls in Pisces due to precession, and will move into Aquarius.). The Equinoxes, of equal day and night, fall in Spring and Autumn, at latitudes away from the equator and poles. The daily apparent movement of the sun and the planets is parallel to the equator (i.e. at ninety degrees to the plane of the earth's axis) and the apparent annual movement against the stars is along the Ecliptic. From mid-winter to mid-summer the Sun rises a little earlier and further to the north than the day before, and from mid-summer to mid-winter a little later and further

south, so travelling a progressive spiral. Dante describes the movement to reach the Spring Equinox in Aries, round which the Divine Comedy is constructed.

ParNote 10. Ancient Florence.

[Paradiso Canto XV:88-148](#). The Badia, the belltower, from which the ancient canonical hours were rung (*tierce* at nine, *nones* at twelve) was close to the ancient circle of walls, within which, in [Cacciaguida](#)'s time Florence was still enclosed. The second circle of walls was built in 1173, the third circle which is still intact in part, was built at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

[Paradiso Canto XVI:1-45](#). The Patron Saint of the city was [John the Baptist](#). An annual race was run along the Corso. Of the six sections into which Florence was divided, the *sesto* of *San Piero* was the last to be entered. The [Elisei](#) house was on the right.

Paradiso Canto XVI:46-87. The statue of Mars stood by the northern end of the Ponte Vecchio, in the south of the city by the Arno, and the Baptistery in the north, marking the old boundaries. New families filtered in from the towns of the Contado. In the eleventh century, Galuzzo and Trespiano were the southern and northern limits of Florentine territory, which did not include Aguglione or Signa. Simifonti was a fortress in the Valdelsa destroyed by the Florentines in 1202. The Conti Guidi sold their castle at Montemurlo, between Pistoia and Prato, to Florence in 1254 being unable to defend it from the Pistoians. Acone was probably in the Val de Sieve. Luni was on the Macra, the northern boundary of Tuscany. Urbisaglia was in the March of Ancona. Chiusi, is ancient Clusium, in the malarial Val di Chiana. Sinaglia is on the seashore north of Ancona.

Paradiso Canto XVI:88-154. Cacciaguida mentions the great families of ancient Florence. The gate of St Peter was where the Cerchi lived in Dante's time. They had purchased the houses over the gate before 1300, which had belonged to the Ravignani, from whom the Conti Guidi were descended through Bellincion Berti's daughter Gualdrada. The Pigli arms were barred with ermine=**vair**. The Chiaramontesi lived in the Saint Peter quarter. One of the family, in Dante's time, **falsified** the measures for the issue of salt to the Florentines. The Calfucci were a branch of the Donati. The Uberti were once the dominant Florentine family. Their pride was exhibited by Farinata. The **golden balls** were the device of the Lamberti, of whom Mosca was one. The ancestors of the Visdomini and Della Tosa families while having **the revenues of the Bishopric** of Florence in their hands were accused of perverting them to their own uses whenever

the See was vacant. The [Della Pera](#) in Dante's time had dwindled to the extent that it seemed incredible a gate of the city had been named after them. The Uccellini and Gherardini were associates of the [Amidei](#). **Associates** were members of a family who joined the tower-club of another for the purposes of its military maintenance, and were legal consorts of that family. These were members of a family which had ceased to act with their true family, and were therefore regarded as no longer belonging to it. The old **standard** of Florence carried white lilies on a red field. The Ghibellines maintained this, but the Guelphs adopted a red lily on a white field in 1251.

ParNote 11. Cacciaguida's unfolding of Dante's fate.

[Paradiso Canto XVII:1-99](#). [Cacciaguida](#) reveals Dante's fast approaching exile from Florence, engineered by Rome. Dante was

sentenced with four others to fine and banishment January 27th 1302. With fifteen others, he was sentenced to death by burning, on March 10th. The Whites were expelled from Florence on April 4th, Between June 8th 1302 and June 18th 1303 he broke away from them (becoming ‘a party of one’) in disgust and took refuge with [Bartolommeo della Scala](#) at Verona.

ParNote 12. The Julian Calendar.

[Paradiso Canto XXVII:97-148](#). The Julian calendar (rectified in 1752) made the year 11 minutes 14 seconds too long, roughly a hundredth of a day. In Dante’s time January began a little later in the real year each time, and so eventually it would fall outside winter altogether.

ParNote13. The Chessboard.

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:58-93](#). The old tale has a reward being demanded of an amount

of corn equal to that obtained by placing one ear on the first of the sixty-four squares of the chessboard, and then doubling the amount of the previous square, at each new square. The number obtained is 2 to the power 63 plus one, which is about 18.5 million million million.

ParNote14. The Angelic Hierarchies.

[Paradiso Canto XXVIII:94-139](#). The Angels are divided in three Hierarchies, each of three orders, here they are three triplets of circles. In the first triplet, Seraphs with their wings, and Cherubs with their eyes emphasise movement towards God (Love) and insight into His being (Knowledge). Thrones signify the Power of God, manifested through the Angels and drawing them towards Him, they are the mirrors of his judgments, and also represent his steadfastness. Joy is connected with the Seraphim, and trust in God's power with the Thrones. In the second triplet, the

Dominions are an image of God's dominion, the Virtues indicate Divine strength and fortitude, while the Powers represent Divine power and majesty. In the third, outermost triplet, Principalities, or Princedoms, Archangels and Angels are concerned with the things of this world, love of the Holy Spirit, and communication of the gifts of God to man. The Angels is a term applied collectively to all the nine Hierarchies, signifying 'messengers' and the higher Angels can execute the functions of the lower, while having their special additional qualities. So Christ is the Angel of the Great Counsel.

The circles of the Angels are in reverse order to the spheres surrounding Earth, the outermost, and fastest sphere to Earth, corresponding to the highest virtue, and therefore matching the innermost circle of the Angels concentrated on God.

ParNote15. The Oriflamme.

[Paradiso Canto XXXI:94-142](#). Dante refers to the Oriflamme, *aurea flamma*, which was the standard given to the ancient Kings of France by the Angel Gabriel, representing a flame on a golden ground. Those who fought under it were invincible. The golden glow of the Virgin's Oriflamme is in contrast that of invincible peace not of war.