



CANTO 12

*Sun, continued: second circle of theologians, saint Bonaventura—
life of saint Domini—decline of the Franciscans—the second circle named*

- 1 As soon as the blessed flame finished speaking
 the last word, the holy millstone began to turn,
4 and it had not completed the circle before
 another enclosed it and took motion from its
 motion and song from its song,
7 song that in those sweet pipes surpasses our
 muses, our sirens, as much as a first shining
 surpasses its reflection.
- 10 As through a tenuous cloud two arcs curve
 parallel and colored alike, when Juno commands
 her handmaid,
- 13 the outer born from the inner one, like the
 speech of that desirous nymph whom love
 consumed as the sun does vapors,
- 16 and cause people here to predict the
 weather, thanks to the pact God made with
 Noah, that the world will never again be flooded:
- 19 so the two garlands of those sempiternal
 roses turned about us, and so the outer replied
 to the inner one.

22 After the solemn dance and the great
rejoicing, both of the singing and of the flaming
of light with light, joyous and affectionate,
25 ceased all together in one instant and with
one will, like eyes which by the pleasure that
moves them must always be closed or lifted together,
28 from the heart of one of the new lights there
came a voice, which made me seem a needle
to the pole star, as I turned to its *where*,
31 and it began: "The love that makes me
beautiful draws me to speak of the other leader,
because of whom my own has been so praised here:
34 fitting is it that, where the one is, the other be
brought in, so that, as they went to war together,
so their glory may shine as one.
37 The army of Christ, which cost so much to
rearm, was marching behind the standard, slow,
fearful, and scattered,
40 when the Emperor who rules forever provided
for his endangered army by grace alone, not
because they were worthy,
43 and, as has been said, he sent to the aid of
his bride two champions, by whose deeds and
words the straying people were brought to themselves.
46 In that region where sweet Zephyr rises to
open the new leaves with which we see Europe
clothed again,
49 not far from the striking of the waves behind
which, in its long flight, the sun each day
disappears from view,

- 52 sits fortunate Calaruega, under the protection
of the great shield on which the lion is subjected
and subjects:
- 55 therein was born the amorous lover of the
Christian faith, the holy athlete, benign toward
his own but harsh to his enemies,
- 58 and, as soon as it was created, his mind was
so filled with lively power that, still in his mother,
it made her a prophet.
- 61 When the betrothal was completed at the
holy font between him and Faith, where they
endowed each other with mutual health,
- 64 the lady who gave consent for him saw in her
sleep the marvelous fruit that was to be born of
him and of his heirs,
- 67 and so that he might be in name what he was
in deed, a spirit moved from here to name him
with the possessive of him to whom he belonged.
- 70 *Dominicus* he was called, and I say he was
the husbandman whom Christ chose to help
him in his vineyard.
- 73 Surely he seemed the messenger and familiar
of Christ, for the first love that became manifest
in him was to the first counsel that Christ gave.
- 76 Often was he found by his nurse silent but
awake upon the ground, as if to say: 'I have
come for this.'
- 79 O his father truly Felix!. O truly Johanna his
mother, if one truly speaks the interpreted meaning!
- 82 Not for the world, for whose sake they labor

now, following the man from Ostia and Taddeo,
but for love of the true manna,

85 in short time he became a great teacher, so
that he took to tending the vine that quickly
withered if the vinekeeper is lazy.

88 And from the See that was formerly more
benign toward the just poor—not because of the
throne but because of him who sits there,
who is degenerate—

91 he asked, not to pay out two or three for six,
not the income of the first vacancy, not *decimas*,
quae sunt pauperum Dei,

94 but permission to fight against the errors of
the world, to defend the seeds that bore the
twenty-four plants that now surround you.

97 Then, with doctrine and with a will, by
apostolic license he went forth like a torrent fed
by a deep spring,

100 and his attack struck the thickets of heresy
most strongly where the resistance was greatest.

103 From him are derived various streams that
water the Catholic vineyard, so that its vines
stand more vigorous.

106 If such was one wheel of the chariot in which
Holy Church defended itself and vanquished in
the field its civil strife,

109 the excellence of the other one should be
clear to you, about whom, before my coming,
Thomas was so courteous.

112 But the track made by its outer circumference

- has been abandoned, so that there is mold
where the crust was.
- 115 His troop, who marched straight while their
feet followed his footprints, has so turned about
that the one in front throws seed contrary to the one behind,
- 118 and soon it will be seen by the harvest of their
poor farming, when the tares will complain that
the granary is closed to them.
- 121 I say indeed: whoever should search page by
page through our volume would find leaves
where he would read 'I am still as I was,'
- 124 but it will not be one from Casale or from
Acquasparta, whence they come to the
Scripture so disposed that one flees it and the
other narrows it.
- 127 I am the life of Bonaventura of Bagnoreggio,
who in my great duties always subordinated the
left-hand cares.
- 130 Illuminato and Agostino are here, who were
among the first barefoot paupers to become
friends with God by wearing the rope.
- 133 Hugh of Saint Victor is here with them, and
Petrus Comestor and Peter of Spain, who
shines down there in twelve volumes,
- 136 Nathan the prophet and Chrysostom the
metropolitan, and Anselm, and that Donatus
who deigned to put his hand to the first art.
- 139 Rhabanus is here, and at my side shines the
Calabrian abbot Joachim, endowed with prophetic spirit.
- 142 To praise so great a paladin I was moved by

the fiery courtesy of brother Thomas and his
judicious words,
145 and all this company was moved with me."



CANTO 12

Sì tosto come l'ultima parola
la benedetta fiamma per dir tolse,
a rotar cominciò la santa mola,
e nel suo giro tutta non si volse
prima ch' un'altra di cerchio la chiuse,
e moto a moto e canto a canto colse,
canto che tanto vince nostre muse,
nostre serene, in quelle dolci tube,
quanto primo splendor quel che refuse.

1

Come si volgon per tenera nube
due archi paralleli e concolori,
quando Iunone a sua ancella iube,
nascendo di quel d'entro quel di fori
a guisa del parlar di quella vaga
ch' amor consunse come sol vapori,
e fanno qui la gente esser presaga,
per lo patto che Dio con Noè puose,
del mondo che già mai più non s'allaga:
così di quelle sempiterne rose
volgiensi circa noi le due ghirlande,
e sì l'estrema a l'intima rispuose.

10

13

16

19

Poi che 'l tripudio e l'altra festa grande,
sì del cantare e sì del fiammeggiarsi
luce con luce gaudiose e blande,
insieme a punto e a voler quetarsi,
pur come li occhi ch' al piacer che i move
conviene insieme chiudere e levarsi,

22

25

- del cor de l'una de le luci nove 28
si mosse voce che l'ago a la stella
parer mi fece, in volgermi al suo *dove*,
e cominciò: "L'amor che mi fa bella 31
mi tragge a ragionar de l'altro duca
per cui del mio ben sì ben ci si favella:
degno è che dov' è l'un, l'altro s'induca, 34
sì che, com' elli ad una militaro,
così la gloria loro insieme luca.

L'essercito di Cristo, che sì caro 37
costò a riarmar, dietro a la 'nsegna
si movea tardo, sospeccioso e raro,
quando lo 'mperador che sempre regna 40
provide a la milizia, ch'era in forse,
per sola grazia, non per esser degna,
e, come è detto, a sua sposa soccorse 43
con due campioni, al cui fare, al cui dire
lo popol disviato si raccorse.

In quella parte ove surge ad aprire 46
Zefiro dolce le novelle fronde
di che si vede Europa rivestire,
non molto lungi al percuoter de l'onde 49
dietro a le quali, per la lunga foga,
lo sol talvolta ad ogne uom si nasconde,
siede la fortunata Calaroga 52
sotto la protezion del grande scudo
in che soggiace il leone e soggioga:
dentro vi nacque l'amoroso drudo 55
de la fede cristiana, il santo atleta
benigno a' suoi e a' nemici crudo,

e come fu creata, fu repleta
sì la sua mente di viva virtute
che ne la madre lei fece profeta.

58

Poi che le sponsalizie fuor compiute
al sacro fonte intra lui e la Fede,
u' si dotar di mutüa salute,

61

la donna che per lui l'assenso diede
vide nel sonno il mirabile frutto
ch'uscir dovea di lui e de le rede,

64

e perché fosse qual era in costrutto,
quinci si mosse spirito a nomarlo
del possessivo di cui era tutto.

67

Domenico fu detto, e io ne parlo
sì come de l'agricola che Cristo
elesse a l'orto suo per aiutarlo.

70

Ben parve messo e famigliar di Cristo,
ché 'l primo amor che 'n lui fu manifesto
fu al primo consiglio che diè Cristo.

73

Spesse fiate fu tacito e desto
trovato in terra da la sua nutrice,
come dicesse: 'Io son venuto a questo.'

76

Oh padre suo veramente Felice!
oh madre sua veramente Giovanna,
se interpretata val come si dice!

79

Non per lo mondo, per cui mo s'affanna
di retro ad Ostiense e a Taddeo,
ma per amor de la verace manna
in picciol tempo gran dottor si feo,
tal che si mise a circuir la vigna,
che tosto imbianca se 'l vignaio è reo.

82

85

- E a la sedia che fu già benigna 88
più a' poveri giusti—non per lei
ma per colui che siede, che traligna—
non dispensare o due o tre per sei, 91
non la fortuna di prima vacante,
non *decimas, quae sunt pauperum Dei*
addimandò, ma contro al mondo errante 94
licenza di combatter per lo seme
del qual ti fascian ventiquattro piante.

Poi, con dottrina e con volere insieme, 97
con l'ufficio apostolico si mosse,
quasi torrente ch'alta vene preme,
e ne li sterpi eretici percossé 100
l'impeto suo, più vivamente quivi
dove le resistenze eran più grosse.

Da lui si fecer poi diversi rivi 103
onde l'orto catolico si riga
sì che i suoi arbuscelli stan più vivi.

Se tal fu l'una rota de la biga 106
in che la Santa Chiesa si difese
e vinse in campo la sua civil briga,
ben ti dovrebbe assai esser palese 109
l'eccellenza de l'altra, di cui Tomma
dinanzi al mio venir fu sì cortese.

Ma l'orbita che fé la parte somma 112
di sua circunferenza è derelitta,
sì ch' è la muffa dov' era la gromma.

La sua famiglia, che si mosse dritta 115
coi piedi a le sue orme, è tanto volta
che quel dinanzi a quel di retro gitta,

e tosto si vedrà de la ricolta
de la mala coltura, quando il loglio
si lagnerà che l'arca li sia tolta.

118

Ben dico: chi cercasse a foglio a foglio
nostro volume, ancor troveria carta
u' leggerebbe: 'l' mi son quel ch' i' soglio,'
ma non fia da Casal né d'Acquasparta,
là onde vegnon tali a la scrittura
ch' uno la fugge e altro la coarta.

121

Io son la vita di Bonaventura
da Bagnoreggio, che ne' grandi offici
sempre pospuosi la sinistra cura.

124

Illuminato e Augustin son quici,
che fuor de' primi scalzi poverelli
che nel capestro a Dio si fero amici.

127

Ugo da San Vitto re è qui con elli,
e Pietro Mangiadore e Pietro Spano,
lo qual giù luce in dodici libelli,

130

Natàn profeta e 'l metropolitano
Crisostomo e Anselmo, e quel Donato
ch' a la prim' arte degnò porre mano.

133

Rabano è qui, e lucemi dallato
il calavrese abate Giovacchino,
di spirito profetico dotato.

136

Ad inveggiar cotanto paladino
mi mosse l'infiammata cortesia
di fra Tommaso e 'l discreto latino,
e mosse meco questa compagnia."

139

142

145

NOTES

1–45. As soon as ... brought to themselves: Thomas finishes, and the circle of preachers turns; it is then enclosed by a second circle of souls, which matches song and movement to the first; when both stop, a light and voice emerge from the new circle to praise the founder of the Dominican order.

1–6. As soon as ... and song from its song: Using an image found in Alfraganus and Ristoro d'Arezzo (*Composizione del mondo*, 1.23; see *Conv.* 3.5.14), Dante compares the nearly flat diurnal course of the sun as seen from the poles to a circular millstone, which turns horizontally over a stone fixed underneath it.

7–9. Song that in those sweet pipes ... surpasses its reflection: Explaining the music of the spheres and the sun's role in moderating it (*Comm.* 2.3.1), Macrobius reports Plato's notion that "a singing Siren sits upon each of the spheres" (*Republic* 10.617b–c), and connects the idea to that of nine Muses distributed in the heavens: Dante's wheeling teachers fulfill and transcend the myth.

10–21. As through a tenuous cloud ... to the inner one: The two circles appear as a double rainbow, identified first with pagan references, then with an episode of Christian sacred history. Juno's handmaid and messenger is Iris, the rainbow (Ovid, *Met.* 1.270–71); the nymph is Echo, the daughter of air and earth; rejected by Narcissus, she withered away to a voice incapable of initiating speech (*Met.* 3.339–510; cf. 3.16–18, 121–123 and notes).

The second circle mirrors the first because the first is primary, as the intellect is primary, followed by the will (see Additional Note 3). The double rainbow, with the second inverting the sequence of colors of the first, is also an image of how the two cantos reflect each other chiastically. Announced by the celestial crossing that suggests the Greek letter X, described in 10.7–21, the chiastic structure is most discernible in the fact that Thomas's list of preachers (10.91–138) precedes his eulogy of Francis (11.43–117, while Bonaventura's list (12.127–145) follows his praise of Dominic (12.45–105). In both cases, the invectives against the degraded orders follow the eulogies (Thomas's at 11.124–38, Bonaventura's at 12.112–26).

16–18. and cause people here ... will never again be flooded: The advent of the reformers, like that of Christ, renews the covenant God made with man after the Flood (Gen. 9.9–15, esp. 13, 15): "I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be the sign of a covenant between me, and between the earth ... there shall no more be waters of a flood to destroy all flesh." The *Legenda of Francis* (preface, 1) presents his coming as "like the rainbow that lights up the clouds with sudden glory [Eccl. 50.8], bearing in himself the sign of God's covenant, bringing the good news of peace and salvation to man." The praise delivered in this canto will in many ways echo Thomas's of Francis in the previous one, as if a second rainbow; poetic form

manifests a renewed covenant between God and man. Parallels between the two cantos are indicated in the notes below.

22–36. After the solemn dance ... may shine as one: These lines parallel 11.13–42, preparing the eulogy of Francis. The language marks the militant activity of this founder (cf. lines 32, 35, 37–39, 41, 44). The Bull of Gregory IX canonizing Dominic refers to the two orders as "legions of the Friars Preachers and Friars Minor, with the generals he [God] had selected to lead them together in battle" (see the discussion of Gregory IX in Lehner 1964).

22–27. After the solemn dance ... lifted together: The cosmic motions illustrated in the working of the body, the microcosm: in addition to the parallel blinking of the eyes/circles, that the organs of sight (associated with intellection) are moved by pleasure (affecting the will) embodies a cooperation of the two circles (Cf. 2.142–44 and note; see Additional Note 6). Reflects 11.13–18.

28–30. from the heart ... as I turned to its where: The pilgrim is a compass needle to the polestar of the next speaker, Bonaventura, in life the minister general of the Franciscans, thus their guide (that the pilgrim turns to a voice rather than a light echoes 11.16–18). Mention of the recently invented compass, an image also found in contemporary lyric poetry, evokes Dominic's guidance of the ship of the Church (11.118–21); see also note to lines 37–39, 106–11.

31–45. and it began ... brought to themselves: Five terzinas of preparation by Bonaventura for his biography of Dominic, parallel to 11.28–42, also five terzinas.

31–36. and it began ... their glory may shine as one: Love moves Bonaventura to match the praise spoken by Thomas, while Thomas is moved by the logical conclusion that Francis and Dominic worked to the same end (cf. 11.40–42)

34. fitting it is that ... the other be brought in: The phrase for reciprocity (in Italian, "l'un l'altro"; cf. *Purg.* 6.73–75), revises earlier instances where it signified rivalry; cf. *Inf.* 25.121–23, 32.126; and esp. *Purg.* 11.97–99 (rival poets) and 16.109–11 (papacy and empire) and notes. Significant tension did exist between the orders: although Bonaventura himself was moderate and was influenced by Aquinas, Alexander of Hales and other Franciscans bitterly attacked Thomas's views (see Wéber 1974). Thomas criticized Franciscan positions on the primacy of will and apostolic poverty and was skeptical of the stigmata (Mineo 1992). This passage parallels 11.37–38.

37–39. The army of Christ ... fearful and scattered: The high cost was Christ's sacrifice (cf. Acts 20.28, 1 Cor. 6.20, and *Par.* 11.31–33); or, as some commentators claim, that of the Apostles (see 27.40–45, and *Ep.* 11.2, "They consecrated with their blood" [*sanguine consecrarunt*]). The "standard" is the cross, the battle standard [*vexillum*] of the faith (cf. *Inf.* 34.1 and note). The Church is slow for lack of zeal; fearful because it is assailed by heresy; scattered because it lacks strong popes.

43–45. and as has been said ... brought to themselves: This parallels 11.31–33 on the espousal of Francis and poverty, as Bonaventura acknowledges. “Deeds” and “words” refer to the preaching and activity the orders fostered; both founders and orders combined the active with the contemplative life. That the orders collaborate to restore the Church is found in Gregory’s Bull of Canonization, and also in the chapter on Dominic in the *Golden Legend*, in which he embraces Francis.

46–105. In that region ... stand more vigorous: Bonaventura relates in twenty terzinas the life of Dominic, parallel to Thomas’s life of Francis (11.43–117). The geography of the birthplace (lines 46–57) is followed by testimonies to the saint’s virtue, his marriage to faith, and dedication to poverty (58–81); then his pursuit of reform (82–87), the approval of his order (88–96), and defense of the Church against heresy (97–102); finally the growth of the order (103–5).

Domingo Guzmán was born in Calaruega, Old Castile, between 1170 and 1175, possibly of a noble family. After theological studies at the University of Palencia, he became in 1195 a canon of the cathedral of Osma, whose bishop he accompanied on diplomatic missions to Rome, and eventually to Languedoc to preach against the Albigensian heresy. With the support of Folquet, bishop of Toulouse (see note to 9.37–42) Dominic founded the *Ordo praedicatorum* [Order of Preachers], recognized by Pope Honorius in 1216. From its first center in Bologna, the order spread over all Europe. Dominic died on 4 August 1221 (his feast day) and is buried in Nicola Pisano’s marble tomb in Bologna in the church bearing his name. He was canonized by Gregory IX in 1234.

Dominic’s biography by Humbert of Romans (1245), which included materials compiled earlier by Jordan of Saxony, circulated widely with Dominican liturgical books. The Dominican James of Voragine’s entry on Dominic in the *Golden Legend* (Chapter 113; written ca. 1285), if supplemented with the Bull of Canonization by Gregory IX (1234), includes virtually all of what Dante reports about Dominic.

46–57. In that region ... harsh to his enemies: Parallel to 11.43–54, locating the birthplace of Dominic in Spain, emphasizing the west and sunset rather than the east, so that the two founders anchor eastern and western cardinal directions.

46–48. In that region ... Europe clothed again: In poetic tradition the amorous embrace of the earth by Zephyr, the west wind of spring, yields flowers and vegetation (Ovid, *Met.* 1.63–64, 107–8). The imagery of renewal tempers Dominic’s association with the west, usually connected in the medieval imagination with nightfall, death, and judgment. Parallel to 11.46–48.

49–51. not far from the striking ... disappears from view: Parallel with 11.49–51, and sharing the identical word *talvolta* [at some time] in the same line 51. For an observer in Italy at the summer solstice (June 13), the Atlantic Ocean (or Gulf of Gascony), west of Spain, is where the sun would seem to set after its long journey [*lunga foga*] across the sky, although the autumnal equinox (September 13) is also a conceivable date. Reference to the sun’s course

is consistent with 10.1–12 (esp. the use of “striking,” as in line 100 and 10.9; see notes).

52–54. sits fortunate Calaruega ... subjected and subjects: “Fortunate” because when Dominic was born, Castile was ruled by the good King Alfonso VIII (see *Conv.* 4.11.14). After 1230 Dominic’s birthplace was part of the unified kingdom of Castile and Leon, which in its arms quartered the lions of Leon and towers of Castile, so that one lion stood above, one below. Parallel to 11.48.

55–56. therein was born ... the holy athlete: Dante’s account of Dominic as a lover of the faith (using the word *drudo* [lover]; cf. *Purg.* 32.155, *Conv.* 2.15.4) is not found in his biographies (but see next note). The Bull of Canonization calls Dominic an “athlete”; borrowed from Greek, the word suggests a strong competitor; Catholic liturgy applies it to soldiers of Christ.

58–69. and as soon as it was created ... to whom he belonged: Dominic’s birth, like Francis’s, is fostered by the heavens, especially the sun. The anecdotes in these verses are in the lives of Dominic and in the *Golden Legend*, but the marriage to faith at baptism is derived from Francis’s espousal of Poverty (11.58–63), and Dominic’s nurture by a mother, a godmother, and a bride, Faith, mirrors Francis’s treatment of Poverty as mother, bride, and lady-love (*Legenda* 7.6).

58–60. and as soon as it was created ... made her a prophet: The saint’s mother dreamt that she gave birth to a dog with a torch in his mouth that set the world afire (cf. 9.28–30 and note). The dream is a prophecy of her son’s name as *domini canis*, “the Lord’s dog,” because *Dominicus* is a possessive form [belonging to the Lord], but the image also prophesied the order itself, the *Dominicani* [those belonging to Dominic]. The dream is both a rebus and a multiple pun.

58–59. his mind was so filled: “Filled” [*repleta*] is a Latinism pointing to John the Baptist (Luke 1.15): “And he shall be filled [*replebitur*] with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” Francis, whose baptismal name was John, is associated with John the Baptist in the *Legenda* (preface, 1, and 5.2; cf. 32.31–36 and note).

61–69. When the betrothal ... to whom he belonged: Dominic’s baptism is a marriage with Faith requiring pledges of mutual support. In some biographies, Dominic’s godmother, who confirms that the child wishes baptism, sees a star on the child’s forehead (cf. *Legenda*, preface, 1, comparing Francis to the morning star, Lucifer), but no source has the godmother furnish the etymology of Dominic’s name, or foretell the fruits of his labors. Dante seems to adapt Joseph’s dream of the sheaves of grain and of the stars and moon worshiping the sun in Gen. 37.6–10.

67–69. and so that he might be in name ... to whom he belonged: The interpretation of names, frequent in Dante (cf. *VN* 2.1, 13.4, 24.4; *Purg.* 13.109–11 and note), is prominent in Bonaventura’s biography (cf. also lines 79–81); the *Golden Legend* begins the

chapter on Dominic with etymologies of his name.

70–75. *Dominicus* [belonging to the Lord] he was called ... the first counsel Christ gave: Dominic is named at the center of the biography (parallel to 11.73–75), and his roles as husbandman of the Church and devotee of poverty declared.

71, 73, 75. Christ. The name of Christ is registered in triple rhyme with itself, for the first time in the poem (there are three further instances: cf. 14.104–8, 19.104–8, 32.83–87 and notes there). Christ is the root of the counsel of poverty and owner of the vineyard of which Dominic is custodian; the saint's name was also understood in the *Golden Legend* as "guardian of the Lord's vineyard" (one of the ways in which Dominic was *Domini custos*, a "guardian of the Lord"). The triple rhyme reiterates Dominic's possession by his lord, as his name *Dominicus* indicates: as his husbandman [*agricola*, lines 71–72]; as his "messenger" and "familiar" (line 73) and in his adherence to Christ's precept (lines 72–73).

71–72. the husbandman whom Christ ... in his vineyard: The motif of the vineyard (cf. lines 86–87, 100, 104–105) rests on scripture (Ps. 79.9–16, Is. 5.1–8, Canticle of Canticles 2.15, John 15.1–8, Matt. 20.1–2; cf. *Ep.* 5.16, 7.21). The Bull of Canonization of Dominic also begins by stating Christ's devotion to the Church: "He does not abandon the vine which he transplanted from Egypt" (Ps. 79.9), "even to the very consummation of the world" (Matt. 28.20).



Figure 8. Saint Dominic teaching to Jews, Arabs and Heretics

73–75. Surely he seemed the messenger ... first counsel that Christ gave: Like Francis, Dominic conceived of his order as poor. The first evangelical counsel of perfection is usually taken to be poverty (the others are chastity and obedience), after Matt. 19.21: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor": this was also the first Bible text to guide Francis (*Legenda* 3.3, 7.3).

76–78. Often he was found ... I have come for this: This widely cited detail (cf. *Golden Legend*) emphasizes Dominic's humility, parallel to Francis's own preference for the ground (*Legenda* 5.1, 14.3; see 11.115–17 and note). Dominic's remark echoes Christ's reference to his preaching mission (Mark 1.38): "For this is why I have come" [*ad hoc enim veni*], but also Francis's words when he discovers his love of Poverty, "This is what I want" [*hoc enim cupio*], *Legenda* 3.1.

79–81. O his father truly Felix ... the interpreted meaning: The name of Dominic's father means "happy" in Latin; his mother's name, after the Hebrew Johanna, means "the grace of God" (Brunetto Latini, *Trésor* 1.65.2). In VN 24.4, Dante explains the name of Guido Cavalcanti's supposed lady, Giovanna, by referring to John the Baptist. The etymologies parallel 11.73–75.

82–87. Not for the world ... if the vine keeper is lazy: Anticipating later criticisms in line 82, Bonaventura contrasts prosperous glossators on canon law like Hostiensis (cf. 5.19–63, 9.134–36 and notes), and the Florentine physician Taddeo Alderotto (cf. *Conv.* 1.10.10), with the theological teaching at which Dominic and his order excelled. Parallel to 11.1–12; cf. 11.4 and note.

84. the true manna: The food that Wisdom affords; cf. *Conv.* 1.1.5–15; *Purg.* 21.1–3; *Par.* 1.68, 2.10–12 and notes; for its Old Testament meaning, see *Purg.* 11.13–15 and note.

88–96. And from the See ... now surround you: This passage, which parallels 11.85–99, describes the order's purpose and Dominic's petition for papal sanction.

88–90. And from the See ... who is degenerate: The poor are neglected by Boniface VIII, pope during the pilgrim's journey, and perhaps by John XXII, reigning in Avignon during the writing of *Paradiso* (see 18.130, 27.58 and notes).

91–93. he asked not to pay out ... decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei [the tenths that belong to the poor ones of God]: Typical ecclesiastical abuses: limiting distributions of Church income intended for poor relief, competing for the first available ecclesiastical benefice (which brought a steady income), and diverting to private use tithes for the poor (cf. *Mon.* 2.10.1–3). Compare Solomon's request, discussed at 13.94–102, with notes; see also Additional Note 2.

94. against the errors of the world: Bonaventura evokes the title of Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*, directed against the "false" beliefs of Jews, Muslims, and "pagans." Dante adapted the title for his poem against philosophical errors regarding nobility [*Contra-lierrant!*]; see *Conv.* 4.30.3.

95–96. to defend the seeds ... that now surround you: See John 15.1–8 and *DVE* 1.8.1. Dominic's defense of the church fructifies as garlands (later, starry crowns) of preachers circling Beatrice and the pilgrim. The image echoes the twenty-four elders of the Church around the lamb, Christ (Apoc. 4.4; see *Purg.* 29.16–30, 83–84 and notes, and Additional Note 14). Francis wrote his first Rule and sought approval of his order when he had twelve followers (*Legenda* 3.7).

97–105. Then with doctrine ... stand more vigorous: For "torrent," see Is. 59.19: "When he shall come as a violent river [*fluvius violentus*], which the Spirit of the Lord driveth on." The uprooting of heretical "thickets" by torrents of water suggests Dominic's weapon was

preaching, not the sword. Once moderated, Dominic's torrent irrigates the vine of the Church.

100. and his attack struck the thickets of heresy: See the Bull of Canonization: "Not only had the brambles and thorns of vice invaded the vineyard ... the little foxes were seeking to change it into the bitterness of a strange vine (Canticle of Canticles 2.15)."

106–45. If such was one wheel ... was moved with me: The second part of Bonaventura's speech attacks the corruption of the Franciscans (lines 112–26; parallels 11.124–39), and names twelve teachers in the second, external circle revolving around the pilgrim and Beatrice (lines 127–41; parallels 10.94–138).

106–23. If such was one wheel ... I am still as I was: The order is described first as a chariot and troop (112–17), then in terms of good and bad harvests (118–20), then as a book (121–23). In lines 114 and 117 an agricultural frame of reference is superimposed on the image of the chariot wheel (the good crust in wine barrels, deposited by a well-harvested wine, has become the bad mold of a spoiled wine, the result of a bad harvest) and on the reversed direction of march (interfering with the act of sowing); the book image is also linked to the agricultural terms, since the word for the granary that stores the harvest [*arca*] also describes chests for storing books. The piling on of figurative language reflects Bonaventura's righteous wrath. For sowing and harvest metaphors in *Paradiso*, see 22.151 and note.

106–11. If such was one wheel ... was so courteous: In Gregory's Bull of Canonization, Franciscans and Dominicans are said to come as a chariot with legions in aid of the Church. The Church itself is a chariot or ark in *Purgatorio* (see *Purg.* 29.115–20; 32.16–27, 48–51, 95, 116–17 and notes; and *Purgatorio* Additional Note 15), though here the orders make up the two-horse battle chariot [*biga*, line 106] that defends the Church.

112–14. But the track ... where the crust was: Francis's successors deviate from his path. Compare Dante's account of the Church misguided by prelates at *Ep.* 11.5 ("neglecting to steer the car of the Church along the track clearly indicated [*manifestam orbitam*] by the Crucified"), based on the phrase Phaethon's father, the sun, uses to describe the correct path (the ecliptic) through the heavens (Ovid, *Met.* 2.133, "You will clearly see the traces of the wheel" [*manifesta rotae vestigia cernes*]; see Additional Note 7). The solar Francis (11.49–51) is still implicit; that Francis followed Christ's footprints, that is, his example, is in *Legenda* 9.1; see also Bonaventura, *Itinerarium* 2.1, 7, 10, 11; and cf. *Mon.* 1.8.2.

115–17. His troop who marched straight ... to the one behind: The reversed direction of march means the seed (Francis's message) is cast under the feet of those who come behind, causing confusion (cf. Matt. 13.3–30, esp. 24–30). For implications of reversed motion, cf. *DVE* 1.1.1, *Conv.* 1.7.4, *Par.* 8.94–96.

118–20. and soon it will be seen ... is closed to them: Images of judgment: the good harvest is stored in the granary, the tares or cockles burned (Matt. 13.30). Whether Dante means a particular group, such as the Spirituals condemned in 1318, is disputed. Cf. 19.106–11

and note.

121–23. I say indeed ... I am still as I was: The order is a book, each individual a page. For the metaphor, see lines 134–35 and 33.85–90 and note.

