The Dante Commentary of Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle
with reference to the proceedings at the Council of Constance and the Ferrara
Recollectae of Benvenuto da Imola

John David Helps

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Italian

University of Warwick, Department of Italian
November 2020
## Contents

### Acknowledgements

iv

### Declaration and Inclusion of Material from a Prior Thesis

v

### Abstract

vi

### Abbreviations, Referencing and Transcriptions

vii

### Introduction

1

1. Serravalle, the Ferrara *recollectae* and the Council of Constance 1
2. Research Objectives and Methodology 3
3. Argument of the Thesis 5
4. Organization of the Thesis 5

### Chapter 1. Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle (c. 1350-1445)

9

1. The Career of Serravalle 9
2. Serravalle's Commentary on the *Commedia* 12
3. *Chiose Filippine* 32

### Chapter 2. Giovanni da Serravalle and the Council of Constance

36

1. A Synopsis of the Council's Proceedings up to 17 July 1416 41
2. The Careers of Cardinal Saluzzo and Bishops Hallum and Bubwith 44
3. Serravalle and the Council 52
4. The Method for the Election of the New Pope 55
5. The Later Sessions of the Council 58

### Chapter 3. A Comparison between the 'Introduction' to Serravalle's Commentary on the *Commedia* and that of Benvenuto da Imola in the Ferrara *Recollectae*

62

1. Literal and Allegorical Interpretations of the *Commedia* 63
2. The *Accessus ad Auctores* in the Early Dante Commentaries 67
3. The *Accessus ad Auctores* in the 'Preambula' and MS. Ashburnham  839 fol. 3 71
4. Serravalle's 'Preambula' and the Ferrara *Recollectae* 74

### Chapter 4. Serravalle's Treatment of Florence in the *Commedia*

87

1. Florence in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries 90
2. Perceptions of Florence 99
   1. The Repentant Murderer 100
   2. The Political Element in the Sixth Canto of the Three Cantiche 102
3. Florence through the Eyes of Prominent Citizens 110
   1. The Meeting with Farinata degli Uberti 111
2. The Florentine Suicides 114
3. Christian Florence 116
4. The Meeting with Brunetto Latini 118
5. Hypocrisy and the Frati Godenti 122
6. Florence and Pistoia 124
7. The Five Thieves 125
8. The Sowers of Schism 126
9. Florentine Women 127
10. The Plant of the Devil 128
4. The Cacciaguida Cantos 130

Chapter 5. France and England in the Commedia 143
1. The Capetian Dynasty of France 146
2. The French Influence on Italian Politics 148
3. Dante and England 164

Chapter 6. Heresy, Schism, Simony and Reform of the Church 171
1. Serravalle and Church Reform 172
2. Dante's Treatment of Heresy and Schism in the Commedia 180
   1. Farinata, Cavalcante and Epicurean Philosophy 182
   2. Intimations of Heresy in Circle 7, the Circle of the Violent 187
   3. The Sowers of Discord 192
   4. Dante and Plato's Timaeus 198
   5. Allusions to Heresy in Paradiso XI and Paradiso XII 200
3. Dante's Treatment of Simony in the Commedia 204

Conclusion 213

Bibliography 217
Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the University of Warwick for providing the facilities and general scholastic environment necessary for the accomplishment of this research. Invaluable assistance has also been provided by the University of Bristol in granting access to library facilities under the SCONUL access scheme.

The author acknowledges with gratitude the understanding and continued support he has received from his supervisor Professor S.A. Gilson, Agnelli-Serena Professor of Italian in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages at the University of Oxford.

This thesis is dedicated to Margaret Alison Helps (née Rhodes) (1945-2010) whose memory has provided the inspiration for this research and whose support throughout my career I gratefully acknowledge.
Declaration and Inclusion of Material from a Prior Thesis

Some material relating to the Capetian dynasty of France has been drawn from a previous study, namely: John D. Helps, *Dante and the French Monarchy: A study of Purgatorio XX and XXXII and their relation to the commentary tradition 1324-1568*, an unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master by Research in Italian, University of Warwick, Department of Italian, 2012. On p. 149 of the present work it is noted that the discussion involving *Purgatorio* XX considered the contributions to the commentary tradition provided by some of the more important commentators who flourished before the end of the seventeenth century. However, there was only a limited reference to Serravalle's commentary and the Ferrara *recollectae* of Benvenuto da Imola, fundamental to the present study, were not considered at all. Material drawn from the previous study is clearly referenced in this thesis. I confirm that the work was my own and that the thesis was not submitted for a degree at another university.
Abstract

Previous scholarship has established that the *Comentum* of Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle on Dante's *Commedia* (1416-1417) was influenced by the *recollectae* (student notes) of lectures on the poem delivered at Ferrara by Benvenuto da Imola during 1375-1376, with codex Ashburnham 839 held in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence being the only manuscript version to have survived substantially intact. The first objective of this dissertation is to offer further detailed study into how Serravalle incorporates the *recollectae*, or a version related to it, into his *Comentum*. The second objective is to investigate the influence of the Council of Constance (1414-1418) on Serravalle's commentary. To facilitate the second objective, three themes were chosen, namely Dante's treatment of Florence, his understanding of the effect of Anglo-French relations on the politics of Western Europe, and his condemnation of heresy, schism and simony.

The dissertation comprises six chapters. Chapter 1 discusses Serravalle's career, his relationship with the *recollectae*, and judgments on the *Comentum*. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the Council itself and its deliberations. Chapter 3 provides new research with an in-depth investigation into the influence of the prologue of Benvenuto's *recollectae* on the wider ranging *preambula* provided by Serravalle as an introduction to his commentary. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 investigate the three themes noted above, by comparing relevant passages drawn from the *recollectae* and the *Comentum*. A new understanding is provided of Serravalle's practice of embedding the often sparse material of the *recollectae* into a longer gloss where a terse contribution is enhanced with his personal insight. It is shown that, although there are some hints of the deliberations of the Council infiltrating the *Comentum*, there is little hard evidence to demonstrate that they provided a major influence on Serravalle's commentary.
Abbreviations, Referencing and Transcriptions

For the most part references to Serravalle's commentary are taken from the text to be found on the database of the Dartmouth Dante Project (DDP) and are referenced, for example: Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 20.112-114. A similar format is used to reference the work of other commentators held on the DDP database. The practice of the DDP of using Arabic numbers for canto identification is maintained when providing referencing in the footnotes. Elsewhere, in accordance with accepted standards, the identification of a canto is achieved using Roman numerals. The important Dedicatio is not included in the DDP version. In addition, there is a need to facilitate the location of text in the extensive Preambula, since the DDP version provides no page numbering. Therefore, references to the Dedicatio and Preambula of Serravalle's commentary are drawn from the edition: Fratris Johannis de Serravalle, Translatio et commentum totius libri Dantis Aldigherii, cum textu italico fr. Bartholomaei a Colle, ed. padre Marcellino da Civezza and padre Teofilo Domenichelli (Prato: Giachetti, 1891), abbreviated to Serravalle, ed. Civezza and Domenichelli.

In the first reference to an author full details are provided, and in subsequent references to the work only the author's name and the page number are given. If there are references to a second work by the author, after the initial full reference, only a short-form title and the page number are shown.

Transcriptions from Ashburnham 839, a manuscript in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence, which has multiple abbreviations, inconsistent spelling and very limited punctuation, are intended to be as diplomatic as possible. However, some interventions were deemed necessary to make the sense of the transcribed text clear. The letters 'u' and 'v' are distinguished where appropriate, and some limited use of the apostrophe and additional punctuation has been introduced to bring the text into a more modern format. The expansion of the abbreviations and contracted forms has been carried out with the assistance of the Dizionario di Abbreviazioni Latine ed Italiane, ed. Adriano Cappelli 7th edition (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 2011, reprinted 2016). The intention has been to remain as close to the original text as possible. Variant spellings of the same word have been maintained, even when they occur in close proximity, the exception being when a contracted word in the text is matched with an entry in Cappelli's dictionary, the dictionary spelling, which is usually consistent with classical Latin, is used. If a word cannot be deciphered, this is indicated in the text by [ ]. Any exceptions, or difficulties in transcriptions, will be signalled in a note.
Introduction

1. Serravalle, the Ferrara recollectae and the Council of Constance

Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle (c. 1350-1445) was a member of the Order of St. Francis who spent the majority of his early career in various teaching and scholastic appointments.\(^1\) During this time he also distinguished himself as a preacher, and showed evidence of diplomatic promise. In 1405, after his nomination as 'Provinciale dei frati minori delle Marche', his career entered the politico-administrative domain and he is recorded as being at Gaeta in 1410 as private secretary to Pope Gregory XII in whose service he remained after his appointment as bishop of Fermo which occurred around this time.\(^2\) Although there seems to be a tendency to comment somewhat negatively on this aspect of his writing, Serravalle, as he reveals in his commentary, was on good terms with important figures such as Carlo Malatesta, Duke of Rimini and Gregory's proxy at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), and King Ladislaus of Naples at whose court he was present in 1412-1413.\(^3\) Serravalle probably arrived at Constance in the retinue of Carlo Malatesta on 1 February 1415, where, at the request of Cardinal Amadeo di Saluzzo and Bishops Hallum and Bubwith of the English delegation to the Council, he completed a translation of, and commentary to, the Commedia between January 1416 and January 1417.\(^4\) Evidence of Serravalle's standing among his fellow delegates is attested by his being elected president of the Italian nation on two occasions.\(^5\) On 15 December 1418 he was appointed to the important diocese of Fano by the newly-elected pope Martin V.\(^6\) There is no evidence in his personal life, both before and after the Council of Constance, that Serravalle personally departed from the ideals of his Order. The impression given is that of a scholar, an accomplished theologian, a brilliant preacher, a capable administrator and diplomat who was probably known, at least by sight, to the major protagonists at the Council. On the basis of the sentiments expressed in the Dedicatio to his commentary, he was probably conservative in his thinking and deferential to the judgement of higher

---

\(^1\) For an account of Serravalle's career and a summary of the commentary tradition and relevant literature see: Saverio Bellomo, Dizionario dei Commentatori Danteschi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2004), pp. 163-170.

\(^2\) Ibidem.

\(^3\) Ibidem.

\(^4\) Ibidem.


\(^6\) Bellomo, p. 164.
The influence of Benvenuto da Imola on Serravalle's *Comentum* is undeniable. However, it was only with the research of Michele Barbi that attention focussed on the second of Benvenuto's three redactions, commonly referred to as the Ferrara *recollectae* (1375-1376), as Serravalle's main source. The only complete version of the *recollectae* still extant is available as the codex Ashburnham 839, still unpublished in its entirety and held in the Laurentian library. Carlo Paolazzi has provided a compelling argument for Serravalle having had access to a superior version of Benvenuto's lectures at Ferrara than that provided by Ashburnham 839 and for his having probably worked on, at least, an embryonic version of his commentary for several years, perhaps even decades, before his arrival at Constance. More recently, Gennaro Ferrante, by linking features in Ashburnham 839, such as the numerous lacunae in the manuscript, with the corresponding passages in Serravalle's commentary, has strengthened the case for Serravalle having had access to such a superior version of the Ferrara *recollectae*.

Serravalle's commentary is the last of the extant major commentaries on the *Commedia* where the emphasis is on a religious interpretation of the poem. Although Serravalle must have been aware of the trend towards the humanistic approach to contemporary scholarship, his *Comentum* is firmly rooted in the tradition of the early commentators. His only concession to the changing intellectual environment is to be found in the *Dedicatio* to his commentary where he acknowledges that there would be criticism of his rustic Latin and, indeed, there would be people who would question his competence to author such a work. The Ferrara *recollectae* are the work of copyists who presumably were transcribing the notes of a student, or students, who had attended Benvenuto's lectures on the *Commedia*. Serravalle's commentary could be considered, both on the grounds of the development of the glosses under consideration and stylistic language

---

9 Bellomo, p. 146.
10 Carlo Paolazzi, 'Giovanni da Serravalle Espositore della 'Commedia' e Benvenuto da Imola (con nuovi accertamenti sul Laurenziano ASHB. 839)', in *Atti Giornata di studi malatestiani a San Marino* 17 ottobre 1987, ed. Dicastero pubblica istruzione e cultura (Rimini: B. Ghigi, 1990), pp. 5-37.
issues, to represent a personal enhancement of the often terse and incomplete notes of the *recollectae*. Benvenuto's definitive redaction (1379-1383), on the other hand, by its incorporation of further references to classical authors and the use of language much closer to classical Latin than that used by the early commentators, shows evidence of at least some humanistic influence.

It has already been noted that there is a strong probability that Serravalle arrived at Constance with an embryonic version of his commentary. Indeed, it is difficult to accept that influential figures such as Saluzzo and Hallum would have lent their support to such a demanding undertaking if there had not been evidence of substantial initial progress on Serravalle's part. Nevertheless, while the commentary achieved its final form at Constance, there is only one direct reference to Constance itself in Serravalle's commentary, namely the anecdote concerning the impossibility of cultivating pepper in the harsh climate of Constance, to be found in the gloss on *Paradiso* VIII.139-141. Therefore, even when Serravalle is commenting on a theme having strong resonance with the proceedings of the Council such as heresy, there is no direct reference to those resolutions of the Council which would be germane to the gloss. Hence, any attempt to evaluate a possible link with the Council's deliberations on such matters must involve a more subtle process than simply searching the commentary for direct references to Constance.

2. Research Objectives and Methodology

The research described in this thesis has two objectives. By undertaking a close comparison between the glosses on selected themes in the *recollectae* and the corresponding comments in Serravalle's commentary, it is intended to attempt an evaluation of the degree of Serravalle's dependence on the *recollectae*. This goes further than previous work in that some of Serravalle's long glosses on important themes are investigated, with consideration being given to the way in which Serravalle incorporates, and elaborates on, the much shorter comments of the *recollectae*, which in turn results in the gloss reflecting his personal judgment of the issues under consideration. The second objective is to consider the possible influence of the ambiance or possibly the daily proceedings of the Council of Constance on Serravalle as he wrote his commentary. The primary objective of the Council was the resolution of the Western Schism, which had resulted in three separate Obediences. Important, but secondary objectives were the repression of the Hussite heresy in Bohemia and the general reform of ecclesiastical malpractices deemed to be detrimental to the standing of the Church in the communities.
which it served.

The methodology, employed in evaluating the potential impact of the Council of Constance on Serravalle's *Comentum*, also served as the vehicle for assessing the degree of Serravalle's dependence on the *recollectae*. A close comparison was made between the glosses of the *recollectae* and those of the *Comentum* on selected issues. In the first instance the *accessus ad auctorem* of the *recollectae* was compared with the much longer *Preambula* of Serravalle's commentary. This was followed by the consideration of three themes which were chosen not only because they were subjected to detailed consideration in the *Comentum*, but also because they were resonant with the ambiance of the Council, whether at a political level or at a more general cultural or commercial level. Florence was chosen as the first theme for three reasons. Firstly, both commentators were known to have had at least some knowledge of the city, with Benvenuto having attended Boccaccio's lectures on Dante, and Serravalle having served two successful terms teaching theology at Santa Croce. Secondly, there was a strong mercantile and humanistic Florentine presence at the Council, which included Cardinal Zabarella who was regarded as a serious candidate for the papacy should an election be deemed necessary. Thirdly, Dante's relationship with Florence forms a major thematic set of concerns in the *Commedia*. The second theme is Dante's treatment of England and France in the poem. The delegations of France and England were important constituents of the Council, with Bishop Hallum a major presence whose activities on behalf of Henry V represented a constant source of concern to the French delegation. During the timespan of the Council, Henry V was campaigning in France, and, although he never attended the Council, his influence was a constant reminder of contemporary political realities. The third theme involves matters pertaining to the Church. The topics of schism and heresy play important parts in the *Commedia*, and, in addition, Dante was a stern critic of some common practices involving the hierarchy of the medieval Church.

The objectives of the Council have been noted above. The Western Schism was resolved with the election of Martin V as Pope and the issues of heresy were mainly brought under control by the posthumous condemnation of Wycliffe, and the executions of John Hus and Jerome of Prague, although problems in Bohemia were still a cause for concern long after the dissolution of the Council. The reform of the Church was considered in session 43 of the Council and, although certain statutes were promulgated, a serious

---

12 Bellomo, p. 142: '… dopo aver udito a Firenze, per alcuni mesi tra il 1373 e il 1374, le lezioni dantesche di Boccaccio …'
attempt at reform was postponed. Serravalle was particularly concerned with the necessity for reform and, indeed, this was the main feature of his homily 'Caro mea vere est cibus' which he preached before the congregation at Constance in 1416. Therefore, when assessing a gloss on Dante's verses invoking comments on heresy, schism and malpractice among the clergy, one might reasonably expect to find some reference to the events before the Council, if only to provide an update for the reader concerning problems which had been long a source of difficulty for the Church.

3. Argument of the Thesis
By giving consideration to Serravalle’s distinguished career as a teacher, preacher, administrator and occasional diplomat it is argued that Serravalle arrived at the Council of Constance as an important delegate of the Italian Nation. The bishop of Fermo soon demonstrated that he had important connections at whose request he undertook to provide a translation of and commentary to the Commedia. It is shown that Serravalle’s interest in Dante’s work probably dated at least from the time of Benvenuto da Imola’s lectures on the Commedia over the period 1375-1376. It is argued that some version of the recollectae of these lectures, probably superior to those preserved in Ashburnham 839, formed the basis of an embryonic work on which he worked during the decades prior to his arrival at Constance. In the work that follows the intention is to investigate the degree of this dependence by effecting a comparison of chosen themes drawn from the recollectae and Serravalle’s comentum.

The Council of Constance was an important ecumenical council which resolved the Western Schism, took action against the Bohemian heresy and considered some aspects of Church reform. The topics of schism, heresy and reform of the Church are treated as important elements by Dante in the Commedia. As a member of the Order of St. Francis the bishop of Fermo would also have had a professional interest in the first two topics. However, it is shown that the reform of the Church was of special concern to Serravalle. It is argued that it should be possible to trace some evidence of the influence of the proceedings of the Council on the writing of the comentum when Serravalle was commenting on Dante’s treatment of such topics in the Commedia.

4. Organization of the Thesis
An overview of Serravalle's career before the inauguration of the Council of Constance in 1415 is provided in Chapter One. This charts his progress as a lecturer in theology,
inspirational preacher and occasional diplomat before his appointment as private secretary to Pope Gregory XII and his installation as Bishop of Fermo. An investigation, following the work of Carlo Paolazzi and, more recently, Gennaro Ferrante, into quantifying the link between Serravalle's Comentum and a version of Benvenuto da Imola's Ferrara recollectae, not necessarily the one provided in Ashburnham 839, follows. Some tentative comments referring to the significance of the Chiose Filippine, a complex stratification of glosses with those identified as being the work of 'hand B' being almost identical to the corresponding elements of Serravalle's Comentum, are provided. The chapter concludes with some discussion on the modern reception of the commentary, which has not always been entirely positive.

While the forty five sessions of the Council are reviewed, for the most part briefly, in Chapter Two, those sessions, which provide a description of the decision-making processes relevant to the key issues before the Council, are considered in more detail. This is notably the case with the mechanism for electing the new pope. Several of the participants and functionaries at the Council kept diaries recording key events, with the diary of Guillaume Fillastre, Cardinal-Priest of St. Mark, a key member of the French delegation and a principal protagonist in the deliberations of the Council, being especially important for this study. The careers of Cardinal Saluzzo and Bishops Bubwith and Hallum are outlined. As the leader of the English Nation Bishop Hallum played a key part in promoting the political objectives of Henry V of England. After Hallum's untimely death, Henry's interests, chiefly the choice of a Pope who would not be inimical to his initiatives in France, were pursued by Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and effectively Hallum's replacement, which resulted in the election of Pope Martin V. Serravalle's contribution to the debate surrounding the reform of the Church is considered, with attention being drawn to the Dedicatio to his commentary in which he states his objectives and considers the criticism he expected to receive.

The introductory lecture to a course delivered in the Middle Ages would be expected to include basic information relative to the work under consideration. This lecture would then become an accessus ad auctorem at the beginning of a manuscript version of the course. The accessus would follow an established format and in the case of the Ferrara recollectae the accessus can only be considered as providing basic information. On the other hand, Serravalle's Preambula, which in effect form an Introduction to the Comentum, contain not only a comprehensive accessus, but also act as a compendium of useful material, often at an elementary level, which would help any reader who had a
knowledge of medieval Latin to place in context some of the issues raised in the *Commedia*. The *Preambula* are known, from internal evidence, to date to 1416 and, hence, must have been written at Constance. Chapter 3 provides a review of the *accessus* methodology exhibited by the early commentators on the *Commedia*. This is followed by a comparison between the *accessus* of the *recollectae* and those elements of the *Preambula* which have been identified as providing a vehicle for the assessment of any influence of the former on the latter work. It is demonstrated that there is sufficient evidence that elements of Benvenuto's *accessus*, often considerably embellished, are to be found in Serravalle's *Preambula*. Although the *Preambula* were written contemporaneously with the Council's preoccupations relating to 1416, no evidence can be found to support the suggestion that these deliberations might have influenced Serravalle's commentary.

Chapter Four is devoted to considering the implications of the often censorious judgement with which Dante assessed the perceived moral and political failings relating to his native city. Serravalle's interpretation of the events and opinions, expressed in Dante's poetry across all three cantiche, is compared with that of Benvenuto in the *recollectae*, with sufficient commonality being found to confirm a link between the two commentaries. It has already been noted that there was a substantial Florentine presence at the Council and, in view of Serravalle's known sympathetic affinity with the people of Florence, his commentary is assessed for any evidence of influence from such sources. No direct evidence can be found linking Serravalle's *Comentum* to the interventions of prominent citizens of Florence, such as Cardinal Zabarella, in attendance at Constance. Serravalle's own personal initiatives in this respect are datable to his two tenures at Santa Croce some twenty years earlier.

From the time of the Norman conquest of England the political environment of Western Europe was affected by the tensions in Anglo-French relations, brought about by the English Monarch's owing allegiance to the French king for his territories in France. The success with which members of the Capetian Dynasty of France exploited these tensions contributed to the pre-eminence of the France of Dante's lifetime, being evident in France's meddling in Italian politics which Dante so clearly deplored. Western European politics in the century after Dante's death continued to be bedevilled by Anglo-French rivalries, made manifest by the Hundred Years War. The English king, Henry V, was pursuing a successful military campaign in France throughout the duration of the Council and his influence on the Council's proceedings through his delegation, as Cardinal Fillastre's diary makes clear, was considerable. In Chapter Five it is shown that, while the
correspondence between the *recollectae* and Serravalle's *Comentum* is substantially unchanged from that to be found previously, Serravalle makes no attempt to broaden the discussion concerning Dante's references to Anglo-French relations to the political events influencing the Council. The pressures, exerted by Bishop Hallum and his successor Bishop Beaufort on behalf of Henry V, on all the major issues before the Council must have been evident to any observer, including the politically astute Bishop of Fermo.

Chapter Six is devoted to the issues raised by Dante's treatment of the themes of heresy, schism, simony and the related problem of the reform of the Church. The *Commedia* was written at a time when the socio-political implications of evolving heretical concepts were not seen to be so dangerously damaging that a concerted effort on the part of the Catholic Church was needed for their suppression. On the other hand, the Lollard movement in England and the Hussite heresy in Bohemia, both owing their inspiration to Wycliffe's teachings, were sources of serious political and social disturbance which required the intervention of the Church at the highest level. The problems caused by the Western Schism postdated Dante's era, leaving only the general condemnation of simony and related issues common to both the *Commedia* and the *Comentum*. The reform of ecclesiastical malpractice was an ongoing issue at Constance. However, it was clearly of least importance to the Council, and the modest attempts at reform occupied the Council only after Martin's election as pope and, hence, occurred after the completion of the *Comentum*. By effecting a close comparison between the glosses of the *recollectae* and those of Serravalle's commentary on the above issues, a similar pattern, reflecting the state of dependence of the latter commentary on the former, continues to be evident. However, there is some evidence that Serravalle's personal interest in reform, made manifest by events at Constance and particularly by the contents of his homily 'Caro mea vere est cibus' delivered there, is reflected in his glosses on these topics.
Chapter 1

Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle (c. 1350-1445)

Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle probably arrived at Constance in 1415 some months after Pope John XXIII opened the Council on 5 November 1414. The delegates to the Council were effectively grouped into 'nations', with the bishop of Fermo being an important member of the Italian nation. During the course of a career as lecturer in theology, preacher, administrator and occasional diplomat he had either served, or established some sort of rapport, with important figures in the ecclesiastical politics of early fifteenth century Italy.

