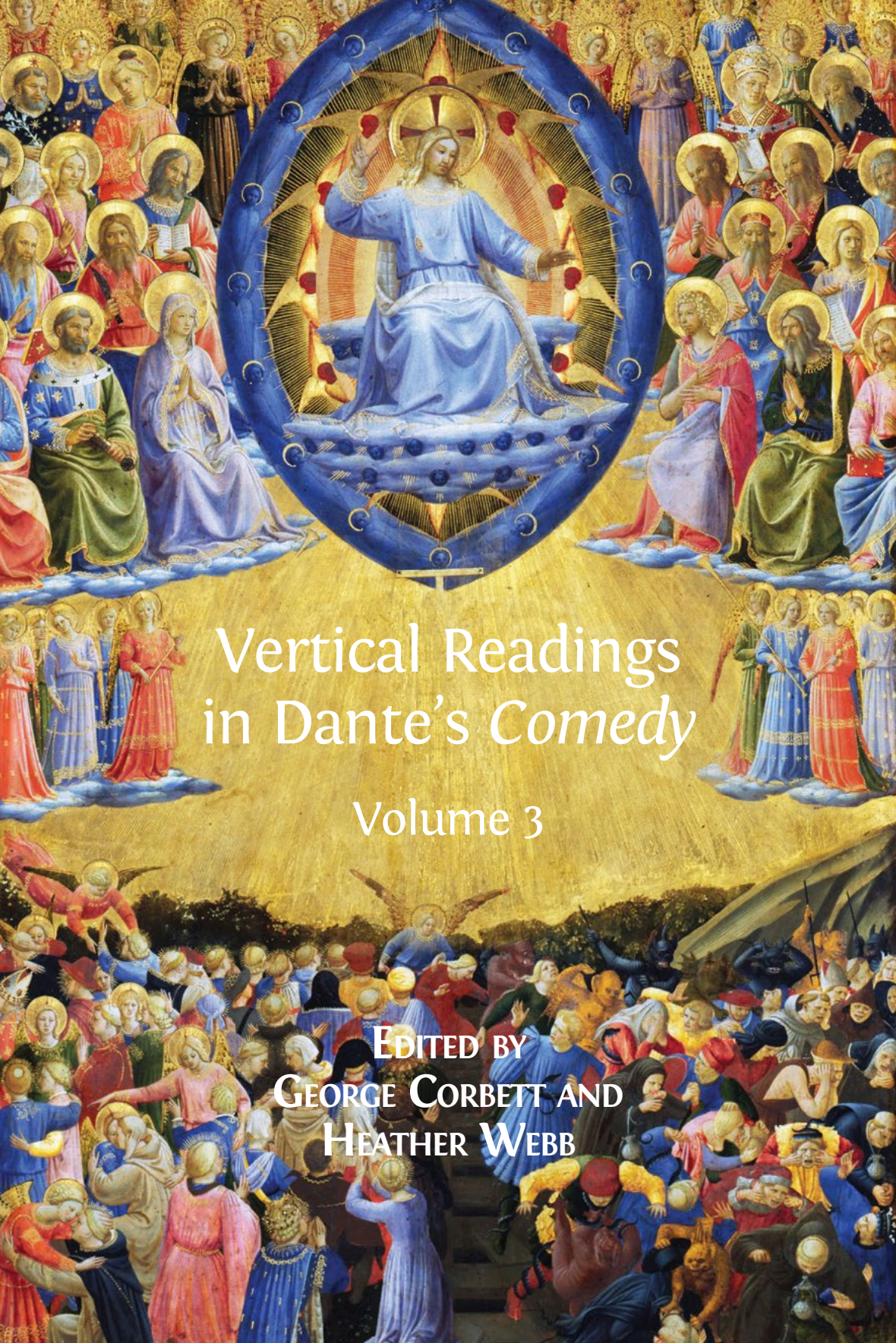

Vertical Readings in Dante's *Comedy*

Volume 3

Edited by
George Corbett and
Heather Webb

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Contents

27. Containers and Things Contained

Ronald L. Martinez

Three twenty-sevens make eighty-one. In the fourth book of *Convivio*, Dante observes that Christ, like Plato, would have lived eighty-one years if he had completed his span of life.[1] If Dante took this idea from Hugh of St Victor's *Didascalicon*, he might also have reflected on Hugh's comment that eighty-one, the fourth power of three, marks the return to unity.[2] Such a regress occurs at the cosmic level in the last of the canto Twenty-Sevens, when the pilgrim is torn from the constellation of Gemini and thrust into the *Primum Mobile*, the ninth Heaven — that is, eight plus one — so entering the sphere from which all the others take their single diurnal motion and in relation to which all time is measured and contained.[3] In a passage of *Convivio* rich in recurring terms for the articulation of time, Dante observes that this single motion is indispensable to life on earth, for without it 'there would be no

1 *Convivio*, IV. xxiv. 6, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, ed. by Cesare Vasoli and Domenico de Robertis, 3 vols (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1988), vol. I/2, p. 823. All references to *Convivio* are to this edition.

2 *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 65: 'in a fourth progression, the soul, freed from the body, returns to the pureness of its simplicity, and therefore in the fourth multiplication, in which three times twenty-seven makes eighty-one, the number "one" reappears in the arithmetical product in order that it may be glowingly evident that the soul, after this life's end, designated by "eighty", returns to the unity of its simple state'. For Hugh in Dante, see Francesco Bausi, *Dante fra scienza e sapienza: esegesi dal canto XII del Paradiso* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2009), pp. 192–97.

3 See also *Conv*., Conv., II. iii. 5.

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generation down here, nor any plant or animal life; there would be neither night nor day, nor any weeks nor months nor years, but the whole universe would be disordered, and the movement of the other Heavens in vain'.[4]

Indeed, temporal cycles, including the phases of human life, unfolded by Dante in detail through the fourth book of *Convivio*, prove an underlying theme for the Twenty-Sevens. In the case of *Inferno* xxvii. 67–68, Guido da Montefeltro intended his conversion as a right use of his time, like that which Dante — using Guido as an example — recommends in *Convivio* to those nearing the end of life.[5] Gabriele Muresu also points out that Guido's autobiography, including his gestation and birth as a mortal man ('mentre ch'io forma fui d' ossa e di polpe / che la madre mi diè' [the form of bone and flesh that my mother gave me]; *Inf*., xxvii. 73–74), his military career, his conversion, his sparring with Boniface, and his final moments, yield almost a complete *vita e morte* (if not *miracoli*).[6] The first lines of *Purgatorio* xxvii mark dawn in Jerusalem, noon over the Ganges and midnight in Spain, suggesting how the arms of the Cross enfold all time and space,[7] and the canto is unique in the poem having its text be coterminous with — exactly contain — a half day, beginning with evening (l. 5), and continuing through the next day's sunrise (l. 133), epitomizing how on the mountain penitent souls perform distinct activities by day and by night.[8] Finally, if we supply, as Peter Armour suggests, the words Dante omits in the fully vernacular lesser Doxology ('Al padre, al figlio, a lo Spirito Santo / […] Gloria' [To the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit […] glory']) that occupies the first lines of *Paradiso* xxvii,[9] we have indirect reference to the glory of the Trinity 'sicut erat in principio, nunc, et semper' [as it was in the beginning, now, and always]. At the other end of the canto, Beatrice details the corruption of humanity in terms of disordered temporal cycles, from the spoilage of fruits to the disrespect for Lenten privations ('divora qualunque cibo per

4 *Conv*., II. xiv. 17. Unless otherwise specified, translations are my own.

