



CANTO 6

*Mercury, continued: the emperor Justinian—history
of the imperial eagle—Romeo*

- 1 "After Constantine turned the eagle back
13 highlighters -----
against the course of the heavens, which it had
followed with that ancient one who took Lavinia,
4 twice a hundred years and more God's bird
remained at the edge of Europe, near the
mountains from which it first came forth,
7 and under the shadow of its sacred wings it
governed the world there from hand to hand,
and, transferred thus, it came to rest on mine.
10 Caesar was I, and I am Justinian, who,
according to the will of the first love I feel, cast out
the excess and the useless from within the laws.
13 And before I was intent upon that work, I
believed there was one nature in Christ, no
more, and with that faith I was content,
16 but the blessed Agapetus, the highest
shepherd, directed me to the pure faith with
his words.
19 I believed him, and what was in his faith I see
now as clearly as you see each contradiction to

- be both false and true.
- 22 As soon as I began to walk in step with the
Church, it pleased God, in his grace, to inspire me
to the high work, to which I gave myself entirely,
- 25 and I handed the wars over to my Belisarius,
with whom the right hand of Heaven was so
joined that it was a sign that I should rest.
- 28 And here I put a period to my reply to your
first question, but its nature requires me to make
some addition,
- 31 so that you may see with what right both
move against the sacrosanct emblem, both those
who claim it as their own and those who oppose it.
- 34 See how much power has made it worthy of
reverence, and it began from the hour when
Pallas died to give it rule.
- 37 You know that it dwelt in Alba for three
hundred years and more until, finally, the three
fought against the three for its possession.
- 40 And you know what it did through seven kings—from
the wrong done the Sabine women to the grief of Lucretia—
as it conquered the neighboring peoples around it.
- 43 You know what it did when borne by the noble
Romans against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, against
the other princes and oligarchs,
- 46 whence Torquatus and Quinctius, named for
his unkempt curls, the Decii, and the Fabii
earned the fame that I gladly enmyrrh.
- 49 It laid low the pride of the Arabs who,
following Hannibal, crossed, Po, the alpine

- steeps from which you glide.
- 52 Beneath it in their youth Scipio and Pompey
earned their triumphs, and to that hill beneath
which you were born it showed itself bitter.
- 55 Then, near the time when all the heavens
wished to reduce the world to their own serene
measure, Caesar took it by the will of Rome.
- 58 And what it did from the Var to the Rhine was
seen by the Isère, the Loire, the Seine, and
every valley that fills the Rhone.
- 61 What it did after it came forth from Ravenna
and leapt the Rubicon, was such a flight as
neither tongue nor pen could follow.
- 64 Toward Spain it turned its host, then toward
Dyrrhacium, and it struck Pharsalia so that the
grief was heard as far as the torrid Nile.
- 67 Antandros and Simois, where it originated,
it saw again, and where Hector lies, and ill it was
for Ptolemy when next it shook itself.
- 70 Thence like lightning it descended on Juba,
then it turned toward your West, where it heard
the Pompeian trumpet.
- 73 For what it did with its next trustee, Brutus
and Cassius bark in Hell, and Modena and
Perugia grieved.
- 76 Sad Cleopatra still weeps because of it, who,
fleeing before it, from the serpent took sudden,
black death.
- 79 With him it coursed as far as the Red shore,
with him it brought such peace to the world that

- Janus' temple was barred up.
- 82 But what the emblem that makes me speak
had done earlier, and was to do later for the
mortal realm that is subject to it,
- 85 seems little and obscure if it is watched in the
hand of the third Caesar with clear eye and
pure affect:
- 88 for the living Justice that inspires me granted
it, in the hands of the one of whom I speak, the
glory of taking vengeance for his anger.
- 91 Now gaze long at what I unfold to you: later, it
ran with Titus to take vengeance for the vengeance
taken on the ancient sin,
- 94 and, when the Lombard fang bit holy Church,
under its wings Charles the Great came
victorious to her aid.
- 97 Now you can judge of those I accused above
and of their errors, for they are the cause of all
your ills.
- 100 One man opposes the golden lilies to the public
emblem, and the other usurps it to his party,
so that it is hard to see which errs the more.
- 103 Let the Ghibellines, then, let them work their
arts under some other emblem, for he who
separates this one from justice follows it ever ill;
- 106 and let not this new Charles strike it down
with his Guelphs, but let him fear the claws that
flayed a greater lion.
- 109 Many times have sons wept because of the
sins of the fathers, and let it not be thought that

- God will exchange his emblem for those lilies!
- 112 This little star is adorned by good spirits who
 were active so that honor and fame might follow
 them,
- 115 and when desires incline in that direction,
 straying, it must be that the rays of the true love
 rise up less vigorously.
- 118 But that our rewards are commensurate with
 our merit is part of our joy, for we see that they
 are neither less nor more.
- 121 Thus the living Justice sweetens our love so
 that it can never be turned aside to any iniquity.
- 124 Different voices make sweet notes: thus
 different thrones in this our life produce a sweet
 harmony among these wheels.
- 127 And within this present pearl shines the light
 of Romeo, whose great and beauteous work
 was ill received.
- 130 But those of Provence who worked against
 him do not laugh: thus he walks ill who feels
 harmed by the good another does.
- 133 Four daughters had Raymond Berenguer,
 and each a queen, and that was done for him by
 Romeo, a humble person and a foreigner.
- 136 And when cross-eyed talk led him to demand
 accounting from this just man, who had repaid
 him seven and five for ten,
- 139 then Romeo departed, poor and aged, and if
 the world knew the heart he bore in him,
 begging his bread crust by crust,

142 much as it praises him now, it would praise
him more."



CANTO 6

"Poscia che Costantin l'aquila volse
contr' al corso del ciel, ch' ella seguiò
dietro a l'antico che Lavina tolse,

1

cento e cent' anni e più l'uccel di Dio
ne lo stremo d'Europa si ritenne,
vicino a' monti de' quai prima usciò,
e sotto l'ombra de le sacre penne
governò 'l mondo lì di mano in mano,
e, sì cangiando, in su la mia pervenne.

4

Cesare fui e son Iustiniano,
che, per voler del primo amor ch' i' sento,
d'entro le leggi trassi il troppo e 'l vano.

7

E prima ch' io a l'ovra fossi attento,
una natura in Cristo, non più,
credea, e di tal fede era contento,
ma 'l benedetto Agapito, che fue
sommo pastore, a la fede sincera
mi dirizzò con le parole sue.

10

Io li credetti, e ciò che 'n sua fede era
vegg' io or chiaro sì come tu vedi
ogne contraddizione e falsa e vera.

13

Tosto che con la Chiesa mossi i piedi,
a Dio per grazia piacque di spirarmi
l'alto lavoro, e tutto 'n lui mi diedi,
e al mio Belisar commendai l'armi,
cui la destra del Ciel fu sì congiunta
che segno fu ch' i' dovessi posarmi.

16

19

22

25

Or qui a la question prima s'appunta
la mia risposta, ma sua condizione
mi stringe a seguitare alcuna giunta,
perché tu veggi con quanta ragione

28

si move contr' al sacrosanto segno
e chi 'l s'appropria e chi a lui s'oppone.

31

Vedi quanta virtù l'ha fatto degno
di reverenza, e cominciò da l'ora
che Pallante morì per darli regno.

34

Tu sai ch' el fece in Alba sua dimora
per trecento anni e oltre, infino al fine
che i tre a' tre pugnar per lui ancora.

37

E sai ch' el fé dal mal de le Sabine
al dolor di Lucrezia in sette regi,
vincendo intorno le genti vicine.

40

Sai quel ch' el fé portato da li egregi
Romani incontro a Brenno, incontro a Pirro,
incontro a li altri principi e collegi,

43

onde Torquato e Quinzio, che dal cirro
negletto fu nomato, i Deci e 'Fabi
ebber la fama che volontier mirro.

46

Esso atterrò l'orgoglio de li Aràbi
che di retro ad Anibale passaro
l'alpestre rocce, Po, di che tu labi.

49

Sott' esso giovanetti triunfaro
Scipione e Pompeo, e a quel colle
sotto 'l qual tu nascesti parve amaro.

52

Poi, presso al tempo che tutto 'l ciel volle
redur lo mondo a suo modo sereno,
Cesare per voler di Roma il tolle.

55

- E quel che fé da Varo infino a Reno, 58
Isara vide e Era e vide Senna
e ogne valle onde Rodano è pieno.
- Quel che fé poi ch' elli uscì di Ravenna 61
e saltò Rubicon, fu di tal volo
che nol seguiteria lingua né penna.
- Inver' la Spagna rivolse lo stuolo, 64
poi ver' Durazzo, e Farsalia percosse
sì ch' al Nil caldo si sentì del duolo.
- Antandro e Simeonta, onde si mosse, 67
rivide, e là dov' Ettore si cuba;
e mal per Tolomeo poscia si scosse.
- Da indi scese folgorando a Iuba, 70
onde si volse nel vostro occidente,
ove sentia la pompeana tuba.
- Di quel che fé col baiulo seguente, 73
Bruto con Cassio ne l'inferno latra,
e Modena e Perugia fu dolente.
- Piangene ancor la trista Cleopatra, 76
che fuggendoli innanzi dal colubro
la morte prese subitana e atra.
- Con costui corse infino al lito rubro, 79
con costui puose il mondo in tanta pace
che fu serrato a Giano il suo delubro.
- Ma ciò che 'l segno che parlar mi face 82
fatto avea prima e poi era fatturo
per lo regno mortal ch' a lui soggiace,
- diventa in apparenza poco e scuro, 85
se in mano al terzo Cesare si mira
con occhio chiaro e con affetto puro:

ché la viva Giustizia che mi spira
li concedette, in mano a quel ch' i' dico,
gloria di far vendetta a la sua ira.

88

Or qui t'ammira in ciò ch' io ti replica:
poscia con Tito a far vendetta corse
de la vendetta del peccato antico,
e quando il dente longobardo morse
la santa Chiesa, sotto le sue ali
Carlo Magno vincendo la soccorse.

91

Omai puoi giudicar di quei totali
ch' io accusai di sopra e di lor falli,
che son cagion di tutti vostri mali.

94

L'uno al pubblico segno i gigli gialli
oppone, e l'altro appropria quello a parte,
sì ch' è forte a veder chi più si falli.

100

Faccian li Ghibellin, faccian lor arte
sott' altro segno, ché mal segue quello
sempre chi la giustizia e lui diparte;

103

e non l'abbatta esto Carlo novello
coi Guelfi suoi, ma tema de li artigli
ch' a più alto leon trasser lo vello.

106

Molte fiate già pianser li figli
per la colpa del padre, e non si creda
che Dio trasmuti l'armi per suoi gigli.

109

Questa picciola stella si correda
di buoni spiriti che son stati attivi
perché onore e fama li succeda,
e quando li disiri poggian quivi,
sì disviando, pur convien che i raggi
del vero amore in sù poggin men vivi.

112

115

Ma nel commensurar d'i nostri gaggi
col merto è parte di nostra letizia,
perché non li vedem minor né maggi.

118

Quindi addolcisce la viva Giustizia
in noi l'affetto sì che non si puote
torcer già mai ad alcuna nequizia.

121

Diverse voci fanno dolci note:
così diversi scanni in nostra vita
rendon dolce armonia tra queste rote.

124

E dentro a la presente margarita
luce la luce di Romeo, di cui
fu l'ovra grande e bella mal gradita.

127

Ma i Provenzai che fecer contra lui
non hanno riso: e però mal cammina
qual si fa danno del ben fare altrui.

130

Quattro figlie ebbe, e ciascuna reina,
Ramondo Beringhiere, e ciò li fece
Romeo, persona umile e peregrina.

133

E poi il mosser le parole biece
a dimandar ragione a questo giusto,
che li assegnò sette e cinque per diece,
indi partissi povero e vetusto,
e se 'l mondo sapesse il cor ch' ell' ebbe,
mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,
assai lo loda, e più lo loderebbe."

136

139

142

NOTES

1–142. After Constantine ... praise him more: As the commentators observe, *Paradiso* 6 forms, along with the sixth cantos of *Inferno* (focusing on the disorders of Florence) and *Purgatorio* (where the purview expands to include all Italy), what has been called a “political triptych” that culminates in the grandiose theme of the entire significance of Rome in human history. The expansion to universal themes and fundamental causes is characteristic of the entire plan of this cantica (and one should note the recurrence of the Roman eagle, along with the ascent to the idea of justice itself, in Canto 18 (see the note to 18.52–136). As six is the number of the last day of creation, followed by God’s rest on the seventh, so the establishment of the Roman Empire represents for Dante the completion of the providential plan for earthly justice, and Canto 7 will rise to the contemplation of God’s ways in the Atonement.



Figure 4. The emperor Justinian

Paradiso 6 is unique in the *Comedy* in consisting entirely of the words of a single uninterrupted speaker. The manuscripts of Dante's time used no graphic signs or punctuation to set off dialogue, and it is worth noticing how carefully Dante has included textual markers setting off Justinian's speech (these include the striking "chiusa chiusa" [all enclosed] and "canto canta" [literally, song sings] of 5.138–39, which arouse expectation and indicate that direct discourse will follow, and the opening of Canto 7, especially lines 1–6, which formally close Justinian's utterance). In the present canto, note especially the function of the repetition of the first-person pronoun in lines 10–30 and of the second-person pronoun in lines 31–51, both recurring in lines 88–93 and moving to the first person plural in lines 118 and following.

1–27. After Constantine ... that I should rest: After indicating his place in history (lines 1–9), Justinian names himself and what he sees as the two most important events of his reign, his (mythical) conversion away from Monophysitism to the orthodox doctrine of the two

natures of Christ, and his codification of Roman law.

1–9. After Constantine ... rest on mine: Constantine the Great (306–37; see 20.55–60), the first Christian Roman emperor, began construction of Constantinople in 324 and transferred his capital there in 330. The increasingly cumbersome administration of the Empire, the western part of which was particularly exposed to barbarian invasion, had led to its division into eastern and western parts under essentially co-equal and independent "Augusti," an arrangement codified under Diocletian (284–304). Constantine and his immediate successors were the last emperors able to impose their rule throughout both parts. By the time of Justinian (born 482; emperor 527–65) the Western Empire had broken down into barbarian kingdoms: Visigoths in Spain, Franks in Gaul, Ostrogoths in Italy.

1–3. After Constantine ... took Lavinia: The "ancient one" is of course Aeneas, who, according to the *Aeneid* (which Dante took as largely accurate history), transferred Trojan religion and legitimacy from Asia Minor to Italy (from east to west, thus following the course of the sun). These lines already establish the enormous historical purview of the canto: from Constantine back to Aeneas and forward to Justinian, to be further expanded in lines 34–111.

In the light of *Par.* 20.55–60 and *Mon.* 2.11.8, it is clear that Dante condemned not only Constantine's "Donation" (see *Inf.* 19.115–17), but also his deserting the West (thus splitting the Empire, cf. *Mon.* 3.10.8–9) and "making himself a Greek" (*Par.* 20.57), the unnaturalness of which is implied here in the mention of going against the sun (lines 1–2), though the implications are not spelled out (but note the negative suggestions of the echo of *Aen.* 3.1: "Postquam res Asiae Priamique euertere gentem / immeritam uisum superis" [After the destruction of Asia and of Priam's blameless subjects was decreed by the gods]).

1. turned the eagle back: The eagle is of course the emblem of the Roman Empire, traditionally placed atop standards borne at the head of command units in the legions; how is it to be imagined here? In *Purg.* 10.79–81 it is figured in gold on banners waving in the wind; here it seems more like an emblem on a standard or scepter, but it merges into the mythical bird itself in lines 7–9 (a process looking back to the dream of *Purg.* 9. 19–33 and forward to *Paradiso* 18–20), combined with a falconry image (the living eagle carried on the forearm, in lines 8–9, as Bellomo 1990 argues).

3. that ancient one who took Lavinia: The line refers to the wedding of Aeneas and Lavinia, the daughter of king Latinus, in settlement of the Trojan victory. "Tolse" [took] means "took in marriage," but the word contains a hint of violence (cf. line 57, with note).

4–9. twice a hundred ... to rest on mine: From the dedication of Constantinople (330) to the accession of Justinian (527) was close to two hundred years, but not more. The eagle is "God's bird" in Dante's eyes because he considered the Roman Empire to have been providentially decreed and fostered (see the note to lines 34–96). The expression "under the shadow of its wings," asserting divine protection, is biblical: cf., e.g., Ps. 16.8: "sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me" [under the shadow of your wings protect me].

6. near the mountains ... came forth: Constantinople was on the European side of the Bosphorus, the eastern entry to the Sea of Marmora, and the site of Troy was near the Asian side of the Dardanelles, the western outlet from the Sea of Marmora.

10–29. Caesar was I ... I should rest: Justinian gives a brief account of his reign, about which Dante's sources were ill-informed (see the note on lines 13–21). Justinian was the last emperor to make a determined effort to reestablish the power of the Empire in Italy, North Africa, and Spain. His brilliant generals Belisarius and Narses were partly successful; the exarchate of Ravenna and the southern Adriatic coast remained under Byzantine control for several centuries, but after Justinian the rest of Italy was essentially abandoned to the Germanic Lombards (Longobardi [long beards]), originally allies of the Byzantines.

Dante's choice of Justinian as the principal spokesman for imperial institutions in the *Paradiso* is motivated partly by the contemporary importance of the revival of Roman law; but in Dante's time Ravenna preserved countless reminders of the splendor of his reign. (It remained unplundered until the French sacked the city in 1512; now everything is gone but the resplendent mosaics on the walls of churches and baptisteries; figure is a detail of the elaborate mosaic in San Vitale representing Justinian, Theodora, and the court). We do not know when Dante first visited Ravenna, but from ca. 1316 until his death he was a guest of its ruler, Guido da Polenta (see our introduction to *Inferno*).

10. Caesar was I, and I am Justinian: The soul identifies himself first by his earthly office (Caesar, i.e., the Roman emperor), then by the personal name he assumed when adopted as heir by his uncle, the emperor Justin I (as commentators note, significantly for Dante this name can be construed to mean "lover of justice" or "son of justice"). The past tense of "I was" suggests that earthly honors do not apply to the next life, unlike personal identity or merit (see *Purg.* 19.130–38). Carrai in *LDT* discusses the relation of such formulae (cf. *Purg.* 5.88 and 134, and *Par.* 3.46–51, with notes) to funerary inscriptions. However, Justinian's double naming of himself is no doubt to be connected with the "double light" that singles him out in 7.5–6 (see note there and cf. 30.133–38).

11–12. according to the will ... within the laws: The reform of Roman law was indeed a major achievement, accomplished between 527 and 534 by a commission under Tribonianus; this commission sifted all the legislation since the time of Hadrian, publishing a series of compilations (the *Codex Iustiniani*, the *Digest*, and the *Institutes*) that had enormous influence, accounting in large part for the growth of the universities in Italy in the thirteenth century, and extending into modern times (in the form of the Napoleonic Code, the basis of law in most of western Europe except Britain; cf. the note to lines 82–90).

13–21. before I was intent ... both false and true: Adherence to Monophysitism (the doctrine that Christ had only one nature—a divine one (Gr. *mónos* [single] plus *phýsis* [nature]) was widespread in the eastern empire (especially in Syria and Egypt), and its adherents fiercely resisted its suppression. The historical Justinian was never a Monophysite; a Latin-speaking Catholic, he repeatedly decreed theological compromises intended to foster religious

uniformity between East and West, but they only angered both Catholic and Monophysite bishops. The visit in 535 of Pope Agapetus I to Constantinople (he died while still there, in 536) did result in the deposition of the Mono physite patriarch of Byzantium, but Justinian's queen, Theodora, a fervent Monophysite, used her considerable influence to mitigate the occasional persecutions. The myth of Justinian's conversion, repeated also in Brunetto Latini's *Trésor* (one of Dante's sources), derives from Paulus Diaconus' eighth-century account of Justinian's reign (*Historia romana* 16.11–17.9); the order of his narrative can be taken to imply that the legal reforms were subsequent to the supposed conversion (the portions of the *Liber pontificalis*—papal biographies—that concern Justinian's reign were written closer to the events and are more accurate; Dante did not know them).

19–21. what was in his faith ... both false and true: For the doctrine of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ and its importance in the Beatific Vision, see the note to 2.37–45.

20–21. as clearly as you see ... both false and true: In Aristotelian logic, propositions are contradictory when the truth of one implies the falsity of the other and vice versa; hence a contradiction includes both false and true. If only one of the propositions can be true but both may be false, they are contraries, not contradictories. The "law of contradiction" is a fundamental axiom of logic, undemonstrable but intuitively recognized (cf. *Purg.* 18.55–60).

22–24. As soon ... gave myself entirely: The texts of Justinian's *Institutes*, *Codex*, and other works do make repeated claims that the emperor speaks for God and that the works are divinely inspired (see Mazzoni 1979), but of course they were completed before Agapetus I's visit. Dante's version of events is coherent with his view of the prestige of Rome before the decline of the papacy.

25–27. I handed the wars ... I should rest: Justinian never led troops in person, as was customary for the emperor to do both before and after him.

28–33. And here I put ... who oppose it: Transition to the main theme of the canto, the reverence due to the "sacrosanct emblem," the Roman eagle. The pilgrim's "first question" is "who you are" (5.127); the second is "why ... you occupy the sphere [of Mercury]" (5.127–29), the reply to which begins at line 112. An addition to the first reply is required by its having touched on the nature of the Roman Empire.

31–33. so that you may see ... who oppose it: The theme of lines 34–111; note the subjunctive *vegli* [that you may see], to which the anaphoras beginning in line 34 look back.

33. both those who claim ... who oppose it: Both parties are identified and criticized in lines 97–111; see next note.

34–111. See how much ... for those lilies: The argument falls into two parts: (1) the

summary of Roman history, asserting the manifestly divine power of the Roman eagle, leading up to the Holy Roman Empire (lines 34–96); and (2) the denunciation of the rival parties of line 33, the Guelphs and Ghibellines (lines 97–111). This is one of the most insistently rhetorical passages in the *Comedy*; note especially the recurrent emphasis on verbs of seeing in lines 34, 86, and 91, leading up to line 97: “Now you can judge,” the conclusion and transition to the second part—all designed to maneuver the listener/reader into accepting the conclusion as if he or she were an eyewitness.

34–96. See how much ... to her aid: A brief summary of the rise of the Roman Empire according to Dante’s conception of the divine plan. Dante’s earliest expression of this view is in *Conv. 4.5*; its fullest expression is Book 2 of the *Monarchia* (on which he was working while writing the *Paradiso*; the relative dates of completion of the two works, as well as the extent to which their positions differ, are disputed; see Additional Note 2); both treatises proceed with formal argumentation rather than narrative, as here. Of the nineteen Roman heroes mentioned in *Conv. 4.5*, thirteen appear in this passage (Romulus—cf. 8.13—and Junius Brutus by implication); of the others, Fabricius is mentioned in *Purg.* 20.25–27, Cato figures in *Purg.* 1.31–109 and 2.129–33, and Mucius Scaevola in *Par.* 4.84. Only Camillus, Manlius, and Regulus are omitted from the *Comedy*, and Pallas, Pompey, and the Fabii are added.

Dante’s views owe much to Paulus Orosius’s *History against the Pagans*, but Orosius’s purpose was to prove that the state of human affairs was far better in Christian times than previously: Rome and its heroes are subject in Orosius’s account to the same condemnation as the Babylonian, Persian, and Alexandrian Empires, very close to Augustine’s view of the Earthly City as founded in power-hunger, fratricide, and war. For Orosius, the (unique and temporary) reduction of the world to peace under Augustus was indeed the providential preparation for the coming of Christ, but for him it marked a break in the typical violent course of Roman history (see, for instance, 3.8.1–8, 6.14.1). Dante’s systematic elevating of the Romans to the status of a second chosen people parallel to the Jews is foreign to Orosius (see Toynbee 1895, Toynbee 1902, Davis 1957).

This passage breaks into three segments of seven terzinas each: (1) lines 34–54; the origins to the last days of the Republic; (2) lines 55–72 and 73–75, Julius Caesar, the founder of the Empire, and Augustus’s revenge for his assassination; and (3) lines 76–96, Augustus’s establishment of world peace, Christ’s crucifixion under Tiberius, Titus’s destruction of Jerusalem, and Charlemagne’s reestablishment of the Empire (cf. the note to lines 55–90).

Note the carefully varied, unusually insistent anaphora of “you know” (lines 37, 40, 43) combined in lines 40 and 43 with “what it did,” which is then maintained (in lines 58, 61, 73) until the elaborate transition of lines 82–85, where the verbs of seeing recur (lines 86 and 91); also important to the powerful effect are the repeated third-person-singular pronouns (*el*, *esso*, *il*, *gli* [it, to it] in lines 37, 43, 49, 52, 57), followed by the variation of omitting the pronoun in lines 58–81 (it is implied as the subject of the verbs), and by the appearance of the noun as explicit grammatical subject (*segno* [sign, emblem] in lines 82, 100, 102, 104; *armi* [arms, emblem] in line 111). Each of the anaphoras introduces a key stage in Roman expansion; for detailed analyses, see Mariotti 1972, Mazzoni 1979.

34–54. See how much ... showed itself bitter: Seven terzinas from Aeneas (see line 3) to Pompey: three on the earliest period to the expulsion of the kings (lines 34–42), four on the Roman Republic (lines 43–54).

35–36. it began ... to give it rule: One victim of the war against the Latins (*Aeneid* 7–10) is singled out (cf. *Inf.* 1.106–8): Pallas was the adolescent son of Evander, king of the Arcadians occupying the future site of Rome, allied to the Trojans; he was brutally slain, and his body boastfully despoiled, by the Rutulian Turnus, chief adversary of Aeneas (*Aeneid* 8 and 10). Note the theme of willing sacrifice for the future power of Rome (cf. the note to lines 47–48, and *Inf.* 1.106–8, with note).

37–39. dwelt in Alba ... for its possession: Alba Longa was the first center of Trojan power in Latium, founded by Aeneas's son Ascanius; its rivalry with the second center, Rome, was settled by a combat between two teams of triplets from the two armies, in which the Romans (the Horatii) overcame the Albans (the Curiatii); Rome therefore won the eagle, the populations merged, and Alba was razed. This and the following terzina draw principally on the first book of Livy's history.

38. three hundred years and more: According to Livy's chronology, Alba was founded (in our dating) in 1155 BCE, and the victory of the Horatii and the move to Rome took place in 672 BCE, almost five hundred years later.

40–42. through seven kings ... peoples around it: Rome's career of expansion began early. The seven kings include Romulus as the first. To provide wives for his followers, he invited the Sabines to games, and at a signal each of his men carried off a Sabine woman; this led to a war between the two tribes, ended by the new Roman wives/mothers intervening in the battle (Livy 1.9–13; cf. Orosius 2.4.2; the *mal* of the Sabine women refers both to the wrong done them and to their sorrow). The seventh king was Tarquin the Proud, whose tyranny was bitterly resented; the rape by his son Sextus of Lucretia, wife of a patrician, followed by her suicide, led to the expulsion of the kings and the founding of the Republic (Livy's date is 509 BCE: 1.57–2.1; cf. Orosius 2.4.12–15).

44. against Brennus, against Pyrrhus: Brennus was the leader of the Gauls who occupied and burned most of Rome, ultimately defeated by Camillus (in 390, according to Livy 5.37–49; cf. Orosius 2.19.5–10); Camillus is mentioned by Dante in *Conv.* 4.5.15 and *Mon.* 2.5.12, though not here. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was allied with the Tarentans in the war of 281–72 (Livy 7.29 mentions Pyrrhus, but his books concerning this war are lost; Dante knew Orosius 4.1–2 and Florus's *Epitome*).

45. against the other princes and oligarchs: The princes include the Etruscan king Porsenna, won to peace in 508 BCE, and Tolumnius (435 BCE), a king of Veii; oligarchies included the Coriolans (488 BCE), Volscians (406 BCE), and others.

46–47. Torquatus ... unkempt curls: Titus Manlius Torquatus (see *Aen.* 6.824–25, Livy

8.7, Orosius 3.9.1–4, *De civ. Dei* 1.23), repeatedly dictator and consul between 363 and 340, was famous for his rigidity, when consul in 340, in condemning his son to death for exceeding orders though achieving victory (*Conv.* 4.5.14 states Dante's view that he could have been capable of such selfless severity only with God's direct help; cf. *Mon.* 2.5.13; Livy regards his severity as barbarous). L. Quinctius Cincinnatus [curly], repeatedly dictator, was first appointed in 458 BCE, against the Sabines; a patrician whose holdings were reduced to a small farm, he was plowing when the commission arrived to notify him; before hearing them he bathed and dressed in his toga; after his great victory he resigned the dictatorship immediately, long before he was legally required to do so.

47–48. the Decii ... gladly enmyrrh: The Fabii were a consular family from the early fifth century BCE on; three hundred six of them swore self-sacrifice in one of the wars against Veii and died to a man (479 BCE; Livy 2.46–50); Q. Fabius Rullianus (Maximus) won major victories over the Etruscans, Samnites, and Pyrrhus (327–283 BCE; Livy, Book 10); Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator [Delayer] was dictator in Italy during the Second Punic War; his wise policy of avoidance of pitched battles with Hannibal (217 BCE; Livy, Book 22), was eventually adopted by others (see the note to lines 49–51).