The main objectives of this chapter are firstly to provide an outline of what is known concerning Serravalle's life and career, and secondly to discuss the Translatio et Comentum in terms consistent with setting the material in succeeding chapters in their proper context. The important highlights in what was essentially a scholastic and teaching career from about 1375 until his appointment as personal secretary to Pope Gregory XII in about 1410 are discussed. After 1410, Serravalle's career became more involved with administrative and diplomatic concerns, culminating in his presence at Constance where he served on two occasions as president of the Italian delegation, preached before the Assembly on the need for Church reform and, at the request of three important ecclesiastics, undertook the task of providing a translation of, and commentary to, the Commedia.

The primary documents important for this research are considered, with some version of Benvenuto's Ferrara recollectae being established as the principal source for Serravalle's Comentum. This identification is achieved by reference to the contribution of Michele Barbi, and more significantly to the more recent research of Carlo Paolazzi and Gennaro Ferrante who have established that the version of the recollectae on which Serravalle drew was probably superior to that to be found in MS. Ashburnham 839. Unfortunately, this presumed superior copy has not survived. Attention is also given to the possible influence of an obscure codex, known as the Chiose Filippine, on the study of Serravalle's commentary. The chapter concludes with a general discussion which attempts to set the perceived aims of the author in a suitable context.

1. The Career of Serravalle

Teodosio Lombardi has provided a comprehensive and sympathetic account of
Serravalle's life and career,¹ and a shorter version, concentrating on the more important details, may be found in the entry written by Giovanni Ferràù in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca.*² However, for present purposes the succinct details provided by Saverio Bellomo of Serravalle's life up to the end of the Council of Constance in 1418 will suffice to indicate the key appointments in his career.³

Giovanni Bertoldi was born around 1350 at Serravalle, and in 1379 he was definitely in post as *lector* of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* in the convent of St. Francis in Ferrara.⁴ In 1383 he was at the Franciscan convent at Padua; in 1387 he was appointed to teach moral philosophy at Pavia; and Boniface IX, three years later, appointed him as *lector* in theology at the school of the Palazzo Apostolico.⁵ In 1391 he was once again *magister* at Padua, in 1392 he acted as vicar for the Bishop of San Leo on a mission to San Marino, and between 1393 and 1397, and again between 1400 and 1404, he taught theology at the Franciscum *Studium* in Santa Croce.⁶ As Bellomo notes, it is difficult to believe that in his two sojourns in Florence Serravalle did not come into contact with important cultural figures such as Luigi Marsili, and, perhaps more significantly, Coluccio Salutati and Filippo Villani, both of whom had a strong interest in Dante's work.⁷ In 1398 Serravalle went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land,⁸ and between 1400 and 1401 he took on the duties of *lector* in theology at Perugia where he also acted as ambassador on missions to Foligno and Spoleto.⁹ In 1405 he was appointed *Provinciale dei frati minori delle Marche.* In 1410 he was at Gaeta as private secretary to Pope Gregory XII, and around this time he was appointed bishop of Fermo.¹⁰ Serravalle's participation in the Council of Constance probably dates from 1415-1418,¹¹ since the first reference to the bishop of Fermo is dated 4 February 1416, although he must have been present earlier since the date for the commencement of the commentary to the *Commedia* is attested as 1 February

---

³ Bellomo, pp. 163-164.
⁴ Bellomo, p. 163.
⁵ Ibidem.
⁶ Ibidem.
⁸ Serravalle, *DDP*, *Inferno* 34.115-117.
⁹ Bellomo, p. 163.
¹⁰ Ibidem.
¹¹ Ibidem.
He was appointed Bishop of Fano on 15 December 1418 by the new pope, Martin V, and died there in 1445.

Gennaro Ferrante in a more recent contribution has provided some insight, based on reasonable deductions, into Serravalle's career prior to the secure dating of 1379 for his presence in the convent of St. Francis at Ferrara. This secure date is especially important because it allows a tentative reconstruction of Serravalle's early career, as well as giving an indication of his year of birth. Following the work of Celestino Piana, Ferrante and others have suggested that the date of Serravalle's birth was probably around 1350. This is based on Serravalle's position of bacchalarius formatus in the convent of St. Francis at Ferrara in 1379, a status which by papal edict he would not have been expected to attain before reaching the age of thirty. As Ferrante indicates: 'Tuttora non conosciamo l'anno preciso in cui egli acquisí il grado di bacchalarius formatus, né tantomeno lo Studio e la data in cui fu licentiatus. È certo che non conseguí la laurea in filosofia e teologia a Bologna, mancando ivi il suo nome nella matricola dei laureati.' However, it is clearly plausible that Serravalle was at Ferrara in 1375 and could have attended Benvenuto's lectures, making his own notes, or even possibly have had access to Benvenuto's own notes for his lectures. Ferrante, while providing little that is new in the secure dating of the important stages in Serravalle's career, enhances the bare details sufficiently to provide a better understanding of Serravalle's merits as an administrator and diplomat. Serravalle was clearly on good terms with Carlo Malatesta and he was Gregory XII's representative at the court of King Ladislaus of Naples from 1412-1414. This, in turn, gives some plausibility to a hypothesis concerning Serravalle's translation.

12 Ibidem.
13 Ibidem.
16 For example, Paolazzi and Bellomo.
17 Ferrante, 'Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle', p. 224. Serravalle's presence in the convent of St. Francis a Ferrara is attested in a 'documento notarile'.
18 See Paolazzi, p. 6. Bellomo, p. 163, comments more succinctly: '... dunque probabilmente stava compiendo il tirocinio biennale in vista del dottorato conseguibile, secondo una norma papale emanata proprio in quegli anni, non prima del raggiungimento del trentesimo anno di età.'
19 Ferrante, 'Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle', p. 224. Ferrante also notes that the only, and insecure, trace of Serravalle's having spent time in Bologna during his education/training is to be found in a document of October 1378 in which there is a hint of the presence of two 'frater Johannes de Serravalle' at the convent of St Francis at Bologna.
from Fermo to Fano so shortly after Martin V's election as pope. Martin at the time of his election could not return at once to Rome since the city was occupied by troops loyal to Queen Joanna II, the sister and heiress of Ladislaus. It was clearly in Martin's interest to preserve the loyalty of Malatesta, and this would have been assisted by the appointment of a bishop, whose allegiance to a duly elected pope and whose competence were beyond doubt, to a diocese which included Rimini. Malatesta's administration of his own dukedom of Rimini, would, of course, have been considerably assisted if the diocese were to be headed by a bishop with whom he had already established a position of trust and mutual respect. Serravalle's career after the formal end of the Council of Constance is outside the scope of the present work. However, it is evident that his political skills continued to be in demand.21

2. Serravalle's Commentary on the Commedia
The publication of the Civezza and Domenichelli edition of Serravalle's commentary could be considered to mark the start of a reassessment of Serravalle's place in the commentary tradition of Dante's masterpiece. As a starting point for this reassessment, the main critical treatments are summarized. As Saverio Bellomo notes, an early (and highly critical) assessment was provided by Ugo Foscolo in 1825.22 A very negative was the view of G. L. Hamilton who focussed not only on a common criticism that the commentary was largely a reworking of what is now called the final redaction of the commentary of Benvenuto da Imola, but also provided a scathing rejection of Serravalle's much criticised assertion that Dante had studied at Oxford.23

Michele Barbi succeeded in providing convincing evidence that the major source for Serravalle's commentary was not Benvenuto's final redaction of 1379-1383, but some version of the recollectae of his lectures given at Ferrara during the period winter to summer of 1375-1376.24 Carlo Dionisotti, with reference to the political and social climate of the late fourteenth century and early fifteenth century, prevailing not only in Florence

---

21 Ferrante, 'Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle', p. 228: 'A parte formali incarichi di rappresentanza presso la Curia papale e presso i signori di Rimini, la sua tempra di politico esperto e capace si mostrò in poche occasioni, come nel maggio del 1431, quando dovette sedere una rivolta della popolazione contro di lui e contro il clero della città, e nell'ottobre dello stesso anno, quando condannò a morte il parroco don Matteo Buratelli, reo di aver congiurato con il popolo contro Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, signore di Fano insieme al fratello. Nel 1434, poi, Sigismondo lo inviò a Firenze per ristabilire la pace tra lui e papa Eugenio IV, incarico che il nostro portò felicemente a termine.' Bellomo, p. 165.

22 Bellomo, p. 165.


24 Barbi, pp. 79-98, and Bellomo, p. 169.
but also in Italy in general and which was very different from that of Dante's time, sets Serravalle's commentary in the conciliar framework of the early fifteenth century. 25 Dionisotti's emphasis invokes the requirement for Serravalle to provide a translation and commentary to the Commedia consistent with the needs of an educated, but multi-national audience, whose common language would be the Latin used in their everyday commitments, rather than the neo-classical Latin being developed, or restored, by the humanist movement. Robert Hollander, while noting that Serravalle relies heavily on Benvenuto – referring to him as his magister in five separate passages in his commentary – considers that there are sufficient examples of Serravalle's provision of new insight for his commentary to warrant further study, with the additional factor that the timespan between this commentary and that of Cristoforo Landino – approximately 65 years – could be considered to represent the transition from the medieval to the renaissance reception of the Commedia. 26 Serravalle's dependence on the Ferrara recollectae of Benvenuto has been comprehensively researched by Carlo Paolazzi, leading Paolazzi to the conclusion that the prime source for Serravalle's commentary was not Ashburnham 839, but a superior copy, now lost, which, according to Paolazzi, had probably been in Serravalle's possession since the winter of 1375 to 1376, when it is presumed that he heard Benvenuto's lectures on Dante. 27 While it cannot entirely be discounted that Serravalle might have had some limited access to Benvenuto's final redaction, composed between 1379 and 1383, on both stylistic grounds and content, the overall impression is that his commentary owes nothing to Benvenuto's final redaction and that the Comentum represents a natural development from the Ferrara recollectae.

Benvenuto's first redaction, usually referred to as the Bologna recollectae, is only available as a late copy, dated 1474, in the hand of the copyist Stefano Talice da Ricaldone. 28 The only complete copy of the Ferrara recollectae exists as the manuscript Ashburnham 839, at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. 29 The commentaries on Inferno and Paradiso are in several hands, but, while the parchment shows evidence of reuse, for

27 Paolazzi, pp. 5-37.
29 Bellomo, pp. 146-147. Bellomo lists four versions of the recollectae, but only Ashburnham 839 is complete.
the most part the palimpsest has been well prepared, resulting in a clear text with very little background 'noise' in the case of *Inferno*, while the 'noise' for *Paradiso* is negligible. The copious abbreviations, common in medieval texts, used by the copyists are usually consistent and, almost certainly for *Inferno* and probably for *Paradiso*, the texts predate 1381. *Purgatorio* is in the hand of Tedaldo della Casa, who was at Burgo San Donnino in 1381 where he is known to have transcribed the *recollectae* of Benvenuto's lectures on *Purgatorio*. Della Casa donated his library to Santa Croce in 1406, and is presumed to have died shortly after 1409. Della Casa's palimpsest may well have been meant for his own personal use: the manuscript preserves evident signs of re-use (the scraping of the previous text is not done to a high standard) and uses a number of (sometimes idiosyncratic) abbreviations. These two factors, in addition to the imperfections of the reproduction available through the photocopying procedure, have made for a very hard text to read.

There are further differences in the commentary on the three *cantiche*. The text of *Purgatorio* differs from the rest of the manuscript in being written in double-(rather than single-) column format. A quirk in pagination at the end of *Inferno* suggests that della Casa had available to him the text of Benvenuto’s Ferrara *recollectae* of *Inferno* before copying *Purgatorio*. No such elements help date della Casa’s acquisition of the *recollectae* of *Paradiso*.

Throughout the dissertation it is sometimes appropriate to make reference to Benvenuto's final redaction (1379-1383). A comprehensive listing of the surviving manuscripts is available in the *Dizionario dei commentatori danteschi*. However, all references to the final redaction in this thesis are taken from the version to be found on the *DDP* database. This, in turn, is based on: *Benvenuti de Rambaldis de Imola Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam*, nunc primum integre in lucem editum sumptibus

---

30 Bellomo, p. 146: ‘Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 839, misto, datato 1381 per il *Purgatorio*, di mano di Tedaldo della Casa, a cavallo tra XIV e XV sec. le altre cantiche di altra mano.’
32 Ibidem.
33 Ibidem.
34 Folio 74v contains the last page of the commentary to *Inferno* XXXIV, while 74r contains the first page of the commentary to *Purgatorio* I, with this side divided into two columns and the text written in a distinctive hand, which Bellomo identifies as that of della Casa. Folio 74rb ends with the beginning of a gloss on *Purgatorio* I.21, ‘velando i Pesci ch'erano in sua scorta’, which continues naturally on folio 75va with: ‘velando: celando quia erat in lucida que obfuscabat signum in quo erat.’
35 Della Casa’s copying of *Purgatorio* ends on folio 116v with folio 116r blank. Folio 117 is blank on both ‘pages’. Folio 118v is blank, with the *recollectae* of *Paradiso* commencing on folio 118r.
36 Bellomo, pp. 147-155.
Guilielmi Warren Vernon, ed J. P. Lacaita (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1887). Details of the surviving manuscripts of Serravalle's *Comentum* together with a full bibliography are to be found in Bellomo and Ferrante. Of the five manuscripts listed by Bellomo the most important one for the present work is that containing the *Comentum* and the translation into Latin of the *Commedia* to be found in the Vatican library and dating to the first half of the fifteenth century. The references to Serravalle's *Comentum* in this dissertation are mainly taken from the commentary on the *DDP* database, which in turn is based on the late nineteenth century edition: *Fratris Johannis de Serravalle, Translatio et comentum totius libri Dantis Aldigherii, cum textu italic fr. Bartholomaei a Colle*, ed. padre Marcellino da Civezza and padre Teofilo Domenichelli (Prato: Giachetti, 1891). This imposing volume contains not only the *Comentum* and Serravalle's translation into Latin, but also the text of the *Commedia* ascribed to Bartolomeo di Colle (1481). The *Dedicatio* at the beginning of the Civezza and Domenichelli edition, which is not included in the *DDP* database, provides definitive information concerning the location (Constance), date of the work (1 February 1416 to 16 January 1417) and, in addition, identifies Cardinal Amedeo di Saluzzo and Bishops Bubwith and Hallam as the inspiration and motivation for the translation and commentary. In view of Dante's opinions, clearly expressed in the *Commedia*, concerning the separation of temporal and spiritual power and his criticism of the worldly behaviour of some of the high clergy of the Church, it might well be thought surprising that Serravalle, and the three dignitaries of the Church, would have thought that the production of a translation into Latin of Dante's masterpiece, together with the accompanying commentary, would have found a receptive audience at the Council of Constance, given the fraught nature of the Council's

40 *DDP*, Biographical Information about the Commentaries: Joannis de Serravalle, 1416-17. Ferrante notes that this edition is based on mss. Vat. Lat. 7566, 7567 and 7568, representing the three *cantiche* in succession. (Ferrante, 'Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle', p. 237.)
42 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., *Dedicatio*. 

15
proceedings. Serravalle offers his excuses for his 'rustic' Latin and his failings as a translator. However, it should be noted that Serravalle makes a very determined effort to absolve himself from any suggestion that he is departing from orthodox teachings of scripture.

The *recollectae* of the course held earlier at Bologna in 1375 by Benvenuto open with a citation from the translation of the *Poetics* of Aristotle by Averroes, namely 'Ipse est mare inundans ...', and the same quotation is to be found in Benvenuto's final redaction, although it occurs in the 'Introduction' immediately after the lengthy dedication to Nicholas II, Marquis of Este. However, there is no trace of this citation in Ashburnham 839. Paolazzi uses distinctive features of the Ferrara *recollectae* to illustrate his opinion that Serravalle's *Comentum* derives from a version different from that to be found in Ashburnham 839. Throughout the Ferrara *recollectae* there are to be found gaps in the text of varying length, referred to as 'lacunae'. As the following examples reveal, it is unlikely that the copyists have used them as delimiting markers. It is also important to note that these lacunae represent, for whatever reason, omissions on the part of the copyists, and are in no way explainable by physical defects in the palimpsests. Because Serravalle follows closely Benvenuto's organization of the commentary, it is possible to 'align' the positions of lacunae in MS. Ashburnham 839 with sections of text which Serravalle has used to fill the void. In the examples, shown below, Paolazzi's notation is used where the symbol [ ] marks the point at which the lacuna is replaced by Serravalle's interpretation of a suitable

---

44 Paolazzi, p. 17: ‘… Dante: un poeta, è noto, appassionato fautore della riforma ecclesiale, della distinzione tra potere spirituale e temporale, e soprattutto dell'origine provvidenziale e divina del potere imperiale, teoria quest’ultima per la quale il suo trattato *Monarchia* era stato bruciato sulle piazzze come eretico e sarebbe rimasto confinato all’indice dei libri proibiti fino al 1881.’ However, Dionisotti argues for a more positive assessment of the effects of the Council; see Dionisotti, p. 175: ‘È difficile immaginare uno sfondo che meglio dell’età conciliare, nel primo ventennio del Quattrocento, da Pisa a Costanza, giustifichi la reviviscenza dopo circa un secolo del messaggio politico e religioso di Dante e ne spieghi il successo su un piano non soltanto fiorentino, ma anche e in ispecie italiano e europeo.’

45 On commenting on Serravalle's Latin, Paolazzi, p. 17, notes, referring to the Ferrara *recollectae*: ‘… anche se non si può dimenticare che lo stesso Benvenuto da Imola, maestro del Serravalle e commentatore ben più impegnato, usa un latino scolastico privo di vezzi stilistici e del tutto analogo a quello del suo allievo.’

46 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed. p. 5.

47 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 6: ‘... quam translationem et quam expositionem, sive quod comentum, vestris Reverendissimis Paternitatibus transmicto, ut videre dignemini, corrigere, et abbreviare vel dilatare, laudare vel vituperare, abiacere vel retinere. Et in his, si, pro quia aliquid inutile, ineptumque et incomptum reperiets, [admirabimini], michi et mee ignorantie adscribatur. Sì quid vero bonum, vel commendable et utile in his fuerit, illi laus sit et gloria, qui cuncta disposit in pondere, numero et mensura. Amen.’

48 Paolazzi, p. 19.
Throughout the Ferrara recollectae words in italics in the extracts from the recollectae signify quotations from the Commedia, while words in bold type in the extracts from Serravalle's commentary signify quotations from Serravalle's own translation. The first example is drawn from Inferno IV.107-110, and the second from Purgatorio XXVII.1-6.

Ferrara recollectae

... fiumicello, intellige vanitatem mundanam fluxibilem, et deffendit istud castrum ne veniant ignorantes [lacuna di 1 rigo]; questo passammo, ad notandum quod isti tales res vanas et fortuitas miserunt sub pedibus, ideo pervenerunt ad istud castrum.

Serravalle

... Muris defensatis in circm ab uno pulchro flumello; idest parvo flumine. Iste fluvius est vanitas mundi fluxibilis, qui tamen defendit istud castrum, ne veniant ignorantes. [ ] Hunc, scilicet fluvium, transivimus sicut terram duram: ad denotandum, quod vanitatem et fortunam submiserunt sub pedibus: ideo pervenerunt ad castrum sapientie.

Ferrara recollectae

... sotto l'altra Libra, quia ibi oriens noster erat oppositus. Dicit [lacuna di ½ rigo]. Dicit Libra, quia Aries Libram a poetis vocatur, quia facit equinoctium sicud et Libra.

Serravalle

... sub alia Libra. Ibero: idest occidente, cuius oriens nostrum est oppositum. [ ] Dicitur hic Libra, quia sepe poete vocant Arietem Libram, quia facit equinoxium sicut Libra.

These examples represent the most straightforward cases where Serravalle's exposition differs little from that of Benvenuto. It is readily seen that the words bracketing the lacunae of the recollectae reappear in Serravalle's commentary, with some modification but strictly in context. Paolazzi suggests that comparison of such texts acts as 'riprova che il suo antografo recava la stessa lacuna del codice di Santa Croce (Ashburnham 839).'

---

49 It should be noted that there is regular disagreement between the references provided by Paolazzi concerning MS. Ashburnham 839 and those obtained by the present writer from his own copy of the manuscript. For example, in the first example below Paolazzi indicates that the reference is to MS. Ashburnham 839, fol. 15v, while the plates available to the present writer would indicate MS. Ashburnham 839, fol. 15r. In addition, Paolazzi cites from the Civezza and Domenichelli edition of Serravalle's commentary, while in the examples which follow the citation will always be from the DDP database. This distinction is necessary because the DDP version shows evidence of occasional editing, while remaining substantially faithful to the Civezza and Domenichelli edition.

50 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 15r. (Paolazzi: Ashb. 839, fol. 15v, p. 20.)
52 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 107va. (Paolazzi: Ashb. 839, fol. 106va, p. 21.)
53 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 27.1-6.
54 Paolazzi, p. 21.
Further consideration of Serravalle's handling of the lacunae in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} leads to the conclusion that his interventions can reflect a tendency to withhold an appropriate comment or even to offer his own personal, and possibly unhelpful, contribution.\footnote{Paolazzi, p. 21: 'Altrove un vuoto d'informazione nella sua fonte (come permettono di controllare le finistrelle’ dell’Ashb. 839) induce il Serravalle, per fretta o per distrazione, a omettere sezioni della \textit{Commedia} con relativo commento, o a colmare il vuoto con interpretazioni cervellottiche e contradditorie, del tutto estranee alla tradizione esegetica dantesca.'}

Paolazzi considers a lacuna from \textit{Inferno} XIII.70-73 which concerns the meeting between Dante-pilgrim and the spirit of the minister of the Emperor Frederick II, Pier della Vigna. Although Pier is to be found among those who have committed suicide, it was generally believed in Dante's time that the charges leading to his arrest and condemnation were unfounded.\footnote{Dante Alighieri, \textit{The Divine Comedy}, trans. with a commentary by Charles S. Singleton, 6 vols. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991) 1\textsuperscript{st} edition 1970-75, \textit{Inferno} 2: Commentary, p. 209-210.}

Paolazzi focusses on the word 'gusto', at the end of verse 70,\footnote{\textit{Inferno} XIII.70-73: 'L’animo mio, per disdegnoso gusto, / credendo col morir fuggir disdegno, / ingiusto fece me contra me giusto.'} and which in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} is followed by a lacuna of a quarter of a line. Paolazzi notes that this reference to Dante's text is missing in Serravalle's commentary and that, in jumping to the next tercet (verses 73-75), Serravalle departs from his normal practice.\footnote{Paolazzi, p. 22. In referring to the omission in Serravalle's text Paolazzi concludes: '… e salta alla terzina seguente, senza mettere in atto quella traduzione parafrastica del testo dantesco con la quale normalmente supplisce ai vuoti del suo commento-guida.'}

The comments in Italian, introduced by Paolazzi, have been reproduced unaltered to assist in the interpretation of the gloss.

\begin{center}
\footnotesize\textbf{Ferrara recollectae}\footnote{Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 36r.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\footnotesize... \textit{che lieti honori magna officia}; \textit{gusto} [\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1/4} di rigo vuoto}]; \textit{per le}, confirmat hoc per sacramentum, idest per animam meam que nuper inclusa est in isto ligno.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\footnotesize\textbf{Serravalle}\footnote{Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 13.67-73.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\footnotesize\textit{Leti honores}: idest magna offitia.\footnote{Paolazzi, p. 23.} \textit{Per novas radices istius ligni}, confirmat dicta sua per sacramentum, idest per animam meam, que iam facta est istud lignum, et inclusa est in isto ligno.
\end{center}

It has already been suggested that Serravalle's commentary is based on a copy of the Ferrara \textit{recollectae}, different from, and probably superior to Ashburnham 839. It would, therefore, seem not unreasonable to suggest that it is possible that Serravalle's copy might not have contained \textit{gusto} and the following lacuna.