5 Cf. *Conv*., IV. xxiv. 8.

6 See Gabriele Muresu, 'La *rancura* di Guido da Montefeltro (*Inferno* XXVII)', in *L'orgia d'amor: Saggi di semantica dantesca (quarta serie)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2008), pp. 51–91.

7 Pietro Calì, '*Purgatorio* XXVII', in *Dante Commentaries*, ed. by David Nolan (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1977), pp. 93–113 (pp. 94–95). The idea is based in part on Eph. 3.18; see Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus*, cxviii, ch. 19 (*PL* 35. 1949–1950).

8 See Luigi Blasucci, 'La dimensione del tempo nel *Purgatorio*', in *Studi su Dante e Ariosto* (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1969), pp. 37–59 (pp. 54–57).

9 See Peter Armour, '*Paradiso* XXVII', in *Dante's Divine Comedy, Introductory Readings III: Paradiso*, ed. by Tibor Wlassics (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press. 1995), pp. 402–23 (p. 403).

qualunque luna' [devours whatever food in whatever month]; *Par*., xxvii. 132). In her account infants grow up to hope for their parents's death (*Par*., xxvii. 133–35), thus imitating one of the evil customs of the iron age from Ovid's influential account in the *Metamorphoses* of the four ages.[10] As Beatrice observes, 'che' n terra non è chi governi' [since on earth there is none who governs] (*Par*., xxvii. 140), seas of cupidity submerge humankind, and only a tempest unleashed by the longest, most comprehensive cycle of the 'cerchi superni' [supernal spheres] can set the ships of state and Church on their right course (*Par*., xxvii. 142–48). Secular time, then: its cause, its articulations, the effects of its passage, and the eternity that comprehends it, furnishes a unifying theme of the three canto Twenty-Sevens. The theme is fittingly concluded in the *Primum Mobile*, where the scattered leaves of time are traced back to their root in lines that express both reduction to the one and containment of what is below by what is above:

> e questo cielo non ha altro dove
> che la mente divina, in che s'accende
> l'amor che 'l volge e la virtù ch'ei piove.
> Luce e amor d'un cerchio lui comprende,
> sì come questo li altri; e quel precinto
> colui che 'l cinge solamente intende.
> Non è suo moto per altro distinto,
> ma li altri son mensurati da questo,
> sì come diece da mezzo e da quinto (*Par*., xxvii. 109–17)
>
> [this Heaven has no other where than the mind of God, in which is kindled the love that turns it and the power that it rains down. Light and love enclose it with one sphere, as this does all the others, and that girding only he who girds it understands. Its motion is not marked by another's but the others are measured by this one, as ten is measured by half and fifth].[11]

Dante's ternary of terms in these lines for containment — *comprende*, *precinto*, *cinge* — determines a chief emphasis of this vertical reading of Dante's poem.

10 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.148: 'filius ante diem patrios inquirit in annos' [the son inquires betimes into the father's years].

11 Texts and translations of Dante's poem are from Durling and Martinez. Translations of the Vulgate Bible are from the Douay version.

Both *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* xxvii mark major thresholds in the pilgrim's journey. Stephen Botterill dubs *Purgatorio* xxvii 'supremely, literally liminal', since it transpires half in the circle of the lustful and half in the vestibule of the Earthly Paradise.[12] The pilgrim's coronation at the very end of that canto marks the conclusion of several actions of the poem: one is the passage of the seven levels where vices are unlearned and virtues instilled (cantos x–xxvii); another is the sequence of three dreams that concludes with the dream of Lia and Rachel. The invitation at line 58 of *Purgatorio* xxvii is the last in the series of angelic exhortations to proceed to the next terrace, five times using *venire* and three *intrare*,[13] drawing on Christ's encouragements at the final judgement adumbrated in Matthew 25: to the good servant, to enter into the joy of the Lord ('*intra* in gaudium domini'), and '*Venite* benedicti' to those whose compassion has earned them a place in the kingdom.[14] Indeed, the long journey with Virgil, understood as a visit to 'il temporal foco e l'eterno' [the temporal fire and the eternal], is completed here,[15] echoing the prospect laid out at *Inferno* i (ll. 115–19), where the two realms of fire, divided between the 'antichi spiriti dolenti' [ancient sorrowing spirits] and those 'contenti nel foco' [content in the fire] are presented as goals of the journey.[16]

Liminality and retrospection also characterize *Paradiso* xxvii. Dante in fact divides the canto's 148 verses *between* the eighth (given 99 lines) and ninth Heavens (given 49 lines). The lesser doxology that begins the canto is the sixth and last canto *incipit* to mention God, but the first to give us the entire Trinity in a single vernacular line. It celebrates joyfully the conclusion of the pilgrim's professions of faith, hope, and love, and his interview with Adam: in short, the content of cantos xxiv–xxvi. The stay in

12 Lines 70–71, halfway through the canto, record the sun's setting and the cessation of upward motion. See Stephen Botterill, 'Purgatorio XXVII', in *Dante's Divine Comedy, Introductory Readings II: Purgatorio*, ed. by Tibor Wlassics (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1993), pp. 398–410 (pp. 399–400).

13 These are: *intrar*, *Purg*., ii. 99; *intrate*, iii. 101; *Intrate*, ix. 131; *venite*, xii. 91–92; *intrate*, xv. 35; *venite*, xviii. 43; *intrate*, xxvii. 11; and '*Venite benedicti patris miei*', xxvii. 58.

14 Matthew 25.21, and Matthew 25.34–35, respectively.

15 Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Funzioni strutturali della retrospezione nella *Commedia*: l'esempio del canto XXVII del *Purgatorio*', in his '*Sole nuovo, luce nuova*': *Saggi sul rinnovamento culturale in Dante* (Turin: Scriptorium, 1996), pp. 221–53, details the canto's retrospectiveness.

16 The cluster 'foco […] etterno' corresponding to the *ignem eternum* of Matthew 25.41 occurs only at *Inf*., viii. 73 (of the fires of Dis) and at *Purg*., xxvii. 127, 'il temporal foco e l'etterno', echoing *Inf*., i. 114–18, 'trarroti di qui per loco eterno […] e poi vedrai color che son contenti / nel fuoco'.

the constellation of Gemini, the longest of any in the spheres, nearly six full cantos in length, is also brought to a close. The closure is framed in both narrative and poetic terms — that is, with analogous gestures and exact verbal echoes — by the two looks back at the earth, in each case deemed an *aiuola*, a threshing-floor for human ferocity,[17] and by a pair of references, to be discussed below, to the sphere of the stars as aether. Matthew 25 plays a role in *Paradiso* xxvii (ll. 46–48) as well, when St Peter disavows 'that on the right hand of our successors one part of the Christian people should sit, and the other on the other side'.[18] A corresponding image is still visible in Dante's beloved San Giovanni on the Last Judgment wall, where are also found the words *Venite benedicti*, as in *Purgatorio* xxvii,[19] thus linking the two cantos through scenes familiar to the poet.

At first glance, it is less clear that *Inferno* xxvii concludes identifiable segments of the first cantica. But it is indubitably the last in the triptych of antihierocratic cantos in *Malebolge* (xix, xxiii, xxvii; two feature Boniface VIII) and the last infernal canto to adopt fire as a direct agent of punishment.[20] It is also the sole episode in the first cantica where the complete drama of death and damnation is recounted in the first person by one who suffers it, including his dying and being packed off to Minos for judgement.[21]

In short, the three canto Twenty-Sevens, the first less obviously, provide both retrospection and closure before a new phase of the journey. That is, each in some way *contains* what has *preceded*. In one sense of course this is true everywhere in the poem — in a linear narrative each subsequent episode can be said to contain the one preceding in narratological terms and in the reader's growing understanding of the work. Parallel-numbered cantos of the *Commedia* are themselves a special case of this kind of formal containment, for later cantos might be thought to be related to earlier ones as the outer curves of a spiral are related to inner.[22] As conceptual category

17 *aiuola* [threshing-floor] is at xxii. 151 and xxvii. 86.