124. but it will not be one from Casale nor from Acquasparta: Dante refers to the extremes of the Franciscan spectrum: the Spiritual Ubertino da Casale (1259–after 1329), and the Conventional Matthew of Acquasparta (1240–1302). As a young man Ubertino, after joining the Franciscans in 1273, studied in Florence under Peter John Olivi (1285–89). Ubertino taught theology at Paris (1289–90) before returning to Italy to lead the Spirituals. Ordered in 1305 to La Verna in the Casentino (where Francis had received the stigmata; see 11.100–108 and note), Ubertino composed the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu*, a work known to Dante that set forth the Spiritual ideal through meditation on the Crucifixion. Later Ubertino clashed with the Church; he declared all papal elections after that of Celestine V invalid (see *Inf.* 3.59–60 and note), and left the order in 1317 when John XXII was elected pope. Ubertino was condemned for heresy in 1325.

Matthew of Acquasparta, a disciple of Bonaventura, taught at Paris, Bologna, and Rome, and became minister general of the order (1287–91). As a cardinal he was twice papal legate to Florence: seeking support for Boniface VIII against the Colonna in 1297 (see *Inf.* 27.85–93, 102 and notes), and in 1300 when appointed pacifier of a divided Florence; instead he fostered the coup by Charles of Valois in favor of the Black Guelphs (Compagni, *Cronica* 1.21; see *Inf.* 6.64–72).

126. narrows it: Mineo 1993 argues that the force of Dante's term [*coarta*] (cf. *Mon.* 3.8.5, *Ep.* 7.11) is not that Ubertino imposed a rigorist reading of Francis's teaching (not necessarily only of the Rule), but that he raised poverty above humility and obedience (hence Dante's corrective references at 11.85–87, 91–99, 113), and at the expense of study, preaching, and conventional life (that is, residence in monasteries, rather than living as a wandering friar; cf. 22.88–89 and note).

127–41. I am the life of Bonaventura ... prophetic spirit: Bonaventura identifies the teachers of the second circle in five terzinas: one to himself; one to two early followers of Francis, the *poverelli*; one to three scholars; and one to an Old Testament prophet, a Greek churchman, a Latin theologian, and a grammarian (the most varied group); the last terzina is shared by an encyclopedist and a prophet. No individual dominates; the humble and inspired outnumber methodical scholars: the first two, the humblest, are nearest to Bonaventura.

Because this group is placed in the sun, it must be equally "wise," though through means other than systematic study. Francis, deprecating his own intellectual achievements, acquired wisdom by memorizing scripture (*Legenda* 11.1). That one of the group "shines" on earth in the twelve books of his work (see line 135) suggests one way heavenly wisdom is transmitted to earth.

127–29. I am the life of Bonaventura ... the left-hand cares: Dominic's eulogist

was born Giovanni da Fidenza at Bagnoregio near Viterbo in 1221, the year of Dominic's death. Bonaventura, reportedly acquired his name when Francis cured him of a disease and exclaimed "bona ventura" [good fortune], studied at Paris under the Franciscan Alexander of Hales, and later taught theology there, where he also met Aquinas. After becoming minister general in 1257, he spent much of his tenure mediating between the Spirituals and Conventuals (see note to line 124). His administration substantially preserved for the order the devotion to poverty Francis had desired, though the Spirituals were not placated. Bonaventura died in Lyons in 1274, the same year as Aquinas. In addition to his *Life of Francis*, which shapes Francis's example in the same moderate direction (11.43–117 and note), Bonaventura's best-known works are the *Breviloquium* and the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* [*The Mind's Journey to God*], a likely influence on the *Paradiso*.

129. subordinated the left-hand cares: Adapting Prov. 3.16, this phrase refers to practical everyday matters, including administration, as opposed to worship, contemplation, and pastoral care. Francis stated the preference in his Rule ("I entreat all brothers ... that they avoid all hindrances and place care and preoccupation behind them" [*postposita, cf. pospusi*]); see *Legenda* 14.5.

130–32. Illuminato and Agostino ... wearing the rope: Dividing a whole terzina between them, these early followers of Francis, distinguished for their humility, are, along with the final pair, the most strongly emphasized. Their names reflect the Franciscan debt to Augustine's teaching, and reliance on direct illumination, rather than ratiocination. Born blind, Illuminato ("a true son of light," according to the *Legenda*) received his sight from Francis, accompanied Francis on his preaching mission to Egypt, and witnessed the stigmata. Agostino was especially remembered because he died on the same day as Francis (*Legenda* 14.6). For the more celebrated Augustine of Hippo, see 32.34–36 and note.

133. Hugh of St. Victor ... in twelve volumes: Hugh of St. Victor (1097–ca. 1141), from 1120 a regular canon of St. Victor, held the chair of theology from 1130 until his death in 1141. He and his disciple Richard (cf. 10.131–32) represent the approach to learning inspired by Augustine (the canony of St. Victor observed the Augustinian Rule). Hugh was known for his *Didascalicon*, an introduction to philosophy and theology. Peter Comestor [the Eater], so named for his vast reading, born at Troyes, was a priest and eventually dean of its cathedral; he joined St. Victor, where by 1164 he was a canon, and taught at the University of Paris, of which he became chancellor. When he died (before 1185) he left his possessions to the poor. In his *Historia scholastica*, he narrates sacred history from Adam to Paul (see 26.139–42 and note). Peter of Spain (1225–76) was born in Lisbon, studied at Paris, and was archbishop of Braga by 1273; the next year he became cardinal bishop of Tusculum (modern Frascati). Elected pope in Viterbo in 1276 as John XXI, he died within the year. His *Summulae logicales*, a manual that commented on Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, were consulted by Dante for *Monarchia*. His papal rank is not mentioned. See Additional Note 2.

136–38: Nathan the prophet ... put his hand to the first art: Nathan rebuked David for his adultery with Bathsheba (see 32.10–12 and note) and anointed Solomon king (3 Kings

1.34; see 13.91–96 and note); the “oracle of Nathan” (2 Kings 8.7–17), often thought the first messianic prophecy in the Old Testament (see Sarolfi 1971), foretold that the house of David would rule “sempiternally.” John Chrysostom, metropolitan patriarch of Constantinople (d. 407, in exile from the court of the emperor Arcadius), the only representative from the Greek Church in Bonaventura’s list, was famous as a preacher (his surname means “golden-mouthed”). Anselm of Aosta (1033–1109), drawn by the fame of Lanfranc, became a monk at the Benedictine abbey of Bec in Normandy; he became its abbot in 1078, and was made archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. His treatise *Cur deus homo* used rational arguments to justify the Incarnation (see 7.19–48 and notes). Aelius Donatus, the fourth-century rhetorician who might have tutored Jerome, wrote a Latin grammar, briefer than Priscian’s (see *Inf.* 15.109 and note). Grammar is called the “first art” because it is the basis for the other arts in the *trivium* (rhetoric and logic); Donatus “deigns” because grammar is the humblest art.

139–41. Rhabanus is here ... endowed with prophetic spirit: Next is the encyclopedist Rhabanus Maurus, a Benedictine who became abbot of Fulda in 822 and was afterwards appointed archbishop of Mainz (847); he died in 856. Last is Joachim of Fiore or Flora (1130–1202), born near Cosenza in Calabria. After a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he joined the Cistercians and became abbot, but in 1189 he founded a monastery in the remote Sila region of the Abruzzi. After the Rule of Fiore was approved by Celestine III in 1196, it became the mother house of the order of San Giovanni in Fiore. In his writings Joachim divided sacred history into three ages: the first, under the rule of the Father; the second, that of the visible Church, ruled by the Son; and a third, dawning age to be ruled by the Holy Spirit, when evangelical purity would prevail. Highly influential during the thirteenth century, Joachim criticized both Church and empire. His name, signed to imitations of his works by the Spirituals, authorized attacks on the papacy with which Dante seems to have largely agreed (see Manselli 1982).

141. endowed with prophetic spirit: Joachim’s prophetic gift was noted in his feast-day liturgy at his home abbey of Flora; its mention here “seals” Dante’s approval of Joachim’s prophecy of renewal. Note the additional emphasis on prophecy (see line 136; Francis, too, was credited with a prophetic spirit [*Legenda* 11.3, 12.1]). As a sometimes controversial visionary, Joachim is the counterpart of the once embattled dialectician Sigier (10.133–38 and note), also last in his group. Dante includes among his teachers two who ventured to the limits of orthodoxy.

142. To praise so great a paladin: Referring to Dominic, the subject of Bonaventura’s eulogy. Note the echo of 10.137–38 (see note). The paladins (counts of the palace [*palatium*] where the emperor held court) were in early epics the especially valiant retainers of Charlemagne; the expression continues the idea of Francis and Dominic as defenders of Lady Church (*Legenda* 1.3, 9.7, 13.10).

143–44: the fiery courtesy ... and his judicious words: Bonaventura attributes to Thomas “fiery” courtesy (like seraphic love, associated with Francis; see 11.37–39 and note) and the “judicious words” of the mind—gifts typical of both orders.

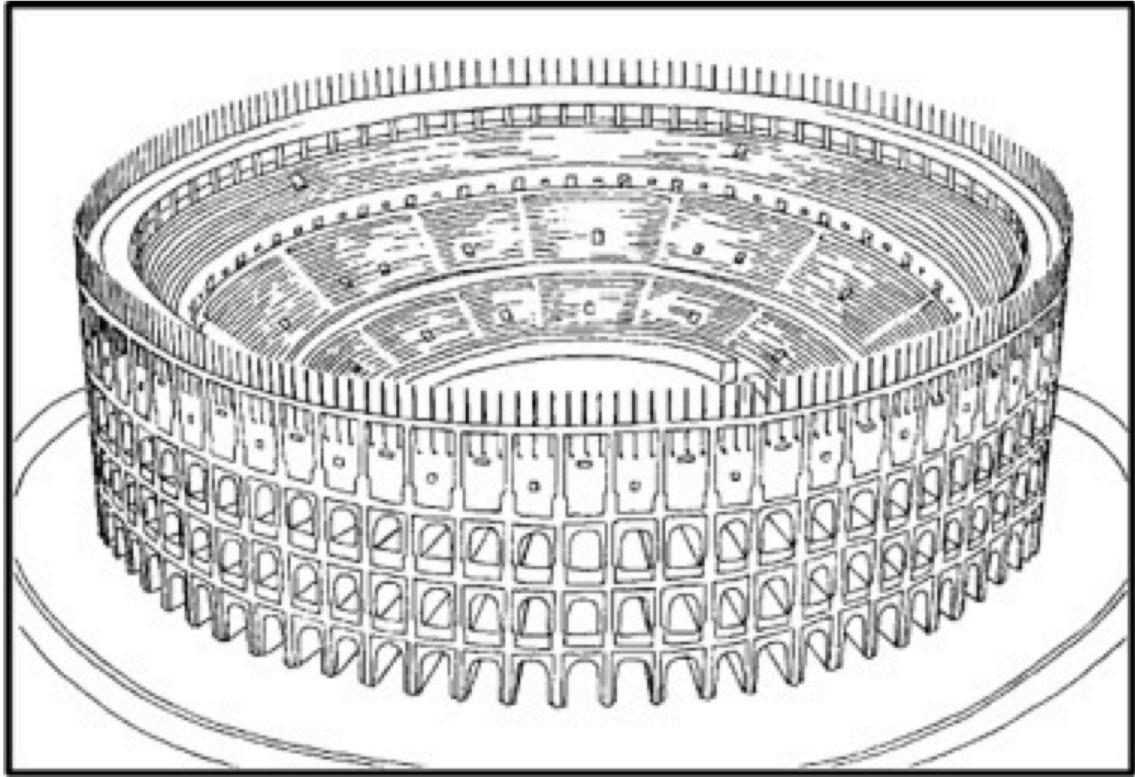


Figure 9. The Coliseum in Rome



CANTO 13

*Sun, continued: dance—the pilgrim's second doubt—only Adam and Christ
created directly—Solomon's wisdom—against hasty judgment*

- 1 Let whoever wishes to grasp well what I now
 saw, imagine (and hold well the image, as I
 speak, like an immovable rock)
- 4 fifteen stars that in the various quarters of the
 sky shine with a clarity that overcomes every
 density of the air:
- 7 imagine that Wain for which the bosom of our
 sky suffices both night and day, never too narrow
 for the turning of the shaft,
- 10 imagine the mouth of the horn that begins at
 the point of the axis on which the first rotation turns,
- 13 and that all these had made two figures in the
 sky like the one made by the daughter of Minos
 when she felt the chill of death,
- 16 and let one have its rays in the other, both
 revolving in such a way that one begins and the
 other follows:
- 19 and he will have almost the shadow of the true
 constellation and the double dance that was
 circling about the point where I was,

- 22 for it is beyond our experience as far as
beyond the motion of the Chiana moves the
heaven that surpasses all the others.
- 25 There they sang not Bacchus, not Paean, but
three Persons in the divine nature, and in one
Person the divine and the human.
- 28 The singing and the turning filled out their
measure, and those holy lights turned to us,
happy to have care succeed care.
- 31 Then the silence among the concordant
deities was broken by the light in which a
wondrous life of God's pauper had been related to me,
- 34 and it said: "Now that one grain has been
threshed and its kernels stored away, sweet
love invites me to beat the other.
- 37 You believe that in the breast whence came
the rib to form the lovely cheek whose palate is
costly to all the world,
- 40 and in the one which, pierced by the lance,
once and for all so satisfied the law that it
outweighs all guilt upon the scales,
- 43 however much human nature is permitted to
receive of light was all infused by the Power that
made both:
- 46 and therefore you wonder at what I said
above when I related that there has been no
equal to the wealth enclosed in the fifth light.
- 49 Now open your eyes to my reply, and you will
see that your belief and my speech both meet in
the truth as at the center of a circle.

- 52 What does not die and what can die are
 solely the shining forth of the Idea to which our
 Lord gives birth in love,
- 55 for that living Light—that so streams from his
 Shining that it is not dis-oned from him nor from
 the Love that entrees itself with them—
- 58 by its goodness unifies its radiance, as if
 mirrored, in nine subsistences, while eternally
 remaining one in itself.
- 61 Thence it descends from act to act down to
 the last potencies, finally becoming such that it
 makes only fleeting contingencies:
- 64 and by these contingencies I mean the things
 that are generated, which the heavens produce,
 with seed and without seed, by their motion.
- 67 The wax of these things, like what works it,
 does not stay in one condition, and therefore
 beneath the seal of the Idea it is more and less translucent.
- 70 Thus it comes about that trees of the same
 species bear better and worse fruit, and you are
 born with different wits.
- 73 If the wax were prepared fully, and if the
 power of the heavens were at its height, the
 light of the seal would appear entirely,
- 76 but Nature always gives it lessened, working
 like the artist who has the habit of art but a hand
 that trembles.
- 79 Thus where the warm love and the clear sight
 of the first power prepare and seal, all
 perfection is acquired there.

- 82 Thus was dust made worthy of all the
perfection brought by soul, thus was the Virgin
made pregnant,
- 85 so that I commend your opinion, that human
nature has never been, nor will be, what it was
in those two persons.
- 88 Now if I did not proceed further, 'Then how
was he without an equal?' would be the
beginning of your words,
- 91 but so that what is not apparent may appear,
think who he was and the cause that moved him
to his request, when 'Ask' was said.
- 94 I have not spoken in such a way that you
cannot see clearly that he was a king who
asked for the wisdom to be a worthy king,
- 97 not in order to know the number of the Movers
up here, or if *necessse* with contingent ever made
necessse,
- 100 not *si est dare primum motum esse*, or
whether in a semicircle one can make a triangle
that lacks a right angle.
- 103 Thus, if you consider this and what I have said,
the prudence of a king is that unequaled seeing
at which the arrow of my intention strikes,
- 106 and if at my 'arose' you direct clear eyes, you
will see that it refers to kings alone, who are
many, but the good are rare.
- 109 With this distinction take what I said, and thus
it can stand along with what you believe of our
first father and of our Beloved.

- 112 And let this ever be lead upon your feet, to
make you move slowly, like a weary man, to both
the yes and the no that you do not see:
- 115 for surely he is low among the fools who
affirms and denies without distinction in either case,
- 118 for it often happens that a hasty opinion turns
in a wrong direction, and then affect binds the intellect.
- 121 Whoever fishes for the truth and lacks the art
fares much worse than in vain when he leaves
the shore, for he does not return the same as before.
- 124 And open proof of this in the world are
Parmenides, Melissus, and Bryson, and many
others who set out without knowing whither:
- 127 thus did Sabellius and Arius and those fools
who were like swords to the Scriptures, reflecting
normal faces all distorted.
- 130 And let not people be too sure to judge, like
one who appraises the oats in the field before
they are ripe:
- 133 for I have seen all the previous winter long the
thornbush appear rigid and fierce, but later bear
the rose upon its tip,
- 136 and I have seen a ship run straight and swift
across the sea for all its course, only to perish at
last when entering the port.
- 139 Let not dame Bertha and messer Martin
believe, because they see one stealing, another
offering, that they see them within God's counsel,
- 142 for that one can rise up, and this one can fall."



CANTO 13

Imagini, chi bene intender cupe 1
quel ch' i' or vidi (e ritegna l'image,
mentre ch' io dico, come ferma rupe),
quindici stelle che 'n diverse plage 4
lo cielo avvivan di tanto sereno
che soperchia de l'aere ogne compage:
 imagini quel Carro a cu' il seno 7
basta del nostro cielo e notte e giorno,
sì ch' al volger del temo non vien meno,
 imagini la bocca di quel corno 10
che si cominicia in punta de lo stelo
a cui la prima rota va dintorno,
 aver fatto di sé due segni in cielo 13
qual fece la figliuola di Minoi,
allora che sentì di morte il gelo,
 e l'un ne l'altro aver li raggi suoi, 16
e amendue girarsi per maniera
che l'uno andasse al prima e l'altro al poi:
 e avrà quasi l'ombra de la vera 19
costellazione e de la doppia danza
che circulava il punto dov' io era,
 poi ch'è tanto di là da nostra usanza, 22
quanto di là dal mover de la Chiana
si move il ciel che tutti li altri avanza.
 Lì si cantò, non Bacco, non Peana, 25
ma tre Persone in divina natura
e in una Persona essa e l'umana.

Compié 'l cantare e 'l volger sua misura,
e attesersi a noi quei santi lumi,
felicitando sé di cura in cura.

28

Ruppe 'l silenzio ne' concordi numi
poscia la luce in che mirabil vita
del poverel di Dio narrata fumi,
e disse: "Quando l'una paglia è trita,
quando la sua semenza è già riposta,
a batter l'altra dolce amor m'invita.

31

Tu credi che nel petto onde la costa
si trasse per formar la bella guancia
il cui palato a tutto 'l mondo costa,
e in quel che, forato da la lancia,
e prima e poscia tanto sodisfece
che d'ogne colpa vince la bilancia,
quantunque a la natura umana lece
aver di lume, tutto fosse infuso
da quel valor che l'uno e l'altro fece:

34

e però miri a ciò ch'io dissì suso
quando narrai che non ebbe 'l secondo
lo ben che ne la quinta luce è chiuso.

40

Or apri li occhi a quel ch'io ti rispondo,
e vedrai il tuo credere e 'l mio dire
nel vero farsi come centro in tondo.

43

Ciò che non more e ciò che può morire
non è se non splendor di quella idea
che partorisce amando il nostro Sire,
ché quella viva Luce—che sì mea
dal suo Lucente che non si disuna
da lui, né da l'Amor ch' a lor s'intrea—

46

49

52

55

per sua bontate il suo raggiare aduna,
quasi specchiato, in nove sussistenze,
eternalmente rimandendosi una.

58

Quindi discende a l'ultime potenze
giù d'atto in atto, tanto divenendo
che più non fa che brevi contingenze:
e queste contingenze essere intendo
le cose generate, che produce
con seme e senza seme il ciel, movendo.

61

La cera di costoro e chi la duce
non sta d'un modo, e però sotto 'l segno
idéale poi più e men traluce.

64

Ond' elli avvien ch' un medesimo legno,
secondo specie, meglio e peggio frutta,
e voi nascete con diverso ingegno.

67

Se fosse a punto la cera dedutta,
e fosse il cielo in sua virtù suprema,
la luce del suggel parrebbe tutta,
ma la Natura la dà sempre scema,
similemente operando a l'artista
ch' a l'abito de l'arte ha man che trema.

73

Però se 'l caldo amor, la chiara vista
de la prima virtù dispone e segna,
tutta la perfezion quivi s'acquista.

76

Così fu fatta già la terra degna
di tutta l'animal perfezione,
così fu fatta la Vergine prega,
sì ch' io commando la tua oppiniōne
che l'umana natura mai non fue,
né fia, qual fu in quelle due persone.

79

82

85

- 88
- Or s' i' non procedesse avanti più,
'Dunque, come costui fu senza pare?'
- comincierebber le parole tue,
- 91
- ma perché paia ben ciò che non pare,
pensa chi era e la cagion che 'l mosse
quando fu detto: 'Chiedi,' a dimandare.
- 94
- Non ho parlato sì che tu non posse
ben veder ch' el fu re che chiese senno
acciò che re sufficïente fosse,
- 97
- non per sapere il numero in che enno
li motor di qua sù, o se *necesse*
con contingente mai *necesse* fanno,
- 100
- non *si est dare primum motum esse*,
- o se del mezzo cerchio far si puote
triangol sì ch'un retto non avesse.
- 103
- Onde, se ciò ch'io dissi e questo note,
regal prudenza è quel vedere impari
in che lo stral di mia intenzion percuote,
- 106
- e se al 'surse' drizzi li occhi chiari,
vedrai aver solamente respetto
ai regi, che son molti, e' buon son rari.
- 109
- Con questa distinzion prendi 'l mio detto,
e così puote star con quel che credi
del primo padre e del nostro Diletto.
- 112
- E questo ti sia sempre piombo a' piedi
per farti mover lento, com' uom lasso,
e al sì e al no che tu non vedi:
- 115
- ché quelli è tra li stolti bene a basso
che senza distinzione afferma e nega
ne l'un così come ne l'altro passo,

perch' ell'i 'ncontra che più volte piega
l'oppinion corrente in falsa parte,
e poi l'affetto l'intelletto lega.

118

Vie più che 'ndarno da riva si parte,
perché non torna tal qual e' si move,
chi pesca per lo vero e non ha l'arte.

121

E di ciò sono al mondo aperte prove
Parmenide, Melisso e Brisso, e molti
li quali andaro e non sapéan dove:

124

sì fé Sabellio e Arrio e quelli stolti
che furon come spade a le Scritture
in render torti li diritti volti.

127

Non sien le genti, ancor, troppo sicure
a giudicar, sì come quei che stima
le biade in campo pria che sien mature:

130

ch' i' ho veduto tutto 'l verno prima
lo prun mostrarsi rigido e feroce,
poscia portar la rosa in su la cima,
e legno vidi già dritto e veloce
correr lo mar per tutto suo cammino,
perire al fine a l'intrar de la foce.

133

Non creda donna Berta e ser Martino,
per vedere un furare, altro offerere,
vederli dentro al consiglio divino,
ché quel può surgere, e quel può cadere."

136

139

142

NOTES

1–24. Let whoever wishes ... surpasses all the others: We count this elaborate proem among the addresses to the reader (see the note to 10.4–21). To imagine the appearance and movements of the two circles of theologians, the reader is asked to think of them as made up of twenty-four of the brightest stars in the sky, moving in two circles in the manner of fixed stars (this can only be understood as coordinated motions in the same direction—not specified). Note the conspicuous repetition (in lines 1, 2, 4, and 7) of *imagine* and *image* and the explicit reference to strenuous mental effort in lines 2–3, giving unusually strong emphasis.

4–6. fifteen stars ... density of the air: Like other introductory handbooks of astronomy, Alfragano's, which Dante knew well and repeatedly cites, gives a list of the fifteen brightest stars in the order of their ecliptical longitude. Many of them can be reliably identified: e.g., Sirius, Rigel, Betelgeuse, Regulus, Antares, and others; but not all: the fifteen brightest stars listed in modern handbooks are all brighter than +1, but Regulus is not among them, though it is conspicuous enough (+1.4).

7–9. imagine that Wain ... turning of the shaft: The Wain is an old name for the Big Dipper, whose long shaft extends furthest south. Above 55° north latitude, the constellation never sets. In any case, the constellation furnishes seven stars visible to the naked eye, bringing the total to twenty-two.

10–12. imagine the mouth ... first rotation turns: The “first rotation” is the diurnal turning of the celestial vault; the north celestial pole is the apparent axis of the rotation. Ursa Minor can be seen as the outline of a horn with the narrow end at the pole star, opening into a mouth, two slightly brighter stars (β UMi and γ UMi), which are now added to the total. One notes that in context, the first circle of theologians corresponds to the “first rotation.”

13–21. and that all these ... the point where I was: The constellation Corona Borealis was identified in antiquity as the crown given to Ariadne by Dionysus, who found her after she was deserted on Naxos by Theseus, and which he made into a constellation at her death (*Met.* 8.172–82). Dante thinks of the constellation as circular (as the term *corona* implies), though it is only a semicircle, and we are to imagine the two “crowns” as concentric. Since the two circles of preachers were established clearly enough at the beginning of Canto 12, the function of this proem, it would seem, is to renew and intensify the wonder of the star or sun circles. But the elaborate effort of imagination will provide only the “shadow” of the reality.

The description of the motion of the two circles looks back to 12.4–6, especially “fitting motion to motion” (cf. also 12.1–21). “Both revolving in such a way that one begins and the

other follows" (lines 17–18) has sometimes been taken to indicate that the circles move in opposite directions, which we believe mistaken. In our view the second circle, composed of voluntarist thinkers, thus representing will, is shown to *follow* the motions of the inner circle, as will should follow intellect (cf. *Inf.* 1.30 and *Purg.* 18.61–75, with notes); in other words, they are reconciled. For further discussion, see Additional Note 3.

22–24. for it is beyond ... all the others: The outermost heaven (the *primum mobile*, enclosing all the others) moves the fastest, and its velocity surpasses that of the Tuscan river Chiana by as much as the pilgrim's experience in the sun surpasses all ordinary earthly experience.

25–30. There they sang ... care succeed care: Bacchus is suggested by the mention of Ariadne's crown; Paean is one of the titles of Apollo: both were shown by Macrobius in *Sat.* 1.17–23, along with other gods, to be aspects of the one true (pagan) god, the sun. The song here is the Christian praise of the Trinity, the true God, and especially of its second Person, the incarnate Christ, the true Sun.

In its exalted formality the hymn must fulfill its measure, its formal parameters, and so must the circular dance as well. Then the souls are free again to deal with the pilgrim's questions, gladly turning from one care (worship) to another (instruction).

31–142. Then the silence ... this one can fall: As happens in each of the cantos of the sun, the bulk of this canto is devoted to a speech of the chief representative of one of the circles (as will be amply clear before we leave the sun, Thomas Aquinas is given far greater prominence than Bonaventura, as befits the representative of the primacy of intellect).

31–33. Then the silence ... related to me: The speaker so indicated is Thomas; "God's pauper" is saint Francis of Assisi, the main subject of Canto 11.

34–142. Now that one grain ... this one can fall: Thomas's entire speech is an answer to the pilgrim's second doubt (for the two doubts, see 11.22–27); the first has been answered in the discussion of the degeneration of the Dominicans (11.118–39).

34–35. Now that one grain ... stored away: Thomas has threshed the harvested stalks, separating the chaff of error from the kernels of truth (on *separating* cf. 11.27: "Here one must *distinguish* well"). The harvest imagery will recur, with greater and greater resonances that go back to Christ's agricultural parables.

37–48. You believe that...in the fifth light: Statement of the second doubt: if Adam (from whose rib Eve was formed—Gen. 2.21–25) and Christ (whose death on the Cross paid entirely the penalty for Adam's sin: cf. 7.25–42) received by infusion the highest degree of understanding of which un fallen human nature is capable, how can it be said that "no second ever arose" to equal the wealth within the fifth light, Solomon (i.e., his wisdom: 10.109–14)? Note that in both cases the seat of wisdom is the breast, as in lines 91–96 (i.e., the heart, which in the body corresponds to the sun in the cosmos; cf. *Inferno* Additional Note 2, Durling

1981b).

49–142. Now open your eyes ... this one can fall: Aquinas's reply to the pilgrim's doubt has several stages: (1) direct and indirect creation and the perfection of nature in Adam and Christ (lines 52–87); (2) the specific wisdom prayed for by Solomon (lines 88–111); and (3) warning against hasty judgment (112–42).

49–51. Now open your eyes ... center of a circle: For imagery of center and circumference of the circle, cf. 14.1–16, with notes. Thomas and the pilgrim are aiming at the same truth from different angles.

52–87. What does not die ... those two persons: An important Neoplatonic statement of the distinction-cum-analogy between God's direct and indirect acts of creation, both conceived in terms of the radiation of light (the analogy with the sun is a governing category), in three parts: (1) the causality governing the entire cosmos (lines 52–66); (2) the source of imperfection in the sublunar (lines 67–78); and (3) return to God's direct creations (lines 79–87). See Additional Notes 10 and 11, and 29.127–45.

Note the repeated explicit emphasis on the participation of all three Persons of the Trinity in the creation (lines 53–54): "that Idea" is the Logos, "our Lord" is God the Father, and "love" is the Holy Spirit; similarly in lines 55–57: the "viva Luce" is the Logos, the "Lucente" is the Father, and "l'Amor" is the Holy Spirit; in lines 79–81: "love" is the Spirit, "sight" is the Logos [John 1.1–10], and the "first power" is the Father—note the order, indicating return). Whatever is radiated directly by the triune God (specifically mentioned are the angels—in lines 55–60: "nine subsistences") possesses its own specific perfection (line 81). Indirect creation is merely the reflection downward of the same "living Light" (line 55) by the secondary causes (the angels and the heavenly bodies: lines 61–78).

Note how these lines take their beginning in God's "shining forth" and enact the reflection (embodied in the repetitions) downward, and then the *return* to God as direct Creator (lines 79–87): for Dante, the radiation of light (as directly experienced in the light of the sun) is the ultimate intellectual model of all causality, both above and below the moon. The astrological influence of the heavenly bodies is the analogue of God's "shining forth." Like 10.1–27 and Boethius' "O qui perpetua," lines 52–87 here are another microcosm, relating the procession of all things from, and their return to, God.

To what extent Dante regarded the historical Thomas as genuinely Neoplatonic is a legitimate question; the views ascribed to Thomas here would not have received his full assent (see the notes to lines 63–78); they are derived from the opinions of Albert the Great. Recent scholarship sees Aquinas as much more Neoplatonic than did the generation of Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson (see Simon Gilson, forthcoming), but there is perhaps a puckish humor at work in Dante having him voice here Albert's views as the ultimate metaphysical truth.

52–66. What does not die ... by their motion: The fundamental causality governing the entire cosmos: the radiation of God's creative power, downward through the angels and the

spheres they govern, into the sublunar.

52–54. What does not die ... birth in love: "What does not die" refers to the angels and the heavens: everything from the moon on up is unchanging (this will be spelled out again in slightly different terms in 29.22–36).

55–60. for that living Light ... one in itself: The "nine subsistences" are the nine orders of angels. Dante's striking coinages are conspicuous here: *disunarsi* [to dis-one oneself] and *intreasri* [to enthrone oneself] are efforts to avoid the banal connotations of ordinary words like *separate* or *triple* in favor of hieratic expressions appropriate to the mystery of the Trinity (see 29.13–45 and 127–45, with notes).