Three members of the patrician family of the Decii (a father, a son, and a nephew) deliberately sacrificed themselves in battles against the Latins, the Samnites, and Pyrrhus, in 340, 295, and 279 BCE respectively (Livy 8.9–10, 10.28–31; cf. Orosius 3.21–22). In *Mon.* 2.5.15–17 the Decii are singled out, along with Cato of Utica, as "sacred victims." Dante's coinage, *mirrare* [to enmyrrh], has been taken by virtually the entire commentary tradition to mean "to anoint with embalming oil"; it may mean "to burn incense to" (thus to praise); in either case the Christological associations are left deeply implicit (see the notes to lines 35–36): the emphasis here is on the eagle's triumphs.

49–51. It laid low ... you glide: The term *Arabs* refers to the Carthaginians (of Phoenician origin; cf. *Aen.* 8.706) under Hannibal, who, from their bases in Spain, invaded Italy, crossing the Alps, in 217 BCE (Livy's Books 21–30 cover the Second Punic War; see next note). The source of the Po is on Monte Viso (cf. *Inf.* 16.95), some fifty miles southwest of Torino, at the northwestern extremity of the Maritime Alps, which gradually blend into the Appenines (see the map on p. 187); Hannibal's route may have passed it.

52–53. Beneath it ... their triumphs: P. Cornelius Scipio was the chief strategist and general in the victory over Carthage; his final victory at Zama (203 BCE) won him the title *Africanus* and a triumph at the age of thirty-one (Dante celebrates it in *Inf.* 31.115–16). Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus was prominent in the wars against Marius and celebrated a triumph at age twenty-five.

53–54. and to that hill ... showed itself bitter: The hill is that of Fiesole, which in the Middle Ages was supposed to have sided with Catiline's rebellion (63 BCE) and to have been razed in retaliation (cf. *Inf.* 15.61–63 and *Par.* 15.125–26, with notes).

55–90. Then, near the time ... for his anger: Fourteen terzinas on the Roman Empire: six (the number associated with creation and earthly preparation) on Julius Caesar; three on Octavian/Augustus, three on Tiberius, and one on Titus, commander under Vespasian: thus seven terzinas (the number of the Sabbath day) on the years of Christ's life and death; followed by an eighth (the number of resurrection: in Christian tradition Sunday is the eighth day of the week) on Charlemagne (see the note to lines 94–96).

55–57. Then, near the time ... will of Rome: Like Orosius, Dante regarded Julius Caesar (b. 101 BCE, active 78–44 BCE) as the first of the emperors. Note that the providential preparation of the Empire is accomplished through the influence of the heavenly bodies (see 8.97–105 and Additional Notes 12 and 14). For the "serene measure" of the heavens as a model for society (involving both peace and law), see *Consol.* 1.m.5, 2.m.8. Note the suggestion of violence in "tolle" [took], as in line 3.

58–60. from the Var ... fills the Rhone: Six of the rivers of France (of the most important ones only the Garonne is omitted), representing the scenes of Caesar's conquest of Gaul (59–51 BCE, covered by Orosius 6.7–12): the Var marks the southeastern boundary, the Rhine part of the northeastern; the Loire (to the west) and the Seine (to the northwest) flow into the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel respectively; the Isère is a tributary (from the east) of the Rhone, which flows into the Mediterranean. The lines echo a passage in Florus (1.37, on the earlier victories of Domitius Ahenobarbus and Quintus Fabius Maximus): "Varus victoriae testes Isara et Vindelicus amnes, et inpiger fluminum Rhodanus" [The Var witnessed the victories and the rivers Isara and Sorgue, and the Rhone, swift among rivers].

61–72. after it came forth ... Pompeian trumpet: Caesar's campaigns in the Civil War take up four of the six terzinas on Caesar. The selection of events and some of the phrasing in these lines is indebted to Orosius's account in 6.15–16 (Toynbee 1895, Toynbee 1902).

61–63. What it did ... pen could follow: Ravenna is north of the river Rubicon, the frontier between Cisalpine Gaul (still a province; Roman control of northern Italy was consolidated late) and Italy proper, into which it was illegal for a commander to bring troops. Caesar had camped there to await events in Rome, and in 50 BCE, at the urging of his lieutenant Curio, he led his legions across the Rubicon, openly defying the law and the senate. Although Dante regarded Caesar as the divinely intended founder of the Empire, he assigned Curio to Hell as a sower of discord (*Inf.* 28.94–102).

64–66. Toward Spain ... the torrid Nile: The decisive stages of the Civil War (cf. Orosius 6.15): the campaigns against Pompey's lieutenants in Spain (line 64; cf. *Purg.* 18.101–2), Dalmatia (Dyrrachium, now Durazzo, was the port on the Adriatic where Caesar besieged Pompey and his allies), and Thessaly, where the plain of Pharsalia saw the decisive battle; after which Pompey fled to Egypt, whose king, Ptolemy XIII, accepted him as a guest but had him assassinated (48 BCE).

67–68. Antandros ... where Hector lies: According to Lucan (*Phars.* 9.950–80), on his

way to Egypt Caesar stopped to visit the site of Troy. Antandros was the port from which Aeneas set sail for the West (*Aen.* 3.6); Simois, the river on the plain of Troy, the scene of much slaughter (the first of many mentions in the *Aeneid* is at 1.100); Hector's tomb is mentioned in *Aen.* 5.371: "Tumulum quo maximus occubat Hector" [the tomb where greatest Hector lies dead]. The eagle, of course, accompanies Caesar. The founding of the empire is thus associated with a symbolic return to Troy, the origin.

69. ill it was for Ptolemy: In Egypt (cf. Orosius 6.16), Caesar, said to have wept on seeing the dead Pompey's head, deposed Ptolemy and replaced him with his sister Cleopatra, with whom he had originally reigned. Dante never mentions Caesar's affair with Cleopatra, who bore him a son, Caeserion. Ptolemy later died in battle in an attempt to regain the throne.

70–72. Thence like lightning ... Pompeian trumpet: Juba, king of Numidia in north Africa, had supported Pompey; he was deposed after Caesar's victory at Thapsus (46 BCE) and committed suicide. "Your West" refers to Spain, where Caesar put down the remainder of Pompey's forces under his sons (Orosius 6.16.3–9).

73–81. For what it did ... temple was barred up: The exploits of Octavian, proclaimed Augustus in 27 BCE

74–75. Brutus ... Perugia grieved: At the battle of Philippi in Macedonia (42 BCE; Orosius 6.18), Octavian and Mark Anthony defeated Brutus and Cassius, the leaders of the conspirators who had assassinated Caesar (in *Inf.* 34. 61–67 they are punished as traitors to their lord and benefactor, along with Judas; Brutus, however, is there said to be silent in spite of his agony).

Dante seems to have been ill-informed about the complicated events involving Modena and Perugia. The sieges of both cities took place while Mark Anthony was still a triumvir, before the final break with Octavian (36–34 BCE) that led to the defeat at Actium. It was Anthony, not Octavian, who besieged Modena in 42–41 BCE (the siege was lifted when he was driven from Italy by Octavian, but they were later reconciled). Shortly afterward (41–40 BCE), Anthony's younger brother Lucius, having opposed Octavian when consul, took refuge in Perugia; after a prolonged siege Octavian took the city, permitting it to be sacked and burned, ordering the execution of its leading citizens, but sparing Lucius and his wife.

76–78. Sad Cleopatra ... sudden, black death: Cleopatra, too, weeps because of the eagle. The naval battle of Actium (31 BCE; Orosius 6.19), the loss of which Cleopatra caused by fleeing in sudden, unexplained panic, leading to her suicide after that of Mark Anthony, is the centerpiece of the prophetic shield made for Aeneas by Vulcan (*Aen.* 8. 671–713); it was regarded by the Romans as the definitive victory over the forces of disorder (Cleopatra is mentioned in *Inf.* 5.63 as "Cleopatràs lussuriosa" [lustful Cleopatra]).

79–81. With him it coursed ... was barred up: The victory at Actium left all Egypt, bordered on the east by the Red Sea, in Augustus's control, along with the rest of Africa north of the Sahara. With peace established, he was able to close the gates of the temple of Janus (their opening signified war). The establishment of Rome's universal empire, imposing law,

justice, and peace, for Dante prepares the coming of Christ; according to Orosius, the peace lasted only twelve years (6.22).

82–90. But what the emblem ... vengeance for his anger: The events under Tiberius (emperor CE 19–37). In Dante's conception of the divine plan governing all human history, the central event is the atonement for Adam's sin by Christ (for the centrality, both spatial and chronological, see *Inf.* 34.112–17; *Purg.* 29.106, 30.1–12; *Purgatorio* Additional Note 15; *Par.* 30.130–32, 32.1–45, with notes).

Accepting saint Paul's theory of the redemption (Rom. 5.1–21), Dante carried it much further: in his view, Christ's sacrifice could be a legally valid punishment of Adam's sin—thus a true satisfaction of God's justice—only if the Roman Empire possessed *de jure* jurisdiction over all humanity (not merely *de facto* authority over a portion of it):

If the Roman Empire did not exist *de jure*, Adam's sin was not punished in Christ; but this is false ... It must be understood that *punishment* is not simply the infliction of harm but a legal penalty inflicted by those having the adequate jurisdiction; unless the penalty is inflicted by a legally appointed judge, it is not a punishment but an injury ... If Christ did not suffer under a judge having legal jurisdiction, he did not suffer punishment [but injury]. And the legally authorized judge could only be one having jurisdiction over the entire human race, since the entire human race must be punished in the flesh assumed by Christ (*Mon.* 2.12.1, 4–5).

Medieval Eurocentrism has never been carried further.

88–90. for the living Justice ... for his anger: The “living Justice that inspires me” is of course God himself; God himself granted the eagle (the institutional Roman Empire), in Tiberius’s hand, the glory of satisfying justice by punishing Adam’s sin in Christ (see Orosius 7.4). The insistence on viewing the events with clear sight (depth and impartiality of insight) and “pure affect” (lines 86–87) is probably a warning to disregard Tiberius’s reputation for corruption and paranoia and to see him and Pilate as instances of God’s use of unworthy instruments (cf. 7.46–47, with note).

91–93. Now gaze long ... on the ancient sin: Titus besieged Jerusalem under Vespasian, emperor 69–79 CE (cf. “later”); (see *Purg.* 21.81–84 and 23.28–30, with notes). Like virtually all medieval Christians, Dante considered the destruction of Jerusalem to have been God’s punishment of the Jews for their guilt in the death of Jesus (based on Matt. 27.23, the only passage in all the Gospels in which the theme is explicit: “And the entire people answering, said: His blood be on our heads and the heads of our children”; see Orosius 7.9.1–8, Martinez 2003b, Jacoff 2004). Titus’s triumph for the victory over the Jews included the display of instruments looted from the Temple in Jerusalem, some of which are portrayed on the Arch of Titus (see illustration on p. 147). The apparent contradiction of “the vengeance for the vengeance” will be explained in Canto 7.

94–96. when the Lombard fang ... to her aid: The Lombards (see the note to lines 10–

19) controlled most of Italy after the death of Justinian; Desiderius, their last king, persecuted the Catholics, and pope Honorius appealed to Charlemagne. Victorious against the Lombards, Charlemagne was crowned emperor in Rome on Easter Sunday in 800 CE, claiming to revive the Roman Empire, now called "Holy"; in one form or another, though much reduced, it lasted until Napoleon.

Dante's *Monarchia* and *Comedy* present a unique but distinctly medieval view of Roman history as an integral part of God's providential plans, a view based on very few historical sources—Vergil's *Aeneid*, a fragment of Livy's history of Rome, Orosius—taken as literally factual, and treating the crucifixion of Christ as a central turning point followed by a new, transfigured kind of time. Within a generation after Dante's death this view was revolutionized by the inauguration of the humanists' critical investigation of extant sources, led by Petrarch and Boccaccio, greatly augmenting the available historical materials, acknowledging the mythical nature of traditional tales, and treating both ancient events and those of Christian times as taking place in the same essentially untransfigured historical space.

97–111. Now you can judge ... for those lilies: Explicit restatement of the accusation of lines 31–33; for the conflict between the Capetians and the Empire as the principal cause of the historical disasters of Dante's time, see *Purg.* 16.85–114, with notes.

100–102. One man opposes ... errs the more: The Guelphs claim that their emblem of golden lilies (arms of the Capetians; see Fenzi 2003) takes precedence over the imperial eagle; the Ghibellines usurp the eagle for their narrow political goals rather than acting in the public interest; Dante sees the parties as equally to blame.

103–11. Let the Ghibellines ... for those lilies: Three lines condemning the Ghibellines, but six for the Guelphs and their leader in 1300, Charles II of Anjou, king of Naples (son of Charles I of Anjou, the victor over Manfred and Corradino; cf. *Purg.* 20.67–69; he was king 1285–1309; see note on 8.31–148). Let the Ghibellines adopt a different emblem, for using the eagle to cover injustice leads to disaster, and let the Guelphs cease to oppose the Empire, for it has triumphed over stronger opponents than "this new Charles." (Note the scornful echo of "Carlo Magno" [Charles the Great]—line 95—in "esto Carlo novello"—line 106; it should be connected with the series in *Purg.* 20.67–81: "Carlo [of Anjou, line 67] ... un altro Carlo [of Valois, line 71] ... L'altro ... [Charles II of Anjou, line 79].") The "claws" are those of the eagle; the "lion" may refer to Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, or to Desiderius. The last three lines warn Charles II that he may be punished for the many sins of Charles I (or, according to Buti, that his crimes may be visited on his own children—cf. Canto 8); he should not suppose that God will side with Charles and the fleur-de-lys against the eagle.

112–42. This little star ... praise him more. The conclusion of the canto answers the pilgrim's second question, "why ... you occupy the sphere" of Mercury (5.127–29), adding a further example of its occupants, Romeo.

112–26. This little star ... among these wheels: Justinian, then, like Romeo, allowed

his preoccupation with worldly affairs (pursued for the sake of glory and fame, worthy goals—note line 113—but lesser ones) to distract him from his love for God, and gives an explanation, closely parallel with Piccarda's (3.70–87) for the fact that his relatively low place does not diminish his beatitude.

115–17. and when desires ... less vigorously: Implicit here is the distinction between the active life (pursued by these souls, line 113), and the contemplative (neglected by them). Note the important difference between these souls and the negligent (inactive) rulers of *Purg.* 7.91–136, such as the emperor Rudolph, "who could have healed the wounds that have killed Italy" (lines 94–95). Justinian and Romeo were only neglectful in neglecting the contemplative life they loved less than they might have "the good of the intellect" (*Inf.* 3.18), i.e., God. To suppose that Dante is condemning the desire for glory attributed to the souls in this sphere (as in Kay 1994) is a serious mistake; compare Dante's expressions of his own desire for deserved glory in 1.22–32, 17.118–20.

118–26. that our rewards ... among these wheels: Like Piccarda (3.70–87), the souls in Mercury rejoice in the justice of their rewards and in the wondrous order of Paradise (cf. especially 3.53–54 and 79–84 with 6.124–26). Here the emphasis is more on the intellectual recognition of God's justice and the vision of the harmony of the universe, but both equally stress their identification with God's will (3.79–81, 6.121–23).

127–42. within this present ... praise him more: The only other soul identified in Mercury is Romeo de Villeneuve (1170–1250); he was in fact no pauper but a powerful nobleman of Catalan origin, the leading minister of Raymond Berenguer V (1204–45), the Guelph count of Provence, also a Catalan. The myth of the count's ingratitude (Romeo in fact profited handsomely in the count's service) may well have been promoted by the Angevins to discredit him and obscure his opposition to Capetian expansion (see below). Dante probably did not know the very detailed account (*Nuova cronica* 7.90) by Giovanni Villani, who seems to have begun writing after Dante's death, but in any case the story probably circulated during the lifetime of Charles of Anjou. The idea of Romeo's being a pilgrim was no doubt suggested by his given name, which however was not an unusual one (as a common noun *romeo* denoted a pilgrim to Rome; on the whole question see Busquet 1930).

Many critics have been struck by the number of parallels between this canto's version of Romeo and Dante himself: purity of motives met by the ingratitude of the powerful, exile, poverty, begging, and dependency at princely courts. That Romeo is represented as having been so successful in advancing the status of his lord might be seen as an idealizing compensation for the shipwreck of Dante's own politics. There is a parallel also with Marco Lombardo (*Purgatorio* 16), another alter ego of Dante's and a courtier, and there are important thematic parallels between these two cantos (concerning empire and papacy).

130–32. those of Provence ... the good another does: Benvenuto comments: "They wept bitterly and often sighed after Romeo, for the officials of the French king and of Charles [of Anjou] were not so liberal and kindly toward them as Raymond and Romeo had been" (note

the parallel with Pier delle Vigne, *Inf.* 13.64–69). There is no evidence of any such opposition to Romeo at the Provençal court (Busquet 1930), but whoever may have opposed the French connection had good reason to do so. Romeo was, of course, a chief architect of Raymond Berenguer V's continual struggle to impose his authority on rebellious barons and towns.

133–35. Four daughters ... and a foreigner: Bereft of his only son, Raymond Berenguer V was opportunistic and perhaps inconsistent in his efforts to marry his daughters to political advantage. The marriage of the eldest, Marguerite, to the nineteen-year-old Louis IX of France (1234), fostered by the French regent-mother (Blanche of Castile), seems to have been intended to enlist French support against Raymond VII of Toulouse, who had designs on Provençal lands. The second (1236), that of Eleanor to Henry III of England, rival of Louis IX, was apparently intended to balance the Capetian influence, like the third, of Sancha to Richard of Cornwall (1243), the brother of Henry III and future king of the Romans. These three were assuredly negotiated by Romeo. When Raymond Berenguer V died (19 August 1245), he had been negotiating the marriage of his last daughter, Béatrix, heir to his title, to his old rival Raymond VII of Toulouse, apparently in order to prevent Provence from becoming a Capetian appanage; these negotiations were continued by Romeo as coregent with the count's widow, Béatrix of Savoie, but she seems to have turned to the French when the emperor, Frederick II, moved a fleet toward the Provençal coast in his son Conrad's interest (Provence was an imperial fief). Louis IX sent a contingent of troops to "protect" Provençal interests, and the future Charles of Anjou married Béatrix on 31 January 1246; apparently Romeo was dismissed soon after and retired to his lands. (This summary is based on Pécout 2004). That Charles of Anjou held a grudge against Romeo seems indicated by his having seized a number of the latter's castles after Romeo's death in 1250, but Romeo's descendants prospered well into the nineteenth century (Busquet 1930).

138. who had repaid him seven and five for ten: In other words, had caused him to profit at the rate of 20%.

140–42. if the world knew ... praise him more: That is, he was not only just but also generous and high hearted. The introduction of Romeo here at the end of the canto seems to serve several purposes: to relax the intensity of the first two-thirds of the canto, with its immense chronological and geographical scope, exalted tone, and political urgency, to contrast with ancient heroes a modern public servant who reverted to strictly private status (a kind of modern Cincinnatus; cf. the note to lines 46–49), perhaps also, after the attack on the warring Guelphs and Ghibellines, to convey a feeling of reconciliation in Romeo's tranquil acceptance of ill treatment.

But, of course, behind the praise of Romeo lie the political realities: Louis IX and Charles of Anjou, limbs of the "evil plant" (*Purg.* 20.43), did gain control of the crucial "great dowry of Provence" (*Purg.* 20.61); note the scorn toward Charles II of Anjou in lines 106–11 of this canto. For his good intentions resulting in political disaster, Dante's Romeo seems parallel to Constantine (cf. *Purg.* 20.61, *Par.* 20.55–60). Even if lines 133–35 indicate that Dante was unaware of the French intervention in Charles's favor, the entire passage is very hard to

reconcile with Dante's bitter anti-Capetianism (*Purgatorio* 20; see Fenzi 2003), and it is odd that he seems not to have recognized the tendentiousness of the Romeo legend.

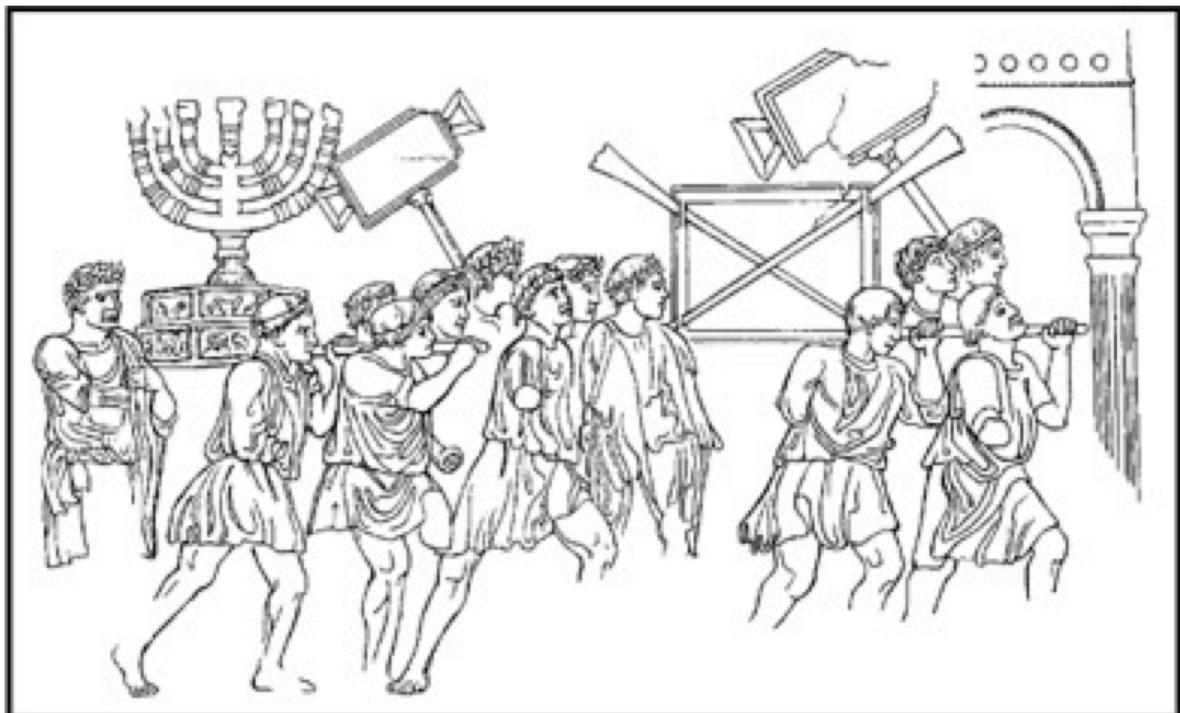


Figure 5. Furniture from the Temple in Jerusalem carried in triumph by the Romans



CANTO 7

*Mercury, continued: just vengeance punished—theory of the
Atonement—direct and indirect creation*

- 1 "Osanna, sanctus Deus sabaòth
superillustrans claritate tua
felices ignes horum malacòth!"
- 4 Thus, revolving to his notes, this substance
seemed to me to sing, on whom double light is
twinned,
- 7 and he and the others moved in their dance
and like flying sparks veiled themselves from
me with sudden distance.
- 10 I was in doubt, saying, "Tell her, tell her!" within
myself, "tell her," I was saying, "tell my lady, who
slakes my thirst with her sweet distillings."
- 13 But that reverence that dominates me utterly,
even for *Be* and for *ice*, was bending me like
one falling asleep.
- 16 Beatrice suffered me so but a little while, and
she began, shining on me with a smile that
would make one happy in the fire:
- 19 "According to my infallible awareness, how a
just vengeance could be justly punished, is

- puzzling you,
- 22 but I will quickly free your mind; and do you
listen, for my words will make you the gift of a
great principle.
- 25 For not enduring any rein upon the power that
wills, though for his good, that man who was not
born in damning himself damned all his offspring;
- 28 therefore the human race lay weak for many
centuries in great error, until it pleased the Word
of God to descend
- 31 where the nature that had gone far from its
Maker he united with himself, in one Person,
with the sole act of his eternal love.
- 34 Now direct your sight to what is said next: this
nature united with its Maker was pure and good
when it was created,
- 37 but still it had banished itself from Paradise,
because it turned aside from the way of truth
and from its life.
- 40 No punishment, therefore, if measured by
the nature that was assumed, ever took its toll
so justly as did the Cross,
- 43 and in the same way none was ever so
unjust, considering the Person who suffered, in
whom that nature had been assumed.
- 46 Thus from one act issued different things: for
the same death pleased both God and the Jews;
because of it earth shook and Heaven was opened.
- 49 No longer now should it seem difficult to you
when it is said that a just vengeance was later

avenged by a just court.

52 But now I see your mind caught, from thought
to thought, within a knot from which with great
desire it hopes to loose itself:

55 You say: 'I discern clearly what I have heard,
but why God should choose just this way to our
redemption is hidden from me.'

58 This decree, brother, lies buried from the
eyes of anyone whose wit has not matured in
the flame of love.⁵

61 But truly, because many aim at this target but
discern little in it, I will say why that manner was
the most worthy.

64 God's goodness, which spurns all envy,
aflame within itself, flashes forth unfolding the
eternal beauties.

67 Whatever flows from it without intermediary
has no end, because when it seals, the stamp
cannot be removed.

70 That which rains from it without intermediary
is entirely free, for it does not lie subject to the
power of created things.

73 This most resembles him, and thus it pleases
him most, for the holy Ardor that radiates all
things is liveliest in what most resembles it.

76 With all these gifts the human creature is
privileged, and if one of them is lacking, it must
fall from its nobility.

79 Sin alone is what disenfranchises it and
makes it dissimilar from the highest Good, so

- that the Light brightens it but little,
- 82 and it can never regain its high worth, if it
does not fill what guilt has emptied, with just
penalty in exchange for evil pleasure.
- 85 Your nature, when it sinned *tota* in its seed,
was expelled from these dignities, as from
Paradise,
- 88 nor could they be recovered in any way, if you
consider subtly, without passing across one of
these fords:
- 91 either that God alone in his liberality should
forgive, or that man by himself should atone for
his folly.
- 94 Probe with your eye now within the abyss of
the eternal counsel, as fixed as you can be
upon what I say:
- 97 man could not, within his limits, ever atone,
since he could not descend with obedient
humility afterwards
- 100 as far as in his disobedience he earlier intended
to rise up; and this is the reason why man was
excluded from being able to atone by himself.
- 103 Therefore it was left to God to restore man to
the fullness of life, I say with one or else with
both his ways.
- 106 But because a work is the more pleasing to
the workman the more it expresses the goodness
of heart from which it issues,
- 109 the divine Goodness that stamps the world
was happy to proceed by all its ways to raise

you up again.

112 Nor between the last night and the first day
has there been or will there be so high and so
magnificent a going forth, by either way:

115 for God was more liberal in giving himself in
order to make mankind sufficient to raise itself
up, than if he had simply forgiven,

118 and all other ways fell short of justice, if the Son
of God had not humbled himself to become flesh.

121 Now, to fulfill all your desire, I return to clarify
some places for you, that you may see them just
as I do.

124 You say: 'I see water, I see fire, air, and
earth, and all their compounds, come to
corruption, lasting little,

127 but these things, too, were created; for this
reason, if what was said is true, they should be
exempt from corruption.'

130 The angels, brother, and the pure realm
where you are now, can be said to have been
created just as they are, whole in their being,

133 but the elements that you have named, and
the things made from them, receive form from
created powers.

136 Created was the matter in them, created was
the informing power in these stars that revolve
about them.

139 The soul of every beast and every plant is
drawn forth from some potentiated compound
by the shining and the motion of the holy lights,

- 142 but the highest Love breathes your life into
you without intermediary, and so enamors it of
himself that ever after it desires him.
- 145 And thence you can take further evidence of
your resurrection, if you think back how human
flesh was made
- 148 when the first parents were both made."



CANTO 7

*"Osanna, sanctus Deus sabaòth,
superillustrans claritate tua
felices ignes horum malacòth!"*

1

Così, volgendosi a la nota sua,
fu viso a me cantare essa sostanza,
sopra la qual doppio lume s'addua,
ed essa e l'altre mossero a sua danza,
e quasi velocissime faville
mi si velar di sùbita distanza.

4

Io dubitava, e dicea: "Dille, dille,"
fra me, "dille," dicea, "a la mia donna,
che mi diseta con le dolci stille."

7

Ma quella reverenza che s'indonna
di tutto me, pur per *Be* e per *ice*,
mi richinava come l'uom ch' assonna.

10

Poco sofferse me cotal Beatrice,
e cominciò, raggiandomi d'un riso
tal che nel foco faria l'uom felice:

13

"Secondo mio infallibile avviso,
come giusta vendetta giustamente
punita fosse, t'ha in pensier miso,
ma io ti solverò tosto la mente;
e tu ascolta, ché le mie parole
di gran sentenza ti faran presente.

16

Per non soffrire a la virtù che vole
freno a suo prode, quell'uom che non nacque,
dannando sé, dannò tutta sua prole;

19

22

25

onde l'umana specie inferma giacque
giù per secoli molti in grande errore,
fin ch' al Verbo di Dio discender piacque
 u' la natura, che dal suo Fattore
s'era allungata, unì a sé in persona
con l'atto sol del suo eterno amore.

Or drizza il viso a quel ch' or si ragiona:
questa natura al suo Fattore unita,
qual fu creata, fu sincera e buona,
 ma per sé stessa pur fu ella sbandita
di Paradiso, però che si torse
da via di verità e da sua vita.

La pena dunque che la Croce porse
s' a la natura assunta si misura,
nulla già mai sì giustamente morse,
 e così nulla fu di tanta ingiura,
guardando a la persona che sofferse,
in che era contratta tal natura.

Però d'un atto uscir cose diverse:
ch' a Dio e a' Giudei piacque una morte;
per lei tremò la terra e 'l Ciel s'aperse.

Non ti dee oramai parer più forte
quando si dice che giusta vendetta
poscia vengiata fu da giusta corte.