The glosses for \textit{Inferno} XXXIV.35-36, shown below, are clearly related.\footnote{Paolazzi, p. 23.}
However, it is to be noted that Serravalle omits the reference to Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*. In the second example relating to *Purgatorio* V.11, he omits the reference to The *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius. In the case of the citation from Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* xxxix.20 there is no indication as to the speaker. However, Fabius Maximus is identified as the speaker in Benvenuto's final redaction.\(^{62}\)

---

**Ferrara recollectae**\(^{63}\)

... ipsi [= Bruto e Cassio] maligne et ingrate prodiderunt, et [hoc] quamquam multi sicut Tullius laudet [sic] istum Brutum libro Philippicarum. Tullius fuit inimicus Cesaris, etiam Lucanus. Dicit Augustinus octavo De Civitate Dei: Gaium Cesarem qui civilem victoriam clementer exercuit [1 rigo vuoto], et non fa motto, denotat magnanimitatem (Ashb. 839, f. 73V; su Inf. XXXIV, 35-36)

**Serravalle**\(^{64}\)

Brutus et Cassius ... ipsi maligne, ingrate fecerunt, interficiendo Cesarem. Tamen aliqui laudant istum Brutum, sicut Tullius in Philippis; sed Tullius fuit inimicus Cesaris. Idem dicit Lucanus. [*Omette citazione di Agostino*].


**DDP**, *Inferno* 64.67

---

Nam dicit Augustinus De Civitate Dei: virtutes habenti magna virtus est spernere gloriam, et [ ... ]tus in simili ca: gloria qui spreverit, veram habebit, et sunt verba [...] ad Paulum Emilium ... Non dubites quod gloria sequitur sapientem, sed quis non debet querere a vulgo, quod ignorat perfectionem tuae scientiae. Dicit etiam Boetius: vos nichil nisi ad populares auras, etc. Dicit etiam Ieronimus ... (*Ashb. 839, f. 79ra; su Purg. V, 11)

Dicit Augustinus de Civitate Dei: virtutes habenti magna virtus est spernere gloriam. Et Titus in simili casu: Gloriam qui spreverat, veram gloriam adeptus est. Et sunt verba [...] ad Paulum Emilium ... Proculdubio, in rei veritate, gloria sequitur sapientem, fugientem ipsam. Nemo debet querere gloria a vulgo, quia vulgus ignorat perfectionem, etc. [*Omette citazione di Boezio*.] Dicit Ieronimus ... (*Translatio et comentum*, II, p. 481).

**DDP**, *Purgatorio* 5.7-12.

---

It is of interest to note that the quotations given above are taken out of context. The quotation from Saint Augustine is from Book V.XIX entitled *Quo inter se differant cupiditas gloriae et cupiditas dominationis*, and it might be thought that completing the quotation would have provided Serravalle with the opportunity for further comment.\(^{65}\)

Similarly, the citation from Livy is part of a speech which Livy attributes to Quintus Fabius

---

\(^{62}\) Paolazzi, footnote 47, p. 23.

\(^{63}\) Paolazzi, p. 23.

\(^{64}\) Ibidem.

Maximus, the Cunctator, outlining the principles of the Fabian policy of attrition which would eventually be a major factor in the defeat of Hannibal, but the neglect of which by the consul Gaius Terentius Varro led to the disastrous Roman defeat at Cannae in 216 B.C. The words *vanam glori*am *qui spreverit veram habebit* appear towards the end of the condemnation of Varro, both with reference to his character and to his military competence, by Fabius to Varro's fellow consul Lucius Aemilius Paulus. Although Paolazzi does not consider this reference on this occasion, both commentators follow the citation from Livy with an accurate quotation from Persius *Satires* I.27, namely 'scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter'. There is agreement that the verse is meant to be interpreted ironically, with Serravalle commenting: '… de illis loquendo, quia querunt virtutes propter vanam glori.'

The examples given above have provided evidence of lacunae, typically of one line or less, which occur in MS. Ashburnham 839. In the *recollectae* such ‘lacunae’ are simply void spaces in the text. It should be noted that the word ‘lacuna’ in this context is employed to maintain correspondence with Paolazzi’s contributions to the discussion. However, there are occasions when the lacunae are of several lines in length. One such example, recounting the intrigues of Archbishop Ruggieri against Ugolino della Gherardesca and which is not considered by Paolazzi, is to be found at the beginning of *Inferno* XXXIII.

---

**Ferrara recollectae**

Tunc episcopus, videns hoc, dicit Gebelinis: Nonne videtis quomodo iste incipit tiraniçare? Et breviter incitavit eos ad insurgendum contra ipsum. Et episcopus remansit ibi. [lacuna of several lines] Tunc captus est Ugolinus

**Serravalle**

Tunc archiepiscopus, videns hec, dixit Gebellinis: Nonne videtis quomodo iste incipit tiramnizare? Et breviter incitavit eos ad insurgendum contra dictum comitem Ugolinum. [ ] Tunc insurrexit populus et cepit comitem Ugolinum et posuit eum cum

---


67 Persius, *Juvenal and Persius*, ed. and tr. Susanna Morton Braund (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), Satire 1.27, p. 50. The choice of Persius is interesting. Braund notes, pp. 15-16: 'Persius presents a stance of scornful isolation in the Prologue, where he depicts himself as not a full member of the guild of bards and rejects their poetic imagery of inspiration. … This stance is confirmed by the opening lines of Satire 1, where Persius appears content with a tiny audience, and is maintained by his wholesale rejection of contemporary poetry on the grounds that it is too smooth, weak, and artificial. This develops into a broader attack on the moral spinelessness of contemporary society: Persius' Latin is extremely difficult. It is marked by a dense literary texture and startling and at times humorous juxtapositions of images.' While this stance might resonate with Dante's convictions regarding contemporary Florence, it is doubtful that a conservative cleric, such as Serravalle, would have wished to espouse such extreme opinions.

68 Serravalle, *DDP*, Purgatorio 5.7-12.

69 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 72r.

70 Serravalle, *DDP*, Inferno 33.10-12.
et ponitus in turri que dicitur Muda. filiis suis in carceribus, in una turri, que vocabatur turris Mude ...

The wording, *Et episcopus remansit ibi*, preceding the lacuna, does not appear in Serravalle's version, and seems to leave the reader expecting more. However, Serravalle makes no attempt to fill the void, leading to reasonable doubt as to whether this lacuna existed on Serravalle's copy of the *recollectae*.

Throughout the text of MS. Ashburnham 839, if one ignores the symbols indicating the division of the canto, glosses in page margins are surprisingly infrequent. Paolazzi notes the presence of glosses in the margins set out in the form of a 'nabla' symbol, that is the inverted Greek delta (Δ). The words themselves are replicated in Serravalle's text. An example is given below in which such a marginal gloss, shown in bold type, in Ashburnham 839, has been incorporated into Serravalle's commentary.71

---

**Ferrara recollectae** 72

*Sed subtilior et moralis sensus est dicere et vult dicere: sol, idest, sol iusticie, scilicet Deus, quia diversimode gratia Dei venit super homines, sed maxime quando surit [sic] ipsa gratia super homine habente tres virtutes theologicas, sicut crux est signum fidei ... [glossa mg:] Itaque per quattuor circulos intelige quattuor virtutes cardinales, [ ] tres theologicas sicut crux est signum Dei.*

**Serravalle** 73

*Sed subtilior est moralis. Moraliter vult dicere auctor, quod sol iustitie, scilicet Deus, oritur hominibus per diversas fauces, scilicet diversimode gratia Dei oritur super homines habentes virtutes, scilicet tres theologicas et quattuor cardinales. Per tres cruces intellige tres virtutes theologicas; per quattuor circulos intellige quattuor virtutes cardinales ...*

---

Paolazzi considers that some of the glosses in MS. Ashburnham 839, for example, marginal annotations, integrations of passages containing lacunae, and textual corrections, are in the hand of Filippo Villani.74 However, he notes that Serravalle, unusually, makes no mention of such interventions even 'nei casi in cui avrebbe potuto trarne spunti ghiotti per la sua vena di moralista, o colmare con vantaggio vuoti imbarazzanti della sua 'fonte'.75 As an example, while Serravalle regularly paraphrases Benvenuto's interpretation of Dante's invective against simony, papal corruption and the corrupt behaviour of the clergy in general, Paolazzi notes that, with reference to Dante's

---

72 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 120v. (Paolazzi: Ashb. 839, fol. 119v).
74 Paolazzi, p. 26.
75 Paolazzi, p.27.
placing the Trojan Ripheus in Heaven (Paradiso XX, 67-72), Serravalle again paraphrases Benvenuto, but does not mention a relevant marginal gloss of Villani: ‘Iste Ripfeus fuit sacerdos Apollonis iustissimus et servantissimus equi, et hunc gentilem ponit in supercilio aquile in contemptum pontificum christianorum, qui neque iustitiam, neque equitatem servant.’ Paolazzi gives further examples of Serravalle's failure to incorporate Villani's glosses, leading him to the conclusion that Serravalle could not have made use of Ashburnham 839 after Villani had made his amendments.

Paolazzi continues to expand this thesis, noting, with examples, that in some cases Serravalle provides a more correct text than that to be found in MS. Ashburnham 839. Some examples follow, and he notes, as a particularly revealing example of how Serravalle reacts to a lacuna, a passage from Inferno XXXII.120-123.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ferrara recollectae</th>
<th>Serravalle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La goriera, iste fuit abbás de Thesanto nobilis de illis de Beccharia, qui parum est ex quo fuerunt domini Papie; erat beneficiatus Florentie [un rigo e mezzo vuoto].</td>
<td>Ille fuit unus vocatus Abbas de Thesancto, oppido in Lombardia, et fuit de domo illorum de Beccaria. Isti de Beccaria fuerunt iam domini Papie, civitatis in Lombardia; fuit magnus prodictor patrie sue. [ ] I Ioannes de Soldaneriis credo quod sit magis ultra,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

76 Serravalle provides a more theological justification concluding: 'Quidquid autem sit de isto Rypheo Troyano, nec ego assero quod sit salvus, nec puto auctorem velle talia dicere, quod velit dicere istum Rypheum Troyanum esse salvum; sed hoc dicit propter abissum iudiciorum divinorum, quia quilibet virtuosus et iustus paganus potest salvari, si Deo placeret, et salvabilis est sine fabbro.' (Sarravalle, DDP, Paradiso 20.67-72.) This is in accord with Benvenuto's gloss on these verses in MS. Ashburnham 839. An informative discussion is to be found in Singleton, Paradiso 2: Commentary, pp. 336-338, which concludes with Grandgent's comment that Cato in Purgatorio 1 and Ripheus represent the only direct references in this context to individual pagans in the Commedia.

77 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 159r.

78 Paolazzi, pp. 27-28.

79 Paolazzi, pp. 28-29: Perciò, in base a questi accertamenti, è del tutto da escludere che Giovanni da Serravalle abbia ricopiato o usato il codice di santa Croce dopo che Filippo Villani ebbe modo di inserirvi postille, integrazioni ed emendamenti: cioè, come ho mostrato in altre sede, forse già a partire dagli anni 1381-82, quando il Villani nel suo De origine civitatis Florentie poteva citare la redazione ferrarese del commento di Benvenuto, certo per averla studiata su questo codice appartenente all'amico fra Tedaldo della Casa. E se non mancano casi nei quali il testo del Serravalle corrisponde a correzioni introdotte nel codice di Santa Croce da Filippo Villani, questo dipenderà da emendamento autonomo (operazione nella quale, peraltro, il Serravalle non dà prove brillanti) o dal fatto che fra Giovanni aveva davanti un testo più corretto, diverso anche dal codice di Santa Croce ‘prima’ degli interventi del Villani. Questa seconda possibilità cresce decisamente alla luce di alcuni luoghi, nei quali a errori o lacune evidentì – e non facilmente emendabili – del codice di Santa Croce fa riscontro nel Serravalle la lezione corretta.'

80 Paolazzi, p. 29.

81 Ibidem: ‘Esemplare delle angustie esegetiche del Serravalle di fronte ai vuoti della sua ‘fonte’ è una pagina sui traditori (Inf XXXII, 120-123), sfigurata da errori e lacune comuni a entrambi i testi, ma caratterizzata nel Serravalle – pur tra guasti causati dalla volontà di chiarire – dal permanere di lezioni intere, ignote al codice di Santa Croce.'

82 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 72v. (Paolazzi: Ashb. 839, fol. 71v).

83 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 32.118-120 and 121-123.
Giovanni Soldani, fuerunt magna domus gebelina in Florentia [un rigo e mezzo vuoto].
Tebaldello fuit de Ciambrasiis de Faventia; Lambertacii de Faventia gebelini fuerant [Faventiam, espunto] et faciebant guerram Bonomie.
Isti Tebalde llo fuerunt ablati duo porci ab aliquibus istorum Lambertaciorum ...

cum Ganellone et Tribaldello, qui aperuit Faventiam, quando dormiebatur, idest tempore nocturno. Johannes Soldanerius fuit civis florentinus de Soldaneriis, domo sic dicta. Interfecit duos suos nepotes proditorie. Ganellone fuit de Lambertacii de Bononia; Trimbaldellus de Ciambrasiis de Faventia: isti erant Gebellini. Isti Tribaldello fuerunt furtive sublati duo porci ab aliquibus illorum de Lambertacii ...

Paolazzi indicates, as is shown above in italics in the passage from Serravalle's commentary, how Serravalle 'fills' the lacunae in the Ferrara text. In addition, Paolazzi notes the inaccuracies concerning Tesauro de' Beccheria of Pavia and Gianni de' Soldanier, and notes the reference to Ganelon which is not found in MS. Ashburnham 839. More importantly, Paolazzi infers that, in describing the Lambertacii as 'de Bononia', rather than 'de Faventia', Serravalle could be considered to be drawing on a source which was different from MS. Ashburnham 839. A full discussion of these events is to be found in Singleton's commentary.

Paolazzi, after excluding the possibility that Serravalle had made use of the codex after Villani's interventions, turns his attention to disproving any suggestion that Serravalle could have accessed it earlier. The starting point is his assertion that Serravalle, a participant in Benvenuto's course at Ferrara and resident in the Franciscan Studium as a baccalarius in 1379, not only did not use the Santa Croce codex, but seemed to have had access to a document which occupied a position 'stemmatica più alta.' Paolazzi provides evidence that Serravalle acknowledged his debt to Benvenuto, citing in particular the 'chiosa sul sogno di Lia (Purg. XXVII, 94-108).

**Ferrara recollectae**

*Sapia. Iste passus fortis est et male Modo vult dicere quod in Paradiso terrestri*

---

84 Paolazzi, pp 30-31.
85 Paolazzi, p. 31.
87 Paolazzi, pp. 31-32.
88 Paolazzi, p.32: 'De ista domina, quam auctor vidit in sompniis eligere flores, mirabiliter loquitur magister Benvenutus da Imola, qui bene scripsit super isto auctore, a quo magistro Benvenuto ego audivi primo istum auctorem et ab eo didici. Ipse etenim vult magister Benvenutus, quod auctor non intelligit per istam dominam ... fuisse dominam Lyam, per quam figuratur vita activa; sed vult quod illa fuerit domina Mathylda de Gonzaga', aggiungendo poco più avanti di meravigliarsi 'de dicto magistro, qui nedum talem opinionem verbo, sed etiam reliquit in scriptis, in suo libro quem composuit in expositione auctoris.' The citation is from Serravalle, *DDP, Purgatorio* 27.106-108.
89 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 107rb.
The identity of Matelda, who is only named much later in *Purgatorio* XXXIII.119, has been the cause of much speculation. Almost all the early commentators believed her to be Matilda of Tuscany (1046-1115), starting with Jacopo della Lana. Although Hollander suggests that the first real note of dissent concerning the identity of Matelda occurs in the eighteenth century, it is clear that the opinion of Serravalle also runs counter to the perceived wisdom of his era. Serravalle's commentary on verses 106-108 is extremely long and its structure is typical of Serravalle's longer glosses. Serravalle begins by outlining the significance of the association of Rachel with the 'vita contemplativa', and Leah with the 'vita activa'. He continues with introducing Benvenuto's replacement of Leah with Matelda and provides a substantial history of Matelda's life and works. With the
words 'Sed, redeundo ad propositum ...' Serravalle returns to discussing Benvenuto's thesis and his own different interpretation, concluding, in accord with common commentary practice among the earlier commentators in such situations, with an invitation to the reader to 'tene opinionem que tibi placet'. Serravalle's final comment involves a reference to Carlo Malatesta. This sentence confirms that the link between Carlo Malatesta and Serravalle goes back at least as far as 1410. Although Benvenuto's account of Matelda's life is very much shorter, there is common ground in ascribing the origins of the Guelf and Ghibelline parties to Matelda's lifetime. Paolazzi sums up his comments by noting that, whenever Serravalle introduces a comment with the words 'heard from the mouth of Benvenuto', it is clear that his memory is aided, for better or worse, by the version of the Ferrara recollectae before him. However, as Paolazzi points out, the gloss on Leah-Matelda goes beyond the evidence to be found in MS. Ashburnham 839.

Paolazzi, in his concluding remarks, offers a route for progression. In essence, he attempts, after considering the known facts and the implications that may reasonably be drawn, to reconstruct the most economical transmission path for Benvenuto's Ferrara recollectae, 'senza contraddire nessun dato sicuro o creare più problemi di quelli che vorrebbe risolvere.' His conclusion is that Serravalle was the first and last link in the chain, in that, in his youth he was present at Benvenuto's Ferrara lectures and 'ne riceve in custodia il frutto di una prima rielaborazione d'autore', which he used years later at Constance, and which, of course, did not contain the interventions of Filippo Villani or others found on Ashburnham 839. Paolazzi's final comment, perhaps with some slight reservation, amounts to an endorsement of the widely accepted view that Serravalle's commentary represents 'un'amplificazione parafrastica della chiosa ferrarese di Benvenuto.'

95 Ibidem: 'Domina Mathylda floruit in millesimo ducentesimo sexagesimo quinto, honestissima, sicut ego legi in quodam antiquo libro, dum essem Mantue millessimo quadrigentesimo decimo cum magnifico meo domino Carolo de Malatestis.'
96 Paolazzi, pp. 33-34: 'È ormai evidente che, ogniqualvolta fra Giovanni cita una chiosa come 'udita' dalle voce di Benvenuto, la sua memoria è aiutata nel bene e nel male dal testimone della lettura ferrarese che sta sul suo scrittoio; ma è anche doveroso constatare che – nell'ultima pagina citata – la menzione della discussione col maestro sull'equivalenza Lia-Matilde e il motivo udito dalle viva voce di Benvenuto ("quia postea, ut patebit in sequentibus, nominat aliam domina cum Rachele": ma sarà “cum Beatrice”, con riferimento a Purg. XXXIII, 118-119, senza peraltro escludere un abbaglio d'autore) eccedono chiaramente i contenuti del testimone ashburnhamiano.'
97 Paolazzi, pp. 34-37.
98 Paolazzi, p. 34.
99 Paolazzi, p. 37.
100 Ibidem: 'Noi moderni, bisogna pur dirlo, siamo un po' infastiditi dalla mancanza di originalità di un commento dantesco, che indagini vecchie e nuove sembrano avvicinare sempre più a un'amplificazione parafrastica della chiosa ferrarese di Benvenuto, ma non si può dimenticare che a
As a final comment in support of Paolazzi's rejection of the Santa Croce document as the direct source for Serravalle's commentary, one should consider the timeline for MS. Ashburnham 839. The manuscript was in the hands of Tedaldo della Casa from 1381 when he made his copy of *Purgatorio*. Tedaldo was a friend of Filippo Villani, who had returned to Florence in 1381 and who in 1391 received from the Florentine Commune the role of reading Dante at the University of Florence. Villani kept this post until 1405, which was the date of the closure of the Studio, probably coincident with his death, since in 1406 Tedaldo inherited Villani's library. Hence, there was clearly ample opportunity for Villani to have studied Tedaldo's manuscript. It is possible that Serravalle had access to both Tedaldo's and Villani's work. However, since Tedaldo donated his whole library to the convent of Santa Croce, also in 1406, and Serravalle completed his second term teaching theology at Santa Croce in 1404, being nominated 'Provinciale dei frati minori delle Marche' in 1405, it would seem less likely that Serravalle had direct access to Tedaldo's manuscript (MS. Ashburnham 839).

Further evidence of the links between the *recollectae* and Serravalle's commentary may be found by considering the description of historical events involving substantial detail in the text of the Ferrara *recollectae*. Such descriptions reveal a tendency for Benvenuto in the *recollectae* to provide what amounts to an outline of the events and personages involved in his gloss on a particular verse of the *Commedia*, followed by a more comprehensive element at the end of the canto. This feature has been analysed by Gennaro Ferrante to determine its impact on Serravalle's commentary. Ferrante identifies the glosses in the 'body' of the commentary on a canto as 'ASH I Stesura', while the more detailed comments at the end of the canto are designated 'ASH II Stesura'. Citing the work of Bonaventura de Bagnoregio, Ferrante suggests that the examples considered

---

101 Bellomo p. 386.
102 Ibidem.
103 Casnati, 'Tedaldo della Casa'.
104 Bellomo, p. 164.
105 This facet of the Ferrara *recollectae* is illustrated below with respect to the gloss on *Inferno* XII.109-114. The corresponding glosses in the Bologna *recollectae* and in Benvenuto's final redaction do not include the more comprehensive element at the end of the canto to which reference is made above.
in his essay might, within the context of Bonaventura's definitions, indicate the possibility of defining Serravalle as a 'compilator', support for which is apparent in the text reproduced below relating to Ezzelino da Romano (Inferno XII.109-114).\(^\text{108}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASH I Stesura, cc. 33r-v</th>
<th>ASH II Stesura, cc. 34v-35r</th>
<th>SERRAVALLE (I Redazione)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nota quod iste Ezzolinus fuit de uno castro comitatus Trivisii, quod vocatur Romanum. <em>Iste fuit unus miles valde sapiens et strenuus, antequam esset dux.</em> Demum cepit fieri dominus castri sui, scilicet Romani; <em>demum fuit dominus Verone, demum Padue, Tridenti, Feltri, civitatis Tervisi.</em> Colligavit se cum Federico 2º; fecit septam cum Federico 2º contra quasi omnes de Lombardia; effectus fuit crudelissimus: <em>fudit multum sanguinem humanum,</em> de quo dominus Luppactus de Luppactis, poeta Paduaneus, fecit unam pulcram tragediam, in qua fingit eum fuisse filium diaboli. Semel, dum esset in campo et obsedebat Man-tuam, audivit quod Padua rebellaverat se sibi. Videns quod non poterat recup-erare eam, habebat secum in campo xii millia Paduaneorum, quos omnes, uno mane, uno die fecit mori et interfici. <em>Hic regnavit xxxii annis in tyrannide sua.</em> Fuit homo pilosus, et inter alios pilos habebat unum supra in naso, qui mirabiliiter erigebatur; quando ipse erat turbatus, sive iratus et iracundus. <em>Hic, auxilio illorum de Montechie, factus fuit dominus Verone, et subito factus dominus, cepit facere trucidari omnes nobiles de Verona,</em> et maxime illos de Montechie, quorum opere et auxilio factus erat domi-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{108}\) Ferrante, 'Il Commento’, p. 61.

The script in italics in ASH I relates to the text in italics in Serravalle's commentary, and similarly the text in bold type in ASH II, is the source for the text in bold type in Serravalle's gloss. Some comment is required concerning Ferrante's use of the term 'I Redazione' in referencing Serravalle's contribution shown above. It is Ferrante's opinion that a manuscript, containing the translation of the whole Commedia into Latin with a commentary on Inferno only and dedicated to 'rex romanorum Sigisimondo di Lusse- mburgo',\textsuperscript{109} possibly represents an attempt by Serravalle to improve, at least as far as the first thirteen cantos of Inferno are concerned, on the original text of the Comentum which later formed the basis of the Civezza and Domenichelli edition.\textsuperscript{110} Hence, Ferrante's need to distinguish between the two 'redactions', with 'I redazione' representing the text to be found in the Civezza and Domenichelli edition.

Serravalle shows a tendency to 'dilute' Benvenuto's glosses with the addition of personal accounts of his more important travels, his meetings with important personages and his own interest in 'luoghi evocati nella Commedia o evocanti l'iter dantesco'.\textsuperscript{111} In addition, there are also examples where Serravalle intervenes in the first person with his contribution introduced with the formulaic 'Ego, Iohannes, Episcopus firmanus'.\textsuperscript{112} Such contributions lead Ferrante to suggest that this provides evidence of 'la volontà di Serravalle di passare dal ruolo di compilator a quello, più autorevole, di commentator'.\textsuperscript{113} However, as Ferrante notes, Serravalle's commentary does not show evidence of a detailed revision of Benvenuto's commentary, possibly due to time constraints or even his own perceived inadequacies. On the other hand, it could simply be that Serravalle's objective was to make the Commedia accessible to the English prelates, and probably to other non-

\textsuperscript{109} Bellomo p. 166. The manuscript is identified as: Eger (Hungary), ms. P. V. 1, Foegyházmegyei Könyvtár. The dating of the manuscript is given as the first half of the fifteenth century.