61–66. Thence it descends ... by their motion: In more abstract terms, this is the cosmology already set forth in 2.112–48: the angels govern the descent of God's creative power through the concentric heavenly spheres. The "last potencies" are the potentialities by which matter is receptive of form. One of the important debates in the late Middle Ages concerned the extent to which matter itself contained potentialities ordered toward specific forms, called by Augustine "rationes seminales," an adaptation of Aristotle's concept of *entelechy* [the indwelling of finality], or whether, as in the Platonic/Neoplatonic view, "first matter" was utterly formless. In 29.22–36 Dante clearly adopts the latter position. At stake was the prestige of Aristotle's key concepts (see next note) and the autonomy of nature.

63–66. fleeting contingencies ... by their motion: As lines 67–78 will indicate, the heavens impose form on sublunar matter, which is like wax to their seal (as in 1.40–42). In the historical Aquinas's more Aristotelian view, the influence of the heavens was limited to moving sublunar things to actualize the forms inherent in matter ("motus ad formam" [movement toward form], as opposed to the imposition of form Dante describes: see Litt 1963).

67–78. The wax of these things ... hand that trembles: The reason for the imperfection of earthly things is double: (1) the receptivity of matter to form varies (lines 67–72); and (2) the change in the relative positions of the heavenly bodies (the "motion of the Other"; see the note to "O qui perpetua," lines 15–17) causes variation in their efficacy. This passage is a major qualification of Carlo Martello's assertion that Nature always works perfectly (see 8.97–111, with notes).

67–68. The wax of these things ... in one condition: "The wax of these things" is the matter that must be formed by the heavens; "what works" the wax is the heavenly bodies (Dante's phrase is the potentially misleading "chi la duce" [who works it], but it is clear that the angels themselves are unchanging; the pronoun *who* anticipates the personification of Nature in lines 76–78). For the verb *ducere* [works, molds] cf. Eng. "ductile."

68–69. therefore beneath ... and less translucent: The antecedent of "it is more, etc." is "wax." The "Idea" is the form taken by the angelic Intelligence in God (specifically in the Logos; cf. line 53) for imposition on the sublunar like a seal on wax; this is restated in lines 73–

75. That the Idea is itself light is explicit in lines 52–58.

70–72. Thus it comes about ... different wits: An entire spectrum of more and less perfect imposition of form on matter is envisaged. For "wit" [*ingegno*] as a bodily faculty imposed by the stars, see 22.112–23, with notes, and Durling/Martinez 1990. On *Conv.* 4.21.3–8 see Additional Note 13.

73–78. If the wax ... hand that trembles: A restatement of lines 67–69, with the fully developed personification of Nature (as usual, in the Middle Ages, the term refers primarily to the operative power of the heavenly bodies). The "habit of art" includes both the theoretical equipment of an artist (or artisan) and the skill acquired by practice, but this artist does not have full control over his body (perhaps because of advancing age: this may be unconsciously a version of the *topos* "the world grown old").

79–87. Thus where the warm ... those two persons: God created Adam ("thus was dust ...") and the Holy Spirit fecundated the Virgin Mary ("the Virgin made pregnant") directly, without the intermediary of the angels and heavenly bodies. Thus the pilgrim's opinion that Adam and Christ were superior in intellect to all other human beings is correct; that they were superior to Eve is taken for granted.

Note the change in the order of naming the Persons of the Trinity: in lines 52–57 it is Logos-Father-Love-Logos; here it is Love-Logos-Father, implying the principle of return as well as that of progression.

88–90. Now if I did not ... beginning of your words: The case of Solomon's wisdom has not yet been addressed.

91–111. but so that what ... and of our Beloved: Thomas explains that Solomon, when asked by God to name a gift, asked for a specific kind of wisdom, that of a king, and so both the pilgrim's opinion and the saint's statement about Solomon are true.

91–96. think who he was ... a worthy king: See 3 Kings 3.5–12:

And the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, saying: Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee. And Solomon said: ... O Lord God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father: and I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in.... Give therefore to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people and discern between good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, thy people which is so numerous? And the word was pleasing to the Lord ... And the Lord said to Solomon: Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life or riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but hast asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment, Behold I have done unto thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart, insomuch that there hath been no one like thee before thee nor shall arise after thee.

(In the verses that follow, God promises Solomon riches and glory and, if he will keep his commandments, long life.) One sees that Thomas's statement in 10.113 is derived from this passage. On the heart, cf. the note to lines 37–48. At stake in this entire passage, though unstated, is the need to demonstrate that the new Scholasticism (particularly Dante's strongly Neoplatonic version of it), does not contradict the Bible.

97–102. not in order to know ... a right angle: In commenting on Solomon's request, God lists three things he might have asked but did not. Thomas also lists things he did not ask for (four in number), but they are examples taken from theology, philosophy, natural science, and mathematics. For a related list of lesser pursuits, see 11.1–12.

97–98. the number of the Movers up here: The number of the angelic Movers of the spheres was a famous unanswerable question; it will reappear in Cantos 28–29.

98–99. if *necessse* with contingent ever made *necessse*: If the combination of a necessary cause with a contingency (a cause dependent on something outside itself) ever made necessity. Strictly speaking, only God is *necessary* in the sense of being utterly self-existent, independent of all externals; all else is contingent, and therefore the answer is *no*, though it is a tricky logical problem.

100. si est dare *primum motum esse* [if one should accept the existence of a first moved thing]: This is, properly speaking, a cosmological question: the existence of a ninth, undifferentiated sphere, encompassing all the others (the *primum mobile*).

101–2. whether in a semicircle ... lacks a right angle: An elementary problem in geometry: any triangle inscribed in a semicircle will have a 90° angle.

103–11. Thus, if you consider ... and of our Beloved: "Our first father" is Adam, and "our Beloved" is Christ (the bridegroom of the Canticle of Canticles in Christian exegesis).

109. With this distinction take what I said: Both of Thomas's explanations have insisted on the necessity of making proper distinctions (for the first explanation cf. 11.27). Cf. lines 115–23, with notes.

112–42. And let this ever ... one can fall: Against erroneous judgments: the first part covers matters subject to human faculties: hasty, ignorant, and unskilled judgments and their serious consequences (lines 112–29); the second part deals with God's judgments as unknowable (lines 130–42).

112–29. And let this ever ... faces all distorted: The first part of the discussion of erroneous judgments. The general principle: in matters that are not obvious, it is essential to proceed "slowly" and carefully, making the proper distinctions, and to be reluctant ("like a weary man") to reach conclusions prematurely.

115–23. for surely he is low ... the same as before: Neither affirmation nor denial ("either case") should be made without distinctions. "In either case" refers to "the yes and the no that you do not see" (line 114).

118–20. for it often happens ... binds the intellect: The psychology of error: hastily formed judgments are frequently mistaken, because they are based on inadequate thought, information, or method (cf. the note to lines 124–26), and one is likely to become attached to one's own opinion ("affect [emotion; here: natural partiality to oneself] binds [restricts] the intellect," preventing it from recognizing the error, especially when one has made public pronouncements).

121–23. Whoever fishes ... the same as before: A striking metaphor, closely related to that of the sea voyage. The truth must be fished for, because it lies beneath the surface of the phenomenal world ("the great sea of being," 1.113); it is not immediately apparent. The ingredients of an art are (cf. note to lines 73–78) doctrine (including method), ability, and skill acquired through practice. Note the parallels with the opening of Canto 2: the unskilled readers should not stray far from the shore (2.4–5), for if they lose their guide they may be lost (2.6); the more qualified readers have been practicing their art from early on (2.10–11); they will be capable of interpreting the poet correctly, if they follow him closely.

124–29. And open proof...faces all distorted: Pagan and early Christian examples of poor judgment resulting in momentous error.

124–26. And open proof ... without knowing whither: The voyage metaphor is maintained. Dante's knowledge of these three early Greek thinkers was derived from Aristotle's critiques, which accuse them of erring both in the matter of their arguments (by presupposing false premises) and in their form (by not constructing valid syllogisms), technical aspects of the "art." Parmenides and Melissus are attacked in *Physics* 1.3 (cited in *Mon. 3.4.4*); Bryson (the son of the historian Herodotus) is cited by Aristotle as an example of one who incorrectly applied logical principles in his effort to square the circle (*Analytica posteriora* 1.39b; see Kraus 1971, Stabile 1970).

127–29. thus did Sabellius ... all distorted: Early Christian heresies: Sabellius and his followers denied the doctrine of the Trinity, asserting that its supposed Persons were merely modes of manifestation of the single God. Arius, a much more influential figure than Sabellius, held that the Son was a created being subordinate to the Father (this dispute lasted for decades; the orthodox doctrine was only defined at the Council of Nicaea in 325; see the relevant articles in *ED*, and Durling 2000a).

128–29. like swords to the Scriptures ... all distorted: A vivid image: the curvature of sword blades makes them distorting mirrors of normal human faces; the heretics derived exaggerated and distorted readings from Scripture, overlooking its open meanings.

130–42. And let not people ... one can fall: The second part of the discussion of

erroneous judgments: God's judgments are inscrutable. Although the analogies in lines 132–38 are taken from fields accessible to human judgments, the target is the presumption of human beings (especially of the unlearned: "donna Berta" and "ser Martino" are proverbial) to suppose they know the mind of God. Cantos 10 and 12 have included three other figures doubts about whose salvation were current: Solomon, Siger, and Joachim of Fiore (for the relation of these cantos to Dante's anxieties and feelings of guilt concerning Guido Cavalcanti, see *Inf.* 10.63–72, with notes, and Durling 2001a).

Harvest, flowering, and sea voyages are key multivalent symbols of the last things (the "four last things": death, judgment, Heaven, and Hell). References to the ultimate harvest from the world become increasingly frequent in the *Paradiso*; the flowering of the wintry thorn is a traditional figure for the Virgin's giving birth; the sea voyage with its dangers is an ever-present category in the *Comedy* (see *Inferno* Additional Note 11, the *Inter cantica* to *Purgatorio* 1, and *Par.* 27.79–83, with notes).

Two of Thomas's examples of unpredictability, the ship sinking after reaching harbor and the briar's late blossoming, have been recognized since Carroll as implicit references to Guido da Montefeltro, who supposed that his retreat from warfare into a Franciscan convent, expressed in terms of the metaphor of ending a ship voyage, guaranteed his salvation, but who sinned and was damned (*Inf.* 27.79–127), and to his son Buonconte (*Purg.* 5.85–129; see our notes and *Inter cantica* there), saved by last-minute repentance with the name of Mary, the rose, on his lips. In relation to Guido, Dante has himself in mind here, for in *Conv.* 4.28.8 (with the same nautical imagery), he had praised Guido for his retirement (see our note to *Inf.* 27.79–81); he does not go so far there as to explicitly judge Guido as saved (however, the other figure praised for his conversion there, Lancelot, is represented in the widely read *La Mort le roi Artu*, §§201–2, as dying a very holy death). This rounding out, at a higher level, of the theme of Guido and Buonconte is typical of the recapitulatory structures in the *Paradiso* (see Additional Note 14).

139–42. Let not dame Bertha ... one can fall: Stealing and making offerings may seem to be chosen at random, but they refer to the thief with whom Christ was crucified who believed and was saved (Luke 23.39–43), and to Cain, whose offering was rejected by God (Gen. 4.3), and who was damned (cf. *Inf.* 32.58, with note).

142. for that one can rise up, and this one can fall: Note the solar terminology of *rise* and *fall* (and the parallels with *Inf.* 10.52, 72, and 121; cf. Durling 1981b).



CANTO 14

Sun, continued: the resurrection of the body—primacy of intellect—a third circle—Mars: fighters for the faith

- 1 From center to circumference, or else from
circumference to center, the water moves in a
round container according as it is struck without
or within:
- 4 into my mind suddenly came what I have just
said, as soon as the glorious life of Thomas fell
silent,
- 7 because of the likeness that was born of his
speech and that of Beatrice, who was pleased to
begin thus after him:
- 10 "He needs, but does not tell you either with
voice or as yet by thinking, to go to the root of
another truth.
- 13 Tell him whether the light with which your
substance blooms will remain with you eternally
as it is now,
- 16 and if it remains, say how it can be, once you
have eyes again, that seeing will not harm them."
- 19 As, impelled and drawn by greater gladness,
those who dance in a round sometimes all at once

raise their voices and move with greater happiness:

- 22 so, at her ready and devoted prayer, the holy circles showed new joy in their whirling and their wondrous song.
- 25 Whoever laments that we must die here to live up there, has not seen there the refreshings of the eternal rain.
- 28 That One and Two and Three that ever lives and always reigns in Three and Two and One, not circumscribed, but circumscribing all things,
- 31 three times was sung by each of those spirits with such melody that hearing it would be just reward for any merit.
- 34 And I heard in the brightest light of the smaller circle a modest voice, perhaps such as the angel's was to Mary,
- 37 reply: "As long as the rejoicing of Paradise lasts, so long will our love radiate this garment about us.
- 40 Its brightness results from our ardor, our ardor from our vision, and our vision is as great as the grace it receives beyond its worth.
- 43 When we are once again clothed with our glorious and holy flesh, our person will be more pleasing by being whole,
- 46 therefore what the highest Good gives us of gratuitous light will be increased, light that enables us to see him,
- 49 thus vision must increase, the ardor must increase that is kindled by it, the radiance must

increase that comes from this love.

- 52 And like a coal that gives off flame, but in its
vivid whiteness surpasses the flame, so that its
appearance still remains:
- 55 so this brightness that encircles us will be
surpassed in appearance by the flesh that today
is covered up by earth,
- 58 nor can so much light weary us, for the organs
of our body will be strong enough for whatever
can delight us."
- 61 So swift and eager were both choruses to say
"Amen!" that they well showed their desire for
their dead bodies,
- 64 perhaps not for themselves alone, but for their
mamas, for their fathers, and for the others who
were dear before they became semipternal flames.
- 67 And behold all around, with equal brightness,
a luster born beyond what was already there, in
the manner of a horizon that is brightening.
- 70 And just as, when early evening rises, the sky
begins to change appearance, so that the sight
both seems and does not seem true:
- 73 so it seemed that I began to see new
subsistences, making a circle enclosing the other
two circumferences.
- 76 Oh true flashing of the Holy Spirit! How it
became swift and blazing to my eyes, which,
overcome, could not sustain it!
- 79 But Beatrice became to me so beautiful and
smiling that the sight must be left among those

that did not follow my memory.

82 Thence my eyes took strength again to lift
themselves up, and I saw that I was translated
alone with my lady into a higher blessedness.

85 I well perceived that I had risen higher, by the
fiery smile of the star, which seemed to me more
flame-colored than usual.

88 With all my heart and with that speech which is
the same in all of us, I made such a holocaust to
God as befitted this new grace.

91 The ardor of my sacrifice had not yet burnt
itself out in my breast, when I knew the offering to
be accepted and favored,

94 for so shining and so fiery appeared splendors
within two rays that I said: "O Helios, how you
clothe them!"

97 As, varied with lesser and greater lights, the
Galaxy shines white between the poles of the
world and makes the sages doubt:

100 so those rays, arranged in the depths of Mars,
made the venerable sign formed by the joining of
the quadrants of a circle.

103 Here my memory outstrips my wit, for that
cross flashed forth Christ, and I cannot find a
worthy comparison,

106 but whoever takes up his cross and follows
Christ, will yet excuse me for what I must leave out,
seeing in that whiteness the blazing forth of Christ.

109 From horn to horn and from summit to base
lights were moving, scintillating brightly when

meeting together and when passing on:

- 112 thus down here we see moving, straight and
oblique, swift and slow, always changing, some
long, some short, the tiny motes
- 115 in the sunbeam that sometime stripes the
shade that with wit and art people make for their
defence.
- 118 And as viol and harp, stretched and tuned,
make a sweet tintinnus of many strings to one
who cannot distinguish the melody:
- 121 so from the lights that appeared to me, I heard
along the cross a melody that ravished me, though
I could not grasp the hymn.
- 124 Well did I perceive that it was of high praise,
for "Arise" and "Conquer" came to me, as to one
who does not understand, although he hears.
- 127 I was falling so in love with it, that until then
there had been nothing that bound me with such
sweet bonds.
- 130 Perhaps my words appear too daring, in rating
less the pleasure of her sweet eyes, in which, when
I gaze, my desire rests,
- 133 but whoever perceives that those lively seals of
all beauty have more power higher up, and that I
had not yet turned to see them there,
- 136 can excuse me of the fault—I accuse myself
here as my excuse—and see that I tell the truth:
for the holy pleasure is not excluded here,
- 139 since it becomes, ascending, ever purer.



CANTO 14

Dal centro al cerchio, e sì dal cerchio al centro,
movesi l'acqua in un ritondo vaso
secondo ch' è percosso fuori o dentro:

1

ne la mia mente fè sùbito caso
questo ch' io dico sì come si tacque
la gloriosa vita di Tommaso,
per la similitudine che nacque
del suo parlare e di quel di Beatrice,
a cui sì cominciar dopo lui piacque:

4

"A costui fa mestieri, e nol vi dice
né con la voce né pensando ancora,
d'un altro vero andare a la radice.

7

Diteli se la luce onde s'infiora
vostra sustanza rimarrà con voi
eternalmente sì com' ell' è ora,
e se rimane, dite come, poi
che sarete visibili rifatti,
esser porà ch' al veder non vi nòi."

13

Come, da più letizia pinti e tratti,
a la fiata quei che vanno a rota
levan la voce e rallegrano li atti:
così, a l'orazion pronta e divota,
li santi cerchi mostrar nova gioia
nel torneare e ne la mira nota.

16

Qual si lamenta perché qui si moia
per viver colà sù, non vide quive
lo refrigerio de l'eterna ploia.

22

25

Quell' uno e due e tre che sempre vive
e regna sempre in tre e 'n due e 'n uno,
non circoscritto, e tutto circunscreve,
tre volte era cantato da ciascuno
di quelli spiriti con tal melodia
ch' ad ogne merto saria giusto muno.

28

E io udi' ne la luce più dia
del minor cerchio una voce modesta,
forse qual fu da l'angelo a Maria,
risponder: "Quanto fia lunga la festa
di Paradiso, tanto il nostro amore
si raggerà dintorno cotal vesta.

31

La sua chiarezza séguida l'ardore,
l'ardor la visione, e quella è tanta
quant' ha di grazia sovra suo valore.

34

Come la carne gloriōsa e santa
fia rivestita, la nostra persona
più grata fia per esser tutta quanta,
per che s'accrescerà ciò che ne dona
di gratuïto lume il sommo bene,
lume ch' a lui veder ne condiziona,
onde la vision crescer convene,
crescer l'ardor che di quella s'accende,
crescer lo raggio che da esso vene.

43

Ma sì come carbon che fiamma rende
e per vivo candor quella soverchia
sì che la sua parvenza si difende:
così questo folgór che già ne cerchia
fia vinto in apparenza da la carne
che tutto dì la terra ricoperchia,

46

49

52

55

né potrà tanta luce affaticarne,
ché li organi del corpo saran forti
a tutto ciò che potrà dilettarne."

58

Tanto mi parver súbiti e accorti
e l'uno e l'altro coro a dicer "Ammel!"
che ben mostrar disio d'i corpi morti,
forse non pur per lor, ma per le mamme,
per li padri, e per li altri che fuor cari
anzi che fosser sempiterne fiamme.

61

64
Ed ecco intorno, di chiarezza pari,
nascere un lustro sopra quel che v'era,
per guisa d'orizzonte che rischiari.

67

70
E sì come al salir di prima sera
comincian per lo ciel nove parvenze,
sì che la vista pare e non par vera:
parvemi lì novelle sussistenze
cominiciare a vedere, e fare un giro
di fuor da l'altre due circunferenze.

73

76
Oh vero sfavillar del Santo Spiro!
Come si fece sùbito e candente
a li occhi miei, che, vinti, nol soffriro!

76

79
Ma Béatrice sì bella e ridente
mi si mostrò che tra quelle vedute
si vuol lasciar che non seguir la mente.

79

82
Quindi ripreser li occhi miei virtute
a rilevarsi, e vidimi translato
sol con mia donna in più alta salute.

82

85
Ben m'accors' io ch' io ero più levato
per l'affocato riso de la stella,
che mi parea più roggio che l'usato.

85

Con tutto 'l core e con quella favella
ch' è una in tutti, a Dio feci olocausto
qual convenies a la grazia novella.

88

E non er' anco del mio petto essausto
l'ardor del sacrificio, ch' io conobbi
esso litare stato accetto e fausto,

91

ché con tanto lucore e tanto robbi
m'apparvero splendor dentro a due raggi
ch' io dissì: "O Elìos, che sì li addobbi!"

94

Come, distinta da minori e maggi
lumi, biancheggia tra ' poli del mondo
Galassia sì che fa dubbiar ben saggi:

97

sì costellati facean nel profondo
Marte quei raggi il venerabil segno
che fan giunture di quadranti in tondo.

100

Qui vince la memoria mia lo 'n gegno,
ché quella croce lampeggiava Cristo
sì ch' io non so trovare esemplare degno,
ma chi prende sua croce e segue Cristo

103

ancor mi scuserà di quel ch'io lasso,
vedendo in quell' albor balenar Cristo.

106

Di corno in corno e tra la cima e 'l basso

109

si movien lumi, scintillando forte
nel congiungersi insieme e nel trapasso:

così si veggion qui diritte e torte,

112

veloci e tarde, rinnovando vista,

le minuzie d'i corpi, lunghe e corte,

moversi per lo raggio onde si lista

115

talvolta l'ombra che per sua difesa

la gente con ingegno e arte acquista.

E come giga e arpa, in tempra tesa,
di molte corde fa dolce tintinno
a tal da cui la nota non è intesa:

così da' lumi che lì m'apparinno
s'accogliea per la croce una melode
che mi rapiva, sanza intender l'inno.

Ben m'accors' io ch'elli era d'alte lode,
però ch'a me venìa "Resurgi" e "Vinci,"
come a colui che non intende e ode.

Io m'innamorava tanto quinci
che 'nfino a lì non fu alcuna cosa
che mi legasse con sì dolci vinci.

Forse la mia parola par troppo osa,
posponendo il piacer de li occhi belli
ne' quai mirando mio disio ha posa,

ma chi s'avvede che i vivi suggelli
d'ogne bellezza più fanno più suso,
e ch' io non m'era lì rivolto a quelli,
escusar puommi di quel ch' io m'accuso
per escusarmi, e vedermi dir vero:
ché 'l piacer santo non è qui dischiuso,
perché si fa montando più sincero.

118

121

124

127

130

133

136

139

NOTES

1–81. From center ... follow my memory: More than half the canto is devoted to the last events in the heaven of the sun.

1–9. From center ... thus after him: The phenomenon described at the beginning of this canto implies the image of concentric circles, either spreading out from a central point (as when a weight has been dropped into water) or converging on the center of a circular container of water that has been struck on its outer surface. A circle is defined as a relation between a circumference and a center, of course, and one function of this beginning, like that of Canto 13, is to reemphasize the pattern governing all the cantos of the sun (all of which, except for Canto 11, begin with references to circles, with fundamentally astronomical reference), and here to reestablish Beatrice and the pilgrim as the defining center: all the discourse of these cantos has been prompted by questions in the pilgrim's mind, and Beatrice, chief mediator, now speaks for him, introducing the last subject dealt with in the sun (cf. the note to lines 79–81).

6. the glorious life of Thomas: Thomas is in glory (Heaven), but there is a reference to his fame as well as to his sun-like mind. The term *life* refers to the soul as the principle of life.

7–8. because of the likeness ... that of Beatrice: Beatrice's words, spoken from the center, will have great effect on the surrounding circles, as we shall see, closely related to the effect of Thomas's words, which illuminate the center.

10–18. He needs, but does ... will not harm them: The light that encloses the souls, as we learned in 5.136 and 8.52–54 (on which see note), is that of their rejoicing. Beatrice's question is what it will become when the souls have been reunited with their bodies (on the airy bodies of the disembodied souls, radiated like light, see *Purg.* 25.88–102, with note; on the resurrected body, see the note to lines 29–60). One may note in passing that the question implicitly involves the question whether the pilgrim's eyes are physically present.

12, 13. root, blooms: For the metaphor of blossoming flowers, see 10.91–93, with notes.

19–33. As, impelled and drawn ... reward for any merit: The joyous reaction to Beatrice's question of the circles of souls surrounding them, again in terms of the figure of the round dance (first introduced in 10.79–81).

20. all at once: Dante's expression, "a la fiata" [at one time], uses one of the normal terms for "occasion" [*fiata*], which in other contexts stands for "a breath" (cf. *Inf.* 5. 135, with note); here the suggestion is that people singing together would normally take breath simultaneously.

25–27. Whoever laments ... the eternal rain: An exalted statement of the superiority of heavenly to earthly joys (cf. *Purg.* 15.61–75, with notes). In both OT and NT, rain is frequently cited as preeminent among God's blessings (Ps. 147.8, Heb. 6.7) and, in association with manna (appearing like dew—Ex. 16.13–15—and soon assimilated to rain—Ps. 78.24), a chief symbol of God's grace. *Ploia* [rain] (also in 24.91), the Provençal term, is used for the solemn effect of its form, more Latinate than *pioggia*.

28–33. That One and Two ... reward for any merit: The song of the thrice-circling souls. The variation of the order in which the Persons of the Trinity are named is significant (see the note to 13.79–87). Another conspicuous Latinism occurs here: *muno* [reward], from Lat. *munus*.

30. not circumscribed ... all things: Circumscription is, literally, the *drawing*, the [de]scribing, of a circle. Note the parallel with *Purg.* 11.1–2; here God has drawn the two circles and will draw a third soon (lines 67–75). There is also a reference to the image of God circumscribing the universe with a compass (see Zahlten 1979).

34–81. And I heard in the brightest ... follow my memory: Solomon's answer to the question, followed by its effect.

34–36. the brightest light ... was to Mary: In 10.109 Solomon is called the most beautiful; here he is the "brightest" of the inner circle; the expressions are equivalent. His authorship of the Canticle of Canticles (see the note to 10.109–14) probably accounts for the choice: in the Middle Ages, the bridegroom of the book was identified as Christ, the bride as the individual soul, as the Virgin Mary, and/or as the Church; the second of these possibilities seems alluded to in the reference to the angel Gabriel and the Annunciation (cf. *Purg.* 10.34–45, with notes).

37–60. As long as the rejoicing ... whatever can delight us: Solomon explains the source of the brightness of the blessed souls and the change that will occur when they are reunited with their bodies. Medieval conceptions of the resurrected ("glorious") body are based on the classic discussion in 1 Cor. 15.35–53:

But some man will say, How do the dead rise again? or with what manner of body shall they come? ... All flesh is not the same flesh: but one is the flesh of man, another of beasts, another of birds, another of fishes. And there are bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial: but one is the glory of the celestial, and another of the terrestrial. One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption ... It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body ... Therefore as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God: neither shall corruption possess incorruption ... In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall

rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying ...: *Death is swallowed up in victory.*

The qualities of the "glorious" or "spiritual" body referred to by saint Paul were further developed and systematized as incorruptibility, wholeness, impassibility, agility, and brightness (see *ST Suppl.* qq. 80–85, *CG* 4, 82–88). Dante adopts the Dominican position, according to which the degree of the intellectual vision of God determines other aspects of beatitude (*ST Suppl.* q. 93); see Additional Note 3.

37–42. As long as the rejoicing ... beyond its worth: The present state of the souls: their "garment" of brightness is a function of their "ardor" (their love), which in turn results from the depth of their "vision" of God. For the clothing imagery, cf. 2 Cor. 5.1–4:

For we know, if our earthly house of this habitation [i.e., our body] be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven. For in this [body] we groan, desiring to be clothed over with our habitation that is from heaven, yet so that we be found clothed, not naked ... because we would not be unclothed, but clothed over, that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

40–41. Its brightness results ... from our vision: As Bosco/Reggio point out, these lines are close to the formulation in Bonaventura's *Soliloquia* 4.5 (Bonaventura was more moderate than later Franciscans).

43–60. When we are once again ... whatever can delight us: The happiness of the blessed will increase after the resurrection. Dante envisions a kind of mutual intensification of body and soul.

43–51. When we are once again ... from this love: Solomon attributes the increase of beatitude resulting from the assumption of the glorified body to the increase of grace bestowed on the wholeness of reunified human nature. "Our person will be more pleasing by being whole" indicates that it will be more pleasing to God in the first instance, but pleasing oneself and others is not excluded by the expression.

46–51. therefore what the highest ... from this love: These are the central lines of the twenty-four lines of Solomon's speech. God's grace consists of additional light; vision (now intensified by the additional light) is again the innermost and basic aspect of beatitude, and from their vision first the souls' ardor and then their brightness radiate, the derivation of each from the preceding being emphasized by the greater fullness of statement and by the chiasmus in relation to the first statement of the structure of beatitude (lines 40–43: brightness, ardor, vision, grace—from outer to inner).

48–49. light that enables ... vision must increase: The hinge of the passage, its central pair of lines, its very emphasis somewhat obscuring the possibility that the love felt for the regained body, and for God's grace in its bestowal, might have a causal relation to the

increase of grace and thus of light (that might somewhat qualify the theme of the primacy of intellect).

52–60. And like a coal ... whatever can delight us: The relation of the glorious body to the present radiance of the soul: the body will not disappear in the brightness of the soul (as it appears to do in the pilgrim's imaginings), but will add additional brightness, resulting from the increased happiness of governing the now-perfected body. (Cf. *ST Suppl.* q. 85 a. 1: "The brightness [of the glorified body] is caused by the overflowing brightness of the soul within it"; the same position in *CG* 4, 86: Dante somewhat complicates the matter by imagining a glory proper to the body.)

58–60. nor can so much light ... whatever can delight us: This is a statement of the principle of the *impassibility* of the glorified body.

61–66. So swift and eager ... sempiternal flames: A strong acknowledgment of the desire of the disembodied souls for reunion with their bodies (see the note to lines 48–49 above).

67–78. And behold ... not sustain it: A third circle of an unspecified number of souls begins to appear, enclosing the first two. The three circles surrounding the pilgrim and Beatrice are strictly parallel to the structure just described: God's grace (the center) illuminates the intellect (first circle of teachers, intellectualists proclaiming the primacy of intellect); the degree of vision produces love (the second circle, voluntarists); the third circle, foreseeing the glorified body (the last fruit of the salvation earned by intellect and will together). Cf. saint Paul on the glorified body as "clothing over" the soul (note to lines 37–42); for the risen body as "garment" and "stole," see also 25.88–96 and 127–29, with notes.

69–78. in the manner ... not sustain it: A brightening horizon is a dawn image, of course, and the "new subsistences" are thus at first, like the first two circles, identified as suns; the simile of lines 70–72 invokes evening twilight to express the initial faintness of the new lights, but like rising suns they become in lines 76–78 too strong for his eyes to bear.

73–74. I began to see new subsistences: These beings are not identified. The philosophical term *subsistence* (referring to a being as autonomous, as distinct from being the substrate of qualities), is used in 13.59 (and cf. 29.15) of the nine orders of angels, and in 33.115 of the unity of God's existence, logically prior to the distinction of the Persons of the Trinity). Maierù 1978 takes it here to refer to other souls "occupying" the sun, which is the simplest explanation, but why the expression is especially appropriate here is not entirely clear; its ambiguity is probably meant to suggest the mysteriousness of the future resurrection of the body.