18 See, Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, ed. by Anna Maria Chiavacci-Leonardi (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), p. 748; Matthew 25.33 has: 'And he shall set the sheep [*oves*] on his right hand, but the goats [*haedos*] on his left'.

19 More exactly, '*Venite, beneditti patris mei*'. Cf. Matthew 25.34: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom [*regnum*] prepared for you from the foundation of the world'.

20 Fire that as often observed refers both to Pentecost, in that the flames are like tongues, echoing Acts 2.3, and to the fire of Exodus 3.2–4 out of which God speaks to Moses, as Ulysses and Guido speak from their fiery enclosures.

21 Pier delle Vigna's episode almost qualifies, but he does not narrate in the first person.

22 E.g. *Inferno* vi discusses just Florence; *Purgatorio* vi, Italy, Rome, and Florence; *Paradiso* vi, the entire Mediterranean.

and as artistic device, containment demonstrably interested Dante across a wide spectrum of topics, including rhetorical colour (metonymy and synecdoche);[23] poetic form, as in the poet's account in *DVE* II. ix. 2 of the canzone stanza as the womb and receptacle of poetic art;[24] and the geocentric cosmology of the *Commedia*, where each level or sphere away from the geocenter contains the previous one. In the case of the Heavens as Dante understood them, such containment implies causal relationships: the pilgrim's upward journey takes him into spheres driven by angelic intelligences that possess increasing virtue, and thus causative power, in relation to the spheres preceding.[25]

Nonetheless, with the canto Twenty-Sevens this poetics of containment is both thematized and elaborated. All three cantos register vivid images of enclosure which in each instance function as metonymies for the content of the cantica as a whole and which further imply metapoetic reflection on their fashioning: that is, on the poetic act itself as an encircling and containing one, analogous to the shaping action of form on matter caused by the heavenly spheres moving over the sublunar world, as Dante sets it out in *Paradiso* when he compares the spheres to hammers wielded by the angels as *fabbri*, as smiths.[26] In the first two canto Twenty-Sevens the comprehensive image is a container of fire; in the last, it is a humble flowerpot, a *testo* — although fire is implicit, since in Dante's day as in our own such pots are made of fired earthenware.

On the heels of the Trojan horse mentioned in the previous canto, Dante in *Inferno* xxvii describes how Guido's voice emerges from his tongue-like

23 Metonymy and synecdoche are among the ten tropes of medieval rhetoric; metonymy, known as *denominatio*, is normally assigned to substitutions such as container for thing contained, or cause for effect (in each case, including vice-versa), while synecdoche, known as *intellectio*, to relations of part for whole and vice-versa. But there is significant overlap. See Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, lines 970–1037, in *Les arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Edmond Faral (Paris: Champion, 1971), pp. 227–29, and also Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Documentum de Arte Versificandi*, 44–46 in *ibid*., p. 292.

24 For this passage, see Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez, *Time and the Crystal: Studies in Dante's* Rime petrose (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 26–32.

25 For a brief account of Dante's scheme, see Durling's Additional Note 11, 'Dante and Neoplatonism', in *The Divine Comedy*, III, pp. 744–49, and the next note.

26 *Par*., ii. 127–38; see Stephen Bemrose, *Dante's Angelic Intelligences* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1983), pp. 61–70. By virtue of the analogy between angels as secondary causes and human artistry, both the angels in *Par*., ii. 128, and Arnaut Daniel in *Purg*., xxvi. 117, can be identified as smiths, *fabbri*; their mutual archetype is God as *fabbro* (*Purg*., x. 99). Dante's *fabbro* derives from Arnaut's smithing metaphors; see Maurizio Perugi, 'Arnaut Daniel in Dante', *Studi danteschi* 51 (1978), 59–152 (pp. 116–19).

flame by evoking the bronze bull that was designed to bellow with the screams of the victim cooked inside it. As deceptive containers, both horse and bull are emblems of fraud. Because Perillus, who devised and sculpted the bull, is immediately placed inside it ('*inbuit* auctor opus', Ovid quips), the story of the bull is especially vivid as an instance of fraud punished by its own device.[27] The bull is thus further notable in its icastic representation of the logic of *contrapasso*, which though first mentioned explicitly at the end of canto xxviii, is in cantos xxvi–xxvii foreshadowed in Virgil's account of the penalty of the *bolgia*: 'catun si fascia di quel ch'egli è inceso' [each is swathed in that which burns him inwardly] (*Inf.*, xxvi. 48).[28] Add Guido's reference, in speaking about his former career, to the sins of the lion and the fox, which tracks Virgil's observation that the malice punished in lower Hell 'injures someone either with force or with fraud' (*Inf.*, xi. 24), and a case can be made for the flaming enclosures as synechdochic emblems (*pars pro toto*) or metonymies (*contentum pro continente*) for all of Hell — what we saw Virgil call 'il fuoco etterno', contrasted to the 'temporal foco' of Purgatory. In a passage in the *Tusculan Disputations*, cited by George Corbett as a source for Farinata's apparent disdain for his fiery tomb,[29] Cicero mocks the ostentatious equanimity of an Epicurean sage who claims to find confinement in Phalaris' bull as comfortable as his own bed.[30] The Ciceronian intertext qualifies the brazen bull as an implicit image for the sarcophagi of the heretics, the first infernal torment that employs both enclosure and direct fire, 'hot as any metal-working art might require' (*Inf.*, ix. 119–20). The bull features thus in axial symmetry with the last of Hell's fiery torments, the tongue-shaped flames of *Inferno* xxvii, which are compared to the sculptor's work of art.

27 Pietro di Dante, followed by Benvenuto, recorded the Ovidian source (*Ars amatoria*, I, 655–56): 'neque enim lex aequior ulla est / quam necis artifices arte perire sua' [nor is there any law more equitable than for the artisan of murder to die by his own art].

28 For the *contrapasso*, see Justin Steinberg, 'Dante's Justice? A reappraisal of the *contrapasso*', *L'Alighieri* 44 (2014), 59–74.

29 See *Inf.*, x. 36, Farinata described 'com' avesse l'inferno a gran dispitto' [as if he had Hell in great disdain] and his words at x. 78 on hearing of the doom of his clan and political faction: 'ciò mi tormenta più che questo letto' [that torments me more than this bed]. See George Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*: *A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment* (Oxford: Legenda, 2013), pp. 78–79, 87n20.

30 *Tusculan Disputations* II.vii.17–18: 'he [Epicurus] affirms somewhere that if a wise man were to be burned or put to the torture […] even if he were in Phalaris's bull, would say, "How sweet it is! how little do I mind it" (*non curo*) […] he would say that to be in Phalaris's bull was the same as to be in his own bed' (*lectulo*).