Ma io veggi' or la tua mente ristretta
di pensiero in pensier dentro ad un nodo
del qual con gran disio solver s'aspetta:
 tu dici: 'Ben discerno ciò ch'i' odo,
ma perché Dio volesse, m'è occulto,
a nostra redenzion pur questo modo.'

28

31

34

37

40

43

46

49

52

55

Questo decreto, frate, sta sepulto
a li occhi di ciascuno il cui ingegno
ne la fiamma d'amor non è adulto.

58

Veramente, però ch' a questo segno
molto si mira e poco si discerne,
dirò perché tal modo fu più degno.

61

La divina bontà, che da sé sperne
ogne livore, ardendo in sé, sfavilla
sì che dispiega le bellezze eterne.

64

Ciò che da lei sanza mezzo distilla
non ha poi fine, perché non si move
la sua imprenta quand' ella sigilla.

67

Ciò che da essa sanza mezzo piove
libero è tutto, perché non soggiace
a la virtute de le cose nove.

70

Più l'è conforme, e però le piace,
ché l'Ardor santo ch'ognе cosa raggia,
ne la più somigliante è più vivace.

73

Di tutte queste dote s'avvantaggia
l'umana creatura, e s'una manca
di sua nobilità convien che caggia.

76

Solo il peccato è quel che disfranca
e falla dissimile al sommo Bene
per che del lume suo poco s'imbianca,
e in sua dignità mai non rivene
se non riempie, dove colpa vòta,
contra mal dilettar con giuste pene.

79

Vostra natura, quando peccò *tota*
nel seme suo, da queste dignitadi,
come di Paradiso, fu remota,

82

85

né ricovrar potensi, se tu badi
ben sottilmente, per alcuna via,
sanza passar per un di questi guadi:

o che Dio solo per sua cortesia
dimesso avesse, o che l'uom per sé isso
avesse sodisfatto a sua follia.

Ficca mo l'occhio per entro l'abisso
de l'eterno consiglio, quanto puoi
al mio parlar distrettamente fisso:

non potea l'uomo ne' termini suoi
mai sodisfar, per non poter ir guso
con umiltate obediendo poi
quanto disobediendo intese ir suso;
e questa è la cagion per che l'uom fue
da poter sodisfar per sé dischiuso.

Dunque a Dio convenia con le vie sue
riparar l'omo a sua intera vita,
dico con l'una o ver con l'amendue.

Ma perché l'ovra tanto è più gradita
da l'operante quanto più appresenta
de la bontà del core ond' ell' è uscita,
la divina bontà, che 'l mondo imprenta,
di proceder per tutte le sue vie
a rilevarvi suso fu contenta.

Né tra l'ultima notte e 'l primo die
sì alto o sì magnifico processo,
o per l'una o per l'altra, fu o fie:

ché più largo fu Dio a dar sé stesso
per far l'uom sufficiente a rilevarsi,
che s'elli avesse sol da sé dimesso,

88

91

94

97

100

103

106

109

112

115

e tutti li altri modi erano scarsi
a la giustizia, se 'l Figliuol di Dio
non fosse umiliato ad incarnarsi.

118

Or per empierti bene ogne disio
ritorno a dichiararti in alcun loco,
perché tu veggi lì così com' io.

121

Tu dici: 'Io veggio l'acqua, io veggio il foco,
l'aere e la terra e tutte lor misture
venire a corruzione e durar poco,

124

e queste cose pur furon creature;
per che, se ciò ch' è detto è stato vero,
esser dovrien da corruzion sicure.'

127

Li angeli, frate, e 'l paese sincero
nel qual tu se', dir si posson creati
sì come sono, in lor essere intero,
ma li alimenti che tu hai nomati
e quelle cose che di lor si fanno
da creata virtù sono informati.

130

Creata fu la materia ch' elli hanno,
creata fu la virtù informante
in queste stelle che 'ntorno a lor vanno.

133

L'anima d'ogne bruto e de le piante
di complession potenziata tira
lo raggio e 'l moto de le luci sante,
ma vostra vita senza mezzo spira
la somma Beninanza, e la innamora
di sé sì che poi sempre la disira.

136

E quinci puoi argomentare ancora vostra
resurrezion, se tu ripensi come l'umana carne
fessi allora che li primi parenti intrambo fensi."

142

145

148

NOTES

1–9. Osanna ... sudden distance: Justinian's acclamation confirms the praise Romeo merits in Heaven (see 6.140–42 and notes), after which Justinian and the other blessed in Mercury depart (see 3.121–23, 4.28–36, 9.7–9 and notes).

1–3. Osanna ... malacoth [O save, Holy God of armies, illuminating with your brightness from above the happy fires of these realms]: The words of praise and victory link Rome's conquests in Canto 6, which prepared the birth of Christ, with the subject of this canto: the purpose of Christ's life on earth (see also 8.28 and note). One of three mostly Latin terzinias in the poem (see 15.28–30, *Purg.* 33.10–12 and notes), only this one opens a canto; the verses contrast with Plutus's babble at *Inf.* 7.1–3. Hebrew words occupy three of the four extremes of the terzina; the last word is a mistake for *mamlacoth* [realms]. See Additional Note 4.

5–7. this substance seemed to me to sing ... moved in their dance: For the dance of the blessed and the dance of the stars, see Freccero 1968 and Miller 1986.

6. on whom double light is twinned: Early commentators saw the doubling as reflecting Justinian's achievements in both arms and the law, but given 6.25–27 (see note), a twinned blessing of Justinian as both man and corporate person, both soul in glory and anointed emperor, the *gemina persona* of the sovereign, has a stronger basis (see Kantorowicz 1957). Jacoff 1985 cites *Aen.* 8.680, where the emperor Augustus's temples seem to radiate twin flames [*geminis ... flammae*].

10–12. Tell her, tell her ... sweet distillings: Stuttering alliteration (lines 10–11), and the self-address that cues the pilgrim's aside to himself, reflect how doubt makes us of two minds. The pilgrim's desire to see Beatrice again was a "ten year's thirst" (*Purg.* 32.2 and note; also 31.127–29); and cf. also *Purg.* 21.1–4 and note.

13–18: but that reverence ... happy in the fire: These lines allude to the pilgrim's history with Beatrice, from the *Vita nova* to the pilgrim's passage of the fire (*Purg.* 27.10–57; see also *Inf.* 1.118–19); that the lady's mercy might soothe a lover in Hell was a topic of vernacular lyric.

14: even for be and for ice: A single syllable of Beatrice's name stuns the pilgrim. The syllabification recalls the force of her name in Dante's work (see *VN* 24.8, where the nickname *Bice* appears in a sonnet). Here her name rhymes, in a sense, with itself (lines 14, 16; compare 12.73, 26.17 and notes, and see Additional Note 1). Beatrice's "infallible view" (19) is emphasized as she begins a major speech.

19–148. According to ... both fashioned: In 130 lines, the length of a canto (cf. Canto

3), Beatrice unfolds the *gesta* of human salvation, the "great principle" (line 24) and "so magnificent a going forth" (line 113) of God's work; hers is the longest continuous discourse in the poem except for Justinian's in the previous canto.

Anselm, abbot of Bec, later archbishop of Canterbury (1033–1109; see 12.136–38 and note), though unnamed in discussions of the Incarnation by Peter Lombard and Aquinas, is the acknowledged authority in Chapter 53 of the *Golden Legend*; Dante, too, with key shifts of emphasis, follows Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* [Why God became man], *pace* Ryan 1995, Muresu 1997; see Fallani 1989.

19–52. According to ... by a just court: Beatrice explains (lines 19–21) Justinian's riddling words on Jerusalem's destruction by Titus (6.92–93 and note), and gives a brief account of creation, original sin, the punishment of mankind, and its reconciliation through the Incarnation and Atonement (lines 25–33). The union of two natures in Christ, who is both the second Adam and God, explains why his death on the cross was both just and unjust (lines 34–51; see also *Conv.* 4.5.3–20 and *Mon.* 2.10–11). Mention of the goodness of creation prepares later stages of the argument (34–36). The supposed guilt and punishment of the Jews (line 47; cf. 6.91–93 and note) figures in discussions of the atonement (cf. *CDH* 1.18 [385A], 2.15 [415C]; *ST* 3a. q. 47 a. 3).

20–21. how a just vengeance could be justly punished: Reiterated at lines 51–52. For the reasoning behind the apparent paradox, see *Par.* 6.82–90 and note. Beatrice's explanation further answers the pilgrim's query at 4.67–79; see also 19.77 and note.

25–26: For not enduring any rein upon the power that wills: Note the echoes of Purgatory, realm of the correction of the will, where Dante defines both human resistance to tendencies instilled by the stars (*Purg.* 16.94 and notes) and the role of the empire as "bit and bridle" guiding human impulses (see *Purg.* 6.88–99 and notes; *Mon.* 3.4.14, 3.16.9).

26–27: that man who was not born ... damned all his offspring: Created directly by God, Adam was never born (*DVE* 1.6.1; *Mon.* 1.16.1), a crucial datum for Dante's exposition (see lines 145–48 and notes). Based in part on Lam. 5.7 and Rom. 5.12 ("As by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men"), Christians believed that Adam's sin was transmitted to his descendants. See lines 85–87 and note.

28–30. therefore the human race lay weak ... to descend: The prostration of humankind in the infirmity of sin recalls the condition of souls in Limbo awaiting Christ (*Inf.* 4.52–63 and note). Compare also *Purg.* 6.149–51 and notes.

28. weak: Dante's view that original sin weakens human nature is sharply distinct from Augustine's view that original sin has so corrupted human nature that any right action of the will is impossible without grace (see *Purg.* 16.64–129, 91–93 and notes, and our introduction to *Purgatorio*, pp. 6–10).

30. until it pleased the Word of God to descend: Compare the Nicene Creed,

"Propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis" [for our salvation he came down from the heavens].

31–33. where the nature ... his eternal love: The Incarnation joins the Word and human nature in marriage. See 11.31–33, 115–17 and notes.

34–39: Now direct your sight ... from its life: Reiterating in reverse order the sense of lines 29–33 (where alienation precedes reunion), these lines balance man's free choice of sin with Christ's choice to be incarnate and crucified ("it pleased," line 30). Line 39 echoes "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14.6).

40–51. No punishment ... a just court: Christ's death was just because culpable human nature was punished; but unjust because Christ, though innocent of sin, suffered on the Cross. The diverse reception of the Atonement (lines 46–48) recalls Caiaphas's unwitting and partial statement of the logic of Christ's sacrifice (John 18.14; see *Inf. 23.115–23* and notes; also *Purg. 22.38–44* and notes); see also Additional Note 2.

46–47. Thus from one act ... pleased God and the Jews: Compare Anselm, *CDH* 1.7 (368A), distinguishing between the right of God and that of the devil to inflict harm on man: "Thus from different points of view, the same action is just and unjust, and it may happen that one may judge it to be wholly just, another wholly unjust." God approves the death of Christ because it redeems Adam's sin (cf. *CDH* 1.10 [374B–75A], "since therefore the will of the Son [to be sacrificed] pleased the Father"); while the Jews' supposed ill will is satisfied with the death of a blasphemer. For the role of the chief priests (the Sanhedrin) in the death of Christ, see *Inf. 23.115–23* and notes (also *ST* 3a q. 47 a. 3, and see Martinez 2003b).

48. because of it earth shook and Heaven was opened: A reference to the earthquake at the Crucifixion (see Matt. 27.51–53; *Purg. 20.127–29, 21.7–15* and notes) and to the relaxation of the decree sending mankind to Hell after the fall of Adam (see *Purg. 10.34–36* and notes). See *ST* 3a q. 49 a. 5: "Through the Passion of Christ the gates of the kingdom of heaven [*ianua regni cael*] are open to us."

51. a just court: The court is just because Rome had lawfully acquired world empire, giving it standing to pass judgment on Christ; see note to *Purg. 6.82–90, Mon. 2.8–11*, and Additional Note 2.

52–120. But now I see your mind ... humbled himself to become flesh: Beatrice answers the pilgrim's question regarding God's choice of means in redeeming man (52–60). The pilgrim's question, implying God's choice in the matter, is foreign to Anselm, who claimed the Incarnation was necessary; but the answer to the question is akin to Anselm in basing the need for the Incarnation on the axiom that man's dignity—the divine likeness conferred by God's creation of him—although partially effaced through sin, must be fully restored (61–84). Such restoration could be achieved through God's largesse in forgiving sin, or if humankind itself made satisfaction for its error (85–93), but the latter could not be achieved, because in its

weakened state mankind could not sufficiently humble itself so as to expiate its presumption and satisfy God's justice (97–102), while the former, simple forgiveness, comes short of justice (implied in 118–19). It remains for God to compass man's salvation in *both* ways: first, through his largesse, in the gift of his son, who freely chooses to pay for human sin; and second, in providing a heroic son of man capable of restoring his own human seed (106–11). Justice is satisfied and divine generosity expressed (106–19).

52–57. But now I see ... is hidden from me: Beatrice, reading the pilgrim's mind (see also lines 124–27) and both voicing and answering his questions, makes her discourse into a dialogue, like Anselm's with his disciple Boso in *CDH*. The pilgrim proposes a question much like Anselm's (*CDH* 1.1 [361C]): "By what necessity and reason God was made man [*Deus homo factus sit*] and has, by his death, as we confess and believe, brought life back to the world."

52–54. But now I see ... to loose itself: The problem is a knot, like others in the poem: Farinata's knowledge of the future (*Inf.* 10.95), the obstacle to other poets writing as well as Dante (*Purg.* 24.55), the appearance of circles in the Trinity (*Par.* 33.115–25), and the union of the two natures in Christ, implicit in the question here.

58–60. This decree ... the flame of love: The "decree" is the plan of the Incarnation, manifest in Gabriel's offer of the "decree of peace" to the earth (*Purg.* 10.34–35), reversing "the handwriting of the decree that was against us" (Colossians 2.14; cf. *CDH* 1.7 [368B]). Dante emphasizes God's love as a cause of the decision to save man through the Incarnation (John 3.16), a view explicit in Aquinas (*ST* 3a q. 46 a. 3) as well as in Anselm: *CDH* 1.3 (364B): "He showed love [*dilectionem*] and compassion for us." That only those who know God's love can understand any love at all informs the *stilnovo* formula (*VN* 26.7; see 3.37–39 and note).

64–66: God's goodness ... eternal beauties: These lines echo "O qui perpetua" 4–6 (see note, p. 689) and its source in the *Timaeus* (see also 2.130–32, 5.19–21, 13.52–87, and 29.13–14 and notes). The fire imagery (see also line 74) continues the idea of love as the motive of creation; cf. *Inf.* 1.39–40, and *Par.* 33.145 and notes. For God's goodness as creator, see Aquinas, *CG* 2.46, *ST* 1a q. 19 a. 2.

67–75: Whatever flows from it ... what most resembles it: This passage prepares Beatrice's answer to the pilgrim's last question (121–48): God's direct creation of man (line 73) imprints his image indelibly (67–69; for the metaphor of the seal in wax, see *Purg.* 10.45, 18.39, 25.95–96, 33.79; *Par.* 1.41, 8.128, 13.67, 73 and notes; see also 9.96 and note). As a result, the human intellect, and ultimately the will, have the possibility to act freely, despite the influence of the planets, which are created things, thus secondary causes (see *Purg.* 16.73–81 and notes, and Additional Note 2). The dignity of direct creation underlies Anselm's account of the necessity of the redemption of mankind (*CDH* 1.5 [365C]: "That dignity, that he should have had, had he not sinned"; see note to lines 121–48 below).

74. The holy Ardor that radiates all things: One of names for God in this canto, which include the Word [*Verbo*, line 30]; the maker [*fattor*, lines 31, 35]; highest Good [*sommo Bene*,

line 80]; highest Love [*somma Beninanza*, line 143, a hapax legomenon in the poem], as well as God [*Dio*, lines 47, 103, 115] and son of God [*figlio di Dio*, 119]. "Ardor" may emphasize how Love, a name for the Holy Spirit, is said to motivate the creation, as it did the Redemption; but both divine acts are works of the Trinity (see 13.52–60, 29.22–30 and notes; *Inf.* 1.39–40, 3.5–6 and note).

76–84: With all these gifts ... evil pleasure: An itemized reversal of the points in previous terzinas: sin weakens man, reducing his dignity and privileges (76–79; feudal and social status metaphors), especially his resemblance to God (73–75, light metaphors), and his full dignity cannot be restored unless his rebellion is punished (82–84, judicial metaphor; cf. *CDH* 1.11–12); "evil pleasure," the result of man's errant will, echoes the hatred imputed to the Jews in lines 46–48 and contrasts with the *placet* of God's consent to the Atonement (line 47).

77–78. it must fall from its nobility: For the human soul as intrinsically "noble," see *Conv.* 3.2.5–6; Aquinas, *CG* 2.72.

83. if it does not fill what guilt has emptied: The terms echo the discussion of vows, "empty" if not kept (see 3.30, 5.57 and notes); see note to lines 97–102.

85–93. Your nature ... atone for his folly: Either God one-sidedly dismisses all charges and penalties, or man atones for his own sin.

85–87. Your nature ... as from Paradise: The dogma of original sin teaches that all men shared in Adam's sin, just as all men could be redeemed in Christ. Line 85 has a parallel in Anselm (*CDH* 1.18 [387B]): "Since human nature in its entirety [*tota*] was in the first parents, it was in its entirety [*tota*] defeated and prone to sin." Line 87 implies a parallel between Heaven and the psychological state of innocence, as maintained by Eurigena and other Greek authors, for whom Eden is a metaphor or allegory; see *Purg.* 28.25–33 and notes.

90. without passing across one of these fords: The metaphor, referring to fording a body of water (usually a stream or river), vividly highlights the recurring references to the atonement as a *via* or way (lines 89, 103, 110), and a procession (113). The "long way" (*Inf.* 4.22, *Purg.* 5.131) of the pilgrim's journey, which includes "fords" (*Inf.* 11.31, *Purg.* 32.28, *Par.* 2.126 and note), is itself part of the "way" opened by Christ.

91. either that God alone in his liberality: Liberality translates *cortesia*, literally "courtliness," one of a family of terms ("magnificent," line 113; "generous" [*largo*], line 115; and, of man's diminished freedom because of sin [*disfranca*], line 79) that help imagine Heaven as like a feudal court; cf. *Inf.* 1.128; *Par.* 5.19, 9.58; 25.17, 42 and notes. God is "Lord of courtliness" [*sire della cortesia*] at *VN* 42.3; see also *Conv.* 4.20.6, *Inf.* 16.67, *Purg.* 16.116. Dante differs from Anselm in emphasizing God's "courtly" generosity, rather than his compassion [*misericordia*]. See Muresu 1997, and cf. *Par.* 8.82–83, 17.85 and note.

92. forgive: Gmelin suggests Dante's use of this word [*dimesso*] echoes Anselm's treatise,

echoing his many uses of *dimittere*, *dimittitur* (*CDH* 1.12, *passim*); but the word is also used in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive [dimitte] our sins."

97–102. man could not ... atone by himself: The two uses of "atone" (lines 98 and 102; and see line 93) correspond to Dante's *sodisfare* [satisfy], previously used to discuss fulfilling vows; Christ's atonement is the archetype of the sacrifice involved in the keeping of vows (see 5.62 and note, and *CDH* 2.5 (403B). See also *CDH* 1.11 (377A): "Thus should everyone who sins pay the penalty for stealing the honor of God: and this is satisfaction." See Additional Note 8).

98–100. he could not descend ... intended to ascend: Just as vengeance answers vengeance in regard to the pilgrim's original question (lines 19–21), here obedience is pitched against disobedience, humble descent to proud ascent. Christ's sacrifice is the ultimate model of the pilgrim's descent to Hell in order to ascend in the course of the journey (see Additional Note 4, *Inf.* 1.91 and notes, our introduction to *Inferno*, and *Inferno* Additional Note 16). Commentators cite Richard of St. Victor: "For the completeness of satisfaction it was necessary that the humiliation in the expiation be as great as had been the presumption in the prevarication" (*Liber de verbo incarnato* 8).

99. obedient humility: Since only a willing offer by one who is both man and God can satisfy the requirements of justice, Christ's obedience to God's will in sacrificing himself for mankind is the keystone of Anselm's argument; see *CDH* 1.8–9, 1.20, and *ST* 3a q. 47 a. 2: "It was most necessary that Christ suffer out of obedience." For the relevance in the canto of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians 2.5–11, see note to line 119.

106–8. But because a work ... from which it issues: "Work" [*ovra*] identifies this as a reference to the Creator as craftsman, a topic in medieval accounts of creation (see *Purg.* 25.70–72 and note, *Purg.* 26.115–17, note and *Inter cantica* there); the idea includes the reference to an imprint in line 109.

109–11: the divine Goodness ... raise you up again: *Bontà* [Goodness] is for Pseudo-Dionysius one of the names of God (*De nom. div.* 4.1–4); here it echoes the "goodness of heart" of the workman in line 108, as well as earlier references (lines 64, 80, and 143). See note to 29.18.

111. raise you up again: "Raise up" [*rilevare*] and "restore" [*riparare*, line 104] are found in Anselm. See *CDH* 2.21 (431A): "It would have been impossible for man to be raised up [*relevari*] by another man, if he were not of the same human species"; and 1.19 (391B): "Not then in this way is man restored [*reparaterur*]."

112–14: Nor between the last night ... by either way: Performed in "both ways" (line 105), the Incarnation and Atonement are the supremely magnificent actions in history. Dante's *hysteron proteron* puts the last night of created time before the first day of creation, echoing the contiguous nights and days of Genesis (1.5, 1.8, 1.13, etc.), and collapsing time

into a single day.

115–19. for God was more liberal ... to become flesh: Although the emphasis on God's liberality is not in Anselm, the insistence on the Incarnation as the only suitable way of effecting the redemption of mankind, other means being found lacking (*scarsi*), is Anselmian in premise and conclusion. See *CDH* 1.3 (364C) and 2.20 (430AB): "As to the mercy of God that seemed to vanish when we considered man's sin and God's justice, we find that it is so great and so in accord with justice that neither a greater nor a more just could be conceived."

119. if the son of God had not humbled himself to become flesh: Statement of a central Christian teaching concludes Beatrice's discourse. The line echoes Philippians 2.5–11, on Christ's self-abasement ("He emptied himself") in the Incarnation and Crucifixion. Both the verb for Christ's humbling of himself [*umiliato*, from *umiliare*] and for his Incarnation [*incarnarsi*] are used only here in Dante's poem (see also line 146). For Philippians 2.5–11 in Anselm, where it anchors the argument, see *CDH* 1.9 (four times); in *ST* 3a q. 46 a. 4 and q. 47 a. 2 it decides the question. See also 11.111–12 and note.

121–48. Now to fulfill all your desire ... were both made: Since the four created elements and their compounds—which compose all material substances on earth—perish, how is it that they, if created as man is, are not also perpetual, like man? (lines 124–29). Beatrice distinguishes humankind, the angels, and the system of the heavens, created directly by God and thus perpetual in their existence, from the elements and their compounds, including the souls of plants and animals, formed in their being by the secondary causes of the stars and planets, guided by angelic intelligences (133–41). The elements are thus subject to corruption and extinction, but original prime matter and the first qualities (hot, dry, wet, cold) are not (see *Conv.* 3.3.2–5, Moore 1896–1917). It follows that man, made directly in God's image, will enjoy eternal life after the resurrection of the body (142–48). Beatrice's answer is crucial, since the restoration of humankind derives from its original dignity as God's creation. This is also Anselm's premise, stated in a passage that Moore 1896–1917, vol. 4, claimed influenced Dante (*CDH* 2.3 [402A]): "It needs be that ... when he [man] is restored, he will be restored in his body, which he lived in this life."

124–29. You say ... exempt from corruption: In this last exchange of Beatrice's "dialogue" with the pilgrim, his unspoken words constitute an objection, as in a scholastic problem [*quaestio*]; her answer employs a scholastic distinction. Mutability is expressed "scientifically"; but see Is. 40.6 ("All flesh is grass").

130–45. The angels ... after it desires him: In five terzinas, Beatrice offers an account of corruptible created being (three terzinas, lines 133–41) bracketed on both sides by one terzina on incorruptible being (lines 130–132, the angels and heavens, and 142–44, man). Rhetorical order mirrors metaphysical: what is active and immutable (see line 138) contains and fashions the passive and mutable (cf. *Par.* 29.16–36, and *Ep.* 13.65: "As is evident in regard to heaven and the elements, of which heaven is incorruptible, while the elements are corruptible.")

130–32. The angels ... whole in their being: Dante uses “pure realm” of the heavens because *sincero* means unmixed, (cf. 6.17 and note). Although compounds of form and matter, the heavens are not fashioned from the four elements, but from a subtle fifth element, aether [*etera*]; see 22.132, 27.70.

136–38. Created was the matter ... stars that revolve about them: The two uses of “created” here (see also lines 127, 131, and 135), are the last in the canto (cf. lines 36, 77). See also uses of *Fattor* (“Maker” 31, 35) and especially *fare* (“to make”), which in this and the preceding canto comprise some eighteen occurrences. The lines closely associate the turning heavens with God’s larger creative plan, his providential “intention” (see 29.22–36 and notes). For line 138, cf. *Conv.* 3.12.8–11; *Mon.* 2.2.2–3; and *Par.* 8.34–49, 9.103–8 and notes.

139–41. The soul of every beast ... motion of the holy lights: The heavenly bodies through their motions and their light actualize the potential of the mixtures of elements that make up the physical world (“potentiated compounds” include everything made from the simple bodies that are the elements: from minerals to the further compounded higher animals, including human embryos before they are ensouled); formed and brought to act, these potentials constitute the vital principles, or souls, of animals and of plants (as well as the properties of minerals and gems). Cf. *ST* 1a. q. 75 a. 6; 1a q. 91 a. 2; *Conv.* 2.13.5; 4.21.4; 4.23.3, 7, 12–14; *Mon.* 1.3.6; and *Purg.* 25.52–60 and notes.

142–44. but the highest Love ... after it desires him: Restates *Purg.* 16.85–93 and 25.67–78 (see notes), which echo Gen. 2.7, “God breathed into his [Adam’s] nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul”; cf. *Conv.* 4.21.4–5.

145–48. And thence ... were both made: Further emphasis on God’s direct creation, which means the human body is also destined for immortality. Dante’s “were ... fashioned” [*fensi*] is the last of the verbs derived from *fare* (“to make”) in Mercury (see note to 136–38), reiterating the dignity of humankind because of its resemblance to its Creator. See *CDH* 2.1 (401C): “Therefore the man who is of rational nature, was made just [*factus est justus*] to this end, that he should be blessed in the enjoyment of God [*ut Deo fruendo beatus esset*].”

146. your resurrection: The term for the return from death to eternal life, which is the hope of Christianity, occurs only here in the poem (though Statius in Purgatory appears like Christ risen from the tomb; see *Purg.* 21.7–15 and note). Anselm also uses the word just once in his treatise (*CDH* 2.3 [401D]): “From this truth [if man had not sinned, he would never have suffered death] a future resurrection of the dead is clearly proven.” And see 1 Cor. 15.51–53.



CANTO 8

Venus—Charles Martel—perfect operation of the heavens—need for diversity of human gifts—heredity overridden by the stars

- 1 The world used to believe, to its peril, that the
lovely Cyprian radiated mad desire, turning in
the third epicycle,
- 4 and therefore those ancient peoples in their
ancient error paid the honor of sacrifice and
votive cry not merely to her,
- 7 but they honored Dione and Cupid as well,
the first as her mother, the second as her son,
and they said that he sat on Dido's lap,
- 10 and from her from whom I take my beginning
they took the name of the star that woos the
sun, now at his nape, now at his brow.
- 13 I did not perceive our rising to it, but that we
were within it, my lady gave me proof, whom I
saw become more beautiful.
- 16 And as we see sparks within a flame, and as
we discern a voice within another voice, when
one is fixed and the other goes and returns:
- 19 I saw in that light other lamps moving
circularly, more and less swiftly, to the measure,

I believe, of their inner sight.