76–78. Oh true flashing ... not sustain it: The Holy Spirit is identified with love (see the note to 13.52–87) and the desire of all the souls mentioned in lines 61–66, presumably shared by the "new subsistences," who like the others rejoice in its future fulfillment as described by

Solomon.

79–81. But Beatrice ... follow my memory: The last phase of the pilgrim's participation in this great explosion of joy is a return to the center. These lines are a version of the inexpressibility *topos*: Beatrice's beauty became so transcendent that the sight did not follow (i.e., could not be retained in) the poet's memory; cf. 1.7–9 ("the memory cannot follow it"), with note. Lines 1–9 (cf. our note) may now be taken as referring proleptically to the explosion: the center profoundly affecting the circumference, even invoking a further circumference that in turn converges on and powerfully intensifies the center.

82–139. Thence my eyes ... ascending, ever purer: The remaining two-fifths of the canto relate arrival in the planet Mars.

82–87. Thence my eyes ... more flame-colored than usual: The transition to Mars has also been simultaneous (cf. 10.34–39, with notes); for the redness of Mars, cf. *Purg.* 2.13–15. The pilgrim's vision is gradually becoming stronger; the theme has been acquiring emphasis (cf. 5.1–3, 22.124–26, with notes).

82. Thence my eyes took strength: From the sight of Beatrice's increased beauty, the pilgrim takes the strength to inspect his new location.

88–90. With all my heart ... this new grace: The "speech which is the same in all of us" is the wordless language of the heart. A holocaust [Gr. *hólos*, whole, + *kaustos*, burnt] was a burnt offering in which an entire animal was offered. Dante has in mind Ps. 50.18–19: "For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The emphasis is on the poet's entire devotion. "This new grace" is his reception in Mars.

91–93. The ardor of my sacrifice ... accepted and favored: As we have seen in the sun, love is regularly referred to as fire: *ardore* [burning], *affocato* [fiery], *roggio* and *robbio* [red hot], *balenare* [flash, as lightning], *lampo* [lightning], *lampegiare* [flash, properly of lightning]. The burning love of the pilgrim's offering of himself to God is answered by the change in the appearance of the planet (we are within it), described next. Compare the change in what is seen in the sun, occasioned by the pilgrim's prayer and Beatrice's reaction to it (10.52–63).

94–95. for so shining and ... within two rays: Although the image is as yet indefinite (it will be further specified in lines 97–102 and 109–17), it is clear that the "splendors" are the souls of the blessed. The vision is closely related to the circle and sun imagery of the cantos of the sun. There the souls are clothed with the semblance of the sun; here the Crusaders conform to the figure of the crusader's cross with which they were signed in life: individual embodiments of the influence of the planets, they are all miniature versions of their respective planets (for the same phenomenon in Jupiter and Saturn, see the notes to the respective

cantos).

96. O Helios, how you clothe them: *Helios* [Gr. sun] was one of the names of the pagan sun god, here used of the true Sun (as in 1.13: “O buono Appollo” [O good Apollo]); the commentators point out that Uguccione da Pisa’s *Magnae derivationes* derives the Greek term from Heb. *Elohim* (a name of God; cf. 26.133–38, with notes). In any case, the true Sun clothes these souls, and it must be with the radiance of their rejoicing. But they are God’s warriors, and Dante’s *addobbare* [to dub, clothe], is derived from the ceremony of knighting, in which the sponsor of the new knight girded him with the sword to be wielded in the service of right, and often provided armor and clothing (Flori 1976, Flori 1978, Keen 1984, Schnapp 1986). The ceremonies of knighting and becoming a crusader are distinct (noncombatants, too, took the cross), but there is a strong suggestion that each soul here bears the sign of the Cross (for the theme of the poet’s metaphorical knighthood, see Canto 17).

97–99. As, varied with ... makes the sages doubt The grandiose image of a vast, cruciform galaxy [like the Milky Way: Gr. *gála*, milk] consisting of myriad sparkling lights (ruddy, according to line 94) against the background of the planet (line 110).

In *Conv.* 2.14.5–13 Dante discusses the galaxy at some length, noting various ancient explanations of it, including the myth of Phaethon (cf. *Inferno* Additional Note 6, *Paradiso* Additional Note 7) and Aristotle’s *Meteorologica* 1.2.6, which he rejects, following instead Albertus Magnus and Aquinas (see the notes ad loc. in the Vasoli/De Robertis edition [*Opere minori*, vol. 1]). In *Comm.* 1.12 Macrobius says that the points where the ecliptic intersects the Milky Way (erroneously identified by him with the solstices in Cancer and Capricorn) are the “gates of the sun,” through which the soul first descends into corporeality and later returns to its original home, respectively.

100–102. sign formed by ... of a circle: The Cross is imagined as formed within a circle, whether visibly traced or implied by the horizon of the planet itself (it is a so-called Greek cross). Both the circle and the diameters forming the Cross in it are clearly implied, and, as lines 109–10 indicate, the arms of the Cross are horizontal, the support vertical.

103–8. Here my memory ... blazing forth of Christ: The exact manner of “flashing forth” Christ is left to the reader’s imagination. Basic to the idea is that of God’s warriors shouldering their individual crosses, accepting suffering and death in imitation of him, so that the collective image of all of them coalesces as the crucified Christ writ large, as it were. Conspicuous in the passage is the word *Christ* in rhyme with itself: the word appears in other positions in the line (for instance, in *Purg.* 21.8), but in final position it rhymes only with itself; this occurs four times in the poem, all in the *Paradiso*; see the note to 12.71–75.

106–8. but whoever takes ... forth of Christ: When the true Christian sees this sight after his death, he will excuse the pilgrim’s inability to describe it. See Matt. 16. 24–26: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” [Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me] (cf. Matt.

10.24, Mark 8.33, Luke 9.23 and 14.27). The citation reveals the basis of the entire symbolism of the “taking on” of the cross by crusaders: the emblem was worn on the shoulder as a public acceptance of the Gospel precept.

109–17. From horn to horn ... for their defense: The “splendors within two rays” are now more fully characterized. The “horns” are the extremities of the two horizontal arms of the Cross.

112–17. thus down here ... for their defense: The striking image of the motes floating in the sunlight that stripes a dark interior is both remarkably intimate (though it includes a reference to the prevalence of warfare on earth) and grandiose when applied to the gigantic spectacle in the planet.

118–26. And as viol and harp ... although he hears: Now the singing of the souls is introduced, surpassingly sweet though not comprehensible to the pilgrim, who only catches two words of it.

119. make a sweet ... many strings: Our “tintinnus” is not a misprint for *tintinnitus* [a purely subjective ringing or roaring in the ear], but a neologism for Dante’s term “tintinno,” the same onomatopoeia as in 10.143 (“sounding *tin tin* with so sweet a note”), an oddly thin timbre to modern ears, accustomed to a much fuller sound from the violin family than medieval viols or lutes could provide.

124–26. Well did I perceive ... although he hears: He perceives that the song is a hymn of praise to Christ, closely related to many liturgical songs though presumably not available on earth. The Resurrection was celebrated in the liturgy in terms drawing on the imagery of Roman triumph, a rich tradition representing Christ as triumphant conqueror (see nos. 38, 42, 54, 55, 57, 133, 147 in Raby 1959). As warriors of God, the souls in Mars have a special relation to these themes; many of them, though not all, died in battle against the Saracens (see 18.28–48, with notes).

126. as to one who does not understand, although he hears: Note the parallel with *Purg.* 9.142–45.

127–29. I was falling ... such sweet bonds: Nothing the pilgrim has so far experienced has so captured him with its sweetness.

130–39. Perhaps my words ... ascending, ever purer: Having characterized the hymn of the souls in Mars as the loveliest thing so far encountered, the poet corrects the impression he may have given that it was even lovelier than Beatrice’s eyes—but he has not yet gazed into them in this sphere. They acquire greater beauty with each upward move, and by implication are even lovelier than the sights and sounds just praised. The passage may seem to contradict line 82, but that line does not in fact mention Beatrice’s eyes.

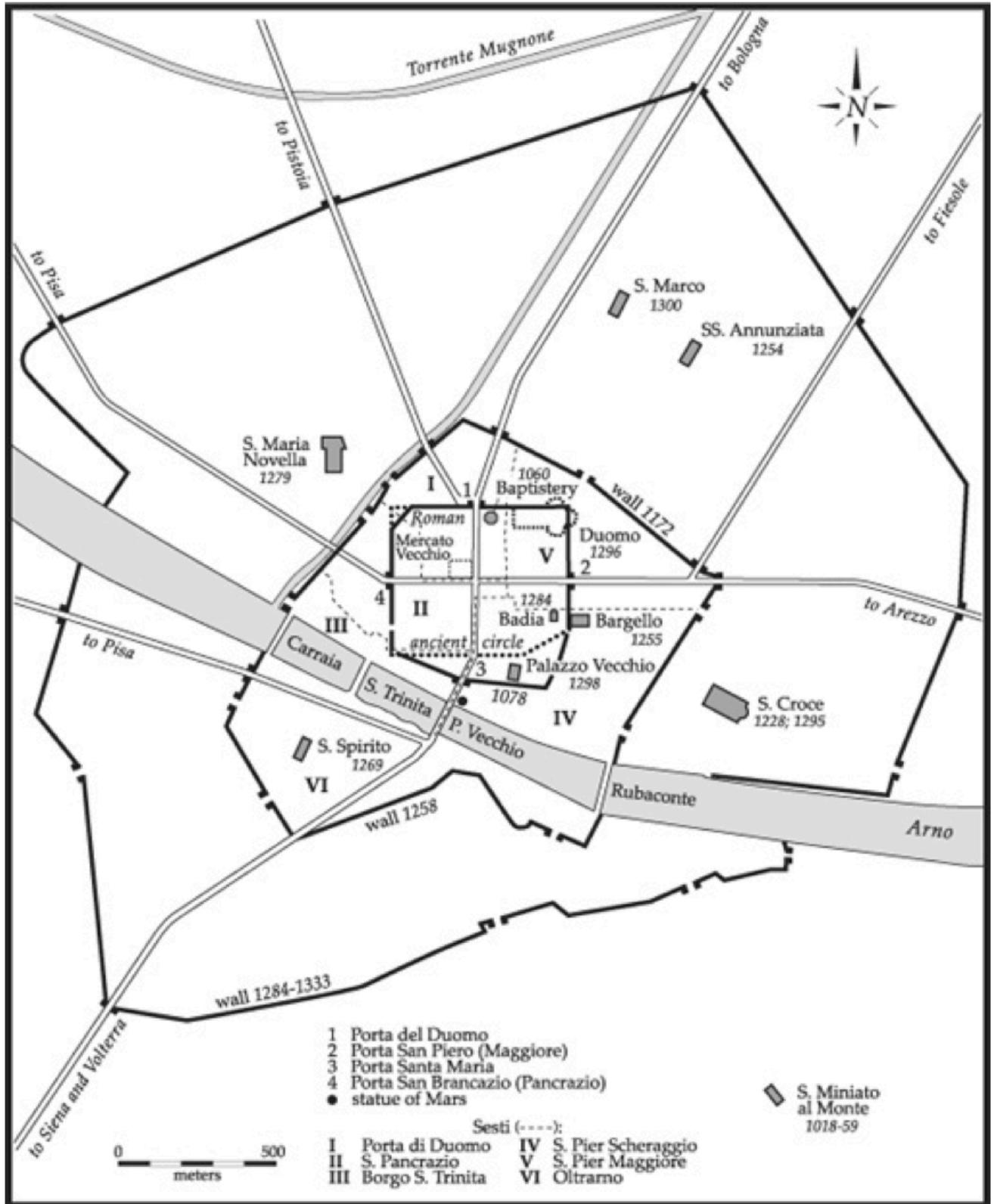


Figure 10. Florence with its early walls



CANTO 15

*Mars, continued: Cacciaguida—Florence in his time—
the family name—his life and death*

- 1 A good will—into which the love that breathes
for justice resolves itself, just as cupidity does
into a wicked will—
- 4 imposed silence on that sweet lyre and quieted
the holy strings that the right hand of Heaven
loosens and tightens.
- 7 How could those substances be deaf to just
requests, who, so as to give me the will to beg
them, fell silent with one accord?
- 10 It is well that he grieve without end who, for
love of a thing that does not last eternally, divests
himself of that other love.
- 13 As across a cloudless, pure, and tranquil sky
from time to time there darts a sudden fire,
moving our eyes, previously fixed,
- 16 and it seems a star changing place, except that
in the place where it began no star is lost, and it
lasts but little:
- 19 so, from the horn that extends to the right,
down to the foot of the cross, there darted a star

of the constellation resplendent there;

22 nor did the gem leave its ribbon, but ran along
 the radiating lines, and it showed like fire behind alabaster.

25 So did the shade of Anchises reach out
 devotedly, if our greatest Muse deserves belief,
 when in Elysium he perceived his son.

28 "O my blood! O poured out from above
 grace of God! To whom as to you
 has the gate of Heaven ever been twice opened?"

31 Thus that light, and I gave it my attention; then
 I turned my gaze back to my lady, and on both
 sides I was amazed,

34 for within her eyes there burned such a smile
 that I thought my eyes must be touching the
 utmost depth of my glory and my Paradise.

37 Then, joyous to hear and to see, the spirit
 added to his beginning things I did not
 understand, so deeply he spoke,

40 nor by choice did he hide them from me, but
 by necessity, for his meaning shot beyond the
 mark of mortals.

43 And when the arc of his burning affect had so
 spent itself that his speech descended toward the
 target of our intellect,

46 the first thing understood by me was: "Blessed
 be you, Trine and One, who are so courteous to
 my seed!"

49 And he continued: "Pleasing and long hunger,
 drawn from reading in the great volume where
 white and black are never changed,

- 52 you have satisfied, son, within this light where
I speak with you, thanks to her who clothed you
with the feathers for your high flight.
- 55 You believe that your thought flows to me from
him who is First, just as from *one*, if known, ray
forth both *five* and *six*,
- 58 and therefore who I may be, and why I appear
more joyous before you than any other in this
happy throng, you do not ask.
- 61 You believe the truth, for the lesser and the
great in this life gaze into the Mirror in which,
before you think, you reveal your thought,
- 64 but that the holy love in which I wake with
perpetual sight, and which fills me ever with
sweet thirsting, may the better be fulfilled,
- 67 let your voice, sure, bold, and glad, sound out
your wish, sound out your desire, to which my
answer is already decreed!"
- 70 I turned to Beatrice, and she heard before I
spoke, and she smiled a sign to me that made
my wish grow wings.
- 73 Then I began thus: "Love and understanding,
as soon as the first Equality appeared to you,
became of one weight in each of you,
- 76 since the Sun that kindled and burnt you
bestows his warmth and light so evenly that all
comparisons fall short.
- 79 But will and knowledge in us mortals, for the
reason that is manifest to you, have differently
feathered wings,

- 82 and therefore I, who am mortal, am caught in
that inequality and can only thank you in my
heart for your paternal rejoicing.
- 85 But I beg you, living topaz that begem this
precious jewel, that you satisfy me with your
name."
- 88 "O my branch, in whom I have been well
pleased even while waiting, I was your root!"
Such was the beginning of his reply.
- 91 Then he said to me: "He from whom you take
your family name, who for a hundred years and
more has been circling the mountain on the first ledge,
- 94 was my son and your great-grandfather: truly it
will be fitting for you to shorten his long labor with
your works.
- 97 Florence within the ancient circle from which
she still takes both tierce and nones dwelt in
peace, sober and modest.
- 100 She had no gold chain, no crown, no
embroidered gowns, no belt more to be looked
at than its wearer.
- 103 The daughter did not yet, when born, make her
father fear, for ages and dowries did not yet flee
the measure, those downward, these upward.
- 106 There were no houses emptied of their
families, Sardanapalus had not yet come to show
what can be done in a bedchamber.
- 109 Montemalo was not yet surpassed by your
Uccellatoio, and as it is surpassed in growing so
it will be in declining.

- 112 Bellincion Berti I saw go wearing leather and
bone, and his lady coming from the mirror
without a painted face,
- 115 and I saw him of the Nerli and him of the del
Vecchio contented with plain leather, and their
ladies with the spindle and the distaff.
- 118 Oh happy ladies! each was sure of her burial
place, and none as yet had been left alone in her
bed because of France.
- 121 This one watched late in her care of the cradle,
and, comforting, used the idiom that first delights
fathers and mothers;
- 124 this other, drawing the strands from the distaff,
told with her household tales of the Trojans, of
Fiesole, and of Rome.
- 127 A Cianghella, a Lapo Salterello would have
then been thought as much a wonder as now
Cincinnatus or Cornelia.
- 130 To so peaceful, to so comely a life of citizens,
to so loyal a citizenry, to so sweet a dwelling,
- 133 Mary gave me, invoked with loud cries, and in
your ancient Baptistry I became at the same
time a Christian and Cacciaguida.
- 136 Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo; my lady
came to me from Po valley, and from there your
surname came.
- 139 Later I followed the emperor Conrad, and he
girt me with knighthood in his service, so much
favor had I gained from him by doing well.
- 142 Following him I marched against the

wickedness of that law whose people usurp,
through the fault of your shepherds, what is
justly yours.

- 145 There by that base folk I was disentangled
 from the deceiving world, the love of which
 defaces many souls,
148 and I came from martyrdom to this peace."



CANTO 15

Benigna volontade—in che si liqua
sempre l'amor che drittamente spira,
come cupidità fa ne la iniqua—

1

silenzio puose a quella dolce lira
e fece quietar le sante corde
che la destra del Cielo allenta e tira.

4

Come saranno a' giusti preghi sordi
quelle sustanze che, per darmi voglia
ch' io le pregassi, a tacer fur concorde?

7

Bene è che sanza termine si doglia
chi per amor di cosa che non duri
eternalmente quello amor si spoglia.

10

Quale per li seren tranquilli e puri
discorre ad ora ad or sùbito foco,
movendo li occhi che stavan sicuri,
e pare stella che tramuti loco,

13

se non che da la parte ond' e' s'accende
nulla sen perde, ed esso dura poco:

tale dal corno che 'n destro si stende
a piè di quella croce corse un astro
de la costellazion che lì resplende;

16

né si partì la gemma dal suo nastro,
ma per la lista rad'ial trascorse,
che parve foco dietro ad alabastro.

19

Sì pia l'ombra d'Anchise si porse,
se fede merta nostra maggior musa,
quando in Eliso del figlio s'accorse.

22

25

*"O sanguis meus! O superinfusa
gratia Dei! Sicut tibi cui
bis unquam Celi ianua reclusa?"*

28

Così quel lume, ond' io m'attesi a lui;
poscia rivolsi a la mia donna il viso,
e quinci e quindi stupefatto fui,
ché dentro a li occhi suoi ardeva un riso
tal ch'io pensai co' miei toccar lo fondo
de la mia gloria e del mio Paradiso.

31

Indi, a udire e a veder giocondo,
giunse lo spirto al suo principio cose
ch' io non lo 'ntesi, sì parlò profondo,
né per elezion mi si nascose,
ma per necessità, ché 'l suo concetto
al segno d'i mortal si soprapuose.

34

E quando l'arco de l'ardente affetto
fu sì sfogato che 'l parlar discese
inver' lo segno del nostro intelletto,
la prima cosa che per me s'intese:

37

"Benedetto sia tu," fu, "trino e uno,
che nel mio seme se' tanto cortese!"

40

E seguì: "Grato e lontano digiuno,
tratto leggendo del magno volume
du' non si muta mai bianco né bruno,
solvuto hai, figlio, dentro a questo lume
in ch' io ti parlo, mercé di colei
ch' a l'alto volo ti vestì le piume.

43

Tu credi che a me tuo pensier mei
da quel ch' è primo così come raia
da l'un, se si conosce, il *cinque* e 'l *sei*,

46

52

55

e però ch' io mi sia e perch' io paia
più gaudioso a te non mi domandi
che alcun altro in questa turba gaia.

58

Tu credi 'l vero, ché i minori e ' grandi
di questa vita miran ne lo speglio
in che prima che pensi il pensier pandi,
ma perché 'l sacro amore in che io veglio
con perpetua vista, e che m'assetta
di dolce disiar, s'adempia meglio,

64

la voce tua sicura, balda e lieta
suoni la volontà, suoni 'l disio
a che la mia risposta è già decretal!"

67

Io mi volsi a Beatrice, e quella udio
pria ch' io parlassi, e arrisemi un cenno
che fece crescer l'ali al voler mio.

70

Poi cominciai così: "L'affetto e 'l senno,
come la prima equalità v'apparse,
d'un peso per ciascun di voi si fanno,

73

però che 'l sol che v'allumò e arse
col caldo e con la luce è sì iguali
che tutte simiglianze sono scarse.

76

Ma voglia e argomento ne' mortali,
per la cagion ch' a voi è manifesta,
diversamente son pennuti in ali,

79

ond' io, che son mortal, mi sento in questa
disagguaglianza, e però non ringrazio
se non col core a la paterna festa.

82

Ben supplico io a te, vivo topazio
che questa gioia preziosa ingemmi,
perché mi facci del tuo nome sazio."

85

"O fronda mia in che io mi compiacemmi
pur aspettando, io fui la tua radice!"

Cotal principio, rispondendo, femmi.

Poscia mi disse: "Quel da cui si dice
tua cognazione, e che cent' anni e piùe
girato ha 'l monte in la prima cornice,
mio figlio fu e tuo bisavol fue:

ben si convien che la lunga fatica
tu li raccorci con l'opere tue.

Fiorenza dentro de la cerchia antica
ond' ella toglie ancora e terza e nona
si stava in pace, sobria e pudica.

Non avea catenella, non corona,
non gonne contigiate, non cintura
che fosse a veder più che la persona.

Non faceva, nascendo, ancor paura
la figlia al padre, ché 'l tempo e la dote
non fuggien quinci e quindi la misura.

Non avea case di famiglia vòte,
non v'era giunto ancor Sardanapalo
a mostrar ciò che 'n camera si puote.

Non era vinto ancora Montemalo
dal vostro Uccellatoio, che com' è vinto
nel montar sù così sarà nel calo.

Bellincion Berti vid' io andar cinto
di cuoio e d'osso, e venir da lo specchio
la donna sua sanza 'l viso dipinto,
e vidi quel d'i Nerli e quel del Vecchio
esser contenti a la pelle scoperta,
e le sue donne al fuso e al pennecchio.

88

91

94

97

100

103

106

109

112

115

Oh fortunate! ciascuna era certa
de la sua sepultura, e ancor nulla
era per Francia nel letto diserta.

118

L'una vegghiava a studio de la culla
e, consolando, usava l'idioma
che prima i padri e le madri trastulla;
l'altra, traendo a la rocca la chioma,
favoleggiava con la sua famiglia
d'i Troiani, di Fiesole e di Roma.

121

Saria tenuta allor tal maraviglia
una Cianghella, un Lapo Salterello,
qual or saria Cincinnato e Corniglia.

124

A così riposato, a così bello
viver di cittadini, a così fida
cittadinanza, a così dolce ostello,

127

Maria mi diè, chiamata in alte grida,
e ne l'antico vostro Batisteo
insieme fui cristiano e Cacciaguida.

130

Moronto fu mio frate ed Eliseo;
mia donna venne a me di val di Pado,
e quindi il soprannome tuo si feo.

133

Poi seguitai lo 'mperador Currado,
ed el mi cinse de la sua milizia,
tanto per bene ovrar li venni in grado.

136

Dietro li andai incontro a la nequizia
di quella legge il cui popolo usurpa,
per colpa d'i pastor, vostra giustizia.

142

Quivi fu' io da quella gente turpa
disviluppato dal mondo fallace,
lo cui amor molt' anime deturpa,

145

e venni dal martiro a questa pace."

148

NOTES

1–12. A good will ... of that other love: The collective will in the cross, an instrument of the divine will, ceases its singing to hear the pilgrim speak. Cf. *Mon.* 1.15.5: "Concord is a uniform movement of several wills"; see 20.1–30 and notes.

1–3. A good will ... into a wicked will: Right love, or charity, "resolves itself" or flows [*si liqua*] into a benign will, and wrong love (cupidity) into a malignant one (see *Purg.* 17.91–139, 20.10–14 and notes).

4–6. imposed silence ... loosens and tightens: Earlier spoken of as a harp and viol (see 14.118–20 and note), the cross is now a lyre whose strings (the singing souls) are imagined as sounded by the right hand (the will) of God. See Ps. 97.1–2, and Luke 1.51, "He has been strong in his right arm" (cf. 6.25–27, 4.43–45 and notes). For the harp as an image of Christ stretched out on the cross, see Heilbronn 1983 and note to *Inf.* 30.49–51, and Additional Note 8.

The instruments mentioned are those of psalmody (Ps. 150.3–4: "Praise him with psaltery and harp"). Also mentioned in the psalm (line 4) is the organ, which Dante brings in at 17.44 (see note). For David the psalmist [*cantor*], see 20.38, 25.72 and notes.

In *Conv.* 2.13.20–24 Dante compares the heaven of Mars to music, because its central position (fifth of nine spheres) means it expresses the "most beautiful relation" or proportion, that of 1:2, which generates a perfect consonance, the octave or diapason (see *Comm.* 2.1.4, 17). Dante's poetry here represents and embodies the three types of music in Boethius' *Institutio musica*: the "music of the spheres" (*musica mundana*), which the pilgrim first heard as he began his ascent (see 1.78 and note); that of the microcosm, the well-tempered mind and body (*musica humana*, here in the harmony of wills); and, in the metaphor of the lyre, instrumental music (*musica instrumentalis*; see Boethius 1867).

7–9. How could those substances ... silent with one accord: Urging the pilgrim to speak out loud is a motif of the canto. Speech distinguishes the living man from the angels and blessed souls, who understand in God; see *DVE* 1.2–3.

10–12. It is well that he grieve ... that other love: This pronouncement has repelled readers, though it is consistent with *Inferno*, and follows from lines 1–3: Dante underlines the consequences of choosing transient over enduring values, a Boethian emphasis (cf. *Purg.* 8.76–81; *Par.* 17.134–35, 19.7–33 and notes).

13–148. As across a cloudless ... to this peace: The balance of the canto relates the pilgrim's interview with a soul that descends from the cross. That this soul is the pilgrim's ancestor is implied by the echoes of Anchises in lines 25–27 and by other terms (lines 48, 52);

the exact kinship is made explicit at lines 91–96, but the forerunner's name, Cacciaguida, though the pilgrim requests it (line 87), is deferred until line 135, after an account of Florence in the late eleventh century (lines 97–130).

13–26. As across a cloudless ... he perceived his son: Implicitly, whoever descends from a cross has previously mounted it, like Christ (see lines 145–48, 14.106–108, 18.28–33 and notes).

13–18. As across ... and it lasts but little: The descent of Cacciaguida from the cross is compared to a meteor (in Dante's understanding of astronomy, meteors were not falling stars but burning vapors in the atmosphere; comparing a meteor to a star is thus a metaphor). Lines 16–18 point to Ovid's account of the fall of Phaethon (*Met.* 2.319–22, esp. 321–22: "As sometimes from the cloudless sky of night / a star, though never falling, appears to fall"). The reference to Ovid's text is important later (cf. 17.1–3); see Additional Note 7.

19–24. so, from the horn ... like fire behind alabaster: Placement in the right arm of the cross may especially honor some of those whose "strong right arm" (see note to lines 4–6) defended the faith. *Corno* also denotes the corner of an altar: the Cross was the altar on which Christ was sacrificed (see *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, line 29: "Hail, altar; hail, victim"; cf. *Inf.* 34.1 and note). Like the staves of the cross, the corners of the altar signify the quarters of the world reached by the Church (Durandus, *Rationale* 1.2.3).

25–27. So did the shade of Anchises ... he perceived his son: The meeting of Aeneas with his father Anchises in the Elysian Fields is the central episode of Vergil's *Aeneid* (6.679–892). To prepare Aeneas for his historic mission, Anchises reveals to him the order of the cosmos and the future destiny of Rome; the meeting with Cacciaguida will prepare the pilgrim for his poetic mission to the world (see 17.13–99 and notes).

Though Dante draws on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in this episode (see 14.97–99 and notes; also note to 22.133–53), where the younger Scipio, dreaming he is in the Milky Way, is told of his future by his adoptive grandfather, Scipio Africanus the Elder, echoes of the *Aeneid* are given much greater prominence.

25. So did the shade of Anchises reach out devotedly: See *Aen.* 6.684–689:

When he saw Aeneas coming toward him through the grass, he stretched out both palms [*palmas utrasque tetendit*] to his son, and with cheeks streaked with tears his voice broke from his mouth: "You have come at last [*venisti tandem*], the faith I knew in you has overcome your hard road" [*vicit iter durum pietas*].

Anchises' gesture (like Aeneas's attempted embrace; cf. *Aen.* 6.699–702, *Purg.* 2.79–81 and note) is impossible for a point of light (lines 13–16): the reader must supply the human image from Vergil's text. Cf. *Purg.* 26.94–96 and note.

26. if our greatest Muse deserves belief: Vergil's reputation as the greatest poet of

Latinity is reaffirmed with the trope of cause for effect (the Muse in place of the author she inspires); cf. *Conv.* 4.26.8 ("our greatest poet") and *Mon.* 2.3.6 ("our divine poet Virgil"). Commentators read Dante's phrasing as suggesting Vergil's account of Aeneas's descent to Hades and Elysium might be a fiction. Whatever the status of Aeneas's journey (which Dante usually treats as historical; see *Inf.* 2.13 and note), all three parts of the *Comedy* have deep roots in the idea of a journey through the underworld and Elysium, in the wake of Aeneas (see Introduction, pp. 18–19).

27. when in Elysium he perceived his son: Elysium, whose location in Virgil's poem is ambiguous (it is entered from Hades, but has its own sun and stars; see *Aen.* 6.637–41), is a pleasure (*locus amoenus*), and the model, in Dante's poem, for Limbo in Hell (*Inf.* 4.24, 106 and notes), the valley of Princes (*Purg.* 6–8), and Eden (*Purg.* 28–30); see Rossi 1981.

28–42. O my blood ... beyond the mark of mortals: Cacciaguida's speech includes Latin (lines 28–30), words unintelligibly lofty (46), the Italian in which the poem is written, archaic Florentine dialect (16.32–33), and easily intelligible prophetic utterance (17.31–36). The range of idiom exceeds that of any other speaker in the poem (cf. *Inf.* 26.73–75 and note, and *Purg.* 26.136–48 and notes).

28–30. O my blood ... twice opened: An obvious answer might seem to be Paul, "rapt to the third heaven" before his death (Acts 9.3–9; see *Inf.* 2.28; *Par.* 1.4–6, 73–75 and notes; and *Ep.* 13.79). But the encomiastic form of the question might imply that the answer is "no one." Has Cacciaguida forgotten Paul, or are the two ascents not fully comparable? See line 33 and note.

