

NAXOS
AudioBooks

POETRY

Dante
The Divine Comedy

Inferno • Purgatory • Paradise • A Life of Dante

Read by **Heathcote Williams** with **John Shrapnel**



Inferno

1	Canto I	7:43
2	Canto II	7:27
3	Canto III	7:45
4	Canto IV	8:02
5	Canto V	8:16
6	Canto VI	6:55
7	Canto VII	7:44
8	Canto VIII	7:28
9	Canto IX	7:34
10	Canto X	7:29
11	Canto XI	5:51
12	Canto XII	7:03
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18	Canto XVIII	7:36
19	Canto XIX	6:35
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21	Canto XXI	6:18
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Purgatory

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39	Canto V	8:23
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42	Canto VIII	8:11
43	Canto IX	9:00
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46	Canto XII	7:54
47	Canto XIII	9:07
48	Canto XIV	8:05
49	Canto XV	8:31
50	Canto XVI	8:11

51	Canto XVII	8:13
52	Canto XVIII	7:53
53	Canto XIX	8:17
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55	Canto XXI	8:11
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Paradise

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70	Canto III	6:38
71	Canto IV	7:48
72	Canto V	7:47
73	Canto VI	7:44
74	Canto VII	8:12
75	Canto VIII	7:41
76	Canto IX	7:48
77	Canto X	8:18
78	Canto XI	8:02
79	Canto XII	8:06
80	Canto XIII	8:02
81	Canto XIV	7:42
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84	Canto XVII	7:45
85	Canto XVIII	7:39
86	Canto XIX	7:46
87	Canto XX	7:49
88	Canto XXI	7:34
89	Canto XXII	8:01
90	Canto XXIII	7:46
91	Canto XXIV	8:49
92	Canto XXV	7:37
93	Canto XXVI	8:48
94	Canto XXVII	8:49
95	Canto XXVIII	7:40
96	Canto XXIX	8:17
97	Canto XXX	8:14
98	Canto XXXI	8:13
99	Canto XXXII	8:36
100	Canto XXXIII	9:05

Time: 4:26:45

A Life of Dante

101	The final journey back to Ravenna	6:21
102	Florence – the great city on Arno’s fair river	4:07
103	Dante was born in May 1265...	7:21
104	The first sight of Beatrice Portinari	4:14
105	Death and philosophy	6:31
106	Dante marries Gemma Donati	2:59
107	Dante, aged 30, 1295	5:33
108	1300 – political upheaval and the beginning of Inferno	13:31
109	Dante in exile	4:23
110	Convivio – The Banquet – a work of instruction	2:15
111	Letters	7:21
112	Ravenna 1318; death 1321	5:49
113	The last 13 cantos of Paradiso; final burial	8:50

Time: 79:23

Total time: 14:30:06

Cover picture: Dante reading from ‘The Divine Comedy’
Domenico di Michelino (1417-91) by courtesy Bridgeman Art Library, London

Dante

Inferno from The Divine Comedy

The Divine Comedy is an epic poem in three parts, describing the poet's imagined journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, and culminating in his vision of God.

To this extent it has much in common with the epic masterpieces of Homer and Virgil whose roots are in history and myth; but the *Commedia* is also an allegory, dealing with nothing less than man's relationship with and place within the universe. Dante's universe was, of course, a medieval one in which the sun and stars revolved around the Earth, and while the *Commedia* takes account of contemporary science in minute detail, his vision of the way in which the regions of the afterworld might be contained within this framework is brilliant in its originality. Hell (the **Inferno**) is conceived as a tapering funnel plunging down into the earth beneath the northern hemisphere. At its deepest point a passage leads out into the southern hemisphere, where Mount Purgatory – its shape mirroring that of Hell – tapers upwards towards Heaven. Paradise itself is conceived as a series of ten 'spheres' encircling the Earth, with God somewhere beyond the tenth, merely glimpsed by Dante as consciousness ebbs from him.

This colossal construction is subdivided to create a zone for every facet of human nature. In Hell and Purgatory a place is allotted for every sin and foible which exists within the world, while in Paradise the pure and just, the saints and the Holy Trinity are arranged in a strict hierarchy. Dante

peoples each region with figures from literature, history and from his own contemporary society. This allows him to comment on issues of morality not in merely abstract terms, but in relation to actual people and events, many of them of titillating contemporary relevance. Because of this many of the names encountered mean nothing to modern readers, and this is one of the reasons why most editions of Dante incorporate many pages of notes for each page of text (a practice which began, incidentally, within a few years of the poem's first publication). The main purpose, however, is not to point the finger or poke fun at friends and enemies (though there is undoubtedly an element of this, especially in the **Inferno**), but to examine the reality of man's human and spiritual nature in all its various and complex manifestations.

One of the principal characters in the **Divine Comedy** (though she does not actually appear in the **Inferno**) is Beatrice, whose significance in Dante's life needs to be understood. Dante first met and fell in love with Beatrice Portinari when she was eight and he nine years old. He worshipped her from afar until her early death at the age of twenty-four. (The full story of this strange 'love affair' is told by Dante in his **La Vita Nuova**.) Beatrice then came to symbolise for Dante all that is pure and worthy. In the **Commedia** it is Beatrice who sends the poet Virgil to guide Dante through Hell and Purgatory. There she herself assumes responsibility for his

journey of discovery, and it is she who reveals to him the splendours of Paradise, leading him eventually to “that love that moves the Sun and other stars”.

Dante calls the three books of the **Divine Comedy** ‘*canzoni*’. Each contains 33 chapters or ‘cantos’, except **Inferno** which has an additional introductory canto – making 100 cantos in all. Each canto contains roughly 150 lines composed according to a strict metrical and rhyme scheme. The language of the poem is, importantly, not Latin (as was customary for high art in Dante’s day) but the language used by educated people in 14th-century Florence. In addition Dante made liberal use of archaic language and regional dialects, all of which makes life very difficult for the modern translator. But Dante’s purpose was to make his work readable by the ‘ordinary’ reader – not merely clerics and academics – for despite its lofty theme and layers of symbolism, the *Divine Comedy* is intended to speak to us directly through the power of Dante’s imagery and narrative skill.

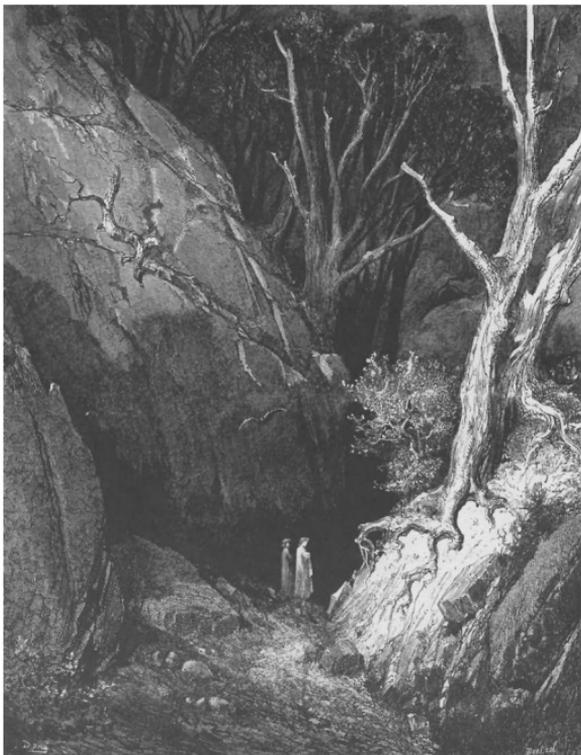
This work has not only endured, but has exerted a powerful influence on Western thought for almost seven centuries, especially perhaps the **Inferno**, whose characters and images can be found peppered throughout literature and art right up to the present day. Tchaikovsky’s **Francesca da Rimini** and Puccini’s **Gianni Schicci** are borrowed from it. Illustrations for Dante editions inspired well-known masterpieces by Botticelli, Blake and Doré, while the pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti – (his first name an obvious choice for a father who was a Dante scholar and reputedly able to recite the entire *Commedia* from memory) –

returned time and again to Dante for inspiration, notably in the enigmatic “*Beata Beatrix*”. Samuel Beckett’s plays and novels are full of allusions to both **Inferno** and **Purgatory** – shades walking slowly weighed down by leaden cloaks (Inf. Canto XXIII), creatures swimming in mud poking and whistling at one another (Inf. Canto XXII), and indolent characters with little inclination to struggle any further (Purg. Canto IV).

Listeners to this reading of the **Inferno** may be struck, too, by Dante’s extraordinary vision when, in Canto XXV, a serpent and sinner combine and transform one another in a way which, it might be supposed, was invented by computer ‘morphing’. And no horror film has yet surpassed the frozen wastes of the deepest region of Dante’s Hell, where the tears of the damned make their eyes freeze over, and where the mortal body of a sinner can begin its torture even before the point of actual death. Be warned.

Roger Marsh

Dante Alighieri was born in Florence in 1265 into a family of the city’s lesser nobility in reduced circumstances. They were Guelphs, a party originally identified with the claims of papal authority and opposed by the Ghibellines, who offered allegiance to the German Emperors in Italy. By Dante’s time both parties had developed into vehicles for feud and private interest. In 1302 control of Florence fell into the hands of ‘Black’ Guelphs and Dante was exiled by the faction. It was during this permanent exile from Florence the **Divine Comedy** was written, completed the year of his death in Ravenna, 1321.



"Ah! who could relate how wild this wood was?" (Canto I)

Canto I

Dante awakens in a gloomy wood. He tries to leave climbing a sunlit mountain but is driven back by three beasts (Leopard, Lion and She-wolf, symbolising worldly pleasure, ambition, and avarice). He meets Virgil, the poet, who offers to guide him.

Son of Anchises: This was Aeneas. In the *Aeneid* Virgil retells the story of Aeneas' flight from Troy after its defeat by the Greeks and his foundation of the city which would become Rome.

A soul worthier than I: Beatrice who, in Purgatory, will take over the role of guide from Virgil.

Canto II

Late that evening. Dante doubts his worthiness for the journey. Virgil comforts him explaining that he was sent by Beatrice. Dante takes heart and they set out.

Silvius' father: Aeneas, who also journeyed to the underworld (in the *Aeneid*) where he met his father who prophesied his son's role in the future glory of Rome.

the dead... in suspense: see Canto IV

a noble Lady: the Virgin Mary, signifying compassion. Interceding on behalf of the Pilgrim Dante, she begins the process of his rescue by Divine Grace, without which he would be lost.

Lucia is Illuminating Grace. Beatrice, whose name means blessedness or salvation appears to reveal the will of God to Virgil and Dante.

Canto III

The Poets arrive at the door of Hell and pass through to the antechamber. Within are shades who achieved neither praise nor blame in life, rejected by Heaven and Hell. Charon, who ferries the souls of the damned to Hades, refuses to ferry the living soul across the Acheron. Dante falls unconscious.

good of intellect: souls who lost sight of the 'Supreme Truth' or God.

great refusal: either Pontius Pilate or Celestine V who abdicated in favour of Boniface VIII.

Canto IV

Dante awakens in the First Circle, or Limbo whose inhabitants were virtuous but lived without Christianity. He encounters Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan and the great poets, heroes and philosophers of antiquity.

A Man of Power: Christ.

they are not sinners: The virtuous souls of Limbo are suspended between the joys of Heaven and the pains of Hell.

The master of men of knowledge: Aristotle.

Canto V

They descend to the Second Circle where the lustful are carried aloft in a violent wind. Minos, who judges the dead and assigns them their place in Hell, bars their way. Dante hears Francesca da Rimini's tale of love and death and faints with pity.

Semiramis: the Assyrian empress, rumoured guilty of incest with her son.



"The winds changed course. They were blown towards us." (Canto V)

That other one: Dido, who broke her oath of fidelity to her dead husband by falling in love with Aeneas.

the couple who fly together: Francesca di Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, brother of Francesca's husband Gianciotto, lord of Rimini. Paolo became her lover, until Gianciotto surprised them *in flagrante delicto* and murdered them.

Caïna's depths: one of the four divisions of Cocytus, the lowest (ninth) circle of Hell.

Galahad: the name of Lancelot and Guinevere's go-between in *Lancelot du Lac*, the medieval romance.

Canto VI

Dante awakens in the Third Circle where the Gluttonous are tormented by freezing filthy rain and the three-headed dog Cerberus, the watchdog of Hell. Ciaccio recognises Dante. He makes a prophecy. Virgil describes The Final Judgement.

solid human flesh: shades only appear to have corporeal form, although they feel actual physical pain.

your city: Florence.

Tell me, if you know: a passage referring to events in Italy, especially Florence, after 1300, the year of Dante's descent through Hell. Shades in Hell see the future and the past but know nothing of the present. Ciaccio is referring to the struggle between factions of the Guelph party. Pope Boniface VIII **whose sail trims to any breeze** waited for an overall victor before committing his support. Ciaccio's 'prophecy' is accurate, because the events had already taken place.

Farinata: a Florentine politician. Farinata is in the circle of Heretics (Canto X); **Tegghiaio** and **Jacopo Rusticucci** are among the Sodomites (Canto XVI); **Mosca** is with the Sowers of Discord (Canto XXVIII); **Arrigo**, does not re-appear.

great adversary: in Hell the enemy is Christ.

Canto VII

The poets meet Plutus at the entrance to the Fourth Circle. Here the Avaricious and the Spendthrifts roll weights against each other in opposing semi-circles. They descend to the Fifth Circle where the Wrathful tear at each other and the Slothful bubble beneath the Styx.

Plutus: god of wealth in myth. The words are gibberish.

Michael took his vengeance: against the rebellious angels.

Charybdis: the whirlpool in the straits of Messina.

These tansured ones: the avaricious are mostly priests.

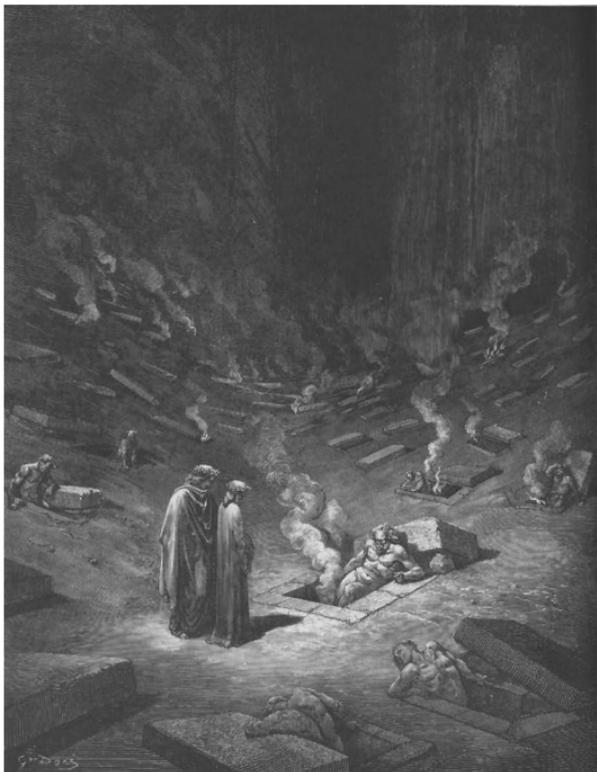
Styx: second of the five rivers of Hades. The Acheron emerges from underground as the **spring**.

Canto VIII

Still in the Fifth Circle Dante and Virgil come to a tall tower. They cross the Styx with Phlegyas, encountering Filippo Argenti. They draw near the red-hot walls of the city of Dis. Their progress to lower Hell is obstructed.

Phlegyas:... guardian and ferryman of the Styx.

Until I was in: Dante, a mortal, has weight. Virgil, a shade, does not.



*"The lid of each tomb was pushed to one side,
And rising from within came cries of grief..." (Canto IX)*

Filippo Argenti: an enemy of Dante's. Little else is known.

the city of Dis: Dis was the Roman name for Pluto god of the underworld. Here it is applied to Lucifer and the city whose walls mark the boundary between upper Hell and lower Hell.

Canto IX

At the gate of Dis. Virgil tries to calm Dante's fear. The Furies appear and Virgil warns Dante not to look at Medusa. The divine messenger arrives and orders the demons to let the poets through. They enter Dis and reach the Sixth Circle where they encounter the Arch-heretics in their red-hot sepulchres.

three Furies: Tisiphone, Megaera and Alecto, bringers of retribution and torment. The **Queen of endless misery** is Hecate, wife of Pluto.

Let Medusa come: one of the three Gorgon sisters whose hair was turned into snakes by Minerva. **Theseus**, the Athenian hero, descended to Hell to kidnap Hecate but was kept by Pluto in the Chair of Forgetfulness. Hercules set him free.

Cerberus: when Hercules rescued Theseus he dragged Cerberus up from Hell by a chain, stripping the fur from his throat.

Canto X

Still in the Sixth Circle the poets come to the Heretics and the Epicureans. Farinata degli Uberti explains that souls in Hell know nothing of the present but are able to remember the past and foresee the future.

Jehosephat: a valley near Jerusalem where the Last Judgement will take place and souls will be

reunited with their bodies.