But not only the sculptor's craft. Although Dante gives credit to 'Highest Wisdom' for the crafting of infernal punishments,[31] the poem of Hell is inevitably an effect of Dante's verbal skill.[32] If Ovid's joke about the author filling the work applies with grim humour to Perillus, it also illustrates the late medieval understanding of the author as the efficient cause of his text: in causing his text, he contains it; in being caused, his text contains him.[33] There are in fact continuities between Guido's motives and Dante's: for example, Guido's curse of Boniface (*Inf*., xxvii. 70: 'the high priest, may evil take him') is carried out by the poet, who has prepared Boniface's place in the third *bolgia*: indeed the whole *Inferno* realizes the malediction in Matthew 25:41 by which Christ assigns the reprobate to the 'eternal fire', a passage relevant, as we saw, to the other canto Twenty-Sevens as well. Such an overlap is potentially disturbing: by wrapping the counselors in tongue-shaped flames Dante suggests not only harmful uses of language, such as Guido's furnishing of stratagems to Boniface, but the ambiguous nature of verbal art in general, including the poet's, as Robert Durling argued: for example the 'allegory of the poets', with its 'bella menzogna' [beautiful lie] concealing ethical meaning (*Conv.*, II. i. 3), is itself structured like fraud, thus hard to distinguish from it.[34] As forms of artistic fraud, both bull and horse work in the poem as apotropaic charms for Dante as the fashioner of Hell's torments and of the vast but confining dwelling of Hell itself, variously described as a 'cieco carcere' [blind prison], a 'pozzo' [well], 'fossa' [ditch], and 'chiostro' [cloister], where Pope Nicholas III can 'bag himself' ('mi misi in borsa') and evil is 'ensacked' ('insacca'), and that is in lower regions divided into a series of 'bolge' [bags or pockets]. In short, a restrictive container.

In *Purgatorio* xxv–xxvii, it is again fire that functions as a container, both in the immediate sense, in that the souls must remain 'nel seno / al grande ardore' [in the bosom of the great fire] (*Purg*., xxv. 121–22) in order to benefit from its therapeutic effect, and in the sense that the fiery barrier

31 *Inf*., xix. 10–12. The 'art of Highest Wisdom' is executed, of course, with fire.

32 Phalaris had polished the bull with his file ('temperato con sua lima'), echoing the metaphorical *labor limae* recommended to the poet in Horace's *Ars poetica* 288–93, also there expressed in the terms of an analogy with sculpture.

33 See *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100-c. 1375*, ed. by A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, with David Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 198–99.

34 See Robert M. Durling, 'Deceit and Digestion in the Belly of Hell', in *Allegory and Representation*: *Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. by Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 61–93 (pp. 74–75, 79–80).

screens the place immediately above, the Earthly Paradise. The barrier is in fact described as a wall (*Purg*., xxvii. 36: 'questo *muro*') through which the pilgrim must pass to enter the garden of Eden (xxvii. 32: 'entra sicuro'). In analyses based on patristic sources, Bruno Nardi accordingly associated the wall that faces the pilgrim with the flaming sword of the angel placed outside Eden after the Fall.[35] And although Dante reserves fire for the extirpation of the habit of lechery, passage through and being tried in the fire seem to be required of all who wish to enter Eden: 'you go no further, holy souls, unless the fire bites first' (*Purg*., xxvii. 10–11). As Nardi showed, moreover, texts such as I Corinthians 3.12–13 ('the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is') inform Dante's account of purgatorial fire not merely as punitive of those who pass through it, but — as in the last line of *Purgatorio* xxvi — 'il foco che li affina' [the fire that refines them].[36] Jacques Le Goff documents how the texts Nardi mentions such as Wisdom 3.6 ('as gold in the furnace he hath proved them'), recur in patristic and scholastic accounts distinguishing benign, 'probative' purgatorial fire from the fire of Hell, while another of these texts, Psalm 65.12 ('We have passed through fire and water') may be seen as prototypical of the pilgrim's *transitus per ignem*, and of his later drinking of Lethe and Eunoè.[37]

Sapegno observes that the fire in canto xxvii is a compendium — one could say as well a synechdoche or metonymy — of purgatorial discipline in general, which otherwise never uses fire at all;[38] those who will their suffering as the condition of their eventual liberation are 'content in the fire'. If as Simona Bargetto argues we see in the wall of flames the second baptism with fire announced by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:16), we can also think of the fire as an incubator,[39] along with Virgil, who calls it 'l'alvo / di questa fiamma' [the womb of this flame] (*Purg*., xxvii. 25–26), echoing traditional figuration of the baptismal font as the womb (*uter*)

35 Bruno Nardi, 'Il mito dell' Eden', in *Saggi di filosofia dantesca* (Milan: Società anonima editrice Dante Alighieri, 1930), pp. 347–74 (pp. 352–55).

36 *Pace* Gianfranco Contini, 'Alcuni appunti su *Purgatorio* 27', in *Un'idea di Dante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), pp. 171–90 (pp. 174–76). Gabriele Muresu, 'Virgilio, la corona, la mitria (*Purgatorio* XXVII)', *Rivista di letteratura italiana antica* 8 (2007), 223–61 (p. 229), rejects the association with the angel of Genesis, but treats the fire as both expiatory and cathartic.

37 Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 237–88 (pp. 245–48, 260–61, 281–86).

38 'compendio e simbolo'; see *Purgatorio*, ed. by Natalino Sapegno (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1968), p. 295.

39 Simona Bargetto, 'Memorie liturgiche nel XXVII Canto del *Purgatorio*', *Lettere italiane* 49 (1997), 185–247.

through which the Church brings forth her regenerate children:[40] another powerful image of containment, both temporary and liminal.

Dante's references to the penitent lustful singing the metrical hymn *Summae Deus clementiae* in the fire evoke further images of containment in alluding to the episode from the Book of Daniel of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego cast into the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar. Reassuring the pilgrim that he will not be harmed by the flames (*Purg*., xxvii. 27: 'non ti potrebbe far d'un capel calvo' [it could not make you bald by one hair]), Virgil shows confidence in the divine protection that shielded the three boys.[41] The fiery furnace recalls at once Phalaris' bull as a simile for Guido's torment in Hell and the fact that Christian saints such as Eustace were martyred within brazen bulls.[42] Indeed, the three boys are remembered in the prayer *Suscipe, domine*, part of the commendation for the dying: 'Free, O lord, the soul of your servant as you freed the three boys from the furnace of burning fire (*de camino ignis ardentis*)'.[43]

Again, given Dante's career as a poet of Amor, there are inescapably metapoetic dimensions to the fire on the terrace of the lustful. Gianfranco Contini observed that the purgatorial fire is a homeopathic penance, like applied to like, in that the fire's heat reenacts the ardent passion that love poets describe as their condition.[44] Fire, a radically polysemous signifier in the poem, stands for both the past ardour of sinful loves, and for the present fire that transmutes *ardore* into charity. The fire is further metapoetic in that the suffering that refines Arnaut Daniel is a traditional metaphor for the love poet's quest for artistic perfection, as well as character building, in fulfilling the strictures of *fin'amors*.[45] No accident then that just one

40 Cf. the thirteenth-century Roman pontifical (44.18), 'immaculato divini fontis utero' [from the unstained womb of the divine fount]. See *Le pontifical de la curie romaine au XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Monique Goullet, Guy Lobrichon and Eric Palazzo (Paris: Cerf, 2004), pp. 302–03.

41 Daniel 3.19–27 and 92–94 ('not a hair of their head had been singed') were linked by exegetes (e.g. Rupert of Deutz, *De Trinitatis et operibus eius*, 42.7, in *PL* 167.1506–1507C) with Luke 21.18 ('But a hair of your head shall not perish'. That they walk unharmed (Daniel 3.24), was previously echoed by Dante's 'spirits walking within the flames' (*Purg*., xxv. 124)

42 William R. Cook and Ronald Herzman, '*St. Eustace*: *A Note on* Inferno *XXVII*', *Dante Studies* 94 (1976), 137–39.

43 For Daniel 3 in the liturgy, see Philippe Bernard, 'Le cantique des trois enfants (Dan. III, 52–90): Les répertoires liturgiques occidentaux dans l'antiquité tardive et le haut moyen age', *Musica e storia* 1 (1996), 232–76.