- 22 From a cold cloud winds never descended,
 whether visible or not, so swiftly that they would
 not appear impeded and slow
- 25 to whoever had seen those blessed lights
 come toward us, leaving the circling begun
 earlier among the high Seraphim;
- 28 and within those who appeared closest
 "*Hosanna*" sounded, such that I have never
 been without the yearning to hear it again.
- 31 Then one came closer to us and began,
 alone: "We are all eager to please you so that
 you may rejoice in us.
- 34 We revolve with the heavenly Principalities—
 in the same circle, with the same circling and
 the same thirst—to whom in the world you once said:
- 37 '*You who by intellection move the third heaven,*'
 and we are so full of love that, to please
 you, a little quiet will be no less sweet."
- 40 When my eyes had reverently offered
 themselves to my lady, and she had made them
 happy and sure of her,
- 43 they turned back to the light that had
 promised so much, and: "Ah, who are you?"
 was my speech, stamped with great affection.
- 46 How and how much did I see it increase with
 new gladness that was added, when I spoke, to
 its gladnesses!
- 49 Having become thus, it spoke: "The world
 had me but a little while, and had it been longer

- much evil to come would not exist.
- 52 My rejoicing keeps me hidden from you, it
radiates around me and hides me like an animal
wrapped in its silk.
- 55 You loved me well, and you surely had cause,
for if I had stayed down there I would have
shown you more than the foliage of my love.
- 58 The left bank that is washed by Rhone, once
it is mixed with Sorgue, awaited me as its lord in
time,
- 61 with that corner of Ausonia that is fortified by
Bari and Gaeta and Catona, and whence the
Tronto and the Verde pour into the sea.
- 64 Already on my brow was shining the crown
of the land the Danube waters after it leaves
behind its German banks.
- 67 And lovely Trinacria, that darkens between
Pachino and Pelorus, on the gulf that is most
beaten by Eurus,
- 70 not because of Typheus but of sulfur in the
making, would have been able to expect kings
born through me going back to Charles
and Rudolph,
- 73 if ill government, which always burdens the
hearts of the subjected peoples, had not moved
Palermo to shout: 'Die, die!'
- 76 And if my brother foresaw this, he would flee
the greedy stinginess of Catalonia, to prevent its
harming him,
- 79 for truly he or another must look ahead, so

- that no more cargo be placed on his already
laden bark.
- 82 His nature, descended frugal from a liberal
one, would need officials not concerned to store
up coins in chests."
- 85 "Because I believe that the deep joy your
speech instills in me, my lord, is seen by you,
where every good ends and begins,
- 88 as clearly as I see it, I rejoice the more; and I
rejoice that you discern it gazing into God.
- 91 You have made me happy, now illumine me,
since, speaking, you have made me wonder
how a bitter plant can spring from a sweet seed."
- 94 This I said to him, and he to me: "If I can
show you a truth, you will have your face toward
what you ask, rather than, as now, your back.
- 97 The Good that turns and sustains the
kingdom you are scaling makes its providence a
shaping power in these great bodies.
- 100 And not only the beings are foreseen in the
Mind that is perfect in itself, but they and their
wellbeing, too,
- 103 so that whatever this bow shoots forth, falls,
being ordered to a goal foreseen, like an arrow
direct-ed at its target.
- 106 If that were not the case, the effects of the
heavens you are traversing would not be art,
but ruins,
- 109 and that cannot be, if the Intelligences that
move these stars are not defective, nor the First

defective in not having made them perfect.

112 Do you wish this truth to be made brighter for
you?" And I: "Not at all; for I see it is impossible
for Nature to grow tired in what is needful."

115 Then he again: "Now tell me: would it be worse
for man on earth, if he were not a citizen?"
"Yes," I replied, "and here I ask no proof."

118 "And can he be one, if down there people do
not live differently through different callings?
No, if your master has written well for you."

121 Thus he came by deduction to this point, and
then concluded: "Therefore your different
effects must have different roots:

124 hence one is born Solon, another Xerxes,
another Melchisedech, and another the one
who, flying through the air, lost his son.

127 Circling Nature, a seal of your mortal wax,
does its art well, but it does not distinguish one
from another dwelling.

130 Hence it happens that Esau's seed departs
from Jacob, and Quirinus comes from so base a
father that he is attributed to Mars:

133 a generated nature would always take a path
like that of its generators, if divine Providence
did not intervene:

136 Now what was behind you is before you, but
so that you may know that I delight in you, I wish
a corollary to cloak you.

139 A nature that finds a fortune discordant with
itself, like any other seed outside its proper

region, always makes ill proof of itself.

142 And if the world down there would put its
mind to the foundation that Nature lays, by
building on it you would have good people.

145 But you force into religious life a man born to
gird on the sword, and you make a king of one
who prefers words:

148 therefore your course strays from the path."



CANTO 8

Solea creder lo mondo in suo periclo
che la bella Ciprigna il folle amore
raggiasse, volta nel terzo epiciclo,
per che non pur a lei faceano onore
di sacrificio e di votivo grido
le genti antiche ne l'antico errore,
ma Dione onoravano e Cupido,
quella per madre sua, questo per figlio,
e dicean ch' el sedette in grembo a Dido,
e da costei ond' io principio piglio
pigliavano il vocabol de la stella
che 'l sol vagheggia or da coppa or da ciglio.
Io non m'accorsi del salire in ella,
ma d'esservi entro mi fé assai fede
la donna mia ch' i' vidi far più bella.
E come in fiamma favilla si vede,
e come in voce voce si discerne
quand' una è ferma e altra va e riede:
vid' io in essa luce altre lucerne
muoversi in giro più e men correnti,
al modo, credo, di lor viste interne.
Di fredda nube non disceser venti,
o visibili o no, tanto festini
che non paressero impediti e lenti
a chi avesse quei lumi divini
veduti a noi venir, lasciando il giro
pria cominciato in li alti Serafini;

1

4

7

10

13

16

19

22

25

e dentro a quei che più innanzi appariro
sonava "Osanna" sì, che unque poi
di riudir non fui senza disiro.

28

Indi si fece l'un più presso a noi,
e solo incominciò: "Tutti sem presti
al tuo piacer, perché di noi ti gioi.

31

Noi ci volgiam coi Principi celesti—
d'un giro e d'un girare e d'una sete—
ai quali tu del mondo già dicesti:

34

'Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete,'
e sem sì pien d'amor che, per piacerti,
non fia men dolce un poco di quiete."

37

Poscia che li occhi miei si fuoro offerti
a la mia donna reverenti, ed essa
fatti li avea di sé contenti e certi,
rivolsersi a la luce che promessa
tanto s'avea, e: "Deh, chi siete?" fue
la voce mia di grande affetto impressa.

40

E quanto e quale vid' io lei far più
per allegrezza nova che s'accrebbe,
quando parlai, a l'allegrezze sue!

43

Così fatta, mi disse: "Il mondo m'ebbe
giù poco tempo, e se più fosse stato
molto sarà di mal che non sarebbe.

46

La mia letizia mi ti tien celato,
che mi raggia dintorno e mi nasconde
quasi animal di sua seta fasciato.

52

Assai m'amasti, e avesti ben onde,
ché s' io fossi giù stato, io ti mostrava
di mio amor più che le fronde.

55

- Quella sinistra riva che si lava 58
di Rodano, poi ch' è misto con Sorga,
per suo segnore a tempo m'aspettava,
e quel corno d'Ausonia che s'imborga 61
di Bari e di Gaeta e di Catona,
da ove Tronto e Verde in mare sgorga.
- Fulgeami già in fronte la corona 64
di quella terra che 'l Danubio riga,
poi che le ripe tedesche abbandona.
- E la bella Trinacria, che caliga 67
tra Pachino e Peloro sopra 'l golfo
che riceve da Euro maggior briga,
non per Tifeo ma per nascente solfo, 70
attesi avrebbe li suoi regi ancora,
nati per me di Carlo e di Ridolfo,
se mala signoria, che sempre accora 73
li popoli suggetti, non avesse
mosso Palermo a gridar: 'Mora, mora!'
- E se mio frate questo antivedesse, 76
l'avara povertà di Catalogna
già fuggeria perché non li offendesse,
ché veramente proveder bisogna 79
per lui, o per altrui, sì ch'a sua barca
carcata più d'incarco non si pogna.
- La sua natura, che di larga parca 82
discese, avria mestier di tal milizia
che non curasse di mettere in arca."
- "Però ch' i' credo che l'alta letizia 85
che 'l tuo parlar m'infonde, segnor mio,
là 've ogne ben si termina e s'inizia,

per te si veggia come la vegg' io,
grata m'è più, e anco quest' ho caro
perché 'l discerni rimirando in Dio.

88

Fatto m'hai lieto, e così mi fa chiaro,
poi che, parlando, a dubitar m'hai mosso
com' esser può di dolce seme amaro."

91

Questo io a lui, ed elli a me: "S' io posso
mostrarti un vero, a quel che tu dimandi
terrai lo viso come tien lo dosso.

94

Lo Ben che tutto il regno che tu scandi
volge e contenta, fa esser virtute
sua provedenza in questi corpi grandi.

97

E non pur le nature provedute
sono in la Mente ch' è da sé perfetta,
ma esse insieme con la lor salute,

100

per che quantunque quest' arco saetta
disposto cade a preveduto fine,
sì come cosa in suo segno diretta.

103

Se ciò non fosse, il ciel che tu cammine
producerebbe sì li suoi effetti
che non sarebbero arti, ma ruine,
e ciò esser non può, se li 'ntelletti
che muovon queste stelle non son manchi
e manco il primo, che non li ha perfetti.

106

Vuo' tu che questo ver più ti s'imbianchi?"
E io: "Non già, ché impossibil veggio
che la Natura in quel ch' è uopo stanchi."

109

Ond' elli ancora: "Or dì: sarebbe il peggio
per l'omo in terra, se non fosse cive?"
"Sì," rispuos' io, "e qui ragion non cheggio."

112

115

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per l'omo in terra, se non fosse cive?"
"Sì," rispuos' io, "e qui ragion non cheggio."

112

115

"E puot' ell'i esser, se giù non si vive
diversamente per diversi offici?
Non, se 'l maestro vostro ben vi scrive."

118

Sì venne deducendo infino a quici;
poscia conchiuse: "Dunque esser diverse
convien di vostri effetti le radici:
per ch'un nasce Solone e altro Serse,
altro Melchisedèch e altro quello
che volando per l'aere il figlio perse.

121

La circular natura, ch' è suggello
a la cera mortal, fa ben sua arte,
ma non distingue l'un da l'altro ostello.

124

Quinci addivien ch' Esaù si diparte
per seme da Iacòb, e vien Quirino
da sì vil padre che si rende a Marte:

127

natura generata il suo cammino
simil farebbe sempre a' generanti,
se non vincesse il proveder divino.

130

Or quel che t'era dietro t'è davanti,
ma perché sappi che ti de mi giova,
un corollario voglio che t'ammanti.

133

Sempre natura, se fortuna trova
discorde a sé, com' ogne altra semente
fuor di sua regiòn, fa mala prova.

136

E se 'l mondo là giù ponesse mente
al fondamento che Natura pone,
seguendo lui avria buona la gente.

139

Ma voi torcete a la religione
tal che fia nato a cignersi la spada,
e fate re di tal ch' è da sermone,

142

145

onde la traccia vostra è fuor di strada."

148

NOTES

1–12. The world used ... at his brow: Dante opens his account of the third planet with an introduction that distinguishes his own scientific astrological views, which will come increasingly to expression, from ancient pagan superstitions, three aspects of which are condemned: (1) the notion that the third planet was the goddess Aphrodite/Venus herself ("the lovely Cyprian"; lines 1–3 and 10–12); (2) the notion that the power of Aphrodite/Venus was irresistible (lines 1–3); and (3) the general system of pagan polytheism (lines 4–9). Cf. the closely related passage in 4.61–63.

1–3. the lovely Cyprian ... the third epicycle: Aphrodite/Venus, according to one pagan myth, was born (of Zeus and Dione) near Cyprus, her home and the center of her cult.

1. to its peril: That is, the false beliefs of paganism are displeasing to God (Ex. 20.2–5, 34.12–17) and lead to evil practices (cf. Rom. 1.18–32).

2–3. radiated mad desire: "Mad desire" (the *fols amors* of the troubadors; see *Purg.* 26.143: "Consiros vei la pasada *folor*" [with chagrin I view my past *madness*]) signifies uncontrollable sensual desire (cf. *Inf.* 5.38–39: "I peccator carnali, / che la ragion sommettono al talento" [the carnal sinners, who subject their reason to their lust]). Dante's point is that Venus, "lo bel pianeto che d'amar conforta" [the lovely planet that strengthens us to love] (*Purg.* 1.19), strengthens all forms of love, not merely the sensual (but see 9.32–36 and 95–105, with notes); in the present canto the main focus will be the love that should unite society.

2. radiated: *Conv.* 2.6.9 (see the note to lines 34–49) explains that the influence of all the planets is conveyed downward in the rays of their light (cf. Litt 1963, Kay 1994). The term also suggests the idea that the influence of the planets is irresistible (for Dante's refutation of that view, current also in his day, see *Purg.* 16.73–78).

3. the third epicycle: This is the only appearance of this Ptolemaic term in the entire *Comedy* (that of Venus is briefly discussed in *Conv.* 2.3.16, where Dante seems to think of it as a physical sphere). The question of the physical basis of the Ptolemaic mathematics of planetary movements was subject to voluminous debate (see Grant 1994, Lerner 2008).

4–12. those ancient ... woos the sun: The ancients gave this planet the name of the Cyprian, i.e. "Venus." "Ancient error" (line 6) refers to the entire system of ancient polytheism, especially that of the Hellenistic period, according to which the planets themselves were irresistible gods (rather than physical bodies governed by angelic "intelligences," the view Dante shared with most of his educated contemporaries, whether Christians, Muslims, or Jews).

5. sacrifice and votive cry: Sacrifice and ritual invocation were regular parts of the liturgy

in honor of the Olympians.

9. that he sat on Dido's lap: At the banquet in honor of Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.655–756), the irresistible Venus ensures that Dido will fall hopelessly in love with Aeneas by requiring Cupid to assume the form of Aeneas's young son Ascanius and sit on her lap, instilling "hidden fire" (*Aen.* 1.688; the incident is mentioned also in *Conv.* 2.5.14 as exemplifying the pagan myth of Cupid as the son of Venus):

reginam petit. haec oculis, haec pectore toto
haeret et interdum gremio foveat inscia Dido
insidat quantus miserae deus.

[he seeks out the queen; she with her eyes, with her entire breast
clings to him, Dido often clasps him to her bosom, unknowing,
wretched one, how great a god is laying siege to her] (*Aen.* 1.717–19).

Along with his suggestions about the fourth *Eclogue* (see *Purgatorio* Additional Note 14), this identification of Vergil's mythology with pagan superstition is by implication one of Dante's severest criticisms of him.

On Dido, cf. *Inf.* 5.61–62 and 85, and *Par.* 9.97–98. Dante entirely ignores the fact that it was common knowledge that the story of Aeneas's affair with Dido was invented by Vergil and that the ancient historians, followed by Augustine (whom Dante had surely read) and other patristic writers, denied that the two were contemporaries and regarded the real Dido as heroically chaste.

10–12. from her from whom ... now at his brow:¹ That is, the ancient pagans named the third planet after the goddess of their belief ("the lovely Cyprian"), supposing her to be the planet itself. In indicating that the cults of Venus, Dione, and Cupid predated the naming of the planet, Dante seems to have understood that the conflation of the traditional myths with astrological religion was a Hellenistic—i.e. late—development (it was beginning in Plato's time; see *Timaeus* 38a–d, Vlastos 1975).

The plain sense here is that the poet "take[s his] beginning" (line 10) not from the planet but *from the goddess*, from her in whom the pagans believed "to their peril." The idea that "her from whom," etc. refers to the planet (Dunbar 1929, Pézard) is a drastic misconstruction of the passage, which states: "The pagans took the name of the planet from the Cyprian, the [false] goddess I mentioned when I began this canto." The notion that Dante could attribute his existential "beginning" to the goddess is of course senseless (cf. Muscetta in *LDS*). There is an emphasis on rhetorical procedure here that demands a certain sharpness of attention from the reader (note the verb *pigliare* [to take] in lines 10 and 11, in both cases referring to the use of words); it is appropriate to both themes, astrology and rhetoric, and it may well be related to *Convivio* 2 (cf. notes on lines 34–49 and 147, and Additional Note 13). (For the question of the "lord"—the dominant influence—of Dante's horoscope, see notes to 22.112–23, Chapter 2 of Durling/Martinez 1990, Additional Note 12.) Dante usually refers to the planets by periphrasis, avoiding the ordinary pagan names except to condemn them (as here and in 4.61–

63; cf. 5.93–99; 10.28–39; 14.82; 18.28–33, 61–72; 21.4–15; and 29.1; “Jove” in 18.95 is an exception).

11–12. the star that ... now at his brow: In modern terminology, the smallness of the orbits of Mercury and Venus (smaller than the earth’s orbit and thus within it) means that, seen from earth, they are always close to the sun and often hidden by its rays. Seen from earth, Mercury’s maximum angular distance from the sun is $30^{\circ} 26'$, which means it is rarely visible. Venus’s is 47° ; when it is to the west of the sun, Venus rises before the sun as the morning star, wooing the sun from in front (“at his brow”); when to the east, Venus sets after the sun as the evening star, wooing the sun from behind (“at his nape”). (Some take “il sol” [the sun] to be the grammatical subject of “vagheggia” [woos, loves, dreams of]; this is unlikely, since it is Venus that does the conspicuous circling; cf. 22.142–44.)

13–15. I did not perceive ... more beautiful: That Beatrice’s increased beauty is the sign of a further ascent will happen repeatedly, as in 5.94–99.

16–30. And as we see ... to hear it again: Like Justinian’s features, the features of the souls encountered from now on will be hidden by the brightness of their gladness, which depends on the intensity of their vision (line 21). “That light” (line 19) may seem to be without antecedent, and its reference is in fact ambiguous. The nearest referent would be Beatrice’s increased beauty (lines 13–15), naturally expressed as light (as in 5.94–96; cf. lines 137–38, with note); the other possibility is the light of the planet itself (“the star,” line 11; again, cf. 5.94–99).

19–21. I saw in that ... their inner sight: We take Dante’s “in giro” [circling] to indicate that each soul moves in its own particular circle, since their movements differ in velocity. Beginning with the cantos of the sun, the souls will be fully coordinated in symbolic patterns (see Ferrante 1984); the souls in Venus anticipate the full coordination of the theologians in the sun but do not achieve it (cf. the notes to lines 31–148 and 76–84).

22–32. From a cold cloud ... and began, alone: As in the moon and Mercury, the souls gather to meet the pilgrim and Beatrice, leaving their previous dancing, without any particular order, and one soul becomes the chief interlocutor. Note the correlation of this passage with the similes of lines 16–19 (sight—fire and sparks; and hearing—polyphony); here: sight—cold winds coming from a cloud (cf. *Purg.* 5.37–42, a departure compared with hot winds); and hearing—the singing of “Hosanna.”

26–27. leaving the circling ... high Seraphim: One notes the complexity of what is asserted about the dance of these souls: (1) in the Empyrean, they seem to be integrated into the universal dance of Heaven, though they are particularly associated with the order of Principalities (lines 34–36); the Seraphim, the highest order, seem here to stand for all the angels; in other words, although associated with the third lowest order, these souls share essentially the same beatitude with all the blessed; (2) descending to meet the pilgrim, they continue to circle (lines 19–21); (3) they gather to meet the pilgrim and Beatrice.

29. Hosanna: For this joyous acclamation of the advent of a king, see the note to *Purg.* 29.51.

31–148. Then one came ... from the path: The rest of the canto is devoted to the encounter with Carlo Martello, the eldest son of Charles II of Anjou (see the notes to 6.103–11, *Purg.* 20.79–84). When his father was captured during the war of the Sicilian Vespers in 1284, while Charles I of Anjou was still alive, Carlo Martello was declared heir to the throne with full privileges; when Charles I died (January 1285), Carlo Martello governed the Kingdom of Naples (now southern Italy, Sicily having been lost) with an advisory Council, Charles II being still a prisoner; he was greatly favored by successive popes, who arranged his marriage (1287) with Clemenza, daughter of Rudolph of Hapsburg. In 1289 his father was provisionally released by the Aragonese, on condition that his three younger sons (Roberto, Ludovico, and Federico) replace him in Aragon as hostages; Carlo Martello governed again for a longer period (1289–94) while his father was involved in prolonged negotiations in France for his permanent release. During this period Carlo Martello took an increasingly active part in governing and reorganizing the kingdom, visiting each part of it. In 1290 the throne of Hungary became vacant, and after his mother, Marie of Hungary, renounced her claim (1292), Carlo Martello was formally recognized as king.

In 1294 Charles II was finally able to resume the throne in Naples, and he made a festive return via northern Italy, including a visit to Florence, where Carlo Martello came to meet him. The festivities in Florence lasted three weeks; this is the only occasion on which Carlo Martello and Dante could have met, and, in order to explain their nascent friendship (lines 55–57), it has been suggested that Dante was a member of the welcoming commission, and that "Voi ch'intendendo" (see line 34, with note) was performed before Carlo Martello. Just at the peak of his fortunes, universally beloved and regarded as sure to be a wise and capable monarch (he is the only Capetian or Angevin whom Dante praises), Carlo Martello, along with his wife, died of an unidentified illness in August 1295. (The rumor that circulated at the time, that the two had been poisoned at the instigation of Carlo's younger brother Robert—see lines 74–84—is regarded as without foundation by modern historians, as it was by Dante.)

Carlo Martello is presented by Dante as one whose life was especially influenced by the planet Venus, both in his affectionate nature and his special gifts for achieving social harmony, but also in relation to his early death; as Peters 1991 observes, drawing on *Convivio* 4 and Nardi 1967a, Venus was thought to govern the stage of human life called *adolescentia*—from birth, or sometimes from age 9, to age 25—normally followed by *iumentus* [youth], governed by the sun. His development arrested by death, Carlo Martello never reaches full maturity. He, too, is a kind of incipient sun (cf. the notes to lines 19–21, 55–57, and 76–84), a chief instance of eclipse by the shadow of mortality.

34–39. We revolve ... no less sweet: The canzone whose first line is quoted here, "Voi ch'intendendo il terzo ciel movete," is the first of the three canzoni (out of the fourteen originally planned) discussed in the *Convivio*. In Book 2, on this canzone (according to the prose commentary, it is addressed to the angelic order of "Thrones," which when he wrote it he took to govern the third heaven; see 28.130–37, with notes), Dante discusses the general

theme of the influence of the planets and their movers and develops an extended analogy between the nine heavens and the nine sciences (the heaven of Venus, the main focus there, is correlated with the science of rhetoric, 2.13–14). The relation of this passage in the *Convivio* with the *Paradiso* has not been sufficiently investigated (again, see Additional Note 13).

34–37. We revolve with ... the third heaven: Dante's self-correction here (see previous note, and cf. 28.130–35, with note) is phrased in such a way as to suggest that the address was acceptable to the actual "movers," the Principalities, in spite of the poet's mistake, which is not mentioned.

49–51. The world ... would not exist: See the note to lines 31–148. That much evil resulted from Carlo Martello's early death at twenty-five will be touched on later (notably in lines 76–84 and in 9.1–6); for the Virgilian subtext—Marcellus—see *Purg.* 30.20, with note. The providential provision of well-being to all creation (especially to man) is a basic theme of the canto and presents Dante with a major intellectual challenge.

52–54. My rejoicing ... wrapped in its silk: The striking comparison of the radiance of the soul's gladness with the cocoon of the silkworm (cf. the note to lines 16–21) contains an allusion to its metamorphosis (see *Purg.* 10.121–29, with note).

55–57. You loved me well ... foliage of my love: This passage is the only evidence of the nascent friendship between Dante and Carlo Martello, who was five or six years younger than the poet. "You surely had cause" (line 55) must mean that Dante was already able, from their initial encounters, to foresee that Carlo Martello would express his growing affection for him by liberal support (material or moral or both). The analogy of a tree's first putting forth leaves and then bearing fruit alludes to the cycle of the seasons and the dependence of all earthly fruitfulness on the heavenly bodies, especially the sun: the fruit foreseen could not ripen to its natural season of harvest (see the note to lines 76–84).

58–75. The left bank ... shout: Die, die: Carlo Martello now identifies himself by enumerating the realms to which he was rightful heir: Provence (lines 58–60), the Kingdom of Naples (lines 61–63), Hungary (lines 64–66), and Sicily (lines 67–75).

58–60. The left bank ... its lord in time: The county of Provence, the dowry of Carlo Martello's grandmother Béatriz, youngest daughter of count Raymond Berenguer V (see 6.127–42, with notes). The Rhone was the boundary dividing Provence on the west from Languedoc; the northern boundary was the river Sorgue, which flows into the Rhone just above Avignon. Provence, as well as the Kingdom of Naples, would have been his had he lived longer.

61–63. and that corner ... pour into the sea: The part of southern Italy (Ausonia) bounded on the north by the rivers Tronto (flowing into the Adriatic) and Verde (flowing into the Tyrrhenian Sea; see the notes to *Purg.* 3.124–32; for both, see the map on p. 187): in other words, the Kingdom of Naples. The cities mentioned represent the vertices of a triangle roughly delineating the kingdom: Bari toward the heel of the boot, on the Adriatic; Gaeta

above Naples on the Tyrrhenian; and Catona (an important port) near Reggio Calabria on the Strait of Messina.

64–66. Already on my brow ... German banks: Carlo Martello had become king of Hungary, whose western boundary was close to Vienna, in 1292. From its source in the Bavarian Alps, the Danube flows through German-speaking lands until after Vienna. Hungary was the only portion of his extensive inheritance of which Carlo Martello actually took possession. (Note the allusion to sunlike splendor in the mention of the crown.)

67–75. And lovely Trinacria ... to shout: Die, die: Along with his offspring, grandchildren of Charles II of Anjou and Rudolph of Hapsburg, Carlo Martello could rightfully have expected to inherit Sicily (Trinacria [Three-pointed land] was the Greek name of the island—cf. the triangular description of the kingdom in lines 61–63), but for the tyranny of his grandfather Charles I (see the notes to lines 73–75, 31–148, and 9.1–6)—another instance of the frustration of natural expectation.

67–70. Trinacria, that ... sulfur in the making: Pachino and Pelorus are the two promontories at the southern and northern ends, respectively, of the eastern coast of Sicily (thus two of the three points of the triangle, the third being at Marsala on the west), which runs almost due north and south and hence is particularly buffeted by the east wind, Eurus; between them the sky is darkened by smoke from Mount Etna, not due, as Greco-Roman mythology had it, to the punishment of the Titan Typhoeus for his rebellion against the gods (cf. the famous passage describing Etna in eruption, *Aen.* 3.570–84), but by natural causes, supposed in the Middle Ages to be sulfur-producing fires.

73–75. if ill government ... to shout: Die, die: Sicily was ruled by Charles I of Anjou after his victories over Manfred and Conradino (see *Purg.* 3.113–32 and 20.67–69, with notes), with oppressive harshness and avarice. The popular revolt against his “ill government” (line 73) began with the so-called “Sicilian Vespers” in Palermo on Easter Monday, 1282. “Mora, mora!” [let him die, die], the slogan reportedly shouted by the mob, is a third-person subjunctive with the implied subject “any Frenchman.” The Sicilians invited Pedro III of Aragon (the kings of which ruled also over Catalonia) to take the throne of Sicily, and the Angevins never regained control there.

76–84. And if my brother ... coins in chests: Carlo Martello refers to his younger brother, Robert of Anjou, who succeeded Charles II in 1304 as ruler of Provence and the Kingdom of Naples. The shadow of the earth prevents both potential suns, Carlo Martello and Robert, from realizing the ideal generosity of a ruler: **Carlo possesses the requisite qualities and motives but is eclipsed by death, and Robert falls short because of stinginess and avarice** (Dante clearly has both full and partial eclipses of the sun in mind; for the association of avarice with the element earth, see *Inf.* 7.22–33, and *Purg.* 19.115–26, with notes, and cf. 7.91–93 and 112–17). This passage on the liberality with which kings should reign, the quality that, along with justice, most justifies the analogy with the sun, occupies the exact midpoint of the canto (as the sun is central among the planets) and leads directly to the question dominating

the rest of the canto.

79–84. for truly he ... coins in chest: The “bark” is the body of his ship of state, i.e., his subjects, who are already burdened with heavy “cargo”—i.e., taxation. Or the “bark” is possibly Robert himself, who has already accumulated enough reproaches against him. If he cannot understand this danger himself, because of his frugality, innate or acquired, he needs wiser counselors, ones not primarily concerned with storing up treasure. The term *milizia*, which we render as “officials,” means properly “knighthood” or “army” (cf. 15.140); it connotes qualities diametrically opposed to avarice and thus here has considerable ironic force.

82–83. His nature ... from a liberal one: Since both Charles I and Charles II of Anjou are identified by Dante as extremely avaricious (see *Purg.* 20.61–69 and 79–84), it is difficult to follow Dante here. Whose is the “liberal” nature from whom Robert’s “frugal” one has descended? Carlo Martello would seem a likelier candidate for being the genetic sport. In fact, it is probable that Dante has here engaged in one of his frequent tricks at the expense of the careless reader (see Durling 2001a and Durling 2003; lines 1–12 of this canto provide another instance): we are to understand that Robert of Anjou is *not* an instance of the heavens’ overriding heredity, but that Carlo Martello is just that.

85–93. Because I believe ... a sweet seed: The pilgrim’s joyous reaction to Carlo Martello’s account of himself and his brother (actually tragic in its implications) serves to reestablish the tone of lines 31–54; he then raises the question of exceptions to heredity, which occupies the rest of the canto (and which might more pertinently be phrased, “How can a sweet plant spring from a sour seed?”).

94–148. and he to me ... strays from the path: The remainder of the canto falls into two parts, Carlo Martello’s main argument (lines 94–137) and his addition of a “corollary” (lines 138–48), a supplementary conclusion implied by the main argument.

94–136. If I can show ... is before you: This passage is one of Dante’s most interesting and important discussions of astrology; it asserts that the influence of the heavens (i.e., the planets and fixed stars) on the development of the human fetus is stronger than heredity, and that in fact it was ordained by Providence precisely in order to override heredity and thus serve the needs of human society. It is thus one of the most fundamental and powerful instruments of God’s government of the world, which, as the Bible repeatedly teaches (as in Ps. 8.6–8; cf. *De civ. Dei* 12.20–24 and 22.1), was created in order to serve man, its crown.

94–96. If I can show ... as now, your back: In his brief introduction (recalled in line 136), Carlo Martello uses a traditional figure for lack of understanding (or for repression; see *Confessions* 8.7.16): having one’s back toward the truth, rather than one’s eyes (cf. *Purg.* 22.67–69, and *Par.* 28.4–10, with note).