This, the sole terzina in the poem entirely in Latin, has liturgical resonance: the Church is Heaven's door [*porta celī*] in the dedication liturgy (after Gen. 28.10–18), and Heaven's gates [*ianūa celī*] open for the protomartyr Stephen in the text of his liturgy (see *Purg.* 15.106–14), an instance of how in the burial liturgy the door of justice may be opened at the request of the dead. All depend on the fact that at Easter both Hell and Heaven are opened by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross (cf. *Par.* 7.46–48 and note); this emphasis on the open door to heaven is related to Cacciaguida's status as the first of Dante's family to reach heaven (see 16.22–24 and note).

But the terzina also recalls the black gate of Hades in the *Aeneid*, open night and day [*nocte atque die patet atra ianua Ditis*, *Aen.* 6.127] through which Aeneas, like the pilgrim, is destined to pass twice [*bis*, *Aen.* 6.134–35], once in his journey and once after death. Cacciaguida's Latin fuses the epic exploit of Christ clearing the way of salvation for his followers with Aeneas's descent to the underworld and Elysium.

28. O my blood: Anchises' advice to Aeneas's descendant, Julius Caesar, is to cast away the weapons of the civil wars that led to dictatorship: "Proice telus, o sanguis meus" [throw down your weapons, O my blood], *Aen.* 6.835. The words also suggest that the pilgrim, descended from a knighted crusader, has, like Aeneas (whose lineage is established at *Mon.* 2.3.6–17), an ennobled bloodline (see note to line 140, 16.1–9 and note, and Additional Note 2).

34–36. for within her eyes ... and my Paradise: The effect of Beatrice's smile appearing in her eyes concentrates past experience in the *VN* (2.5, 3.1); see also 18.19–21 and *Conv.* 3.15.2, where Dante lists as "the greatest good of Paradise" the demonstrations of Wisdom (her eyes) and her persuasions (her smile).

33. I was amazed: The commentators refer to the amazement of the disciples at Pentecost when possessed of languages and of the companions of Paul when he answers an invisible Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts. 2.7–12, 9.6–7), as well as the Transfiguration (Mark 9.14); cf. also *Conv.* 4.25.5–6. Related instances are *Purg* 26.80, *Par.* 26.67.

37–42. Then joyous to hear ... the mark of mortals: What kind of speech Cacciaguida uses here is debated; on the relation of human speech to the divine *Logos* or *Verbum* that transcends it, see 18.1, 3; 19.40–42 and notes; also *Conv.* 3.4.11. But the ancestor's joy at the meeting (line 37) is audible and visible without the use of intelligible words (cf. 26.97–99 and note).

43–69. And when the arc ... already decreed: Descending to intelligible speech (lines 43–45), Cacciaguida thanks the Trinity for granting his wish to see his descendant (46–54). Cacciaguida sees in God the pilgrim's desire to know his identity and the reason for his joy (lines 55–60), but urges the pilgrim to articulate the question audibly, to increase the charity of the exchange (61–69).

43–45. And when the arc ... the target of our intellect: For the archery metaphor see also 1.118–26, 4.58–60, 26.24, 29.24 and notes. See also *Purg.* 16.47–48, 25.16–18 and notes, and Durling/Martinez 1990, Chapter 5.

46–49. the first thing understood ... courteous to my seed: Cacciaguida's words blessing the Trinity are a doxology, like that concluding psalms when used liturgically. This transposition from the Latin liturgy, in the first part of the ancestor's speech to be intelligible, should be seen in relation to lines 28–30: Dante is revealing affinities between Latin and his Italian vernacular.

49–54. And he continued ... your high flight: Heaven has no privations (see 32.52–54 and note), but this soul's joy at the pilgrim's visit suggests that history still brings fulfillment, even for the saints. The ancestor's attitude is based on *Aeneid* 6.687–88 (see note to line 25), but also on the expectation of the just in Limbo for the arrival of Christ, expressed in the Holy Thursday matins liturgy, itself modeled on Virgil's lines: "Advenisti, redemptor mundi" [you have come, redeemer of the world].

53–54. thanks to her ... your high flight: Compare Boethius' Lady Philosophy:

I will attach wings to your mind on which it can raise itself up; so that, all cares being driven away, you will with my guidance, on my path, and with my conveyances be able to return unhindered to your homeland (*Consol.* 4.pr.1.9).

This also echoes "O qui perpetua," 27–28. See also lines 70 and 81; for other high fliers with whom the pilgrim is compared, cf. *Inf.* 17.106–11 and note, and *Inferno* Additional Note 6. See Additional Note 1.

55–57. You believe that your thought ... both five and six: The pilgrim's thought flows to Cacciaguida through God (First, or One). Five and six radiate from the One where all numbers originate; it is like the center of a circle, from which the circumference (here, all human thought) is known (see *VN* 12.4). Five relates to Mars as the fifth sphere, six because it describes Florence, a human city (cf. *Inf.* 6.61, 16.76, *Purg.* 6.127–51, *Par.* 6.103–8, and the next canto).

61–69. You believe the truth ... is already decreed: As in line 50, where he shows foreknowledge of the pilgrim's visit, Cacciaguida, reading the pilgrim's question in God's mind, has his answer prepared. Both in Mars and in Jupiter, the next planet, Dante confronts the problem of free will and God's foreknowledge (see *Consolatio* Books 4–5). On God as a mirror, see note to 3.21, 9.61–66, 13.58–60 and notes.

67. let your voice, sure bold, and glad: Further stimulus to speak. Cf. *Purg.* 32.103–5, 33.23–30 and notes; and see *Par.* 16.16–18, 17.127–35 and notes.

70–87. I turned to Beatrice ... satisfy me with your name: Cacciaguida gazes on the first Equality (God); thus his understanding and love are in balance; not so for the pilgrim, whose affection for his ancestor (lines 82–84) does not yet include knowledge of his name.

73–78. Then I began thus ... comparisons fall short: The implicit metaphor of scales balancing love and understanding is followed by the metaphor of the sun, whose heat (love) and light (wisdom) are inseparable but logically distinct (see 13.79–81, etc.). The central terzina of the canto turns on the metaphor of the balance (see line 75, "weight"), used earlier (cf. 4.138, 5.62, and 13.42 and notes). With its cross of light, Mars, fifth of nine planets, is the fulcrum of the cosmos. See Additional Note 8.

74. the first Equality appeared to you: "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him" (1 John 3.2). God is the "first Equality," both with respect to his own wisdom and power (see *Inf.* 3.95–96) and in the harmony of the three persons (see 10.1–3 and note). Commentators cite Hugh of St. Victor, *De trinitate* 6.21: "What a supreme equality must there be in that Trinity, where all must be equal and perfect."

79–81. But will and knowledge ... feathered wings: Resuming the image of line 73, the two powers of the soul are imagined as wings (a variant on the idea of the two feet of the soul; see *Inf.* 1.30 and note). For this metaphor applied to an *Alighieri* (*alager* means "wing bearer"), see Shankland 1975.

85–87. But I beg you ... satisfy me with your name: Like Folquet (see 9.69 and note), this soul is identified with a gem, here a topaz (usually blue or tawny), set among the jewels of

the planet (Dante's cross has been compared to jeweled crosses, or images of them, like the Latin cross of saint Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna; see Schnapp 1986). Topaz was said to strengthen chastity; see Durling 1971.

88–148. O my branch ... to this peace: The rest of the canto includes Cacciaguida's self-identification (88–96) and a social portrait of the twelfth-century Florence into which he was born and baptized (97–135); mention of his kinsmen and of his brief career as a crusader, conclude his tale (136–48).

88–96. O my branch ... with your works: Cacciaguida reveals that his son, the pilgrim's great-grandfather, is in Purgatory, on the terrace of pride. Thus Cacciaguida is great-great-grandfather to the pilgrim; counting inclusively, five generations are spanned. Like the Donati (see 3.34–63, *Purg.* 23.48 and notes), kin to Dante through his wife, Gemma, the pilgrim has relatives in all three realms of the afterlife (cf. Geri del Bello, *Inf.* 29.25–27 and note). On pride as the family failing, see *Purg.* 13.138 and note.

88–90. Oh my branch ... beginning of his reply: Cacciaguida echoes Is. 11.1 ("and there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower [*flos*] shall rise up out of his root [*radice*]"; see *Conv.* 4.5.5–6), and Matt. 3.17, God's approval of Christ at his baptism: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased [*complacui*]." Implicit is the Jesse tree (Matt. 1.1–16; see *Purg.* 7.121 and note), showing how Jesus, son of Mary, springs from Jesse, father of David.

91–92. He from whom you take your name: Having a family name [*cognazion*] in medieval Florence was a mark of status (see Najemy 2006). But Dante's family was not especially notable (see *Inf.* 10.46–48 and note); see note to lines 79–81.

92. A hundred years and more: Dante's prideful great-grandfather (named Alighiero, like Dante's father) died, in this reckoning, toward the end of the twelfth century, though documentary evidence suggests he was still alive in 1201.

95–96. truly it will be fitting ... labor with your works: Alighiero's stay in Purgatory can be abbreviated by the pilgrim (applicable to Dante's father as well, unless he is in Hell, cf. *Purg.* 23.85–90 and note; also *Purg.* 26.127–32 and note, of a poetic "father," Guinizelli). In a larger sense the poem is a work of devotion and sacrifice for others (see 17.124–42 and note, and Durling 1981a).

97–135. Florence within the ancient circle ... a Christian and Cacciaguida: Old Florence is described in two similar sections, of five and six terzinas (lines 97–111, 112–129). Each begins with individuals (97–102: Florence as a woman; 112–14: Bellincione and his lady), then addresses families (103–5: daughters needing dowries; 115–20: wives content with distaffs, sure of burial places) and their habitations (106–8: houses emptied; 121–23: the nursery) and concludes with reference to cities (109–11: Florence overgrown; 124–26: Troy, Fiesole, and Rome). Implicit is the series of concentric governable entities: individuals and

families, neighborhoods, and cities (see *Mon.* 1.3.2–4). Both sections conclude with a more general view of decay: the decline predicted of the city in relation to that of Rome (109–11); the unfavorable comparison with ancient virtue (127–29). Lines 130–35 summarize the account through the life of Cacciaguida.

97–111. Florence within the ancient circle ... will be in declining: The five stanzas of the first section are articulated by anaphora, with “Not” beginning four consecutive terzinas: Dante’s nine instances of *Non* (cf. the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not kill,” Ex. 20.13), reiterate the word for noes [*Nona*] ending line 98 (cf. line 100, “*Non a vea*” [she had no]). Negations in series also characterize accounts of the peaceful Golden Age, as in Ovid, *Met.* 1.97–100: “No deep moats yet girt their cities; no straight trumpets, no curved brass horns, no helmets, no swords were there”; and cf. *Inf.* 13.1–9.

97–99. Florence within the ancient circle ... sober and modest: The ancient Benedictine abbey (see 16.127–32 and note) marked with its bells the liturgical hours (tierce and noes, the office services sung at about 9 am and 3 pm). The abbey was adjacent to the ancient walls, south of the old San Piero gate, the eastern gate of the city (for the other gates, see 16.103–5 and note). Like the “belt” of the city walls, the liturgical hours are a form of restraint, but their message is disregarded in Dante’s Florence, as are all demographic or architectural limitations; new walls were built in 1178 and a larger circuit planned and begun before Dante was exiled (see plan, p. 301). On the “ancient circle” as a geometrical sign of the old city’s perfection, see Mazzotta 1979.

100–102. She had no gold chain ... than its wearer: Virtuous old Florence is personified as a woman who avoids rich ornament (note how the belt, whose symbolic function is to restrain, was later turned to ostentation). Compare personified Florence at *Purg.* 6.127–51 and notes (and see lines 113–14). Cf. also *Conv.* 1.10.12.

103–5. The daughter did not yet ... these upward: In Dante’s day a girl could be married only if provided with a large dowry. The measure is exceeded by a decline in the marriageable age in the one case, and by the increase in the dowry in the other; cf. other ratios at lines 109–11, 127–29.

105. did not yet flee the measure, those downward, these upward: The just measure as ethical principle was the basis of Aristotle’s system of the virtues in his *Nichomachean Ethics* (5.3–5) each of which was thought to be the mean between vicious extremes; see *Conv.* 4.17.1–8, *Inf.* 7.40–42, our introduction to *Purgatorio*, pp. 8–10, and *Purg.* 22.38–44 and notes; see also Additional Note 8, and Martinez 1989.

106–8. There were no houses emptied ... in a bedchamber: Houses were emptied for various reasons: because of political exile, because fathers traveled to France or the Holy Land, because very large palaces were built, or because the cost of child rearing discouraged procreation (consistent with lines 103–5). See note to lines 118–20.

107. Sardanapalus. A king of Assyria, famed for sexual excess (see Juvenal, *Satire* 10.362; Orosius, *Adversus paganos* 1.19). His five-syllable name is itself excessive.

112–17. Bellincion Berti I saw ... the distaff: See 16.94–99 and note for Bellincione; for the Nerli, see 16.127–32. The Guelph del Vecchio house was expelled in 1248 and 1260. Though ancient and noble, these citizens went modestly clad; their women used no cosmetics and virtuously practiced spinning (cf. Prov. 31.19). Note terms for contained desires [*cinto, contento*].

118–29. O happy ladies ... Cincinnatus or Cornelia: The focus returns to women in domestic settings (bed, cradle, household): their security assures family survival and the transmission of knowledge over generations.

118–20: O happy ladies ... because of France: Florentine wives knew they would be buried where they were born because political exile was unknown and commercial travel still uncommon (see note to lines 106–8).

121–23. This one watched late ... delights fathers and mothers: Close supervision of infants is accompanied by the “baby talk” parents themselves enjoy, a key stage in inculcating the vernacular that even women and infants could understand (cf. *DVE* 1.1.1). The “household” [*famiglia*] includes all souls that must be fed, including children, servants, and often slaves.

124–26. this other ... of Fiesole and of Rome: Women transmit the founding narratives of Florence in the vernacular as they spin wool into thread (spinning is a metaphor for narrating; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 1.4, and note to 30.35).

126. of the Trojans, of Fiesole, and of Rome: The Troy story is the myth of the origins of European civilization (see *Inf.* 1.73–74, 5.64 and notes; *Mon.* 2.3), that of Rome, founded by descendants of Trojan exiles, is the myth of Italian cultural prestige (*Conv.* 4.5.3–9; Florence was a “daughter” of Rome; *Conv.* 1.3.4). After long strife, Fiesole and its rough inhabitants (see *Inf.* 15.63 and note) were conquered by Florence in 1010, paving the way for its hegemony over Tuscany.

127–29. A Cianghella ... Cincinnatus or Cornelia: Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus the elder, and mother of the populist reformers Tiberius and Gaius (the two Gracchi); and Cincinnatus, called from the plough to the dictatorship (see 6.46–47 and note, *Mon.* 2.5.9–10, *Conv.* 4.5.15), would be as exceptional for their virtue in the Florence of 1300 as Cianghella, a woman of ill repute said to have been the daughter of Arrigo della Tosa (d. 1330), and Lapo Salterello, a Florentine lawyer and judge banished in 1302 (along with Dante) for barbary (Compagni, *Cronica* 2.22), would have been exceptional for their vice in the days of Dante’s ancestor. The “proportion” is chiastic, comparing ancients to moderns and moderns to ancients.

130–35. To so peaceful ... a Christian and Cacciaguida: After describing the peaceful and virtuous city into which he was born, Cacciaguida names himself: one implication is that his virtues embody those of his city.

133. Mary gave me invoked with loud cries: Echoing the “loud cries” of Christ from the cross (11.32–33), Mary’s name, invoked to relieve birth pangs, stands in for the name of Cacciaguida’s mother, probably unknown to Dante.

135. at the same time a Christian and Cacciaguida: Delayed since line 87, Cacciaguida’s name finally emerges. His christening follows closely on his birth, reflecting how baptism signified the birth of the soul into mother Church, the community of the saved (see also Cacciaguida’s taking of the cross, line 140).

136–48. Moronto was my brother ... to this peace: The choice of details in Cacciaguida’s biography—his birth, his brothers’ names, his descendants, his wife’s origin, his friendship with the emperor and honor as a crusader, which leads to the journey that brings his death at the hands of enemies—follows an astrological scheme, derived from Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, that assigned to each of the twelve zodiacal signs a specific influence over the various ages, experiences, and relationships in life. See Additional Note 2.

136–38: Moronto was my brother ... your surname came: Only this passage attests to these brothers, perhaps added by Dante to establish the connection to the Elisei family; the early commentators record the presence of an Aldighieri family in Ferrara as early as the eleventh century. The prominence given Cacciaguida’s mother and wife is consistent with lines 97–129.

139–41. Later I followed ... by doing well: Existing documents about Cacciaguida do not call him a *dominus* [noble], though this status would have resulted from his being knighted by the emperor, for which there is likewise no record; nor do Cacciaguida’s sons, Preitenitto and Alighiero, appear in registries as noble (*domini*). Yet by Dante’s day the family was treated as noble: Dante rode with the knights at Campaldino (see note to *Inf.* 22.4–5) and was called *dominus* when on an embassy to San Gimignano in 1300 (Mattalia).

139. Later I followed the emperor Conrad: This is Conrad III of Swabia (emperor 1138–52), who entered Italy early in his reign to be crowned King of the Romans in Milan. Conrad II, the Salic, who fought the Saracens in southern Italy and knighted many Tuscans, has also been suggested, but he never went to the Holy Land. Conrad III is significant as the first of the Hohenstaufen rulers of Swabia, whose last descendants were Frederick II, Manfred, and Conradi (see *Purg.* 3.103–45 and note), and because the Guelph-Ghibelline divisions that were to divide Florence arose in Germany during his reign. Line 141 could be taken to mean that Conrad knew Cacciaguida before the crusade.

140. he girt me with knighthood in his service: In the knighting ceremony, the sponsor girds the new knight with his sword and other weaponry (see Durling/Martinez 1990,

Appendix 1). Note the return to imagery of girdling and containment. Conferal of the *cingulum militiae* [belt] was a patent of knighthood, ennobling the family (see lines 139–41 and 16.1–9 and notes).

142–44: Following him I marched ... what is justly yours: Dante's final pronouncement on the loss of the Holy Land (entirely in Islamic hands—"that law"—after the fall of Acre in 1291), recovery of which he felt the popes had neglected (line 143; see *Inf.* 27.87–90 and notes). Christians deemed Jerusalem Christ's legacy to his followers (as in Christian interpretation of Lam. 5.2, "Our inheritance is turned to aliens"; cf. *Purg.* 33.1–3 and notes). See *Ep.* 11.1–2, 4.

145–48. There by that base folk ... to this peace: Cacciaguida's victory is that of the soul over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Crusaders who died in battle were regarded as martyrs; they fulfilled the example of Cross hymns (see 14.124–26 and note) by conquering with their deaths: the words of the hymn *Pange lingua*, line 3, are *immolatus vicerit* [sacrificed, he vanquished], referring to Christ.

146–48. Disentangled from the deceiving world ... to this peace: This passage repeats language and rhymes used in the heaven of the sun for Boethius (10.127–29 and notes), associating the poet's ancestor Cacciaguida with the author of one of the chief texts that shape *Paradiso*, also traditionally a Christian martyr.

145. There by that base folk: Italian *turpe* [base] was applied by Christian polemicists to Islam, who supposed it to promote sensual indulgence (allowing polygamy, for example); thus Dante refers to Islamic control of the Holy Land.

148. To this peace: What Anchises (and Vergil) wanted for Rome, and what, according to Dante and medieval tradition, Augustus gave the world (see 6.34–94, 79–81 and notes; and *Mon.* 1.16.2).

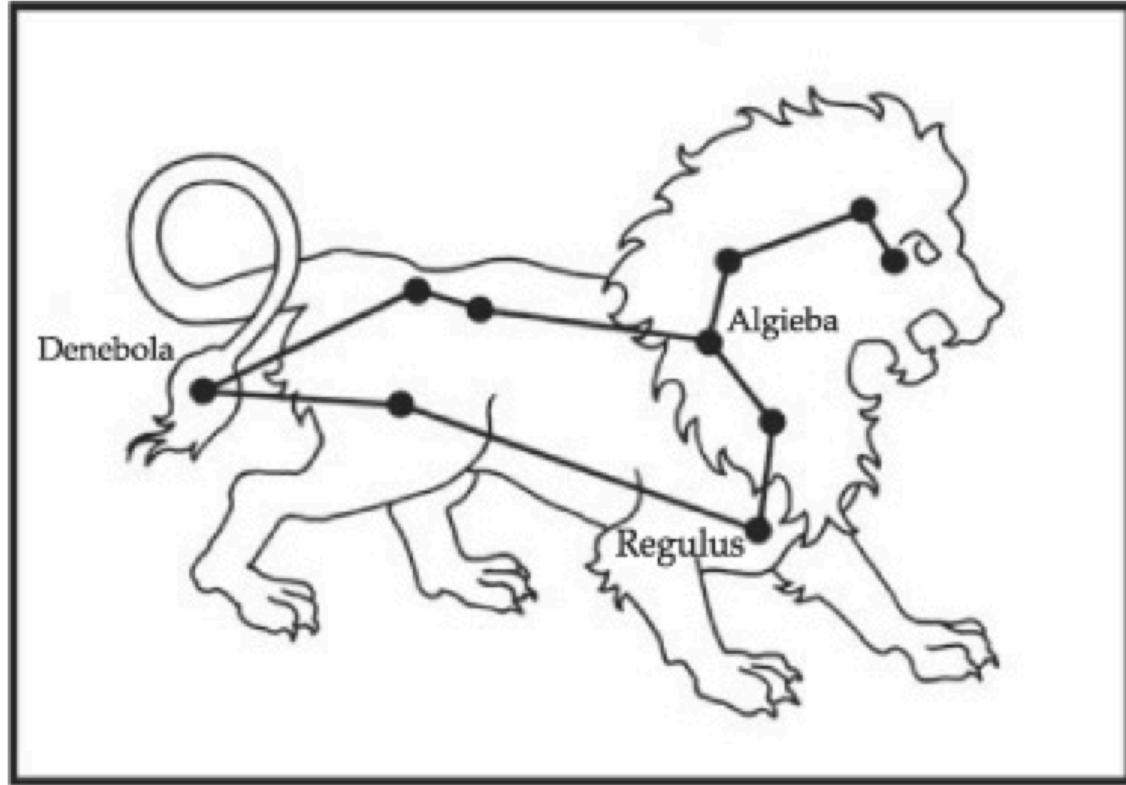


Figure 11. The constellation Leo



CANTO 16

Mars, continued: Cacciaguida's ancestors—the decline of Florence—new people and money—simplicity of the early Florentines

- 1 O our paltry nobility of blood, if you cause
 people to glory in you down here, where our
 affect is feeble,
- 4 it will never seem a wondrous thing to me, for
 there where one's yearning cannot stray, I say in
 Heaven, I gloried in you.
- 7 Truly you are a mantle that quickly shrinks,
 and, if we do not add from day to day, time goes
 around it with his shears.
- 10 With the *voi* that Rome first endured, in which
 its descendants now least persevere, my words
 began again,
- 13 so that Beatrice, a little apart and smiling,
 resembled her who coughed at the first recorded
 fault of Guinevere.
- 16 I began: "You are my father, you give me all
 boldness to speak, you lift me up so high that I am
 more than myself.
- 19 My mind is filled by gladness from so many
 streams that it rejoices in its power to endure it

without being shattered.

22 Tell me then, my dear first harvest, who were
your ancestors, and what years were recorded in
your childhood;

25 tell me of the sheepfold of San Giovanni, how
large it was then, and who were the people there
worthy of the higher seats."

28 As in the breathing of the wind a coal livens in
the flames: so I beheld that light grow bright at
my blandishments,

31 and as it became more beautiful in my eyes, so
with sweeter and gentler voice, but not in this
modern speech,

34 it said to me: "From the time when 'Ave' was
spoken, to the birth whereby my mother, now
sainted, lightened herself of me, her burden,

37 this fire came five hundred, fifty, and thirty
times to its Lion, to be inflamed again beneath its
foot.

40 My ancestors and I were born where the last
ward is reached by one who runs in your annual
game.

43 Suffice it to hear this of my forebears: of who
they were and whence they came, it is more
fitting to be silent than to speak.

46 All those who in those times could bear arms,
between Mars and the Baptist, were a fifth of
those alive today.

49 But the population, now mixed with those from
Campi, from Certaldo, and from Figline, then was

pure to the last artisan.

52 Oh how much better to have as neighbors the
people of whom I speak, and to have your
boundaries at Galluzzo and Respiano,

55 than to have them inside the limits, and to
endure the stench of the peasant from Aguglione
or from Signa, who already sharpens his eye to swindle!

58 If the people who are most degenerate in the
world had not been a step-mother to Caesar, but
kindly, as a mother toward her son,

61 such a one has become a Florentine and
changes money and sells, who would have
returned to Simifonti, where his grandfather went begging,

64 Montemurlo would still belong to the Counts,
the Cerchi would be in the parish of Acone, and
perhaps in Valdigieve the Buondelmonti.

67 The mixing together of persons has ever been
17 highlighter
the beginning of harm to the city, as excessive
food is cause of your diseases,

70 and a blind bull falls sooner than a blind lamb,
and many times one sword cuts more and better
than five.

73 If you look at Luni and Orbisaglia, how they
have gone to ruin, and how Chiusi and Sinigaglia
are following in their wake,

76 to hear that lineages perish will not seem a
strange thing or difficult, since cities have their
end.

79 The things of your world all have their deaths,
just as you do, but in some it is hidden, for they

- last a long time, and lives are short.
- 82 And as the turning of the heaven of the moon
covers and uncovers the shores without pause,
so Fortune does with Florence:
- 85 thus what I say of the noble Florentines whose
fame is hidden in antiquity, should not seem
wondrous.
- 88 I saw the Ughi and I saw the Catellini, Filippi,
Greci, Ormanni, and Alberichi, illustrious citizens,
already in decline,
- 91 and I saw, still as great as they were ancient,
de l'Arca with de la Sannella, and the Soldanieri
and Ardinghi and Bostichi.
- 94 Over the gate now burdened with wickedness
of such weight that soon the bark must be lost,
- 97 dwelt the Ravignani, from whom Count Guido
descends and whoever later took his name from
the noble Bellincione.
- 100 De la Pressa already knew how to rule, and
Galigaio already had gilded hilt and pommel in
his house.
- 103 Already great were the column of vair, the
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti and Barucci and Galli,
and those who blush for the bushel.
- 106 The stock from which the Calfucci were born
was already great, and already the Sizii and
Arrigucci had been called to curule thrones.
- 109 Oh how great they seemed to me, those who
have been undone by their pride! and the golden
balls made Florence flourish in all her great deeds.

- 112 Such were the fathers of those who, whenever
your church is vacant, make themselves fat in
consistory.
- 115 The presumptuous clan that is like a dragon
against those who flee, but is placated like a
lamb by those who show their teeth or their purse,
- 118 was already coming up, but from lowly folk, so
that Uberto Donato was not pleased when his
father-in-law made him a relative of theirs.
- 121 Already Caponsacco had come down from
Fiesole to the market-place, and already Giuda
and Infangato were good citizens.
- 124 I will say a thing incredible but true: one
entered into the little circle of walls through a gate
that took its name from the Pera family.
- 127 All who wear the lovely emblem of the great
baron whose name and praise adorn the feast of
Thomas
- 130 from him had knighthood and privilege, though
today he who adorns it with the fringe gathers
with the commoners.
- 133 Already there were the Gaulterotti and the
Importuni, and Borgo would still be tranquil if they
lacked new neighbors.
- 136 The house from which your weeping came
because of the just anger that has killed you all
and put an end to your happy living,
- 139 was honored, along with its consorts: O
Buondelmonte, how ill you fled marriage with
it at others' urgings!

- 142 Many would now be glad who mourn, if God
 had given you to the Ema the first time you came
 to the city,
- 145 but it was necessary that Florence, in her last
 peace, should offer a victim to that broken stone
 that guards the bridge.
- 148 With these folk, and others along with them,
 did I see Florence in such repose that she had no
 cause to make her weep.
- 151 With these folk I saw her people so glorious
 and just that the lily had never been reversed
 upon the staff
- 154 nor made scarlet by division."



CANTO 16

O poca nostra nobiltà di sangue,
se gloriār di te la gente fai
qua giù, dove l'affetto nostro langue,
mirabil cosa non mi sarà mai,
ché là dove appetito non si torce,
dico nel cielo, io me ne gloriāi.

Ben se' tu manto che tosto raccorce,
sì che se non s'appon di dì in die
lo tempo va dintorno con le force.

Dal *voi* che prima Roma sofferie,
in che la sua famiglia men persevra,
ricominciaron le parole mie,
onde Beatrice, ch'era un poco scevra,
ridendo, parve quella che tossio
al primo fallo scritto di Ginevra.

Io cominciai: "Voi siete il padre mio,
voi mi date a parlar tutta baldanza,
voi mi levate sì ch' i' son più ch' io.

Per tanti rivi s'empie d'allegrezza
la mente mia che di sé fa letizia
perché può sostener che non si spezza.

Ditemi dunque, cara mia primizia,
quai fuor li vostri antichi e quai fuor li anni
che si segnaro in vostra puerizia;
ditemi de l'ovil di San Giovanni
quanto era allora, e chi eran le genti
tra esso degne di più alti scanni."

1

4

7

10

13

16

19

22

25

- Come s'avviva a lo spirar d'i venti 28
carbone in fiamma: così vid' io quella
luce risplendere a' miei blandimenti,
e come a li occhi miei si fé più bella,
così con voce più dolce e soave, 31
ma non con questa moderna favella,
dissemi: "Da quel dì che fu detto 'Ave'
al parto in che mia madre, ch' è or santa, 34
s'alleviò di me, ond' era grave,
al suo Leon cinquecento cinquanta 37
e trenta fiate venne questo foco
a rinfiammarsi sotto la sua pianta.

Li antichi miei e io nacqui nel loco 40
dove si truova pria l'ultimo sesto
da quei che corre il vostro annüal gioco.

Basti d'i miei maggiori udirne questo: 43
chi ei si fosser e onde venner quivi
più è tacer che ragionare onesto.

Tutti color ch' a quel tempo eran ivi 46
da poter arme tra Marte e 'l Batista
erano il quinto di quei ch' or son vivi.

Ma la cittadinanza, ch' è or mista 49
di Campi, di Certaldo e di Fegghine,
pura vediesi ne l'ultimo artista.

Oh quanto fora meglio esser vicine 52
quelle genti ch' io dico, e al Galluzzo
e a Trespiano aver vostro confine,
che averle dentro e sostener lo puzzo 55
del villan d'Aguaglion, di quel di Signa,
che già per barattare ha l'occhio aguzzo!

- Se la gente ch' al mondo più traligna 58
non fosse stata a Cesare neverca,
ma come madre a suo figlio benigna,
tal fatto è fiorentino e cambia e merca 61
che si sarebbe volto a Simifonti,
là dove andava l'avolo a la cerca,
sariesi Montemurlo ancor de' Conti, 64
sarieno i Cerchi nel piovier d'Acone,
e forse in Valdigieve i Buondelmonti.
- Sempre la confusion de le persone 67
principio fu del mal de la cittade,
come del vostro il cibo che s'appone,
e cieco toro più avaccio cade 70
che cieco agnello, e molte volte taglia
più e meglio una che cinque spade.
- Se tu riguardi Luni e Orbisaglia 73
come sono ite, e come se ne vanno
di retro ad esse Chiusi e Sinigaglia,
udir come le schiatte si disfanno 76
non ti parrà nova cosa né forte,
poscia che le cittadi termine hanno.
- Le vostre cose tutte hanno lor morte, 79
sì come voi, ma celasi in alcuna
che dura molto, e le vite son corte.
- E come 'l volger del ciel de la luna 82
cuopre e discuopre i liti senza posa,
così fa di Fiorenza la Fortuna:
per che non dee parer mirabil cosa 85
ciò ch' io dirò de li alti Fiorentini
onde è la fama nel tempo nascosa.