\textsuperscript{110} Gennaro, Ferrante, 'La ridestinazione del Commento di Giovanni da Serravalle a Sigisimondo di Lusse- mburgo: Implicazioni Testuali', Rivista di Studi Danteschi, 8/1 (2008), 143-167, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{111} Ferrante, 'Il Commento', p. 62-63.

\textsuperscript{112} Ferrante, 'Il Commento', p. 63.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibidem.
Italian clerics, and there was no need to engage in a major re-evaluation of Benvenuto's commentary. 114 Therefore, in expressing such sentiments it could be suggested that Ferrante seems to endorse the less than enthusiastic assessment of Serravalle's capabilities as an original commentator which has already been expressed by previous writers including Hamilton, Bellomo and Paolazzi. Ferrante concludes by noting that most of Serravalle's commentary is at the level of compilator/commentator, and 'authorial' interventions on Serravalle's part are somewhat rare. 115

Some indications of the somewhat negative reception of the Comentum have already been provided. Saverio Bellomo, the leading Italian authority on Dante commentary, makes similar observations when he writes: 'Senza condividere il giudizio del tutto negativo di Foscolo sul commento, è però innegabile che esso soffra di una certa fretta, ..: Il commento ebbe scarsa fortuna, come dimostrano l'esiguità della tradizione e la mancanza di echi in altri commenti ..' 116 As far back as 1902 Hamilton dismissed the translatio as having 'no pretensions to elegance: it is at best a closely literal “crib”'. 117 Hamilton continues: 'The commentary, for the most part an abbreviated version of that of Benvenuto da Imola, has no additional historical or critical apparatus to give the author a place among the valuable older commentators'. 118 He is particularly critical of Serravalle's references to Oxford. 119 The opinions expressed by Paolazzi and Ferrante above clearly resonate with Hamilton's opinion, even if they are not so strongly expressed. Serravalle offers an apology regarding the limitations of his work. He was clearly aware that the lack of resources and time constraints would leave his work open to criticism from the scholastic fraternity. 120 In the sense that Benvenuto in his final redaction, which in its turn

114 Ferrante, 'Il Commento', p. 65.
115 Ferrante, 'Il Commento', p. 71: ‘... per arrivare, infine, a casi in cui l'incremento del gradiente autoriale riduce l'inerzialità della compilazione attraverso un confronto “attivo” con la fonte, realizzato, sostanzialmente, in due modi: “abusivo”, e cioè con un'indebita appropprazione in chiave autobiografica del materiale presente nella fonte, oppure “dialettico”, e cioè con una dichiarazione di presa di distanza dall'opinione di colui “quem et cuius opinionem scutus sum quasi semper” per avanzarne una propria. Ciò contribuisce a confermare la vivacità dell'esegesi serravalliana, capace di oscillare dalla riproduzione inerziale della fonte, tipica dello scriptor “quiescente”, alla compilatio autoriale nelle sue varie sfaccettature, alla costituzione di un commentum in cui l'esegeta, nel rapporto dialettico attivato tanto con il testo commentato, quanto con la tradizione degli interpreti che lo hanno preceduto, si trasforma in consapevole autore che parla con l’autore”.
116 Bellomo, p. 165.
117 Hamilton, p. 19.
119 Hamilton, p. 20.
120 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., pp. 5-6: 'Ideo de nimia brevitate temporis, quod ad bene faciendum hoc tale opus requireretur, dubitantes, taliter fieri decretivistis; scilicet quod hoc opusculum facere accellerarem, non curantes de rusticana latinitate, incompta et inepta translatione, quam sic fieri necesse fuit proper temporis brevitatem; cum non videatur posse esse maius spatium quam unius anni, ubi ad minus requireretur duo anni ad transferendum dictum librum decenter; quod fecissem in
employs Latin which had its critics, avoids Serravalle's more obvious departures from classical Latin, the Latin of Serravalle may perhaps be called 'rustic'. However, it should be borne in mind that Serravalle was writing under severe time pressures, and it is very unlikely that he was unduly preoccupied with writing his *Comentum* in a Latin which would meet the ideals of convinced Humanists, even if he were capable of so doing. Serravalle acknowledges, perhaps a little too easily, that his *translatio* is 'incompta' and 'inepta', and he doubts his ability to accomplish an effective verse translation. Leaving aside the difficulty that any translator would have in turning Dante's Italian verse into an equivalent masterpiece in any other language, the finished product would inevitably fall short of Serravalle's essential requirement that he would not wish to 'discedere a textu auctoris, nec illi addere, nec ab ipso diminuere'.

Lombardi draws attention to the difficulties faced by the author of a verse translation by comparing the translations of three passages from the *Commenda* with the original, Serravalle's translation, and the verse translation of Matteo Ronto, a contemporary of Serravalle. Lombardo notes that: 'Il verso del Ronto vuol essere classico'. It is sufficient to limit the debate to Lombardi's second example involving la Pia (*Purgatorio* V.133-136), where 'Le gentili e commoventi parole di Pia de Tolomei in Dante, mantengono la stessa bellezza nel Bertoldi, mentre si stenta a riconoscerla nel Ronto'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Commedia</em></th>
<th><em>Serravalle</em></th>
<th><em>Ronto</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ricordati di me che son la Pia / Sena mi fe'; disfecemi Maremma; / salsi colui che inanellata pria / disposando m'avea con la sua gemma</td>
<td>Recorderis mei, quia sum Sapia: / Sene me fecerunt, et disfecit me Mariptima: / scit ille qui, annulatam prius, / desponsaverat me cum sua gemma</td>
<td>Ora memento mei que dicor Pia Senarum / urbs genuit me, me miseram maris ora necavit, / anulus ille sibi cuius gemmatus in auro / contulit in sponsam, quo morbo novit obvii.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Giovanni Boccaccio Dante considered writing the *Commenda* in Latin hexameters beginning:

> Ultima regna canam, fluido contermina mundo, Spiritibus quae lata patent, quae premia solvunt Pro meritis cuicumque suis, etc.

---

rythimis litteralibus, ex quo liber est editus in rythimis vulgaribus ytalici ydiomatis, ut minus male scivissent. Excusent me igitur mandata vestra et brevitas temporis; nam non puto fore possibile in tam parvo tempore per aliquem virum, saltam per ita ignorantem sicut sum ego, fieri huiusmodi translationem decentem in bona rethorica et laudabili, nolendo discedere a textu auctoris, nec illi addere, nec ab ipso diminuere.'

121 Lombardi, p. 120.
122 Lombardi, p. 121.
123 Giovanni Boccaccio, *Opere in Versi, Corbaccio, Trattatello in Laude di Dante, Prose Latine, Epistole*,
This brief example recalls the stately opening of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and, while in the hands of a master, hexameter verse can adequately express the range of human emotions, for example in *Aeneid* IV, there could be some doubt as to whether it is the most suitable metric vehicle for expressing the lively accounts of some of the characters to be found in the *Commedia*. In any case it has to be asked whether a poet, so conscious of his abilities as was Dante, when he implies in *Inferno* IV that he was the equal of Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan and Virgil, would really want his poetry to be considered as being anything other than the product of his own genius.

Serravalle acknowledged that there would be criticism from those who would question his competence to undertake such an enterprise.\(^{124}\) His response is polite and conventionally formulaic. However, his insistence that he is, in effect, submitting his work, at least in principle, to the Council for their editing is important. Heresy and reform of the Church were principal concerns for the Council, and they constitute important themes in the *Commedia*. It could be suggested that Serravalle, from his privileged position, which, at the very least, was close to those at the centre of the debate, was offering the 'official' judgement on those passages in the *Commedia* that might cause the lay reader of the text to fall into error.

An area of concern, to which attention has already been drawn, is the suggestion that Dante studied at Oxford. Hamilton's harsh criticism has already been noted. However, although the main focus of a contribution from Norbert Mátyus is to suggest that Serravalle was influenced by *chiosatori* other than Benvenuto,\(^{125}\) Mátyus does offer a more charitable explanation for Serravalle's suggestion that Dante studied at Oxford.\(^{126}\)

---

\(^{124}\) Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 6: 'Scio etenim, et bene scio, et iam percipio, me ab emulis diffamandum, et multipharie multisque modis, verbis dectractoris et obloquutionibus variis, inscium in hoc opere, ineptum et prosumptuosum, undique proclamandum, ... idcirco censui et decrevi verba emulorum, qui nunquam operi laudabili defuerunt, cum patientia tolerare et vestris iussis humiliter et sollicite obedire. Opus magnum, et quod vires meas excedit, aggrediar, Deo duce; primo ad translatandum, sive transferendum, dictum librum de dicto ydiomate ytalico in ipsam literalem [linguam], demum ad expositionem eiusdem libri taliter translati per me et ad comentum eiusdem, prout divina gratia michi concedet, in qua tota persistit spes mea, procedam; quam translationem et quam expositionem, sive quod comentum, vestris Reverendissimis Paternitatibus transmicto, ut videre dignemini, corrigere, et abbreviare vel dilatare, laudare vel vituperare, abiicere vel retinere.'


\(^{126}\) Mátyus, p. 26: 'Per fare un solo esempio, quello più noto, va menzionata la leggenda divulgata dal vescovo di Fermo, secondo la quale Dante, oltre a essere studente a Parigi, andò ad ascoltare lezioni di teologia a Oxford. Possiamo esser sicuri, credo, l'autore conosceva bene l'inverosimilità di tale ipotesi, informato com'era della biografia dantesca; perciò l'acceso ad un viaggio di Dante in
While one must take account of the legitimate concerns of those who have passed judgement on Serravalle's work in the past, it would seem more appropriate for the most part to take Serravalle's preface at face value. Deficiencies in the literary merit of his translation are probably irrelevant when due consideration is given to his stated aims. In addition, his commentary is important because, if his avowed intentions in the Preface be taken seriously, it represents a view of those aspects of the Commedia, which were of most importance to Serravalle, and which were in effect offered up to the highest authorities for their criticism and provoked no adverse reaction.\textsuperscript{127} The impression is given of a scholar, of a man who was faithful to the simple life to be expected of a Franciscan, of a cleric with sufficient political acumen to merit advancement in the Church and to be an effective member of embassies and the Council of Constance, and, above all, a conservative in any controversy relating to the Church's teaching.

\section*{4. Chiose Filippine}

Bellomo dates the composition of this complex manuscript from before 1370 to the middle of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{128} The potential importance of the Chiose Filippine, henceforth referred to as CF, was first considered by the German philologist Marcella Rodewigg.\textsuperscript{129} She suggested CF should be considered as a possible influence on Serravalle's commentary.\textsuperscript{130} A critical edition of the CF has become available as part of the Edizione Nazionale dei Commenti Danteschi.\textsuperscript{131} In the introduction to the work, the editor, Andrea Mazzucchi, discusses the complex history of the manuscript.\textsuperscript{132} In particular, Mazzucchi identifies five different contributors to the glosses on the manuscript. The identities of these glossists are unknown and they are simply denoted by the letters A, B, C, D and E, with the glosses attributed to hand B\textsuperscript{133} being of particular relevance to this work in that,

\begin{itemize}
\item Inghilterra va interpretato come una forma di ringraziamento alla richiesta dei prelati inglesi, che gli forniscono l'opportunità del lavoro.'
\item Teuwse, p. 22. Similarly, Serravalle makes a commitment that he would submit his proposed treatise on Charity to the inspection of sancte matris ecclesie as he states in his homily Caro mea vere est cibus.
\item Bellomo, p. 218.
\item Roddewig, pp. 91-96 and 103-109.
\item Mazzucchi, vol. 1, pp. 9-53.
\item Ibidem. Mano B is described by Mazzucchi as being ‘… della prima metà del XV secolo, certamente posteriore – come si vedrà – al 1417 … fino a Par. IX, con sporadiche annotazioni anche a Par. XI e
except for features such as the bishop of Fermo's personal anecdotes often being ignored, the glosses are virtually identical to those found in Serravalle's *Comentum*. Three hypotheses are suggested and their possible relevance to the *Comentum* discussed.

The first hypothesis is due to Marcella Roddewig. To support her tentative thesis that the *CF* was one of Serravalle's sources, she cites the gloss on *Paradiso* VIII.139-141: 'Sempre natura, se fortuna trova / discorde a sé, com'ogni altra semente / fuor di sua region, fa mala prova.' Roddewig notes that Serravalle suggests, as an example of the 'mala prova', the pepper which could not fruit in Constance, because, presumably for reasons of climatic conditions, it was not native to the region. She continues by noting that the passage is identical to that found in *CF*, with the exception that 'al luogo di “Costanza” scrisse “hic neapoli”', leading her to the conclusion: 'Anche con ottima memoria il vescovo di Fermo non sarebbe riuscito a riprodurre un testo così letteralmente.' Bellomo rejects Roddewig's hypothesis, and concludes, like Mazzucchi, that the *chiosatore* of the *CF* copied Serravalle's text sometime after 1417. It is instructive to compare the gloss on *Paradiso* VIII.136-141 in Serravalle's commentary with the corresponding gloss in Benvenuto's second and third redactions, there being no reference to 'piper' in the Bologna *recollectae*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ferrara recollectae</th>
<th>Serravalle</th>
<th>Benvenuto Final redaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Natura</em>: scilicet generata piper non potuit oriri in partibus nostris quia vult</td>
<td>Piper, seminatum in diocesi Constantiens, sive istius civitatis Constantiensis non</td>
<td>... sicut piper non proficit in parte frigida ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XXXIII.

134 Mazzucchi, pp. 31-32. It should be noted that, although Roddewig appears to have been the first in the modern era to have paid serious attention to the *Filippine* manuscript, it has to be pointed out that she was operating off a poor quality microfilm version and at the time the Biblioteca dei Girolamini di Napoli, which housed the manuscript, was closed to scholars, thereby preventing her from verifying corrupted areas of the text.

135 Roddewig, p. 93.

136 Ibidem.

137 Bellomo, p. 165. Bellomo offers no further support for 1417 as the earliest date for *mano* B other than Serravalle finished his commentary in this year. Developing this theme, Bellomo notes that mano B is mostly faithful to his sources, limiting his initiative to the choice of passages for reproduction, but also correcting clear errors. The example provided by Bellomo is of interest in that the failure to identify Ganellone as Ganelon, the traitor responsible for the destruction of Charlemagne's rearguard at the battle of Roncesvalles in A.D. 778, is found in only two commentaries, namely that of Grazioso Bambaglioli and that of the *Anonimo Latino*. In the case of the latter, Ganellone is said to be a citizen of Florence. The correction of errors in Serravalle's commentary, taken at face value, is crucial. If further examination shows that the *chiosatore* routinely corrected Serravalle's errors, then the most obvious, but perhaps not the only, conclusion is that the contribution from *mano* B must be later than 1417.

138 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 137v.

139 Serravalle, *DDP*, *Paradiso* 8.139-141.

140 Benvenuto, *DDP*, *Paradiso* 8.136-141.
It is clear that Serravalle has amended the *recollectae*, in particular by defining 'our regions' to be the diocese of Constance, thereby providing support for the rejection of Roddewig's hypothesis.

The second hypothesis, to which reference has already been made above, requires that hand B, sometime after 1417, acquired a copy of the *Comentum*. This is certainly possible in that Joanna II of Naples, as Cardinal Fillastre makes clear in his diary, had a high-level delegation at Constance pleading her case, in view of her brother's recent death, as the rightful successor to the throne of Naples.\footnote{Loomis, p. 289.} At least some of these delegates would very probably have been known to the bishop of Fermo, given his stay at the court of Ladislaus from 1412-1414. The fact that Serravalle's personal experiences and anecdotes are usually missing is explained by the copyist engaging in an editing process designed to remove material considered superfluous to the main aims of the commentary. Hand B ceased contributing to the *CF* after *Paradiso* IX. This could be readily explained by personal circumstances, including possibly the death of the copyist.

The third hypothesis is based on the possibility that the bishop of Fermo arrived at the court of Ladislaus in 1412 with an embryonic version of what was to become his *comentum*. He remained in Naples for nearly two years and during that time he could have made some version of his work available to interested parties. One of these parties in copying the fledgling *Comentum* could have corrected the errors. The personal anecdotes may have been written at Constance and, hence, would not have featured in this version of the commentary. In addition, the termination of hand B’s interventions at the end of *Paradiso* IX may simply reflect the limit of Serravalle’s glosses at the time of his stay in Naples. As it stands, none of these hypotheses is entirely satisfactory. The case for the third hypothesis would be enhanced if evidence could be found that a copyist was working on the *CF* during 1412-14.

Although the conclusions of the scholarly research into Serravalle's commentary, carried out over approximately the last sixty years, have shown a more sympathetic approach to the *Comentum*, the emphasis has been in acknowledging its relationship to the Ferrara *recollectae* of Benvenuto and the circumstances in which the opus was written. While the commentary might be considered to be the last major surviving work
representing a tradition, which started with the commentary to *Inferno* by Iacopo Alighieri (1322), devoted to the religious implications of the *Commedia*, it is Serravalle's presence as a contributor, of at least minor importance, to the events unfolding at the Council of Constance which might be considered to offer the possibility of a different insight into an understanding of Dante's poem. For this reason, in the chapters to follow, this will represent a major thematic strand. It will be shown in the following chapters that the main preoccupations of the Council of Constance were the resolution of the schism in the Church, manifest by the election of three contemporaneous popes, the suppression of heresy, in particular the Hussite heresy in Bohemia, and the reform of the Church.
Chapter 2

Giovanni da Serravalle and the Council of Constance

This chapter is concerned with the proceedings of Council of Constance which could be considered to have begun with the entry of Pope John XXIII into Constance on 28 October 1414, although the Convocation did not take place until 5 November, with the first session being held on the following day.\(^1\) The Council concluded on 22 April 1418, with the newly elected pope, Martin V, departing from Constance on 16 May.\(^2\) In this Introduction a brief history of the important events post 1378 leading to the convocation of the Council of Constance is provided, concluding with an acknowledgement of the existence of important contemporary journals or diaries bearing witness to the proceedings of the Council. The remainder of the chapter is divided into five parts, with the first being devoted to the Council's proceedings up to 17 July 1416. The second part outlines in some detail the careers of Cardinal Saluzzo and Bishops Hallum and Bubwith who were the motivation for the writing of the *Translatio et Comentum*. In the third part Serravalle's own standing in the Council and his views on reform, demonstrated by his homily *Caro mea vere est cibus*, is considered. Fourthly, attention is paid to the voting system put in place for the election of the new pope, the consequences of which enabled the king of England, Henry V, to enable the choosing of a pope who would not be inimical to his ongoing military actions in France. Finally, the later proceedings of the Council are considered. The intention has been to provide sufficient background to set chapters 4, 5 and 6 into context.

The Conciliar movement was the response of the Catholic Church to longstanding problems concerning malpractices and abuse of position by senior clerics and the positioning of the Church within the context of the political realities of the times. The *status quo* suited those who were benefiting from the contemporary situation and, without a reforming pope, it was clear that nothing would change. It is evident from the *Commedia*, with popes in Hell accused of simony, and some of the Chronicles, where dubious practices by the clergy seem to have been widely acknowledged, that there was a perceived necessity for reform. In addition, the secular power often resented the interference of the Church in

---


2 Loomis, p.541.
domestic politics. However, although the concept of Papal Infallibility was only set out as a dogma of the Catholic Church at the First Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (1869-1870), the Pope's position as God's Vicar on Earth made a direct challenge to his authority very difficult. A mechanism, acceptable to the whole of the Catholic Church, whereby the decisions of a pope could be called into question, or a serious crisis resolved, was needed. In short, the Church required a properly constituted authority to pass judgment on matters of critical moment and to propose methods for their solution.³

The death of Pope Gregory XI in 1378, shortly after he had led the papal curia back to Rome from Avignon, could be considered to mark the beginning of such a crisis for the Catholic Church. The election of an Italian pope, Urban VI, induced the French cardinals to abandon the Curia and elect their own pope who took the title of Clement VII, in effect creating two obediences. The problems caused by the resulting schism were clearly in need of resolution. Since neither pope was prepared to concede his authority to the other, there evolved a realization that the creation of a Council of the Church, with authority claimed to be directly derived from Christ, and, hence, superior to any authority on Earth, represented the only practical solution. In commenting on the Conciliar movement, John Hines Munday notes:

> With the exception of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Council of Constance was the most memorable gathering of the Latin clergy in the history of the medieval church. It was also the most successful hour of the great councils which hopefully began at Pisa in 1409 and ended in despair at Lausanne in 1449. The business of the fathers assembled at Pisa, Constance and Basel-Lausanne was the unification and the reform of the Church.⁴

It can not be doubted that the wheels of reform moved very slowly, mainly, one suspects, due to the conflict of interests. However, the first Council took place at Pisa in 1409, some thirty years after the commencement of the schism. Before the Council of Pisa Gregory XII (Angelo Corario, pope since 1406) and Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna, pope since 1394) could both lay claim to some advantage over their rival. Gregory XII was the latest pope in the direct succession from Urban VI, while Benedict XIII was the successor of Clement VII. The legitimacy of Clement's election was founded on the so-called irregularities involved in the election of Urban VI in that it was claimed that the election

---


was influenced by the hostility of the members of a Roman mob who were determined to have an Italian, or preferably a Roman, pope elected. Cardinal Fillastre, whose diary is of great importance for the present work, summed up the situation admirably:

Origo generalis concilii Constanciensis ex Pisano concilio cepit. Cum enim magnum et horrendum scisma, quod cepit in urbe post obitum Gregorii XI anno domini millesimo trecentesimo septuagesimo octavo, iam triginta annis durasset, quo tempore primum per tumultum et oppressionem Romanorum electus fuit Bartholomeus archiepiscopus Barensis, qui se Urbanum sextum nominavit, deinde per eosdem cardinales, qui ab eo recesserunt, asserentes eum per metum electum, fuit electus Rober[t]us cardinalis Gebennensis, qui se Clementem septimum nominavit. In hiis duobus capitibus constitutum est illud magnum et famosum scisma, cui nullum simile, neque temporis diuturnitate, iam enim tricesimus septimus annus agitur, neque cause et rei dubietate neque regnorum et provinciarum divisione precessit.5

While one might have hoped for more determination on the part of the cardinals who, after all, were presumably in office to provide moral leadership to the members of the Church, it cannot be denied that the election of Urban VI could be legitimately challenged on the grounds of intimidation. The simultaneous existence of two popes clearly provoked the question of who was entitled to speak for the Catholic Church. In those areas where support for one or the other of the popes was universal, it might be argued that the pronouncements of the other pope were an irrelevance. However, there were regions, such as Flanders, where this was not the case.

The Council of Pisa was an attempt to try to resolve the impasse between the two Obediences, and also to address problems concerning the reform of the Church. These problems were complicated by issues involving vested interests, and little progress was made. However, the Council took the view that, since neither pope would give way to his rival, the only way progress could be made was for the Council to depose both of them, and to elect a new pope. The success of this act depended upon general acceptance that the Council of Pisa was legally constituted and that it held a position superior to that of the Supreme Pontiff, whoever he might happen to be. Neither Gregory XII nor Benedict XIII faced any substantial accusations of misconduct in the discharge of their office. Both men were simply victims of circumstances, and the establishment of a Council of the whole Church was the only realistic mechanism, short of military intervention, by which the situation could have been resolved. Naturally, the legitimacy of the Council itself and its decisions were open to challenge. Both popes refused to abdicate. Hence, the Council

deposed both and elected Pietro Philarghi as Pope Alexander V on 26 June 1409. As Archbishop of Milan (since 1402) and Cardinal (since 1405), Pietro was a strong supporter of the Conciliar Movement, and seemingly a very suitable candidate for the papacy, although Fillastre restricts his supportive comments to 'famosissimum theologie doctorem Parisiensem'. The hopes raised by the election of Alexander V were thwarted due to the realities of the occupation of Rome by King Ladislaus of Naples, and Alexander was detained by Cardinal Cossa in Bologna where he died on 3 May 1410.