97–136. The Good that turns ... is before you: Carlo Martello’s explanation has several stages: (1a) The heavenly bodies are the direct instruments of God’s government of the

world, which provides for the well-being of creatures as well as for their existence; (1b) the operations of the heavenly bodies must therefore be unerring (lines 97–111); (2a) man is naturally a social being (lines 115–17); (2b) the functioning of society depends on the division of duties and thus on a diversity of innate abilities (lines 118–26); (3a) the influence of the heavenly bodies is required to ensure this diversity, since heredity would always produce sons identical with their fathers, but (3b) the heavenly bodies do not take into account the social classes into which the gifted will be born (lines 127–35). That sexual reproduction, in all species, always produces genetically unique offspring is a modern realization. (On Dante's mainly Aristotelian views of reproduction, see *Purgatorio* Additional Note 11.)

97–111. The Good that turns ... made them perfect: The first phase of the argument, accepted as self-evident by the pilgrim. Note the procedure, fundamental to the *Paradiso*, of reasoning deductively, downward from general propositions, often regarding higher causes, as in 2.106–48. The optimistic view taken here will be modified later (see 13.52–78, and see the notes to lines 127–35, 139–41 below).

97–99. The Good that turns ... in these great bodies: The "Good" is God, of course; the term *virtute* [from Latin *virtus*, in modern Italian *virtù*; we translate it here as "shaping power"] in reference to God usually refers to his exercise of *creative* power, usually identified with the second Person of the Trinity (for Dante's use of the term, see Chapter 4 of Durling/Martinez 1990).

103–5. whatever this bow ... directed at its target: In this metaphor, the "bow" is the power of the heavens, wielded by God, the imagined archer; the "arrow" is some particular influence of the heavens on the sublunar; the "target" is an intention in the mind of God, his aim.

106–11. If that were not ... made them perfect: The effects of Nature (in the sense of *natura naturans*, the term normally refers to the heavenly bodies, as here and below) cannot be imperfect (let alone "ruin"), since they are produced by God acting through things he directly created (see 7.134–38, with notes). The "Intelligences" are the angelic movers of the spheres; the "First" is God: they cannot be defective.

112–14. Do you wish ... what is needful: Conclusion of the first phase of Carlo Martello's argument, with the pilgrim accepting the reasoning as self-evident.

115–26. Then he again ... lost his son: The second phase of the argument, signaled by "or" [now], departing from a further set of axioms: man is a social being (Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2: "Man is by nature a political animal"), and society requires division of duties and therefore diversity of innate abilities.

118–20. And can he be one ... written well for you: Aristotle ("the master of those who know," *Inf.* 4.131), in *Politics* 1.3–13, had categorized the members of society by sex and by their status as free or slave. Free men were superior to both women (by nature bearers of

children) and slaves (by nature instruments of their masters); the functions of free citizens were to govern and to make war; physical work was the function of slaves and artisans. Aristotle implicitly recognized the need for different productive activities but had nothing like the modern notion of the division of labor, so clearly anticipated by Dante. For Dante's remarkably original account in *DVE* 1.7 of the confusion of tongues—Gen. 11.1–9—as following the division of labor among the builders of the tower of Babel, see Mengaldo's notes in *Opere minori*, vol. 2 (and cf. Durling 1992).

121–26. Thus he came ... lost his son: The “different effects” are the skilled applications of abilities that have innate “roots.” Solon, Xerxes, Melchisedek [the name means literally, “just king”], and Daedalus (who, flying, “lost his son,” Icarus) stand, respectively, for those gifted as law givers, military commanders, righteous kings, and artists/inventors. Dante knew of Solon and Xerxes from Orosius, Melchisedek from the Bible (Gen. 14.18–20), and Daedalus from Vergil (*Aen.* 6.14–33) and Ovid (*Met.* 8.183–235).

127–35. Circling Nature ... did not intervene: The third stage in the argument: the overriding function of astrological influences in providing for the needed diversity of innate abilities. The argument is paradoxical, for by this account it seems that the intervention of Providence does produce ruins—historical disasters like the Capetians, Angevins, and other base or incompetent rulers, as indicated in lines 139–48.

127–28. Circling Nature ... mortal wax: The heavenly bodies stamp all mortal bodies as seal stamps its form on molten wax (again, see 7.134–38 and Additional Note 12).

128–32. it does not distinguish ... attributed to Mars: God's Providence, acting through the Intelligences and the heavenly bodies, acts without aiming at particular individuals or social classes; this seems derived from the traditional astrological idea that the light of the stars and planets operates along lines of sight.

130–32. Hence it happens ... attributed to Mars: According to Gen. 25.21–26, the twins Esau and Jacob struggled against each other in the womb; Esau was born first, covered with red hair, and Jacob came holding Esau's heel; later (Gen. 25.29–34) Esau sold his rights as firstborn to Jacob for a dish of lentils; the tradition regarded Jacob as just, and Esau as violently unjust. According to Livy (1.4), Quirinus (Romulus) was born to Rhea Silvia, a Vestal (vowed to eternal virginity) who claimed—falsely, in Livy's and Dante's views—that the father was the god Mars (cf. the notes to lines 133–35 and 6.40–42).

133–35. a generated nature ... did not intervene:² In asserting that the heavens override heredity, Dante accepts a major premise of traditional astrology; he clearly accepts the notion of meaningful individual horoscopes (see Additional Note 12); for his view of his own horoscope, (see 22.112–23, with note; Durling and Martinez 1990; and Additional Note 14). Since the form of the term *generante* [generator] does not vary with gender, “generanti” (line 134) conceivably refers to both parents (see *Purg.* 25.37–51, *Par.* 3.120).

136. Now what was behind you is before you: Note the echo of lines 94–96.

137–38: that you may know ... corollary to cloak you: The term *corollary* [*corollarium*, from *corolla*, diminutive of *corona*, “crown”] originally denoted a supplementary prize given to the winner of an athletic contest (see the note to *Purg.* 28.136, the only other appearance of this word in the *Comedy*). As Maierù (s.v. “Corollario” in *ED*) observes, the metaphor of the “mantle” [*manto*] refers to the light radiated by the blessed (cf. lines 52–54; for the clothing metaphor, see 14.37–58 and 25.88–96, with notes). Carlo Martello means that this evidence of his love will cause the pilgrim gladness, and thus increase the light that he (the pilgrim) emits.

139–41. A nature that finds ... proof of itself: The term *fortune* is used here to mean “circumstances” or “lot.” That the stars do not “distinguish one from another dwelling” brings it about that children may have innate gifts inconsistent with their social class, and if, because of this, their gifts are not fostered, their potentialities will not be fulfilled; like plants, human beings require the appropriate soil and cultivation.

142–48. if the world down there ... strays from the path: Dante seems to envisage a society that would pay close attention to the natural gifts of children and recognize and foster rather than thwart them. Although he may not have thought out its full implications, this doctrine (a version of “la carrière ouverte aux talents,” long before Napoleon) would justify an extreme degree of social mobility.

145–48. But you force ... from the path: Dante offers no explanation for such errors; presumably they would be due to rigid class distinctions and the power of heads of families (cf. 3.103–8). The tradition has long seen a reference here to King Robert of Naples, famous for writing sermons (though *sermo* can mean “speech” more broadly), since lines 79–84 have occasioned the entire discussion. Some see in lines 145–46 a reference to Robert’s younger brother Ludovico, a Franciscan and bishop of Toulouse, canonized by John XXII in 1317, but he had no knightly inclinations.



Figure 6. Italy, ca. 1300



CANTO 9

Venus: Charles Martel, continued—Cunizza d'Este—prophecy about Romagna—Folquet of Marseilles—Rahab—denunciation of the florin

- 1 After your Charles, beautiful Clémence, had
enlightened me, he narrated the betrayals that
his seed was to undergo,
- 4 but he said: "Be silent and let the years pass,"
so that I can say only that deserved weeping will
follow the wrongs you suffer.
- 7 And already the life of that holy light had
turned back to the Sun that fills it, as to the
Good that is sufficient to everything.
- 10 Ah, deluded souls, wicked creatures who
twist your hearts away from such a good,
directing your faces toward emptiness!
- 13 And behold, another of those splendors came
toward me and signified with its brightness its
desire to please me.
- 16 Beatrice's eyes, fixed upon me as before,
made me certain of sweet assent to my desire.
- 19 "Ah, give my desire quick recompense,
blessed spirit," I said, "and prove that what I
think I can reflect in you!"

- 22 Therefore the light that was still unknown to
me, from its own depths, where it earlier had been
singing, answered like one rejoicing to do good:
- 25 "In the part of the degenerate Italian land that
lies between Rialto and the springs of Brenta
and of Piave,
- 28 a hill rises up, and it does not become very
high, from which there once came down a
blazing torch that made a great assault upon
the countryside.
- 31 From one root both it and I were born:
Cunizza I was called, and here my brightness
shines because the light of this star overcame me,
- 34 but joyfully I forgive myself the cause of my
fate, and it does not harm me, though perhaps
that would seem difficult to your common folk.
- 37 Of this luminous dear jewel of our heaven
that is closest to me, great fame remained on
earth, and before it will die,
- 40 the century that turns this year will enfive
itself: see how one should strive to be excellent,
so that a second life is left behind by the first.
- 43 To this no thought is given by the present
herd enclosed by Tagliamento and Adige, nor,
though beaten, do they yet repent,
- 46 but soon will it come to pass that Padova will
stain in the swamp the water that bathes Vicenza,
because its people are so unripe to their duty,
- 49 and where Sile and Cagnano come together,
there is one who lords it and goes with head held

- high, and already they make the web to snare him.
- 52 Feltro will yet weep for the fault of its wicked
shepherd, a filthier than any yet judged worthy
of a dungeon.
- 55 The vat would be large indeed that could
receive, and weary would he be who would
weigh, ounce by ounce, the Ferrarese blood
- 58 that this generous priest will give over to
prove he is a Guelph, and such gifts will
conform to the ways of that land.
- 61 Above there are mirrors, you call them
Thrones, and from them God's judging shines to
us, and so such talk seems good to us."
- 64 Here she fell silent, and it seemed to me she
turned to something else, taking her place in the
wheel where she had been before.
- 67 The other joy, already known to me as
precious, became in my sight like a pure ruby in
the sun.
- 70 By rejoicing up there they gain in brightness,
as here we smile, but down below, shades
become as dark to sight as the mind is wicked.
- 73 "God sees all things, and your sight so inhimself," I said, "O blessed spirit, that no desire
can flee from you.
- 76 Therefore your voice, that delights Heaven
always, with the singing of those devout fires
that make of their six wings their robes,
- 79 why does it not fulfill my desires? Surely I
would not wait for your asking, if I could inyou

myself as you inme yourself."

- 82 "The largest valley in which water can
spread," began its words then, "after the ocean
that garlands the dry land,
- 85 between discordant shores goes against the
sun so far that it has its meridian where formerly
its horizon was.
- 88 I was a dweller on the shore of that valley
between Ebro and Magra, whose short course
parts the Genovese from the Tuscan.
- 91 Bougie has almost the same sunset and
sunrise with the city I was from, that once made
the port warm with its blood.
- 94 Folquet those people called me who knew my
name, and this heaven is stamped by me, as I
was by it,
- 97 for the daughter of Belus, wronging both
Sichaeus and Creusa, did not burn more than I,
as long as it befitted my hairs,
- 100 nor that Rhodopea who was deceived by Demo-
phoön, nor Alcides when he held Iole in his heart.
- 103 Not for that do we repent here, but we laugh,
not for the guilt, which comes no longer to mind,
but for the Worth that ordained and foresaw.
- 106 Here we marvel at the art that so much love
adorns, and we discern the Good on account of
which the world above is the lathe for the world
below.
- 109 But so that you may carry off, fulfilled, all the
desires born in this sphere, I must proceed still

further.

- 112 You wish to know who is in this light here
beside me that sparkles as if it were a sunbeam
in pure water.
- 115 Know, then, that within it Rahab finds her
peace, and, joined with our order, she is its
highest seal.
- 118 Into this heaven, where the shadow of
your world shrinks to a point, she was taken
up before any other soul in the triumph
of Christ.
- 121 Fitting indeed it was to leave her in one of the
heavens as a palm of the great victory acquired
by his two palms,
- 124 because she aided Joshua's first victory in the
Holy Land, which touches the pope's memory
but little.
- 127 Your city, planted by him who first turned his
back on his Maker and whose envy is so much
bewailed,
- 130 brings forth and spreads the cursed flower
that leads the sheep and lambs astray, since it
has made a wolf of the shepherd.
- 133 For this the Gospel and the great Doctors are
forgotten, and only the Decretals are studied, as
their margins show.
- 136 To this the pope and cardinals attend; their
thoughts go not to Nazareth, where Gabriel
opened his wings.
- 139 But Vatican and the other noble parts of

Rome, cemetery of the army that followed Peter,

142 will soon be freed from such adultery."



CANTO 9

Da poi che Carlo tuo, bella Clemenza,
m'ebbe chiarito, mi narrò li 'nganni
che ricever dovea la sua semenza,
ma disse: "Taci, e lascia muover li anni,"
sì ch' io non posso dir se non che pianto
giusto verrà di retro ai vostri danni.

E già la vita di quel lume santo
rivolta s'era al Sol cche la riempie
come quel ben ch' a ogne cosa è tanto.

Ahi anime ingannate e fatture empie
che da sì fatto ben torcete i cuori,
drizzando in vanità le vostre tempie!

Ed ecco un altro di quelli splendori
ver' me si fece, e 'l suo voler piacermi
significava nel chiarir di fori.

Li occhi di Béatrice, ch'eran fermi
sovra me come pria, di caro assenso
al mio disio certificato fermi.

"Deh, metti al mio voler tosto compenso,
beato spirto," dissi, "e fammi prova
ch' i' possa in te refletter quel ch' io penso!"

Onde la luce che m'era ancor nova
del suo profondo, ond' ella pria cantava,
seguette come a cui di ben far giova:

"In quella parte de la terra prava
italica che siede tra Rialto
e le fontane di Brenta e di Piava,

1

4

7

10

13

16

19

22

25

si leva un colle, e non surge molt' alto,
là onde scese già una facella
che fece a la contrada un grande assalto.

28

D'una radice nacqui e io ed ella:
Cunizza fui chiamata, e qui refulgo
perché mi vinse il lume d'esta stella,
ma lietamente a me medesma indulgo
la cagion di mia sorte, e non mi noia,
che parria forse forte al vostro vulgo.

31

Di questa luculenta e cara gioia
del nostro cielo che più m'è propinqua
grande fama rimase, e pria che moia,
questo centesimo anno ancor s'incinqua:
vedi se far si dee l'omo eccellente,
sì ch'altra vita la prima relinqua.

34

E ciò non pensa la turba presente
che Tagliamento e Adice richiude,
né per esser battuta ancor si pente,
ma tosto fia che Padova al palude
cangerà l'acqua che Vincenza bagna,
per essere al dover le genti crude,
e dove Sile e Cagnan s'accompagna
tal signoreggia e va con la testa alta,
che già per lui carpir si fa la ragna.

40

43

Piangerà Feltro ancora la difalta
de l'empio suo pastor, che sarà sconcia
sì, che per simil non s'entrò in malta.
Troppo sarebbe larga la bigoncia
che ricevesse il sangue ferrarese,
e stanco chi 'l pesasse a oncia a oncia,

46

49

52

55

che donerà questo prete cortese
per mostrarsi di parte; e cotai doni
conformi fieno al viver del paese.

58

Sù sono specchi, voi dicete Troni,
onde refulge a noi Dio giudicante,
sì che questi parlar ne paion buoni."

61

Qui si tacette, e fecemi sembiante
che fosse ad altro volta, per la rota
in che si mise com' era davante.

64

L'altra letizia, che m'era già nota
per cara cosa, mi si fece in vista
qual fin balasso in che lo sol percuota.

67

Per letiziar là sù fulgor s'acquista,
sì come riso qui, ma giù s'abbuia
l'ombra di fuor, come la mente trista.

70

"Dio vede tutto, e tuo veder s'inluia,"
diss' io, "beato spirto, sì che nulla
voglia di sé a te puot' esser fua.

73

Dunque la voce tua, che 'l Ciel trastulla
sempre col canto di quei fochi pii
che di sei ali facen la coculla,
perché non satisface a' miei disii?

76

Già non attendere' io tua dimanda,
s'io m'intuassi, come tu t'inmii."

79

"La maggior valle in che l'acqua si spanda,"
incominciaro allor le sue parole,
"fuor di quel mar che la terra inghirlanda,
tra 'discordanti liti contra 'l sole
tanto sen va che fa meridiano
là dove l'orizzonte pria far suole.

82

85

Di quella valle fu' io litorano
tra Ebro e Macra, che per cammin corto
parte lo Genovese dal Toscano.

Ad un occaso quasi e ad un orto
Buggea siede e la terra ond' io fui,
che fé del sangue suo già caldo il porto.

Folco mi disse quella gente a cui
fu noto il nome mio, e questo cielo
di me s'imprenta com' io fe' di lui,

ché più non arse la figlia di Belo,
noiando e a Sicheo e a Creusa,
di me, infin che si convenne al pelo,
né quella Rodopëa che delusa
fu da Demofoonte, né Alcide
quando Iole nel core ebbe rinchiusa.

Non però qui si pente, ma si ride,
non de la colpa, ch'a mente non torna,
ma del Valor ch'ordinò e provide.

Qui si rimira ne l'arte ch'addorna
cotanto affetto, e discernesi 'l bene
per che 'l mondo di sù quel di giù torna.

Ma perché tutte le tue voglie piene
ten porti che son nate in questa spera,
procedere ancor oltre mi conviene.

Tu vuo' saper chi è in questa lumera
che qui appresso me così scintilla
come raggio di sole in acqua mera.

Or sappi che là entro si tranquilla
Raàb, e a nostr' ordine congiunta
di lei nel sommo grado si sigilla.

88

91

94

97

100

103

106

109

112

115

Da questo cielo, in cui l'ombra s'appunta
che 'l vostro mondo face, pria ch' altr' alma
del triunfo di Cristo fu assunta.

118

Ben si convenne lei lasciar per palma
in alcun cielo de l'alta vittoria
che s'acquistò con l'una e l'altra palma,
perch' ella favorò la prima gloria
di losüè in su la Terra Santa,
che poco tocca al papa la memoria.

121

La tua città, che di colui è pianta
che pria volse le spalle al suo Fattore
e di cui è la 'nvidia tanto pianta,
produce e spande il maladetto fiore
c'ha disviate le pecore e li agni,
però che fatto ha lupo del pastore.

124

Per questo l'Evangelio e i dottor magni
son derelitti, e solo ai Decretali
si studia, sì che pare a' lor vivagni.

127

A questo intende il papa e ' cardinali;
non vanno i lor pensieri a Nazarette,
là dove Gabriello aperse l'ali.

130

Ma Vaticano e l'altre parti elette
di Roma, che son state cimitero
a la milizia che Pietro seguette,
tosto libere fien de l'avoltero."

133

136

142

NOTES

1–12. After your Charles ... toward emptiness: The exchange with Charles Martel concludes with the address to Charles's daughter, and with a prophecy, the first of three in the canto (see lines 46–60, 139–42); Charles then turns to God and the narrator condemns transitory goods; cf. 11.1–6 and note.

1. Clémence: Recent commentators see this as Charles's wife, Clémence of Hapsburg, who died soon after Charles (1295). But if so, the narrator addresses a soul in heaven, who can see the future in the divine mind (cf. 17.37–45, etc.), to tell her that he cannot disclose prophecies her husband has just made (Gmelin places him alongside her). Early commentators preferred Clémence of Hungary, Charles Martel's daughter, who married King Louis X of France in 1315; she was still living while Dante was writing *Paradiso* (1316–20). If the daughter is meant, then this is one of only three cantos that begin by addressing a feminine subject (cf. *Inf.* 26.1, Florence personified, and *Par.* 33.1, the Virgin Mary), and the only one to address a living woman (see 8.37 and note).

5–6. deserved weeping ... the wrongs you suffer: After the death of Charles Martel, his heir, Charles Robert ("his seed"), was stripped in 1296 of his succession through the collusion of his grandfather, Charles II (the Lame, see *Purg.* 20.79–81; *Par.* 6.106–8, 19.127–29 and notes) and his uncle, Robert of Anjou (see 8.145–48 and note) with Boniface VIII (*Inf.* 19.52–57, 27.85–93 and notes; and lines 139–42 and notes). The arrangement was ratified in 1309 by Clement V, completing another Angevin acquisition by expropriation (*Purg.* 20.66 and note). The prophecy here may allude to the defeat of the Angevins by Uguccione della Faggiuola at Montecatini in 1315 (see *Purg.* 23.106–11 and notes), where a brother and a nephew of Robert of Anjou were killed. Use of *inganni* [betrayals, line 2] links the resistance offered by Henry VII in 1311–13 (see *Par.* 17.82 and note) to the treatment of Charles Robert, which dashed hopes raised by Charles Martel, who united in his person Angevin and Hohenstaufen bloodlines. Clement V was deeply implicated on both occasions.

8. the sun that fills it: The sight of God completes the unfulfilled life of Charles Martel: he is finally a sun (see 8.4–12, 31–148, 55–57, 64–66, 76–84 and notes).

10–12. Ah deluded souls ... toward emptiness: In contrast to Charles's joy, the narrator reproaches those who aim at vanities; cf. 3.28, 5.72–84 and notes.

13–148. And behold ... from such adultery: The pilgrim interviews two souls, with mention of a third, who exemplify mad love (see 8.2–3 and note). The first introduces the second, who introduces the third, who does not speak.

13–24. And behold ... rejoicing to do good: Beatrice grants with her eyes "sweet

assent" to the pilgrim's desire, preparing topics in the canto related to love and courtship (see notes to lines 32–33, 70–72, 95–96, 97–102, 101–2).

25–66. In the part ... she had been before: First to speak is Cunizza, youngest child of Ezzelino II da Romano and Adelaide of Mangona, and sister to the notorious tyrant of the Romagna, Ezzelino III (see *Inf.* 12.110–12). She was born about 1198, and after marriage in 1222 to the lord of Verona, Riccardo di San Bonifazio, she was (at Ezzelino's behest) abducted by the poet Sordello (possibly her lover; see *Purg.* 6.58–75 and notes). Subsequently she wandered the world with the Trevisan knight Henry of Bovio; after his murder upon their return to Treviso she was married twice more. She is recorded in the house of the Cavalcanti in Florence in 1265, when she freed her slaves; in 1277 she made her will, leaving as beneficiary her nephew Alessandro degli Alberti of Mangona (see *Inf.* 32.56–57 and note, and *Ep.* 2.1). As she lived beyond 1279, Dante might have met her. She is for Benvenuto a typical child of Venus, "always amorous and full of desire ... kind, compassionate, and full of pity for those her brother cruelly afflicted."

After identifying herself and characterizing her destiny (25–36; rhetorical exordium, *propositio*, and *narratio*), Cunizza introduces the next soul slated to speak (37–42; a confirming exemplum); his fame cues a series of prophecy-invectives (43–60; *refutatio*) which Cunizza describes in the higher orders of Angels (61–66), before returning to her own circlings. For rhetoric in Venus, see note to lines 52–60.

25–27. In the part ... of Piave: The Rialto, the central island of Venice, and the springs of the Brenta and Piave rivers delimit the area Dante knew as the March of Treviso; its courts were known for their cultivation of troubadour poetry in Italy.

As in the previous canto (cf. 8.58–60 and notes) geographical and political areas are demarcated by rivers (25–27, 43–44, 46–47, 49, as well as 88–90), necessary when no fixed political boundaries existed. But Dante's fluvial descriptions are often allegorical (cf. *Inf.* 5.97–99; *Purg.* 14.28–66 and *Inter cantica* there; *Purg.* 15.130–32, 28.121–33 and notes). In astrological terms, clouds and rain, and therefore rising rivers, are governed by Venus and Saturn (see Chapter 1 of Durling/Martinez 1990, and Ptolemy and Haly in Kay 1994); see note to lines 82–93.

25. the degenerate Italian land: The entire Italian peninsula is condemned. An identical expression is aimed at Florence in Hell (*Inf.* 16.9); see also *Purg.* 6.76, and *Inter cantica* to *Purgatorio* 16. Cunizza's fierce opening prepares later attacks.

28. a hill rises up and it does not become very high: This description seems to echo Lucan, *Phar.* 4.11–12: "The fertile land swells to a hill of moderate height and rises up with gentle slope" (cf. 11.43–48, 21.106–7 and notes).

29–30. There once came down ... a great assault: Compare the eagle's descent in *Purg.* 9.29 and Lucifer's fall in *Purg.* 12.27, precedents for both Ezzelino's partisanship for the imperial eagle as its vicar (see also *Par.* 6.70 and note) and for his demonic reputation. For

Ezzelino's "assault" in the March of Treviso and the Veneto as far as Trento and Mantua, cf. *Inf.* 9.54 and notes, recalling language used for Theseus's raid on Hell. Astrologers noted that Venus gave rise to quarrels when in unfavorable aspect (Scot and Bonatti in Kay 1994).

29. a blazing torch: Pietro di Dante relates how Ezzelino's mother dreamt she gave birth to a torch that would set the country ablaze; the topic echoes Hecuba's dream of the birth of her son Paris, who precipitated the Trojan war (Ovid, *Heroides* 16.39–50; see also 12.58–60 and notes). Ezzelino is paired with Obizzo d'Este in the boiling blood of the violent (*Inf.* 12.110–12); see also 3.118–20.

31. From one root both it and I were born: Cunizza and Ezzelino had the same father; as in the Jesse tree, paternal genealogy was often represented as a taproot (see *Purg.* 7.121 and note, and cf. lines 3, *semenza*, and 8.131, 140). The amorous nature of Cunizza and the murderous bent of Ezzelino exemplify how Providence overrules heredity with the stars, as set out by Charles Martel (see 8.94–137 and note). For a similar contrast, see Jacob and Esau in 32.67–72. Dante dramatizes such differences by assigning blood relatives to the three realms of the poem, e.g., Frederick II, Manfred, and Costanza (*Purg.* 3.112–16); the Montefeltri, Guido and Buonconte, father and son (see *Purgatorio* 5, *Inter cantica*), and Corso, Forese, and Piccarda (see *Purg.* 23.13–15, 82–87 and notes, and Bergin 1969).

32–33. Cunizza I was called ... overcame me: Cunizza's Provençal name *Conissa* possibly alludes to sexual excess (cf. French *con*). But she shines in the heaven of Venus because she was "vanquished" by the planet: its effect on her character at birth swept her away; "overcame" (*vinse*) echoes Francesca's "one point ... overpowered us" (*ci vinse*, *Inf.* 5.132). Cunizza's love is now set on God, but her past amours, insofar as forms of love, were misguided, not evil (see *Purg.* 18.34–39).

34–36. but joyfully I forgive myself ... to your common folk: Cunizza forgives herself for the erotic inclination that in part shaped her fate. Her logic recalls that of Christ speaking about the woman identified in Christian exegetical tradition as Mary Magdalene (Luke 7.37–50): "Many sins are forgiven her, for she hath loved much."

36. would seem difficult to your common folk: Cunizza supposes that her complacency about her past would shock the vulgar crowd; that the decrees of Providence were puzzling to the many is a commonplace of philosophical texts; cf. *Consol.* 4.m.5, 20–21, 4.pr.6.21–22. See also 20.67–72 and notes, and lines 103–8.

37–42. Of this luminous ... by the first: The illustrious soul introduced here, but not named until line 94, is the troubadour Folquet (*Folquetus*, corresponding to Old French *Folquet* and Italian *Folchetto*, is used for the troubadour in DVE 2.6.6). According to his Provençal biography, or *Vida*, he was the son of a wealthy Genoese merchant who lived in Marseilles. Folquet served his lord, the viscount Barral, while declaring in his poems his love for Barral's wife, Adelaide. In about 1195, after his lord and lady had died, Folquet entered the Cistercian monastery of Le Thoronet, where he soon became abbot (ca. 1200); later he became bishop of

Toulouse (1206), and lent support to Dominic of Calaruega (see 12.46–105 and note), then beginning his antiheretical preaching. Folquet was prominent in the crusade against the Albigensian heretics (1208–29; his *Vida* ends there). Other sources attest to Folquet's support of Simon de Montfort in reducing Cathar strongholds.

Folquet's place in the poem is based on both his poetic and religious careers. His poetry was influential for the Sicilian poetic school (see *Purg.* 24.56 and note), and Dante includes in *DVE* 2.6.6 Folquet's canzone "Tan m'abellis l'amoros pessamen" among works worthy for excellence in construction (it is the poem Dante's Arnaut emulates at *Purg.* 26.139–47; see note). Folquet wrote poems renouncing love, as well as exhortations to crusade and a religious *alba* (dawn song; see 23.1–15 and note). Along with the *Vida*, these works have suggested to commentators a pattern of conversion that warrants Folquet's place in Venus. If Bertran de Born is Dante's poet of arms (*DVE* 2.2.8), and Arnaut the poet of "mad love" [*foler*] (see *Purg.* 26.143), then Folquet, whose rhetorical efforts included antiheretical preaching, may represent Dante's ideal advocate of moral rectitude among troubadours, replacing Giraut de Bornelh (see *Purg.* 26.118–26 and note, and *DVE* 2.2.8); but Folquet is in some sense *also* a poet of love and arms. In this he would parallel Dante, both a love poet and a poet of morality. For accounts of Dante's Folquet, see Picone 1981–83, Rossi 1989a, Squillaciotti 1993, and Allegretti-Gorni in *LDT*.

37. Of this luminous dear jewel: Folquet's Latin name as bishop, Fulco, seems to derive from *fulgeo* [shine], and is linked to Cunizza's *refulgo* [shines brightly] in line 33 (see also 8.12 and 8.64). The poet is compared to a gem, but *gioia* [jewel] here also puns on the Provençal troubadour term for erotic fulfillment [*joï*].