- Io vidi li Ughi e vidi i Catellini,88
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni e Alberichi
già nel calare, illustri cittadini,
e vidi così grandi come antichi,91
con quel de la Sannella, quel de l'Arca,
e Soldanieri e Ardinghi e Bostichi.
- Sovra la porta ch' al presente è carca94
di nova fellonia di tanto peso
che tosto fia iattura de la barca,
erano i Ravignani, ond' è disceso97
il conte Guido, e qualunque del nome
de l'alto Bellincion ha poscia preso.
- Quel de la Pressa sapeva già come100
regger si vuole, e avea Galigaio
dorata in casa sua già l'elsa e 'lpome.
- Grand' era già la colonna del vaio,103
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti e Barucci
e Galli, e quei ch'arrossan per lo staio.
- Lo ceppo di che nacquero i Calfucci106
era già grande, e già eran tratti
a le curule Sizii e Arrigucci.
- Oh quali io vidi quei che son disfatti109
per lor superbia! e le palle de l'oro
forian Fiorenza in tutt' i suoi gran fatti.
- Così facieno i padri di coloro112
che, sempre che la vostra chiesa vaca,
si fanno grassi stando a consistoro.
- L'oltracotata schiatta che s'indraca115
dietro a chi fugge, e a chi mostra 'l dente
o ver la borsa com' agnel si placa,

già venia sù, ma di picciola gente,
sì che non piacque ad Ubertin Donato
che poï il suocero il fé lor parente.

118

Già era il Caponsacco nel mercato
disceso giù da Fiesole, e già era
buon cittadino Giuda e Infangato.

121

Io dirò cosa incredibile e vera:
nel picciol cerchio s'entrava per porta
che si nomava da quei de la Pera.

124

Ciascun che de la bella insegnava porta
del gran barone il cui nome e 'l cui pregio
la festa di Tommaso riconforta

127

da esso ebbe milizia e privilegio,
avvegna che con popol si rauni
oggi colui che la fascia col fregio.

130

Già eran Gualterotti e Importuni,
e ancor saria Borgo più quïeto
se di novi vicin fosser digiuni.

133

La casa di che nacque il vostro fletto,
per lo giusto disdegno che v'ha morti,
e puose fine al vostro viver lieto,

136

era onorata, essa e suoi consorti:
o Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti
le nozze süe per li altri conforti!

139

Molti sarebber lieti che son tristi,
se Dio t'avesse conceduto ad Ema
la prima volta ch'a città venisti,
ma conveniesi a quella pietra scema
che guarda 'lponte che Fiorenza fesse
vittima ne la sua pace postrema.

142

145

Con queste genti, e con altre con esse,
vid' io Fiorenza in sì fatto riposo
che non avea cagione onde piangesse.

148

Con queste genti vid' io glorioso
e giusto il popol suo tanto che 'l giglio
non era ad asta mai posto a ritroso
né per divisiōn fatto vermicchio."

151

154

NOTES

1–9. O our paltry nobility ... around it with its shears: The pilgrim glories in the noble ancestry deriving from Cacciaguida's knighthood, though he also acknowledges, after his authorities (*Juvenal, Satires* 8.1–20; *Consol.* 3.pr.6.1–2) and his own stated views (see *Conv.* 4.20.5, *Mon.* 2.3.4), that nobility of individual character is primary. Like some earlier passages (see *Purg.* 8.121–39, on the Malaspina), the cantos in Mars foreground the leading role noble families might play in Italian politics (see 17.70–93, and Carpi 2004).

7–9. Truly, you are a mantle ... around it with its shears: The sumptuary laws that dictated the garments Florentine citizens might wear defined this mantle as suited to the class of knights, thus to the nobility. But nobility will erode over time unless it is renewed by good deeds; cf. *Conv.* 4.20.3–5, 4.29.6–11; and the attacks on degraded houses at *Purg.* 7.91–136, 121–23; 14.91–123 and notes.

10–27. With the *voi* ... the higher seats: Knowledge of his ancestry (lines 16–18, 22) and Cacciaguida's account of old, virtuous Florence encourage the pilgrim to pose further questions (lines 22–28; cf. 15.67–69). Anaphora on *voi*, the second-person-plural honorific form (lines 16–18), elevates the pilgrim's language, reflecting his social elevation and his sense of restoring an ancient Roman dignity (lines 10–12).

10–12. With the *voi* ... words began again: Lucan attributes changes in Roman protocol to Caesar's assumption of the dictatorship (see *Phar.* 5.383–86: "all the lying titles that we have used so long to our masters"), including use of the plural *vos* to address an individual; but contemporary Rome, left desolate by emperors and popes (see *Purg.* 6.112–14 and notes, *Ep.* 11.21) has abandoned the practice. *Voi* was used in *Inferno* to Farinata and Cavalcante (10.51, 63, and *passim*) and Brunetto Latini (15.80), and in *Purgatorio* to Currado Malaspina (8.121), Hadrian V (19.131), and Guido Guinizelli (26.112), and in both *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* to Beatrice (but see *Par.* 31.80–90 and note, and Additional Note 1).

13–15. so that Beatrice ... fault of Guinevere: Beatrice witnesses the pilgrim's somewhat vainglorious pleasure in his family's nobility; she stands apart, marking her dissociation from the fault; but smiles, showing her indulgence of it.

In the Old French *Lancelot* (8.52a.108), the Lady of Malehault escorts Arthur's Queen Guinevere to an assignation with the knight Lancelot; the lady, who had once loved Lancelot, coughs when Guinevere asks the knight to describe how he first fell in love with her: it is the "first fault" of the queen because her question opens the way for her adulterous affair (see *Inf.* 5.127–38 and notes).

16–18. I began ... more than myself: Cacciaguida is the fifth of those addressed by the pilgrim or poet as fathers in the poem, in addition to Virgil, Brunetto (*Inf.* 15.83), Guinizelli

(*Purg.* 26.97), and Apollo (see 1.28), with four to follow (see 22.58, 24.62, 26.91–93, 31.63). Cacciaguida, the only blood relative among them, raises the pilgrim's self-esteem. See note to lines 7–9.

22–24. Tell me then ... in your childhood: The pilgrim's question recalls Farinata's interrogation of the pilgrim (*Inf.* 10.42, 46–48). In line 22 *primizia* [first harvest fruits] identifies Cacciaguida as the first of Dante's family to reach Heaven (see 15.91–93 and note), in the wake of 1 Cor. 15.20: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep" [*primitiae dormientium*]. For the assembled blessed as a harvest, see 23.19–21 and note.

25–27. tell me of the sheepfold ... the higher seats: As patron of Florence (see *Inf.* 13.143–50), the Baptist cares for the city as his sheepfold (see 25.5–6 and note); John also recognized Christ as "Lamb of God" (John 1.36).

28–154. As in the breathing ... made scarlet by division: In the balance of the canto, the pilgrim's questions (lines 22–27) are answered by Cacciaguida, who gives the year of his birth (lines 34–40), names his family and their residence (lines 40–45), numbers the city's inhabitants (lines 46–48), adds a comment on the effects of immigration from the countryside (lines 49–87), and then lists the most important families (lines 88–147). In his words the vanished era of honor, moderation, and courtesy reproaches the new world of sudden wealth (cf. *Inf.* 16.67–69; *Purg.* 16.121–26, 134 and notes).

32–33. so with sweeter ... not in this modern speech: Leaving off his Latin speech (15.28–30), Cacciaguida appears to speak in old Florentine dialect, which, given the passage of more than a century, would differ from Dante's own, according to Dante's own theories (cf. 26.124–32, which represents a change in Date's earlier views: *Conv.* 1.5.9 and *DVE* 1.9.6–8). The words "sweet and gentle" were used of Beatrice's speech to Virgil (*Inf.* 2.56–57 and note).

34–39. it said to me ... beneath its foot: Cacciaguida records, in terms of the returns of Mars to the zodiacal sign of the Lion, the number of years elapsed from the Annunciation, March 25, when Gabriel saluted Mary with *Ave* (see *Purg.* 10.34–45, notes on *Par.* 26.114, and 32.112–13), to the year of his birth. According to the astronomer Alfraganus, Mars makes a complete revolution around the sun in 687 days; 687 multiplied by 580, divided by the number of days in a solar year, 365 and a fraction, yields 1091 as the year of Cacciaguida's birth. The second crusade, where he met his death (15.145–46) began in 1147, so by this reckoning he lived fifty-six years. Calculations using different values for the period of Mars are less convincing. Dante was also in his fifty-sixth year when he died.

37–39. this fire ... beneath its foot: Ptolemy records Regulus, the principal star in Leo (*cor leonis*), as strengthening courage, akin to the effect of Mars. With his mention of the Annunciation, which also marked the Florentine New Year, Cacciaguida implies the horoscope of the city, supposed refounded on that date by Charlemagne in 801, with Mars and Mercury as principal influences (see *Inf.* 13.143–50 and notes, Villani 4.1). Cacciaguida's own birth was probably "under Mars": *Martius*, the Roman month of March, was sacred to Mars, and the sign

Aries, traversed by the sun from 13 March to 13 April (according to the Julian calendar) is one of the houses of Mars; Mars never entered Leo in 1091, however (data from Tuckerman 1964).

40–42. My ancestors ... your annual game: Cacciaguida locates the houses of his ancestors at the beginning of the Porta San Piero quarter, where the modern Via degli Speziali and Via Calimala intersect, thus at the place where the axes of the ancient Roman surveying plan (*cardo maximus, decumanus*) form a cross (see 14.100–102 and note). The “annual game” is the *palio*, the horse race run on Saint John’s day (June 24; cf. *Inf.* 15.121, 124 and notes), from outside Porta San Brancazio, the western gate, through the city to the church of San Pier Maggiore, near Porta San Piero, the eastern gate. The San Piero *sesto* [sixth] was the “last ward” because, as the source of the greatest number of knights in the Florentine force, it entered battle after the others (Villani, 4.2). Cacciaguida resided in the quarter with the greatest density of knights from the oldest families. For Florentine place names, see plan, p. 301.

40. My ancestors: Commentators suggest that Dante claims parentage here with the old Roman family of the Elisei (see 15.136 and note); he does appear to have identified with the prophet Elisha, Eliseo in Italian (4 Kings 2.7–14; see *Inf.* 26.34–39 and note). For the pilgrim’s old Roman origins, see *Inf.* 15.76–77 and note.

46–72. All those who in those times ... better than five: Cacciaguida traces the decline of Florentine mores to the overpopulation of an uncouth peasantry and factious aristocracy from towns and fortresses all over Tuscany. Compare *Inf.* 15.61–62, 76–77 and notes, where Florentine degeneracy is attributed to the mixture of uncouth Fiesolans with an earlier Roman stock.

46–51. All those who in those times ... pure to the last artisan: Immigration from nearby Tuscan towns (Campi to the north, Certaldo to the south, Figline to the east) has diluted bloodlines that ran pure through Florentine society down to the class of manual workers. The population that could bear arms in Cacciaguida’s day was one-fifth of all those living in Florence in Dante’s; as Villani (9.39) gives thirty thousand as the city’s population in 1300, this suggests some six thousand capable of arms in Cacciaguida’s day; if instead Cacciaguida means one fifth of all souls capable of arms in 1300, the number is only two thousand.

51. artisan. As probably the first writer to use the word *artista* in his vernacular, Dante affirms the broadly based dignity of craft in applying it to Nature and skilled craftsmen (13.77), to himself (30.33), and to humbler workers in the “mechanical” arts, as here; see also 32.139–41 and note.

47. between Mars and the Baptist: The baptistery to the north and the statue of Mars on the south, placed on the city side of the Ponte Vecchio mark the northern and southern city limits (see plan, p. 301). The Baptist and his baptistery stand for Florence (see lines 25 and 42, 15.134 and note); the baptistery is also a focal point for Cacciaguida (15.134 and note) and for

the poet (25.1–12 and notes). Like the chronicler Villani (2.5), Dante believed the baptistery to have been a Roman temple of Mars later converted to Christian use. The shift of the city's patron to the Baptist gave rise to the superstition that the city's violence resulted from the offense to the pagan deity (see *Inf.* 13.143–50 and note).

56–57. the peasant from Aguglione ... sharpens his eye to swindle: Two jurists with roles in Dante's exile are here satirized: one is Baldo d'Azuglione, condemned for theft of public funds in 1299 (see *Purg.* 12.105 and note), who helped compile the *Ordinamenti di giustizia* in 1293 (see our introduction to *Inferno*, p. 8) and promoted the decree granting amnesty to the Whites (1311), excepting those, like Dante, suspected of Ghibellinism; the other is Fazio dei Morubaldini of Signa, who switched from the Whites to the Blacks "to do ill," as Compagni reports (*Cronica* 2.23). As the Florentine ambassador to Clement V, Fazio fostered resistance to Henry VII in 1311 (see 30.133–38 and note).

58–63. If the people ... his grandfather went begging: If the papacy and clergy had cooperated with imperial governance in Italy, rather than resisting (see *Purg.* 6.76–151 and notes), impoverished rustics would not have come to Florence to engage in sharp practice. Commentators see a reference to Lippo Velluti, one of a family of money changers and merchants from Simifonti, and part of the government that expelled Giano della Bella in 1295 (see note to lines 131–32).

59. a stepmother to Caesar: The stepmother [*noverca*] mixing poisons typifies the violent Iron Age in Ovid's account of the four ages (*Met.* 1.127–50, esp. 147; see *Inferno* Additional Note 3); cf. 17.47, the sole other use of *noverca* in the poem.

64–66. Montemurlo ... the Buondelmonti: In 1219 and again in 1254 the Counts Guidi ceded their fortress of Montemurlo (between Prato and Pistoia) to the Florentines because they could not hold it against the Pistoians; the low-born Cerchi from nearby Acone migrated to Florence, became wealthy and, as leaders of the White Guelphs, became rivals of the Donati, leaders of the Blacks; the Buondelmonti of Valdigrieve moved to Florence when they lost Montebuono Castle in 1135. For Dante, the city's rapid growth, the expropriations of the country nobility, and the feuds between families newly settled in the city and newly enriched were aggravated by the conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the Church (see *Purg.* 6.91–92, 97–102 and notes).

67–70. The mixing together of persons ... your diseases: Compare Aristotle, *Politics* 5.3: "Most of the states which have admitted persons of another stock, either at the time of their foundation or later, have been troubled by sedition." Excess food in the body causes indigestion, an analogy for civil broils; see *Inf.* 6.49–51 and note, and *Inferno* Additional Notes 2 and 13. "Confusion" in line 67 implies that Dante's Florence is a new Babel; see Mazzotta 1979.

73–87. If you look at Luni ... should not seem wondrous: Five terzinas at the heart of the canto (the midpoint is at line 78; see 15.73–78 and note) outline the decline of cities

(73–75), of lineages (76–78), and of all sublunar things, which change under the influence of the heavens, here signified by the moon (82–84), associated with Fortune and mutability (see *Inf.* 7.73–90; *Inf.* 15.46–48, 93; *Par.* 3.31–130 and notes). Decay goes unperceived because it spans more than a single human generation (79–81; cf. *DVE* 1.9.6–8).

73–75. If you look at Luni ... are following in their wake: The old Etruscan city of Luni, in Lunigiana at the border of Tuscany and Liguria, was desolate in Dante's day after being sacked by Saracens (see *Inf.* 20.47 and note), as was Orbisaglia, a Roman city in the marches, destroyed by Visigoths. Etruscan Chiusi, (ancient Clusium), in the swampy Chiana valley (see *Inf.* 29.46), and Roman Sinigaglia (in Romagna), declined in the Middle Ages but were later rehabinited. The cities suggest a distant outer ring around Florence.

82–84. And as the turning ... Fortune does with Florence: This reference evokes the image for the succession of time as wave after wave in Ovid, *Met.* 15.179–85. Modern Florence is vulnerable to the tides of Fortune because she lacks the civic virtue that defended Cacciaguida's Florence (see 15.97–135 and notes). In "without pause" [*sanza posa*] there is an echo of *Purg.* 6.150 ("cannot find rest [*posa*]"), which decries the inconstancy of Florence. For other alliteration on the city's name, see lines 111 and 149; the city is named six times in Mars (15.97; here; 16.111, 146, 149; 17.48).

88–147. I saw the Ughi ... that guards the bridge: To answer the pilgrim's question (lines 26–27), and illustrate the principle in lines 73–87, Cacciaguida lists old families, many of which he treats as extinct or unimportant by Dante's day (most in fact survived, under different names, by shifting allegiance to the guild party, the *Popolo*; see Carpi 2004). Packing some forty proper names into sixty lines recalls the vernacular *serventesse*, used for satirical and encomiastic themes: Dante says in *VN* 6.2 that he wrote one listing sixty Florentine women. Anchises' display for Aeneas of Rome's future progeny, from which Dante drew for his negligent princes (see *Purg.* 7.88–89 and notes) is also relevant: for Rome, as for Dante's Florence, civil broils cast a pall over civic success.

88–99. I saw the Ughi ... the noble Bellincione: In the dozen names of his first list, Cacciaguida contrasts six families extinct or declined in his day, with six ancient families still important. Restatement of Bellincione's nobility, closing the list, is part of Cacciaguida's rhetorical organization; see 15.112–14 and note.

88–89. I saw the Ughi ... Ormanni, and Alberichi: The Ughi and Catellini dwelled near the western Porta San Brancazio (or Pancrazio); the latter, Ghibellines, were expelled in 1258 and 1268; repatriated after 1280, they were kept from high office because they were not enrolled in a guild [*arte*]. The Guelph Ormanni, from the Porta Santa Maria district, later joined the White faction as the Foraboschi. The Alberichi lived in the Porta San Piero district, to the east; Boccaccio relates as traditionally Florentine a tale of Federigo degli Alberighi (*Decameron* 5.9).

92–93. De l'Arca ... and Ardinghi and Bostichi: The de l'Arca and Soldanieri,

Ghibellines from San Brancazio ward, were penalized by Charles of Valois in 1302 (Gianni de' Soldanieri is in Dante's Cocytus; see *Inf.* 32.121 and note). The Sannella dwelled near the Mercato Nuovo, the city center, as did the Bostichi, Guelphs who fled after Montaperti (1260; see *Inf.* 10.32, 85–87 and notes), and who sided with both Whites and Blacks during factional fighting after 1300. The Ardinghi were from the Porta San Piero quarter.

94–99. Over the gate ... the noble Bellincione: After naming eleven families in six lines, Cacciaguida devotes the next six to the Ravignani, whose houses adjoined the Porta San Piero, and who, through marriage with a daughter of Bellincion Berti (see *Inf.* 16.37–38 and note), gave rise to the several branches of the Conti Guidi; their houses were taken over by the Cerchi, here left unmentioned (see note to lines 64–66, *Inf.* 6.64–72 and note).

94–96. Over the gate ... the bark must be lost: The moral evil of the Cerchi is a weight that will sink the city, imagined as the ship of state (see *Inf.* 22.7–18, 53–54; *Purg.* 6.77 and notes; *Conv.* 4.4. 5–7). Emphasis falls not only on families, but on Porta San Piero as the principal eastern gate, the city's gate of Paradise, on which the sun rises; cf. 11.46–47 and note.

100–120. De la Pressa already knew ... a relative of theirs: As in lines 88–99, a dozen families in decline are listed in nine lines, followed by a dozen lines given to five clans so infamous they are left unnamed. The early fame and misdeeds of the first group anticipate the haughtiness shown by those in the second; as in lines 88–99, the half dozen is capped with a worthy man, Uberto Donato.

100–108. De la Pressa already knew ... curule thrones: This group of a dozen families is articulated with five uses of *già* [already], emphasizing their rise on Fortune's turning wheel. See note to lines 121–35.

100–102. De la Pressa already knew ... pommel in his house: The de la Pressa, Ghibellines from Porta del Duomo, were expelled in 1258; Villani (7.78) associates them with the Abati traitors of Montaperti (see *Inf.* 32.80–81 and note). The Ghibelline Galigai from Porta San Piero, whose gilded sword pommel signifies their knightly rank, were also expelled in 1258 because of crimes committed by a family member; their houses were demolished in 1293 as provided by the *Ordinamenti di giustizia* (see Compagni, *Cronica* 1.12).

103–5. Already great ... blush for the bushel: The Pigli, from Porta San Brancazio, became Ghibellines in 1215, but later identified with the Whites; their colors showed a vertical stripe of vair (the fur of the Eurasian grey squirrel; cf. *Inf.* 11.115 and note), bisecting a vermilion field. The Sacchetti, from San Pier Scheraggio, joined the Guelphs and fled to Lucca after Montaperti; the writer Franco Sacchetti (1335–1400) was of this family. The Giuochi were from Porta San Piero; the Fifanti, expelled in 1258, and the Galli were Ghibellines from Porta Santa Maria; the Barucci from Porta del Duomo. This group includes families from all the old quarters named after the four original city gates.

105. and those who blush for the bushel: The Chiaramontesi family held the salt monopoly; Donato Chiaramontesi tampered with the salt measure for the sake of profit (see *Purg.* 12.103–5 and note, and *Purgatorio* Additional Note 8).

106–8. The stock ... curule thrones: The Calfucci were an extinct branch of the Donati, a family Dante avoids naming, given their role in civic faction; cf. *Inf.* 6.67–72, *Purg.* 24.76 and notes). The Guelph Sizii and Arrigucci from Porta del Duomo had attained important offices, marked by reference to the folding chair of ancient Roman magistrates. Dante had probably read Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 1.8, tracing use of the chair to the kings of Etruria—that is, Tuscany. Its medieval equivalent, the faldstool, was used by traveling bishops.

109–11. Oh how great ... all her great deeds: A pair of Ghibelline families are identified in these lines: the proud Uberti from Porta San Piero (cf. *Inf.* 10.49–51, 82–87 and notes); and the Lamberti from the Porta San Brancazio, whose coat of arms depicted golden balls in a blue field. Both families were proscribed; after Benevento (1266) the houses of the Uberti were destroyed, making way for the present Piazza della Signoria (see *Inf.* 23.105–8 and note).

112–14. Such were the fathers ... fat in consistory: These lines refer to the Visdomini and the related Tosinghi, Guelphs of Porta San Piero, expelled after Montaperti, later allied with the Black Guelphs. As patrons of the episcopal see, they garnished its revenues whenever no bishop occupied the seat. “Consistory” is used ironically to suggest swinish feeding at the trough rather than the ceremonies customary at such gatherings (see *Purg.* 9.22–27 and note).

115–20. The presumptuous clan ... a relative of theirs: This group culminates with an allusion to the Adimari, Guelphs from Porta San Piero; expelled in 1248 and again after Montaperti, most members later joined the Whites. According to the commentators, Filippo Argenti (see *Inf.* 8.61 and note), a member of the Cavicciuli branch, associated with the Blacks; his brother received Dante’s property, confiscated after the poet’s exile. Cacciaguida treats them as low-born, but socially rising after marriage to a sister-in-law of Ubertino Donato, who had married into the illustrious Ravignani clan (see line 97).

115–17. The presumptuous clan ... or their purse: The clan’s pride, cowardice, and avarice merit harsh alliteration and rhymes (on - *aca*; cf. 27.23–27 and note) and the vivid coinage *s’indraca* [endrags itself] in line 115.

121–35. Already Caponsacco ... new neighbors: The last group consists of six families named and six implied (again articulated with *già*; see lines 118, 121, 133), who swelled the immigration Cacciaguida deplores (see lines 67–69). The Buondelmonti (line 135) make thirteen (see *Inf.* 28.106 and notes).

121–23. Already Caponsacco ... were good citizens: The Caponsacchi [Head in the bag] migrated from “stony” Fiesole (cf. *Inf.* 15.63 and note) to the Mercato Vecchio in the Porta

San Piero; Ghibellines, they expelled the Guelphs in 1244, were in turn exiled in 1258, and after 1280 joined the Whites, to be expelled again in 1302. The Giudi [Judases], from San Pier Scheraggio, were consuls in the twelfth century and as Ghibellines were driven out in 1258, returning after Montaperti to be forced out again in 1268; they were excluded from high office when declared magnates in 1293. The Ghibelline Infangati [Muddied ones] from San Pier Scheraggio near the Mercato Nuovo were exiled in 1258. At once historical and fanciful, the names may imply poetic judgments.

124–26. I will say a thing ... from the Pera family: That a gate in the oldest walls was named after the Peruzzi attests to their antiquity.

127–32. All who wear ... with the commoners: The great baron is Hugh of Brandenburg, marquis of Tuscany from 961 to 1001, son of Uberto, marquis of Tuscany, and Countess Willa, who founded the Badia of Florence in 978, where Hugh was later buried. Hugh knighted the Giandonati, Pulci, Nerli, Gangalandi, Alepri, and della Bella, and allowed them to quarter into their colors Hugh's arms, seven red and white vertical staves. His death was commemorated on December 21, the feast of Thomas the Apostle.

131–32. though today he who adorns it ... with the commoners: The family of Giano della Bella, who curbed the political participation of the magnates with the *Ordinamenti di giustizia* of 1293, thus siding with the guild party or commoners [*Popolo*], adorned its coat of arms with a gold fringe.

133–35. Already there were the Gualterotti ... lacked new neighbors: The Guelph Gualterotti and Importuni lived in Borgo Santi Apostoli, which would have remained tranquil had new families not moved there. In 1311, both families were excluded from city magistracies. For the image of fasting, see 15.49 and note.

136–47. The house ... that guards the bridge: Among new neighbors to be regretted (see line 66) was Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti: after he spurned his Amidei bride for a daughter of the Donati, he was murdered by the Amidei near the statue of Mars on his wedding day, Easter Sunday of 1215, sparking hostilities between Guelphs and Ghibellines (Villani 6.38; see *Inf.* 28.106 and note).

148–54. With these folk ... made scarlet by division: Cacciaguida's Florence was peaceful, victorious, and just; the last three lines show how all was lost. Since the lily symbolizes justice (see 20.1–21 and note), the reversed-lily standard is a sign of injustice as well as defeat, as after Montaperti. After the Guelph victory in 1266, the city's Ghibelline device, the white lily on a red field, became a red lily on a white field, as if bloodied by civil war. The division manifest in the city's heraldry reverses the meaning of the *tondo*, whose four sections are joined, not divided, by the arms of the cross (see 14.101–3).



CANTO 17

*Mars, Cacciaguida continued: the prophecies about the pilgrim—his exile foretold—Can Grande
—the command to write the vision*

- 1 As to Clymene, in order to verify what he had
 heard against himself, he came who still makes
 fathers cautious toward their sons:
- 4 such was I, and so was I perceived both by
 Beatrice and by the holy lamp that earlier had
 changed place because of me.
- 7 Therefore my lady: "Send forth the blazing of
 your desire," she said, "and let it come forth well
 signed with your internal stamp,
- 10 not so that our knowledge may grow by your
 speech, but that you may become accustomed to
 speak your thirst, so that one may pour for you."
- 13 "O dear root of me, who enhigh yourself so far
 that, as earthly minds see that two obtuse angles
 cannot fit in a triangle,
- 16 so you see contingent things before they come
 to be, gazing at the point to which all times are
 present:
- 19 while I was together with Virgil, up along the
 mountain that restores souls and going down into

- the dead world,
- 22 heavy words were said to me about my future
life, although I feel solid and foursquare against
the blows of events;
- 25 therefore my desire would be contented to
understand what fortune is approaching me: for
an arrow foreseen comes more slowly."
- 28 So I said to the same light that had spoken to
me before, and, as Beatrice wished, my desire
was fully spoken.
- 31 Nor with ambiguities, in which the deluded
people used to mire themselves, before the Lamb
of God was killed, who takes away our sins,
- 34 but with clear words and precise language did
that paternal love reply, hidden and shining
within its own smile:
- 37 "Contingency, which extends no further than
the quaternion of your matter, is all depicted in
the eternal Gaze;
- 40 it does not, however, take necessity from there,
any more than from the eye in which it is mirrored
a ship that floats downstream.
- 43 Thence, just as to the ear there comes the
sweet harmony of an organ, there comes to my
sight the time that is being prepared for you.
- 46 As Hippolytus left Athens because of his
18 highlighters
pitiless, treacherous step-mother: so must you
leave Florence.
- 49 This is willed, this is already sought, and soon
will be done by him who plans it where Christ is

- sold all day long.
- 52 The cry of blame will follow the party harmed,
as usual, but the vengeance will testify to the
truth that will dispense it.
- 55 You will leave behind everything beloved most
dearly, and this is the arrow that the bow of exile
first lets fly.
- 58 You will experience how salty tastes the bread
of another, and what a hard path it is to descend
and mount by another's stairs.
- 61 And what will most weigh upon your shoulders
will be the wicked, dimwitted company with whom
you will fall into this valley,
- 64 who will become utterly ungrateful, mad, and
cruel against you, but shortly after they, not you,
will blush.
- 67 Of their stupidity the outcome will provide the
proof, so that for you it will be well to have
become a party unto yourself.
- 70 Your first refuge and first shelter will be the
courtesy of the great Lombard who atop the
ladder bears the holy eagle,
- 73 who will have such kind regard for you that of
doing and asking, between you two, that will be
first which among others is later.
- 76 With him you will see him who was so strongly
stamped at his birth by this star that his works
will be worthy of recording.
- 79 People have not yet become aware of him, he
is so young, for only nine years have these

wheels turned about him,

82 but before the Gascon shall deceive the noble
Harry, sparks of his valor will appear, in his
indifference to money and to toil.

85 His great deeds, too, will be known, so that his
enemies will be unable to remain silent about
them.

88 Look to him and to his benefactions; many
people will be transmuted by him, the rich and
beggars exchanging condition,

91 and you will carry written in your memory
about him, and will not say"—and he said things
that will be incredible to those who witness them.

94 Then he added: "Son, these are the glosses on
what was said to you: behold the snares that are
hidden beyond a few turnings of the heavens.

97 In spite of them, I would not have you envy
your neighbors, since your life enfutures itself far
beyond the punishing of their treacheries."