The cardinals of the Pisan obedience, assembled at Bologna, elected Baldassare Cossa as pope. As Cardinal-Deacon of St. Eustachius he had to be ordained as a priest before being consecrated and crowned Pope, taking the name John XXIII, on 25 May 1410. Although he was among the cardinals created by the new pope, Fillastre appears to endorse the widely held negative opinion of John. Pope John attempted to steer a path through the very difficult political circumstances involving Sigismund, the King of Hungary and newly elected King of Germany, King Ladislaus, Louis of Anjou and the other two rival popes. John, conforming with a resolution passed at the Council of Pisa, summoned a new Council to meet at Rome on 29 April 1412. In addition, he created new cardinals, among them Francesco Zarabella of Florence, Pierre d'Ailly, Bishop of Cambrai, Guillaume Fillastre, Dean of Reims, and Robert Hallam, Bishop of Salisbury. Bishop Hallam, no doubt influenced by the English King, Henry IV, declined the honour. However, all four played major roles at the Council of Constance. The Council of Rome was a failure, and, with the worsening of the political situation, John was forced to escape with his cardinals to Florence, where he sought the protection of Sigismund.

Profiting from Pope John's political problems, Sigismund insisted on Constance as the meeting place for the next Council and prevailed upon John to issue the Convocation Bull on 9 December 1413 for the Council of Constance to be opened on 1 November 1414. Although the sudden death of King Ladislaus on 6 August 1414 had improved John's position in Italy, the cardinals required his presence in Constance for the purpose of presiding in person, and directing the treatment of all ecclesiastical matters. However, upon John's arrival at Constance his position became ever more difficult since it was clear

---

7 Finke, p. 14: 'Quam electionem fuisse vitosam fama est, et quantum ad merita persone certum.'
9 Ibidem.
that Sigismund did not consider himself obligated to the Pope. Sigismund had needed John to bring about the council but by the summer of 1413 Sigismund had come to realize that the unity of the Church could only be achieved by the abdication, either on a voluntary basis or, if necessary, by a formal process, of all three claimants to the papacy. Clearly the prelude to the Council of Constance involved complex difficulties which the key delegates at the Council would have found impossible to resolve to everybody's satisfaction, given the wide disparity existing between the objectives of the three popes and the secular forces involved.

Contemporary chronicles and diaries have been preserved which show, from their authors’ perspective at least, how the workings of the Council unfolded. For example, the chronicle of Ulrich Richental is the work of a citizen of Constance with sufficient connections to be able to go from house to house and to take 'note of what the spiritual and temporal lords told me when I questioned them.' The chronicle is presumed to have been written in Latin after the conference had ended, probably sometime between 1420 and 1430. Richental's knowledge of the inner workings of the Council is clearly second-hand and there are errors of detail in his account to which attention is drawn in the notes on the chronicle. However, the reader gains an insight into the amount of pageantry that took place during the lifespan of the Council, and, unsurprisingly, he goes into great detail concerning the everyday logistics which the City must provide for the day-to-day needs of the Council. His account almost certainly shows the City in an overgenerous light. However, Richental provides a succinct description of the organisation of the Council. He notes that the decision-making involved five Nations, namely, the Italian, the French, the German, the English and, eventually, the Spanish. The names are generic, in that a Nation included not only its nationals but also the nationals of those territories which owed allegiance to that Nation. Richental notes: 'The Nations met every day, each Nation in a conclave, that is, in a hall. And each Nation had its proper delegates, who were learned in theology and who were sent from one nation to another whenever a plan was being discussed.' The Council of Constance brought together the whole Christian world, including not only the Catholic hierarchy and the secular princes with their retinues, but also it provided a meeting place for men of learning, commerce and international

10 Ibidem.
11 Loomis, p. 84.
12 Ibidem: 'There are nine extant copies of the Chronicle, all composed in southern German dialect.'
13 Loomis, pp. 190-199.
14 Loomis, p. 108.
diplomacy where important contacts could be made and where there could be an open exchange of new ideas concerning the cultural issues of the time. In short, there existed an intellectual atmosphere which allowed a flourishing market for a wide range of important manuscripts to be available commercially.

1. A Synopsis of the Council's Proceedings up to 17 July 1416

Although the Council only consisted of 45 formal sessions, with the first occurring on 6 November 1414 and the last on 22 April 1418, the entries in the diary of Guillaume Fillastre give an indication of the vast amount of 'committee' work that went into preparing the positions that the individual nations would adopt before the Council met in formal session to decide on the resolutions before it. Fillastre's diary represents a more useful work for the understanding of the workings of the Council than does Richental's Chronicle. Cardinal Fillastre, the cardinal priest of St. Mark at Reims, was primarily a jurist who complemented the more theoretically minded Pierre D'Ailly (Cardinal of Cambrai), and who by the end of the Council of Constance was probably the man who best expressed the point of view of the Sacred College. Fillastre's comments regarding the decision-making process in the Council reveal how Pope John's position was undermined almost from the beginning, concluding with Fillastre's opinion that the majority were in favour of a process of abdication as the way to resolve the problem.

15 Andrea A. Robiglio, 'Dante al Concilio di Costanza', Humanistica 8:1, (2008), 11-28, p. 12: ‘Si trattò del congresso dell'intero orbe cristiano: un'occasione rara d'incontro su scala europea, in senso lato. Il 're dei Romani' e il papa (o suo pretendente che dir si voglia) furono coinvolti in prima persona. All'adunanza convennero i principi della Chiesa (tre patriarchi e ventinove cardinali) e ben oltre trecento vescovi d'ogni nazione cristiana; al loro séguito, affluì un gran numero di messi governativi. Astuti banchieri vi gettarono le basi della propria ricchezza, come Cosimo il Vecchio capostipite dei Medici che, giunto a Costanza al seguito di Giovanni XXII, vi realizzò investimenti, non solo finanziari, tali da giocare una parte non secondaria nella sua successiva influenza politica.

16 Robiglio, pp. 13-14. For example: 'A Costanza vennero trascritte opere che da lì raggiunsero i paesi del nord Europa. Guglielmo Fillastre, …, fu un protagonista degli eventi, oltre che uno dei loro cronisti. Recatosi all'adunanza di Costanza egli “non dimenticò la biblioteca che aveva contribuito a fondare nella sua antica sede episcopale e si preoccupò di arricchirla.” Capolavori del primo Umanesimo, come il De sui ipsius ignorantia petrarchesco, si unirono a best-sellers gotici come il De ludo scaccorum del frate Jacopo da Cessole e ai nuovi classici del diritto, Bartolo da Sassoferrato e Baldo degli Ubaldi. Il Commento di san Tommaso d'Aquino alla Metaphysica di Aristotele o la tommasiana Summa contra Gentiles giunsero a Costanza da Parigi e dall'Italia e, dopo avervi sostato, proseguirono per la lontana Cracovia.' Although, of course, Serravalle made no use of such works, it does indicate the range of manuscripts that might well have been available to him if he had wished to comment in some depth on, for example, Aristotle's works.


18 Loomis, p. 200.

19 Finke, p. 19: ‘In hac questione pendente incidit questio, quomodo deciderentur agenda in concilio et fieret scrutinium votorum, utrum per nationes in genere, quorum quatuor erant, videlicet Italie, Gallie, Germanie et Anglie, vel per capita singula? Et licet clare de iure videatur, quod perscrutanda
that the early sessions of the Council were preoccupied with establishing a position concerning the authority and integrity of the Council. Fillastre provides details of the manoeuvrings, no doubt very time consuming for those involved, which occurred in establishing the Council's credentials. However, there were powerful arguments against the authority of a Council unless it were accepted by the Catholic community that it had been convoked by a legitimate pope. Crowder comments:

The canon law explicitly and tradition implicitly established that a pope could be judged by no man. His supremacy over all human jurisdiction, as a consequence of his near divinity as God's vicegerent on earth, had been promoted by the publicists of the earlier fourteenth century. Part of this superiority was the papal prerogative of summoning a general council, the plenary assembly of the Church, when he saw a need for it. Without such a summons, no council, however fully representative, was valid; and the acts of any general council were of no force if they did not have papal approval.

Although Serravalle's presence at the Council is not attested before February 1416, it has already been noted that he is likely to have arrived with Carlo Malatesta in June 1415. As an aid to putting Serravalle's Comentum into context, it is now useful to provide a résumé of the Council's business as it unfolded through the sessions. Session 1 of the Council, held on 16 November 1414 dealt with 'the matters to be treated in the council, in which order and by which officials'. In session 2, held on 2 March 1415, Pope John XXIII offered to resign the papacy. Session 3 (26 March 1415) covered 'decrees on the integrity and authority of the Council, after the pope's flight'. Session 4 (30 March 1415) involved 'Decrees of the council on its authority and integrity, in the abbreviated form read out by Cardinal Zabarella'. Session 5 (6 April 1415) produced the Haec Sancta decree stating that a properly constituted Council has power immediately from Christ. As a consequence, all members of the Faith, even a Pope, were bound to obey it in those matters which pertain to the Faith, including the eradication of the current schism and the
general reform of the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{28} Sessions 6 (17 April 1415) and 7 (2 May 1415) involved proceedings against John XXIII and Jerome of Prague.\textsuperscript{29} Session 8 (4 May 1415) covered the condemnation of various writings of John Wyclif, with the Council pronouncing him a heretic, condemning his memory and ordering his bones to be exhumed and scattered far from a burial place.\textsuperscript{30} Session 9 (13 May 1415), Session 10 (14 May 1415) and session 11 (25 May 1415) were devoted to proceedings against John XXIII.\textsuperscript{31} Session 12 (29 May 1415) was concerned with the formal deposing of John XXIII and the issuing of a decree to the effect that none of the current popes might be re-elected as pope.\textsuperscript{32} In the event of anyone of the three popes establishing himself in the future as an 'antipope', the Council issued strictures against any person who might presume to follow this obedience, including the threat of eternal damnation and the certainty of their undergoing further proceedings, probably involving the secular arm.\textsuperscript{33} Session 13 (15 June 1415) involved the 'condemnation of communion under both kinds, recently revived among the Bohemians by Jakoubek of Stríbro.'\textsuperscript{34}

At this stage in the Council's proceedings there occurred a significant event when, as Cardinal Fillastre records in his diary, on 15 June 1415 Carlo Malatesta arrived in Constance with full authority to act as proctor for Gregory XII.\textsuperscript{35} Since Serravalle had been associated with Malatesta in the years before the commencement of Council, with both men belonging to the obedience of Gregory, it is possible, therefore, for reasons of safety that Serravalle travelled under the protection of Malatesta.\textsuperscript{36} From the details of his career outlined in the previous chapter, it is evident that Serravalle arrived at the Council of Constance having had a distinguished career as a scholar, theologian, and with at least some diplomatic experience. He was clearly trusted by Gregory XII and remained loyal to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibidem.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Finke, p. 41: 'Die sabbati decima quinta Junii Karolus Malatesta intravit Constanciam cum procuratorio plenissimo Angeli Corario ad cedendum papatui et de hoc tractatur pluribus diebus.'
\item \textsuperscript{36} Aldo Vallone, 'Bertoldi, Giovanni (Giovanni da Serravalle)' in Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, vol. 9 (1967), available online at http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-bertoldi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/, accessed 25/06/2014: 'Nel 1410, con Malatesta da Rimini, il B. fu a Mantova... Probabilmente nel 1410 gli era giunta la nomina, voluta da Gregorio XII, a vescovo di Fermo... Seguì invece il papa a Gaeta e ivi rimase per alcun tempo, presso Ladislao... Abbandonato da costui Gregorio XII (che si era rifugiato presso il generoso Malatesta) per l'antipapa Giovanni XXIII, il B. rimase ancora presso Ladislao, seguendolo in vari luoghi fino a Napoli, nel tentativo di fingere da intermediario tra lui e Carlo Malatesta.'
\end{itemize}
him until Gregory formally abdicated. If Serravalle's participation in the affairs of the Council should be dated from June 1415, he will have played no part in the deliberations involved in ensuring the legitimacy of the Council and its acts.

Session 14 of the Council (4 July 1415) approved the resignation of Gregory XII and, with the abdications of John XXIII and Gregory XII, formally united their followers. Session 15 (6 July 1415) involved further condemnation of Wyclif and the sentencing of John Hus. Session 16 (11 July 1415) and Session 17 (15 July 1415) dealt with events leading to Sigismund's imminent departure for Spain, the purpose of which was to treat with the King of Aragon and to, at least, set in motion events leading to the desired abdication of Benedict XIII. Fillastre records that Sigismund departed from Constance on 17 July, and did not return to the Council until 27 January 1417, having 'gone to France and England to make peace between their kings'. Sigismund took care to preserve his position after his departure, with Fillastre noting that during his absence Sigismund requested the Council to discuss matters pertaining to the reform of the Church, but to pass no decrees, and, in particular, to make no changes concerning his Kingdom of Hungary.

2. The Careers of Cardinal Saluzzo and Bishops Hallum and Bubwith

In the months after Sigismund's departure from the Council three sessions were held, with the last being on 21 November 1415, mainly devoted to routine matters. During this relatively inactive period it is likely that Serravalle was familiarising himself with the workings of the Council and renewing old acquaintances. At some stage during these months Serravalle must have come into contact with Amadeo di Saluzzo, Robert Hallum and Nicholas Bubwith, to whom he gives the credit for providing the motivating force for his translation of and commentary on the Commedia.

The main biographical details relating to Amadeo di Saluzzo (c. 1361-1419) are derived from the entries in The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church and the Dizionario

---

37 Council of Constance 1414-1418.
38 Ibidem.
39 Ibidem.
40 Loomis, p. 258.
41 Loomis, p. 310-311.
42 Finke, p. 49: 'Rex in suo recessu rogavit deputatos generales concilii, quod ipso absentе deliberatur de reformacione ecclesie, set tamen nichil concluderetur neque statueretur, donec esset reversus; et maxime quantum ad regnum suum Hungarie nichil immutaretur.'
43 Available online at: www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/cardinals.htm 'Amadeo di Saluzzo (ca 1361-1419)', accessed 23/06/2014.
Saluzzo was born in Savoy, the second of 12 children of Federico II, marquis of Saluzzo and Béatrice de Genève. He was the nephew of the Antipope Clement VII on his mother's side. Saluzzo was a licentiate in civil law and in 1383, although only in his early twenties, he was elected bishop of Valence and Die, but he never received the Episcopal consecration. He was created pseudocardinal deacon of S. Maria Nuova in the consistory of 23 December 1383 and named archdeacon of Reims from 1384 until 4 January 1419. He was canon of the cathedral chapter of Rouen 1385-1403, and its archdeacon 1403-1419. He was absent at the death of his uncle, Antipope Clement VII on September 16 1394, but participated in the conclave of 1394, which elected Antipope Benedict XIII. Saluzzo was created cardinal protodeacon in 1403 and was camerlengo of the Sacred College of Cardinals, effectively from 1403 until his death in 1419. In 1408 he abandoned Antipope Benedict XIII who deposed him as camerlengo. He attended the Council of Pisa and participated in the conclave of 1409, which elected Antipope Alexander V who reappointed him camerlengo. He was sent by the new antipope as a member of a mission to Geneva on 16 October 1409 and, therefore, did not participate in the conclave of 1410, which elected Antipope John XXIII. He attended the Council of Constance and was created camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church toward 1416. He participated in the conclave of 1417 which elected Pope Martin V. He left Constance on 17 December 1417 and accompanied the new pope to Florence. Pope Martin sent him as legate to France and Germany. Cardinal Saluzzo died on 28 June 1419 at Saint-Donat in the archdiocese of Vienne and, after a funeral in Reims, his body was transferred to Lyon and buried in the cathedral of Saint Jean de Lyon.

These brief biographical details show that, through his uncle Clement VII and Clement's successor Benedict XIII, Saluzzo was well-connected at the papal court at Avignon. His departure from the obedience of Avignon to the obedience of Pisa probably represented an understanding that the schism in the Church had to be resolved, although the election of John XXIII only made matters worse. Saluzzo was to play a prominent part in the events leading up to the resignation/deposition of the three popes and the election of Martin V which placed the Church under the authority of a single pope.

The diary of Guillaume Fillastre provides real insight into the politics and trading between the interested parties which occurred during the activities of the Council.

---

As a French cardinal his writing, although there is no reason to doubt its accuracy in matters of fact, clearly interprets the events and the motivation behind them from his own privileged viewpoint. His first mention of Saluzzo occurs in a passage stressing the importance of the French nation. Following the flight of Pope John XXIII from Constance to Schaffhausen early in the morning of Thursday 21 March 1415, Fillastre comments on the Council's attempt to recover the situation and the part played by Saluzzo:

Ex tali recessu die iovis predicta publice scito turbatus plurimum fuit rex et totum consilium pluresque secuti sunt dictum d. papam. Die veneris sequenti collegium cardinalium misit ad papam apud Scafusiam tres cardinales: de Ursinis episcopum, sancti Marci presbyterum et de Saluciis dyaconum ad consolandum et exhortandum, ut perseveret in proposito cessionis, et persuadendum, quod faceret procuratores et alia utilia unioni et concilio.

The cardinals' mission appears to have been successful, at least on the surface, in that a commitment was obtained from the Pope that he would appoint as his proctors each and every cardinal to execute his abdication with the understanding that, if three cardinals together should agree on the necessity of his abdication, they were free to abdicate for him, even against his will. Saluzzo continued to play a prominent role in the proceedings. Fillastre comments on the problems concerning the deposition of Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna). The college of cardinals was unwilling to accede to Sigismund's request to proceed with the case against Benedict on the grounds that, as long as the main body of the Spanish nation persisted in their support of Pedro de Luna, there would be no union of the Church. Again Saluzzo found himself entrusted with a delicate mission. However, probably the most revealing entry in Fillastre's diary relates to the conclave which elected Cardinal Colonna as Pope. This extract from Loomis's translation is preserved in English in view of its relatively complicated nature and its importance in understanding the processes.

45 Finke, pp. 23-24: 'Cum autem nacio Gallicana esset multum solenniter congregata, et ut apparebat prima facie maior omnium nacionum et in numero et in meritis personarum, cum haberet quadringentas personas honestas, voluit deliberare. ... Ibique venerunt quinque cardinales tamquam de illa nacione, videlicet Ostiensis episcopus, ... et Saluciarum dyaconus.'
46 Finke, p. 25.
47 Loomis, p. 225.
48 Loomis, p. 245. 'It was decided that certain cardinals, Orsini, Cambrai, Challant, Saluzzo, and Florence, should go to the Pope-who was then in the town of Radolfzell, two miles away-in the name not of the Council but of the college, and persuade him to accept the terms of the memorandum. {sentence of deposition and his unqualified abdication} They went and the Pope agreed on the form of the following statement …'
49 Loomis, p. 335.
50 Finke, p. 99. 'Die Martis sequentis XIX. Aprilis cardinales de Ursinis et Saluciarum ex parte collegii fecerunt responsionem regi secundum predictam deliberacionem, qui illam visus est non habere acceptam. Et brevis verbis respondit: Bene audivi vos, scio, quid sum acturus.'
51 Loomis, pp. 427-428. The Latin version of Fillastre's account can be found in Finke, pp. 157-159.
leading to the election of Pope Martin V:

On Wednesday morning … they proceeded to vote by ballot … the Cardinal of Saluzzo, the first cardinal deacon, took them one by one from the urn and read them separately in a loud voice. … when the ballot count was announced, … the Cardinal of Ostia, who had eleven cardinals' votes, three French, five Spanish and one German, the Cardinal of Venice, who had ten cardinals' votes, two Italian, three French, one Spanish, the Cardinal of Saluzzo, who had twelve cardinals' votes, two Italian, three French, one German, five Spanish and Cardinal Colonna, who had eight cardinals' votes, four Italian, one French, three German, two Spanish, six English.52

Each Nation chose six of its members to join with the cardinals in the election of the new pope. The apparent discrepancies in the arithmetic can be accounted for by noting that it was permitted for a voting paper to be inscribed with more than one name. When this occurred, the candidates, so indicated, were to be considered as equal.53 The English Nation appears to have voted in a bloc for Cardinal Colonna. However, for present purposes it should be noted that the Cardinal of Saluzzo headed the cardinals' votes and that he came within one vote of leading the ballot after the final round of formal voting.54 It is clear that Saluzzo, by virtue of his office as camarlengo of the Sacred College and by his standing as expressed by the voting of the Conclave, was a formidable presence at the Council of Constance.

Robert Hallum, Bishop of Salisbury, was, until his death on 4 September 1417, one of the most influential participants in the deliberations of the Council. A description of Hallum's earlier career may be obtained from Michael Bennett's authoritative account.55 The date of Hallum's birth was probably slightly before 1360 at Warrington in the North West of England. By the late 1380s he was studying canon law and was already well established in the service of Archbishop Courtenay. Hallum's career owed much to his reputation as a scholar, attaining his doctorate in canon law and eventually being elected chancellor of Oxford University in 1403. As his proficiency in canon law advanced, his abilities seemed to have been recognized by leading figures in the Church. In 1389 he served Archbishop Courtenay as principal registrar, and in 1400 he was appointed as chancellor to Archbishop Arundel. It would appear that his abilities had also come to the attention of the authorities in Rome, and Bennett comments that 'from 1404 he was the

52 Loomis, p. 427.
53 Loomis, note 302, p. 462.
54 Loomis, pp. 427-428. Cardinal Fillastre records the transfer of votes which ensured the election of Cardinal Colonna as Pope.
prime papal candidate for episcopal office. Hallum's growing reputation at Rome is attested by a letter from Richard Clifford, then Bishop of Worcester, expressing pleasure at the news of his doing well at the Roman Curia between 1404 and 1407. Since Hallum was Chancellor of Oxford University from November 1403 until at least February 1406, it is likely that his attendance at the Curia was sporadic. Nevertheless, he clearly had made a considerable impression since he was appointed Archbishop of York by papal provision 22 May 1406. However, Henry IV objected to his appointment. The reason for Henry's objection is not known. However, Bennett suggests: 'In 1406 his provision to the archbishopric of York was blocked by the king's determination to advance his own clerks ...' In the event, although Nicholas Bubwith had been appointed Bishop of Salisbury by papal provision on 22 June 1407, Bubwith was translated to make room for Hallum, who was appointed Bishop of Salisbury by papal provision 23 October 1407. Hallum was certainly in Italy in 1407 since in that year he was consecrated bishop by Pope Gregory XII. Hallum's subsequent career can be summed up for present purposes by paraphrasing Emden's comments. Hallum was one of the English ambassadors at the Council of Pisa in 1409 and was created cardinal by John XXIII. Hallum declined the honour in deference to the wish of Henry IV. He was one of the English ambassadors to the Council of Constance, where he arrived on 7 December 1414. He acted as president of the English Nation and worked to obtain for it an individual vote. Hallum collaborated with the German Nation and Sigismund for the restoration of the unity of the Church and for its reform. He was influential in securing the suspension of Pope John XXIII. Hallum preached before the Council on 22 January and on 8 December 1415 and on three other occasions. He was commissioned to treat for alliances with Aragon, the German princes, the Hanse cities and Genoa, being appointed on 2 December 1416 and on 25 February 1417. Hallum was on the committee for investigation of charges against the deposed Benedict XIII. He died unexpectedly at Constance on 4 September 1417 and was buried at Constance Cathedral on 13 September 1417 in the presence of Sigismund and the leading dignitaries attending the Council.

56 Ibidem
59 Ibidem.
60 Bennett, p. 156.
63 Ibidem.
The third person mentioned by Serravalle as being an inspiration for his starting the *Translatio et Comentum* is Nicholas Bubwith. Unlike Cardinal Saluzzo and Bishop Hallum, the contributions of Bishop Bubwith to the proceedings of the Council would appear to have been relatively low key and probably consistent with those to be expected from a senior member of the English delegation. Certainly, Cardinal Fillastre does not record any of his interventions. A brief summary of the salient aspects of his career is drawn from the appropriate entry in *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*. Emden notes that Bubwith possibly studied at Oxford. However, he did not incept. From 1379 he held various ecclesiastical appointments. On 22 June 1407 he was appointed Bishop of Salisbury by papal provision but, as noted above, was translated 'to make room for Robert Hallum'. He was appointed Bishop of Bath and Wells by papal provision 7 October 1407, an appointment which he held until his death on 27 October 1424. A brief summary of his career in public service is as follows: probably chancery clerk in 1380; master in chancery by June 1399; king's secretary in 1402; keeper of the rolls from September 1402 to March 1405; keeper of the privy seal March 1405 to October 1406; treasurer of England from April 1407 to July 1408; envoy to treat with Scotland May 1412. He was appointed as one of the king's ambassadors at Constance on 20 October 1414, and he had returned to England by August 1418.