40. will enfive itself: Either five century marks will pass, or the year 1300 will be multiplied five times (totaling 6,500 years), before Folquet's fame dims.

43–60. To this no thought ... the ways of that land: Using Folquet as the positive example, three instances of what results from disregarding the second life that is fame (rhetorical *reprehensio* or refutation): the bloody defeat that the Ghibellines of Vicenza and their ally Can Grande della Scala, imperial vicar in the Veneto and Romagna (lines 46–48), inflicted in 1314 on the Paduan Guelphs, led by Jacopo da Carrara in revolt against imperial authority; the murder in 1312 of Riccardo da Camino, son to "buon Gherardo" (*Purg.* 16.124) and second husband of Giovanna Visconti (see *Purg.* 8.71 and note), captain of Treviso from 1306, by Guelph nobles of the city, after Riccardo's sudden switch of allegiance to the Ghibellines (lines 49–51); and the consignment in 1314 by the bishop of Feltro, Alessandro Novello of Treviso, of four suppliant Ferrarese exiles to the Angevin and pontifical vicar in Ferrara, Pino della Tosa, who executed them as rebels (lines 52–60).

References to the rivers Tagliamento and Adige (line 44) define the March of Treviso, the "swamp" (line 46) refers to the Bacchiglione near Vicenza, the confluence of the Sile and the Cagnano (line 49) marks Treviso (see map, p. 187). Reference to the swamp may imply a topic of political degeneration; see note to lines 25–27.

46–48. but soon will it come to pass ... to their duty: Most commentators take "change" [*cangiar*] to mean that Can Grande's slaughter of the Paduans stained with blood the waters of the Vicentine swamps (cf. *Inf.* 10.86 and note); readings that see a reference to Paduan attempts to divert the river account less well for the "beatings" (line 45). Giovanni del Virgilio recommends Can Grande's victory to Dante as a subject for the Latin epic Dante should write (see his *Eclogue* 1.28). Because Albertino Mussato, the Paduan poet crowned in 1315, was imprisoned by Can Grande in Verona during Dante's likely residence there (1316), commentators have discerned allusions to Mussato in the canto (see Martellotti, s.v. "Mussato," *ED*).

49–51. and where Sile and Cagnano ... the web to snare him: An assassin with a pruning hook cut Riccardo to pieces while he played chess. His proud head echoes the lion of *Inf.* 1.47 and Farinata's erect posture (*Inf.* 10.35–36 and note); Cunizza intensifies her rhetoric with a complex metaphor: the use of a web indicates a conspiracy and fraud (see *Inf.* 17.18 and note).

52–60. Feltro will yet weep ... the ways of that land: Cunizza's harshest language is for the bishop, who betrays his flock (52–54; "wicked shepherd" is a kind of oxymoron) and fosters bloodshed. She uses a modifier with ironic intent ("generous priest") and refers to the bishop's betrayal as a donation, also ironic in view of the emphasis in the sphere on courtly *larghezza* or generosity (cf. 8.82 and note; generosity was an attribute imparted by Venus; see Scot and Bonatti in Kay 1994). Her elaborate figurative speech is characteristic of sarcastic invective (cf. *Purg.* 6.124–48 and notes) and proper to Venus, which fosters rhetoric in its "children" (*Conv.* 2.13.13; see Additional Note 13).

61–66. Above there are mirrors ... had been before: After her prophecies, derived from the Thrones, the angelic order assigned to judgments, Cunizza reenters the "wheel"—her group of the blessed in Venus—where she left it. A system of assigned places for the souls in the sphere is here incipient (see Lansing 1977); it will be explicit in the next sphere. For angelic orders as mirrors, see *Ep.* 13.60.

67–69. The other joy ... a pure ruby in the sun: Folquet, a jewel in lines 37–39, is compared to a balas ruby, possibly named for Balascam in Persia. At *Conv.* 3.7.3–4, gems are said to multiply the light they receive (and see 2.34, 6.127).

70–72. By rejoicing up there ... as the mind is wicked: The joy of the spirits in the pilgrim's presence acts out the opening of Folquet's canzone, "Tan m'abellis" [It is so pleasing to me]; cf. *letiziar* [to rejoice] at line 70, a synonym of *abbellire*.

73–81. God sees all things ... as you inme yourself: Like "enheaven" [*inciela*], 3.97; see note), "fortified" [*s'imborga*, 8.40] and "enfive," [*incinqua*], line 40, the coinages, *inyou*, *inme*, *inhims* are a legacy of Arnaut Daniel, who in his sestina "Lo ferm voler" (see *Purg.* 26.137–47 and notes) affirms his deeply rooted desire ("it infixes and enwalls itself"). By borrowing diction "forged" by Arnaut ("the best craftsman" *Purg.* 26.117), Dante's Folquet

repays Dante's Arnaut for his use of Folquet's incipit, "Tan m'abellis" (see *Purg.* 26.140–47 and note).

76–78. Therefore your voice ... their six wings their robes: Though Folquet circles with the intelligences that move the third sphere (see 8.34–49 and note), the pilgrim describes him as a singer associated with the Seraphim (whose devotion is based in ardent Love; see also 8.26–27 and note). The pilgrim's phrasing echoes Is. 6.2–3, source of the preface to the Mass, where the angels also sing *Hosanna* (cf. 7.1–3; 8.28–30; 9.29; 28.94, 118 and notes). Dante frequently juxtaposes vernacular lyrics to sacred song (see 8.34–49 and note, and Additional Note 4).

82–142. The largest valley ... from such adultery: Parallel to Cunizza's account, Folquet identifies his dwelling-place (*exordium*, 82–93); names himself and confesses past subjection to mad love (*narratio*, 94–102); delights in the ways of Providence (*confirmatio* 103–8); and appends a positive exemplum (109–26) that triggers invective (*reprehensio*, 127–42). Folquet was "handsome of body, skillful with his tongue, generous with money, therefore truly venereal" (Benvenuto).

82–93. The largest valley ... warm with its blood: Folquet first names the greatest sea after the surrounding ocean itself: the Mediterranean, which extended, in the erroneous account of Ptolemaic geography, over ninety degrees of latitude, (in reality, it is one third that size, stretching about thirty degrees from Gibraltar to modern Lebanon). In Folquet's terms, what for an observer at Gibraltar would be a horizon circle, touching the eastern end of the sea (where the sun rises), would be a meridian for an observer at the eastern end—that is, an imaginary north-south circle overhead through the poles, crossed by the sun at midday (compare *Purg.* 2.1–6, 4.55–81, 27.1–6, and *Par.* 1.37–45 and notes). Next Folquet marks as the environs of Marseilles (never named in the canto) the stretch of Mediterranean between the river Ebro (in Spain) and the Magra, the stream that divides Liguria from Tuscany (see map, p. 187). Since Marseilles lies within three degrees of the same meridian as medieval Bougie in North Africa (modern Bejaïa, Algeria), the two cities observe sunrise and sunset at about the same time.

Beginning with the circumference of the ocean (line 84), Folquet relies on periphrasis (five in lines 82–90), a figure of his Venus-instilled rhetoric (see note to lines 52–60), to name longer and shorter coasts, arriving at a line through a point, Marseilles. Mention of horizons, sunsets, and meridians implies observation of the sun in the heavens (see *Conv.* 3.5, and 10.13–21 and note); the pilgrim is in fact approaching the sun.

93. warm with its blood: Dante alludes to the campaign of Caesar (see *Purg.* 18.101–2 and note) and the sea battle within the port of Marseilles, where, according to Lucan (*Phar.* 3.572–73), "the waves were encrusted with blood." Note the implied parallel with the Bacchiglione swamp (lines 46–47).

85–88. between discordant shores ... a dweller on the shore: Echoing Dido's call

for war between Carthage and Rome (*Aen.* 4.628–29), cities on opposing shores [*litora litoribus contraria*]—a case of “mad love” leading to war (see *Inf.* 5.64 and note). The conflict between Europe and Africa during the Crusades is also implied.

96. this heaven is stamped ... I was by it: In parallel to Cunizza’s lines 31–33, Folquet’s name, with its suggestion of effulgence (line 32) is associated with the idea of the heaven having imposed (“stamped”) its “complexion” on the newborn “child of the planet” (see *Conv.* 4.21.4). Folquet sings of “mad love”: nine of the twenty-two poems attributed to him refer to *folors* [folly], often rhymed with *Amors*. But his fame now adds to the luster of the planet itself (see note to 67–69).

97–102. for the daughter of Belus ... held Iole in his heart: Ovid’s works track Folquet’s literary and amorous vocations: in addition to the *Ars amatoria* (3.37–40; mention of Phyllis and Dido), the *Remedia amoris* (55–58) and the reproachful fictional epistles *Heroides* 2 (by Phyllis) and 7 (by Dido) are relevant. Rossi 1989a argues that such citations outline Folquet’s continuity with Latin literature. The assertion that the canto ignores Folquet’s literary work (Beltrami 2004) seems extreme given the many references to Latin, Provençal, and Tuscan poetry and rhetoric.

98–99: wronging both Sichaeus and Creusa ... befitted my hairs: By loving the Trojan hero Aeneas, Dido, the daughter of Belus the Phoenician (see *Inf.* 5.61–62, *Par* 8.9 and notes) wronged her dead husband, Sichaeus, and Aeneas’s dead wife, Creusa. Folquet allows that his passions too were adulterous, as the *Vida* suggests (see note to lines 37–42, and *Purg.* 25.133–35 and note), but he renounced illicit loves when they became indecorous, since “mad” love was held to be unsuited to the aged.

101–2. nor Alcides when he held Iole in his heart: The epithet “Alcides” for Hercules derives from his grandfather Alcaeus, son of the hero Perseus. Hercules’ loves for Iole and Omphale notoriously effeminated him, but he is also a figure of moral transformation: after being tormented by the poisoned cloak given him by his jealous wife Deianira (see *Inf.* 12.67–69 and note), his self-immolation on Mount Oeta purifies him and he is deified; see Ovid, *Met.* 9.239–72, *Inf.* 9.98 and note.

103–8. Not for that ... for the world below: Echoing Cunizza at lines 34–36, Folquet explains that he laughs not because of sinful memories erased by Eunöè (*Purg.* 28.131), but because he grasps how Providence intends the Good that is the final cause (that is, the purpose) of the circling of the heavens around the earth.

109–42. But so that you may carry ... from such adultery: To satisfy the pilgrim regarding the planet Venus (but also as a corollary; see 8.137–38 and note), Folquet introduces a soul whose presence challenges the complacent (see Matt. 21.31: “The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you”), and spurs an invective against the effects of cupidity on the pastoral mission of the Church. This section parallels Cunizza’s attacks on Treviso and Padua.

112–26. You wish to know ... the pope's memory but little: Folquet refers to Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho who concealed Joshua's spies and helped deliver the city to Joshua and his army (Jos. 2.1–21, 6.22–25). Christian exegesis saw her faith in Joshua's mission (Jos. 2.9–11) as exemplary and treated her as an allegory of the Church: justified by faith in Christ as well as works (James 2.25), the Church passes from harlotry (cf. Hosea 1.2, 3.1) to espousal with Christ. The red thread Rahab attached to her window so that her house would be spared when the city fell (Jos. 2.18) was taken as a sign of Christ's blood. Rahab's faith in Joshua's victory puts to shame the pope's neglect of holy war; her past harlotry expresses the "adultery" of the Church owing to papal cupidity (see *Inf.* 19.1–4 and note). See Auerbach 1946.

114. as if it were a sunbeam in pure water: Cf. 2.25–36 and note, and for the action of the sun, see lines 68–69, 118–19 and notes. See also lines 32 and 37.

118–25. Into this heaven ... in the Holy Land: Folquet explains why a prostitute can be the "highest seal" (line 117; cf. lines 32, 96 and notes) in the heaven of Venus: since Joshua extended his arms to achieve a victory (*Eccl*. 46.3; cf. *ST* 3a q. 46 a. 4), and his name is the Hebrew form of Jesus, Rahab's role in his victory foreshadows her status as a trophy ("palm") of Christ's Harrowing of Hell, the victory over death that began when Christ extended his "two palms" on the Cross (cf. *Purg* 3.119–23 and note; and see Additional Note 4).

Crusade preaching treated the victory at Jericho as an Old Testament figure of the crusades. Folquet was present in 1211 at the siege of the heretical stronghold of Lavaur in southern France, where crusaders sang hymns to invoke divine aid; after the city fell, hundreds of Cathars were burned at the stake.

118–19. Into this heaven ... shrinks to a point: The earth's conical shadow comes to a point in the heaven of Venus. This marks the first major articulation of *Paradiso*, after the three planets where souls appear whose devotion to God when they were alive had been qualified by the effects on their character of astrological influence; see note to 3.29–30 and Additional Note 6.

127–32. Your city ... a wolf of the shepherd: Folquet's rhetoric of invective culminates with a biblical warning about wolves in sheep's clothing (see Matt. 7.15) and with etymological play; attesting to the vigor implied in its name (Latin *florentia*, "flourishing one"), Florence is a plant of the devil who rebelled against God (cf. *Inf.* 34.35 and note), and whose envy "brought death into the world" (Wisdom 2.24; cf. *Inf.* 1.111 and note). The city's coin, with the lily stamped on its reverse, the "little flower" [*fiorino*] (cf. *Inf.* 30.73–74 and note), excites the cupidity of Boniface VIII, who perverts his pastoral role (cf. *Inf.* 27.85–93 and note) and leads his flock astray.

133–35. for this the Gospel ... as their margins show: Dante argues that overemphasis on the financially profitable study of canon law (see 11.4–9 and note), as evident from the heavily annotated margins of the books containing the Decretals (see 5.55–60,

10.103–5 and notes), had led to neglect of the Gospels, and of authors like Augustine and Gregory (cf. *Mon.* 3.3.14, and *Ep.* 11.16).

136–38. To this the pope ... opened his wings: The angel Gabriel announced to Mary in Nazareth (Luke 1.26–38; see *Purg.* 10.34–45 and notes); Bernard of Clairvaux interpreted the name of the town to mean “flower,” Dante may intend a contrast with the corrupting florin (Rossi 1989a).

139–42. But Vatican ... from such adultery: The Vatican is the cemetery of the army of martyrs who followed Christ and Peter (his crucifixion was traditionally located near the Vatican Hill; see *Inf.* 19.22–24 and note). The comeuppance prophesied for the fouling of Peter’s Rome by Boniface VIII (see *Inf.* 19.1–3, *Par.* 27.22–26 and notes) remains obscure.



CANTO 10

Sun: God's art in the heavens—the circle of twelve teachers of theology—saint Thomas Aquinas names them

- 1 Gazing at his Son with the Love that both
eternally breathe, the first, ineffable Power
- 4 made all that turns in the mind or through
space with so much order that one who
contemplates it cannot be without a taste of him.
- 7 Lift therefore your gaze to the high wheels
with me, reader, straight to that place where the
one and the other motion strike each other,
- 10 and there begin to marvel at the art of that
Master who within himself loves it so much that
he never moves his eye away from it.
- 13 See branching off from there the oblique
circle that carries the planets, so as to satisfy
the world that calls for them:
- 16 for if their path were not twisted, much
of the power in the heavens would be in vain,
and dead almost every potentiality down here,
- 19 and if its departure from the straight were
greater or smaller, much would be lacking, both
below and above, in the order of the world.

- 22 Now stay there, reader, on your bench,
thinking back on your foretaste here, if you wish
to rejoice long before you tire;
- 25 I have set before you: now feed yourself, for
all my care is claimed by that matter of which I
have become the scribe.
- 28 The greatest minister of Nature, which
stamps the world with the power of the heavens
and measures time to us with its light,
- 31 joined with that part mentioned above, was
wheeling through the spirals in which it rises
ever earlier,
- 34 and I was with it, but I did not perceive the ascent,
except as one perceives a first thought before it comes.
- 37 Beatrice is she who guides from good
to better so swiftly that her act does not extend in
time.
- 40 How bright in itself had to be whatever was
within the sun, where I entered, not by color but
by manifest light!
- 43 Though I call on my wit and art and practice, I
could never tell it so that it could be imagined,
but it can be believed, and let the sight of it be
yearned for.
- 46 And if our imaginations are too low for such a
height it is no wonder, for no eye has ever seen
intensity beyond the sun's.
- 49 Such was the brightness there of the fourth
family of the high Father, who always satisfies
them, showing how he breathes and how begets.

- 52 And Beatrice began: "Give thanks, give
 thanks to the Sun of the angels, who to this
 visible one has lifted you with his grace!"
- 55 Mortal heart has never been so concentrated
 to devotion and so swift to surrender itself to
 God with all consent,
- 58 as at those words I became, and I so placed
 all my love in him that it eclipsed Beatrice with
 forgetfulness.
- 61 She was not displeased but so smiled that
 the splendor of her laughing eyes divided my
 united mind into a plurality of things.
- 64 I saw many lively, overpowering splendors
 make of us their center and of themselves a
 crown, even sweeter in voice than bright to see:
- 67 girt thus at times we see the daughter of
 Latona, when the air is moist enough to retain
 the thread that makes her belt.
- 70 In the court of Heaven, whence I return, there
 are many jewels so precious and beautiful that
 they cannot be taken from the kingdom,
- 73 and the song of those lights was one of them;
 whoever does not grow the feathers to fly up
 there can expect to hear news of it from the mute.
- 76 When, singing thus, those burning suns had
 revolved about us three times, like stars near
 the fixed poles,
- 79 they seemed to me like ladies not freed from
 the dance, but pausing silently, listening until
 they have gathered the new notes.

- 82 And within one of them I heard begin: "Since
 the ray of grace, by which true love is kindled
 and then grows by loving,
- 85 so shines, multiplied in you, that it leads you
 up along the ladder that no one descends
 without climbing it again,
- 88 whoever should deny the wine of his flask to
 your thirst, would not be free except as water
 not descending to the sea.
- 91 You wish to know with what plants this
 garland blooms that woos from all sides the
 beautiful lady who strengthens you for Heaven.
- 94 I was among the lambs of the holy flock that
 Dominic leads by a path where one fattens well
 if one does not wander.
- 97 He who is closest to me on my right was
 brother and master to me, and he is Albert of
 Cologne, and I Thomas of Aquino.
- 100 If you wish to be apprised of all the others,
 come and with sight follow my words, circling
 through the blessed wreath.
- 103 That next flame comes forth from the smile of
 Gratian, who helped both forums so much that
 Heaven is pleased.
- 106 The next who adorns our choir was that Peter
 who with the poor widow offered up his treasure
 to Holy Church.
- 109 The fifth light, the loveliest among
 us, breathes from such love that the whole
 world down there is greedy to have news of it:

- 112 within it is the lofty mind where
 such deep wisdom was placed that, if truth
 is true, no second ever rose to see so much.
- 115 Next you see the light of that candle which
 below, in the flesh, saw deepest into the nature
 and the ministry of angels.
- 118 In the next little light smiles that advocate
 of Christian times of whose Latin Augustine
 made use.
- 121 Now if you train the eye of your mind from
 light to light after my praisings, you still thirst to
 know the eighth light.
- 124 Within it, joying in the vision of all Goodness,
 is that holy soul who proves the world deceptive
 to anyone who listens well;
- 127 the body from which it was driven lies down
 below in Cieldauro, and from martyrdom and
 exile it came to this peace.
- 130 Beyond, see flaming the ardent spirit of
 Isidore, of Bede, and of Richard, who was more
 than man in contemplation.
- 133 This one, from whom your gaze returns to
 me, is the light of a spirit who, in his grave
 thoughts, found that death came too slowly:
- 136 it is the eternal light of Siger, who,
 lecturing in Straw Street, made syllogisms
 of envied truths."
- 139 Then, like a clock that calls us in the hour
 when the bride of God rises to sing a dawn
 song to the Bridegroom, that he may love her,

- 142 whose one part pulls and the other pushes,
 sounding *tin tin* with so sweet a note that a well-
 disposed spirit swells with love:
- 145 so I saw that glorious wheel turning, voice
 answering voice, with tempering and sweetness
 that cannot be known
- 148 except there, where rejoicing forevers itself.



CANTO 10

Guardando nel suo Figlio con l'Amore
che l'uno e l'altro eternalmente spirà,
lo primo e ineffabile Valore
quanto per mente e per loco si gira
con tant' ordine fé ch'esser non puote
sanza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira.

Leva dunque, lettore, a l'alte rote
meco la vista, dritto a quella parte
dove l'un moto e l'altro si percuote,
e lì comincia a vagheggiar ne l'arte
di quel maestro che dentro a sé l'ama
tanto che mai da lei l'occhio non parte.

Vedi come da indi si dirama
l'oblico cerchio che i pianeti porta
per sodisfare al mondo che li chiama:
ché se la strada lor non fosse torta,
molta virtù nel ciel sarebbe in vano
e quasi ogne potenza qua giù morta,
e se dal dritto più o men lontano
fosse 'l partire, assai sarebbe manco
e giù e sù de l'ordine mondano.

Or ti riman, lettore, sovra 'l tuo banco,
dietro pensando a ciò che si preliba,
s'esser vuoi lieto assai prima che stanco;
messo t'ho innanzi: omai per te ti ciba,
ché a sé torce tutta la mia cura
quella materia ond' io son fatto scriba.

1

4

7

10

13

16

19

22

25

- 28
- Lo ministro maggior de la Natura,
che del valor del ciel lo mondo imprenta
e col suo lume il tempo ne misura,
- 31
- con quella parte che sù si rammenta
congiunto, si girava per le spire
in che più tosto ognora s'appresenta,
- 34
- e io era con lui, ma del salire
non m'accors' io se non com' uom s'accorge,
anzi 'l primo pensier, del suo venire.
- 37
- È Béatrice quella che sì scorge
di bene in meglio sì subitamente
che l'atto suo per tempo non si sporge.
- 40
- Quant' esser convenia da sé lucente
quel ch' era dentro al sol dov' io entra'mi,
non per color, ma per lume parvente!
- 43
- Perch' io lo 'nsegno e l'arte e l'uso chiami,
sì nol direi che mai s'imaginasse,
ma creder puossi e di veder si brami.
- 46
- E se le fantasie nostre son basse
a tanta altezza non è maraviglia,
ché sopra 'l sol non fu occhio ch'andasse.
- 49
- Tal era quivi la quarta famiglia
de l'alto Padre, che sempre la sazia,
mostrando come spira e come figlia.
- 52
- E Béatrice cominciò: "Ringrazia,
ringrazia il Sol de li angeli, ch' a questo
sensibil t'ha levato per sua grazia!"
- 55
- Cor di mortal non fu mai sì digesto
a divozione e a rendersi a Dio
con tutto 'l suo gradir cotanto presto,

come a quelle parole mi fec' io,
e sì tutto 'l mio amore in lui si mise
che Béatrice eclissò ne l'oblio.

58

Non le dispiacque, ma sì se ne rise
che lo splendor de li occhi suoi ridenti
mia mente unita in più cose divise.

61

Io vidi più folgór vivi e vincenti
far di noi centro e di sé far corona,
più dolce in voce che in vista lucenti:

64

così cinger la figlia di Latona
vedem talvolta quando l'aere è pregno,
che ritenga il fil che fa la zona.

67

Ne la corte del Cielo, ond' io rivegno,
si trovan molte gioie care e belle
tanto che non si posson trar del regno,
e 'l canto di quei lumi era di quelle;
chi non s'impenna sì che la sù voli,
dal muto aspetti quindi le novelle.

70

Poi, sì cantando, quelle ardenti soli
si fuor girati intorno a noi tre volte,
come stelle vicine a' fermi poli,
donne mi parver, non da ballo sciolte,
ma che s'arrestin tacite, ascoltando
fin che le nove note hanno ricolte.

73

E dentro da l'un sentì cominciar: "Quando
lo raggio de la grazia, onde s'accende
verace amore e che poi cresce amando,
multiplicato in te tanto resplende
che ti conduce su per quella scala
u' sanza risalir nessun discende,

76

79

82

85

qual ti negasse il vin de la sua fiala
per la tua sete, in libertà non fora
se non com' acqua ch' al mar non si cala.

88

Tu vuo' saper di quai piante s'infiora
questa ghirlanda che 'ntorno vagheggia
la bella donna ch' al ciel t'avvalora.

91

Io fui de li agni de la santa greggia
che Domenico mena per cammino
u' ben s'impingua se non si vaneggia.

94

Questi che m'è a destra più vicino
frate e maestro fummi, ed esso Alberto
è di Cologna, e io Thomas d'Aquino.

97

Se sì di tutti li altri esser vuo' certo,
di retro al mio parlar ten vien, col viso
girando su per lo beato serto.

100

Quell'altro fiammeggiare esce del riso
di Grazian, che l'uno e l'altro foro
aiutò sì che piace in Paradiso.

103

L'altro ch' appresso addorna il nostro coro
quel Pietro fu che con la poverella
offerse a Santa Chiesa suo tesoro.

106

La quinta luce, ch' è tra noi più bella,
spira di tale amor che tutto 'l mondo
là giù ne gola di saper novella:

109

entro v'è l'alta mente u' sì profondo
saver fu messo che, se 'l vero è vero,
a veder tanto non surse il secondo.

112

Appresso vedi il lume di quel cero
che giù in carne più a dentro vide
l'angelica natura e 'l ministero.

115

come a quelle parole mi fec' io,
e sì tutto 'l mio amore in lui si mise
che Béatrice eclissò ne l'oblio.

58

Non le dispiacque, ma sì se ne rise
che lo splendor de li occhi suoi ridenti
mia mente unita in più cose divise.

61

Io vidi più folgór vivi e vincenti
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64

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67

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multiplicato in te tanto resplende
che ti conduce su per quella scala
u' sanza risalir nessun discende,

76

79

82

85

qual ti negasse il vin de la sua fiala
per la tua sete, in libertà non fora
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88

Tu vuo' saper di quai piante s'infiora
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91

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che Domenico mena per cammino
u' ben s'impingua se non si vaneggia.

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Questi che m'è a destra più vicino
frate e maestro fummi, ed esso Alberto
è di Cologna, e io Thomas d'Aquino.

97

Se sì di tutti li altri esser vuo' certo,
di retro al mio parlar ten vien, col viso
girando su per lo beato serto.

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Quell'altro fiammeggiare esce del riso
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109

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saver fu messo che, se 'l vero è vero,
a veder tanto non surse il secondo.

112

Appresso vedi il lume di quel cero
che giù in carne più a dentro vide
l'angelica natura e 'l ministero.

115

- 118
- Ne l'altra picioletta luce ride
quell'avvocato de' tempi cristiani
del cui latino Augustin si provide.
- 121
- Or se tu l'occhio de la mente trani
di luce in luce dietro a le mie lode,
già de l'ottava con sete rimani.
- 124
- Per vedere ogne ben dentro vi gode
l'anima santa che 'l mondo fallace
fa manifesto a chi di lei ben ode;
- 127
- lo corpo ond' ella fu cacciata giace
giuso in Cieldauro, ed essa da martiro
e da essilio venne a questa pace.
- 130
- Vedi oltre fiammeggiar l'ardente spiro
d'Isidoro, di Beda e di Riccardo,
che a considerar fu più che viro.
- 133
- Questi, onde a me ritorna il tuo riguardo,
è 'l lume d'uno spirto che 'n pensieri
gravi a morir li parve venir tardo:
- 136
- essa è la luce eterna di Sigieri,
che, leggendo nel Vico de li Strami,
silogizzò invidiosi veri."
- 139
- Indi, come orologio che ne chiami
ne l'ora che la sposa di Dio surge
a mattinar lo sposo perché l'ami,
- 142
- che l'una parte e l'altra tira e urge,
tin tin sonando con sì dolce nota
che 'l ben disposto spirto d'amor turge:
- 145
- così vid' io la gloriosa rota
muoversi e render voce a voce in tempra
e in dolcezza ch'esser non pò nota

se non colà, dove gioir s'insempra.

148

NOTES

1–27. Gazing at his Son ... become the scribe: Arrival in the sun, beyond the shadow of the earth, is a major transition in the *Comedy* as a whole as well as in the *Paradiso* (for the parallels between the cantos of the sun and the corresponding cantos of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, see Additional Note 6). This proem focuses particularly on the intersection of the celestial equator and the ecliptic at the point of the vernal equinox. The importance of the inclination of the ecliptic to the equator had been recognized since antiquity; it was central to Plato's conception of the cosmos and the basis of the microcosmic structure of the human body (see Boethius' "O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas," pp. 686–94, an important model for Dante since the "Rime pet-rose"; see Durling/Martinez 1990). For Christians the intersection of the two motions was a chief instance of the wondrous art of the Creator, just as the sun itself, "the greatest minister of Nature" (line 28) and "the father of every mortal life" (22.116), is the chief visible analogue of the Creator himself (*Conv.* 3.12); cf. Additional Note 12.

The passage falls into three distinct parts: (1) the relations among the Persons of the Trinity in the creation of the world (1–6); (2) the Creator's art revealed in the inclination of the ecliptic (7–21); (3) injunction to the reader and transition back to the narrative (22–27): five central terzinas surrounded by first and third parts of two terzinas each (see the note to lines 13–15). Like "O qui perpetua," the passage is a microcosm, a model of the cosmos: its origin, its structure, and its goal, the return to God, which in true Platonic fashion must begin with the contemplation of the heavens (*Timaeus* 47a–c).

1–6. Gazing at his Son ... a taste of him: God the Father ("the first, ineffable Power," the first Person of the Trinity) is represented as gazing at his Son, the second Person of the Trinity, because the Son is the Logos, identified by Christians as corresponding to Plotinus's principle of *noûs* [mind], containing the eternal ideas, or forms, of things (see Additional Note 10; cf. "O qui perpetua," lines 4–8). The Holy Spirit, the Love breathing between Father and Son, is essential to the creation, which expresses God's love of his creatures; cf. "O qui perpetua," lines 5–6.