Farinata: di Jacopo degli Uberti, a Ghibelline (pro-imperial) leader in Florence, died 1264. The Ghibellines drove the (pro-papal) Guelph's from Florence on **two occasions**, but by 1300 the Guelphs had returned to the city.

her whose eyes: Beatrice.

Canto XI

Dante and Virgil pause beside Pope Anastasius' tomb before descending to the Seventh Circle. Virgil explains the arrangement of punishment in Hell. Violence in the three rounds of the Seventh Circle; ordinary fraud in the Eighth Circle and complex fraud in the Ninth. Having passed through the circles punishing the (lesser) Mortal sins of Incontinence, Lust, Gluttony, Avarice, Sloth, and Wrath, the sins prompted by Envy and Pride lie ahead.

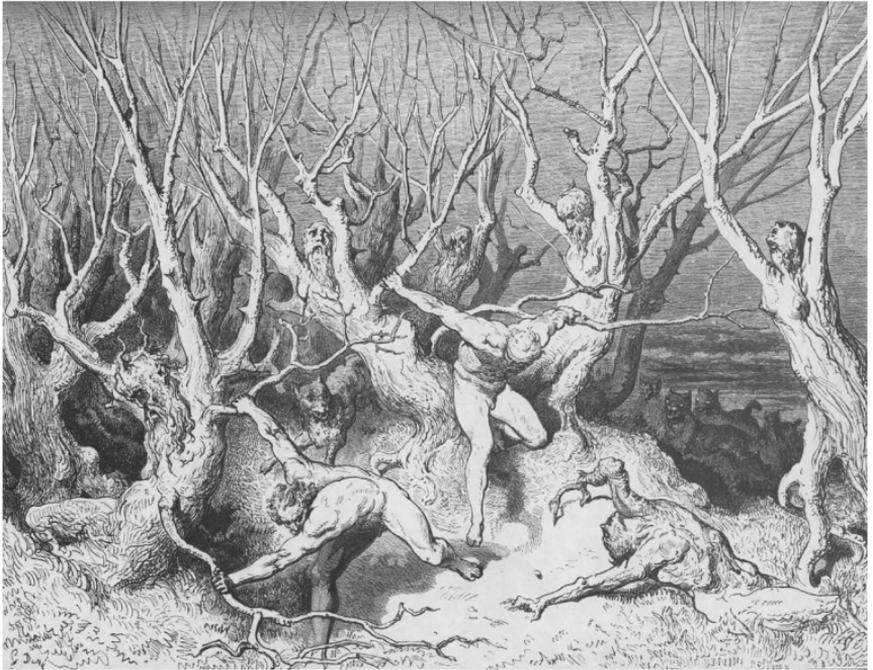
Anastasius: Pope 494-498. Held as heretic because of his support for Photinus of Thessalonica who denied Christ's divine birth.

Aristotle's Ethics: a work on politics, the *Physics* his work on natural science.

Genesis: Man is to work and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Usurers do not, hence usury is sin.

Canto XII

The Seventh Circle, First Round: the Violent Against their Neighbours. The Minotaur and the Centaurs, half man, half horse, led by Chiron. Nessus guides them across the boiling blood of Phlegethon where the Tyrants and Murderers are immersed.



"We were men once, though we've become trees..." (Canto XIII)

infamy of Crete: the Minotaur, part-man, part-bull born of Queen Pasiphaë who satisfied her lust with a bull. He was killed by Theseus **duke of Athens.**

before he came: Christ, in the harrowing of Hell.

Chiron:... centaur celebrated for his wisdom, tutor to the Greek heroes.

Nessus: centaur killed by Hercules after attempting to rape his wife Deianara. As Nessus died he gave her a robe dipped in his blood which, he said, would preserve Hercules' love. She hanged herself when the robe poisoned Hercules.

God's sanctum: In 1272, Guy de Montfort avenged his father, killed by Edward I of England, by murdering Edward's cousin Prince Henry. Henry's heart was set up on a column on London Bridge to be venerated.

Pyrrhus: son of Achilles. **Sextus,** pirate son of Pompey the Great.

Rinier da Corneto: highwayman of Dante's time, as was **Rinier Pazzo,** who made a habit of attacking clerics.

Canto XIII

Seventh Circle, Second Round: the Violent against Themselves. The Wood of Suicides. Harpies and The Profligates, hunted by hounds.

Cecina and Corneto: the limits of the Maremma, a Tuscan swamp.

The tree spoke: Pier delle Vigne, advisor to Emperor Frederick II. Disgraced in 1248 he was imprisoned and committed suicide. **That whore** is envy; **Caesar's household** is Frederick's court; **Augustus** is the Emperor i.e., Frederick II.

two figures: Profligates who deliberately destroyed their worldly goods. Pier delle Vigne, is Arcolano da Squarcia of Padua. **Toppo,** a famous defeat of the Sienese in 1288, at which Lano wilfully refused to retreat, dying rather than living in poverty. **Giacomo da Sant'Andrea** is reputed to have thrown money into the river Brenta to while away the time.

my home city: Florence, whose **first protector** was Mars, changed to **John the Baptist** when the citizens became Christian. In revenge Mars punishes Florence with constant fighting, allowing it to rebuild itself so long as fragments of his statue remain at Arno.

Canto XIV

Seventh Circle, Third Round: the violent against God, Nature and Art. Blasphemers, supine on the burning sand. The Ancient Man of Crete whose tears form the rivers of Hell.

Capaneus: one of the Seven who besieged Thebes was struck by Jove's thunderbolt after blaspheming that the gods could not defeat him.

ancient man: an allegory for the ages of man and the decline of human nature from Golden Age to Age of Iron. The statue in Crete, the centre of the known world, is midway between the pagan East (**Darmatta,** an Egyptian seaport) and the Christian West, **Rome.** The fissure which cracks every part except the head is the sorrow in every Age but the first. The tears are the source of the rivers Acheron, Styx and Phlegethon which collect at Cocytus, the lowest point of Hell.

Lethe: river of forgetfulness.

Canto XV

Seventh Circle, Third Round: Sodomites (scholars and clerics) eternally moving across the burning sand beneath a rain of fire.

Brunetto Latini: the Florentine, Guelph statesman–politician and writer 1212-94 wrote *Livres dou Tresor*, an encyclopaedic work and *Tesoretto* a didactic poem. He was in some way an early mentor of Dante.

Fiesole: the hill town where Catiline took refuge against Caesar. After its destruction the survivors, with a number of Roman families, were used to people Florence. This mix was seen as the root of Florentine civil discord.

Priscian: a sixth-century Latin grammarian.

Francesco d'Accorso: (1225-94) a celebrated Florentine jurist.

Servant of Servants: Pope Boniface VIII, who transferred the well-known sodomite Andrea de' Mozzi, bishop of Florence to Vicenza.

Canto XVI

Seventh Circle, Third Round: Sodomites (warriors and leaders). The decadence of Florence. Phlegethon plummets over the precipice. Dante's cord summons a monstrous figure.

Guido Guerra and Tegghiaio Aldobrandi: Guelph leaders. Little is known of **Jacopo Rusticucci**. My **downfall was my wife** suggests he was driven to homosexuality by her.

the centre: to Cocytus, the centre of the earth and the lowest part of Hell.

Canto XVII

Geryon. Seventh Circle Third Round: Violent Against Nature and Art. Usurers with their purses. Virgil and Dante descend to the Eighth Circle.

the monster: Geryon was the mythological Spanish giant king killed by Hercules in the course of his Labours.

Arachne: the weaver whose work rivalled Minerva's. She was turned into a spider.

beaver dips its tail: the beaver was supposed to catch fish by dangling its tail in the water.

The sovereign cavalier: held to be Gianni Buiamonte di Becchi, a usurer who held high office in Florence.

Phaeton: begged Apollo to let him drive the Sun-chariot. He was unable to control it and burnt the streak of sky known as the Milky Way.

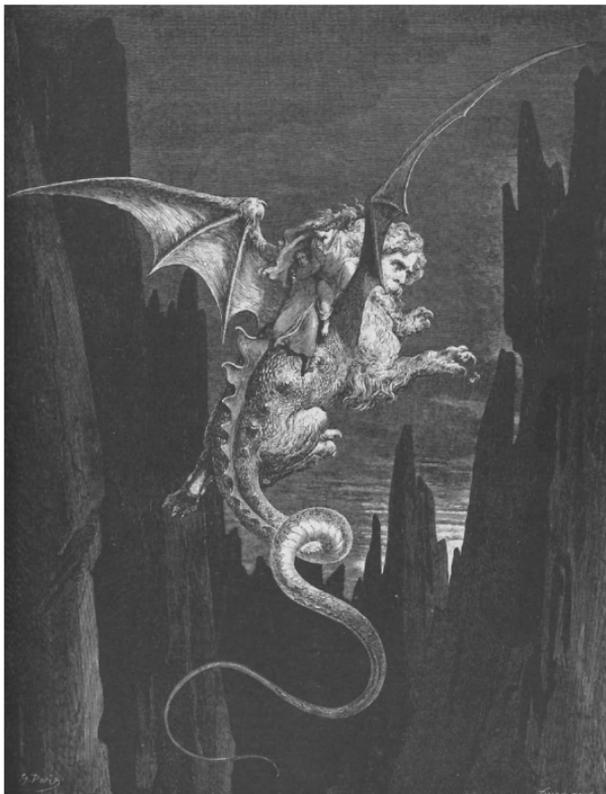
Canto XVIII

The Eighth Circle, Malebolge, with Ten Ditches containing those who committed Fraud against mankind in general. The First Ditch; Panders and Seducers, scourged by demons. The Second Ditch; Flatterers immersed in filth.

Malebolge: a word invented by Dante meaning 'evil pouches', where sinners are pocketed in a set of concentric ditches.

Jubilee year: 1300, when Boniface VIII granted absolution to those who made a pilgrimage to Rome. Many thousands came and a traffic control system was instituted.

Venedico Cacciamenico: a Bolognese Guelph who procured his sister Ghisolabella for the Marchese of Ferrara.



"Look, the monster with its sharpened tail..." (Canto XVII)



*"Out of the mouth of each hole there emerged
A sinner's feet and his legs up to the calf." (Canto XIX)*



*"Grappled him by his sticky, pitchy hair,
And hauled him up..." (Canto XXII)*

sipa: the word for ‘yes’ in the Bolognese dialect. Caccianemico suggests there are more Bolognese in the ditch than in Bologna.

other misbegotten spirits: seducers, who defraud the innocent for their gain.

Jason: leader of the Argonauts, who captured the golden fleece. Sailing home he stopped at Lemnos where he seduced Hypsipyle, but abandoned her, pregnant. The men of Lemnos were slaughtered because they had brought home Thracian concubines. Hypsipyle **gulled the other women** by hiding her father, Thoas, the king, pretending she had slain him. Later Jason married **Medea**, the sorceress, but abandoned her too. Medea took her revenge by killing Creusa, for whom Jason had abandoned her and murdered her own children.

Canto XIX

The Eighth Circle, Third Ditch: the Simonists set head down into holes in the rock, flames tormenting their feet.

Simon Magus: tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter and John. The sin of simony, the fraudulent use of the Church and sale of its offices for money or power, derives from his name.

Whoever you may be: Pope Nicholas III.

vile assassin: in the Florence of Dante’s time murderers were executed by being placed upside down in a hole which was then filled with earth.

Is that you Boniface:... the soul, able to see the future knows Boniface VIII will take his place on his death, in 1303. Since it is 1300 Nicholas thinks the writings lied; Boniface is early. Boniface tricked Celestine V into abdicating the See of St

Peter and was infamous for simony.

Fairest of Women: the Church.

great mantle: the papacy.

one of the she-bear’s sons: Nicholas III was a degli Orsini, which means of the little bears (orsa = bear), notorious for simony and nepotism – his desire to **advance the bear-cubs**.

lawless shepherd: another corrupt pope, Clement V, puppet of Philip, King of France.

Canto XX

Eighth Circle, Fourth Ditch: Soothsayers, Astrologers, Magicians, whose heads are twisted so that they look only backwards. Virgil explains the origin of Mantua.

amazing deformation: these sinners who attempted to divine the future, are forced to look backwards eternally.

Amphiaraus: another of the seven kings who assaulted Thebes and a seer.

Tiresius: a soothsayer of Thebes.

Michael Scott: a Scottish philosopher (1175-1235). Reputedly a magician.

Cain with his thorns: the medieval Italian equivalent of ‘the man in the moon’.

Canto XXI

Eighth Circle, Fifth Ditch: Barrators, swindlers in civic and public office, plunged beneath boiling pitch guarded by demons. A new arrival from Lucca. Dante and Virgil proceed, escorted by demons.

Malebranche: the generic name for the demons.

Sacred Face: a crucifix at the cathedral in Lucca. The **Serchio** is a nearby river – perhaps the

sinner is lying on his back in the pitch with his arms open.

smashed to bits: broken by the earthquake at the death of Christ.

Canto XXII

Eighth Circle, Fifth Ditch Barrators. The demons fork out a Navarrese barrator from the pitch. The Navarrese plays a trick; two demons end up in the pitch.

You Aretines: Dante was at the battle of Campaldino 1289, when Guelphs from Florence and Lucca defeated Ghibellines from Arezzo.

Gomita: a Sardinian friar hanged when it was discovered he was selling prisoners freedom.

Don Michele Zanche: governor of another Sardinian district, Logodoro. Murdered in 1275 by his son-in-law Branca d'Oria.

Canto XXIII

Eighth Circle, Fifth Ditch: Barrators. Pursued by demons, Dante and Virgil escape by scrambling down the bank into the Sixth Ditch where the Hypocrites file along beneath cloaks of lead. The Jovial Friars of Bologna.

King Frederick's: a punishment instituted by Emperor Frederick II for traitors. They were given a leaden cape, which was melted on their bodies.

Jovial Friars: the nickname of a religious Order of Knights dedicated to the Virgin; disbanded because of scandalous corruption.

nailed down figure: Caiaphas, High Priest of the Pharisees urged the death of Jesus. Annas, Caiaphas' father-in-law, is one of the counsellors who **seeded so much evil**; the destruction of

Jerusalem and the dispersal of the Jews.

Canto XXIV

A difficult passage to the Eighth Circle, Seventh Ditch. The Thieves. The sinner bitten by a serpent turns to ash, then resumes his shape. Vanni Fucci, and his prophecy.

heliotrope: a stone that protected the wearer from snake bite.

Vanni Fucci: violent bastard of Fuccio de' Lazari, a leader of the Black Guelph faction in Pistoia. He is here because of his theft of treasure from the chapel of Saint James in Pistoia. Vanni's 'prophecy' meant the Florentine White Guelphs would help the White Pistoians score a victory over the Blacks in May 1301. That autumn Charles of Valois arrived in Florence, sided with the Blacks and turfed out the Whites. Moroelo Malaspina, lord of Lunigniana (**Valdimagra**), is the **fiery thunderbolt**, who drove the Whites from their last stronghold in Tuscany.

Canto XXV

Eighth Circle, Seventh Ditch: the Thieves. The centaur Cacus. Three Florentine thieves arrive, then two more in the form of snakes. Bizarre metamorphoses occur.

Pistoia: was supposedly founded by the remnants of the army of Catiline, composed of criminals and brigands.

fell from Thebes rampart:... Capaneus.

Cacus: the son of Vulcan and Medusa. Dante makes him a centaur.

deceitful robbery: Cacus stole the oxen of Geryon belonging to Hercules.

from where unborn we feed: the navel.

Lucan be silent here: in the *Pharsalia* Lucan tells of two soldiers bitten by snakes; **Sabellus** was reduced to a puddle of liquid, the other **Nassidius** swelled up until he died. Ovid describes Cadmus turning into a snake and Arethusa into a fountain.

Puccio Sciancato: ‘Sciancato’, the nickname of Puccio dei Galigai, a Florentine thief.

Gaville: a village in the Arno valley. Francesco dei Cavalcanti was killed by the inhabitants. His family avenged his death.

Canto XXVI

They leave the Seventh Ditch for the Eighth Ditch, Dante, condemns Florence. The poets view the Eighth Ditch, where those who counselled fraud burn in the flames that enclose them. Ulysses and Diomedes share a flame. Ulysses describes his final voyage.

avenged by bears: Elisha, mocked by some boys who were later eaten by bears. He saw Elijah ascend to heaven in a fiery chariot.

Eteocles and his brother: Polyneices, sons of Oedipus, so hated each other the flames on their joint funeral pyre refused to mingle.

Ulysses: (Odysseus) the Greek hero who fought at Troy with **Diomedes** and devised the stratagem of the Wooden Horse. **Deïdamia** was the daughter of king of Scyros and mother of Achilles’ child. The **Palladium** was the sacred symbol of Troy and guarantee of its safety: its theft meant the city would fall.

Leaving Circe: journeying home from Troy, Ulysses was detained by the sorceress Circe.

Gaëta: a promontory near Naples Aeneas named

after his nurse, Caita.

narrow strait: Gibraltar, where the pillars of Hercules marked the westernmost end of the known world.

a mountain: the Mount of Purgatory.