100 When, falling silent, that holy soul showed it
had finished pulling the weft through the warp I
had held out to him,

103 I began, like one who, fearing, desires counsel
from a person who sees, and wills, and loves
what is just:

106 "I see clearly, my father, how time is spurring
toward me, to give me the kind of blow that falls
heaviest on those who are most heedless,

109 wherefore it is good that I arm myself with
foresight, so that, if the dearest place is taken from

- me, I may not lose the others because of my verses.
- 112 Down through the endlessly bitter world, and
 along the mountain from whose lovely summit
 the eyes of my lady have raised me,
- 115 and afterwards, through the heavens from light
 to light, I have learned much that, if I relate it, to
 many will bring a most bitter taste;
- 118 and if I am a timid friend to the truth, I fear I will
 lose life among those who will call this time
 ancient."
- 121 The light wherein my treasure laughed, that I
 found there, first became bright as a golden
 mirror in the sun,
- 124 then replied: "A conscience dark with its own
 or another's shame will indeed feel your word to
 be harsh.
- 127 But nonetheless, putting aside every
 falsehood, make manifest all your vision, and let
 them still scratch where the itch is.
- 130 For if your voice will be painful at the first taste,
 it will leave vital nourishment later, when it is
 digested.
- 133 This cry of yours will be like a wind that strikes
 hardest the highest peaks, and this is no small
 claim to honor.
- 136 For this reason have been shown to you in
 these wheels, on the mountain, and in the
 sorrowing valley, only the souls who are known to fame,
- 139 for the spirit of one who hears does not rest or
 settle its faith in an example whose root is

unknown and hidden,
142 nor for any other argument that does not appear."



CANTO 17

Qual venne a Climenè, per accertarsi
di ciò ch' avëa incontro a sé udito,
quei ch' ancor fa li padri ai figli scarsi:
tal era io, e tal era sentito
e da Beatrice e da la santa lampa
che pria per me avea mutato sito.

Per che mia donna: "Manda fuor la vampa
del tuo disio," mi disse, "sì ch'ella esca
segnata bene de la interna stampa,
non perché nostra conoscenza cresca
per tuo parlare, ma perché t'ausi
a dir la sete, sì che l'uom ti mesca."

"O cara piota mia, che sì t'insusi
che, come veggion le terrene menti
non capere in triangol due ottusi,
così vedi le cose contingentì
anzi che sieno in sé, mirando il punto
a cui tutti li tempi son presenti:

mentre ch' io era a Virgilio congiunto
su per lo monte che l'anime cura
e discendendo nel mondo defunto,

dette mi fuor di mia vita futura
parole gravi, avvegna ch' io mi senta
ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura;

per che la voglia mia saria contenta
d'intender qual fortuna mi s'appressa,
ché saetta previsa vien più lenta."

1

4

7

10

13

16

19

22

25

Così diss' io a quella luce stessa
che pria m'avea parlato, e come volle
Beatrice fu mia voglia confessata.

28

Né per ambage, in che la gente folle
già s'inviscava pria che fosse anciso
l'Agnel di Dio che le peccata tolle,
ma per chiare parole e con preciso
latin rispuose quello amor paterno,
chiuso e parvente del suo proprio riso:

31

"La contingenza, che fuor del quaderno
de la vostra matra non si stende,
tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno;
necessità però quindi non prende
se non come dal viso in che si specchia
nave che per corrente giù discende.

34

Da indi, sì come viene ad orecchia
dolce armonia da organo, mi viene
a vista il tempo che ti s'apparecchia.

40

Qual si partio Ipolito d'Atene
per la spietata e perfida noverca:
tal di Fiorenza partir ti conviene.

43

Questo si vuole e questo già si cerca,
e tosto verrà fatto a chi ciò pensa
là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca.

46

La colpa seguirà la parte offesa
in grido, come suol, ma la vendetta
fia testimonio al ver che la dispensa.

49

Tu lascerai ogne cosa diletta
più caramente, e questo è quello strale
che l'arco de lo essilio pria saetta.

52

55

- Tu proverai sì come sa di sale 58
lo pane altrui e come è duro calle
lo scendere e 'l salir per l'altrui scale.
- E quel che più ti graverà le spalle 61
sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia
con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle,
che tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia 64
si farà contr' a te, ma poco appresso
ella, non tu, n'avrà rossa la tempia.
- Di sua bestialitate il suo processo 67
farà la prova, sì ch' a te fia bello
averti fatta parte per te stesso.
- Lo primo tuo refugio e 'l primo ostello 70
sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo
che 'n su la scala porta il santo uccello,
ch' in te avrà sì benigno riguardo 73
che del fare e del chieder, tra voi due,
fia primo quel che tra li altri è più tardo.
- Con lui vedrai colui che 'mpresso fue, 76
nascendo, sì da questa stella forte
che notabili fier l'opere sue.
- Non se ne son le genti ancor accorte 79
per la novella età, ché pur nove anni
son queste rote intorno di lui torte,
ma pria che 'l Guasco l'alto Arrigo inganni 82
parran faville de la sua virtute
in non curar d'argento né d'affanni.
- Le sue magnificenze conosciute 85
saranno ancora, sì che ' suoi nemici
non ne potran tener le lingue mute.

- A lui t'aspetta e a' suoi benefici; 88
per lui fia trasmutata molta gente,
cambiando condizion ricchi e mendici,
e portera'ne scritto ne la mente 91
di lui, e nol dirai"—e disse cose
incredibili a quei che fier presente.
- Poi giunse: "Figlio, queste son le chiose 94
di quel che ti fu detto: ecco le 'nsidie
che dietro a pochi giri son nascose.
- Non vo' però ch' a' tuoi vicini invidie, 97
poscia che s'infutura la tua vita
via più là che 'l punir di lor perfidie."
- Poi che, tacendo, si mostrò spedita 100
l'anima santa di metter la trama
in quella tela ch' io le porsi ordita,
io cominciai come colui che brama, 103
dubitando, consiglio da persona
che vede e vuol dirittamente e ama:
"Ben veggio, padre mio, sì come sprona 106
lo tempo verso me per colpo darmi
tal ch' è più grave a chi più s'abbandona;
per che di provedenza è buon ch'io m'armi, 109
sì che, se loco m'è tolto più caro,
io non perdessi li altri per miei carmi.
- Giù per lo mondo senza fine amaro, 112
e per lo monte del cui bel cacume
li occhi de la mia donna levarmi,
e poscia per lo ciel di lume in lume, 115
ho io appreso quel che, s'io ridico,
a molti fia sapor di forte agrume;

e s'io al vero son timido amico,
temo di perder viver tra coloro
che questo tempo chiameranno antico."

118

La luce in che rideva il mio tesoro
ch' io trovai lì si fé prima corusca
quale a raggio di sole specchio d'oro;
indi rispuose: "Coscienza fusca
o de la propria o de l'altrui vergogna
pur sentirà la tua parola brusca.

121

Ma nondimen, rimossa ogne menzogna,
tutta tua vision fa manifesta,
e lascia pur grattar dov' è la rogna.

127

Ché se la voce tua sarà molesta
nel primo gusto, vital nodrimento
lascerà poi, quando sarà digesta.

130

Questo tuo grido farà come vento
che le più alte cime più percuote,
e ciò non fa d'onor poco argomento.

133

Però ti son mostrate in queste rote,
nel monte e ne la valle dolorosa,
pur l'anime che son di fama note,
ché l'animo di quel ch' ode non posa
né ferma fede per esempio ch' aia
la sua radice incognita e ascosa,
né per altro argomento che non paia."

136

139

142

NOTES

1–9. As to Clymene ... your internal stamp: This solemn beginning prepares for the pilgrim's questions, to which Cacciaguida's answers are the fullest and most explicit statement in the poem that the pilgrim has been divinely chosen for this journey in order to fit him to write his poem and that the duty of writing it is laid upon him by God (it is the ultimate answer to the question he raises in *Inf.* 2.10–36).

1–6. As to Clymene ... because of me: The reference is to Ovid's telling of the myth of Phaethon (*Met.* 1.750–2.332), an archetypal overreacher: a coequal, hearing the young Phaethon brag of his divine father (Sol, the sun), accuses him of lying and of repeating his mother's lies. Confronting his mother, the boy demands proof and learns the way to the palace of the sun, where his father, unwisely swearing by the river Styx to grant any wish, is forced to allow him to drive the chariot of the sun, with disastrous results, until Jupiter kills the boy with a thunderbolt (hence the caution of fathers, line 3). Both Beatrice and Cacciaguida understand the pilgrim's concern (see the note to 14.97–99). On Dante's frequent (often implicit) references to Phaethon, see Additional Note 7.

7–12. Therefore my lady ... may pour for you: For anxious curiosity as thirst, cf. *Purg.* 21.1–4, *Par.* 10.88–90, with notes. Dante's *mescere* [to pour drink] implies a somewhat ceremonial occasion.

7–9. Send forth the blazing ... your internal stamp: The pilgrim's desire to know is fiery, and Beatrice counsels him to express its intensity fully—"signed with your internal stamp" is a coinage metaphor: the mind imprints language with the form of the soul's thought and desire, as the blow of the hammer on the matrix stamps the gold with the legal form of the currency (cf. 24.63–87, with notes, and for this and other coinage images in the *Comedy*, see Durling 1981a).

13–30. O dear root of me ... was fully spoken: The pilgrim asks Cacciaguida to prepare him for the adverse events that have been obscurely predicted in Hell and Purgatory (*Inf.* 6.64–72, 10.79–81, 15.55–78, 24.139–51; *Purg.* 11.139–41, 24.37–48—the only one with positive content); 32.148–60 is perhaps also referred to, though it is a particularly obscure symbolic event in the Earthly Paradise, after Virgil's departure (the notes to these passages discuss their topical references).

13–18. O dear root of me ... all times are present: Cacciaguida is lifted so high in Heaven that he can read the future in the mind of God, the "point to which all times are present": God exists in eternity, an absolutely fixed point beyond time, to which all times are present, like the circumference of a circle to its center; this conception has important development in Cantos 28 and 29. That the angles of a triangle may not include two obtuse

angles is intuitively grasped by the human mind (they must total 180°; essentially the same question as in 13.101–2, where the matter is less intuitive). The analogy is between geometric intuition (related to the “first knowables,” *Purg.* 18.55–60; cf. *Par.* 2.40–45, with notes) and Cacciaguida’s intuition of the causal chain that will produce future events, contingent on preceding ones (cf. 13.61–66, with notes): all things seen in God are *intuited* (on the model of mathematical intuition).

22–27. heavy words were said ... comes more slowly: The images of the blows of events in line 24 and the arrow in line 27 introduce the central metaphor of armed combat against Fortune (and her ally, time), to which the image of the tetragon [square] is closely related (see lines 106–11, with notes; Sapegno cites Aquinas’s note on Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* 1.10 (1100b): the virtuous man “will bear the chances of life most nobly ... if he is ‘truly good’ and ‘foursquare beyond reproach’”; cf. *Rhetoric* 3.11 (1411b), on the same quotation from Simonides); Aquinas takes the “square” to refer to a cube.

30. my desire was fully spoken: Lat. *confessus*, from which Dante’s word “confesso” is derived, is the past participle of *confiteor*, which originally meant “to tell all” (*con/cum* [entirely, as in *confusio*] + *fateor* [to speak]); “to confess” still means “to hold nothing back.”

31–36. Nor with ambiguities ... its own smile: While the previous prophecies the pilgrim has encountered, though metaphorical, have not been particularly obscure in language, they have been incomplete (see the note to lines 13–30). Cacciaguida gives a full and explicit prediction.

31–33. Nor with ambiguities ... takes away our sins: Dante’s “ambagi” is from Lat. *ambages* (a roundabout or labyrinthine path or an evasive expression; from *ambi* [around] + *ago* [to drive]), frequent in Roman writers for the language of oracles. Among other examples (cf. *Met.* 7.761), Dante has in mind *Aen.* 6.98–100:

Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumaea Sibylla
horrendas canit ambages antroque remugit,
obscuris vera involvens
[With such words the Cumaeian Sibyl from her sanctuary
sang horrible ambiguities and bellowed through the cave, wrapping true things in
obscure ones]

Augustine has much to say about the “deceiving oracles” of the pagan gods (really devils, according to widespread Jewish and Christian belief): see *De civ. Dei* 18.12–24, 19.23–25. *Inviscarsi* means properly “to be caught in birdlime.” At the death (or in some texts, the birth) of Christ, the demons were forced to abandon their temples and oracles.

37–99. Contingency, which extends ... of their treacheries: After nine lines on the modality of his knowledge of the future (lines 37–45), Cacciaguida foretells the pilgrim’s exile: its cause (lines 46–51), the pilgrim’s eventual vindication (lines 52–54), its inherent painfulness

and poverty (lines 55–60), the unworthy sharers in exile he will encounter (lines 61–69), and the help he will receive from the Scaligeri of Verona, especially Can Grande (lines 70–93). Nine lines of conclusion (lines 94–103) foretell the closeness of the disaster and urge the pilgrim not to feel negatively toward his treacherous fellow Florentines.

37–45. Contingency, which extends ... prepared for you: Cacciaguida sees future events on earth as they are held in the mind of God, the “eternal Gaze,” whose serenity is not affected by them. A quaternion (or quire) is the folded gathering of pages that is sewn with others to form a book or codex. Only what is below the moon is subject to contingency, and the universe consists of many more such gatherings (the book metaphor recurs in lines 94–96, see note there; and cf. the grandiose, climactic instance in 33.85–93).

40–42. it does not ... floats downstream: Contingent events do not become necessary (i.e., predetermined) from God’s foreknowledge, any more than a ship floating downstream is affected by the eye of an observer. The analogy of the ship appears to be Dante’s, but that God’s existence in eternity makes the entire “moving image of eternity” (*Tim.* 28) simultaneously knowable without determining it, is Boethius’ solution (*Consol.* 5.5) to the puzzle of foreknowledge and predetermination, frequently adopted by the Scholastics (e.g., in *ST* 1a q. 14 a. 13).

43–45. Thence, just as ... prepared for you: The rhetorical limitation (lines 37–42) and disarming of the future events continues in the comparison of their knowledge with sweet organ music (note the parallel with *Purg.* 9.133–45: another opening of a door). The previous reference to the sublunar contributes an implication of distance also.

46–51. As Hippolytus left ... sold all day long: Treachery and machinations in Florence and in Rome (obviously in the papal curia) are already setting in motion the events that will lead to the pilgrim’s exile.

46–48. As Hippolytus left ... you leave Florence: Dante knew the story of Hippolytus, the son of Theseus, from Ovid (*Met.* 15.492–546): Phaedra, the younger sister of Ariadne, married to Theseus after he abandoned her sister, fell in love with Hippolytus (the son of Theseus’s first wife), who refused her advances; she then accused him of attempted rape before his father, who cursed him, causing his death by a sea monster while fleeing Athens (Ovid’s version has him miraculously restored to life as a minor deity and dwelling near Rome).

49–51. This is willed ... all day long: Cf. *Inf.* 6.64–76, Ciacco’s prophecy of the internal strife in Florence, fostered by “one who now hugs the shore” (line 69), a clear reference to Boniface VIII, notoriously corrupt; “selling Christ,” which refers to Judas’s crime (Luke 22.1–6), stands for all forms of simony (cf. *Inf.* 19.52–56, with notes, *Inferno* Additional Note 7, and *Par.* 27.19–66).

52–54. The cry of blame.... will dispense it: At first people will suppose, as always happens, that the victim of the injustice is exiled for some crime, but the ultimate punishment

of the guilty will vindicate him (on the Florentine principally responsible, Corso Donati, see *Purg.* 24.82–90).

55–60. You will leave ... by another's stairs: The inherent bitterness of exile: the loss of home (for Dante's many expressions of love for Florence, see 25.1–12, with notes) and family, and reduction to poverty and dependency on others for food and lodging. "The bread of another" tastes of salt because it is eaten with tears of homesickness and humiliation at being forced to beg. Note the force of the order of "descend and mount": the first ascent of another's stairs might be optimistic, but the first descent, like the others, will be bitter because of humiliation and probably disappointment. Famous, terse lines.

61–69. And what will most ... a party unto yourself: The most burdensome (and potentially dangerous) aspect of sharing exile ("this valley") with the other members of the White Guelph party driven into exile in eastern Tuscany by the coup d'état of November 1301 (see our introduction to *Inferno*) will be their wickedness and stupidity, expressed in futile attempts to overcome the Blacks by force of arms. Presumably Dante earned their hatred by strongly opposing their unrealistic military hopes. The definitive defeat ("the outcome") took place on 20 July 1304 (the birthday of the poet Petrarch, whose father fought in the battle), by which time Dante had (sometime after April 1304) dissociated himself from the White party, forming, as he says, a political party unto himself (one of some importance: he was conspicuous as a pamphleteer until the death of the emperor Henry VII in 1313).

70–96. Your first refuge ... who witness them: Cacciaguida foretells Dante's special debt of gratitude to the rulers of Verona.

70–75. Your first refuge ... among others is later: Dante seems to have been in Rome, or on his way from there back to Florence, when he learned of the Black coup (see *Inferno* Additional Note 9); his first refuge, according to this passage, was Verona, which Dante reckoned part of Lombardy.

The identity of the "great Lombard" (line 71) and the dates of Dante's stay(s) in Verona have been much debated. Alberto della Scala, who ruled from 1271 to 1301, was harshly criticized in *Purg.* 18.121–26; of his three sons, the second, Alboino (ruled, in association with Cangrande, 1304–11), was very slightly mentioned in *Conv.* 4.16. 6; it is unlikely that the term "great" refers to either. Bartolomeo, the oldest son, who ruled from 1301 to 1304, married a great-granddaughter of the emperor Frederick II in 1302 and (until Alboino and Cangrande were named imperial vicars by Henry VII) was the only member of the family who had borne the imperial eagle above the ladder [*scala*] in his coat of arms. The conclusions of Petrocchi 1966 and 1984 have been widely adopted (see also Arnaldi 1966, Arnaldi 1970a, and Arnaldi 1970b): Dante probably stayed in Verona twice (1301–04 and ca. 1311–ca. 1319, thus avoiding the period of Alboino's primacy); the "great Lombard" whose generosity and courtesy are praised, then, is probably Bartolomeo.

76–93. With him you will see ... who witness them: Cangrande, Alberto della Scala's

youngest son, was born 9 March 1291, thus under Aries and Mars (see lines 76–78). He became the chief leader of the Italian Ghibellines early on, gaining notable victories in favor of Henry VII over Vicenza (1311–12) and later over Padova (1314). After the death of Henry VII in 1313, Cangrande continued, with moderate success, in his endeavor to establish Veronese hegemony in northeastern Italy, but nothing came of his efforts that remotely resembled what Dante clearly expected he would achieve. When Dante died, Cangrande was a very promising thirty-year-old; Dante was not to foresee that he would die in 1329, not yet in his fortieth year.

82–84. but before the Gascon ... to money and to toil: The "Gascon" is Pope Clement V (see *Inf.* 19.82–87, with notes), who seemed at first to favor Henry VII's effort to establish imperial authority in Italy, but even before Henry's coronation in Rome (June 1312) he began more and more openly to oppose him. Cangrande's early military successes took place in this period.

88. Look to him and to his benefactions: Cangrande seems to have supported Dante handsomely in Verona during his second stay there, to the extent that (taking Epistle 13, to Cangrande, as genuine, which seems most likely) he formally dedicated the *Paradiso* to him (Petrocchi suggests that *Paradiso* 17 was written as an expression of gratitude on the occasion of Dante's leaving Verona for Ravenna in 1316 or 1317; in any case relations with Cangrande remained cordial, and Dante returned to Verona briefly in January 1320 to lecture on the *Quaestio de acqua et terra*).

89–93. many people will be ... who witness them: Modern scholars have been particularly puzzled by these lines, for Cangrande did not achieve the degree of power and influence they imply. It has been suggested that Cangrande is the "greyhound" [*veltro*] foretold in *Inf.* 1.91–111 as the future victor over the she-wolf of avarice (the identification is based partly on the fact that the name, derived from the Mongol title *khan* [prince], means "dog" in Italian).

91–92. you will carry written ... and will not say: Cacciaguida prophesies events that the poet is not to mention. Note the explicit book metaphor for memory.

94–99. Then he added ... of their treacheries: Cacciaguida adds a summarizing conclusion and the advice not to envy (or not to harbor hatred against) his fellow Florentines, in spite of their treachery, since he will be remembered when their very punishment will be forgotten (cf. *Purg.* 11.140–41, on Dante's "vicini" [neighbors]).

94–96. Son, these are the glosses ... turnings of the heavens: Glosses are short explanations added (often interlinearly) to a text; the metaphor of the "book of memory" is implicit here, and the "turnings" of the heavens that hide the future are like those of the pages of a codex or a scroll.

98–99. your life enfutures ... of their treacheries: Clearly a prediction of the lasting fame Dante will gain through the *Comedy*, which becomes the next subject.

100–142. When, falling silent ... that does not appear: The rest of the canto is devoted to the pilgrim's second question: how should he deal with the danger of offending the powerful by speaking openly about what he has learned on his journey?

100–102. had finished pulling ... held out to him: Cacciaguida has completed his answer to the pilgrim's question; the metaphor is that of a strung loom, with the warp (the fixed threads) in place, through which the weaver has drawn the shuttle, depositing the weft: the cloth has been woven.

104. who sees ... loves what is just: The adverb "dirittamente" [justly] modifies all three verbs; thus in the translation "what is just" is the direct object of all three verbs; in other words, Cacciaguida sees what is just, desires it, and loves it.

106–20. I see clearly ... this time ancient: Cacciaguida has told the pilgrim what the disastrous future will bring; now the pilgrim asks for counsel about how to use the dangerous knowledge he has gained on his journey: he will have the difficult choice between offending the powerful or "losing life" among future generations, in other words, losing the glory or immortality of a great poet.

106–8. how time is spurring ... most heedless: In his first question, the pilgrim had referred to his future with the metaphor of an arrow (lines 26–27), a weapon used from a distance. Now his adversary (time) is spoken of as a warrior mounted on a horse and spurring toward him in order to deliver his blow (this new context requires the blow to be that of a lance or a sword). The language is that of knightly combat; see the next note.

109–11. it is good that I arm ... because of my verses: Foresight is thought of here as defensive armor ("to arm oneself" meant to don armor, not to take up a weapon). Cacciaguida's role includes providing (metaphorical) armor, as the sponsor of a new knight often did (for the sword, see the note to lines 124–42).

110–11. if the dearest place ... because of my verses: The "dearest place" is Florence and home; "the others" refers to the possibility of being a guest of the powerful; the next three terzinas will explain the pilgrim's anxiety. The Italian *carmi* is a Latinism; Lat. *carmina* for "verses" is used by Dante in his poetic correspondence with Giovanni del Virgilio; the reference is of course to the *Comedy*.

112–20. Down through the endlessly ... this time ancient: Like lines 19–21, a recapitulation of the poem, this time including the *Paradiso*. In the course of his journey, the pilgrim has learned much that is to the discredit of many powerful individuals; if he relates it, it will taste bitter to them and those close to them, and if he does not, he will lose credit with posterity.

118–20. if I am a timid ... call this time ancient: Only uncompromising devotion to the truth will keep his name alive among distant posterity. Dante did not harbor small

aspirations, as these justly famous verses show.

121–42. The light wherein ... does not appear: Cacciaguida rejoices to counsel the pilgrim to serve the truth without compromise. The image of the golden mirror in the sunlight serves, among other things, to remind us that all the planets receive their light from the sun.

124–42. A conscience dark ... does not appear: After acknowledging that the poet's identification of crimes and abuses will be painful to the guilty, Cacciaguida urges him to express his vision (i.e., write his poem) fully without regard for the consequences (lines 124–29), for, if painful at first his verses will leave vital nourishment when digested—the implication is that they may be beneficial also to the guilty (lines 130–32). His criticism will strike the most conspicuous examples (and his courage will be a chief claim to honor), and that is why during his journey only the most famous souls have been shown to him, so that his reader will the more readily believe him (lines 136–42).

Other instances of the command that he write are shorter and subordinated to this one: see *Purg.* 32.100–105 and 33.52–57, and *Par.* 27.64–66. This passage also represents the chief function of the parallels with Aeneas's encounter with his father, Anchises, in *Aen.* 6.703–892 (see 15.25–27, with note). Although the parallels with the ceremonies of being knighted and of assuming the cross as a Crusader are kept largely implicit, they are unmistakable: as to the knighting, we have the following parallels: Cacciaguida as sponsor and instructor of the new knight in his duties, furnishing him with his sword (the pen) and his defensive armor (foresight), and doing so on the eve of his great battle (as was the custom), indicating the adversaries of the right, and delivering the blow upon the neck or shoulder (parallel to the bishop's slap on the cheek in the sacrament of confirmation) that symbolizes the new knight's humble acceptance of possible suffering and death in the service of the right (in the pilgrim's case the blow is represented by the prediction of his exile). The taking on of the Cross as a Crusader has been conspicuously alluded to: implicitly in that the denizens of Mars are the fighters for the faith (some are enumerated in 18.28–51), explicitly in 14.96 and 15.100–108 (for further discussion, including the parallels with Dante's references in earlier works to the parallel between poets and knights and the ceremony of knighting, see Durling/Martinez 1990, Appendix 1).

124–26. A conscience dark ... word to be harsh: For the ideal state of the mind (conscience includes all levels of awareness, not only "conscience," but including it) as a crystalline clarity, see *Purg.* 13.85–90.

127–29. But nonetheless, putting ... where the itch is: Note that the Italian avoids specifying who is doing the scratching: "Let there be scratching where the itch is": the poet need not be concerned, the guilty will know themselves, the bestiality of shame has its own automatic mechanisms. Famous lines, tartly scornful.

130–32. For if your voice ... when it is digested: That truth is the food of the soul, falsehood a poison for it, is a strain of traditional imagery that pervades the *Comedy*; for it and

for the idea of reading as parallel to ingestion and meditation to digestion, see Durling 1981a. Note the identification of the poet's text with his *voice* (cf. *Inf.* 1.62–63, with note; *Par.* 4.49–60, with notes).

133–42. This cry of yours ... that does not appear: In the traditional *topos*, high places (whether physical or social) are more exposed to the wind of misfortune than lower ones. A typical counsel of moderation is Horace, *Odes* 2.10.1–12:

Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
semper urgendo neque, dum procellas
cautus horrescis, nimium premendo
 litus iniquum.
auream quisquis mediocritatem
diligit, tutus caret obsoleti
sordibus tecti, caret invidenda
 sobrius aula.
saepius ventis agitatur ingens
pinus et celsae graviore casu
decidunt turres feruntque summos
 fulgura montis.
[You will live more justly, Licinius, neither daring
always the deep, nor, during the storms
your caution fears, too closely hugging
the rocky shore.
Whoever loves the golden
middle state, he will avoid the squalor
of a neglected roof, will soberly avoid
the envy drawn by a sumptuous hall.
More often do the winds agitate the giant
pine, and high towers fall
more heavily, and the mountain tops
are struck by lightning.]

Dante is turning the *topos* upside down in his lines: he (or his voice) is imagined as the wind of change, attacking the wickedness prevalent in high places.

135. this is no small claim to honor: Part of the poet's claim to honor is that he does not hesitate to attack the powerful if they deserve it.

136–42. For this reason ... that does not appear: The entire journey, then, has been governed by a providential plan to put the pilgrim in contact with important examples ("known to fame") of good or evil conduct in each of the three realms ("in these wheels [Heaven], on the mountain [of Purgatory], and in the sorrowing valley [Hell]").

139–42. for the spirit of one ... does not appear: The providential plan has been based on a rhetorical principle, then: the spirit of the hearer (reader) is moved only by examples whose validity is known to him or her or by other open and clear arguments.



CANTO 18

*Mars, Cacciaguida, continued: the warriors
named—Jupiter: just rulers—the Eagle*

- 1 Already that blessed mirror was rejoicing only
 in its thought, and I was tasting mine, tempering
 the bitter with the sweet,
- 4 and the lady who was leading me to God said:
 “Change your thought; think that I am close to the
 One who lightens every injury.”
- 7 I turned to the loving sound of my comfort, and
 what love I saw then in her holy eyes, I here
 abandon it,
- 10 not because I lack confidence in my speech,
 but because my memory cannot return so far
 above itself, if not guided by another.
- 13 This much I can relate of that point: gazing on
 her, my affect was free of any other
 desire
- 16 while the eternal Pleasure, shining directly on
 Beatrice, contented me with its reflection in her
 lovely face.
- 19 Vanquishing me with the light of a smile, she
 said: “Turn and listen, for not only in my eyes is

- Paradise."
- 22 As down here we sometimes see the affect in
someone's eyes, if it is so great that the whole
soul is seized by it:
- 25 so in the blazing of the holy fire to which I
turned I recognized its desire to speak somewhat
further with me.
- 28 It began: "In this fifth threshold of the tree that
draws life from its summit and bears fruit perpetually,
without shedding a leaf,
- 31 there are blessed spirits who, below, before
they came to Heaven, had great fame, so that
every muse would be richly furnished by them.
- 34 Therefore gaze at the horns of the Cross: the
one I name will move there like swift fire within
its cloud."
- 37 I saw a light drawn along the Cross,
simultaneous with the naming of Joshua, nor did
I perceive the speech before the event.
- 40 And at the name of the great Maccabee I saw
another move spinning, and joy was the whip for
the top.
- 43 Thus for Charlemagne and Roland my
attentive gaze followed two of them, as one's eye
follows its falcon in its flight.
- 46 Then William and Renoart and duke Godfrey
drew my sight along that Cross, and Robert
Guiscard.
- 49 Then, moving and mingling with the other
lights, the soul that had spoken with me showed

- what an artist he was among the singers
of Heaven.
- 52 I turned to my right side to see what I should
do, shown in Beatrice by a word or gesture,
- 55 and I saw her eyes to be so bright, so joyous,
that her expression surpassed her former and her
latest custom.
- 58 And, as a man day by day perceives, from
feeling greater delight in acting well, that his
virtue is increasing:
- 61 so I perceived that my turning about with the
heavens had increased its arc, seeing that
miracle grow lovelier.
- 64 And like the changing in a short interval of time
of a lady's white face, when it unburdens itself of
the burden of shame:
- 67 such was what I saw, when I turned about, in
the whiteness of the temperate sixth star, which
had received me within itself.
- 70 I saw in that Jovial torch that the flashing of the
love there made sign to my eyes of our
speech.
- 73 As birds, rising from a river, seeming to rejoice
together at their feeding, make of themselves
now a round, now some other outline:
- 76 so within their lights holy creatures flew back
and forth singing, and in their figures they
became now *D*, now *I*, now *L*.
- 79 First, singing, they would move to their notes,
then, becoming one of these signs, they would

- rest a little and be silent.
- 82 O Pegasean goddess who make our poets
glorious and give them longevity, as they, with
you, do to cities and kingdoms,
- 85 illumine me with your light, so that I may set
forth their figures as I have conceived them: let
your power appear in these brief verses!
- 88 They showed themselves, then, in five times
seven vowels and consonants, and I noted the
parts as they were dictated to me.
- 91 "*DILIGITE IUSTITIAM*" were the first verb
and noun of the whole depiction,
"*QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM*" were the last.
- 94 Then they remained arranged in the *M* of the
fifth word, so that Jove appeared there silver
adorned with gold.
- 97 And I saw other lights descend to the summit
of the *M* and grow quiet there, singing, I believe,
the Good that moves them to itself.
- 100 Then, as at the striking of smoldering logs
innumerable sparks fly up, from which fools often
take auguries:
- 103 I seemed to see more than a thousand lights
fly up, some far, some but a little, as the Sun that
kindles them allotted,
- 106 and, each coming to rest in its place, I saw the
head and neck of an eagle represented by that
articulated fire.
- 109 He who portrays there has no one to guide
him, but he guides, and from him is remembered

- the power that is the form for nests.
- 112 The other beatitudes, that earlier had appeared
contented to enlily themselves in the *M*, adjusted
to the new imprint with small motions.
- 115 O sweet star, what and how many gems
showed me that our justice is the effect of the
heaven that you begem!
- 118 Therefore I beg the Mind that initiates your
motion and your power, that it look whence
comes the smoke that vitiates your shining,
- 121 so that yet again it may be angered by the
buying and selling within the Temple whose
walls were built with miracles and martyrdoms.
- 124 O army of Heaven that I contemplate, pray for
those who are on earth, all astray behind the evil
example!
- 127 In the past they made war with swords, but
now they do it by withholding, now here, now
there, the bread the merciful Father locks away from no one.
- 130 But you who write only to strike out, remember
that Peter and Paul, who died for the vine you are
laying waste, are still alive.
- 133 You can well say: "My desire is so fixed on him
who wished to live alone, whom dancing led to
martyrdom,
- 136 that I know not the fisherman nor Pol."