44 Contini, 'Alcuni appunti', pp. 176–78 ('per antitesi omeopatica').

45 *Ibid*., pp. 178–79, citing the lyric *topos* of the salamander thriving in fire, as fish thrive in water.

canto back (*Purg*., xxvi. 41, 86–87) Dante mentions Pasiphae's 'false cow' fashioned by Daedalus and reminiscent of the hollow horse and bull of *Inferno* xxvi–xxvii. They are deceptive containers all, apotropaic instances of art gone bad, and thus warnings to poetic makers whose lyric stanzas, like the sexually charged sestina *cambra* fashioned by Arnaut Daniel, might have once been conducive to the heterosexual form of trespass Dante's Guinizzelli calls *ermafrodito* (*Purg*., xxvi. 82).[46]

Among the fixed stars in *Paradiso* xxvii we find numerous references to fire: the four souls who dialogue with the pilgrim (Peter, James, John, Adam) are 'face / […] accese' [burning torches], and St Peter says 'arrosso e sfavillo' [I redden and spark] (*Par*., xxvii. 54) as he denounces corruption in the Church, taking on the aspect of the planet Mars, traditionally associated with fire (as it is in Dante's *Convivio*), rather than temperate Jupiter.[47] The crimson of both wrath and shame then spreads from Peter to besprinkle the entire Heaven ('vid' ïo allora tutto' l ciel cosperso' [I then saw all Heaven suffused]; l. 30), including Beatrice, whose deep blush is compared to the darkening of the whole universe at the crucifixion. On a brighter note, we find the metaphysical idea of the love that moves the sun and the stars, by virtue of its contiguity with the mind of God in the circumambient Empyrean, 'igniting' the *Primum Mobile*: 'e questo cielo non ha altro *dove* / che la mente divina in che s'accende / l'amor che 'l volge' [and this Heaven has no other *where* than the mind of God, in which is kindled the love that turns it] (*Par*., xxvii. 109–12). The Empyrean itself, too, as Dante knew, means 'Heaven of fire', suggesting a spiritual conflagration kindled by Empyrean *caritas*.[48] If in Dante's famous simile of the resting *villano* the flames of the eighth *bolgia* of Hell are discrete, scattered lights like fireflies seen on a summer evening (*Inf*., xxvi. 25–33), and the ring of fire in *Purgatorio* xxvii walls Purgatory off from Eden all the way around, in *Paradiso* xxvii, in an incandescence that emphasizes the urgency of Peter's invective, Dante imagines a whole celestial sphere becoming incarnadine.

Substituting with rhetorical *tapinosis* a humble for a lofty image, the poet, as we saw, in *Paradiso* xxvii conceives of the *Primum Mobile*, the all-containing sphere of the physical universe, as an earthenware

46 See *The Divine Comedy*, II, pp. 454–55.

47 *Conv*., II. xiii. 21: 'Its heat is similar to that of fire'; for Jupiter, see *Conv*., II. xiii. 25: 'Jupiter is a star of temperate complexion'.

48 *Conv*., II. iii. 8: 'the Catholics posit the empyrean Heaven, which is to say Heaven of fire, or luminous Heaven'.

flowerpot — which might allow us to imagine Dante's entire physical cosmos as nested spherical pots. This metaphorical *testo*, housing the roots of temporal processes that unfold beneath it, anchors several other images of containment in the last canto xxvii. By calling the constellation of Gemini in the starry sphere 'il nido di Leda' [Leda's nest] (l. 98), Dante echoes the use of *alvo* for the gestational fire in Purgatory and recalls the mythological *vacca* containing Pasiphae used to discourage the lustful in Purgatory.[49] Dante makes his natal constellation the birthplace of Helen of Troy, whose egg, as Horace recalls in the *Ars poetica*, originated the Trojan war: Leda's nest is thus the remote beginning of the Roman nation.[50] The nest harbours these meanings by virtue of multiple verbal figures. Metaphorically, the nest is Leda's womb because it sheltered the eggs that contained her offspring; Helen, born from the egg, is the thing contained. These implications are joined to serial metonymies of cause for effect: Helen, 'per cui tanto reo / tempo si volse' [who brought such evil times] (*Inf.*, v. 64–65), was a cause of the war; Leda, and the seed of the swan, Jupiter, were causes of Helen, and so on.[51] The ultimate effect of this series of causes is the pilgrim himself, a descendant of the Trojans and born under Gemini.

The looks back at earth also frame an encapsulating *vision*: the pilgrim's tenure in Gemini, spanning six hours of time, in spatial terms a celestial arc of 90 degrees, beginning on the meridian of Jerusalem and ending on the meridian of Gades, when added to the previous look back in *Paradiso* xxii, permits a complete prospect of the habitable portion of the world, between the Ganges and Gades and slightly beyond. Given the pilgrim's location in Gemini, this prospect reflects Dante's conclusion to the *Questio de aqua et terra*, where he argues that the emergence of the wedge of land over the level of the ocean, so making terrestrial life possible, was effected by the Heaven of the Fixed Stars acting upon the earth immediately after Creation.[52] But the poet's gaze also defines his own scope over the course of the poem:

49 Also the Trojan horse and brazen bull of *Inf.*, xxvi and xxvii; Virgil refers to the former as 'feta armis' [pregnant with arms] (*Aen*. II. 238).

50 *Ars poetica*, lines 147–49. Compare how, in 'Leda and the Swan', W. B. Yeats compresses the futures of Troy and Argos entirely within the moment of Zeus' insemination of Leda: 'a shudder in the loins engenders there / the broken wall, the burning roof and tower, / and Agamemnon dead' (ll. 9–11).

51 Cf. Dante's account in *Epist.* v. 24 of Rome's whole history, founded remotely in Laomedon's refusal of hospitality to the Argonauts, which led to the first sack of Troy under Hercules, and to the rape of Helen.

52 Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Epistole*, *Ecloge*, *Questio de situ et forma aque et terre*, ed. M. P. Stocchi (Padua: Antenore, 2002), p. 267 (*Questio* 70–73). See Armour, 'Canto XXVII', p. 407.

from his perch he sees Ulysses' 'mad track', identifying an episode largely of his own invention, as well as the rape of Europa, which set in motion the fractious history of Thebes, one of the failed cities of the *Inferno*.[53] The look back is thus metapoetic, capturing at a glance what Dante has contemplated within the space and time of human history, within 'l'aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci' [the little threshing floor that makes us so ferocious], but within the formal boundaries of the poem as well. This comprehensive glance justifies Dante's use of *etera* for the starry sphere, the 'rounded aether' (*Par*., xxii. 132) and the 'etera […] adorno' [aether […] adorned] (*Par*., xxvii. 71).[54] The term is used in Proverbs 8:27–28, describing how God and Wisdom first traced the limits of the universe. Dante translated the passage: 'quando con certa legge e certo giro vallava li abissi, quando suso fermava [l'etera] e suspendeva le fonti dell' acque' [when with certain law and certain compass he walled the depths, when he fixed the sky (*etera*) above, and poised the fountains of waters].[55] Dante has thus placed his pilgrim in a position analogous to that of the divine artificer gazing on his creation. The adoption of *etera* along with mention of Ulysses's path beyond Cádiz ('di là da Gade') confirms the metapoetic moment, as the notion of Gades as the boundary of a literary work is set out at the end of the *Poetria nova*, marking the limits of Geoffroi de Vinsauf's didactic enterprise.[56]

What subjects are contained, then, in these explicitly capacious cantos? Necessarily juxtaposed from the canto Twenty-Sevens are Boniface VIII's famously deceptive absolution of Guido da Montefeltro in *Inferno* and St Peter's denunciation in *Paradiso* of several papacies contemporary with Dante. In a recent essay, Ronald Herzman and William Stephany correlate the episodes in which Boniface appears in the poem, including the two canto Twenty-Sevens dealt with here, arguing that Dante's treatment of

53 Cf. the pyre of Eteocles and Polynices in *Inf*., xxvi. 52–54, and *Purg*., xxvi. 94–96, referring to Statius' Hypsipyle (*Thebaid* IV. 718–V. 752). The Europa reference alludes to Statius' exordium to the *Thebaid*, an epic reference. See Franco Fido, 'Writing like God, or Better?: Symmetries in Dante's 26th and 27th Cantos of the *Commedia*', *Italica* 63 (1986), 250–64 (p. 257), who notes the georgic episode in *Inf*., xxvi. 25–30 and the bucolic one in *Purg*., xxvii. 76–84. *Par*., xxvii completes the *rota Virgilii*.