From their brief career outlines above it is clear that Hallum and Bubwith brought different levels of expertise to the English delegation at Constance. Their careers spanned three reigns, with both beginning to hold high office in the reign of Henry IV (1399-1413). The troubled reign of Richard II (1377-1399) had come to an end in dubious circumstances and, other than by rights won on the battlefield, Henry's claim to the throne was weak. As a consequence not only was it a potential stimulus for rebellion, but it was a considerable obstacle in his dealings with Parliament and possibly also with his own Council. During the course of his reign Henry had to deal with rebellion in England, with problems concerning Ireland and France, with the defence of the Scottish Marches, with the maintenance of order on the seas and with the war against Owen Glendower in Wales. In addition, when account is taken of the necessity to reward his supporters, particularly at the start of his reign, and the perceived over-generosity to his retainers, Henry was perpetually short of money to finance his projects. Therefore, Henry needed Parliament to authorise the taxes that were necessary if he were to meet his obligations.

---

However, Parliament was mainly concerned with the good governance of the realm, the maintenance of the shipping lanes across the Channel, and the suppression of the revolt in Wales. The realities of Henry's position in 1403 have been outlined by Kirby:

It was true that this year he (Henry) had survived a great danger, suppressed a revolt and pacified the north. But the position was as difficult as ever. The French were still threatening the south coasts, the rebellion of Owen Glendower still prospered, and the financial position was still desperate. Lollard doctrines were being widely preached and discussed. The Archbishop of Canterbury was now attending the council more regularly, perhaps aware of the need to defend the interests of the church.66

This political environment would clearly have effected Bubwith more than Hallum. It was a difficult environment for a public servant to perform his duties satisfactorily, and Henry's difficulties with Parliament and, hence, his financial problems lasted until the end of his reign. For example, Bubwith was one of ten treasurers appointed during Henry's reign, none of whom came to terms with the King's financial burdens.67

With the accession of Henry V in 1413 the political atmosphere changed considerably. The potential accusation that the throne had been usurped was no longer a threat. The Welsh rebellion had ceased to be an issue, and the political standing of the king was considerably enhanced by his victory over the French at Agincourt in 1415. An excellent account of the methods by which Henry succeeded in governing his kingdom is to be found in a series of essays edited by G. L. Harriss.68 The mechanics of government and the conduct of military campaigns are not particularly relevant to the present discussion. However, in order to consider the conduct of Bishops Hallum and Bubwith at Constance, it is significant that, having come to real prominence in the previous reign, they now served a king who had effective control over his kingdom.69 That Henry kept a close watch on the activities of the Council at Constance and exercised direct control over his delegation cannot be doubted:

66 Kirby, p. 161.
67 Kirby, p. 258.
69 Gerald L Harriss, 'The Management of Parliament', in Henry V: The Practice of Kingship, ed. Gerald L. Harriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 137-158, p. 156: 'Parliament had this unique quality, that it embraced and served the interests of all the estates of the realm, from the highest to the lowest, and this made it a peculiarly effective instrument of government for a king like Henry V. For Henry's policies and his view of kingship demanded an identity of interest between the king and the realm, and in parliament this could most appropriately and publicly be given expression. We have observed the fruits of this in the provision of good government, in taxation, petitions, and legislation, and in the speed and effectiveness of the parliamentary timetable.'
But it was his uncle and chancellor, Henry Beaufort, bishop of the rich see of Winchester, who felt his hand hardest. When sent to the Council of Constance in 1417 to procure the election of a pope favourable to English interests, Beaufort deposited with the king a loan of £14,000. If this was intended as security for his good behaviour, Beaufort's acceptance of a cardinal's hat against Henry's wishes proved a costly miscalculation; for the king stopped repayment of his loan and exacted a further £17,666 13s. 4d. from him in 1421 as the price of his restoration to royal favour.  

When discussing the eventual failure of the Treaty of Brétigny due to a lack of precision in the original drafting of the Treaty, Maurice Keen comments:

Nevertheless, the whole incident indicates and illustrates the importance of professionalism in diplomacy in the period. It also helps to explain why every English embassy, of Henry V's time and before, included among its named personnel experts in civil law … Diplomatic professionalism was already part of an established career structure.  

It is, therefore, clear that Hallum and Bubwith were accomplished diplomats who were obeying the King's instructions. Hallum, in particular as head of the English delegation, would have been replaced immediately if Henry had had any doubts as to his ability to handle the negotiating process in the King's interests. The reason why the French cardinal Fillastre in his diary was unsympathetic to Bishop Hallum's interventions in the Council is to be found in Hallum's 'being very much of the reform or royal party and hostile to the cardinals'. This is entirely understandable, Cardinal Fillastre and Bishop Hallum served different interests. However, the note on Richental's Chronicle does not do justice to Hallum. A very different view of Bishop Hallum has been provided by Jeremy Catto:

It is possible to detect among the bishops a loose group of men both in the close confidence of Henry V and active in ecclesiastical affairs. Its centre was in the prerogative court of Canterbury, … They were also called upon by Henry IV and Henry V for diplomatic work, pre-eminently, though not exclusively, at the councils of Pisa and Constance. Doyen among these professional lawyers to whom the leading role in ecclesiastical affairs was entrusted after the death of Archbishop Arundel was Robert Hallum, former registrar of Archbishop Courtenay, auditor of causes in the

---

72 For example, in describing the complex negotiations with the Spanish delegates involving Benedict XIII, Fillastre comments: 'Unde rex supplevit, quod loquebatur proipsis et illis de imperio et qui sequebantur partes regis; Sarisberiensis superbe, ut solet, et cum minis loquutus est cum comite Cardone, qui bene respondit sibi.' Finke, p. 118. 
73 Loomis, note 132, p. 454. 
74 Loomis, note 52, p. 194; 'The three principal Englishmen were Richard Beauchamp, count or earl of Warwick; Robert Hallum, bishop of Salisbury; and Richard Clifford, bishop of London. Robert Hallum - who, like Richard Clifford, is here mistaken for a metropolitan - was both powerful and arrogant, and it is curious to note in these chronicles that the attitude of continental toward Englishmen at this time was not dissimilar to that of modern times.'
court of Canterbury, Bishop of Salisbury since 1407, and leading conciliarist in the English hierarchy.\textsuperscript{75}

There appears to be no doubt that Hallum was an able professional charged with maintaining a negotiating position favourable to his king's interests. His personality, arrogant or otherwise, would not have been an issue. Equally intransigent negotiators would have existed on all sides, all no doubt appearing unsympathetic to any opinion but their own. Bishop Hallum's position at the centre of events is further attested by Cardinal Fillastre when, as his diary makes clear, he records that Hallum preached a laudatory sermon in the cathedral on Sigismund's return to Constance.\textsuperscript{76}

3. Serravalle and the Council

At this stage some consideration should be given to Serravalle's own standing at the Council of Constance. The only other extant work attributable to Serravalle is the homily, \emph{Caro mea vere est cibus}, which he preached at Constance on 18 June1416. Robiglio comments at some length on this homily.\textsuperscript{77} In particular, concerning the reform of the Church, Robiglio notes that the excesses of the Church are condemned 'con toni che non sarebbero dispiaciuti al Wyclif', that the struggle against vested interests 'anche nelle alte gerarchie' will be difficult, but that Serravalle 'è parimente consapevole dell'importanza della partita che si sta giocando in concilio,'\textsuperscript{78} The bishop of Fermo was elected president of the Italian Nation for April 1416 and for June 1417.\textsuperscript{79} The election in 1417 was controversial in that Sigismund wanted the archbishop of Milan to be elected as president. The details relating to the political manoeuvrings are described in Filastre's diary.\textsuperscript{80} This whole episode serves to emphasize that Serravalle was seen to be a serious contributor to the workings of the Council.

It is important to try to establish, if only tentatively, Serravalle's purpose in undertaking the \emph{Translatio et Comentum}. It is straightforward to accept that the translation

\textsuperscript{76} Finke, p. 86: 'Die mercurii XXVII. Januarii millesimo quadringentesimo XVII rex Romanorum d. Sigismundus, ... , reversus est et intravit Constantiam. Cui totum concilium ... ivit obviam usque supra pontem. Qui rex descendit ante primas cruces et securut est processionem in ecclesiam cum pallio aureo supra se, et cardinalis episcopus Ostiensis cum mitra parata preciosa receptum eum in ecclesia cum evangeli et aqua benedicta, et dicta in ecclesia oracione, episcopus Sarisberiensis Anglicus in ambone fecit sermonem ad laudes regis, rege sedente in cathedra parata pannis aureis, in loco, ubi olim sedebat papa.'
\textsuperscript{77} Robiglio, pp. 14-16.
\textsuperscript{78} Robiglio, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{79} Loomis, note 20, p.63.
\textsuperscript{80} Loomis, pp. 363-364.
into Latin of the *Commedia* was undertaken at the request of the two English bishops, and Cardinal Saluzzo might well have seen some advantage in providing a Latin translation of the *Commedia* for the benefit of those members of the higher echelons of the Roman Church who had little or no grasp of Italian. In view of the shortage of time available, it is probable that few copies were made. However, David Wallace provides a convincing explanation for the location of a (now lost) copy of the *Translatio* in Wells Cathedral library.\(^{81}\) It is reasonable to suppose that this copy was brought back by Bishop Bubwith on his return from Constance. The assertion of Wallace that 'there was evidently plenty of free time at the council …' \(^{82}\) is, as a general statement, questionable. As has already been shown, there were formal sessions of the Council, continual meetings of the nations to provide the resolutions for consideration and endless ceremonial duties involving the arrivals and departures of distinguished delegates to the Council, not to mention the ceremonial/religious events associated with an Ecumenical Council. However, between January and May 1416, which corresponded to the time Serravalle spent on the translation,\(^{83}\) the Council only met on one occasion (Session 21, 30 May 1416) to pass the sentence condemning Jerome of Prague\(^{84}\). The next session, Session 22, took place on 15 October 1416. This dealt with the confirmation of the Treaty of Narbonne, the withdrawal of the King of Aragon from the obedience of Pope Benedict XIII and the King's recognition of the Council through his envoys.\(^{85}\) Session 23 (5 November 1416), Session 24 (28 November 1416), Session 25 (14 December 1416) and Session 26 (24 December 1416) dealt with matters relating to Spain, among them the beginning of the process against Pedro de Luna (Benedict XIII).\(^{86}\) It is likely that Serravalle would not have been too involved in any discussion relevant to these sessions. However, before the commencement of Session 23, as Fillastre's diary makes clear, Pierre D'Ailly, Cardinal-Priest of Cambrai, acting apparently on behalf of the King of France, announced his intention of formally opposing the continuation of the English Nation as a separate voting entity in the proceedings of the Council, thereby provoking a response from the English and German Nations which threatened the continuation of the formal proceedings against


\(^{82}\) Wallace, p. 143.

\(^{83}\) Lombardi, p.105. Lombardi quotes from the *Explicit* at the end of Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p.1254, where Serravalle gives the date for the composition of the *Translatio* as January-May 1416.

\(^{84}\) Council of Constance 1414-18.

\(^{85}\) Ibidem.

\(^{86}\) Ibidem.
Pedro de Luna.\textsuperscript{87} With Sigismund absent for most of the time and a relatively light agenda for the Council, it might be thought that Serravalle could concentrate on his commentary. However, the French intervention, concerning the legitimacy of the individual presence of the English Nation at the Council sessions, heralded the start of serious bickering between the delegates and the supporters of the French and English Nations, which would have certainly required the full-time attention of Bishop Hallum. As will be shown later, the maintaining of England's position as a separate nation enabled the delegation of the English Nation to vote as a block in the Conclave.

Wallace, under a subsection headed \textit{Bubwith at Constance: the Dante Circle}, writes that:\textsuperscript{88} 'While at Constance, the two Englishmen (Bubwith and Hallam) befriended a Franciscan, Giovanni Bertoldi de Serravalle, bishop of Firmano, who was keen to share his enthusiasm for Dante's \textit{Commedia}.' It is reasonable to question whether this was the only link between the three men. Wallace notes that Serravalle had spent some time in England '(perhaps in 1398)'.\textsuperscript{89} Since Oxford's reputation was already well established, with Pietro Philarghi (later antipope Alexander V) having studied there,\textsuperscript{90} it is possible that Serravalle paid a visit to Oxford during this time when he could have met Hallum. In addition, Hallum was consecrated by Gregory XII in 1407, and there is every possibility that Serravalle could have made the acquaintance of Hallum at that time or during Hallum's service with the Curia bearing in mind the close links between Gregory and Serravalle. Judging by the content of the homily, \textit{Caro mea vere est cibus}, the link between the three men was their zeal for the reform of the Church.

Passages from the text of the homily may be found in Teuwsen's dissertation.\textsuperscript{91} These passages, which will be considered in more detail in chapter 6, are important, not only because they represent Serravalle's thinking, but also because they illustrate his use of the Latin language for a piece of writing over which he must have taken care. There is little to distinguish between Serravalle's use of Latin in this homily and that to be found

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{87} Finke, p. 78: '\ldots de mane ante sessionem rev. p. d. cardinalis Cameracensis pro rege Francie et ab eo generale mandatum habens et ali eiuisdem regis proposuerant in sessione protestari quod nacio Anglica non deberet in concilio generali haberi neque reputari pro una nacione, faciente quartam partem concilii concilii (sic) generalis et per consequens universalis ecclesie, prout de facto fecerat, cum regnum Francie muo maius sit quam Anglie et nacio Ytalica, Germanica et Gallica multo et multo maiores sint. Cum autem Anglici ante sessionem hoc audierunt, aliqui ex illis et Germanis venerunt ad cardinales et dixerunt, quod, si talis protestacio fieret, naciones Germanie et Anglie non essent in sessione, et ita impediretur sessio, que fiebat pro unione ecclesie contra Petrum de Luna.'
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{88} Wallace, p. 143.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{89} Ibidem.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{90} Petersonn, 'Alexander V', \textit{The Catholic Encyclopedia}.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{91} Teuwsen, pp. 20- 22.
\end{flushright}
in his translation of and commentary on the *Commedia*, both of which show no indication of any influence of the humanistic trend towards a more classical Latin. Teuwsen speculates that Serravalle connected more with Sigismund and his reforms, but in any case there are no more references to him in the proceedings of the Council.\(^{92}\)

### 4. The Method for the Election of the New Pope

While Serravalle was continuing with the production of his commentary, the sessions of the Council were ongoing. Session 38 (28 July 1417) involved a Decree about the right to vote of the deputies of the kings of Castile and Aragon.\(^{93}\) Session 39 (9 October 1417) covered a variety of issues such as appointing the date for the next Council, precautions for guarding against future schism, and commitments to be undertaken by the pope on Church matters.\(^{94}\) Session 40 (30 October 1417) was very important:

Reforms to be made by the pope together with the council before it is dissolved, that the election of the Roman pontiff may be begun, notwithstanding the absence of Peter de Luna's cardinals, and On the manner and form of electing the pope. … for this time only, at the election of the Roman and supreme pontiff, there shall be added to the cardinals six prelates or other honourable churchmen in holy orders, from each of the nations currently present and named at the same synod, who are to be chosen by each of the said nations within ten days. … the person is to be regarded as the Roman pontiff by the universal church without exception who is elected and admitted by two-thirds of the cardinals present at the conclave and by two-thirds of those from each nation who are to be and have been added to the cardinals.\(^{95}\)

As the voting was to show, the requirement that two-thirds of those voting in each nation had to support the candidate for the election to be valid played into the hands of the nation who, for whatever reason, was able to present a united front. Events were to show that only the English delegation, acting almost certainly under the orders of Henry V, met this requirement.

In Session 41 (8 November 1417) preparations were made for the start of the conclave to elect a pope,\(^{96}\) and on 11 November cardinal Oddo Colonna was elected Pope as Martin V. Mention has already been made of the votes cast in the Conclave during the discussion of Cardinal Saluzzo's career. After the negotiations following the first round of voting, it became clear that Cardinal Colonna lacked only one vote in the assembly of cardinals to secure election.\(^{97}\) Cardinal Fillastre, in terms which might seem to imply the

---

92 Teuwsen, p. 22.
93 Council of Constance 1414-18.
94 Ibidem.
95 Ibidem.
96 Council of Constance 1414-18.
97 Finke, pp. 158-159: 'Ex hiis ventum est ad accessiones. Et statim cardinalis Pisanus cum vigenti voce
sacrifice of the interests of the French Nation for the good of the unity of the Catholic Church, describes how the impasse was finally resolved:

Cardinales sancti Marci (Fillastre) et de Fuxo (Peter de Foix) presentes et qui nulli accesserant, invicem loquebantur et timebant accedere. Verum attendentes tantum concursum vocum in unum et credentes, quod absentes, qui revertentur, accederent, deliberaverunt accedere et dicendo per organum sancti Marci hec verba: Ad consumacionem huius operis et unionis ecclesie accedimus nos ad cardinalem de Columpna. Et ita dixit cardinalis de Fuxo.98

Oddo Colonna was then duly elected.

It is very difficult not to detect the hand of Henry V behind all the politics and manoeuvring. Firstly, the English Nation voted as a bloc, following the will of the ruler of England. Secondly, under the system of voting approved by the Council, it was evident that only Cardinal Colonna would be elected, since the English votes were clearly committed to Colonna and, hence, no other candidate could have satisfied the rules of the ballot. The complex political game that Henry V was playing has been admirably summed up by Gerald Harriss:

But it was only when, on Henry V's initiative, the English claimed and won full representation as a separate nation at the Council of Constance, that the northern monarchies took over control of the conciliar movement from the college of cardinals. Acting first in alliance with Sigismund to procure the resignation of the three rival popes, and subsequently in opposition to him to achieve the election of Martin V, Henry's intervention was forceful and decisive. Conciliar politics was a strand in Henry's anti-French diplomacy, but the conciliar programme of reform interested him little. What did interest him was the reform of the church in England.99

It might be thought that the death of Robert Hallum on 4 September 1417, with his zeal for the reform of the Church and his perceived position as a strong supporter of the Emperor and his politics, would have been of assistance in achieving Henry's aims. However, it is evident that Henry V was eager to hasten the election of a pope for his own political advantage. Crowder notes that in some ways Hallum's death enabled Henry to change his political objectives without loss of face.100 Previously both Sigismund and the German and English Nations had opposed proposals for an early election for the new pope,
wishing first to find the basis for an agreed programme of reforms. However, Crowder suggests that Henry had come to the conclusion that Sigismund would not provide military assistance against France until the Council had ended.\footnote{Ibidem.} Hallum's political stance at the Council would have been unhelpful in the light of Henry's presumed change of political objectives. However, a change of direction was achieved by the arrival on 4 October 1417 of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and uncle of Henry V and an experienced diplomat, at Ulm, ostensibly on his way to Jerusalem. Cardinal Fillastre, despite his suspicions as to the motives of the English, records how the intervention of the Bishop of Winchester clearly facilitated the proceedings which were in danger of coming to a halt due to apparently irreconcilable differences between the nations and Sigismund.\footnote{Finke, p. 147: ‘Hiis pendentibus venerunt nova, quod episcopus Vinctoniensis in Anglia, patruus regis Anglie, erat in Ulma ad duas dietas de Constancia et quod ibat in Jherusalem. Et fuit per Anglicos significatum cardinalibus et persuasum, quod multum afficiabatur unione ecclesie, et quod scriberent sibi, quod veniret Constanciam, quod faceret cum rege Romanorum quicquid vellet. Quod fecerunt. Rex eciam scriptit. Et ivit ad illum episcopus Lichefeldensis et adduxit eum Constanciam in habitu peregrini cum cruce. Et sic intraet et stetit in Constancia pluribus diebus. Et iverunt sibi obviam rex et tres cardinales. Tractatum est per cardinales et deputatos omnium nacionum paucos cum rege per medium illius Vinctoniensis et finaliter deventum ad hoc, quod daretur per decretum concilii in forma infra scripta cauicio de fienda reformacione post electionem pape et expedirent capitula reformacionis concordata per omnes naciones et darentur deputati ad ordinandum modum eleccionis.’} However, his arrival was most unlikely to have been fortuitous. Henry V was engaged in a major campaign in Normandy from the middle of 1417 and much of the winter of 1417-18 was spent besieging the castle of Falaise.\footnote{C.T. Allmand, 'Henry V the Soldier, and the war in France' in \textit{Henry V: The Practice of Kingship}, ed. Gerald L. Harriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 117-135, p. 127.} 

Cardinal Fillastre provides some indication of the manoeuvrings which were influencing, and impeding, the conduct of business in the Council. As an example, when the envoys reported back to the Council on 10 March 1417 that Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna) had in effect rejected the request that he abdicate and was denying the authority of the Council, at a time when unity among the nations would have been beneficial in agreeing a suitable course of action, Fillastre writes that a rumour had spread to the effect that Sigismund had, during his absence from the Council, made a pact with Henry V against the King of France.\footnote{Finke, p. 93: ‘Ante istos dies fere per mensem fuit fama ante sessionem de die mercurii ultima Martii in Constancia, quod d. Sigismundus rex Romanorum erat confederatus regi Anglie contra regem Francie et promiserat esse cum rege Anglie in armis in Francia Parisius et contra regem et regnum Francie. Que omnia hiis diebus patefacta sunt. Hoc enim publice confessus est et asseruit idem rex Romanorum, quod volebat diffidare regem Francie; fecitque litteras diffidorias.’ Unsurprisingly, the members of the Council felt that such a course of action by Sigismund would provoke a reaction from the King of France and, since the Kings of Castile, Navarre, and Aragon and the nation of Italy would probably
follow the King of France, the schism in the Church would only worsen.  

After representations, an agreement of sorts was reached with Sigismund. Fillastre supplies further evidence of the mistrust amounting almost to paranoia that seemed to pervade the Council at this time. The following extract from Fillastre's diary is reproduced following Loomis's translation since it illustrates very clearly the pervading mood of the Council:

> But after the coming of the Bishop of Winchester, a dark suspicion arose in many minds and rumors were widely circulated to the effect that he was pretending to be on his way to Jerusalem but had no intention of going there … The King of the Romans, it was said, had contrived a scheme with the English - that the Bishop should pretend to take this journey and so come to the Council and there be elected pope. 

This whole episode clearly demonstrates how little many of the delegates at the Council appear to have understood of the objectives of Henry V. It is scarcely credible that Henry, or even Beaufort for that matter, believed that the Bishop of Winchester had any realistic chance of being elected Pope. The very mechanism, which guaranteed that Henry would not be saddled with a pope, whom he regarded as inimical to his interests, also guaranteed that the French Nation would not accept an English pope. The requirement of a two-thirds majority in each Nation for the election to be valid would also have meant that the Italian Nation, with its insistence on an Italian, and preferably a Roman, pope would also have opposed any attempt to secure Beaufort's election. In addition, it is very doubtful that Henry V would have welcomed as pope a senior English cleric, particularly one of Beaufort's capabilities and ambition. Beaumont was an important figure in English politics throughout the first 43 years of the 15th century. It was, therefore, only to be expected that, when he was made a cardinal and papal legate by Martin V in 1417, the king soon forced him to resign these appointments.

5. The Later Sessions of the Council

In Session 42 on 28 December 1417 a bull of Pope Martin V was approved. This concerned

---

105 Ibidem: ‘… quod illa guerra regis Romanorum, in cuius manibus erat concilium, contra regem Francie veri similiter esset impedimentum unionis ecclesie, quoniam propter hoc rex Francie forsam revocaret legatos suos et illos de suo regno non obediret pape in Constancia eligendo. Et forte reges Castelle, Navarre et forte Aragonum, Ytalia dictum regem Francie sequerentur et ita esset scisma periculosius quam ante.’

106 Ibidem: 'Finaliter fuit cum rege deliberatum, quod rex non mitteret de presenti diffidencias illas, tamen misit regi Anglie et heraldum suum, ut illis uteretur, prout et quando vellet; set ille naciones tres vel totum concilium, si naciones Gallie et Anglie consentirent, mitterent ad regem Anglie et rex Romanorum eciam mitteret legatos ad persuadendum pacem vel treugas inter reges Francie et Anglie.’