Canto XXVII

Eighth Circle, Eighth Ditch: Fraudulent Counsellors. The state of Romagna. Guido’s tale of self-deception.

As the torturer’s Sicilian bull: Perillus of Sicily constructed a brass bull as an instrument of torture for the tyrant Phalaris. Victims were roasted inside the bull so fashioned that their cries sounded as if the bull itself was bellowing. Perillus was its first victim.

Those hills between Urbino: a region called Montafeltro. The speaker is Guido da Montefeltro.

If I believed: Guido was known as one of the wildest soldiers and politicians of his time. He fought successfully for the Ghibellines against Papal and Guelph forces in Romagna between 1274 and 1282. Excommunicated and banished he returned to Pisa to lead its Ghibellines, but was reconciled with the church by 1296 and became a Franciscan friar.

Prince of Pharisees: Boniface VIII, who rather than crusading against the traditional enemies of the church, **Saracens or Jews**, chose to subdue the Colonna family, who refused to recognise his papacy.

“He asked me for my counsel...”: The Colonna family took refuge in their fortress of Palestrina, near the **Lateran**, the papal palace in Rome. Advised by Guido da Montefeltro,

Boniface falsely promised them a pardon. They surrendered and lost everything.

The two keys: symbols of papal authority.

Canto XXVIII

Eighth Circle, Ninth Ditch: the sowers of discord perpetually circling wounded after each turn by a demon. Mohammed and Ali. Warnings to those still alive.

Apulia's fateful earth: to Dante 'Apulia' described southern Italy, scene of the following wars.

Mohammed: founder of Islam, was traditionally held to be a Christian schismatic. Mohammed's son-in-law **Ali** was responsible for the Sunni-Shi'ite schism in Islam.

Fra Dolcino: lead a dissenting sect preaching simplicity and community of property.

Pier de Medecina:... stirred up the feud between the houses of Polenta and Malatesta.

Guido and **Angiolello** were drowned off the Adriatic coast, by Malatesta.

Mosca: Moscadei Lamberti fomented Guelph-Ghibelline strife in Florence.

Bertran de Born: twelfth-century troubadour. Stirred up animosity between Henry II of England and his son.

Canto XXIX

Eighth Circle, Ninth Ditch: sowers of discord. Dante expects to see an ancestor. He and Virgil cross the bridge into the Tenth Ditch where the Falsifiers lie with their hideous diseases. The Alchemists.

Geri del Bello: kinsman of Dante and troublemaker. **Altaforte** is Bertran de Born.

Maremma to Sardinia:... an area famous for breeding malaria.

Capoccio: burned for alchemy in Siena, in 1293.

Canto XXX

Eighth Circle, Tenth Ditch: the Falsifiers. Gianni Schicchi and Myrrha (impersonators); Master Adamo (counterfeiter) Potiphar's wife and Sinon the Greek (perjurers). The quarrel between Adamo and Sinon.

Semele: a Theban princess seduced by Jupiter. In revenge Juno drove mad Semele's brother-in-law Athamas. He took his wife Ino for a lioness and their children for cubs then killed them.

Hecuba: wife of Priam, taken prisoner after the fall of the Troy, went mad when her children Polyxena and Polydorus were killed.

Gianni Schicchi: a Florentine mimic, who cheated the family of **Buoso Donati** out of a mare.

Myrrha: tricked her father into incest and gave birth to Adonis.

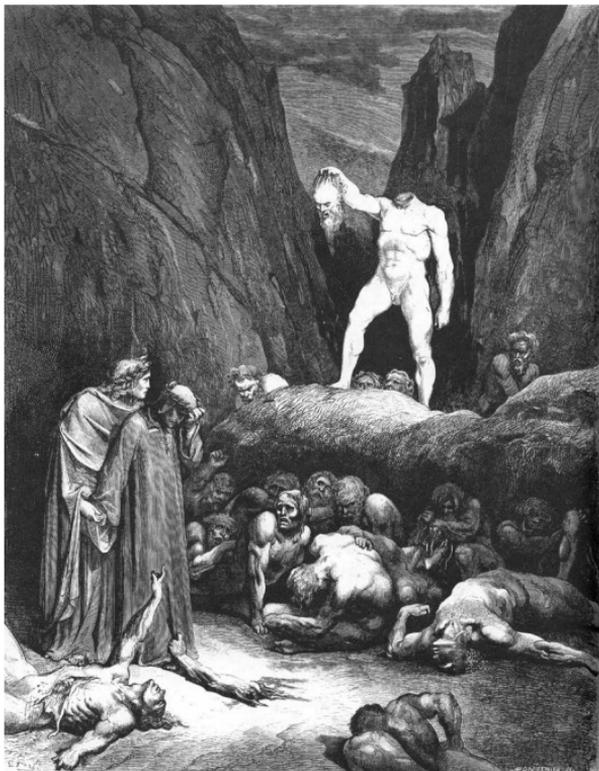
Master Adamo: falsifier of money.

false wife: Potiphar's wife.

Sinon: who pretended to swap sides in the Trojan war so the Trojans would take in the Wooden Horse.

Canto XXXI

Dante and Virgil descend to the Ninth Circle, the well at the bottom of the abyss. Around it the Giants are visible from the waist up. Dante sees Nimrod and Ephialtes. Antaeus lowers them to the frozen Lake of Cocytus, fourth river of Hell.



*"The corpse was carrying its hacked off head
By the hair, swinging it like a lantern." (Canto XXVIII)*

Achilles: Achilles and his father Peleus possessed a lance that could heal the wounds it inflicted.

Roland's horn: From the medieval epic *Le Chanson de Roland*, the blast on Roland's horn was heard eight miles away.

Raphèl mai: nonsense language spoken by **Nimrod**, builder of the Tower of Babel.

Ephialtes: he and his brother Oti attempted to invade Heaven by placing Mount Pelion on Mount Ossa.

Briareus: a monster with fifty heads and a hundred arms who attacked Mount Olympus.

Anteus: another Titan, unchained since he did not take their part against the gods. He lived in Libya on a diet of lions, in the valley where Scipio defeated Hannibal.

Canto XXXII

Ninth Circle, First Ring: Caïna, named after Cain, who killed his brother Abel. Traitors to their kin immersed in ice up to the neck. The Second Ring: Antenora, named after the Trojan traitor. Betrayers of their country. Dante encounters two traitors, one gnawing at the other's head.

those ladies: the muses.

Bizensio: The two are the Alberti brothers who killed each other over an inheritance in the Bizensio valley.

Arthur: struck his treacherous nephew Mordred a blow that pierced his body so sunlight shone through the hole onto his shadow.

Focaccia: a Pistoian who murdered his cousin through greed.

Sassol Mascheroni: murdered his nephew to gain his inheritance.

Camiscon de' Pazzi: murdered a kinsman

Carlino, a relative, betrayed his party, the White Guelphs surrendering a castle for money; his fate will be worse.

Bocca degli Abati: betrayed his party at Montaperti by cutting off the Guelph standard-bearer's hands, throwing his troops into confusion.

da Duera: a Ghibelline who sold Parma to the French.

Beccharia: Pope Alexander IV's legate decapitated for plotting against the Guelphs.

Gianni de' Solanieri: betrayed the Ghibellines during a Guelph uprising.

Ganelon: betrayed Charlemagne and the rearguard in the *Chanson de Roland*,

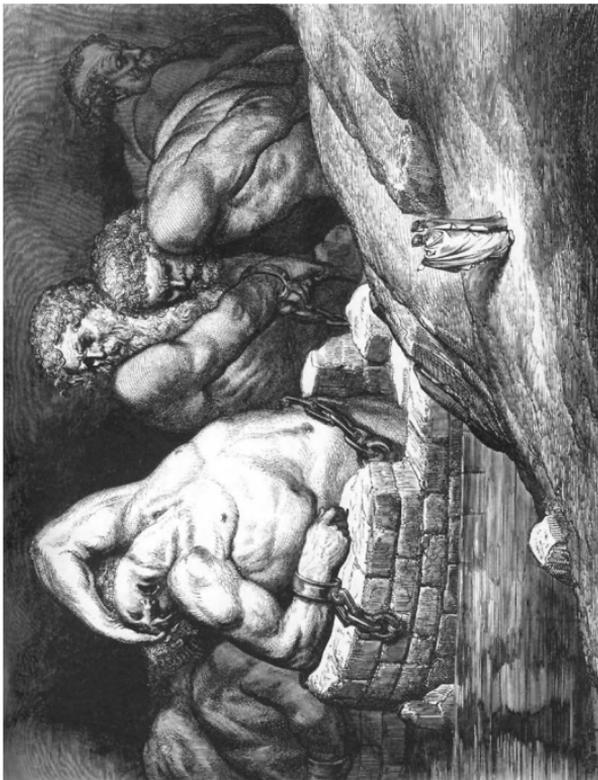
Tebaldello: opened the gates of Faenza to enemy Guelphs.

Tydeus:... one of the Seven against Thebes. Mortally wounded by Menalippus, who he managed to kill before dying, Tydeus gnawed on his skull.

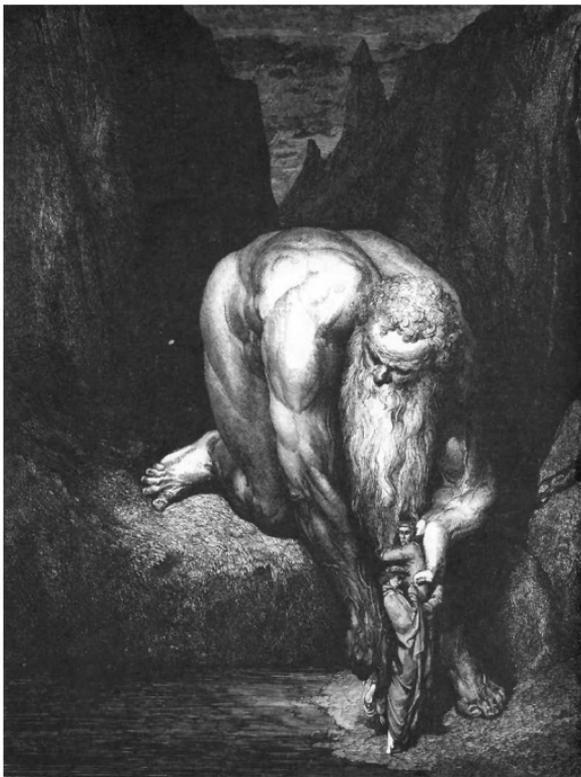
Canto XXXIII

Ninth Circle, Second Ring. Ugolino's tale of his death. Virgil and Dante proceed to the Third Ring, named 'Tolomea' after Ptolomey, the captain of Jericho, who killed his guests as they ate with him. The traitors to hospitality, eyes sealed by frozen tears. Some alive on earth but already in Hell.

Count Ugolino: a Ghibelline of Pisa, betrayed Pisan strongholds to Florence and Lucca in 1284. Later, plotting with **Archbishop Ruggieri** and the **Gualandi, Sisoni and Lanfranchi** families against his kinsmen the Visconti, he was betrayed by Ruggieri who imprisoned him in the



*"It is a ring of giants, not towers,
Each one sunk to his navel in the pit." (Canto XXXI)*



*"He sat us down gently on the bottom,
Within the pit that swallowed Lucifer and Judas." (Canto XXXI)*

Tower of Hunger to starve.

Friar Alberigo: a Jovial Friar who murdered his enemies at a banquet to which he had invited them, the signal for the act being an order for the fruit.

Atropos: one of the three Fates.

Ser Branca: aided by his unnamed kinsman, murdered his father-in-law Michel Zanche, a guest.

Canto XXXIV

The final division of Hell. Ninth Circle, Fourth Ring; Judecca, named after Judas Iscariot. Traitors to their benefactors totally immersed in ice. Lucifer rending Judas, Brutus and Cassius. Descent of the poets down Lucifer's body, to the southern hemisphere. The stars.

Judas Iscariot: who betrayed Christ; **Brutus** and **Cassius** conspired to kill Caesar.

grasped the shaggy flank: Dante and Virgil climb feet first down Lucifer's leg. But since Lucifer's navel is the world's centre of gravity, once past it they must turn round to clamber up towards Lucifer's feet. Gravity is acting now in reverse.

the side covered by dry land: the northern hemisphere. The southern hemisphere contains no dry land except the Mount of Purgatory.

Notes by Benedict Flynn

Translation by Benedict Flynn.

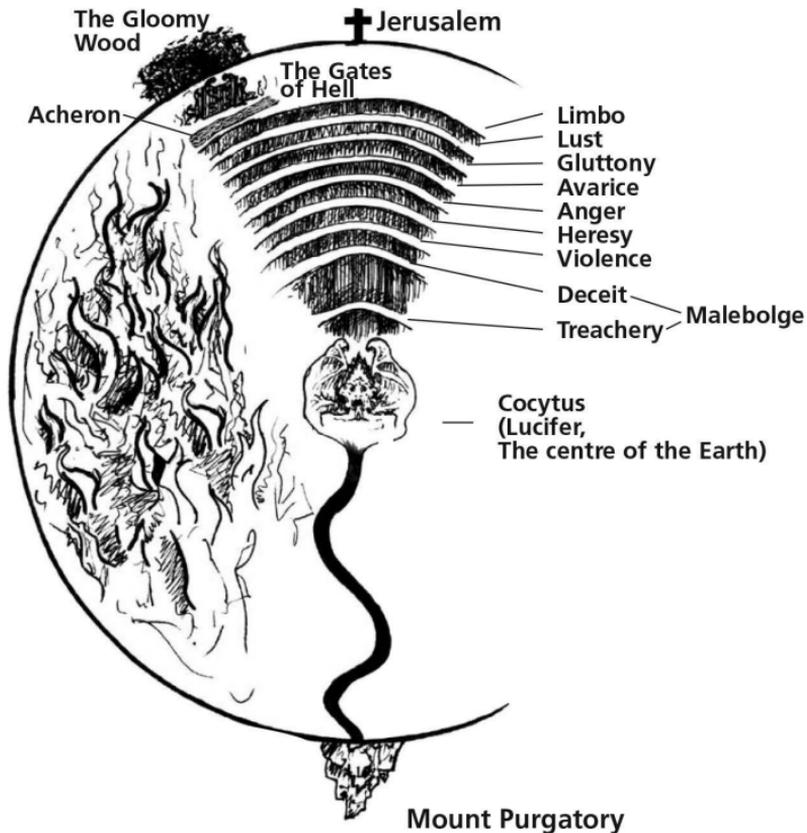
Produced by Roger Marsh

Post production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording Company

Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes



*"The emperor of that realm of despair
Towered above the ice from mid chest up." (Canto XXXIV)*



Dante

Purgatory from The Divine Comedy

Dante calls the three books of **The Divine Comedy** '*canzoni*'. Each contains 33 chapters or 'cantos', except **Inferno** which has an additional introductory canto – making 100 cantos in all. Each canto contains roughly 150 lines composed according to a strict metrical and rhyme scheme. The language of the poem is, importantly, not Latin (as was customary for high art in Dante's day) but the language used by educated people in 14th-century Florence. In addition Dante made liberal use of archaic language and regional dialects, all of which makes life very difficult for the modern translator. But Dante's purpose was to make his work readable by the 'ordinary' reader – not merely clerics and academics – for despite its lofty theme and layers of symbolism, **The Divine Comedy** is intended to speak to us directly through the power of Dante's imagery and narrative skill.

This work has not only endured, but has exerted a powerful influence on Western thought for almost seven centuries, especially perhaps the **Inferno**, whose characters and images can be found peppered throughout literature and art right up to the present day. Tchaikowsky's **Francesca da Rimini** and Puccini's **Gianni Schicci** are borrowed from it. Illustrations for Dante editions inspired well

known masterpieces by Botticelli, Blake and Doré, while the Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti (his first name an obvious choice for a father who was a Dante scholar and reputedly able to recite the entire 'Commedia' from memory) returned time and again to Dante for inspiration, notably in the enigmatic "Beata Beatrix".

Samuel Beckett's plays and novels are full of allusions to both **Inferno** and **Purgatory** – shades walking slowly weighed down by leaden cloaks (Inf. Canto XXIII), creatures swimming in mud poking and whistling at one another (Inf. Canto XXII), and indolent characters with little inclination to struggle any further (Purg. Canto IV). Indeed, the character Belacqua who Dante encounters here is the primary source for all those later Beckett characters who might say: "what's the good in climbing?"

One of the principal characters in **The Divine Comedy** (though she does not actually appear in the **Inferno**) is Beatrice, whose significance in Dante's life needs to be understood. Dante first met and fell in love with Beatrice Portinari when she was eight and he nine years old. He worshipped her from afar until her early death at the age of twenty four. (The full story of this strange 'love affair' is told by Dante in his **La**

Vita Nuova). Beatrice then came to symbolise for Dante all that is pure and worthy. In the ‘Commedia’ it is Beatrice who sends the poet Virgil to guide Dante through Hell and Purgatory. In **Purgatory** she herself assumes responsibility for his journey of discovery, and it is she who later reveals to him the splendours of Paradise, leading him eventually to “that love that moves the Sun and other stars.”