54 'etera tondo' and 'etera addorno' are metrically equivalent and assonant, with *tondo* and *addorno* partial anagrams into the bargain.

55 *Conv*., III. xv. 16. As is well known, *etera* is present by emendation, highly likely given the Scriptural source. Dante arguably knew passages in Aristotle's *De caelo et mundo* i.3 (270 b 24) and iii.3 (302 a 31) that identified the *aether* with fire (supposedly Anaxagoras' view).

56 *Poetria nova*, line 2066, in *Les arts poétiques*, p. 261.

Boniface systematically repudiates the hierocratic claims visible — posted, so to speak — in the frescoes in the chapel of the Quattro Coronati in Rome. The paintings illustrate concessions by Constantine of imperial insignia and privileges to Pope Sylvester, concessions that were fabricated by the author of the fraudulent *Donatio constantini*.[57] The authors underline how the Pope's use of the keys to threaten Guido, a former Ghibelline warlord and promoter of imperial authority in northern Italy, established the high-water mark of papal corruption first set into motion by the Donation, consequences also deplored in *Paradiso* xxvii in the words of St Peter himself, who delivers the tenth and penultimate invective in the *Paradiso*.[58]

The Quattro Coronati frescoes were intended to counter the threat posed to the papacy by Frederick II. Dante's campaign in dispraise of the popes responds in turn to steps taken later in the century to widen the reach of papal power. Perhaps the most significant appropriation, as illustrated in the Quattro Coronati frescoes, was the presumed concession to the Pope of the conical *phrygium* or *regnum*, headgear formerly imperial. In 1273 Gregory X shifted the crowning of the Pope with the *tiara*, or *regnum*, from the Lateran to the Vatican, implicitly enlarging his scope of authority; so that, beginning in the late thirteenth century, ceremonials and pontificals refer to the crowning not as the pope's consecration, but his coronation. This tendency blossomed with the full-scale *imitatio imperii* advanced by Boniface VIII. Pipino's chronicle relates that upon his coronation in 1294, Boniface sat on his throne crowned with the tiara and deemed himself a Caesar and an emperor. Later he made a point of publishing important bulls on 22 February, the feast of Peter's chair, the *cathedra Petri*, while his court theologian and apologist, Giles of Rome, tailored the symbolism of the tiara's topknot so that it could be affirmed that Boniface embodied the Church itself: '*Papa potest dici ecclesia*'.

In addition to insulting imperial dignities, Boniface enhanced his status at the expense of Peter, and of Christ himself: he had himself sculpted

57 For this and the next two paragraphs I rely on Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani, *Le chiavi e la tiara: immagini e simboli del papato medievale* (Rome: Viella, 1998), pp. 13–23, 45–97, 107–08, and Ronald Herzman and William Stephany, 'Dante and the Frescoes at Santi Quattro Coronati', *Speculum* 87 (2012), 95–146; for the *cathedra Petri* as implicitly present in *Inf.*, xix, see John A. Scott, 'The Rock of Peter and *Inferno*, XIX', *Romance Philology* 23 (1970), 462–79.

58 On the invectives, see Reto R. Bezzola, 'Paradiso XXVII', *Letture dantesche*, vol. 3, *Paradiso*, ed. by Giovanni Getto (Florence: Sansoni, 1964), pp. 551–66 (pp. 553–54).

holding Peter's keys in the same pose as the Arnolfo di Cambio bronze of St Peter in the Vatican, and topped it all off by ordering a funeral monument within the Vatican — Peter's sepulchre — representing Boniface, rather than Peter, holding the keys. This programme of arrogance and usurpations plausibly underlies the violence of Peter's outburst in *Paradiso* xxvii referring to Boniface:

> 'Quelli ch' usurpa in terra il luogo mio,
> il luogo mio, il luogo mio, che vaca
> ne la presenza del Figliuol di Dio' (*Par*., xxvii. 22–24)
>
> ['He who on earth usurps my place, my place, my place, which is vacant in the presence of the Son of God'].

But why should the utterance be tripled?

Dante's accounts of papal-imperial relations in the canto Twenty-Sevens of *Inferno* and *Paradiso* focus appropriately on two principal symbols of papal pretension: the keys, the power of opening and closing in Heaven and earth; and the papal throne or seat, broadly understood to include the Vatican, which is St Peter's temple as head of the whole church and, possibly, his gravesite (*cimitero*). Dante's Boniface uses the keys to threaten Guido with damnation,[59] while Dante's St Peter waxes indignant that the keys, which should liberally open the purgatorial gates, are instead brandished as insignia on the battle standards of armies ranged against fellow Christians who oppose papal political ambitions: 'che contra battezzati combattesse' [warring against the baptized] (*Par*., xxvii. 51). These included the Hohenstaufens, Aragonese, Colonnesi, and Ghibellines in general, or indeed the Forlivesi once defended by Guido da Montefeltro against papal and Angevin troops sent by Martin IV in 1282.[60] In this sense, Peter alludes to the 'Italian' crusades preached in order to affirm papal authority, from Alexander IV through Benedict XII.[61]

59 *Inf*., xxvii. 104–05: 'però son due le chiavi, / che il mio antecessor non ebbe care' [for that reason the keys are two, which my predecessor did not prize].

60 *Inf*., xxvii. 44; see Donald L. Galbreath, *Papal Heraldry* (London: Heraldry Today, 1972), p. 6; also Paravicini Bagliani, *Le chiavi*, pp. 46 and 111 on Innocent III and the papal gonfalon, the *vexillum*.

61 See Norman Housley, *The Italian Crusades: The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades Against Christian Lay Powers, 1254–1343* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 13–70.