4–6. made all that turns ... a taste of him: That the order of the universe reveals the power and godhead of its Creator has always been a central Judeo-Christian theme, like the joy deriving from the contemplation of God in his works (cf. Ps. 8, 18, 91—with *Purg.* 28.74–81—and Rom. 1.20); these are also central subjects of the *Paradiso*. Compare 1.103–8, especially 104–5: the order of the universe "is a form that makes the universe resemble God."

4. all that turns in the mind or through space: Note the implicit analogy between intellectual/spiritual activity, whether of angels or human beings, and the turning of the heavens; this is the kernel of the idea of the microcosmic relation; for self-awareness—

reflexivity—as the hallmark of intellect, cf. *Purg.* 25.75: “sé in sé rigira” and “O qui perpetua” lines 13–17, especially “in semet redditura” [to return into itself] (for the microcosmic head, see Additional Note 14).

6. a taste of him: Note the food metaphor, which will be more fully developed in lines 22–25.

7–21. Lift therefore ... order of the world: The third of the six addresses to readers in the *Paradiso*, now explicit (see the note to 2.1–18), and in many respects the most important. The reader is imagined as seated on a bench, no doubt before a desk or lectern of some sort, in a realistic situation that mirrors the real situation of the writing poet. He is asked to interrupt his reading in order to look up at the heavens *with the poet* (“Lift ... with me”), who is thus also imagined as interrupting his activity. This emphasis is picked up again at the end of the passage, leaving the reader on his bench, meditating, while the poet returns to his writing (lines 22–27). The lines explore a series of parallels between the actions of the two humans and the celestial motions that are contemplated. The lines fall into three parts: (1) preparation and generalization (lines 7–12); (2) sharpened focus on the branching (lines 13–15); (3) the importance of the exact angle of branching (lines 15–21). For the centrality of the sun and of the cantos of the sun, see Additional Note 3.

7–12. Lift therefore ... away from it: Six lines lead up to the main statement, stressing its importance and beauty. The “art of that Master” is once again the Logos.

7–9. Lift therefore ... strike each other: The instantaneous movement of directing the eye (“leva ... dritto” [lift ... straight]) mirrors the “striking” together of the celestial motions. The phrase “high wheels” refers of course to the heavenly spheres (cf. 1.76, 4.58, 6.126), as always with emphasis on the regularity of their motion (Consoli in *ED*, s.v. *rota*), and here calling attention to the great circles at their extreme circumference.

10–12. and there begin ... eye away from it: God’s eye is fixed on his art, the Logos; note that all three Persons of the Trinity (Power, Logos, Love) are referred to, as in lines 1–3.

13–15. See branching off ... calls for them: The principal focus, the “branching off” [si dirama], is now reached; it has been reserved for the central terzina of the central five terzinias devoted to the intersection of celestial equator and ecliptic because it occupies the central position in the cosmos (cf. “O qui perpetua,” lines 13–17, with notes, and see the final note on pp. 693–94). The need of the world for the planets (lines 14–15) includes reference to 8.115–35, Carlo Martello’s explanation of the providential role of the planets in overriding heredity.

13. branching off: Dante’s “branching off” is a tree metaphor. As Plato observed (*Timaeus* 36c), the intersection of the two motions resembles the Greek letter *chi* [X], where medieval Christians recognized the cross and the first letter of *Christ* (see Freccero 1968). Dante refers to the idea also in 1.39 but leaves it implicit (see the note to “O qui perpetua” lines 15–17).

16–21. for if their path ... order of the world: The importance of the inclination of the ecliptic to the equator: (a) the general need for the inclination: if the rays of the sun struck the earth directly at the equator, without variation, temperatures would be much higher, as well as unchanging (in antiquity and the Middle Ages, it was believed that the tropical zone was too hot for human habitation); the seasons would not exist; the conjunction of the sun with the signs of the zodiac, essential to the generation of plants and animals, would not take place; (b) the exact angle is also critically important.

16–18. if their path ... potentiality down here: The varying relative positions of the planets is the chief factor in enabling the differentiation of horoscopes. It had been known since antiquity that the paths of the planets did not coincide with the ecliptic but, except for the sun's, were themselves variously inclined in relation to it. Without the changes in the aspects of the planets, their power could not be fully exerted, and the enormous possibilities for variety in living things could not be fulfilled; there is an implicit reference to the principle of plenitude.

19–21. and if its departure ... order of the world: The critical importance of the exact angle of the ecliptic ($23^\circ 27'$) had also been recognized since antiquity: the dimensions and climates of the five zones (two arctic, two temperate, one tropical) are its direct result. Aristotle had recognized that all life on earth depended on it, but had supposed that the seasons depended on the sun's coming closer as it rose in the sky when north of the equator (*De gen. et corr.* 2.10 [336b]); today it is understood that the seasons depend on the precise angles at which the rays of the sun strike the earth (the earth is actually closest to the sun at the winter solstice, because of its slightly elliptical orbit).

22–27. Now stay there ... become the scribe: The concluding portion of this proem. The reader's and the poet's tasks now diverge.

22–25. Now stay there ... now feed yourself: The reader, now explicitly imagined on a bench (note to lines 7–21), is to meditate on what he or she has just read and to delight in deeper contemplation of God's art (an explicit reminder that the poem does not present its full meanings at a casual glance but requires study and thought; also that its subject lies outside itself, in the real world). The food metaphor hinted at in line 6 is now more fully developed: lines 7–21 are a "foretaste," food that the poet has "set before" the reader (line 15), who must now "feed" him- or herself (see lines 49–51 and 17.130–32, with notes; for the importance of the food metaphor in the *Comedy* as a whole, see Durling 1981a).

26–27. for all my care ... become the scribe: The branching of the poet's path away from the reader's is analogous to that of the ecliptic: the reader is enjoined to continue in the direction established in lines 7–21; the poet's attention is "twisted" (line 26), like the ecliptic, back to the matter of his narration, the imagined events of the poem (see the note on lines 34–36); it calls him back, as the world calls the planets in lines 14–15, with no doubt an implicit reference to the parallel between God's art and the poet's, and to Dante's hope that the poem would help correct the wretched plight of humanity (see 17.124–42, with notes). The notion

encountered in some commentaries that the term "scribe" [scriba] here indicates a mere chronicling by the poet disregards the entire theme of the relation of the poet with the sun (see Additional Note 13).

28–39. The greatest minister ... extend in time: Twelve lines form the formal transition from the sphere of Venus to the sun (now first explicitly named, though peripherastically). Three terzinas (lines 28–36) on the arrival; one on the role of Beatrice (lines 37–39).

28–30. The greatest minister ... with its light: The sun is "the greatest minister of Nature" because it directly controls the generation and corruption of all living things, and because the influence of the other planets is transmitted through their reflecting the light of the sun (line 29: it "stamps the world with the power of the heavens"). Also, according to Gen. 1.14, the sun and the moon are made "to divide the day and the night, and ... [to] be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years." In the analogy of the sciences with the heavens, the heaven of the sun corresponds to arithmetic (since computation of time is the most important use of arithmetic).

31–33. joined with that part ... rises ever earlier: That is, the sun was near the vernal equinox (see 1.43–44, with note) and thus moving ever farther north of the equator on the ecliptic and therefore rising earlier every day.

34–36. and I was ... before it comes: The transition from Venus to the sun was instantaneous, as quick as thought (see next note). That the pilgrim is with the sun, following the ecliptic, completes the suggestion in lines 26–27. For the poet and the poet's poem are like the sun, cf. the claim for the *Convivio* (associated with the food metaphor—with reference to the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Matt. 14.14–21—governing the entire first book): "This [work] will be that barley bread that will satisfy thousands, and the remnants will fill my baskets to overflowing. This will be a new light, a new sun that will rise where the accustomed one will have set, and it will give light to those that are in shadows and darkness, instead of the usual sun that does not shine for them" (*Conv.* 1.13.11–12).

37–39. Beatrice is she ... extend in time: The most probable interpretation of this statement about Beatrice is that she represents the principle of spiritual/intellectual illumination (integral to divine revelation; cf. Singleton 1957); medieval theories of light regarded the radiation of light as instantaneous. This is one of the critical passages on the nature of the pilgrim's ascent, which is intellectual and imaginative, not bodily (see Introduction, pp. 14–17).

40–51. How bright in itself ... and how begets: The introduction to the encounter with the teachers of theology: they are "whatever was within the sun," and their brightness exceeds all imagining (as it must, to be discernible within the sun). The mention of color in line 42 distinguishes between the proper object of bodily sight (identified by Galen as color itself; cf. Galen 1968, Grant 1977) and light itself. This is the first of an increasing number of

instances of the "inexpressibility *topos*" (see Curtius 1953).

49–51. Such was the brightness ... and how begets: This "fourth family" (denizens of the fourth planet, the sun) becomes visible only from line 64 on. That souls in bliss may see the inner relations of the Persons of the Trinity (the begetting of the Son by the Father and the breathing of the Holy Spirit between Father and Son: cf. lines 1–3) has not previously been said; probably it is a mark of the increasing degrees of beatitude. "Satisfies" [sazia] is a continuation of the food metaphor, now with Eucharistic overtones.

52–63. And Beatrice began ... a plurality of things: A particularly brilliant transition to the encounter with the souls in the sun, based on the analogies governing the heaven of the sun: (a) the analogy between the visible sun and God (especially the Son; for the special status of this analogy, see the note to lines 1–27); (b) the analogy between the preachers who illuminate the faithful and both terms of the first analogy

52–54. And Beatrice began ... with his grace: Among the several instances of Beatrice's urging the pilgrim to give thanks (2.28–30) and his doing so spontaneously (14.88–93), this is the most emphatic and unique in stating the analogy. The "Sun of the angels" is God, but especially the second Person of the Trinity.

55–60. Mortal heart ... with forgetfulness: We translate "digesto" as "concentrated"; the term has a great richness of meanings (see Durling 1981a), including "classified" and "set in order," as well as the physiological "extracted nourishment from." The food metaphor is much more distantly operative here than earlier.

59–60. I so placed ... with forgetfulness: The pilgrim's love so completely and directly focuses on God that it disregards the intermediary, Beatrice. Note the sun image: the ecliptic, which we are following (see the note to lines 34–36), is the circle that the moon (whose orbit is inclined to it) must be crossing for eclipses of sun or moon to occur.

61–63. She was not displeased ... a plurality of things: The pilgrim has been gazing into Beatrice's eyes even as he has forgotten her in his prayer to the "Sun of the angels." The sudden refraction of his "united mind" (concentrated on God) into this new plural vision reflects the traditional notion that the light of the sun, unified in itself, contains the forms of all things; in this, as in other respects, it is the created thing most similar to God (see the note to 13.52–60, Litt 1963).

64–148. I saw many ... rejoicing forevers itself: The rest of the canto is devoted to the first of three circles that will surround Beatrice and the pilgrim in the heaven of the sun (the second will arrive in Canto 12, the third in Canto 14; on the relations among them, see Additional Note 3). The number of the new splendors is not stated explicitly; we must count until we reach line 138; it should not surprise us that it will be a solar number.

64–81. I saw many ... the new notes: The new splendors form a circular "crown" with

the pilgrim and Beatrice in the center; they are singing and, as we learn only in lines 76–78, revolving about them. They are like so many suns both in their brightness and in their circular motion; perhaps there is also an allusion to the music of the spheres in the sweetness of their song. Some commentators (such as Forti in *LDS*) have been misled by the image of the lunar halo (see next note) to suppose that the circle of splendors is undifferentiated, but its plurality is emphasized from the outset.

67–69. girt thus at times ... makes her belt: The daughter of Latona is the moon, which is sometimes surrounded by a halo; the clothing metaphor in “the thread that makes her belt” is an early anticipation of the theme of Canto 14; the atmospheric moisture that causes the halo falls in dew, a traditional metaphor for God’s grace. For the suggestion that Beatrice corresponds to the moon, representing the Church, see Freccero 1968.

70–75. In the court of Heaven ... from the mute: The surprising comparison of the sweetness of the song with the universally acknowledged beauty of jewels (associated on earth with the richness and splendor of royal courts) probably indicates an utter clarity and purity (the song is probably unison rather than polyphonic).

74–75. whoever does not ... from the mute: In other words, it cannot be expressed in language; cf. 1.70–72, with note. This is again a version of the inexpressibility *topos*, perhaps already proverbial, but many of Dante’s pithy expressions have been adopted in everyday speech.

74. whoever does not ... to fly up there: For the metaphor of wings, see the note to *Inf.* 26.125 and *Purg.* 27.121–23, with note (the ultimate biblical source is Ps. 54.7).

76–78. When, singing thus ... near the fixed poles: The three revolutions of the circle of souls is perhaps proleptic of the future presence of three circles. That their revolutions are like stars near the poles indicates both that they move relatively slowly (since stars close to the equator move fastest) and that they maintain fixed distances, presumably uniform, from each other (see also the note to 13.16–18). For the tradition of the dance of the stars, see Freccero 1968.

76–77. those burning suns had revolved about us: The analogy of these souls with the sun is now made explicit, and the analogy of their motion with the sun’s about the earth is plain (see the note on lines 139–48).

79–81. they seemed to me ... the new notes: As we will soon learn, all these souls were men, and the majority of them clergymen, but the feminine gender of the term *anima* and the idea of the round dance itself suggest an image of the graceful pause of noble ladies waiting, attuning themselves to the changed music (“the new notes”), before beginning to dance again.

82–138. And within one ... envied truths: In one long speech the spokesman of these

souls will proclaim the assurance of the pilgrim's salvation and identify his companions. The first two are members of the Dominican order (the "Order of Preachers," founded by saint Dominic; see 12.32–102); in the lively controversies of the thirteenth century, the Dominicans strongly represented the principle of the "primacy of the intellect" (see Additional Note 3). All the speeches of the denizens of the sun (Thomas, Bonaventura, and Solomon) are said to occur from "within" their radiance; see the note to 14.46–51.

83–87. Since the ray ... climbing it again: The speaker begins with the most emphatic prediction of the pilgrim's ultimate salvation that has appeared so far in the poem: God's grace instills in its recipient "true love," and loving brings ever more grace (the ray is "multiplied"); the multiplied light of grace in the pilgrim is so strong that it enables him to climb the ladder of contemplation, and whoever climbs it, though he or she must descend once more to earthly life, is assured of reascending it (after death).

88–90. whoever should deny ... descending to the sea: The pilgrim's special grace is so evident that the blessed can no more refuse to answer his questions than water can refuse to flow downward, unless blocked (closely parallel to 1.136–38, on the ascent itself, which uses the analogy of fire).

91–93. You wish to know ... for Heaven: Note the metaphor of a garland of flowers (with implicit reference to the sun as bringing forth flowers). The souls are "wooing" Beatrice, shining on her, expressing their love to her (cf. lines 139–48, with notes). The terminology and sentiments in these lines and at the end of the canto draw on the traditions of veneration of the Virgin (flowers, garlands, wooing, amorous singing), motifs that are increasingly prominent toward the end of the *Paradiso*.

94–138. I was among ... envied truths: Fifteen terzinas identifying the circle of souls. It is important to distinguish these souls from the contemplatives in the heaven of Saturn (Cantos 21 and 22): here we are encountering preachers and teachers the light of whose intellect illuminates the world, and this is the basis of the analogy with the sun (cf. *Inf.* 1.17–18, with note).

94–99. I was among ... Thomas of Aquino: The speaker first identifies himself as a Dominican friar, then identifies his closest neighbor (the only other Dominican present) and finally names himself.

95–96. a path where ... does not wander: The remark will puzzle the pilgrim and require explanation in 11.123–39.

97–99. He who is closest ... Albert of Cologne: The German Dominican Albert (1206?–80), commonly called "the Great" [Magnus], was an extraordinarily wide-ranging intellect and prolific writer of commentaries on the natural sciences, the major Neoplatonic texts, Aristotle, and Aristotle's Arabic commentators. He taught at Paris (where Thomas was among his pupils), was made bishop of Regensburg, and for his last ten years taught in

Cologne (hence his epithet; he was born in Lauingen in Bavaria). Albert's influence on Dante is even more pervasive than that of Thomas.

99. and I Thomas of Aquino: Thomas Aquinas (1224–74) quickly became the most influential teacher of theology among the Dominicans, prominent in the faculties of theology at Paris, Rome, and Bologna, and his reconciliation of the claims of faith and reason was declared by the Council of Trent (1545–63) to be the official theology of the Roman Church. Aquino (near Naples) is close to Thomas's birthplace (*Aquinas* is a Latin adjective of place of origin, in modern Ital. *Aquinate*; cf. *Ravennate* [from Ravenna]).

100–102. If you wish ... the blessed wreath: An indication permitting the reader to visualize the sequence of identifications.

103–5. That next flame ... Heaven is pleased: Gratian (?–1160), a member of the Camaldolesian order based in Bologna, was the codifier of canon law (ecclesiastical law) in his *Decretum*, a reference work not superseded until 1918. The meaning of "both forums" has been disputed: the possibilities are: (a) both canon law and civil law (the latter indirectly); (b) both distributive and penal canon law; (c) the two Lateran Councils (in 1123 and 1139) that legislated strictly in favor of priestly celibacy in rulings that Gratian approved and analyzed at length (see Brundage 1987).

106–8. The next who ... to Holy Church: This is the Italian Peter Lombard (ca. 1100–1160), an Augustinian canon at the important and influential monastery of saint Victor in Paris and from 1159 bishop of Paris, who produced a systematic collection of theological pronouncements by patristic writers that became the foundation of all instruction in theology in the West, the *Liber sententiarum*. Every aspiring theologian began by writing a commentary on it. The reference to the parable of the widow's mite (Mark 12.41–44) adopts Peter's own description of his book.

109–14. The fifth light ... to see so much: Solomon, famous for his wisdom, is the one the whole world wishes news of, because his salvation was sometimes put in doubt. As author of Ecclesiastes, he was suspected of denying the immortality of the soul; he worshipped the Canaanite gods and was thought excessively uxorious (4 Kings 11.1–13). The question was disputed among the rabbis, and Philippe de Harvengt (d. 1184) wrote a treatise, *De damnatione Salomonis* (PL 203; cf. Sarolli 1971, DTC 12, Durling 2001a). Cf. 13.138–42, with notes.

The analogy between the king and the sun was widespread (see Kantorowicz 1957); Solomon is the only king in the circle, but he is its most beautiful light (line 109), and line 114, which puzzles the pilgrim, will receive extended commentary in Canto 13 (cf. the note to 8.31–148). The emphasis on Solomon's being fifth in the circle may be a reference to the Canticle of Canticles, which celebrates the marriage of the soul and Christ (cf. lines 139–48, with note): the number five symbolizes marriage, being the sum of male and female numbers (three and two respectively); cf. the note to *Inf.* 5.100–107. (For Solomon as "the Beloved," see 13.111, with

note.)

115–17. Next you see ... ministry of angels: This is the Pseudo-Dionysius, an unknown fifth- or sixth-century Neoplatonic theologian whose works, of enormous influence throughout the Middle Ages (see Rorem 1993), were attributed to the Dionysius the Areopagite, converted by saint Paul (Acts 17.22–34); he was supposed to have been the first bishop of Paris and to have carried his severed head down from the Mount of Martyrs (that is, Montmartre) to his burial place, now the basilica of saint Denis. He was the author of *The Celestial Hierarchy*, referred to here, and of other treatises, of which *On the Divine Names* was also an important influence on Dante.

118–20. In the next little ... Augustine made use: Several candidates have been nominated for this post; Toynbee 1895 showed definitively that the reference is to Paulus Orosius (ca. 390–420?), whose *History against the Pagans*, written at the suggestion of Augustine of Hippo, undertook to show how much better Christian times had been than pagan times (see the note to 6.34–96).

121–29. Now if you train ... to this peace: Reminders of the running total will cease after this eighth light, that of the great Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, buried in the basilica of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro in Pavia (see the headnote to "O qui perpetua," pp. 688–89). The achievement praised here is his demonstration, in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, of the ephemeral nature of all earthly goods, subject to the whims of Fortune. Since, as Macrobius showed, two points define a line, three points a plane, and eight points a cube, the basis of the element earth (*Comm.* 1.5.7), perhaps Boethius' occupying the eighth position alludes to his having seen the true nature of the element earth (for eight as signifying the entire cosmos, see *Comm.* 1.5.8 and Freccero 1968).

130–31. Beyond, see flaming ... and of Richard: After three terzinas allotted to Boethius, we now have three figures named in one terzina. Isidore is saint Isidore (ca. 570–630), bishop of Seville, the most prominent figure in the early history of Christianity in Spain, author of the extremely influential encyclopedia *Etymologies*. The sainted Venerable Bede (673–735), the most prolific writer of the Anglo-Saxons, wrote a history of England and numerous biblical commentaries; his *Computus* (treatise on the date of Easter) was especially widely used. Richard of Saint Victor (ca. 1110–73), prior of the Augustinians of Saint Victor in Paris, wrote treatises on mystical contemplation (*De contemplatione, sive Benjamin maior*, and *De preparatione animi ad contemplationem, sive Benjamin minor*) that may have influenced Dante.

132. in contemplation: "Contemplation" is our rendering of "considerare;" for its etymology (from "to move with the heavenly bodies"—cf. note to lines 7–31) see Freccero 1968.

133–38. This one, from ... envied truths: Siger of Brabant (ca. 1235–ca. 1282), a professor in the faculty of arts at Paris, a specialist on Averroes (see the note to *Inf.* 4.142–44).

The extent to which his doctrines were heretical is still debated, though the majority view now is that he had changed his views under Aquinas's influence. A number of theses were condemned by the bishop of Paris in 1277 (it seems clear that Siger had abandoned the Averroist position on the unity of the human intellect); Siger insisted that his faith was orthodox and appealed to the pope in Orvieto. There he was not imprisoned but placed under house surveillance; a few years later he was murdered, apparently by his deranged secretary (this partly speculative account has been challenged by Thijssen 1998 and Gauthier 1984). Much controversy has been occasioned by Dante's including him here (cf. 12.140–41, with note; and see next note). Aquinas, who praises him here, was in life one of his principal opponents (in his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*—see *Purg.* 25.61–66, with note); in Heaven mutual understanding is perfect. Scott 2008 is an excellent survey of the controversies.

137–38. lecturing in Straw Street ... envied truths: The Rue du Fouarre, in the heart of the Latin Quarter in Paris, was the location of arts-faculty lecture halls (the reference has been implausibly adduced as evidence that Dante had studied in Paris). The phrase "silogizzò invidiosi veri" has been much debated. "Silogizzò" presumably means "constructed valid syllogisms" (cf. 11.1–3, with note). "Invidiosi" may mean "enviable" (i.e., "incomparably brilliant"); following Gilson 1939, Nardi 1956a, who defends Siger's orthodoxy, takes it to mean "targeted by the envious," and to refer to Siger's insistence on the autonomy of philosophy (as separate from theology).

139–48. Then, like a clock ... rejoicing forevers itself: The canto ends with the simile of a clock chiming to wake the faithful for the service of lauds, sung at dawn, implying a monastic setting. The "bride of God" is the soul, the "Bridegroom" Christ (as in the Canticle of Canticles), but the suggestion of a convent of nuns is inescapable (and consistent with the feminine imagery of lines 79–81). Dawn songs (*aubades*) are a genre of secular love poetry (cf. lines 91–93, with note); the sexual overtones of "turge" [swells] in line 144 are strong (cf. *Purg.* 19.64–69, with note).

In the presence of a single revolving circle, the image of the mechanical clock (an innovation introduced in the thirteenth century; this is one of the earliest references to it), implying multiple wheels, is particularly striking. We are reminded that the sun was created to measure time (see the note to lines 28–30), that the "clockwise" motion of clock hands imitates that of the sun, from left to right as seen by one facing south in the northern hemisphere (its north-facing correlative, the shadow on a sundial, also moves from left to right). The souls in the circle number twelve: the number of hours of both day and night, as well as of the signs of the zodiac (and the related, originally astrological, number of the tribes of Israel—see Gen. 35.22–26 and 37.5–11—and of the Apostles).

146–47. with tempering and sweetness: *Temper* is used of musical intonation; "sweetness" refers to the emotional effect; the phrase is an example of the rhetorical figure hendiadys ["one through two"]: it is equivalent to "sweet tones."

148. where rejoicing forevers itself: In Heaven, where rejoicing is perpetual. The verb

insemprarsi [to become perpetual], based on *sempre* [always], is one of Dante's daring neologisms, part of the elevated, Latinate style of much of the *Paradiso*.



CANTO 11

Sun, continued: the pilgrim's doubts—Aquinas' answers—life of saint Francis—decline of the Dominicans

- 1 O senseless care of mortals, how defective
 are the syllogisms that make you ply your wings
 downward!
- 4 This one was pursuing *iura*, and that one
 Aphorismi, this one priesthood, these sought
 to rule by force or by sophisms,
- 7 this one to steal, this one to gain public office,
 this other labored immersed in the pleasure of
 the flesh, and this other gave himself to idleness,
- 10 while, freed from all these things, I was with
 Beatrice up in Heaven, so gloriously received.
- 13 After each had returned to the point of the
 circle where he had been before, each stopped,
 like a candle on a chandelier,
- 16 and I heard, within the light that had earlier
 addressed me, one begin, smiling and becoming
 brighter:
- 19 "Just as I reflect his ray, so, looking into the
 eternal Light, I apprehend whence you derive
 your thoughts.

- 22 You are puzzled, and you wish my words to
make clear, in such open and ample language
as befits your hearing,
- 25 where earlier I said: 'Where one fattens well,'
and where I said: 'The second had not been
born'; and here one must distinguish well.
- 28 The Providence that governs the world by
that Counsel in which every created sight is
vanquished before it touches bottom,
- 31 so that the bride of him who with piercing
cries wedded her with his blessed blood, might
go toward her delight
- 34 secure in herself and also more faithful to
him, ordained two princes to protect her, to act
as her guides on this side and on that.
- 37 One was all seraphic in his love, the other in
wisdom was a splendor of cherubic light
on earth.
- 40 I will tell of one of them, because we speak of
both when praising one, whichever we take, for
their works were toward one same end.
- 43 Between Tupino and the stream that
descends from the hill chosen by the blessed
Ubaldo, there slopes the fertile side of a high mountain
- 46 from which Perugia feels the cold and heat at
Porta Sole, and behind it the heavy mountain
yoke makes Nocera and Gualdo weep.
- 49 From this slope, where it most breaks its
steepness, was born to the world a sun, as this
one is born at times from Ganges.

52 But let him who speaks of this place not say
Assisi, for he would come short, but Sunrise, if
he wishes to speak properly.

55 He was not yet far from his rising when he
began to make the earth feel strengthened by
his great power,

58 when, still a youth, he had to do battle with
his father for a lady to whom, as if she were
death, no one unlocks the gate of pleasure,

61 and before the bishop's court *et coram patre*
he wedded her; after that from day to day his
love for her grew stronger.

64 This lady, deprived of her first husband, had
waited, scorned and obscure, without a suitor
eleven hundred years and more until this man appeared,

67 nor had it availed that he who terrified the
whole world with his voice had found her fearless
with Amyclas,

70 nor had it availed to have been constant and
fierce in her love, so that, when Mary stayed
below, she wept with Christ upon the Cross.

73 But that I may proceed not too obscurely,
take Francis and Poverty for these two lovers
now in my extended speech.

76 Love and admiration and joyful glances
caused their harmony and their cheerful look to
be the occasion of holy thoughts,

79 so that the venerable Bernard was first in
taking off his shoes, and ran after such great
peace, and, running, thought himself slow.

- 82 Oh unknown riches! oh fertile good! Egidio
goes barefoot, Silvestro, too, following the
bridegroom, so pleasing is the bride.
- 85 So he goes on, that father, that master, with
his lady and that family already girt with the
humble rope.
- 88 Nor did any cowardice of heart weigh down
his brow for being the son of Pietro Bernardone
nor for appearing wondrously base,
- 91 but regally he set forth his harsh intention to
Innocent and from him had a first seal to
his order.
- 94 When the flock of poor folk grew behind him,
whose wondrous life would be better sung in the
glory of Heaven,
- 97 the Eternal Spirit, through Honorius, crowned
for a second time the holy will of this archshepherd.
- 100 And when, in his thirst for martyrdom, in the
proud presence of the Sultan he preached
Christ and those who followed him,
- 103 and, because he found the people too unripe
for conversion, and so as not to stay in vain,
returned to the fruitful Italian plantings,
- 106 on the bare rock between Tiber and Arno
from Christ he then took the last seal, which his
limbs bore for two years.
- 109 When it pleased the One who allotted him
such good to draw him up to the reward he
merited in making himself weak,
- 112 to his brothers, as to lawful heirs, he

- commended his dearest lady, and commanded
them to love her faithfully;
- 115 and from her bosom his glorious soul chose
to set forth, returning to its kingdom, and for his
body he wished no other bier.
- 118 Think now what he was, who was a worthy
colleague to steer Peter's ship on the deep sea
by a true star:
- 121 and this was our patriarch; thus you can
discern that whoever follows him as he
commands is laden with worthy merchandise.
- 124 But his flock has become greedy for new
foods, so that it must spread itself over divers
mountain pastures,
- 127 and the farther his roaming sheep wander
from him, the more they return empty of milk to
the sheepfold.
- 130 To be sure, there are those who fear the
harm and gather close around the shepherd,
but they are so few that their hoods require but little cloth.
- 133 Now, if my words have not been hoarse, and
if your listening has been attentive, if you
remember what has been said,
- 136 your wish will be in part fulfilled, because you
will see the plant from which they splinter off,
and you will see the remedy suggested by
- 139 'where one fattens well, if one does not wander.'"