And it is in **Purgatory** that Dante gives us the nub of the problem. The lengthy discourse on love and free will (in Canto XVIII) prepares us for Dante’s meeting with his idealized love and for her unexpected reprimands (Canto XXX). She argues that at her death Dante might have dedicated his great talents to her (to purity, to wisdom and to truth) but that he allowed himself to be turned away and thus wasted himself. Her purpose in revealing the Divine order to him is to restore him to the true path.

The almost cinematic splendour of Beatrice’s appearance at the head of a fantastic allegorical procession provides a stunning climax to this second book of the trilogy.

Notes by Roger Marsh



The Island of Purgatory Illustration (above): Dante's vivid topography of Hell and Purgatory is based on the fall of Satan. When Satan fell into the seabed, feet first, Hell was formed above him. Meanwhile, under his feet, the earth retreated, forming a mountain on the other hemisphere. This is Mount Purgatory. So, having descended the pit into the deepest point of Hell, Dante and Virgil emerge in the other hemisphere.



*'Bend! Down on your knees: see there, God's Angel'
(Canto II)*

Canto I

Dante and Virgil emerge from Hell just before Dawn on Easter Sunday. They meet Cato of Utica, guardian of the shores of Purgatory who challenges them as fugitives from Hell. They explain their mission.

four stars: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

Cato: guardian of the island-mountain. An opponent of Caesar and a suicide, but also a symbol of devotion to freedom, for which he died. At the foot of Purgatory he is on the highest rung of natural virtues, and the lowest of godly virtues.

Magpies: Pierus, king of Emathia, had nine daughters who unwisely challenged the Muses to a contest of song. Defeated, they were changed into magpies for their presumption

Canto II

Dante observes a strange object crossing the water – the Angel boatman ferrying souls from their gathering place at the mouth of the Tiber to Purgatory's shore.

Casella: a musician-singer friend of Dante's.

all who wish to cross: Boniface VIII declared a Jubilee Year from Christmas 1299 to Christmas 1300 extending plenary indulgence to all pilgrims to Rome, believed to extend to the dead.

Canto III

They race on. At the base of the cliff they meet the first Late Repentants; souls who put off desire for grace and must wait for purgation. The Contumacious, here, died excommunicated but surrendered their souls to God at the point of death. They must wait thirty times the period it took them to repent, their contumacy.

Brindisi: Virgil's body was taken from Brindisi to Naples in 19 BC.

Manfred: King of Sicily, opposed by the Papacy.

Canto IV

They reach the opening in the cliff face and begin the climb. Dante flags but Virgil urges him to the next level of the Late Repentants: the ledge of the Indolent. Virgil explains that the beginning of the ascent (turning from Sin to True Repentance) is the hardest, but the higher one goes the easier it becomes.

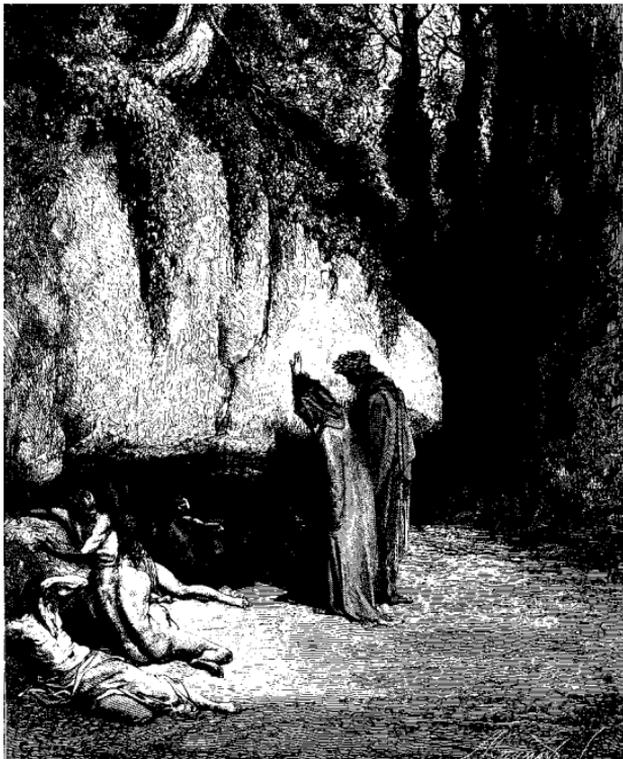
more than one soul: Plato claimed we have three souls, each with a specific function, the vegetative, the emotional and the intellectual. Belacqua: a Florentine lutemaker and friend of Dante's famed for indolence.

Canto V

Dante's shadow creates excitement among the souls of the next level, those who died by violence without last rites. Since their lives were



'The celestial helmsman'
(Canto II)



Belacqua: 'Brother,' he said, 'what's the good in climbing?'
(Canto IV)

cut short they did not have the chance to repent fully, and so are placed higher than the Indolent.

Miserere: Psalm 51, which asks for forgiveness and purification of the soul.

Buonconte: the son of Guido da Montefeltro, in Hell as an evil counsellor. Buonconte was killed at the battle of Campaldino. Giovanna was his wife.

Pia: traditionally Pia de' Tolomei of Siena, whose jealous husband suspected her of adultery and threw her from a window to her death.

Canto VI

The souls of those who died by violence continue to press around Dante. He promises to bear word of them back to the world, but does not pause. Virgil speaks of the power of prayer to shorten time in Purgatory but tells Dante to wait for Beatrice to explain. They come upon Sordello, a Mantuan like Virgil.

Sordello: a troubadour poet of the early thirteenth century.

Justinian: emperor of Constantinople 527-565, author of the code of Roman law, 'the bridle'.

Marcellus: a Roman senator who opposed Caesar but was forgiven by him.

Canto VII

Sordello pays homage to Virgil and offers to guide the poets to St Peter's Gate. He explains that none may climb during sunset, and shows them a flowering valley to rest in. They observe

the Negligent Rulers of the Late Repentants, to whom personal satisfaction was more important than public duty.

snubnose: Philip III of France, the lily is the symbol of France.

kindly features: Henry of Navarre, reportedly suffocated by his own fat.

France's Plague: Philip IV of France, whose misrule unites him with his father and father-in-law Henry of Navarre.

robust soul, handsome nose: former enemies, Pedro III of Aragon and Charles I of Anjou. Pedro was responsible for the massacre of the French in the 'Sicilian Vespers' of 1282.

young man: Alfonso III, the Magnificent, King of Aragon who died in 1291 without heirs.

Henry [III] of England: a pious but slothful king whose son, Edward I, was an improvement.

William, Marquis: of Montferrat, was captured quelling a rebellion in Alessandria and displayed in an iron cage until his death. The Alessandrians invaded Montferrat and Canovese.

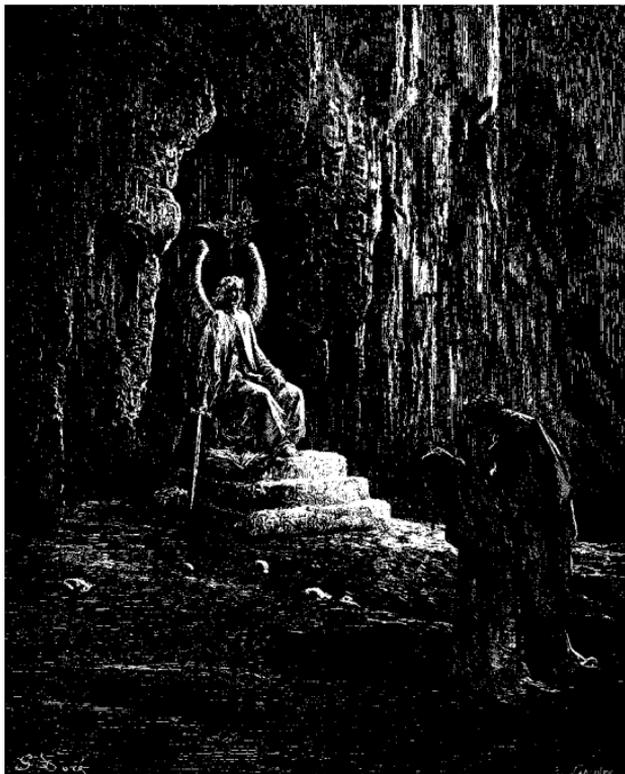
Canto VIII

The hour of evening worship arrives. The souls gather and sing the evening Compline hymn asking for protection in the night. Two angels descend from heaven and take their posts one on each side of the valley. The poets join the souls.

Te lucis ante terminum: 'To thee before the ending of the light', the opening lines of the



'Dreaming, I seemed to see an eagle poised'
(Canto IX)



'Sat on the highest step, as yet silent, was a guardian.'
(Canto IX)

Compline hymn.

Canto IX

Dante falls asleep. He dreams he is clasped in the talons of an eagle and raised into an orb of fire. When he wakes he is alone with Virgil, further up the mountain, at the portals of Purgatory itself. The angel inscribes seven P's on his forehead (for peccatum – sin) representing seven deadly sins to be purged.

Tithonus: husband of Aurora, for whom she gained the gift of eternal life but not eternal youth. He grew old and decrepit beside his ageless bride, who eventually turned him into a cicada.

we reached the steps: the three stages of repentance. White for sincerity, black and rough for contrition and sorrow for sin, red for penance and the ardour that leads to good works.

Seven P's: the sins of Pride, Envy, Wrath, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony and Lust.

Te Deum laudamus: 'We praise thee O God'

Canto X

The door clangs shut behind them, and they are faced by narrow fissure to climb. Three hours later they come to the first terrace. On one side is a precipice, on the other a frieze of marble reliefs. Virgil asks Dante to observe the penitents of this level bent double under the weight of boulders – the proud brought low.

Polycletus: A fifth century sculptor unsurpassed in carving images of men. 'ecce ancilla Dei': behold the hand maid of the Lord, the words of the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation. (Luke 1:38)
the humble psalmist: King David, dancing in humility before the Ark of the Covenant. (11 Sam. 6:1-17) Michal his wife was punished with sterility for her scorn.

Canto XI

The proud souls, bent double, speak a version of the Lord's Prayer interceding for the living and those still in Purgatory.

Oderisi glory of Gubbio: an illuminator of manuscripts who in life boasted he had no equal in painting.

Cimabue: a great Florentine master c. 1240-1302 who broke from the Byzantine tradition of art with a more natural style.

Giotto: a pupil of Cimabue who went on to surpass his master.

Canto XII

Virgil bids Dante straighten up, but then asks him to observe the relief beneath his feet, with depictions of great pride from Lucifer to the story of Troy; the Reign of Pride. They reach the angel guiding the next terrace, who erases the symbol of pride from Dante's forehead.

Briareus: one of the giants who challenged Jupiter.



'I am Umberto and the sin of Pride has not harmed me alone but all my house...'
(Canto XI)

Thymbraeus: another name for Apollo.

Niobe: the mother of seven sons and seven daughters who claimed her superiority over Latona, who had only two. These were Apollo and Diana, who killed her sons and daughters respectively. Niobe was turned to stone, and left to weep stone tears.

Arachne: challenged Minerva to a weaving contest, and won, but was turned into a spider.

Tomyris: a Scythian queen who decapitated her son's murderer, Cyrus, Emperor of the Persians, and threw his head into a vessel of blood, urging him to drink.

Beati paupares spiritu: the first beatitude. Blessed are the poor in spirit; in praise of humility.

Canto XIII

The next terrace is apparently deserted, but as Dante and Virgil walk on they hear voices crying out examples of great love for others. These voices are the Whip of Envy. The souls, when they see them, have their eyes sealed, until their envious looks are cured. The examples are of charitable concern for others.

'Vinum non habent': they have no wine, an allusion to the wedding feast at Cana, where Mary solicits Christ's first miracle.

'I am Orestes': Orestes was condemned to death for avenging the murder of his father, Agammemnon. Pylades pretended to be Orestes to save his friend's life, but Orestes would not

allow it and asserted his identity. Each declared 'I am Orestes'.

Canto XIV

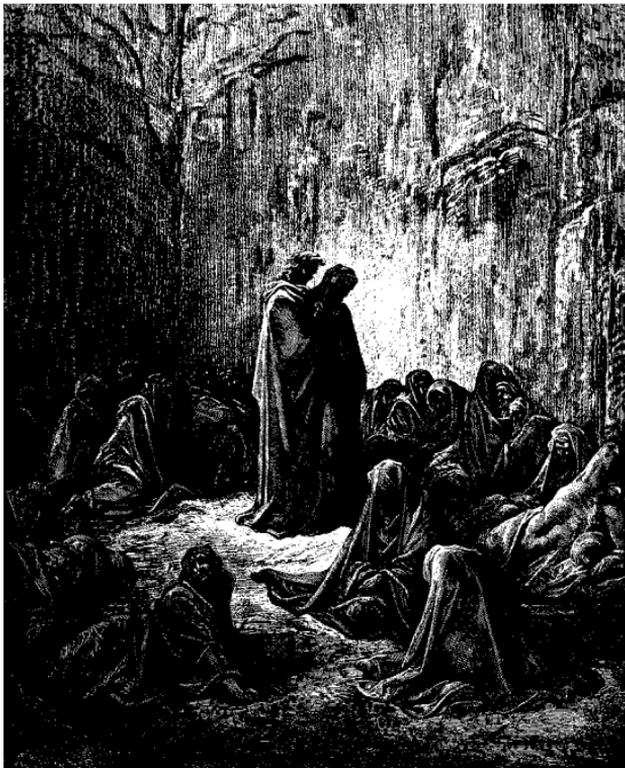
Two speakers begin to discuss Dante as though he were as deaf as they are blind. When Virgil and he move on Dante is struck with terror by two disembodied voices that break over them like thunder- the Rein of Envy. Circe: an enchantress, with the power to turn men into beasts.

It flows on: Guido describes the nature of the inhabitants of the various towns of the Arno valley. **'I shall be slain':** the voice is of Cain facing God's punishment 'I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth and who ever finds me will kill me.' (Gen 4: 13-14)

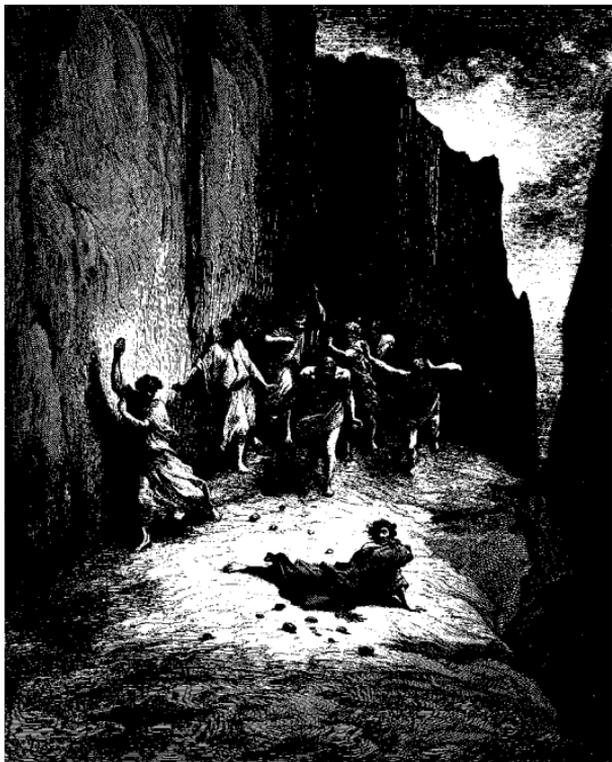
I am Aglauros: the second example of Envy. Aglauros, daughter of the king of Athens. tried out of jealousy to prevent a meeting between her sister and Mercury, and so was turned to stone.

Canto XV

The travellers have rounded a quarter of the mountain and now face the sun setting in the north. Dante is dazzled by the Angel of Caritas, who passes them on to the next ledge. The Angel sings the fifth beatitude as they enter the Third Cornice – the Wrathful. The visions that entrance Dante are the Whip of Wrath, extolling the virtue of Meekness.



*The eyelids of those shades has been sewn shut but with threads of iron...
(Canto XIII)*



'Then I saw people, ignited by hate, stoning a boy to death...'
(Canto XV)

the more each possesses : sharing love does not diminish but increases the quantity of it.

'why have you done this to us': the words of Mary when she finds Jesus in the temple are meek, despite her distress at losing him.

'If you are ruler of this city': the allusion is to Athens, over which Neptune and Athena contested. Pisisstratus, its benevolent tyrant was famous for turning away anger with a soft answer.

stoning a boy to death: St Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

Canto XVI

Dante is blinded by smoke that purifies the wrathful, and clings to Virgil. He hears their voices singing Agnus dei, the lamb of God symbol of the meekness of divine love. They sing with one voice for Wrath is the sin that breeds division among men.

From the fond hands of God: Marco has said that if the world has gone astray it is man's fault, not the stars. But the state of the world is not caused by depravity inherent in human nature – the soul is innocent but in need of guidance. The lack of guidance has brought the present corrupt state about.