In short, the *Inferno* and *Paradiso* Twenty-Sevens dramatize Dante's view of the crises afflicting the two chief powers of the medieval world during the papacies of Boniface, Clement V, and John XXII. In *Inferno* xxvii Empire and Church are represented, in a negative light, by Constantine's supposed concessions to Sylvester and by the bargain Boniface strikes with Guido that follows from those concessions. In *Paradiso* xxvii Peter speaks for the Church, while the Empire is implicit in Peter's reference to Scipio, who saved Rome, 'the glory of the world', from Carthage so that it could become the seat 'di madre Roma e di suo impero' [of mother Rome and her empire] (*Inf*., ii. 20). But the corruption of Boniface, whose place yawns vacant in the presence of Christ, and the crisis of governance decried by Beatrice — which might refer both to the vacancy of 1300 created by Boniface's unworthiness, and the vacancy of the imperial office after the death of Henry VII — has created a deficit of both the spiritual and the temporal authorities that should rightly sit in Rome. As Benvenuto da Imola relates, neither temporal nor spiritual authority was to be found, because Boniface had usurped both.[62]

More specifically, Peter's *luogo*, usurped by Boniface, can be correlated both with Peter's chair and with the Vatican cemetery as the place of his burial. Peter's triple exclamation can be linked back to *Inferno* xxvii, where Guido da Montefeltro's advice shows Boniface the way to prevail over the Colonna on his *alto seggio* [high throne],[63] an expression that echoes accounts in consecration ceremonials of the papal seat as a *solium glorie* [glorious threshold].[64] As we know, the Pope's triple iteration of 'il luogo mio' in *Paradiso* xxvii recalls the thrice-mentioned *templum domini* in Jeremiah 7:4, also referred to there as *in loco isto* and *in hoc loco* [in this place] and *in locus meus* [in my place].[65] Significantly, *locus iste* also appears in Antiphons for

62 Thus Benvenuto da Imola: 'quia Bonifacius usurpat utramque potestatem' [for Boniface usurps both powers]. References to Dante's old commentators in this and the next note are taken from the *Dartmouth Dante Project* http://dante.darmouth.edu/. Dante's epistle to the cardinals of 1314 refers to the city as 'deprived of both its lights' (*Epist*. xi.10).

63 *Pace* Mirko Tavoni, 'Guido da Montefeltro dal *Convivio* a Malebolge (*Inferno* XXVII)', in *Qualche Idea su Dante* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015), pp. 251–94 (pp. 264–65), who makes a case for the 'alto seggio' as the citadel of Penestrina Boniface conquers. *Inf*., ii. 24; xvii. 111 and *Par*., xxvii. 22–24 are linked by Francesco Torraca's commentary on *Par*., xxvii. 22–24. If only the citadel is meant, the force of Dante's irony is diminished.

64 *Le pontifical*, XIIIB.41, p. 114, specifically in words from I Samuel 2:8, describing how the elected pope is lifted from the dung (*de stercore*) and placed on the threshold of glory (*solium glorie*).

65 See Jeremiah 7:3 and 7 ('in loco isto'), also 7:12 ('ad locus meus', of the altar at Shiloh).

the dedication of a Church ('*locus iste* est domus dei' [this place is the house of God]), the texts for which are drawn from Jacob's vision at Beth-el of angels rising and descending on a ladder, traditionally the account of the origin of the Church.[66] These words inform St Peter's 'luogo mio', as well as the pilgrim's original reference to Rome in *Inferno* ii. 22–24 as 'established to be the holy place [*loco santo*] where the successor to Peter is enthroned'. And when St Peter announces that Boniface has turned the Vatican *cimitero* into a sewer, a *cloaca*, his meaning includes, again, *Peter's* burial place — located according to tradition under the *aedicula* in St Peter's — but also possibly alluding to the funeral chapel in the Vatican, erected by Boniface during his lifetime and supplemented with Arnolfo di Cambio's lifelike effigy of the Pope holding the keys.[67] Peter's *luogo* is thus at once the *cathedra Petri*, the Temple of the Vatican, and his sepulchre, all occupied illicitly and unworthily by Boniface: it is also, as Peter says, his mystical headship of the Church, which becomes void (*vaca*) in the presence of Christ.

Where then are Church and Empire to be located in *Purgatorio* xxvii, the midmost of our Twenty-Sevens? They are, if anywhere, in the metaphorical crown and mitre that Virgil sets on the pilgrim's head at the canto's end (*Purg.*, xxvii. 139–42). For Kantorowicz, Virgil, in a laicized liturgy modelled on baptism, confers the 'crown of honour and glory' (Psalms 8:6) that attests to the perfection of natural virtue and reason in a superindividual *humanitas* embodied by the pilgrim. As John Scott observes, Virgil's coronation of the pilgrim on the threshold of Eden — or of that earthly felicity that Eden can allegorically represent — certifies his possession of the directive authorities of Empire and Church originally instituted as 'remedies for sin'. As both crown and mitre enclose the head, the Empire and papacy might be said to have devolved within the pilgrim, who is now

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Jeremiah 7:11 ('is this house then […] become a den of robbers?') originates from the New Testament (see note below), specifically the idea of the Church transformed from a house of prayer into a den of thieves. See Rachel Jacoff, 'Dante, Geremia, e la problematica profetica', in *Dante e la Bibbia*, ed. by Giovanni Barblan (Florence: Olschki, 1988), pp. 113–23 (p. 115), and Armour, 'Canto XXVII', pp. 413–14.

66 Genesis 28:10–22. For the dedication liturgy, see *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy; The Ordinals by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243–1307)*, ed. by S. J. P. Van Dijk, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 2, pp. 317–18.

67 Note how Peter's phrasing, 'fatt' ha del cimitero mio cloaca / del sangue e de la puzza' [He has made my burial place a sewer of the blood and stench] (*Par.*, xxvii. 22, 25–26), follows that of Christ on the defilement of his house in Matthew 21:13: 'Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur; vos autem fecistis illam speluncam latronum' [My house was called a house of prayer; you have made it a den of thieves].

ruler over himself ('te sovra te', *Purg*., xxvii. 139–42).[68] Further associations have been offered for Virgil's ritual. Simona Bargetto sees the crowning in relation to the pilgrim's second baptism of fire, and recalls that for Catholic liturgy baptism is a coronation, and 'all true Christians can be called kings and priests'[69] — indeed Christ's invitation in Matthew 25:34, beginning with *Venite, benedicti*, in fact promises a kingdom, a *regnum*.[70] Michelangelo Picone sees the ritual as a transfer of poetic authority from Virgil to Dante, and offers a metapoetic reading of Virgil's lines, 'fuor sei de l'erte vie, fuor sei de l'arte' [you are beyond the steep ways, beyond the narrow] (*Purg*., xxvii. 132), as a reference to the stern discipline of art, topical in rhetorical manuals.[71]

I would hazard, however, that if we exclude the historical struggles of the contemporary papacy and empire, which are implicit in the contested symbols of mitre and tiara, Virgil's ritual cannot be fully understood: the crowning, too, may arguably be seen as a refutation of the Quattro coronati frescoes in which Constantine grants the tiara to Sylvester. As often observed, in contemporary ceremonials both popes and emperors were sequentially crowned both with the two-horned mitre, standing for ecclesiastical authority, and with the *regnum* or diadem, later tiara, associated with temporal power.[72] In light of Boniface's ostentatious insignia it is difficult to overlook Dante's polemical intentions in having the pilgrim crowned not by a pope, who held the prerogative of crowning the emperor, nor indeed by any of the prelates charged with crowning the

68 See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 451–95 (pp. 491–95), and John A. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 180–81. Justin Steinberg, *Dante and the Limits of the Law* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp 54–63, argues that the pilgrim possesses *arbitrium* in the sense of judicial discretion subject to law, rather than unconstricted freedom. See also Albert R. Ascoli, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 329–57.

69 Bargetto, 'Memorie liturgiche', pp. 239–41; see also Mira Mocan, *L'arca della mente, Riccardo di San Vittore in Dante* (Florence: Olschki, 2012), pp. 141–56 (pp. 143–46).

70 The *regnum* prepared for the righteous 'from the foundation of the world' (Matth. 25.34).

71 Michelangelo Picone, '*Purgatorio* 27: Passaggio rituale e *translatio* poetica', *Medioevo romanzo* 12 (1987), 389–402 (p. 391), quoting Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, lines 149–50: 'Thus the way that lies open is more restricted [*artior*] […] its art superior' [*ars major*] (*Les arts poétiques*, p. 201).