107 The original Latin version can be found in Finke, p. 147-148.

108 See, for example, M. H. Keen, England in the Later Middle Ages, A Political History (London: Methuen, 1973), chapter 15.
Baldassare Cossa, who had been earlier deprived of his see and imprisoned by the Council, but was now to be set free.\textsuperscript{109} In Session 43 on 23 March 1418 certain statutes were promulgated on the reform of the Church. These included statutes on exemptions, on unions and incorporations, on intercalary fruits, on simoniacs, on dispensations, on tithes and other dues, and on the life and probity of clerics.\textsuperscript{110} It is significant that only one formal session of the Council was devoted to reform of the Church. The general failure to adhere to the promises of the Council suited the papacy and the Cardinals in the short term, but the outcome, in the longer term, was to provide the context for the Reform movement, culminating in the Reformation. The tone was set by Pope Martin V himself. Although Martin V was the first of the Colonna family to become Pope, his family had already provided twenty-seven cardinals to the Church.\textsuperscript{111} Owing to the parlous state of Rome Martin did not reach the city until 28 September, 1420.\textsuperscript{112} Martin secured the Capital and his own position by appointing members of his own family to important political and civil offices. In availing himself of the assistance of his family to this extent, Martin must have given the doubters reason to believe that real reform of the Church was as far away as ever.

In Session 44 on 19 April 1418 the Council, having decided that a new Council should be convened every five years, nominated Pavia as the venue.\textsuperscript{113} Martin's support for the Conciliar concept was clearly minimal.\textsuperscript{114} Session 45 on 22 April 1418 brought the Council to an end, with the granting of indulgences to those attending the Council.\textsuperscript{115}

Although Serravalle would not have had a major voice in the deliberations of the Council, as an important member of the Italian nation of which he was president on two occasions, he must have been party to the important issues that were discussed at the meetings of the nations prior to their being put forward as proposals for the consideration

\textsuperscript{109} Council of Constance 1414-18.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{113} Council of Constance 1414-18.
\textsuperscript{114} Ott, 'Pope Martin V', in The Catholic Encyclopedia: 'The tendency which some of the cardinals had manifested at the Council of Constance to substitute constitutional for monarchical government in the Church and to make the pope subject to a General Council, was firmly and successfully opposed by Martin V. … Martin convened a council, which opened at Pavia in April 1423 but had to be transferred to Siena in June in consequence of the plague. He used the small attendance and the disagreement of the cardinals as a pretext to dissolve it again on 26 February, 1424, but agreed to summon a new council in Basel within seven years. He died, however, before this convened, though he had previously appointed Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini as president of the council with powers to transfer and, if necessary suspend it.'
\textsuperscript{115} Council of Constance 1414-18.
of the Council in session. Bellomo comments:116 ‘Il 15 dicembre 1418 gli fu affidata l'importante diocesi di Fano … ’ However, Teuwsen117 claims documentary evidence supporting his translation to the Bishopric of Fano by Martin V on 15 December 1417, but, citing a letter from Martin V on 1 August 1418 in which Serravalle is still referred to as the bishop of Fermo, supports a date for Serravalle's actual translation sometime in 1419. Martin V seems to have made appointments shortly after his election on 11 November 1417, the appointment of Bishop Beaufort as Cardinal being an example. Why Serravalle should be signalled out for preferment is unknown. However, it has been suggested in the previous chapter that Serravalle's translation would have suited both Carlo Malatesta and Martin V politically. It has already been noted that Serravalle disappears from the Council record after 18 June 1416, and this absence from the Official record could be due to his having a full-time role in the writing of his commentary and ensuring that sufficient copies of his Translato et Comentum were available for presentation by the time the Council ended. Certainly, as he makes clear in the Preface, Serravalle himself was well aware of the limited time available before the Council was dissolved and the delegates returned home. Whether the presentation of a copy to an individual was really just a matter of form, as in the case of the lavish copy given to Sigismund, or whether it was hoped that the Commedia would be disseminated throughout non-Italian speaking parts of Catholic Europe cannot be determined. Certainly, as Saverio Bellomo notes,118 the commentary appears to have had little influence on the commentary tradition as the lack of citations in later commentaries demonstrates.

The Council of Constance was convoked primarily to resolve the Western Schism. In this it was successful. However, as the contemporary writings make very clear, this success was achieved despite the petty disputes involving the self-centred interests of the individual Nations. The situation was not helped by the fact that, although Cardinal Fillastre, for example, clearly represented the interests of the College of Cardinals, other prominent individuals, such as Bishop Hallum, were acting as representatives or proxies for their 'principals', inevitably leading to difficulties in formulating a rapid solution to the immediate problem requiring resolution. By comparison, the decrees for the suppression of heresy were formulated and approved with little critical discussion. Both the spiritual and temporal hierarchies had no interest in supporting heretical sects that might be thought

116 Bellomo, p. 164.
117 Teuwsen, p. 22.
118 Bellomo, p. 165.
to promote disorder in the temporal world and/or to impinge on the privileges of the established Church. While Serravalle, as bishop of Fermo and an influential figure in the Italian Nation, would have been interested in these events, on the basis of his own evidence it is the third item before the Council, namely the reform of the Catholic Church, which would appear to have excited his enthusiasm for change. Although discussions on such matters probably took place within the individual Nations during most of the lifespan of the Council, it was only in session 43 after the election of Martin V that any substantial measures were approved. As far as the committed reformers were concerned, the Council of Constance probably seemed, in retrospect, like a lost opportunity.
Chapter 3

A Comparison between the 'Introduction' to Serravalle's Commentary on the Commedia and that of Benvenuto da Imola in the Ferrara Recollectae

In this chapter a study is undertaken of the Introduction (Preambula) to Serravalle's Comentum and the prefatory material to be found in Benvenuto's Ferrara recollectae before the beginning of the 'commentary' to Inferno I, namely the introductory material set out in MS. Ashburnham 839 fol. 3. Serravalle's Preambula are wide ranging in their content and were probably intended to provide a compendium of useful information for his readers, some of whom would not have been expected to have been conversant with some of the detail of this background material. For example, this might have been applicable to the two English bishops, Hallum and Bubwith. However, embedded in this material are to be found the elements of an accessus ad auctorem, that is, the formal introductory and prefatory discussions to authoritative ‘authors’ that had become an established mode of presenting major literary, philosophical and other texts in the Middle Ages. As far as Dante commentary is concerned the use of such discussions had become commonplace. Dante himself, if he is the author of the Epistle to Cangrande, had provided a lengthy accessus to the Paradiso. In his authoritative essay on the early commentaries on Dante's Commedia1 Steven Botterill draws attention to the importance of the Epistle to Can Grande, commenting that: 'Throughout the Trecento, it remained a touchstone for commentators, many of whom drew on its methodologically conservative analysis - though whether directly or indirectly is rarely clear.'2 Both the authorship and the dating of the Epistle are matters of dispute.3 However, since there is only one reference, namely that to be found in the commentary of Andrea Lancia (1341-1343),4 in the early commentaries either to the

2 Botterill, p.591.
3 For a recent summary of the contested positions see Henry A. Kelly, 'Epistle to Cangrande Updated', Dante Notes, September 28, 2018, available online at dantesociety.org/publications, accessed 17/02/2020.
4 See Luca Azzetta, 'Le chiose alla “Commedia” di Andrea Lancia, l”“Epistola a Cangrande” e altre questioni dantesche', L'Alighieri, XXI (2003), 5-76. Azzetta, p.38, provides a direct comparison
author or to the *Epistle* itself prior to the commentary of Filippo Villani (1391-1405), it would seem reasonable to accept Botterill's implied thesis that the inclusion of an *accessus ad auctores* in these commentaries owed more to the conventional practices of literary criticism in the late Middle Ages rather than to direct reference to the *Epistle* itself.

The manuscript of the *recollectae* provides a text of limited length for its Introduction, thereby providing a compact vehicle for the assessment of any relationship between the commentary by Benvenuto and the re-elaboration by Serravalle. In addition, Serravalle's *Preambula* are known to have been written at Constance. Therefore, it is possible that they may contain some reference, even if only indirect, to the proceedings of the Council of Constance.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into four parts. Firstly as an important prelude for future analyses, the relationship between a literal and allegorical reading of the *Commedia* is discussed. There follows an outline of the history of the *accessus ad auctores* as it applied to fourteenth century writers with particular emphasis on the early Dante commentators. Thirdly, the *accessus* material in the *Preambula* and the *recollectae* are evaluated. Finally, a direct comparison is made between the text of Ashburnham 839 fol. 3 and the relevant sections of the *Preambula*.

1. *Literal and Allegorical Interpretation of the Commedia*

Before giving consideration to how Benvenuto, in the Ferrara *recollectae*, and Serravalle, in the *Comentum*, incorporated the *accessus* material into the prefaces to their commentaries, it is useful, in the context of interpreting aspects of the *Commedia* to be discussed in later chapters, to consider the insight provided by Botterill in his analysis of the relationship between a literal and allegorical reading of the *Commedia*. Botterill

---

5 Villani, *DDP*, *Inferno* 1. Nota: 'Noster vero poeta, in quodam introductorio suo super cantu primo Paradisi ad dominum Canem de la Scala destinato, de sex agere videtur, que fatum agentem, formam, finem, libri titulum et genus philosopie comprendunt.'

6 Botterill, p. 595: 'It is worth noting that no commentator before Villani either mentions the *Epistle*, as such, or attributes it to Dante, unless the recent discovery of a reference by Andrea Lancia in the 1340s can be confirmed.'

7 Botterill, pp. 598-599: 'Following the *Epistle to Can Grande*, most Trecento readers accepted that the poem's meanings are not exhausted by explication of its literal sense. … But the extent to which it was legitimate to look for meanings beyond the literal, as well as the nature of such meanings, never ceased to be controversial.'

8 Botterill, p. 599.
notes that Jacopo Alighieri believed his father intended his poem to be interpreted allegorically. However, some commentators sought to reconcile the demands of literal exposition and allegorical interpretation. Jacopo (Iacopo) della Lana, after *Inferno* VI, provides each canto with a *proemio* which offers the reader a survey of the major issues, followed by detailed glosses on the text itself. Botterill concludes: 'This pragmatic combination of literal and allegorical reading (which Lana achieves, paradoxically, by treating the two approaches as separate stages in the act of reading itself) was to be highly influential in the Trecento – thanks, no doubt, to the scope the method offers for both theoretical synthesis (in proems) and textual analysis (in glosses).'

Pietro Alighieri considered his father to be a poet and his text a fiction. The commentary of Boccaccio brought about a complete separation between the literal and allegorical with most cantos being glossed twice, once for *senso letterale* and once for *senso allegorico*, with the implication being that the two interpretations are applicable to different audiences. This is confirmed by the contents of a note to the first canto of *Inferno*. Botterill suggests that, as the fourteenth century drew to a close, critical priorities seemed to change with Benvenuto, for example, seeming to be not overly concerned with the relationship between the literal and allegorical, and noting that in Benvenuto's final redaction, 'the commentary on each canto begins with a *divisio*, followed by glosses in continuous prose that include explication of both literal and allegorical senses.' Serravalle also provides each canto with a *divisio* and then proceeds to glosses of a similar form to that of Benvenuto. However, Serravalle does provide a substantial *summarium* at the beginning of each canto prior to the *divisio*, although his motives for so doing are open to conjecture.

Some of the early commentators clearly wished to absolve themselves from any

---

10 Botterill, p. 600.
11 Botterill, p. 601.
12 Botterill, p. 602.
14 Botterill, pp. 603-604.
15 Giovanni Boccaccio, *DDP, Inferno* I. Nota: ‘Ma, avendo già l'una delle due parti in questo primo canto mostrata, cioè come quegli, che di minor sentimento sono, si possano intorno al senso litterale non solamente dilettare, ma ancora e nudrire e le lor forze crescere in maggiori, è da dimostrare la seconda, intorno alla quale si possano gl'ingegni più sublimi essercitare: la quale cosa si farà aprendo quello che sotto la crosta della lettera sta nascoso.’
16 Botterill, pp. 604-05.
17 Botterill, p. 605.
suggestion that, in interpreting the *Commedia*, they were giving support, either directly or indirectly, to heretical beliefs. For example, the Carmelite Guido da Pisa, c. 1335, in his gloss to *Inferno* I.91 goes to considerable lengths to distance himself from any suggestion that his commentary departs from Catholic orthodoxy, while at the same time asking the reader not to judge Dante too severely because Dante is 'speaking' as a poet and in fictional terms.\(^{18}\) In a similar fashion in the *Dedicatio* to his *Comentum* the Franciscan Giovanni da Serravalle, perhaps influenced by the ambiance of the Council of Constance, or conscious of the extreme measures taken against perceived heresy by decisions of the Council, or simply following his own beliefs, makes it clear that he has no intention of departing from orthodox Catholic doctrine.\(^{19}\) However, in his gloss to *Inferno* XIII.103-105 Serravalle, like Guido da Pisa, also takes the opportunity to offer a mitigating explanation for Dante's seeming to espouse an heretical standpoint.\(^{20}\) Serravalle's gloss to *Inferno* XIII.103-105 links suicide, heresy and the concept of 'moral' *Inferno*.\(^{21}\) Luca Fiorentini discusses the way in which Benvenuto justifies the presence of Cato Uticensis, a pagan and a suicide, as the 'gatekeeper' of Purgatory.\(^{22}\) Benvenuto, in the glosses on *Purgatorio* I.28-33 in the Ferrara *recollectae* and in his final redaction, suggests that such a position could be considered as amounting to heresy. In both the Bologna and Ferrara *recollectae* Benvenuto, in this instance, rejects the explanation offered by Pietro Alighieri.\(^{23}\) In its place, there is an insistence that the poem should be considered on two levels, namely a literal level and, where appropriate, an allegorical level, naturally in this case leading to the concepts of the

---

\(^{18}\) Guido da Pisa, *DDP, Inferno* I.91: ‘Quia si in ista Comedia esset aliquod hereticum, quod per poesiam seu aliam viam sustineri non posset, non intendo illud tale defendere vel fovere, immo potius, viso vero, totis conatibus impugnare. Rogo te autem, o lector, ut autorem non judices sive culpes, si tibi videatur quod ipse autor in aliquo loco vel passu contra catholicam fidem agat, quia poete loquitur et fictive.’

\(^{19}\) Serravalle, *Civezza and Domenichelli ed.*, p. 6: ‘... quam translationem et quam expositionem, sive quod commentum, vestris Reverendissimis Paternitatibus transmicto, ut videre dignemini, corrigere, et abbreviare vel dilatare, laudare vel vituperare, abiciere vel retinere.’

\(^{20}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 13.103-105: ‘Sicut alie anime, redibimus pro nostris spoliis, idest corporibus, non tamen quod aliqua nostrum se reinduat; quoniam non est iustum reacquirere id quod homo auferit sibi: quia, quando homo quispiam se privat sponte aliqua re, non est dignum nec iustum quod rehabeat. Hic punctus fortis est, et non videtur verus, nec catholicus, sed hereticus. Sed notandum est, quod hic loquitur auctor de Inferno morali, et hic loquitur de morte morali et resurrectione morali: nam omnes vitiosi in alii vitii, et mortui in alii vitii, resurgere possunt; desperati autem non. ... Vel die, et bene, quod desperatus habet dicere, quod si ipse cognovisset, vel imaginatus fuisse, quod anima debet reinduire carnem, et pati tot, tales et tantas penas, nunquam desperasse se.’

\(^{21}\) Ibidem. ‘Sed notandum est, quod hic oquitur auctor de Inferno morali.’

\(^{22}\) Luca Fiorentini, ‘Per il lessico esegetico di Pietro Alighieri e Benvenuto da Imola (in rapporto all’*Epistola a Cangrande* e ad altre fonti)’, *Bollettino di italianoistica*, 7/2 (2010), 120-155.

existence of 'due Purgatori, si dice, di cui uno essenziale (e in questo non c'è posto per Catone Uticense, ma neanche per Virgilio) e uno morale.'

It is important to follow Fiorentini in his assessment of Benvenuto's probable source for the 'existence' of 'Moral' and 'Essential' 'Inferno', 'Purgatorio' and 'Paradiso', especially since Serravalle also makes extensive use of these concepts. It is Fiorentini's belief that it is very probable that Pietro Alighieri was the first commentator to make the distinction between, for example, 'moral' and 'essential' Inferno, with particular emphasis being given to the likelihood that Benvenuto drew especially on Pietro's first redaction. After giving consideration to possible influences on Pietro's commentary, Fiorentini arrives at the definitions for 'Inferno essenziale' and 'Inferno morale' which, together with the corresponding definitions for Purgatorio and Paradiso, will be found to be applicable to the discussions on Benvenuto's redactions and Serravalle's commentary which follow later in this chapter. The distinction between the terms 'moral' and 'essenziale' will be considered more fully later in this chapter in the context of Serravalle's second 'preambulum'.

Consideration is now given to the use made by the early commentators of the accessus ad auctores in their prefatory comments at the beginning of their individual commentaries. This is followed by a similar analysis which focusses on the Ferrara recollectae of Benvenuto and on Serravalle's 'preambula'. Finally, a direct comparison is made between the material of MS. Ashburnham 839 fol. 3 and those sections of Serravalle's 'preambula' where the existence of some kind of a link might be established.

2. The Accessus ad Auctores in the Early Dante Commentaries

In the prefaces or introductions to their commentaries the early commentators include an accessus ad auctorem, i.e. to Dante, the contents of which tend to follow a prescribed formula. The scholars of the later medieval world demonstrated a profound respect for the

---

24 Fiorentini, p. 124. Benvenuto in his final redaction is explicit in his explanation: 'Nec mireris, lector, si sic moraliter dixi istum passum fore intelligendum, quia etiam Virgilius non habet hic locum, nisi loquamur de purgatorio morali, quia non novit purgatorium essentiale, neque in vita cum fuerit paganus, neque post mortem cum sit damnatus.'

25 Fiorentini, p. 127: 'La contrapposizione tra luoghi dell'aldilà intesi essentialiter e luoghi dell'aldilà intesi moraliter, fissata da Pietro Alighieri a partire dal proemio generale al poema, ritorna anche nel corso dell'esegesi dei singoli versi danteschi (per quanto la frequenza sia assai più bassa di quella che troviamo nel commento di Benvenuto."

26 Fiorentini, p. 130.

27 Fiorentini, p. 129. 'L'Inferno essenziale è dunque il luogo in cui precipita l'anima peccaminosa nel momento in cui si separa del corpo … L'Inferno morale è invece uno stato che l'anima raggiunge ancora in vita nel momento in cui si allontana da Dio: cioè, nel momento in cui cede al peccato.'
important writers of antiquity, \(^{28}\) according them the status of 'auctor':

The 'canon' of auctores rigorously excluded contemporary writers who were merely lectores. … The auctor was cited but his words were interpreted to suit the purpose of the writer. … Rather than contradict or condemn an auctor, the writer was content to interpret. … Everything was grist for the mill of the Christian writer, since he felt that all truth, implicit and explicit, was his for the taking. … Ovid, as an auctor, was the possession of the teacher of the Middle Ages and he could be used for whatever purpose the teacher wished. Anything in Ovid that was in accord with revealed truth, was God's truth from the beginning; anything that contradicted it, had to be interpreted in a way that would save, externally, the auctor, and that could be used for the instruction of his pupils. \(^{29}\)

Such works were considered to possess 'auctoritas'. \(^{30}\) Every discipline had its 'auctores', with the study of authoritative texts forming the basis of the medieval educational system. \(^{31}\) The study of the text commenced with an introductory lecture to the subject and author, which served in the written version as a prologue to, for example, a commentary:

The explication of an auctor in any discipline invariably began with an introductory lecture in which the master would say something about the discipline in general and the purpose and contents of the chosen text in particular. … When the series of lectures was written down by pupils, or prepared for publication by the master himself, the opening lecture would serve as the prologue to the commentary on the text. \(^{32}\)

Three main types of prologue, which were commonly used in introducing an 'auctor', have been identified by R.W. Hunt. \(^{33}\) The most popular of which, Hunt's 'type C', was used by twelfth-century scholars at the beginning of commentaries in all disciplines. \(^{34}\) Minnis has provided an outline of the standard headings for this model. \(^{35}\) These include the title of the work (Titulus libri), the name of the author (Nomen auctoris), which might include a short life of the author, \(^{36}\) the intention of the author (Intentio auctoris), where 'texts of profane

---


\(^{29}\) Quain, pp. 225-226: ‘

\(^{30}\) Alastair J. Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship, Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages, 2nd edition (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), pp. 10-11. The term auctor may profitably be regarded as an accolade bestowed upon a popular writer by those later scholars and writers who used extracts from his works as sententious statements or auctoritates, gave lectures on his works in the form of textual commentaries, or employed them as literary models. Two criteria for the award of this accolade were tacitly applied: 'intrinsic worth ' and 'authenticity'. To have 'intrinsic worth', a literary work had to conform, in one way or another, with Christian truth; an auctor had to say the right things. … To be 'authentic', a saying or a piece of writing had to be the genuine production of a named auctor. … It was regarded as a very drastic step to dispute an attribution and deprive a work of its auctor. Much more common was the tendency to accept the improbable attributions of currently popular works to older and respected writers.'

\(^{31}\) Minnis, p. 13.


\(^{33}\) Minnis, pp. 15-19.

\(^{34}\) Minnis, p.19.

\(^{35}\) Minnis, p. 19-23.

\(^{36}\) Minnis, p. 20.
auctores were interpreted, and sometimes elaborately allegorised, so that they could be seen to contain nothing contrary to Christian truth', 37 and Materia libri, i.e. the subject-matter of the work. This was followed by a description of the didactic procedure (Modus agendi) employed in the work, 38 the order of the book (Ordo libri), the utility (Utilitas), where 'a consideration of the ultimate usefulness of the work, i.e. the reason why it was part of a Christian curriculum', 39 and an identification of the branch of learning to which the work belonged (Cui parti philosophiae supponitur), with the understanding that 'philosophia' 'included all human knowledge and investigation.' 40

An alternative approach to the 'Type C' prologue, named by Minnis as the 'Aristotelian' prologue, was developed by scholars of the thirteenth century. 41 This was based on the concept of 'causality' and seems to have owed its origin to 'the extensive accounts of causality contained in Aristotle's Physics and Metaphysics, works which were being admitted to the curriculum of studies in the early thirteenth century.' 42 Four 'causes' were identified, namely the 'causa efficiens', 43 the 'causa materialis', 44 the 'causa formalis' 45 and the 'causa finalis'. 46 Although the 'Aristotelian' prologue became the preferred choice, both types continued to be employed by commentators long into the Renaissance, often combined and to some extent mixed up, as is the case in Serravalle's preambula. 47 The 'accessus ad auctorem' could be short or, as in the case of Serravalle's commentary, extremely long. The writer or commentator would develop the basic headings of the type C prologue or expound on the 'causae' of the Aristotelian prologue as he sought fit, and provide supporting material which formed an introduction in the accepted modern sense of the term. In the discussion, which follows, the term 'prologue' is used to define the model,

37 Minnis, p. 21.
38 Ibidem.
40 Ibidem.
41 Minnis, pp. 28-29.
42 Minnis, p. 29.
43 Minnis, p. 28: 'The efficient cause was the auctor, the person who brought the literary work into being.'
44 Minnis, p. 28: 'The material cause was the substratum of the work, i.e. the literary materials which were the writer's sources.'
45 Minnis, p. 29: 'The formal cause of the work was the pattern imposed by the auctor on his materials. Commentators spoke of the twofold form (duplex forma), the forma tractandi, which was the writer's method of treatment or procedure (modus agendi or modus procedendi), and the forma tractatus, which was the arrangement or organisation of the work, the way in which the auctor had structured it.'
46 Minnis, p. 29: 'The final cause was the ultimate justification for the existence of a work, the end or objective (finis) aimed at by the writer; more specifically, the particular good which (in the opinion of the commentator ) he had intended to bring about.'
either 'type C' or 'Aristotelian', which the commentator has used, and the term 'introduction' is used in the modern sense of implying a body of material considered useful, or possibly even essential, for an understanding of the work to follow.