Canto XVII

Emerging from the smoke Dante sees the visions that make the rein of Wrath. The Angel of Meekness calls them to the next level, but it is dark

and the Poets must rest. Virgil explains Purgatory.

I saw the cruelty of one: Procne, angered by her husband's rape of her sister killed her own son in wrath and fed him to his father. She was turned into nightingale.

a figure who was crucified: Haman, minister of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, enraged that the Jew Mordecai refused to do him homage persuaded the king to crucify all the Jews. Esther convinced Ahasuerus of Haman's wickedness and the minister was crucified instead.

O my queen: Amata wife of Latinus and mother of Lavinia, hoped Turnus would marry her daughter and kill Aeneas, the invader. Amata killed herself in a rage after hearing a rumour of Turnus' death. Her crime was against herself and God's will however because Aeneas was chosen by God to found Rome and the Empire.

Canto XVIII

Dante enquires more about the nature of love. Virgil explains warning that he must seek the final answer from Beatrice. A train of souls come running round the mountain – the slothful, now in too much of a hurry to stop and talk.

Ismenus and Asopus: Boetian rivers, near Thebes.

Barbarossa: Emperor Frederick I, who destroyed Milan in 1162.

one foot in the grave: Alberto dell Scala, Lord of Verona, who died in 1301; the year is presently 1300.

Canto XIX

Dante dreams of the Siren, hideous in her true form but who grows irresistible as men stare on her. Virgil, prompted by a Heavenly lady strips the Siren, exposing her deformities. Dante awakes and they continue to the fifth cornice of the Avaricious – the hoarders and spendthrifts.

the sweet Siren: represents the vices of Avarice, Gluttony and Lust which will be purged on the upper three terraces.

‘I was Peter’s successor’: Pope Adrian V, of the counts of Lavagna, the river mentioned.

Canto XX

The Poets find the ledge so crowded with sinners there is only a narrow path left to walk. Dante hears a soul cry out the Whip of Avarice. The sinner proceeds to denounce the Capetian dynasty, which he founded, then offer exempla of the Rein of Avarice. The mountain is shaken as if by an earthquake.

how poor then you were: the blessed poverty of Mary

Fabricius: the honourable poverty of a Roman Consul who refused to deal in bribes, and died so poor the state buried him.

(Saint) Nicholas: bishop of Myra in Lycia, whose generosity saved an impoverished nobleman from turning his daughters to a life of sin through lack of dowry.

evil past and future may seem less: refers to

Philip the Fair’s attack on Boniface VII in 1303. He was threatened with execution and died of ‘hysterical seizures.’ The crime, to Dante, dwarfed all else. Pygmalion: a king of Tyre Achan: stole some of the consecrated spoils of Jericho. Joshua had him stoned to death with his family.

Canto XXI

A newcomer explains why the mountain appeared to shake. It is Statius an admirer of Virgil’s work and a poet himself.

she who sits spinning: Lachesis, who spins the thread of a man’s life from the measure of wool her sister Clotho puts on the distaff. Atropos the third sister cuts the thread when it is finished.

Thaumus daughter: Iris, personification of the rainbow.

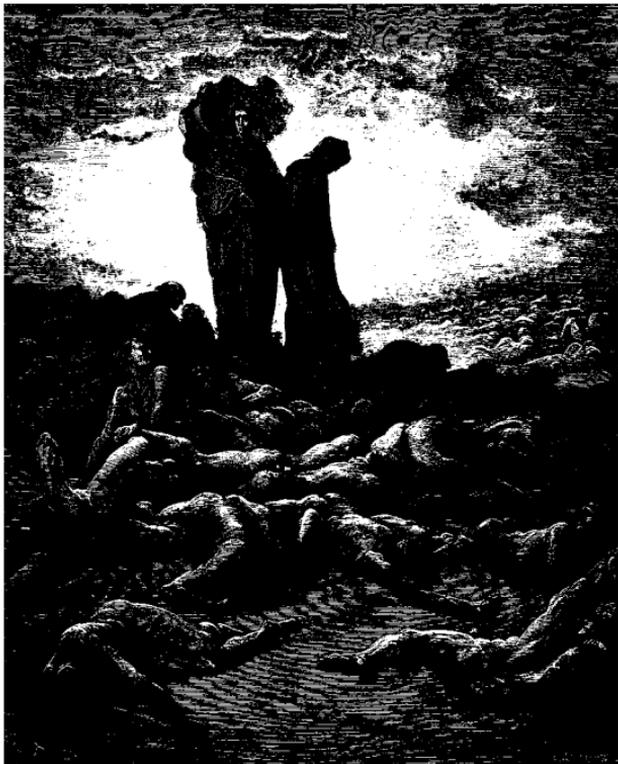
tremors: for Dante, earthquakes were caused by winds trapped underground.

worthy Titus: emperor from 79-81 AD, destroyed Jerusalem.

Statius: the major poet of the Silver Age of Latin literature. He never completed his second major work the Achilleid. His first is the Thebaid.

Canto XXII

Statius explains how he became a Christian, and inquires after his favourite poets of iniquity. Statius’ besetting sin was prodigality. They come to a tree laden with fruits, and from within the foliage a voice cries out exempla for the whip of Gluttony.



'As avarice vanquished our love for good...here we shall lie motionless.'
(Canto XX)

Jocasta: the mother of Oedipus, whom she later unwittingly married. Her two sons Eteocles and Polynices killed each other, the subject of Statius Thebaid.

many of your people: characters from Statius works. a tree that blocked our path: small branches at the bottom, growing larger at the top, make the fruit unattainable.

Daniel: spurned meat and drink of the king's table and was given the gift by God of interpreting visions and dreams.

Canto XXIII

The three poets hear Psalm 51, and a band of emaciated spirits come from behind them – the Gluttonous. Dante recognises one by his voice, his features are so changed by starvation. Forese Donati although a late repentant, has moved up the mountain because of his widow's prayers.

Labis Mea Domine: 'Open my lips O lord, and my mouth shall sing your praises,'the prayer of the gluttonous.

Erychthon: committed an outrage by cutting down the trees in a grove sacred to Ceres. She afflicted him with ravenous hunger, which led him to eat his own flesh.

OMO: a medieval notion that God had signed his handiwork, OMO dei, man [is] of God. The eye sockets form the O's and the brows nose and cheekbones the M.

Eli: Eli, eli, lema sabachthani, my God my god who hast thou forsaken me. (Matthew 27:46).

Barbagia women: famous for being lascivious and bare-breasted.

Canto XXIV

Forese identifies many of the Gluttonous. They come to the Tree of Knowledge and having skirted it meet the Angel of Abstinence who shows them to the ascent.

Piccarda: Forese's sister, who took vows but was forced into a political marriage.

Bonagiunta of Lucca: poet and orator of repute, but a famous glutton and drinker too.

one behind him: Pope Martin IV, a good pope, if a glutton.

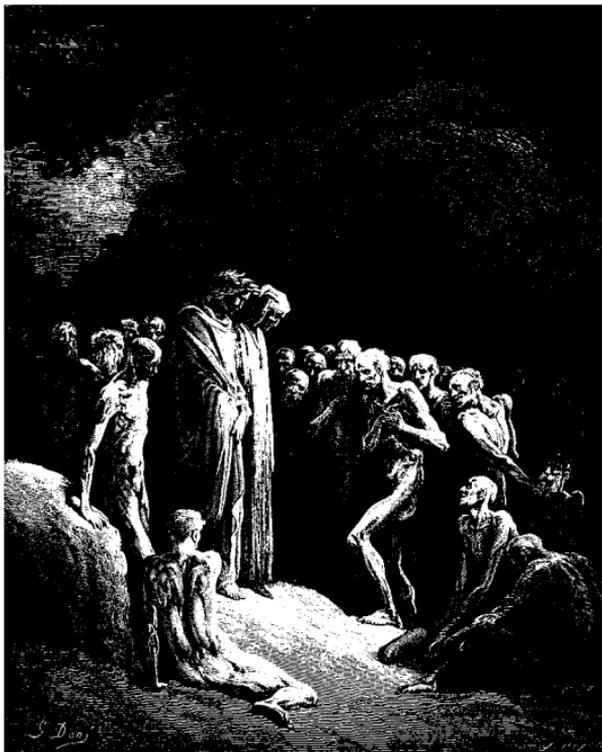
Take heart: Forese's prophecy of the downfall of Corso Donati, his brother.

Canto XXV

Dante wonders how purely spiritual beings can feel hunger and thirst. Statius explains and he finishes as they arrive at the seventh and last terrace.

Meleager: was fated to live as long as a piece of wood on his mother's hearth remained unconsumed. She kept it from the fire until in revenge for the death of her brothers, whom he killed, she burned it. As it was consumed, he died.

Summus Deus clementia: God of supreme clemency, the hymn of the Lustful, asking God to banish Lust from their hearts.



*'Each shade had dark and sunken eyes, pallid faces and bodies so emaciated...
(Canto XXIII)*

‘virum non cognosco’: ‘I know no man,’ the reply of the Virgin Mary when she was told she would conceive and bear a son. Diana **Helice:** Diana took to the woods to preserve her virginity. Helice one of her nymphs was seduced by Jove and banished.

Canto XXVI

They proceed avoiding the flames. A conversation begins between Dante and some souls, but is interrupted by another group of souls rushing in the opposite direction. The two groups greet each other, then shout exempla of Lust.

Sodom and Gomorrah: words shouted in self-reproach for the sin of sodomy. Pasiphae enters the cow: the wife of Minos of Crete who Poseidon caused to lust after a bull. She had a structure made resembling a cow into which she climbed and was possessed by the bull. The union produced the Minotaur.

Guido Guinzelli: vernacular poet of mid 13th century.

Arnaut Daniel: author of late 13th century Provençal poetry, some pornographic.

Canto XXVII

They meet the angel of chastity but Dante is afraid to pass through the curtain of fire. Virgil persuades him in Beatrice’s name. A chant coming from the other side guides them, sung by the Angel guardian of the Earthly Paradise. They hurry on but night overtakes them and they sleep

on the steps up. Dante has a prophetic dream.

Beati mundo corde: Blessed are the pure in heart

Pyramus and Thisbe: tragic lovers of Babylon. At their rendezvous by a mulberry bush Pyramus comes across Thisbe’s bloody scarf and assumes she has been killed. He stabs himself, and his blood stains the ground turning the mulberries, hitherto white, a deep red. Thisbe whispers her name to him as he dies.

Leah: the first wife of Jacob, Rachel his second. Leah was fertile, Rachel sterile but with beautiful clear eyes. They were held to be representative of the active and contemplative life respectively.

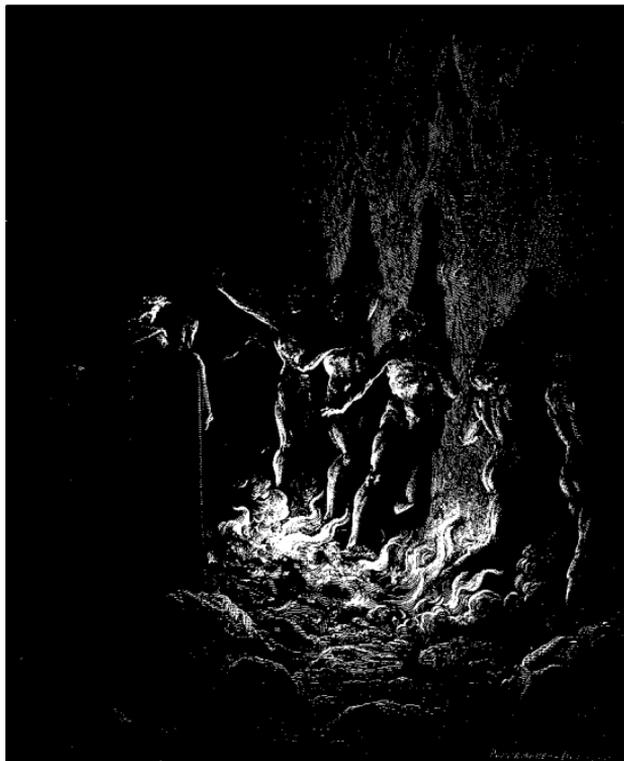
Canto XXVIII

Dante wanders at leisure in the earthly paradise until his way is blocked by the waters of Lethe. He comes across Matilda who explains the Garden to him.

a solitary lady: Matilda who symbolises the active life of the Soul, but also the intermediary between Human Reason and Beatrice’s various manifestations Divine Love, contemplative life of the soul and others.

Delectasti: from Psalm 92. ‘For thou Lord hast made me glad through thy Work’

Lethe: classically, the river from which the souls of the dead drink to forget their first existence. Eunoe is Dante’s invention from the Greek for well-minded.



'The care and nourishment of flames and hymns they endure sustains them...'
(Canto XXV)

Canto XXIX

When the lady has finished speaking, she begins to walk upstream singing, Dante keeping pace with her on the other side. A glorious light and sweet melody fills the air with rapture. Dante cries out against Eve's daring, through which such joy was lost to mankind.

The heavenly pageant: is an allegory of the church triumphant. The seven candlesticks and their rainbow trails represent the gifts of the holy spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. The twenty-four elders are the books of the old testament, and the four beasts guarding the chariot, the evangelists – Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. The griffon's dual nature reflects the human and divine nature of Christ. To the right of the chariot the three dancing ladies are the theological virtues Faith, Hope and Charity; to the left are the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. The seven men following are the remaining books of the New Testament, the last being the Apocalypse of St John.

Three eyes: indicate Prudence's ability to see past present and future. Prudence is a good memory of the past, good knowledge of the present, and good foresight of the future.

great Hippocrates: the reference is to Luke, the physician of the soul.

the other: St Paul. The sword represents the word of God.

four with an humble aspect: the minor epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude.

Canto XXX

Dante encounters Beatrice, feeling shame at the years he has ignored her. Dante turns to Virgil and finds he has disappeared. Beatrice reprimands Dante for having wasted his talents.

veni sponsa de Libano: 'come my bride from Lebanon' from the Song of Solomon. Here the soul is wedded to Christ.

Benedictus qui venis: 'Blessed art thou that comest' (Matthew 21:9).

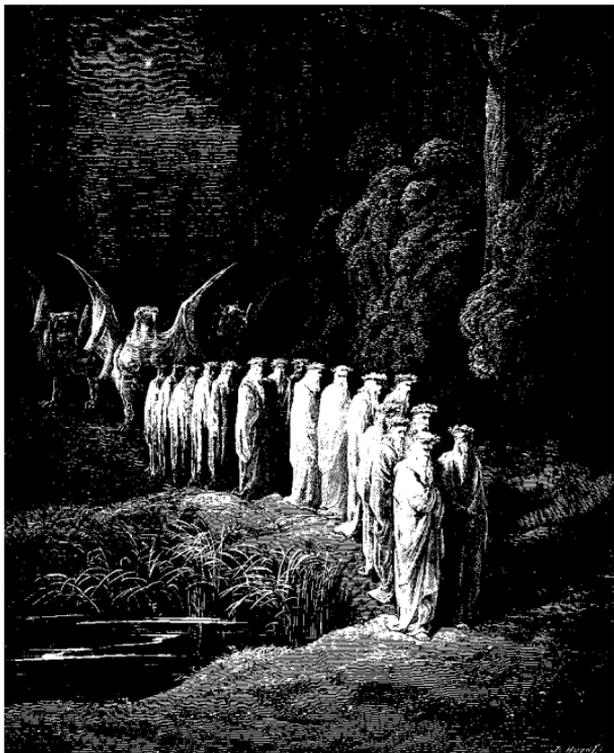
Manibus, O date lilia plenis: O, give us lilies with full hands (Aeneid VI 883). A tribute to the now departed Virgil. appeared a lady: Beatrice, who in life, left Dante stupified. He would often faint in her presence.

I know the flame of old: the words spoken by Dido of her passion for Aeneas, which she thought had died (Aeneid IV, 23). In te Domini speravi: 'In thee, O lord have I put my trust.' Psalm 31

Canto XXXI

Beatrice's reprimand continues, forcing Dante to confess his faults until he swoons with grief and pain at the thought of his sin. He wakes in the waters of Lethe, held by Matilda.

Asperges me: Cleanse me [of sin]. Psalms li 7. Matilda is performing the office of absolution after Dante's confession and repentance.



'Beneath this magnificence, proceeding two by two, came twenty-four elders...'
(Canto XXIX)



*'So, within a cloud of flowers...came a lady wearing
a white veil crowned with olive leaves'
(Canto XXX)*

the four women: the Cardinal virtues Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance. here as nymphs, but also as the stars Dante saw at the base of the mountain.

three beyond: faith hope and charity.

second beauty: i.e., salvation.

Parnassus: the fountain of Castalia. To drink from it is to receive poetic gifts, to grow pale in its shadow is to labour at mastering the art.

Canto XXXII

Beatrice unveils and for the first time in ten years he gazes on her radiance, thereby nearly losing his sight. He recovers to observe a strange metamorphosis of the chariot, an allegory of the church in terms of the misdirections and heresies it has suffered.

The tree: is an off shoot of the Tree of Knowledge, from which Christ's Cross was made. The pole the Griffon is pulling and what draws the Church (i.e., the chariot) forward is allegorically the true cross too.