72 For the double coronations, see Joan M. Ferrante, The *Political Vision of the Divine Comedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 243–45, and Peter Armour, *Dante's Griffin and the History of the World: A Study of the Earthly Paradise* (Purgatorio, *cantos xxix–xxxiii*) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 143–48.

pope — there are of course none such in Purgatory — but rather by the Roman layman and poet Virgil (although, as Muresu observes, Virgil is anachronistically well informed regarding the Christian dispensation).[73] As several readers take it, given the vacancies in papal and imperial authority this office must fall to Virgil, because only a representative of natural reason, classical ethics ('they left morality to the world', *Purg*., xviii. 69) and Roman law (e.g. *Inf*., xi. 22–66)[74] has sufficient status to confer mitre and crown.[75] Not only does Virgil supplant the authorities of Empire and Church, which Dante felt to be lacking, but the Roman poet corrects the absorption by the papacy of imperial insignia. Furthermore, in light of Paola Rigo's account of the poet's hoped-for *cappello* (*Par*., xxv. 1–12), which she identifies with the *pilleum*, the freedman's cap, this poetic coronation dispels the spectre of Dante forced to wear the defamatory fool's cap (*mitra*) in the ritual imposed on exiles reconciled with the Florentine government.[76] The poetic vector is crucial: Virgil has expertise in poetic coronations, given his own triumphal olive crown in the elaborate ceremonial that begins the third *Georgic* (ll. 1–22). Certainly the emphatic final hemistich of *Purgatorio* xxvii, *corono e mitrio*, acquires considerable resonance through *poetic* means, by the narrower way of art (*via* […] *artior*). The rhyme of *mitrio* with *arbitrio*, which occurs elsewhere in *Purgatorio* only at viii. 113, xvi. 71 and xviii. 74 (the last two exactly framing the center of the poem, as Singleton showed[77]) articulates a fundamental principle of human dignity: the freedom that the pilgrim seeks as he enters Purgatory (*Purg*., i. 71), which Dante refers to in *Monarchia* as God's greatest gift to humankind and the basis of human happiness in this life and in the next.[78] Just as Dante prospectively assigns to his poem the task of overcoming the cruelty of his fellow citizens in

73 Muresu, 'Virgilio', pp. 256–58. Muresu denies any association with Church and Empire and argues that Virgil's words are derived from Ecclesiastes 45:14 (Moses crowning Aaron as high priest) and Exodus 29:6–7. Both texts contributed to the medieval coronation orders.

74 Amedeo Quondam, 'Corona', in *Enciclopedia dantesca*, ed. by Umberto Bosco, 6 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970–1978), II, pp. 212–13 and Domenico Consoli, 'Mitriare', in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, III, p. 979, offer contrasting views.

75 Ferrante, *Political Vision*, p. 43; Ascoli, *Dante and the Making*, p. 356, Steinberg, *Dante and the Limits*, pp. 107, 172, 186n12.

76 Paola Rigo, 'Prenderò il cappello', in *Memoria classica e memoria biblica in Dante* (Florence: Olschki, 1984), pp. 135–63 (pp. 142–51). The *pilleum* is related to the *phrygium*, or *tiara*: see Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, XIX. 31.4: 'The mitre is a phrygian cap, protecting the head' (Migne, *PL* 82.699A).

77 Charles S. Singleton, 'The Poet's Number at the Center', *Dante Studies* 80 (1965), 1–10.

78 See *Par*., v. 19–25 and *Mon*., I. xii.6.

Paradiso xxv. 1–12, and anticipates a future coronation as a poet, it is, more than anything, the *poetry* that fills up the space vacated by other authorities: this is perhaps the benign sense of the author entering and filling his work, '*inbuit auctor opus*'.

Indeed, the political invective of the canto Twenty-Sevens displays poetic, that is, verbal correspondences, linking fire and blood by their common colour. Both the *Inferno* and *Paradiso* Twenty-Sevens register bloodletting by tyrannical violence. In the Romagna that Dante's pilgrim describes to Guido, a 'sanguinoso mucchio' [bloody heap] ensued from Guido's victory over the papal Guelph army besieging Ghibelline Forlì in 1283, with the papal keys as their 'signaculo in vessillo' [emblem on a standard] (*Par*., xxvii. 50). Romagnole tyrants such as the Malatesta suck blood with teeth sharpened into gimlets ('fan dei denti succhio', *Inf*., xxvii. 48).[79] In Paradise, Peter returns to the blood-sucking conceit when accusing the Gascon Bertrand de Got (Clement V), and the Cahorsin Jacques Duèse (John XXII), of preparing to drink the blood of the faithful (*Par*., xxvii. 57–58), in a eucharistic parody that echoes the apocalyptic 'woman drunk on the blood of the saints'.[80]

But the blushing of the crystalline Heaven as if reddened by the setting sun ('il ciel *cosperso*', *Par*., xxvii. 30) announces as well the shedding of blood in sacrifice. Peter avows that he and other early popes nourished the Church, the bride of Christ, 'del sangue mio, di Lin, e di quel di Cleto' [by my blood, by Linus's, by that of Anacletus],[81] as did Sixtus and Pius and Calixtus and Urban, who 'sparser loro sangue dopo molto fleto' [shed their blood after much weeping] in the agonies of martyrdom (*Par*., xxvii. 45). For the purpose of this vertical reading, scattered blood and blushes take us back to *Purgatorio* xxvii, which begins, as we saw, by establishing the time with reference to Jerusalem, the world's center, as the place where Christ shed his blood ('lo sangue sparse'). The word rhyming there with *sparse* is *riarse* [scorched], which associates shed blood with the burning noonday

79 Cf. *Epist*., XI 7:14–15, and the Latin used there for the 'daughters of the horseleech' (*filiae sanguisugae*), that is, daughters of cupidity, who espouse apostaste bishops and cardinals. These prelates may in their turn be called 'sons to shame', *filios ad ruborem*, so collating bloodletting with blushing.

80 See *Apoc*. 17.6: 'And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus'. *Par*. xxvii uses *sangue* three times in eighteen lines.

81 Cf. *Epist*., XI 2, of the sacrifices of Peter and Paul for Rome: 'that Rome […] which the same Peter and Paul […] consecrated as the Apostolic See by the shedding of their own blood'. On blushing and blood in *Paradiso* xxvii see also Jacoff, 'Dante, Geremia', p. 116.

sun on the Ganges, and marks the centre of the system of references to blood, blushes, fire, and sacrifice.

The comparison of the hesitant pilgrim to the dying Pyramus (*Purg*., xxvii. 37–39) means that shed blood is also present, albeit inexplicitly, in the text of the midmost of our canto Twenty-Sevens: Dante's echo of the fable about why the 'mulberry turned crimson' (*Purg*., xxvii. 39) references the copious bloodletting at the end of Ovid's tale. Bargetto refurbishes Francis Fergusson's claim that the reference to Pyramus and Thisbe and their sanguinary end recalls Christ's blood shed on the cross in the first verses of the canto.[82] As the cross of Christ traditionally extends to the four cardinal points, and in Dante's treatment marks the four articulations of the solar day, it may be taken, as we saw, as a figure embracing the whole of space and time. 'Christ's blood streams in the firmament', is how Marlowe's Faustus put it, which may point again to the most comprehensive container of all for Dante's pilgrim, one also suggested by eighty-one, the sum of three twenty-sevens: Christ's age had he lived out his natural life, circumscribing the fullest extent of the human lifespan.

82 Bargetto, 'Memorie liturgiche', pp. 227–28; see Francis Fergusson, *Dante's Drama of the Mind, A Modern Reading of the Purgatorio* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), pp. 162–63, 67. For Pyramus and Thisbe in *Purgatorio*, see Durling's Additional Note 13 in *The Divine Comedy*, II, pp. 618–20.

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