CANTO 11

O insensata cura de' mortali,1
quanto son difettivi silogismi
quei che ti fanno in basso batter l'al!

Chi dietro a *iura* e chi ad amforismi4
sen giva, e chi seguendo sacerdozio,
e chi regnar per forza o per sofismi,
e chi rubare e chi civil negozio,7
chi nel diletto de la carne involto
s'affaticava, e chi si dava a l'ozio,
quando, da tutte queste cose sciolto,10
con Béatrice m'era suso in Cielo
cotanto gloriòsamente accolto.

Poi che ciascuno fu tornato ne lo13
punto del cerchio in che avanti s'era,
fermossi, come a candellier candelo,
e io senti' dentro a quella lumera16
che pria m'avea parlato, sorridendo
incominciar, faccendosi più mera:

"Così com' io del suo raggio resplendo,19
sì, riguardando ne la luce eterna,
li tuoi pensieri onde cagioni apprendo.

Tu dubbi, e hai voler che si ricerna22
in sì aperta e 'n sì distesa lingua
lo dicer mio ch' al tuo sentir si sterna,
ove dinanzi dissi: 'U' ben s'impingua,'25
e là u' dissi: 'Non nacque il secondo':
e qui è uopo che ben si distingua.

La Provedenza, che governa il mondo
con quel Consiglio nel quale ogne aspetto
creato è vinto pria che vada al fondo,
però che andasse ver' lo suo diletto
la sposa di colui ch' ad alte grida
disposò lei col sangue benedetto,
in sé sicura e anche a lui più fida,
due principi ordinò in suo favore
che quinci e quindi le fosser per guida.

L'un fu tutto serafico in ardore,
l'altro per sapienza in terra fue
di cherubica luce uno splendore.

De l'un dirò, però che d'amendue
si dice l'un pregiando, qual ch'om prende,
perch' ad un fine fur l'opere sue.

Intra Tupino e l'acqua che discende
del colle eletto dal beato Ubaldo,
fertile costa d'alto monte pende
onde Perugia sente freddo e caldo
da Porta Sole, e di retro le piange
per grave giogo Nocera con Gualdo.

Di questa costa, là dov' ella frange
più sua rattezza, nacque al mondo un sole,
come fa questo talvolta di Gange.

Però chi d'esso loco fa parole
non dica Ascesi, ché direbbe corto,
ma Oriente, se proprio dir vuole.

Non era ancor molto lontano da l'orto
ch' el cominciò a far sentir la terra
de la sua gran virtute alcun conforto,

28

31

34

37

40

43

46

49

52

55

che per tal donna giovinetto in guerra
del padre corse a cui, come a la morte,
la porta del piacer nessun diserra,
e dinanzi a la sua spirital corte
et coram patre le si fece unito;
poscia di dì in dì l'amò più forte.

58

Questa, privata del primo marito,
millecent' anni e più dispetta e scura
fino a costui si stette senza invito,
né valse udir che la trovò sicura
con Amiclate, al suon de la sua voce,
colui ch'a tutto 'l mondo fé paura,
né valse esser costante né feroce
sì che, dove Maria rimase giuso,
ella con Cristo pianse in su la croce.

61

64

Ma perch' io non proceda troppo chiuso,
Francesco e Povertà per questi amanti
prendi oramai nel mio parlar diffuso.

70

73

La lor concordia e i lor lieti sembianti,
amore e maraviglia e dolce sguardo
facieno esser cagion di pensier santi,
tanto che 'l venerabile Bernardo
si scalzò prima, e dietro a tanta pace
corse, e correndo li parve esser tardo.

76

79

Oh ignota ricchezza! oh ben ferace!
Scalzasi Egidio, scalzasi Silvestro
dietro a lo sposo, sì la sposa piace.

82

85

Indi sen va quel padre e quel maestro
con la sua donna e con quella famiglia
che già legava l'umile capestro.

- Né li gravò viltà di cuor le ciglia 88
per esser fi' di Pietro Bernardone
né per parer dispetto a maraviglia,
ma regalmente sua dura intenzione
ad Innocenzio aperse e da lui ebbe 91
primo sigillo a sua religione.
- Poi che la gente poverella crebbe 94
dietro a costui, la cui mirabil vita
meglio in gloria del Ciel si canterebbe,
di seconda corona redimita
fu per Onorio da l'Etterno Spiro 97
la santa voglia d'esto archimandrita.
- E poi che, per la sete del martiro, 100
ne la presenza del Soldan superba
predicò Cristo e li altri che 'l seguirono,
e per trovare a conversione acerba
troppo la gente, e per non stare indarno, 103
redissi al frutto de l'italica erba,
nel crudo sasso intra Tevero e Arno
da Cristo prese l'ultimo sigillo, 106
che le sue membra due anni portarono.
- Quando a colui ch' a tanto ben sortillo 109
piacque di trarlo suso a la mercede
ch' el meritò nel suo farsi pusillo,
a' frati suoi, sì com' a giuste rede,
raccomandò la donna sua più cara, 112
e comandò che l'amasssero a fede;
e del suo grembo l'anima preclara
mover si volle, tornando al suo regno, 115
e al suo corpo non volle altra bara.

Pensa oramai qual fu colui che degno
collega fu a mantener la barca
di Pietro in alto mar per dritto segno:
e questo fu il nostro patr'arca;
per che qual segue lui com' el comanda,
discerner puoi che buone merce carca.

118

Ma 'l suo pecuglio di nova vivanda
è fatto ghiotto, sì ch' esser non puote
che per diversi salti non si spanda;
e quanto le sue pecore remote
e vagabunde più da esso vanno,
più tornano a l'ovil di latte vòte.

124

Ben son di quelle che temono 'l danno
e stringonsi al pastor, ma son sì poche
che le cappe fornisce poco panno.

127

Or, se le mie parole non son fioche,
se la tua audienza è stata attenta,
se ciò ch'è detto a la mente revoche,
in parte fia la tua voglia contenta,
perché vedrai la pianta onde si scheggia
e vedra' il corrègger che argomenta
'U' ben s'impingua, se non si vaneggia.'"

130

133

136

139

NOTES

1–12. O senseless care of mortals ... so gloriously received: The singing of the teachers stirs the pilgrim to compare his reception in Heaven (cf. 23.16–18, 19–21 and notes) to vain pursuits. The apostrophe echoes the opening of Persius's first satire ("O cares of men, O what emptiness in things!"), and recalls the address of the proud (see *Purg.* 10.121–26 and note).

1–3. How defective ... your wings downward: Echoing mention of Siger's syllogisms (10.138), Dante sees vain activity as arising from faulty reasoning that checks the mind's movement to its goal (cf. *Purg.* 10.121–26). For a similar turn from faulty arguments to disaster, see *Inf.* 26.125 and note.

4–9. This one was pursuing ... to idleness: Nine activities in a descending hierarchy, which negatively expresses the variousness imposed by the heavens (see 10.1–12 and notes). If pursued for gain, jurisprudence [*iura*], medicine [*amforismi*] (after the Arabic title of Hippocrates's textbook), and the priesthood (lucrative for popular preachers, and because of the policies of the Avignon papacy; cf. 29.115–26), pervert the life of contemplation (cf. *Conv.* 3.11.10). The next four distort the active life by seizing rule through force, fraudulent sophisms (cf. *Inf.* 27.74–75 and note), thievish practices like usury, or by seeking elected office for the sake of graft (cf. *Inferno* 21–22). The last two are indulgence in pleasure and idleness. For the variousness of human activity, see 8.115–26, 118–20 and notes.

10–12. while freed ... so gloriously received: The commentators cite *Consol.* 1.pr.3.14: "But from above, safe from their angry confusion, we can laugh at them as they snatch off those worthless things." Beatrice guides the pilgrim's intellectual ascent, as Lady Philosophy that of Boethius (see Additional Note 1).

13–42. After each had returned ... one same end: When the wheel of the teachers stops, Thomas takes up the first of the remarks left unexplained in the previous canto (10.96; quoted in line 139); the other, expressed at 10.114, will be taken up in Canto 13 (91–111). Like Lady Philosophy, who appeals to first principles in explaining how Providence steers nature and human affairs toward the best outcome (see *Consol.* 3.pr.9, 4.pr.6, and Beatrice at 1.100–126 and 2.64, with notes; also *Mon.* 2.6.4–9), Thomas speaks of the corruption of his order by disclosing the divine plan for reforming the Church through two saints (here "princes")—Francis, not named until line 74, and Dominic, discussed in the next canto. For their cooperation toward the same end, compare 12.31–36 and note.

13–15. After each ... on a chandelier: Precise movement might again suggest clockworks, as in 10.139–48. In Dante's angelology the heaven of the sun corresponds to the Dominations, who contemplate the relation of Christ, the second Person, to the Holy Spirit (see

Conv. 2.5.7–11; and see 13.52–97 and note).

25–27. where earlier I said ... one must distinguish well: Thomas resolves the question at 10.96 by making explicit what is implicit, and the question at 10.114 with a distinction, which reconciles contradictory statements by adjusting the import of each. The Latinism *ricerna* [re-sift] in line 22 implies a distinction; it rhymes with *sterna* [roll out flat] in line 24, a term akin to *explicit* [unfolded]. The two methods suit the “intellectual” Dominicans and “affective” Franciscans respectively. See 13.34–35 and note.

28–42. The Providence ... toward one same end: In a rhetorical chiasmus, the Dominican Thomas praises Francis, founder of a rival order, while the Franciscan Bonaventura will praise Dominic, founder of the Order of Friars Preacher, or Dominicans; each criticizes his own order, however. Dante reflects the custom by which a member of each order praised the founder of the other on his feast day.

31–33. in order that the bride ... toward her delight: The bride is the Church, espoused to Christ through his sacrifice on the Cross. See Matt. 27.50: “When he had cried out with a loud voice [*clamavit voce magna*], yielded up the ghost” (cf. 15.133, *Purg.* 23.73–75, 30.11 and notes). The nuptial metaphor marking Francis’s lifelong imitation of Christ derives from the Canticle of Canticles, in which the “beloved” [*dilectus*] is a metaphor for Christ (see Canticle of Canticles 2.3, 2.8, etc., and *Purg.* 29.108–14; and see Bonaventura’s biography of Francis, *Legenda maior*, 9.1, 10.1). Dante followed the attribution of Canticles to Solomon explicit in the work’s Vulgate title (*Canticum cantorum Salomonis*), and Solomon is one of the teachers in the sun (10.112–14), as well as the subject of discussion in 13.91–96 (see note); which helps explain why the nuptial metaphor permeates the cantos in the sun (10.139–48, 12.43) and recurs in *Paradiso* (27.40, 31.3, 32.128); see Introduction, p. 8–9, and Additional Note 4.

34–36. secure in herself ... on this side and on that: The security of the Church might mean her protection from heresy by the Dominicans, and “faithfulness” the imitation of Christ’s life that Francis promoted; yet Dominic espouses faith (see 12.61–63 and note), while freedom from worldly cares (one meaning of *securitas*) was promoted by Franciscans in their Rule of 1221 (Chapter 8); the relation of the founders cuts both ways (see note to lines 40–42).

That the two princes guide “on this side and on that” echoes a prophecy, based on Daniel 12.5 and Apoc. 11.3, and inserted into a work by Joachim of Fiore (see 12.139–40 and note), regarding two champions of the Church: “There shall be two men, one here, the other there ... one Italian, one Spanish” [*erunt duo viri, unus hinc, alias inde ... unus italicus, alter hispanus*]. The passage likely influenced the choice of east and west at 49–51 and 12.46–51, and implies defense of the flanks of the Church, as if a chariot or ship (cf. 12.28–30, 106–8; *Purg.* 32.116–17 and note).

37–39. One was all seraphic ... cherubic light on earth: Identification of two founders with angelic orders may derive from Ubertino da Casale: “The first [Francis], purged

with the seraphic coal and inflamed with heavenly ardor, was seen to fire the whole world. The second [Dominic], truly a cherub outstretched and extending the light of wisdom, radiated more brightly over the darkness of the world, fecund in the word of his preaching" (Ubertino 1961, 421ab). Francis's relation to the seraphim is announced at the beginning of the *Legenda* (see preface, 1, 13.3; see also lines 52–54 and 106–8, with notes).

43–117. Between Tupino ... no other bier: Five terzinas introduce the twenty-five that contain Thomas's eulogy of Francis. After periphrases marking Francis's place of birth (lines 43–48), his life is narrated in figurative terms, first as a rising Sun (49–57), and as a marriage with Poverty (58–75, also 31–33, 112–17) that excites others to follow him and form an order (76–87), soon officially approved (88–99). Francis's expedition in quest of martyrdom (100–105) prepares the account of his stigmata (wounds in the hands, feet, and side) and death (106–17).

Francis was born in 1182 to Pica Bourlement and Pietro Bernardone, a wool-merchant in the Umbrian town of Assisi, and christened Giovanni (Francis was added subsequently, perhaps by his father). Pleasure-loving as a youth, Francis aspired to bear arms, but after illness kept him from joining a military expedition to Apulia, he acted on the scriptural admonition to sell all his possessions, give to the poor, and take up the cross (Matt. 10.9–10, 19.21, 16.24, respectively). In 1209 his rule for his Friars Minor ("minor" echoes Matt. 25.45; see *Legenda* 6.5) received verbal sanction from Pope Innocent III, followed by confirmation of a "sealed rule" in 1223 by Pope Honorius III. After Francis's return from Egypt in 1219 he founded a tertiary order of penitents, open to men and women (1223), a parallel order of nuns having been established before 1221 by his friend Chiara [Clare] Scifi (see 3.97–102 and note). Late in 1224 Francis was witnessed bearing the stigmata; he died near Assisi on 4 October 1226, now his feast day, and was canonized in 1228 by Pope Gregory IX (see Additional Note 5).

After line 75, Dante largely adheres to the official biography, the *Legenda maior* by Bonaventura, minister general of the order (other versions were ordered destroyed). Bonaventura strove to mediate between the lax (or Conventual) and rigorist (or Spiritual) positions regarding poverty that finally divided the order (by 1318 a number of Spirituals had been condemned and burned; see 12.124 and note). Dante also draws on sources more insistent in advocating poverty, such as the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu* of Ubertino da Casale (see 12.124–26 and note), which includes material from the anonymous *Sacrum Commercium sancti Francisci cum domina Paupertate*.

43–54. Between Tupino ... if he wishes to speak properly: The geographic surroundings of Assisi are outlined (see map, p. 187): the streams Chiascio and Topino, that flow respectively south from Mount Ubaldo and west past the southern end of Mount Subasio to join each other and then flow into the Tiber (see lines 106–8); the massif of Subasio, stretching north-south, which during summer reflects heat, and cold in winter because of snows, on Perugia to the west; and the gentler slope, east of Assisi, from which Francis is said to have risen at his birth.

The passage mentions the sun three times and prepares a key theme of the biography: Francis rises like the sun in bringing light, vigor, and heat (that is, love) to the earth; but Francis is himself an effect of the sun, both because it is the "father of all mortal life" (see 22.116); and

as a symbol of God's Providence trained on the earth below (see 1.40–42 and note; *Conv.* 3.12.7–8).

44. the blessed Ubaldo: Ubaldo began as a hermit on the mountain that later bore his name. After attempting to establish a religious order, he was made bishop of Gubbio, and intervened in 1148 to save the city from destruction by Frederick Barbarossa, the Holy Roman emperor. He is a forerunner of Francis, as the hermit John the Baptist was a forerunner of Christ (see 12.58–59 and note, and *Legenda*, preface, 1)

49–51. From this slope ... at times from Ganges: Francis is a figurative sun, while the pilgrim finds himself within the planetary sun that rises "at times" from Ganges; that is, at the spring equinox (cf. *Purg.* 2.1–6 and note), when it is most vigorous (see 12.54 and note). Mention of the sun while the pilgrim is within it has its rhetorical equivalent in the fact that the figurative language of the biographies is itself fostered by solar virtue. See Chapter 6 of Durling/Martinez 1990.

52–54. But let him who speaks ... to speak properly: Francis is here named after Christ, who rises like a sun, "oriens ex alto" [the rising from on high] (Luke 1.78). In the preface to the *Legenda*, Francis is seen "under the image of an angel coming up from the rising of the sun [*ab ortu solis*] with the seal of the living God" (cf. *Apoc.* 7.2). See also Malachi 4.2, "The sun of justice shall arise" [*orietur vobis ... sol iustitiae*] and 3.1, "Behold I send my angel" [*ecce ego mitto angelum meum*], texts featured in advent and nativity liturgies. Francis's imitation of the advent Christ is a staple of the biographies (*Legenda*, preface, 1; *Sacrum commercium*, 1.12, 2.16–17), and related to his role in the *Legenda* as herald of the second Advent, the Last Judgment (see Emmerson and Herzman 1992). See Additional Notes 4 and 6.

53. not say Assisi, for he would come short: The medieval spelling *Ascesi* means "I have risen," and evokes both Christ's ascent of the Cross (a key Franciscan theme) and his Resurrection; but the similar name of *Oriente* [rising place] evokes the cosmic Christ as the rising sun (see previous note). Dante's focus on Francis's name echoes Zachariah 6.12: "Behold a man, the Orient is his name" [*Ecce vir Oriens nomen eius*], a prophecy of the reconstruction of the Temple, interpreted to mean that Francis would help rebuild the Church.

55–75. He was not yet far ... my extended speech: Thomas passes from solar metaphor to Francis's love for Lady Poverty, the dominant motive of his life. "Do battle" in line 58 reflects how Francis, who had wanted to serve as a soldier, is presented in the biographies as a knight engaged in service to Christ or to his beloved lady, Poverty (*Legenda* 1.3, 13.9–10; *Sacrum commercium* 1.9; and see 12.31–45 and notes). Thomas's prolixity (*parlar diffuso*) suggests rhetorical elaboration, not his usual terse dialectical style: cf. lines 25–27 and note.

58–62. when still a youth ... et coram patre [in front of the father] he wedded her: The *Legenda* (2.4) relates how, after a quarrel about money Francis had taken from his father for charitable works, Francis publicly returned his father's property, and stripped naked (or to a loincloth) in front of his father and the bishop of Assisi. The Latin phrase in line 61 can refer to

Pietro Bernardone or to the bishop, or, echoing Matt. 10.33, to the "father in heaven" to whom Francis shifts his allegiance (cf. *Purg.* 11.1–24, 4–6 and notes). A spandrel in the lower church in the basilica in Assisi, painted between 1308 and 1334, depicts a homely *sancta Paupertas* [saint Poverty] married to Francis, with Christ officiating (see *Legenda* 14.4 and [figure 7](#)).



Figure 7. The Wedding of Saint Francis and Poverty

60. no one unlocks the gate of pleasure: Poverty is as unwelcome as death. For assent as a door closed or opened by the will, see *Purg.* 18.61–63. As the biographies speak of Francis's willing physical embrace [*amplexus*] of Poverty (*Sacrum commercium* 1.13, *Legenda* 7.6), with Solomon's Canticle of Canticles in the background, the expression "gate of pleasure" is, metaphorically, erotic (see Auerbach 1959).

64–75. This lady ... my extended speech: The shunning of Lady Poverty, from the nudity of Adam through the Crucifixion to Francis's day, is detailed in the *Sacrum commercium* and in Ubertino's *Arbor vitae*; more briefly in the *Legenda* (7.1–2). "Scorned" comes from Is. 53.3 [*despectum*], describing the "man of sorrows"—in Christian exegesis, Christ (*Legenda* 1.6);

see 7.28–30 and note. The loathing of poverty was a topic of vernacular literature (see *RR* 10111–10234 and the Tuscan lyric poets Monte Andrea and Cecco Angolieri; see Chapter 5 of Steinberg 2007)

64–72. This lady ... Christ upon the Cross: This scene is in the *Arbor vitae*, not the *Legenda*. Mary's desire to join Christ on the Cross was a topic of the *planctus Mariae*, a trope in the passion liturgy (cf. *Purg.* 33.4–7 and note).

67–68. fearless with Amyclas: In Lucan's *Pharsalia* (5.504–59, recalled in *Conv.* 4.13.10–12), Caesar, seeking passage across the sea to Italy, knocks on the door of the fisherman Amyclas, whose hut is unbarred, as he is poor [*pauper*] and fears no robbers. The Gospels attest that fishermen were dear to Christ; they also figure in Franciscan biography (*Sacrum commercium* 2.20). Lucan's episode from the Roman civil war is presented by Dante as preparatory of Christian values; the emperor Trajan exemplifies humility with Mary and David in *Purg.* 10.64–78 (see notes); Fabritius is "a great man in his poverty" at *Mon.* 2.5.11; Caesar's preparation of the world for Christ is narrated in *Par.* 6.61–81 (see notes).

73–75. But that I may proceed ... in my extended speech: The revelation of Francis's name and the identity of the lovers is the center of Thomas's speech.

76–84. Love and admiration ... so pleasing is the bride: The sight of Francis and Poverty excites others to pursue her. They cast off their shoes like Francis, imitating both Gospel prescription (cf. Luke 22.35 and *Legenda*, 3.1, 4.7) and the first biography of Francis by Thomas of Celano (in Habig 1973; 1.10.24: "Bernard ... ran eagerly after the saint of God").

79–83. so that the venerable Bernard ... Silvestro too: In mentioning Bernard, Egidio, and Silvestro in order, Dante follows Bonaventura (*Legenda* 3.3–5). Bernard of Quintavalle was Francis's first disciple. A wealthy merchant of Assisi, he sold all his goods and gave to the poor; in Bologna, he founded the first Franciscan convent (1211). The humble, uneducated Egidio was subject to ecstatic visions. He wrote a book on Francis entitled *Verba aurea* and died in 1262. As a priest, Silvestro haggled with Francis over the price of stone for building a church; shamed by Francis's generosity, he became a disciple. He died ca. 1240.

82. Oh unknown riches oh fertile good: That poverty is truly wealth was an axiom of Francis's teaching (see *Legenda* 4.7, 7.1), based on the Gospel parables of the treasure hidden in a field and the pearl of great price for which one ought to give all one has (Matt. 13.44–46, cited in *Legenda* 6.4, 7.1, 11.14). Mineo 1992 points out the echo of Lucan's episode of Amyclas (*Phar.* 5.527–29), translated by Dante in *Conv.* 4.13.12: "Oh as yet scantily understood riches [*ricchezze*] of the gods!"

85–93. So he goes on ... first seal to his order: Innocent III, the thirteenth-century pope who reinvigorated the papacy, though troubled by the austerity of Francis's proposed rule, granted verbal approval in 1209.

87. already girt with the humble rope: Francis was said to have adopted the rope belt [*capestro; corda*] because of Matt.10.9–10—hence “corded friars” (*Legenda* 3.1). Along with the coarse brown habit, the rope soon identified the order (cf. *Inf.* 27.91–93, and *Inf.* 16.106–14 and notes; see also 15.100–102 and note).

88–90. Nor did any cowardice ... wondrously base: Francis’s father, Pietro, was a merchant, thus socially second-class (cf. *Legenda* 6.1); Francis himself consorted with lepers and beggars (*Legenda* 1.5–6). “Base” [*dispetto*] echoes its use for Poverty (line 65, “scorned”), further binding the spouses.

91–93. but regally ... first seal to his order: See *Legenda* 7.7, on poverty: “This is the royal dignity which our Lord Jesus assumed when for our sake he became poor, that he might make us rich through his poverty.” Francis’s regal status (see “princes,” line 35), arising from his abasement, echoes the exaltation of Christ through his humility, by which his name is exalted in Heaven and earth (cf. *Philippians* 2. 5–11, cited in the biographies, e.g. *Sacrum commercium*, 1.21); see 7.118–20, 19.100–111 and notes, and Additional Note 4.

94–99. When the flock ... this archsheperd: Derived from Greek, *archimandrita* is used of Pope Clement V in Dante’s *Ep.* 11.13 (see also *Mon.* 3.11.17, where it describes Peter). Dante’s mention of official approval of the rule underscores Francis’s obedience to authority alongside his love of poverty; Mineo 1992 suggests that Dante scores a polemical point in having the Holy Spirit move Honorius to approve the Rule, placing it beyond revision by subsequent popes.

100–108. And when in his thirst ... bore for two years: The last part of Thomas’s eulogy links Francis’s expedition to Sultan Melek-el-Khamil (1217–38) in Damietta, Egypt, during the Fourth Crusade—out of sequence here, as it occurred in 1219, before Honorius’s approval of the *regula bullata* [sealed rule] in 1223—to the stigmata of 1224. Following *Legenda* 9.9, the miracle compensates for Francis’s frustrated quest for martyrdom.

101–2. in the proud presence ... those who followed him: Francis supposedly risked his life in preaching to the sultan, but he was received courteously, heard out, and allowed to leave unharmed. That the episode seems suited more to Dominic than Francis argues for the similarity of the founders (cf. 12.31–36 and note); it also testifies to Francis as a “knight” of Christ [*miles Christi*]; see *Legenda* 1.3, 2.8, 9.7, 13.10, etc.), and exemplifies the parallel often drawn between Franciscans and crusaders as those who take up the cross and follow Christ (see Derbes 1996).

106–108. on the bare rock ... bore for two years: *Legenda* 13.3 and other biographies relate how the stigmata were impressed on Francis at La Verna in the Tuscan Appenines, on or near the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (Sept. 14). Key terms in Dante’s account (“seal,” “limbs,” “bore”) spring from the biographies, but Dante omits the vision of the Seraph with “an image of a man crucified in the midst of the wings,” nor does he mention the wounds described in the *Legenda*.

107. from Christ he then took the last seal: After the first (line 93) and second seals (lines 97–98), the third seal is pressed directly into Francis's flesh. See *Legenda* 4.11: "Francis had the stigmata of our lord Jesus Christ impressed in him with the finger of the living God, as if the sealed bull of Christ, the supreme pontiff, for the confirmation of the rule in every way and the commendation of its author." For the idea of "sealing" with the image of Christ, see 2 Cor. 1.22.

109–17. When the One ... no other bier: As Providence sent Francis to be born, God will raise up his soul and complete the circle of his life. The rivers of the birthplace (line 43) are echoed in the Tiber and Arno (line 106) framing La Verna.

110–11. the reward he merited in making himself weak: "Weak" [*pusillo*] was used by Francis of his flock ("pusillus grex"), and is like expressions Francis used of himself ("small and least [*minimus*] servant," related to the term *frater minor* [lesser friar]; see note to lines 43–117), versions of which Dante also used of himself (*Ep.* 11.9): "I am one of the least [*minima*] of the sheep in Christ's pasture."

112–14. to his brothers ... to love her faithfully: Mineo 1993 observes that "heirs" and "command" refer to Francis's testament, in which he forbids lax interpretations of his Rule; defense of its rigor became crucial to the Spirituals.

115–17: and from her bosom ... no other bier: Two years after receiving the stigmata, Francis died at the small church of the Porziuncola, near Assisi, after asking to be placed on the ground (*Legenda* 14.3; see also 3.5, 5.1). He rises to Heaven from the same earth from which he rose as a sun (see lines 49–57). Dante drew on the ascensions of both Christ and Francis for the death of Beatrice (Cf. *Legenda* 14.6, *VN* 23.7)

An implicit model for Francis's life is Ps. 18.5–7, used liturgically to signify the descent, birth, manifestation, and return to Heaven of the Word (Advent, Nativity, Epiphany, Ascension, respectively). The Psalm includes solar and nuptial imagery (18.5–6: "He hath set his tabernacle in the sun ... as a bridegroom [*sponsus*] coming out of his bride chamber"), understood as referring to the Incarnation. Francis's return to his kingdom echoes Ps. 18.7: "His going out is from the end of heaven [*a summo caelo*] and his circuit even to the end thereof [*ad summum eius*]." The psalm was well known to Dante (cf. *Conv.* 2.5.12 and *Ep.* 5.2–6; see also 7.30–33 and note). There is also a link here to Dominic's life (cf. 12.76–78 and note).

118–39. Think now ... if one does not wander: Francis's standard applies equally to the founder of the Dominicans; therefore the corruption of one group (line 139, said of contemporary Dominicans) is as lamentable as that of the other (Franciscan decline is lamented in the next canto). Auerbach 1959 observes that Thomas uses ninety lines of biography to explain one-half line of text.

118–32. Think now ... but little cloth: Thomas clarifies his remark (reiterated as line 139), describing the founder of his own order, Dominic, first as co-helmsman of the ship of the Church (118–20; see *Purg.* 32.116–17 and note, *Ep.* 6.3), then as the flagship of a fleet of cargo

vessels (his followers, 121–23; cf. *Purg.* 26.73–75 and note). Thomas then returns to the metaphor of fraternal discipline as sheep grazing, reproaching those who wander after novel, inferior nourishment, so that they return to the sheepfold empty of milk (124–29). Similar metaphors were adopted for Francis's leadership of his friars (*Legenda* 4.5, 8.3, 9.6) so the parallelism of the lives is maintained this way as well; see also 12.142–45 and note.

131–32. so few that their hoods require but little cloth: An abrupt shift from metaphor (the good friars as sheep who keep near the shepherd) to fact (all friars wore hoods; cf. the "jovial friars" at *Inf.* 23.61–63, and cf. 22.76–78 and note).

133–39. Now, if my words ... if one does not wander: If the value of the main stem is grasped, then deviance from it is correspondingly lamentable; the same goes for straying from the pastures of good fraternal discipline; thus the language of 10.94, repeated as line 139, is justified. For the metaphors, see note to lines 49–51.