Syrinx: The hundred eyes of Argus, or Panoptes, Juno's gamekeeper set to watch lo her rival in love for Jupiter. Mercury lulled him to sleep and beheaded him. Juno set Argus' eyes into the peacock's tail.

bird of Jove: the eagle. Here its attack symbolises the Roman persecution of early Christianity. The ship metaphor is often used for the Church.

a fox: the heresies that threatened the early church.

a dragon: Satan

the seven heads: the deadly sins. Those with two horns are worst, Pride Wrath and Envy, Avarice Sloth Gluttony and Lust have only one, as sins of the flesh not the spirit.

ungirt whore: the corrupt papacy.

the giant: the French monarchy, especially Philip the Fair, who forced the papacy to Avignon and under his control.

Canto XXXIII

The seven nymphs sing a hymn of sorrow for the Church. They walk on in front, with Dante Statius and Matilda behind Beatrice. She delivers an obscure prophecy regarding the church for Dante to record for the living. Dante drinks from the restoring waters of Eunoë and is ready for the stars.

Deus venerunt gentes: a lament for the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem – 'O God, the nations have come into your inheritance, thy holy temple they have defiled (Psalm 78).

Modicum et non videbitis me: a little while and you shall not see me, (et iterum), and again (modicum et vos videbitis me), a little while and you shall see me. The words of Christ regarding his own departure and return, (John 16:16).

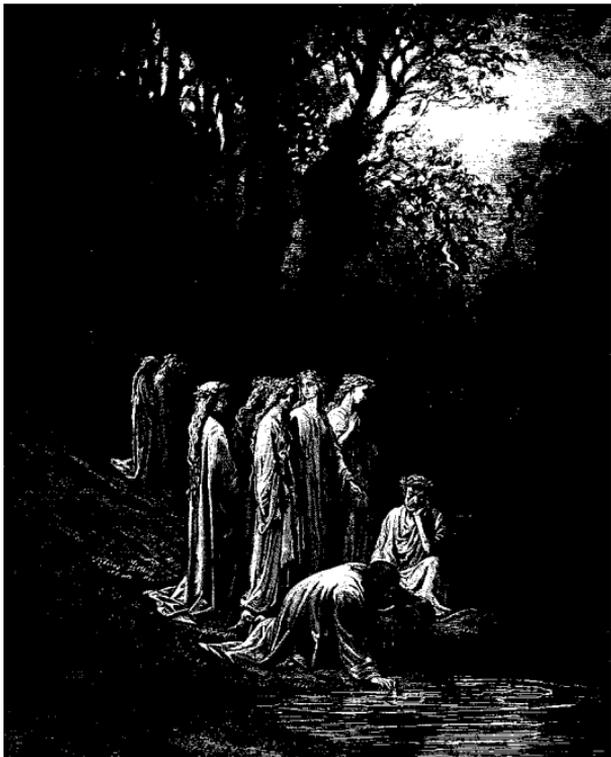
Tigris and Euphrates: two of the four rivers mentioned in Genesis as watering the Earthly Paradise.



'She had plunged me up to the throat into the river'
(Canto XXXI)



*'Then there appeared...an ungirt whore...and standing at her side was a giant...'
(Canto XXXII)*



But there flows Eunoe, lead him to it and revive the powers grown faint in him.'
(Canto XXXIII)

Notes by Benedict Flynn

Translation by Benedict Flynn

Produced by Roger Marsh

Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording Company

Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

Dante

Paradise from The Divine Comedy

Though less well known, less quoted and less borrowed from than **Inferno** and **Purgatory**, **Paradise** is quite as extraordinary a vision as the two preceding books of the trilogy. Few authors have dared to attempt a description of Heaven – how can one give concrete form to ‘purity’, ‘goodness’, ‘faith’ etc? These are the problems facing Dante, and repeatedly he admits his inability to contain his vision with mere words.

While in the worlds below he was able to revel in the painstaking description of strange creatures and fantastic landscapes, in **Paradise** his task is to introduce us to the pure and just, whose abode is clear air adorned only with singing stars and ever more brilliant light. While in the abyss and on the mountain of Purgatory, ascent involved tremendous effort and was impeded by numerous obstacles, in Paradise Dante and Beatrice simply rise, ever faster, through space – passing from sphere to sphere, until they reach ‘the Empyrean’. Here, within the vast white Celestial Rose, encircled by nine rings of angels, sit the greatest of all the saints – John, Peter, Francis, Benedict – along with the ancient fathers of Christianity – Adam and Moses – and the Virgin Mary herself. Incredibly, perhaps,

Beatrice accompanies Dante all the way to this final sphere, and even takes her place close to the feet of Eve and the Blessed Virgin.

In place of the fantastic images, colourful characterisation and political comment of the earlier works, in **Paradise**, Dante fills his narrative with theological argument and speculation. The souls he encounters here, though they retain a certain degree of venom to direct at the modern guardians of the faith, are most concerned with matters of the spirit.

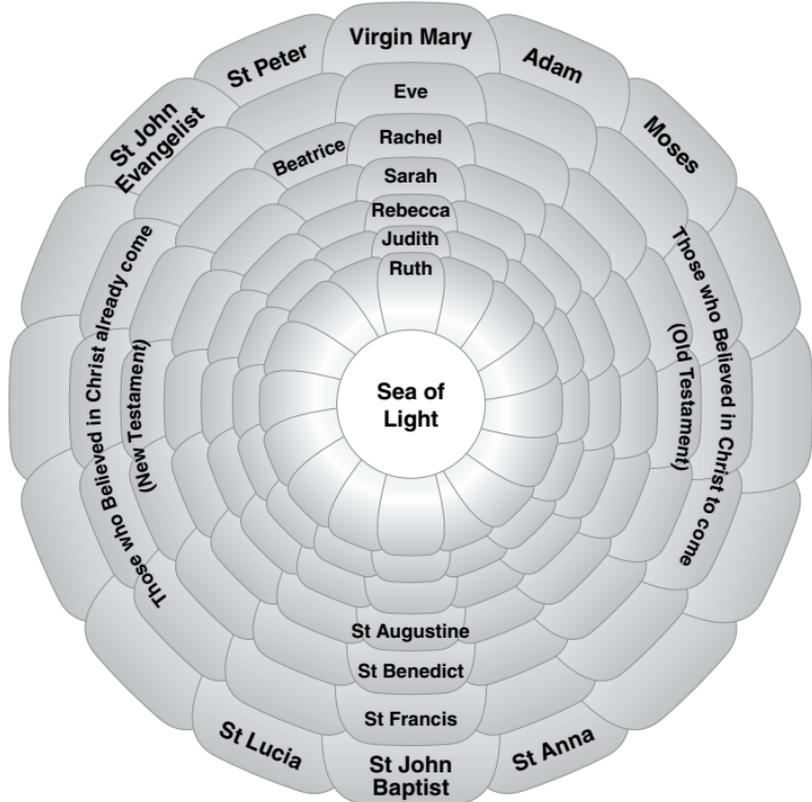
While St Thomas Aquinas, in Canto XI, relates the life and achievements of St Francis and decries the deterioration of the order in recent times, St Benedict himself addresses Dante in Canto XXII with similar complaints about the Benedictines. St Peter, St James and St John examine Dante quite closely (in Cantos XXIV–XXVI) on his own understanding of ‘faith’, ‘hope’ and ‘love’; before he is permitted to rise to the final heavenly sphere. Constantly reassured by Beatrice, whose beauty increases with every Canto, Dante appears to pass every test. Unable, however, to find the words to describe for us the intensity of the Divine Light, he claims to be at a loss to convey his final vision, although – not

surprisingly, perhaps – the final Canto rises, in that failure, to some of the most inspired poetry of the entire trilogy:

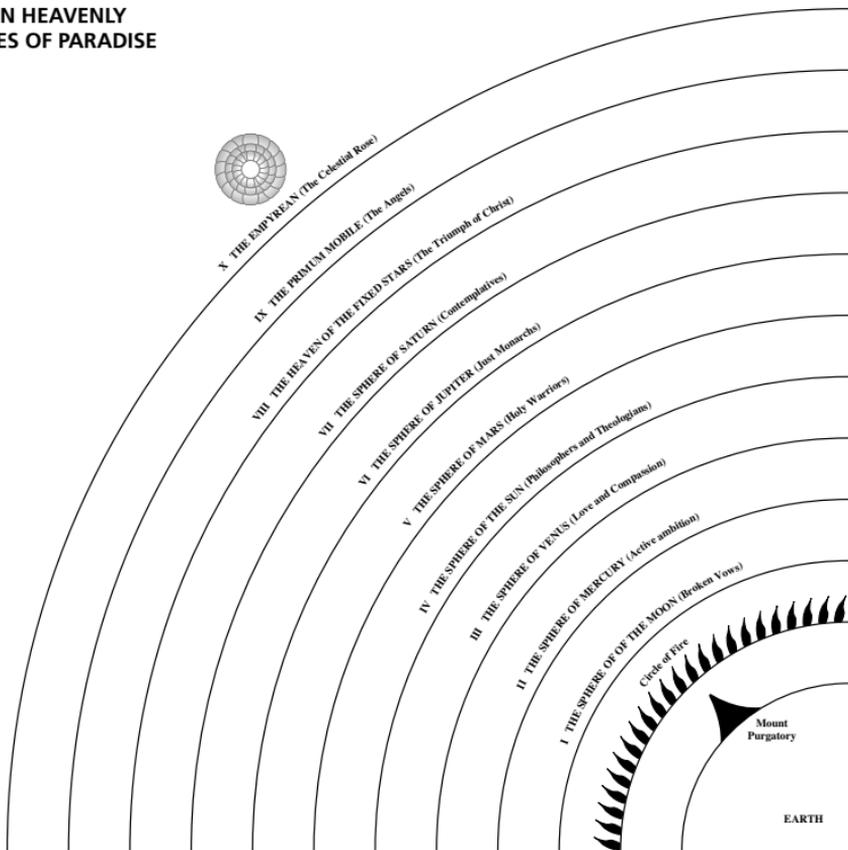
*“Like the geometer who tries so hard
to square the circle, but is unable,
think as he may, to find the principle, –
so did I strive to understand this new
mystery; how could the image merge with
the circle, how could it fit and conform?
But my own wings could not take me so high.
Then a great flash of understanding struck,
cleaving my mind with the truth I desired.
In that instant power failed my fantasy,
but, as a wheel in perfect balance spins,
I could feel desire and will revolve with the
Love that moves the sun and the other stars.”*

Notes by Roger Marsh

THE CELESTIAL ROSE



THE TEN HEAVENLY SPHERES OF PARADISE



Canto I

Dante, purified, rises with Beatrice from the Earthly Paradise into the Sphere of Fire. He hears the music of the spheres. Beatrice expounds the principle of order governing the universe.

Apollo: the sun god, father of the Muses. One of Mount Parnassus twin peaks (Cyrha) was sacred to him, and one to the Muses (Nisa).

Marsyas: a satyr, defeated by Apollo in a singing contest punished by being flayed alive.

Peneian branches: laurel or bay, named for Daphne daughter of Peneus, the river god.

no eagle : according to mediæval belief eagles could stare unblinded at the sun.

Glaucus: a fisherman who, seeing his catch revive when placed on a certain herb on the bank, ate some himself and was transformed into a sea-god.

Canto II

Dante and Beatrice rise to the Sphere of the Moon. Beatrice explains the workings of the heavenly bodies, and the reason for the moon's markings.

Minerva: goddess of wisdom, with Apollo, god of poetry and the Muses, all act as Dante's guides.

the Bears: the constellations, Ursa Minor and Major

men of glory: the Argonauts, who journeyed to Colchis to obtain the Golden Fleece from King

Ætis. He demanded Jason plough a field with two fire-breathing oxen and sow it with dragon's teeth, from which armed men grew.

Cain: was banished to the moon for the murder of Abel in mediæval Italian fable. The bundle of thorns he carries are further punishment.

shared one virtue: varying degrees of brilliance are not just from relative intensity, they derive from differences in heavenly bodies' virtue or specific nature. Since the universe displays the influence of the heavenly bodies in the various species and abilities of living forms, there cannot be just one virtue.

formal principle: scholastic teaching distinguishes between the material principle i.e., first matter, which is the same in all; and the formal (constitutive) principle that determines species and potential.

Canto III

The First Sphere; the Moon. Dante sees the pale faces of the lowest class of the blessed; the Inconstant, who failed to fulfil their holy vows. He converses with Piccarda Donati who recounts her story and that of the Empress Constance.

love the pool: Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection thinking it real. Dante mistakes what is real for reflection.

the slowest sphere: The moon, innermost of the nine concentric spheres, furthest from the Empyrean is the slowest sphere. Speed like brilliance is proportional to proximity to God.



'Our charity would no more lock its gates to a just will than would His love.'
(Canto III)

Waxing and waning makes the moon a symbol of inconstancy.

desire a higher station: the blessed appear to Dante in the sphere that best reflects their earthly tendencies, but have a proper place in the Empyrean where they experience as much bliss as they are capable of without wishing for more.

Piccarda Donati: cousin of Dante's wife Gemma, sister of Corso Donati, his political enemy. Corso forced Piccarda to leave her convent and marry Rossellino della Tossa of Florence in a political alliance.

higher in heaven: Saint Clare of Assisi, founder of the order Poor Clares, disciple of St Francis.

this other radiance: Empress Constance d.1198 heiress to the crowns of Sicily and Naples and mother of Frederick II. Legend suggests she was forced to leave her convent to marry Henry VI, son of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.

blasts of Swabia: the three princes mentioned above.

Canto IV

Piccarda's story prompts two equally strong doubts in Dante – about free will, and why Divine Justice lessened the merit of the souls in this sphere. He wonders if it is possible to make recompense for Broken Vows.

Nebuchadnezzar: ordered his sages executed for failing to interpret a dream. Daniel appeased his wrath by explaining the dream.

Plato: taught in the *Timaeus* that souls come

pre-formed from their various stars and return to them at the body's death, a doctrine that denies free will, and the possibility of souls returning to the Creator. Dante assumes that Piccarda and the Inconstant have been assigned to the moon eternally, hence his confusion.

Tobit: a blind man cured by Raphael, the third archangel.

Lawrence: deacon of the early Roman church, grilled to death in 258 AD. Reported as saying to his torturer "Thou hast roasted the one side, tyrant, now turn the other and eat."

Mucius: Mucius Scaevola, having failed in his attempt to kill Lars Porsena during the latter's siege of ancient Rome, placed his right hand in the fire kindled to execute him and held it there without flinching. Mucius courage earned Rome and himself a reprieve.

Alcmaeon: murdered his mother at the instigation of his father.

Canto V

Beatrice explains the nature of vows, and touches on free will. They rise to the Sphere of Mercury.

creatures created intelligent: angels and mankind.

evil greed: of certain religious orders offering dispensations for money.

the Jew: whose law on sacrifice remains uncorrupted.

veiled from mortals: Mercury is usually obscured by the sun, and seldom visible from earth.



'At least a thousand spendours approached us...'
(Canto V)

Canto VI

In the Sphere of Mercury, Justinian describes the spread of Rome's eagle standard through the ancient world and into mediæval times.

Constantine: moved the eagle (the seat of Roman authority) east to Constantinople in 324 AD, counter to the course of the sun, and reversing the journey from Troy made by Rome's founder Aeneas (who wed Lavinia).

Justinian: sixth century Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, renowned for his codification of Roman law – his 'high task'.

Agapetus: pope from 535–536. Legend (erroneously) suggests he converted Justinian from heresy.

Belisarius: a general under Justinian, to whom was entrusted the reconquest of Italy from the Goth.

Pallas: son of Evander, king of Latium, killed in battle helping Aeneas to victory. When Aeneas married Lavinia, Pallas' sister, he acquired rights to the kingdom of Latium, present site of Rome.

three contended with three: the Horatii, three Roman champions, fought the Curiatii, three champions of Alba Longa.

Sabine's rape: a local raid carried out by Romulus to acquire wives.

Lucretia's grief: Sextus son of the seventh king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus, violated Lucretia daughter of a patrician family, who killed herself. The resulting scandal led to the foundation of the Republic.

Arab pride: reference to the Carthaginians.

those hills: above Florence where Catiline, the conspirator, took refuge and was defeated.

Rubicon: Caesar crossed the river Rubicon in default of orders from the Senate and started the Civil Wars.

Its next chief: Augustus; Caesar's nephew and successor, 44 BC defeated two of his assassins Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, Marc Antony at Modena, 43 BC and Marc Antony's brother at Perugia.

Janus: god of beginnings, porter of heaven. The temple doors were only closed in peace time.

the third Caesar: Tiberius, in whose reign Christ was crucified 34 AD, by which event Adam's sin was expiated.

Titus: Emperor from AD 79-81, destroyer of Jerusalem, and thus avenger of the death of Christ.

Lombard: Germanic invaders of Italy defeated by Charlemagne 774 AD.