CANTO 18

Già si godeva solo del suo verbo
quello specchio beato, e io gustava
lo mio, temprando col dolce l'acerbo,
e quella donna ch' a Dio mi menava
disse: "Muta pensier; pensa ch' i' sono
presso a colui ch' ogne torto disgrava."
4

Io mi rivolsi a l'amoroso suono
del mio conforto, e qual io allor vidi
ne li occhi santi amor, qui l'abbandono,
non perch' io del mio parlar diffidi,
ma per la mente, che non può redire
sovra sé tanto, s' altri non la guidi.
7

Tanto poss' io di quel punto ridire:
che rimirando lei lo mio affetto
libero fu da ogne altro disire,
fin che 'l Piacere eterno, che diretto
raggiava in Béatrice, dal bel viso
mi contentava col secondo aspetto.
10

Vincendo me col lume d'un sorriso,
ella mi disse: "Volgiti e ascolta,
ché non pur ne' miei occhi è Paradiso."
13

Come si vede qui alcuna volta
l'affetto ne la vista, s' ellì è tanto
che da lui sia tutta l'anima tolta:
così nel fiammeggiar del folgor santo
a ch' io mi volsi, conobbi la voglia
in lui di ragionarmi ancora alquanto.
16

19

22

25

El cominciò: "In questa quinta soglia
de l'albero che vive de la cima
e frutta sempre e mai non perde foglia,
spiriti son beati che giù, prima
che venissero al Ciel, fuor di gran voce,
sì ch' ogne musa ne sarebbe opima.

28

Però mira ne' corni de la croce:
quello ch' io nomerò, lì farà l'atto
che fa in nube il suo foco veloce."

31

Io vidi per la croce un lume tratto
dal nomar Iosuè, com' el si feo,
né mi fu noto il dir prima che 'l fatto.

37

E al nome de l'alto Macabeo
vidi moversi un altro roteando,
e letizia era ferza del paleo.

40

Così per Carlo Magno e per Orlando
due ne seguì lo mio attento sguardo,
com' occhio segue suo falcon volando.

43

Poscia trasse Guiglielmo e Rinoardo
e 'l duca Gottifredi la mia vista
per quella croce, e Ruberto Guiscardo.

46

Indi, tra l'altre luci mota e mista,
mostrommi l'alma che m'avea parlato
qual era tra i cantor del Cielo artista.

49

Io mi rivolsi dal mio destro lato
per vedere in Beatrice il mio dovere
o per parlare o per atto segnato,
e vidi le sue luci tanto mere,
tanto gioconde, che la sua sembianza
vinceva li altri e l'ultimo solere.

52

55

- E come per sentire più diletanza 58
bene operando l'uomo di giorno in giorno
s'accorge che sua virtute avanza:
- sì m'accors' io che 'l mio girare intorno 61
col cielo insieme avea cresciuto l'arco,
veggendo quel miracol più addorno.
- E qual è 'l trasmutare in picciol varco 64
di tempo in bianca donna, quando 'l volto
suo si discarchi di vergogna il carco:
- tal fu ne li occhi miei, quando fui volto, 67
per lo candor de la temprata stella
sesta, che dentro a sé m'avea ricolto.
- Io vidi in quella gioviāl facella 70
lo sfavillar de l'amor che lì era
segnare a li occhi miei nostra favella.
- E come augelli surti di rivera, 73
quasi congratulando a lor pastura,
fanno di sé or tonda or altra schiera:
- sì dentro ai lumi sante creature 76
volitando cantavano e faciensi
or *D*, or *I*, or *L* in sue figure.
- Prima cantando a sua nota moviensi; 79
poi, diventando l'un di questi segni,
un poco s'arrestavano e taciensi.
- O diva Pegasëa, che li 'ngegni 82
fai gloriosi e rendeli longevi,
ed essi teco le cittadi e ' regni,
illustrami di te sì ch' io rilevi
le lor figure com' io l'ho concette: 85
paia tua possa in questi versi brevi!

- Mostrarsi dunque in cinque volte sette vocali e consonanti, e io notai
le parti sì come mi parver dette. 88
- "*DILIGITE IUSTITIAM*" primai
fur verbo e nome di tutto 'l dipinto,
"*QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM*" fur sezzai. 91
- Poscia ne l'emme del vocabol quinto
rimaser ordinate, sì che Giove
pareva argento lì d'oro distinto. 94
- E vidi scender altre luci dove
era il colmo de l'emme e lì quetarsi,
cantando, credo, il ben ch' a sé li move. 97
- Poi, come nel percuoter d'i ciocchi arsi
surgono innumerabili faville,
onde li stolti sogliono agurarsi: 100
- resurger parver quindi più di mille
luci e salir, qual assai e qual poco,
sì come 'l sol che l'accende sortille, 103
- e, quïetata ciascuna in suo loco,
la testa e 'l collo d'un'aguglia vidi
rappresentare a quel distinto foco. 106
- Quei che dipinge lì non ha chi 'l guidi,
ma esso guida, e da lui si rammenta
quella virtù ch' è forma per li nidi. 109
- L'altra bëatitudo, che contenta
pareva prima d'ingigliarsi a l'emme,
con poco moto seguitò la 'mprenta. 112
- O dolce stella, quali e quante gemme
mi dimostraro che nostra giustizia
effetto sia del ciel che tu ingemme! 115

- Per ch'io prego la mente in che s'inizia 118
tuo moto e tua virtute che rimiri
ond' esce il fummo che 'l tuo raggio vizia,
sì ch' un'altra fiata omai s'adiri 121
del comperare e vender dentro al Templo
che si murò di segni e di martiri.

O milizia del Ciel cu' io contemplo, 124
adora per color che sono in terra,
tutti svïati dietro al malo esempio!

Già si solea con le spade far guerra, 127
ma or si fa togliendo or qui or quivi
lo pan che 'l pïo Padre a nessun serra.

Ma tu che sol per cancellare scrivi, 130
pensa che Pietro e Paulo, che moriro
per la vigna che guasti, ancor son vivi.

Ben puoi tu dire: "I' ho fermo 'l disiro 133
sì a colui che volle viver solo
e che per salti fu tratto al martiro,
ch' io non conosco il pescator né Polo." 136

NOTES

1–18. Already that blessed ... her lovely face: Cacciaguida has fallen silent (he is referred to as a mirror because he sees the future in God and reflects it to the pilgrim: cf. 17.39; cf. 17.123); the pilgrim is considering his prophecy and advice; Beatrice recalls him to the eternal happiness that will eventually efface all memory of suffering.

1–3. Already that blessed ... the bitter with the sweet: Cacciaguida's replies have foretold both earthly suffering (exile and blame, possibly danger) and earthly rewards (the satisfaction of loyalty to truth, and fame and glory) which temper (lessen, moderate) the painful thoughts. Note the food metaphors ("tasting," "bitter," "sweet"; cf. 17.55–60, 130–32).

1, 3. rejoicing only in its thought ... tasting mine: Dante's term translated here as "thought" is *verbo*, rich in connotations: from a spoken word (especially one that has causal effect, as a decree) to the Logos itself. What Cacciaguida has spoken is what God has decreed, and the pilgrim is "tasting" its implications: it is "his" *verbo* in so far as it foretells his future.

4–18. and the lady ... her lovely face: Beatrice understands that the pilgrim is still troubled and reminds him of the eternal love and joy that await him.

5–6. think that I am ... lightens every injury: Beatrice is close to Christ: the reference is ultimately to Christ's words in Matt. 11.28–30: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you ... For my yoke is sweet and my burden light" (cf. 14.100–108, with notes).

7–18. I turned ... her lovely face: Another elaborate version of the inexpressibility *topos* (Dante's use of it is carefully gradated): as the pilgrim rises higher in the heavens, he is approaching both the end (his personal suffering and death, but also the goal of all his desires) and the beginning (both are "the point to which all times are present"); confrontation with future suffering brings the intensification of the sense of compensatory reward.

13–18. Thus much I can ... her lovely face: This passage should be compared with 10.55–63, another passage depending on the distinction between mediated and unmediated relation to God. Beatrice always represents some form of mediation of grace or illumination, and the emphasis on the reflection in Beatrice of God as "eternal Pleasure" (shining "directly" on her) is higher than previously, high enough to engross his affect.

22–51. As down here ... the singers of Heaven: A kind of coda to the cantos of Mars is furnished by Cacciaguida's identification of seven warriors for the faith, and he himself then joins their dance and singing.

22–27. As down here ... somewhat further with me: We know from 5.124–26 that the brightness that veils the blessed issues from their eyes; here Cacciaguida's desire to speak further is specifically discernible in his brightness.

28–33. In this fifth ... furnished by them: Cacciaguida announces that he will identify some of the famous souls, who would furnish ample material for poetry (the term *muse* here is equivalent to individual poets' inspirations). In *DVE* 2.6–8, Dante identifies three worthy subjects of poetry: arms, love, and righteousness (he does not distinguish between secular and religious warfare there). He clearly has epic poetry in mind here, and all but one of the Christian heroes mentioned became the subject of legend in the vernacular *chansons de geste*, the other in a poem in Latin.

28–30. In this fifth ... shedding a leaf: Mars is the fifth planet ascending (as Venus is fifth descending, beginning with Saturn), and the planets are thresholds the pilgrim crosses in his ascent, gaining each time more light and love. The "tree" that "draws life from its summit," produces fruit (sublunar things), and never loses its leaves is the cosmos of celestial spheres, perfect and unalterable, fed by God's creative power from above. The image is more fully and strikingly developed in 27.106–20; see note there.

34–36. Therefore gaze ... fire within its cloud: As Thomas guides the pilgrim's eye sequentially around his circle (10.97–102; cf. 12.127–41, 20.31–72), Cacciaguida instructs him where to look and how to interpret what he sees: the pilgrim is to gaze at the ends of the arms of the Cross (its "horns"), Cacciaguida will name a soul, and the soul will express its joy by seeming like lightning. Focus on the arms of the Cross emphasizes the military prowess of those identified, since arms and hands use the sword to fight.

35–36. will move there ... fire within its cloud: The image is one of the swiftness and brilliance of lightning, thought to be caused by clouds containing fire.

37–48. I saw a light ... and Robert Guiscard: Seven heroes, two of them from Old Testament times, five of them heroes in wars against the Muslims (the count of five invokes the number of Mars—called to our attention by line 28—and probably signifies that as defenders of Christendom they are more ideal instances of the planet's influence).

37–39. I saw a light ... before the event: The leader of the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan, related in the book of Joshua. The emphasis is on speed.

40–42. And at the name ... whip for the top: Judas Maccabaeus, with his brothers, led the Jews in their successful revolt against Antiochus IV (died 160 BCE), the Hellenizing Seleucid emperor (Judea was part of the Seleucid Empire at the time) who sought to suppress Judaism. Four books of the Maccabees survive in the Septuagint; two of them were accepted as canonical by the early and medieval Church.

42. joy was the whip for the top: The speed of the soul's spinning expresses his

rejoicing. Children used small whips to maintain the speed of spinning tops.

43–45. Thus for Charlemagne ... falcon in its flight: Charlemagne and Roland, his nephew (who seems to have been a historical person), figured in a whole cycle of *chansons de geste*, many of which concerned the wars against the Muslims in Spain; the most famous of them is the *Song of Roland* (ca. 1100).

45. as one's eye follows ... in its flight: Falcons are extremely swift flyers and typically fly very high, diving on their prey. The impression of tremendous height relative to the observer seems to be the principal effect aimed at here.

46–48. Then William ... and Robert Guiscard: William, count of Orange, was a contemporary of Charlemagne who figured in the wars against the Saracens in southern France; his cycle of *chansons de geste* is also filled with pious legends, among others that of the giant Rainouart in *Aliscans* (see Ferrante 1974), whom William supposedly converted to Christianity (Dante clearly supposed Rainouart to be a historical figure). Duke Godfrey is Godfrey of Boulogne, leader of the first Crusade, who died in 1100 as king of Jerusalem; a number of *chansons de geste* concerned episodes of the crusade. Robert Guiscard (1015–85) was the leader of the Norman intervention against the Muslims in southern Italy and Sicily that established the Norman kingdom of Sicily; he was the subject of a poem in Latin hexameters by William of Puglia.

49–51. Then, moving and mingling ... the singers of Heaven: Cacciaguida joins the others in their singing and dancing.

51. showed what an artist ... the singers of Heaven: The implication is, of course, that he was a particularly fine artist. The end of the pilgrim's stay in Mars, which has occupied exactly three-eighths of Canto 18. Dante seems to be the first medieval writer to use the term *artista* [artist] in a generalized sense, as here.

52–136. I turned to my right ... fisherman nor Pol: We now reach the planet Jupiter, from whose influence, the poet says (lines 115–17), comes everything we know on earth of justice, and where we encounter one of Dante's most impressive symbols, the gigantic eagle formed by myriad souls ("more than a thousand" in the head and neck alone) all acting and speaking as one, the personification both of the principle of justice and the figure of an ideal polity. It has not escaped the commentators that $18 = 6 + 6 + 6$ (or 3×6 —the Trinity's influence—product—on earthly existence?). (For the sixth cantos of each cantica, see the note to 6.1–142.) Now we are to confront God's Justice itself, as far as the human mind can grasp it.

52–63. I turned to my right ... miracle grow lovelier: The turning to Beatrice for instructions repeats the gesture of lines 7–8, where the theme of the increase in Beatrice's beauty is more fully developed ("her latest custom" refers to lines 8–21). The difference in the two passages lies in the first being a marker of the completion of a stage, the second the transition to a new one: the emphasis is not so much on the pilgrim's delighting in her beauty

as a reflection of God, as on his awareness of the change in his location. From this further increase in Beatrice's beauty, the pilgrim infers that the arc of his revolution with the celestial spheres has increased; that is, that he has risen to a sphere of larger dimensions and thus to the next planet (notice the relevance of the last note).

58–63. And, as a man ... miracle grow lovelier: The change in Beatrice, by which the pilgrim infers his ascent into Jupiter, is compared to the delight connected with increasing virtue, a repeated experience in Purgatory (cf. *Purg.* 12.118–27, 27.15–23). The implication of these lines for the nature of the ascent is noteworthy, for the happiness of growth in virtue derives directly from the growth in intellectual self-possession (see 14.37–60, with notes), another instance of the primacy of intellect.

64–69. And like the changing ... me within itself: When the pilgrim turns to look at the new planet, he sees that the red color of Mars has been changed to the white of Jupiter. The "burden of shame" is the lady's blush, which drains from her face as it returns almost instantaneously to its normal whiteness. For the temperance connected with Jupiter, see 22.144–47, with notes, and Additional Note 12. Until this point, the transition from Mars has taken place in terms of analogies with earthly events of a certain intimacy: the gazing into a lady's eyes; the observation, in a small social group, of a lady's passing blush. Now things change dramatically.

70–96. I saw in that Jovial ... adorned with gold: The first phase of the spectacular light-show, as one may indeed call this extraordinary display of Dante's imaginative power, carefully prepared by and gradated with the collective spectacles provided by the souls in the sun and Mars: the spelling out by the myriad souls of a sequence of letters—they are to be imagined in the form of fourteenth-century Gothic display capitals (see [figure 12, 13](#))—thoses of a famous biblical phrase admonishing rulers, to be followed by even more spectacular effects.

70–81. I saw in that Jovial ... and be silent: Dante's awareness of the unprecedented nature of his imagining is perceptible in the great care he takes to explain it. First a general statement (lines 70–72), then the vivid simile of the birds (lines 73–76), followed by the full description of the procedure (lines 77–81).

70–72. I saw in that Jovial ... of our speech: The term *segnare* [to sign, to make sign, to make a sign] suspends the specification that the signs in question are *letters* until line 78. Dante avoids the term *scrivere* [to write], which implies *tracing* (leaving behind a trace); even in modern Italian there is no term exactly corresponding to our verb *to spell*.

70. Jovial torch: The modern usage of *joyful* as meaning good-humored or cheerful is a survival in the popular tradition of the astrological conception of personality types as the "children of the planets." Dante's insistence on the planet Jupiter as representing the exalted principle of God's justice is of course much more ambitious than the popular conceptions.

73–81. As birds, rising ... and be silent: The birds in the simile are as if seen from a considerable distance, an effect greatly helped by the mention of the river, which also, along with the reference to their feeding, suggests a morning scene. Note the parallel with *Inf.* 5.40–42, where the point is the disorder and randomness of the flight of starlings. (The term *schiera* is rich in suggestion; both in *Inferno* 5 and here it is used to suggest a multitude; here it is translated “outline” in order to preserve some of its original strong connotation of “battle line”: cf. the notes to *Inf.* 5.40–46).



DILIGITE IUSTITIAM.
QM. IUSTICHTIS. TERRAM.

Figure 12. "DILIGITE IUSTITIAM"

76–81. so within their lights ... and be silent: Again, an initial generalized statement (lines 76–78): the souls fly about singing and “become” the letters *D*, *I*, and *L* (withholding the full significance until the procedure is fully clear); then a more detailed analysis (lines 79–81), introducing a crucial detail: the punctuation of each new letter by the brief cessation of motion and by momentary silence.

82–87. O Pegasean goddess ... these brief verses: The first invocation of a muse (or muses) since *Purg.* 29.37–42 (to all the muses, singling out Urania; cf. *Purg.* 1.7–12, to all the muses, singling out Calliope); the grand invocation in *Par.* 1. 13–36 is to the “good Apollo” (see our notes on all three passages). There has been discussion as to the specific muse addressed here, with some tendency to take the passage as addressed to all of them (following Benvenuto and Landino). The reference to Pegasus has not attracted much attention, but it is the focus of the invocation: the winged horse, born of the blood of the beheaded Medusa, who with a blow of his hoof released the Hippocrene [lit. “spring of the horse”] on Helicon (cf. the note to *Purg.* 29.40–41). The grand upsurge of the invocation derives from the idea of the flight of the great winged horse as that of poetry, mirroring the flight of the birdlike souls but greatly enlarging the symbol (as the imminent appearance of the eagle will also do).



Figure 13. Transformation of M into lily into eagle

83–84. who make ... cities and kingdoms: Poets give glory and immortality to cities and kingdoms by celebrating their justice, which is the focus of the cantos of Jupiter (Dante almost certainly has the *Aeneid* in mind here, perhaps also the Horace of the "Roman odes"). This passage should be closely connected with 17.118–20 and 124–42, where the emphasis is on denunciation of wickedness and abuse, as it is here on praise, but they are equally concerned with the "longevity" of poetic achievement.

85–87. illumine me ... brief verses: Calling on the muses helps to emphasize the daring novelty of the poet's idea, and setting forth "their figures as I have conceived them," so that the power of the poetic muses (i.e., of the poet's ideas and words) may be evident, is very close to an explicit reference to the fictitious nature of the entire undertaking, as well as to the poet's virtuosity.

88–96. They showed themselves ... ornamented with gold: At last the first goal of the passage, the spelling out of a celebrated phrase from Scripture.

88–90. They showed themselves ... dictated to me: Another important explanatory remark: the pilgrim quickly understands what is happening and makes a conscious effort to piece the successive letters together. One notes, of course, that "our speech" (line 72) is not the vernacular but the high language of biblical and liturgical texts.

88–89. five times seven vowels and consonants: Thirty-five letters in all, then, spaces not being counted, words of eight, nine, three, nine, and six letters.

91–93. Diligite iustitiam [Love justice] ... qui iudicatis terram [you who judge the earth]: (Wisdom 1.1), this famous opening of the book of Wisdom was included in the mural (painted 1338–40) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Sala della Pace in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. Accepted as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church, but not by the rabbis and Protestants, the book of Wisdom was probably written in the first century BCE (in Greek) in Alexandria, offering itself as written by Solomon (and closely related to the account of Solomon's prayer for wisdom in 3 Kings 3.5–12—see 13.91–111, with notes). It was particularly prized by early Christians, to whom it seemed to prophesy Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection.

94–96. Then they remained ... adorned with gold: The pause on the final *M* is longer than the preceding ones, and the phrasing suggests that "Jove appeared" in some special way: the commentators suggest, probably correctly, that this last *M* stands for *Monarchia*, the principle of single rule. The planet is said to be white in line 58, so that we may infer that all the letters have been gold (already implicit in the idea of fire, as in other heavens).

97–114. And I saw ... with small motions: The last spectacular transformation of the show, and the last event narrated in the canto, in three stages: lines 97–99, the descent of a

number of souls to the summit of the *M*; lines 100–111, the rising up of “more than a thousand lights” to combine with those descending so as to form the head and neck of an eagle; and lines 112–14, the small adjustments by others, so that what was formerly an *M* becomes the body and wings of a heraldic eagle. Three reminders are included (lines 99, 105, and 109–11) that these figurations are directly guided by God.

100–102. Then, as at the striking ... take auguries: A homely but very vivid image. Dante's *agurarsi* [from Lat. *auguror*, to take oracles from birds] is hardly casual in this context, Jove's bird having been particularly significant to the Roman augurs [diviners] (note that lines 73–75 had introduced the flocks of flying birds). Dante is engaged in a particularly ambitious “augury.”

103–5. I seemed to see ... kindles them allotted: The number contributes a further suggestion, that of great size.

107–8. I saw the head ... that articulated fire: The head and neck are formed by the souls that have just joined the others; special status is probably indicated by their *descending* or *flying up* to form the highest parts. The phrase “*distinto foco*” [articulated fire] indicates that the representation is relatively detailed.

109–11. He who portrays ... form for nests: The general import is clear: God guides the souls in forming the eagle. But the bird imagery in line 111, “the power that is the form for nests,” is puzzling: since birds cannot intuit intellectual entities like form, how do they build nests? The sense would seem to be that God's creative power (“the power that is the form”) guides them in building their nests, as it does the souls forming the eagle (see Mattalia's excellent notes and our note to lines 115–17).

112–14. The other beatitudes ... with small motions: The remark is perhaps required to remind the reader that the head and neck (line 107) are an addition to the original shape, which still remains.

113. to enlily themselves in the *M*: The first phase of the transformation of the *M* (lines 97–99), we are now told, gave it the shape of the Florentine lily (see [fig. 13](#)). *Ingigliarsi* [to enlily themselves] is another of Dante's striking coinages (see the note to lines 133–36).

115–36. O sweet star ... fisherman nor Pol: The rest of the canto is devoted to a passionate denunciation, written in the person of the poet, of the rulers and prelates responsible for the corruption and injustice prevalent on earth, attributed in lines 133–36 to avarice. After a conclusion drawn from what has just been seen, the exclamation has three parts, the first (lines 118–23) is addressed to God, the second (lines 124–29) to the souls just seen (or to all the blessed), the third (lines 130–36) to the pope. (Clement V, “the Gascon,” died in 1314; his successor, John XXII, from Cahors, was pope 1316–34; never mentioned by Dante by name, he is targeted along with Clement V in 27.58, in the phrase “Cahorsans and Gascons” and is probably meant here; cf. the note to 17.88.)

115–17. O sweet star ... that you begem: This is an important statement of Dante's astrological conception. The explicit logic of the exclamation is that the great number of souls ("how many [gems]") and their nature ("what [gems]"), i.e., the degree to which they reflect the influence of the planet, proves to him that whatever justice exists on earth is the result of the influence of the planet Jupiter. From Canto 8 we know the central importance, in God's providential government of the world, of astrological influence in counteracting heredity in the establishment of the native gifts of individuals (legible in their horoscopes as well as in their behavior). The souls in Jupiter, then, are "children" of that planet (it was the dominant influence—the "lord"—of their horoscopes). But lines 109–11 add a particularly interesting nuance: it seems that the children of Jupiter must be guided day by day by an impulse prior to rational thought, inherent in their natures and akin to the natural instincts of animals.

118–23. Therefore I beg ... miracles and martyrdoms: Although couched in the third person, the appeal is obviously directed at God. Dante's "therefore" indicates that the conception of the power of Jupiter just expressed (see last note) makes it especially difficult to understand how corruption and injustice can prevail on earth, and particularly how they can so deeply threaten the Church.

118–19. the Mind that ... and your power: God, ruling the celestial spheres by his direct influence on the angels who move them. The term *Mind* refers especially to the Logos.

120. the smoke that vitiates your shining: The influence of Jupiter is conceived of in terms of light ("shining" [*raggio*, lit. "ray"], line 120), which, like that of the sun, can be blocked by clouds or smoke (here metaphorical, developed further in lines 124–36).

121–22. so that yet again ... within the Temple: "Yet again" refers to Matt. 21.12–13 (cf. Mark 11.15–18):

And Jesus ... cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves: and he saith unto them: My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.

(Note the quasi quotation of "sold and bought in the temple" in line 122 (and cf. 17. 51), which links Boniface VIII with Judas.)

123. whose walls ... miracles and martyrdoms: See the long denunciation of the papacy by saint Peter, in related terms, in 27.40–66, and cf. 24.97–111.

124–29. O army of Heaven ... away from no one: The "army" is the Church Triumphant, including Christ, as well as the particular portion of it contemplated in Jupiter. Popes and prelates abuse their spiritual authority, using it as a weapon against political enemies. For the evil effects of their bad example, see *Purg.* 16.97–114.

127–29. In the past ... away from no one: The reference is to the excommunication of political opponents, which denies them the Eucharistic bread (cf. 27.46–51).

130–36. But you who write ... fisherman nor Pol: The addressee is now the pope, in all probability John XXII (see note to 115–36). Note that the emphatic anaphora of "O" (lines 115 and 124), addressing allies, is changed to the contemptuous "ma tu" (cf. the analogous rhetorical moves in the invective of *Purgatorio* 6, in lines 74, 76, 91, 97, 118, and 127, and the reproach of inconstancy, lines 142–47).

130. write only to strike out: The reference is to excommunications rescinded for money.

131–32. Peter and Paul ... are still alive: Saints Peter and Paul were both martyred in Rome; Peter was buried in the cemetery on the Vatican hill, where the basilica of saint Peter was eventually built. The "vine" is a traditional figure for the Church, based especially on John 15.1–5, especially verse 5: "I am the vine, you the branches." For the laying waste of the vine, see Canticle of Canticles 2.15, *Purg.* 32.118–23, with notes, and Manselli 1971.

133–36. My desire is so fixed ... fisherman nor Pol: The pope is made to confess his greed with sardonic mockery. He "who wished to live alone, whom dancing led to martyrdom," is of course John the Baptist, whose head rewarded Salome's dance (Matt. 14.1–12), and whose image "seals" the florin (see the note to *Inf.* 30. 73–74).

136. I know not the fisherman nor Pol: "Fisherman" mocks Peter's humble origins, and "Polo" (a colloquial form common in both Italy and France) mocks Paul.

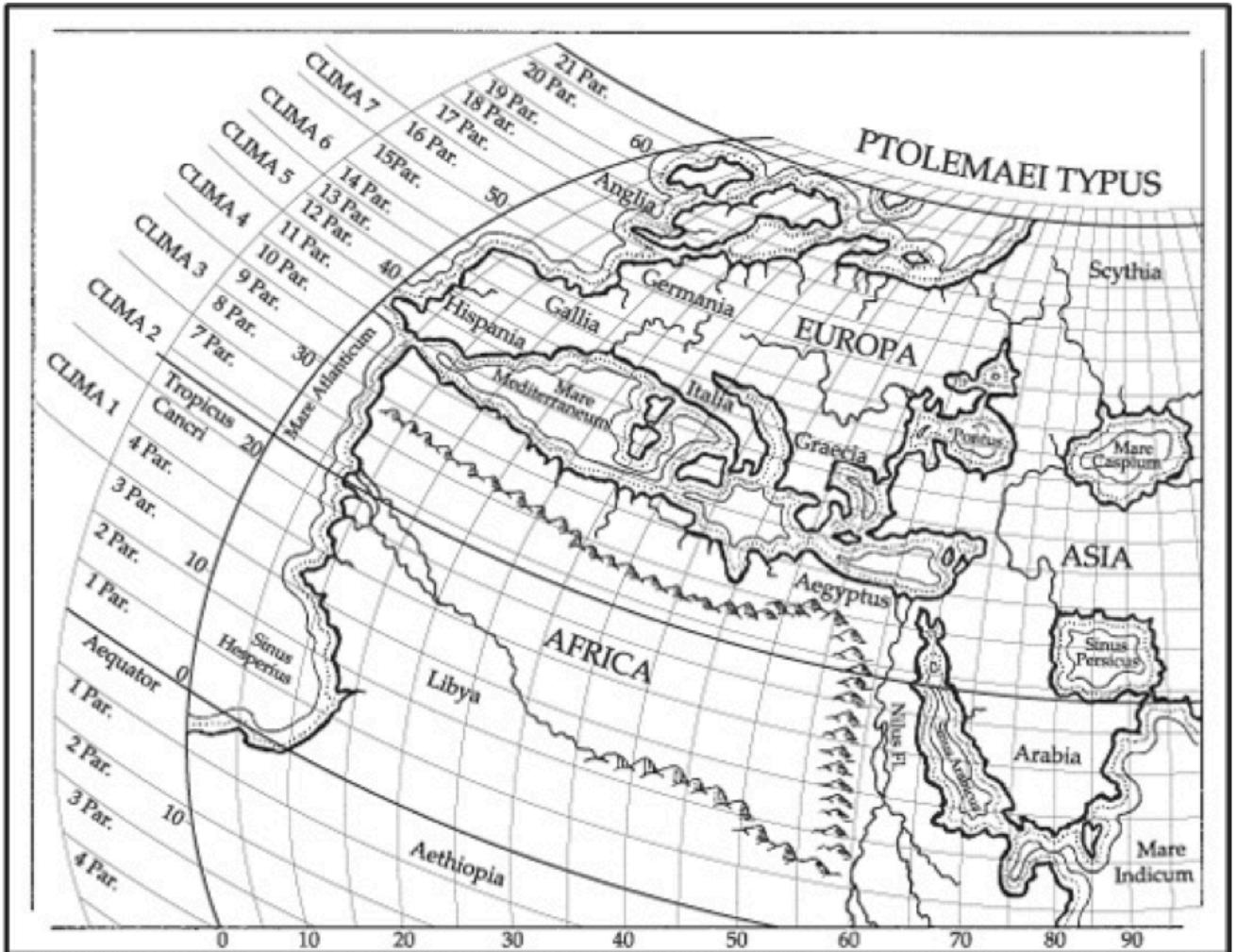


Figure 14. The Climata of the *Oikumenē*