Canto VII

In the Sphere of Mercury, Beatrice answers Dante's unspoken question arising from Justinian's discourse, further questions about redemption, and the difference between primary and secondary creation.

man not born of woman: Adam

just vengeance... avenged: the crucifixion was just retribution for original sin, but the sinlessness of the person who suffered made it

unjust. Retribution was exacted by Titus in the destruction of Jerusalem.

fire, water, air, earth: the four elements of matter of which all substances are composed. Beatrice distinguishes between them, the fruits of secondary creation, and the angels and the spheres, fruits of direct creation.

Canto VIII

Dante has been ascending to the planet Venus without realising. He meets the Amorous who gave way to immoderate passion in earthly lives, but did not turn from God.

Dido: conceived a fatal passion for Aeneas, inspired deceitfully by Cupid disguised as Ascanius, Aeneas' son.

My life among men: the speaker is Charles Martel, d.1295, son of Charles II of Anjou and a friend of Dante.

Xerxes...Solon...Melchizedek: archetypes of war leader, lawgiver and spiritual leader respectively.

lost his own son: Daedalus, father of Icarus

Canto IX

Still in the Sphere of Venus, Cunizza da Romano and Folco of Marseilles talk to Dante.

Cunizza da Romano: d.1279) had four husbands and two lovers during her life. She lived to the great age of 80, and was well known in Florence for her acts of compassion.

fire brand: Cunizza was the sister of the tyrant Azzolino da Romano placed by Dante in Circle VII of Inferno, the river of boiling blood.

bright and precious jewel: refers to Folco (Folquet) of Marseilles, a troubadour poet who became bishop of Marseilles 1205-1231. A leader of the harsh crusade against the Albigensian heretics.

Belus' daughter: Dido, whose passion for Aeneas led her to betray her vow of constancy to Sicheus her dead husband, and to wrong Creusa, Aeneas' wife, who had perished in the fall of Troy.

the girl of Rhodopè: Phyllis daughter of the King of Thrace, believing she was abandoned by Prince Demophöon, hanged herself.

Hercules: fell into a mad passion for Iole, and after killing her father, Eutryus, King of Oechalia, abducted her.

accursed flower of gold: Florentine currency had a lily stamped on one side.

decretals: texts of canon law

Canto X

They enter the fourth Sphere, of the Sun. St Thomas Aquinas identifies the garland of twelve souls of philosophers and theologians who have guided the church.

Because the ray of grace: Thomas Aquinas d.1274, 'the Angelic Doctor' most famous for the *Summa Theologica*, an exposition of church teachings.

Albert of Cologne: d.1280 Dominican and teacher of Aquinas. Known as the Universal Doctor because of his vast learning especially on Aristotle.

Gratian: 12th century Benedictine monk, originator of the science of canon law.

Peter: Lombard, d.1160, known as the Master of the Sentences, through his collection of the sayings of the church fathers.

the fifth: King Solomon, the fairest light, who asked God for an understanding heart and was given unique wisdom.

that candle: Dionysius the Areopagite, an Athenian converted by St Paul credited with having written the *Celestial Hierarchy*, a treatise explaining the angelic orders.

Little light: probably Orosius, a 5th century Spanish priest whose *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* was intended to show the world had not deteriorated since Christianity, contrary to pagan belief.

the eighth: Boethius (St Severinus) author of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, d.524.

Isidore, Bede and Richard: St Isidore of Seville, d.636, influential writer of the Middle Ages. The Venerable Bede d.735, an English monk, known as the father of history, author of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*. Richard of St Victor, d.1173, known as the great Contemplator, a mystic and scholastic philosopher.

Siger: of Brabant d.1284, a distinguished Averroist philosopher (after the Muslim thinker

Averrhoes) who taught at the University of Paris, in the Rue de Fouarre. ('Straw Street' – now called Rue Dante).

Canto XI

Within the Sphere of the Sun, Aquinas resumes his discourse, relates the story of Francis of Assisi and bewails the degeneration of the Dominican order.

Aphorisms: a medical textbook attributed to Hippocrates.

seraphic in his love: the Seraphim are the highest order of angels, symbolic of the greatest love for God, Francis is characterised by his seraphic love.

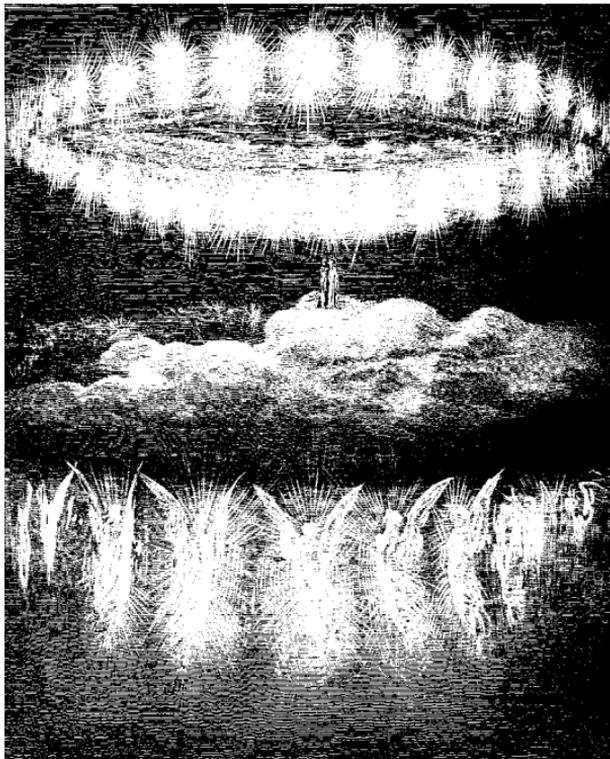
in his wisdom Dominic's learning and doctrinal clarity associates him with the Cherubim the second order of angels, acknowledged as the wisest.

Assisi: or Ascesi in Dante's time, also means 'I have risen.' Francis is described here as a sun, and Orient is a more appropriate name for a rising sun.

Amyclas: a fisherman so poor he had nothing to fear from any man, so lay at his ease on a bed of seaweed before Caesar himself.

Bernard di Quintavalle: Francis' first disciple. Egidius and Sylvester were other disciples.

The damage to the plant: the erosion of the order.



'Just so, those two garlands of eternal roses circled round us...'
(Canto XII)

Canto XII

In the Sphere of the Sun a second circle of souls forms around the first. St Bonaventure tells the story of St Dominic and comments on the decadence of the Franciscans, his own order.

her handmaid: Iris, goddess of the rainbow and Juno's messenger. Twin rainbows occurred when Juno called Iris to her.

wandering nymph: Echo who wasted away to a voice for love of Narcissus.

one of those new splendours: St Bonaventure, a scholar saint and theologian, given the title Doctor Seraphicus. As a child he was miraculously healed by St Francis, hence his name buona ventura – good fortune. Died 1274, canonised 1482 by Sixtus IV.

his mother: dreamt that she gave birth to a black and white dog. The Latin *Domini canes*; translates as the 'hounds of the Lord'; black and white are the orders colours.

Dominicus: the possessive form of *Domine* (the Lord). Dominic was an austere man with an undeviating faith in pure doctrine. He took part in the Albigensian crusade, preaching (and bearing arms) against the heretics, who denied the resurrection. Founded his order in 1215, d.1221, canonised 1234.

Illuminato and Augustine: early followers of St Francis.

Hugh of St Victor: 12th century mystic.

Peter of Spain: author of summary of logical principles, later John XXI; d.1277 when a ceiling

collapsed on him in the papal palace.

Peter Mangiadore: author of a famous work of Bible history, d.1164.

Nathan: Hebrew prophet who rebuked King David for his sins.

Anselm: 11th century Archbishop of Canterbury.

Chryssostom: 'golden mouth' in Greek, 4th-century Patriarch of Constantinople noted for his preaching.

Donatus: 4th-century Roman rhetorician.

Rabanus: d.856, scholar, poet, Archbishop of Mainz.

Joachim: of Fiore, d.1202, preacher and eschatological mystic.

Canto XIII

St Thomas Aquinas explains the nature of perfect creation in Adam and Christ, and Solomon's gift of Wisdom. He warns against making hasty judgements.

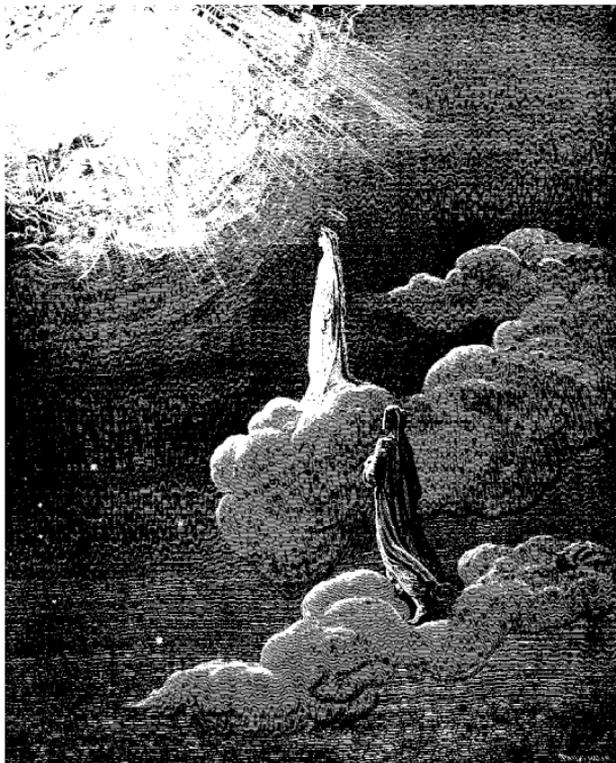
Minos' daughter: Ariadne, whose wedding wreath at her death was turned into the constellation Corona Borealis.

that great soul: Solomon.

no mortal soul rose to be his equal: though Adam and Christ-as-man were wiser than Solomon they were *direct* creations of God, apart from mortal creation; Solomon was a *secondary* creation arising from Nature.

Canto XIV

In the Sphere of the Sun Solomon expounds the



'I saw I had been transported, alone with my lady, to higher blessedness.'
(Canto XIV)



*'With these families and others with them The Florence I knew was in such repose
there was nothing for which she had to weep.'
(Canto XVI)*

doctrine of the resurrected body. Dante gradually becomes aware of a third circle of souls, Warriors for God, then realises he and Beatrice have ascended to the Fifth Sphere, of Mars.

One and Two and Three: the Trinity

Canto XV

In the Sphere of Mars the soul of Cacciaguida, Dante's ancestor, tells his story and extols the virtues of ancient Florence.

Anchises: Aeneas' father, who greeted him with great joy.

five and six from one: all numbers derive from one, as all knowledge derives from the Primal Thought.

Sardanapalus: the last Assyrian king, a byword for wantonness and debauchery.

Bellincone Berti...dei Nerli del Vacchio: ancient honourable Florentine families.

Canto XVI

Cacciaguida speaks of his family's history, contrasting early Florence with Dante's corrupt city.

St John: Florence's patron saint.

this fire: Mars; the lions paw; Leo. By this calculation, Cacciaguida was born around 1090.

Mars and the Baptist; the statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio and the Baptistry of St John marked the limits of Cacciaguida's Florence.

Campi, Certaldo, and Figghine: small towns

near Florence whose inhabitants polluted pure Florentine blood.

the lily: the white lily was the ancient standard of Florence. The Guelphs made it bloody/red. Flying a captured standard upside down mocked the vanquished.

Canto XVII

Cacciaguida prophesies Dante's banishment from Florence and entrusts him with writing the Comedy.

Clymene: mother of Phaëton. Hearing that Apollo was not his father, as he had believed, Clymene urged her son to ask Apollo himself. To reassure him, Apollo let Phaëton drive his sun chariot, with fatal consequences.

contingency...necessity: divine foreknowledge of contingent things does not imply necessity because man has free will.

Hippolytus: rejected the advances of his stepmother Phaedra who then accused him of wanting what she had been denied. Theseus, Hippolytus' father, banished his innocent son.

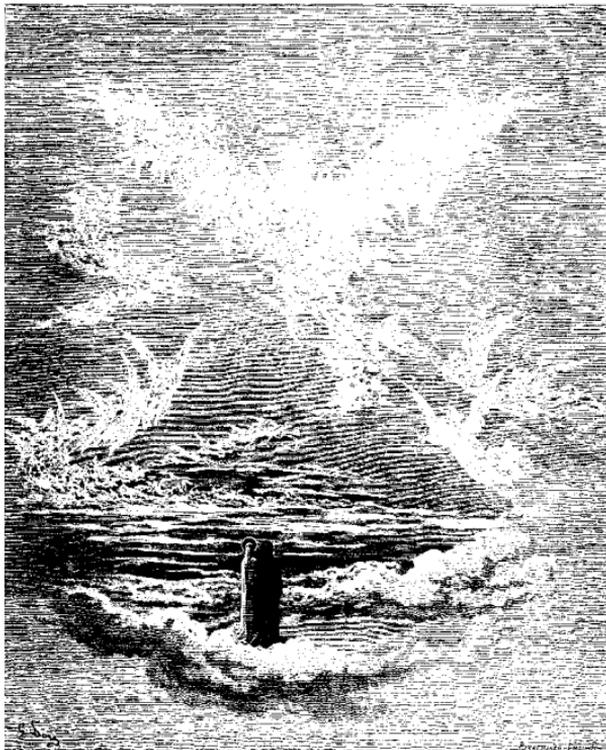
great Lombard: Bartolommeo della Scala of Verona. An eagle perched on a golden ladder formed part of the family arms.

the seal of this star: Mars. Thus Can Grande della Scala to whom this refers, would achieve great things in the martial arts.

Gascon: Clement V invited Emperor Henry VII to Rome, but later threatened to excommunicate him.



'So within the lights the holy creatures sang, and in their flight spelled different shapes.'
(Canto XVIII)



*'Before me a handsome image appeared to which those souls in happy unison gave form:
the eagle, now with outstretched wings.'*
(Canto XIX)

Canto XVIII

Cacciaguida identifies the warrior saints in the cross of light. Beatrice and Dante rise to the sixth sphere, the Sphere of Jupiter, where the souls of just monarchs and governors spell out messages, and delineate the profile of an eagle.

Joshua: led the Israelites into the Promised land.

Maccabeus: Judas Maccabeus died freeing Israel from Syrian tyranny.

Charlemagne and Roland: Charlemagne, d.814, king of the Franks, Holy Roman Emperor. With Roland his nephew and greatest warrior, he defended Christendom against the Saracens.

William and Renouard: William, Count of Orange d.812, whose battles against the Saracens in Southern France are retold in Old French epics. Renouard a giant of Saracen birth, converted and served with William.

Duke Godfrey: Duc de Bouillon leader of the First Crusade.

Robert Guiscard: d.1085, (the Weasel), took Apulia and Calabria from the Saracens.

martyrdom by a dance: John the Baptist. Dante refers to those set on the image of the patron saint of Florence, stamped on the florin. In other words, the Papacy cares only for money.

the Fisherman: St Peter.

Canto XIX

In the Sphere of Jupiter, souls of the just and temperate rulers forming the symbolic eagle discourse on divine justice, and its inscrutability,

and the fate of the good heathen. They denounce Christendom's present rulers.

another Kingdom: the angelic order of Thrones, which guides the Sphere of Saturn.

first proud being: Lucifer the fallen angel

Albert: of Austria, laid waste to Bohemia in 1314.

Seine: the grief inflicted on France by Philip the Fair when he debased the currency to pay for his Flanders campaigns. He was killed by a fall from his horse hunting wild boar.

cripple of Jerusalem: Charles II, 'the Lame' of Naples, titular King of Jerusalem.

M: The Roman symbol for 1000.

Canto XX

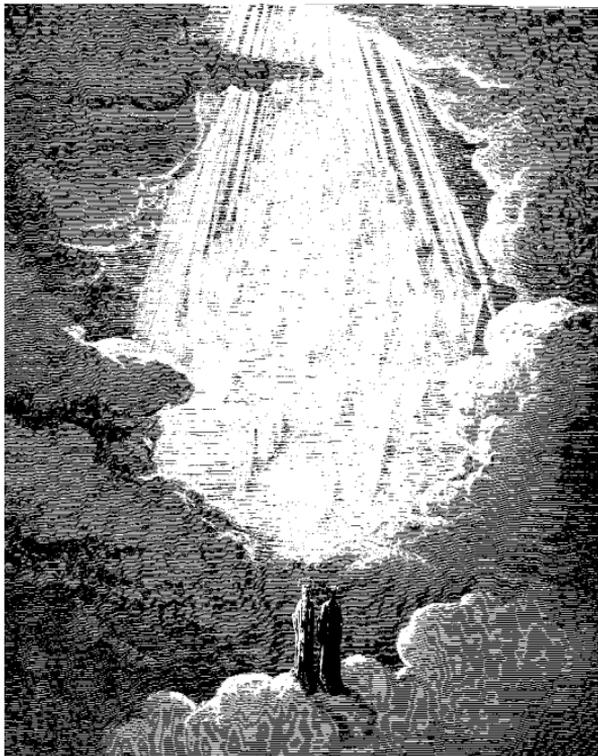
The souls of the imperial eagle identify those that make up its eye, two Jews, two pagans and two Christians, champions of justice on earth.

singer of the Holy Spirit: King David, the psalmist.

He who consoled the widow: the Emperor Trajan. A legend existed that Pope Gregory so prayed for Trajan, a pagan when he died, that he was brought from Limbo back to life, and baptised by Gregory to salvation.

delayed his death: Hezekiah, King of Judah, informed of his impending death, prayed God to remember his service and was granted another fifteen years.

went to Greece: Constantine ceded the Western



*'I saw so many flames descend its steps that it seemed that every light in heaven
was cascading down in brilliance there.'
(Canto XXI)*



'By now my eyes were fixed again upon my lady's face...'
(Canto XXI)

Empire to the Church (the Shepherd) and moved the seat of Empire and its laws to Byzantium.

William: King of Naples and Sicily d.1189, a just ruler. Naples passed to Charles the Lame and Sicily to Frederick II, see above.

Ripheus: the one just man among the Trojans, and proof of how inscrutable is Divine Justice.

quiddity: the 'thingness' of something – its essence.

Canto XXI

In the Sphere of Saturn, the seventh Heaven, a golden ladder appears, on which the souls of the contemplatives gather. St Peter Damian speaks to Dante.

Semele: was reduced to ashes when Juno, jealous of her love for Jupiter, persuaded the girl to beg Jupiter to show her his full splendour.

that dear leader: Saturn, father of Jupiter, ruled as King of Crete in the Golden Age, before malice.

Peter Damian: d.1072, rose from humble beginnings to be Cardinal-bishop of Ostia, and was a zealous reformer of Church discipline. He signed some of his later work Peter the Sinner.

The hat: his cardinal's hat.

Cephas: rock in Hebrew, i.e., St Peter.

Canto XXII

Dante is addressed by St Benedict on his order's decline, then ascends the ladder to the Eighth Heaven, the Sphere of Fixed Stars.

largest and most luminous: St Benedict, d.543, founder of the monastery of Monte Cassino on the site of an active pagan sanctuary. He drew up the general rule of worship, labour, and service which have since regulated western monasticism.

impious cult: of Apollo

Maccarius: the Younger, d.404. St Benedict's counterpart, founder of Eastern monasticism.

Romoaldus: d.1027, founded the Order of Camaldoli, reformed Benedictines, who emphasised contemplation.

Latona's daughter: Diana, the Moon.

your son, Hyperion: Hyperion was father of Helios, the Sun.

Diöne and Maia: Diöne was the mother of Venus. Maia, Mercury's mother, was one of the seven Pleiade sisters.

tempering Jupiter: between Mars his hot son, and Saturn his cold father.

Canto XXIII

The Eighth Heaven of the Fixed Stars. Dante witnesses the spectacle of the Church Triumphant; Christ and the Virgin, with the souls of the redeemed.

Trivia: another name for Diana; the moon.

Substance Radiant: the figure of Christ.

Polyhymnia: the Muse of sacred songs.

the Rose: the Virgin Mary.

the lilies: souls that share in Triumph.

I am angelic love: Gabriel, speaking on behalf of all angels.



'Speak therefore, and say to what end your soul is directed...'
(Canto XXVI)

Canto XXIV

The Eighth Heaven of the Fixed Stars, St Peter examines Dante on Faith.

Canto XXV

Still in the Eighth Heaven, St James examines Dante on Hope.

Another radiance: St James, brother of St John, killed by order of Herod Agrippa. At death his body was mysteriously transported to Galicia, Spain, where he once preached, to become the centre of pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela.

the breast of the Pelican: At the last supper John Christ's favourite disciple, reclined on his breast. In mediæval legend the pelican succoured its young with blood pecked from its breast.

by looking is blinded: Dante is trying to resolve the mediæval puzzle of whether St John had been translated to heaven in body and soul at his death.

Canto XXVI

St John examines Dante on love. Adam answers Dante's questions on his life in Eden and after.

Ananias: cured St Paul's blindness on the Damascus road.

a fourth light: Adam.

Nimrod's people: built the Tower of Babel.

Hell's agonies: According to Dante (following Eusebius), Adam was created in 5198 BC, died aged 930, and was released from Hell by Christ

in 34 AD.

YAH: from the initial letter of Jehovah.

El: from Elohim the other Hebrew name for God.

On that peak: Adam spent only half a day in Eden.

Canto XXVII

St Peter denounces papal corruption. Dante and Beatrice ascend to the ninth and highest of the material heavens, the Primum Mobile.

four torches: Peter, James, John, Adam. Peter glows red.

The man who now usurps my throne: Boniface VIII, the reigning pope in 1300.

Linus and Cletus: Peter's two martyred successors.

Sixtus, Pius, Calixtus and Urban: Bishops of Rome who died for their faith.

Europa: was carried from Phoenicia by Jupiter.

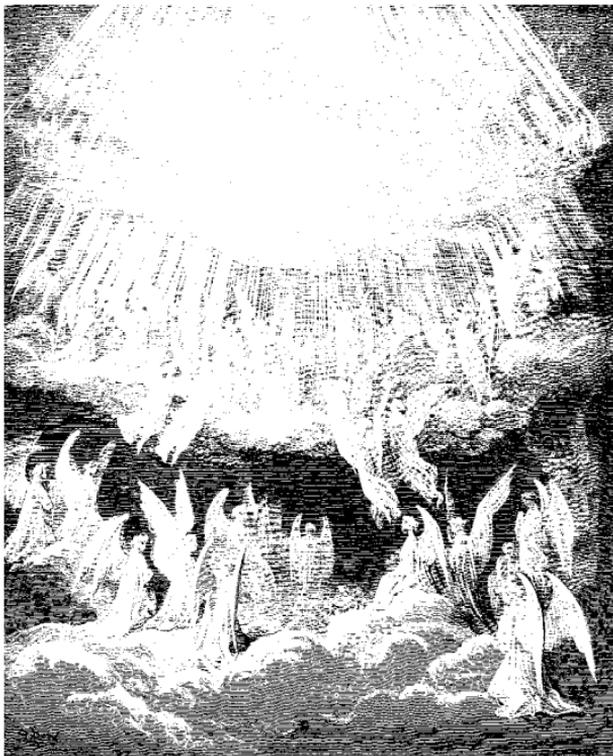
nest of Leda: the constellation of Gemini, named for Leda's twin sons, Castor and Pollux, born from eggs sired by Jupiter in the form of a swan.

Canto XXVIII

In the Primum Mobile, Dante has a vision of God as a point of light ringed by Nine glowing spheres – the angel hierarchy which Beatrice explains.

a point: the point of light is God, representing the centre of all Heaven.

Boreas: the North wind, blowing from his left



*"To the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, glory,' all Paradise began to sing, so sweetly I was enebriated."
(Canto XXVII)*



*'...each sphere gave off a shower of sparks, like iron heated to incandescence,
every spark circled by a spinning, flaming ring...'*

(Canto XXVIII)

cheek, produces northeast winds, storms and cloudy skies. His gentler right cheek, produces *il maestrale* the cloud clearing northwesterly. Blowing straight produces a north wind of bitter winter cold.

Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones: the angelic orders are grouped into three sets of trinities, and these comprise the first. Seraphim are distinguished by fervour of love, while cherubim excel in knowledge. Thrones are God's aspect as Supreme Justice.

Aries: rises with the night in autumn and with the sun in spring.

Dominions, Virtues, Powers: the second Trinity. God's majesty is manifested through Dominions. Virtues work miracles on earth and are bestowers of grace and valour. Powers work towards keeping order and preside over demons.

Principalities, Archangels, Angels: Principalities are protectors of religion and watch over leaders of people. Archangels and angels are the lowest in the hierarchy and make propitiation to God for the sins of the ignorant and the righteous.

Canto XXIX

Beatrice discusses the creation of angels and the fall of Lucifer, condemning foolish teachings and preaching on the subject.

Latona's children: Apollo and Diana.

Eternal love: God's motive for all creation was that things created might participate in his goodness.

a party of angels fell: Lucifer and the rebellious angels.

the bird that nests: in mediæval superstition the devil often took the shape of a rook crow or woodpecker.

Canto XXX

Dante and Beatrice ascend to the Empyrean, the highest sphere and the abode of God. Dante describes it as a rose.

handmaid of the sun: Aurora, the dawn.

noble Henry: Henry VII of Luxembourg Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, through whom Dante hoped Italy would be cured of its troubles and Christendom returned to order.

who travels on Henry's path: Clement V, pope 1305-14, at first supported Henry, then changed sides to support the French monarch Philip IV. Dante predicts his death and his fate among the simoniac popes, in **Inferno**

Alagni, Boniface VIII, in Inferno.

Canto XXXI

Dante sees the angelic host and the elect in the Empyrean. Beatrice takes her place, leaving Dante in the care of St Bernard of Clairvaux. Dante looks upon the Virgin.

Her faithful Bernard: St Bernard of Clairvaux, d.1153. The most famous abbot of the Benedictine Order. His writings are characterised by an ardent devotion to the Virgin Mary.

oriflamme: the standard supposedly given to the kings of France by the angel Gabriel, a flame on a golden background.

Canto XXXII

St Bernard identifies the elect born before and after Christ, seated in the Rose shaped court of the Empyrean. The presence of unbaptised children is explained.

Mary: mother of God, sits in the top most tier of the rose **Eve**, mother of man directly below and **Rachel**, symbolising the Contemplative Life below her. On her right, **Beatrice**, who lights the intellect to truth.

Sarah, Rebecca and Judith: Sarah, Abraham's wife, mother of Isaac. Rebecca, wife of Isaac bore Esau and Jacob. Judith, a biblical heroine murdered Holofernes, an Assyrian general, while he slept, saving the Jews.

great grandmother: Ruth,

that singer; David, whose sin was sending Uriah to die in battle so he might marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.

great John: the Baptist.

childlike treble voices: the lower half of the rose, contains the souls of those who died before they grew to reason and faith, and won salvation through the prayers of others.

two roots: Adam, father of mankind, St Peter, father of the church.

The great leader: Moses to the left of Adam.

Anna: mother of the Virgin.

Canto XXXIII

St Bernard offers a prayer to the Virgin, and Dante is permitted the Direct Vision of God.

Sybil's oracle of leaves: the Cumean Sybil wrote her oracles on leaves that were scattered by the wind.

Neptune: looked up to see the underside of the Argo, the first ship, on its journey to Colchis for the Golden Fleece. After twenty five centuries Neptune's surprise is more easily recalled than Dante's moment of vision an instant after he had it.

*... this poem from the earth and air
This medieval miracle of song.*

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



'So in the shape of that white rose, the host of the holy was shown to me...'
(Canto XXXI)

About the translation

Had Dante guessed at the attention posterity would give his vision, he would no doubt have set aside a special place in the lowest part of hell for translators. Some of the most famous names in literature have attempted a Divine Comedy for their time, and with the most famously awful results. His *terze rima*, or three-fold rhyme scheme, has tied numerous poets in English into such knots that on occasions Dante's rhyme scheme is all that remains of the original.

But as Virgil says to the Poet, 'Let us not talk of them, but with a glance pass on.' This translation was made with the listener in mind. Here, couplets and *terza rima* have been rejected for the clarity of blank verse. And while the purist's lip may curl, Dante's sometimes convoluted sentence structure has been occasionally straightened for ease of comprehension.

It may be assumed that for many of Dante's contemporaries, **The Divine Comedy** will have been an aural experience. It is this pleasure of his epic as a story rather than as a classic text that this translation seeks to recapture. Conjured by the listener's own imagination 600 years on, Hell has lost none of its terror nor Paradise its ecstasy.

Notes by Benedict Flynn

Translation by Benedict Flynn

Produced by Roger Marsh

Post-production: Christine Hardwick and Beth Hammond, CRC

Recorded at Bucks Audio Cassettes by Alan Smyth

Benedict Flynn

A Life of Dante

The Italy of Dante's time was lively, vigorous, occasionally dangerous but certainly bold. The central mediaeval period – the Dark Ages, as they are traditionally called – were over, and the first stirrings of the Renaissance could be detected. It was a time when learning, kept alive within the Church during those difficult centuries after the collapse of the Roman Empire, was being rediscovered by the aristocracy; and the growing class of merchants flourished in this profitable period of trade and commerce, where powerful guilds were growing and benefiting from the new trading routes.

With the help of translations from the Arabic, the works and thoughts of classical Greece – in particular Aristotle – were beginning to cast an influence once more; and music and poetry, through the troubadours, and painters were transforming the artistic lives and environment of late 13th-century Italy.

Of course, the Church continued to be the primary single influence – often in matters of state as well as religion. In Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire ruled over its people in a stricter alliance between church and state, continuing the traditions of the Roman empire

of the Caesars. In the West, however, and in particular in the Italian peninsular, there was no longer such a neat homogeneity.

The city state was the primary unit. Florence, Venice, Ravenna, Pistoia, Siena – the citizens felt loyalty to the place of their birth. The loyalty was defined by their home town, rather than their nation or their language; and politics and the rule of law was dictated by constantly shifting alliances, making the Italy of the 13th and 14th centuries an unpredictable place to be. And only too often, if there wasn't a dominant political or military power, foreign kings or princes would be called upon to involve themselves in local disputes for spoil, lands or political benefits. The only single personage to hold some measure of national control over Italy was the Pope – through his religious power.

This was reflected in the two main political factions. The aristocratic party was represented by the Ghibellines – who looked towards the Holy Roman Emperor as their principal protector. The opposing party was represented by the Guelfs (among them, powerful bankers), hoping for more democratic rule, who looked towards the Pope as their principal figure.

This was the background of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) as he grew up in Florence. It is important to have some idea of this setting, for although **The Divine Comedy** may be set in another world, and meant as a commentary for mankind for all time, it was, paradoxically, placed very strongly in Dante's own time. Many of the characters who appear in **Inferno**, **Purgatory** and **Paradise** were contemporaries or near contemporaries of Dante himself. This is why, when he enters into conversation with them, in their enduring trials, he often talks about matters other than their 'sins' or the actions that led them to their place of penance or reflection. We need the footnotes to explain the background, but Dante's contemporaries would have known about them directly.

This is also why he wrote in Italian rather than Latin, the accepted custom of the time. He wanted **The Divine Comedy** to be read by a wider audience than offered by Latin, a language not necessarily studied by many of the new merchant families. Dante also makes the point that writing in Italian would have allowed greater access to the poem by women.

So, the life of Dante, and the background against which he wrote, is essential to a reading of **The Divine Comedy**. He was born into a Guelf family. His natural aptitude for learning and poetry was recognised, and

he became active in the state life of Florence, becoming one of the Priors, which exercised considerable influence on the running of the city. But however able as a man of letters, he seemed less adept at operating in the darker shadows of politics and intrigue, and came out the worse after infighting between two sections of the Guelf party, the Blacks and the Whites. In 1302, while away from Florence, he was condemned to the stake and had no choice but to go into exile. It proved to be a bitter life sentence, not helped by his changing political views which resulted in him being known as Dante the Ghibelline.

This was the public part of his life. The more private (though it became very public...) was his reverence for a girl he saw from a distance when he was nine. The encounter with Beatrice Portinari was to transform his inner life and propel him along the road of poetry, which was to sustain his life as an exile. Nine years after that initial sight of her, he met her at a party and they exchanged a few words. A little later they met again, but she had heard some 'scandalous' reports about him and snubbed him. He was heartbroken. He saw her at a distance once more before she died in 1290.

Despite – perhaps because – he seems to have had a reputation for leading a passionate life, Dante described his feelings for Beatrice very clearly as 'most chaste'. Passion travels

easily (and even simultaneously) down both secular and sacred routes and, for Dante, Beatrice became the symbol of purity, a constant star that his uncertain life so needed.

She provided the impulse for his poetry. His learning and his awareness of political and commercial life was unusually combined with an energy for living and the spiritual search. Out of all this and his homelessness, emerged **The Divine Comedy**.

Notes by Nicolas Soames



Heathcote Williams, poet, playwright and actor, has made a significant contribution to many fields. He is best known for his extended poems on environmental subjects: *Whale Nation*, *Falling for a Dolphin*, *Sacred Elephant* and *Autogeddon*. His plays have also won acclaim, notably *AC/DC* produced at London's Royal Court, and *Hancock's Last Half Hour*. As an actor he has been equally versatile – taking memorable roles in *Orlando*, *Wish You Were Here* and Derek Jarman's *The Tempest*, in which he played Prospero.



Born in Birmingham and brought up in Manchester, **John Shrapnel** joined the National Theatre (under Laurence Olivier) playing many classical roles including Banquo and Orsino. With the RSC he has appeared in classical Greek theatre as well as numerous Shakespearean plays. His TV work varies from *Stoppard's Professional Foul* and *Vanity Fair* to *Inspector Morse* and *Hornblower*. Films include *Nicholas and Alexandra*, *One Hundred and One Dalmations* and the role of Galus in *Gladiator*.

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Dante The Divine Comedy

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Also includes

A Life of Dante by Benedict Flynn

Read by **John Shrapnel**

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