Almost all the important early commentators on the Commedia provide a substantial introduction which includes a 'prologue' which is substantially based on the 'Aristotelian' model, although there is evidence of some usage of the earlier 'type C' model. Jacopo della Lana begins the 'Proemio' with a simple declaration of the 'Aristotelian' model:

Ad intelligenzia della presente Comedia sì come usano li espositori in le scienzie è da notare quattro cose. La prima cioè la materia overo subietto della presente opera. La seconda cosa quale è la forma e onde tolle tale nome overo titolo del libro. La terza cosa quale è la cagione efficiente. La quarta cosa ed ultima quale è la cagione finale overo a che utilitate ell'è diretta e sotto quale filosofia ella è sottoposta.48

On the other hand, Guido da Pisa, under a heading of 'Incipit Prologus', provides an approach which is in some ways a mixture of the two models.49 Pietro Alighieri in his third redaction is clearly following the 'Aristotelian' model with several references to Aristotle's works, although the identification of the 'causae' is not so succinctly made as in the cases of Lana or Guido. The identification of the 'causae' is somewhat easier in Pietro's second redaction.50 However, in view of the earlier comment that Benvenuto was mainly influenced by Pietro's first redaction (1340-1341), it should be noted that the Proemio introducing Pietro's redaction does not contain a formal accessus. Guglielmo Maramauro, under a heading of 'Prologo', opts for the earlier 'type C' model.51 Giovanni Boccaccio provides a long introduction to his commentary which is headed 'Accessus' in which the 'causae' are formally defined and explained with other material being provided, e.g. on Hell, on the guides, on reasons for writing etc.: 

Le cause di questo libro son quatro: la materiale, la formale, la efficiente e la finale. La materiale è, nella presente opera, doppia, così come è doppio il suggetto, il quale è colla materia una medesima cosa: per ciò che altro suggetto è quello del senso litterale e altro quello del senso allegorico, li quali nel presenti libro amenduni sono, sì come manifestemente apparirà nel processo. È adunque il suggetto, secondo il senso litterale, lo stato dell'anime dopo la morte de' corpi semplicemente preso, per ciò che

48 Jacopo della Lana, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota.
49 Guido da Pisa, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota: ‘... His visis, sex in ista Comedia breviter indagemus: primo subiectum, idest causam materialem; secundo formam, idest causam formalen; tertio causam agentem; quarto finem, idest causam finalem; quintio genus philosophie, idest sub quo genere philosophie ista Comedia comprehendatur sive decurrat; sexto et ultimo libri titulum, idest quo titulo liber iste debeat intitulari.’
50 Pietro Alighier (2), DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota: ‘Merito ergo de causa dicte Comedie queramus, que scilicet finalis sit, que efficiens, que materialis et formalis, ac insuper quis sit libris titulus et cui parti etc.’
51 Guglielmo Maramauro, DDP, Inferno I Nota: ‘Io faria la divisone de questo libro: de la materia, e de la forma, e del titolo del libro, e a che parte de filosofia se sotomete, e ancora de la forma del tractato, e ancora de la forma del tractare.’
di quello, e intorno a quello, tutto il processo della presente opera intende; il suggetto secondo il senso allegorico è: come l'uomo, per lo libero arbitrio meritando e dismeritando, è alla giustizia di guiderdonare e di punire obligato. La causa formale è similmente doppia, per ciò che gli è la forma del trattato e la forma del trattare. … La forma o vero il modo del trattare è poetico, fittivo, discrittivo, digressivo e transuntivo; e, con questo, definitivo, divisivo, probativo, reprobativo e positivo d'esempi. La causa efficiente è esso medesimo autore Dante Alighieri, del quale più distesamente diremo appresso, dove del titolo del libro parleremo. La causa finale della presente opera è: rimuovere quegli, che nella presente vita vivono, dallo stato della miseria allo stato della felicità.\(^{52}\)

Benvenuto da Imola opens the introduction to his final redaction with a panegyric in praise of the person and family of his protector in Ferrara, Niccolò II d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara. The introduction is well written and comprehensive with Benvenuto employing the earlier form of 'prologue'.\(^{53}\) Benvenuto discourses at some length on the 'standard headings' of the model, but in his comments there is some reference to the 'causae' of the 'Aristotelian' prologue:

Libri titulus est talis: Incipit prima Cantica Comoediae Dantis Aldigherii poetae Florentini, in qua tractatur de Inferno. In hoc titulo, primo tangitur ordo, sive causa formalis, cum dicitur prima…. Deinde tangitur in titulo causa efficiens, cum dicitur Dantis Aldigherii; et materia, cum dicitur, in qua agitur de Inferno, sive causa materialis et subjectum libri primi.\(^{54}\)

Francesco da Buti also provides a substantial introduction with the 'prologue' material being based on the 'Aristotelian' model.\(^{55}\) In his commentary to Inferno I Filippo Villani provides the extended and considered introduction to be expected from a scholar of his standing. Villani notes:

Noster vero poeta, in quodam introductorio suo super cantu primo Paradisi ad dominum Canem de la Scala destinato, de sex agere videtur, que fatum, agentem, formam, finem, libri titulum et genus phylosophie comprehendunt', followed by: 'Causas istas ferme omnes moderni ad quattuor redegerunt, querentes de efficiente, de materia, de forma et postremo de fine.\(^{56}\)

This change from a 'type C' model to the 'Aristotelian' model could be taken as a formal acknowledgement of the pre-eminence of the 'Aristotelian' model by the beginning of the fifteenth century.

\(^{52}\) Giovanni Boccaccio, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota.
\(^{54}\) Benvenuto da Imola, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota.
\(^{55}\) Francesco da Buti, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota. 'E quanto al primo è da sapere che le cagioni, che sono da investigare nelli principi delli autori, sono quattro; cioè, cagione materiale, formale, efficiente e finale.'
\(^{56}\) Filippo Villani, DDP, Inferno I. Nota.
3. The *Accessus ad Auctores* in the 'Preambula' and MS. Ashburnham 839 fol. 3

Having already given an outline of the constraints under which he was working in the 'Dedicatio', Serravalle, following the precedent set by all of the early major commentators, provides an introduction to the *Comentum*. This introduction, entitled 'Preambula', is unusual in its length, and clearly Serravalle was intending to provide instruction for the reader to help in the understanding of the *Commedia*, rather than merely offering a simple *accessus ad auctorem*. In devoting such space to this explication, i.e. sixteen pages of the Civezza and Domenichelli edition, it is clear that Serravalle felt that his readership, whoever they might happen to be, would benefit from this preliminary and informative material.

The first of the eight preambula outlines the *intentio auctoris*, and the second is devoted to denigrating Dante's critics who, in Serravalle's opinion, are wont to take a too literal view of Dante's journey. This is achieved by defining the concepts 'moral', 'imaginative' and 'essential' with reference to the *Commedia*. Since the 'Preambula' may be considered to represent an *accessus*, it should be noted that this represents an unusual heading although one consistent with the orthodox stance required. In the third preamble Serravalle investigates the reasoning behind Dante's acceptance of Virgil as his mentor, leader and guide through Inferno and Purgatory up to Dante-pilgrim's arrival at terrestrial Paradise. This is achieved via a discussion concerning the interpretation of Virgil's name, and reference to the genealogy of Aeneas in *Aeneid VI*. An outline of the triple style of poetry and its relevance to the *Commedia* is provided in the fourth preambulum, in essence corresponding to the *modus agendi*. The fifth preambulum is devoted to the means by which Dante makes himself Virgil's disciple, that is, by associating Virgil with reasoning, a strategy common to early Dante commentary although again not always placed prominently into the prefatory discussions. Since human reasoning can only take the pilgrim so far, there is a need to introduce Beatrice, or Sacred Theology, as his guide for

---

57 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., pp.5-6.
58 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., pp. 7-22.
59 Substantial introductions to their commentaries are also provided, for example, by Boccaccio, Benvenuto da Imola in his final redaction and, especially, by Filippo Villani.
60 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p.7: ‘Antequam ad divisionem libri procedam, intendo aliqua preambula facere, et illa expositioni et comento preponere, ex quorum notitia intentio libri et sui auctoris clarius elucescet.’
61 As a somewhat crude measure, the importance Serravalle attached to the 'Preambula' may be judged by noting that the number of words devoted to the 'Preambula' and to the commentary to the whole of *Inferno I*, including the 'Summarium', is approximately 6200 words in both cases.
progressing further through terrestrial Paradise and beyond. The sixth preambulum concerns the pilgrim's descent through Hell, his ascent of 'Mount Purgatory', his flight to the heaven of the Moon and his journey through Paradise. In the seventh preambulum, the material of each of the three cantiche is shown to be divisible into three parts, with the division, particularly in the case of Inferno being very detailed. Serravalle discusses the interpretation of Dante's assertion that God has imposed and implanted an 'order' on creatures in the eighth preambulum according to which everything has to be arranged. This feature is also unusual in the tradition of Dante commentary accessus. Serravalle also provides an introduction to Purgatorio in which, while reaffirming that the 'preambula' at the beginning of his commentary to Inferno were applicable to all three cantiche, he sets out four additional 'preambula' for the reader's benefit in the understanding of the second canta. 62 In contrast, the introductory material to Benvenuto's second redaction, reproduced in the Ferrara recollectae, is covered by less than two 'pages' located in a single folio of the manuscript, identified as fol. 3 of Ashburnham MS. 839.63

Since it is one of the purposes of the present study to investigate whether the proceedings at the Council of Constance had any influence on Serravalle's commentary, Serravalle's 'preambula' are important because this intervention on Serravalle's part is clearly datable from internal evidence to 1416 and, therefore, would have been written at Constance,64 with the possible implication that Serravalle was anxious to defend his own position and to protect the integrity of the poet. The model suggested by Paolazzi, which was discussed in chapter 1, allows for the possibility that Serravalle, in studying the Commedia together with his assumed personal copy of Benvenuto's Ferrara recollectae over a time span of perhaps thirty years, had produced an outline draft which would form the basis of his commentary.65 Against this hypothesis it should be noted that there is some evidence, provided by Serravalle's very limited use of the word 'preambulum' or one of its

62 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio Intro. Nota: 'Esto quod in principio expositionis prime Cantice, seu Inferni, aliqua sint edita preambula, que conferunt ad intelligentiam omnium trium Canticarum; nihilominus, ut michi videtur, aliqua sunt etiam hic premictenda in principio huius secunde Cantice, sive Purgatorii, que erunt utilia ad intelligendum ea, que in hac secunda Cantica sunt dicenda. Ponetur igitur aliqua preambula satis parva.'
63 The introductory material occupies approximately 1100 words.
64 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 16: '... et sic a morte Dantis usque ad hanc diem presentem, qua ego Frater Iohannes, Episcopus Firmanus, feci hanc expositionem, que facta est anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo sextodecimo, fluxerunt anni nonaginta quinque. ... Hec omnia sunt necessaria pro intelligentia libri dicti auctoris plenarie capienda.' It should be noted that the only direct reference to Constance to be found in the commentary itself occurs in the gloss to Paradiso 8.139-141: 'Piper, seminatum in dioecesi Constantiensii, sive istius civitatis Constantiensis, non fructificaret, quia non est regio ubi piper nascitur.'
65 Paolazzi, p. 34.
Latin case endings, of some cantos of *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* being written after the composition of the introduction to *Inferno*. The only occasions when Serravalle directly identifies a specific 'preambulum' are to be found in *Inferno* I, when the third 'preambulum' in the commentary to verses 70-72 and 73-75, and the sixth 'preambulum' in the commentary on verses 62-64, are designated. However, there are a few references, which clearly are linked to the 'preambula' of *Inferno* in the later *cantiche*, in particular 'in uno preambulo in Inferno' in the comments on *Purgatorio* XXX.124-126 and *Paradiso* XV.88-90. These examples, obtained by using the search facility on the DDP database, while not completely conclusive in that, owing to the lack of precision in identifying the 'preambula', other interpretations may be possible, would suggest that, at the very least, Serravalle might have had in his mind an outline of the contents of the introduction to the *Commentum* before he engaged in writing the commentaries to the later *cantiche*.

Whether it be called an 'Introductio' (Benvenuto final redaction) or 'Preambula' (Serravalle) or even an 'Accessus ad Auctorem' (Gennaro Ferrante), there is clearly an 'introduction' at the beginning of Benvenuto's Ferrara *recollectae*. The reason for fol. 2 of Ashburnham MS.839 being blank remains a matter for conjecture. However, fol. 3 of Ashburnham MS.839 commences with an 'illuminated' I of four lines height, clearly indicating the commencement of a new contribution by the author. The recto leaf of this folio also includes the beginning of the commentary on canto I of *Inferno*, and is identifiable with an 'illuminated' N of approximately three lines height, which is 'preceded' by 'Modo veniendum est ad textus'. Hence, the 'introduction', covering a space of approximately one and three quarter folio sides and containing a nominal 1100 words, is, therefore, very much shorter than Serravalle's contribution. Nevertheless, it is clearly intended to serve the same function, and in part covers, much more economically, similar ground. Given the disparity in the lengths of the two 'introductions', it is inevitable that, where there is common ground, Serravalle's introduction will tend to demonstrate evidence of elaboration, resulting in a tendency to provide more detail.

---

66 In addition, the comment on *Paradiso* 16.43-45 makes reference to 'in uno preambulo, in principio libri', and there is a comment concerning Beatrice, Serravalle, *DDP, Paradiso* 7.1-9: 'Nota etiam quod Beatrix puella, quam dilexit in puieritia, vocabatur Bice, sicut dictum est in uno preambulo', which are also clearly identifiable as pertaining to the fifth preambulum of *Inferno*.

67 Gennaro Ferrante, *Il Commento Dantesco di Giovanni da Serravalle*, p. 63: 'nella copia laurenziana delle *recollectae* ferraresi era previsto un proemio al commento, per il quale furono lasciate in bianco le prime due carte, cominciandosi a scrivere a partire dall'*accessus ad auctorem* ...'
4. Serravalle's 'Preambula' and the Ferrara Recollectae

The Ferrara recollectae could be considered to represent a common source for Serravalle's commentary, and, independently, a basis upon which Benvenuto later elaborated his more extensive prologue for his third and final redaction. It has already been noted that there is general acceptance of Paolazzi's hypothesis that Serravalle had available to him a superior version of the recollectae than that provided by Ashburnham MS.839. However, the contents of the 'introduction' provided in this assumed superior version are unknown. When due account is taken of the length of the panegyric to Niccolò II, the inclusion of thirty lines of Benvenuto's own verse, and the development of themes in a more considered and elegant form, the 'introduction' provided in Benvenuto's final redaction may be accepted as an upgraded version of the 'introduction' to the recollectae available in Ashburnham MS.839. It will be shown that the elements, outlined in the recollectae, are to be found in Serravalle's 'introduction'. However, the development of such themes in Serravalle's 'introduction' enjoys a scope similar to that to be found in the 'introduction' to Benvenuto's final redaction. The accepted dating of Benvenuto's final redaction is 1379-1383. It has already been noted that Serravalle was at the monastery of St. Francis in Ferrara in 1379 and, by 1383, he was at Padua. Hence, there is a possibility that Serravalle could have had some access to Benvenuto's final redaction. However, there is no evidence to support this argument, and examination of the two 'introductions' would render this hypothesis unlikely, in that Serravalle's 'introduction' is more wide-ranging and contains discussion of different issues, while Benvenuto's 'introduction' makes use of references which are not found in Serravalle's 'preambula'.

All of the 'preambula' contain material which would fit naturally into a general introduction to the Commedia. As an example, the fifth 'preambulum' opens: 'Quintum preambulum est, quare Dantes se fecit discipulum Virgilii.' Serravalle emphasizes that the adoption of Virgil implies the adoption of reason:

Dicendum est, quod hoc fecit ad ostendendum quod homo debet assumere semper rationem pro duce. ... Et ideo volens figurare sensualitatem, et prontitatem ad peccandum, et peccatorem, in se ipso, ideo assumpsit Virgilium, idest rationem, pro duce ... Modo licet ipse Dantes assumpsisset Virgilium pro suo magistro in Inferno et Purgatorio, idest rationem; quia tamen naturalis ratio non sufficit nobis ad finem ultimum acquirere, quia ipsa a se non potest nec sufficit noscere cuncta nobis ad salutem necessaria, quia multa sunt fide firma tenenda, ad que non attingit ratio naturalis; ideo in Paradiso terrestri, et in toto Paradiso, voluit Beatricem pro ductrice

---

68 Bellomo, p. 142.
69 Bellomo, p. 163.
et magistra: nam per Beatricem figurat sacratissimam Theologiam, que docet omnia necessaria ad salutem. ... Et ideo Dantes Virgilium, idest rationem naturalem, quousque sufficit sibi, tenuit pro magistro: deficientis ratione naturali, sive Virgilio, assumpsit Beatricem, idest scientiam divinam, sive sacratissimam Theologiam, que homines beatos facit, si eam debite student, et secundum ipsam humiliter operantur.\textsuperscript{71}

In addition, he takes this opportunity to point out that reason alone is not sufficient and, therefore, as a consequence Dante adopts Beatrice, or Sacred Theology, as his guide in \textit{Paradiso}. Although Serravalle mentions the legend surrounding Virgil's birth in the third 'preambulum', the introduction of Virgil in the context of the fifth 'preambulum' gives him the opportunity to compare the interpretations of the legends surrounding the dreams of the mothers of the two poets prior to the birth of their sons. Only Serravalle formally makes this connection in the 'introduction' to the commentary. A version of the legend concerning the dream of Dante's mother is to be found in Boccaccio's \textit{Tratatello in Laude di Dante}, which forms the basis of the account given in Benvenuto's final redaction.\textsuperscript{72} As already noted, a version of the story is to be found in Serravalle's commentary,\textsuperscript{73} but, while it also occurs in the 'introduction' to the Bologna \textit{recollectae}\textsuperscript{74} and the final redaction,\textsuperscript{75} it does not occur in the 'introduction' to the Ferrara \textit{recollectae}. Nevertheless, in the gloss to \textit{Inferno} I.79 in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} a similar account is to be found, immediately preceding a partial quotation from \textit{Purgatorio} VI.76, the context being the appearance of the poet Sordello and Italy's need of a single temporal ruler, and from \textit{Purgatorio} XX.82, the context being Hugh Capet's denunciation of the behaviour of his descendants.\textsuperscript{76} It is interesting to note that, immediately prior to the two quotations, the commentator had been discoursing on the 'vox horribilis' of the peacock, and of the poet when Dante is criticizing the behaviour of his fellow Italians. The two quotations, here taken out of place, also occur in the 'introduction' to Benvenuto's final redaction in the same context.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{72} Louis M. La Favia, 'Benvenuto da Imola's Dependence on Boccaccio's Studies on Dante', \textit{Dante Studies}, 93 (1975), 161-175. La Favia comments: '… Benvenuto accepted indiscriminately whatever he (Boccaccio) wrote. … One thinks, for example, of Dante's mother's dream just before giving birth to the poet. This episode, of an absolutely fantastic nature, is narrated by Boccaccio in the \textit{Life of Dante} and reported almost verbatim in Benvenuto's commentary.', p. 165.
\textsuperscript{73} Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p.14.
\textsuperscript{74} Talice, \textit{Inferno}, pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{75} Benvenuto, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} Intro. Nota.
\textsuperscript{76} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 006r.
\textsuperscript{77} Benvenuto, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} Intro. Nota.
It is clear that, while the text reproduced above from the 'introduction' to Benvenuto's final redaction could be considered a reasonable derivative from the text of the gloss to *Inferno* I.79 from the *Ferrara recollectae*, there is little correspondence with Serravalle's contribution. In some way, the most unusual feature of Serravalle's 'preambula' might seem to be the placing of the 'Aristotelian' prologue after the end of the eighth 'preambulum', rather than at the beginning of the first 'preambulum'. However, as will become apparent later, this concluding feature of Serravalle's introduction, which has the form of a review element, providing further discussion or elaboration of previously considered material, is a feature of both Benvenuto's and Serravalle's commentaries.81 A transcription of MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 3 follows, with the corresponding elements of Serravalle's 'preambula' provided for comparison.

---

79 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 006r.
80 Benvenuto, *DDP, Inferno Intro*, Nota.
81 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 20. This concluding section begins: 'Per hec octo preambula facile est, bene capientibus ipsa, intelligere intentionem auctoris et totum librum, in quo ipse auctor, tractans de vitiiis, ponit et nominatillos qui fuerunt preclui in talibus per famam, sive sint spiritus antiqui sive moderni. Conatur nempe auctor attribuere penas et tormenta bene convenientia talibus peccatoribus.'

---

82 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 3v.
Dantes venit de prosapia Enee, vel del aliquo suorum comitum. Aldicherrii potuit interpeteri qui alta digerens, idest tractans, qui quasi alta tractet et describat patet intuitibus. Poeta est nomen professionis; quidem nomen est rarius quam habebat mundus. Saltem una fenix reperitur in mundo sed poeta nullus. Dixi quod est rarius, est enim et carius est et clarius.

Benvenuto, following the 'type C' prologue, defines six points for consideration. On the other hand, Serravalle lists the four 'causae' of the 'Aristotelian' model, supplemented with a requirement for the title of the work and the identification of the philosophy on which the work is based, thereby arriving, like Benvenuto, at six points for discussion. Benvenuto provides brief details of Dante's ancestry, life and career which, in essence, are not too dissimilar to those provided by Serravalle. However, there is no reference to Dante's ancestor Cacciaguida in the introduction to the recollectae. It is noted that both commentators agree that Dante studied at Bologna, Padua and Paris, but in the recollectae there is no reference to Dante's having studied at Oxford. At this point both commentators, in discussing the utility of poetry in lauding great achievements and condemning base deeds, make similar references to Aristotle's Poetics.

Ferrara recollectae
Ista enim scientia processit a nobilitate animi sicut probat Aristoteles et eius commendator Averois, dicens quod animi nobiles invenerunt versus ad exaltandum magna gesta et vituperandum turpia et vilia. Si quis enim vult bene dicere, scire, laudare virtutes, oportet ut sciant derogare vitii, quod ultra omnes alios poetas iste fecit. Dicit Aristoteles in Poetria sua omnis oratio poetica nihil alid est nisi laudatio et vituperatio, etsi Dantes melius omnibus hoc fecit.[Videtur]

Serravalle
Poesis enim processit a nobilitate animi generosi. Vult etenim Aristotiles in Poetica, quod nobiles invenerunt poesim, quando fecerunt versus ad exaltandum magna gesta et vituperandum turpia: dicit enim Aristotiles, quod omnis oratio poetica nihil alid est nisi laudatio vel vituperatio. Laudavit etenim Dantes et vituperavit, sicut sibi placuit et sicut voluit, excellenter.

84 More recently, Anne Isba has reviewed the arguments put forward by the Victorian statesman W.E. Gladstone in support of Dante's having studied at Oxford, Anne Isba, Gladstone and Dante, Victorian Statesman, Medieval Poet (Suffolk: The Royal Historical Society, The Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 117-28. The author, against mainstream opinion, and without evidence, concludes: 'My own view, originally sceptical, is now that Dante may well have visited Oxford at some time during his lengthy exile. It is a powerful tradition to have evolved at such an early date, had there been no foundation for it.; p. 127.
85 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 3v.
86 Serravalle, DDP, p. 22.
Serravalle's intention in the discussions relating to the second 'preambulum' would appear to be concerned with enabling the reader to distinguish between 'moraliter', 'ymaginarie' and 'esentialiter'. These words, when applied to the realms of Hell, Purgatory and celestial Paradise, are not easy to define succinctly in English, since, at least in the mind of the present writer, there is a sense of the fundamental essence of these concepts, which is implicit in Dante's poetry, and which seems to be lacking in the use of a simple epithet. However, for present purposes, the most convenient solution is to use the terminology 'moral', imaginary' and 'essential'. In the introduction to this chapter, it was established that the fundamental difference between applying the terms 'Moral' and 'Essential' to the three realms is that 'Moral' implies that the individual is still alive, i.e. the 'anima' has not been separated from the 'corpus', while 'Essential' implies that the individual has now entered the realm after death and it is the soul, now separated from the body, which is undergoing a journey through this realm which is now visualised in essentially allegorical terms. As an example, 'Moral' Inferno describes the condition of a man who, while understanding the nature of his sinful life and the punishments expected to accrue from this behaviour, nevertheless persists in such conduct, while 'Essential' Inferno is the realm to which followers of the Christian Church believe the souls of the evildoers go after death to meet their just deserts. Similar concepts apply to the realm of penitence or purgatory, where in life the sinful acknowledge their failings and the necessity for penitence, and to the concept of the heavenly paradise awaiting the truly virtuous in this world.

Serravalle adds a third element, namely the epithet 'ymaginarius' applied to the three realms. An electronic search of the DDP database reveals only four commentaries in which the word is used. These are in the Prologo of Pietro Alighieri's second redaction, the Proemio to Pietro's third redaction, the introduction or Preambula to Serravalle's commentary and the introduction to the commentary to Inferno of P. Gioachino Berthier. 'Imaginary' Inferno for Serravalle seems to be a condition of the mind in which an individual understands the concept of doing wrong, the dangers of persisting in such practices, and has knowledge of the punishments that necessarily follow for the individual.
who continues to follow this path. Pietro Alighieri's redactions clearly contain similar sentiments, even if they are not so succinctly expressed. For example, in his first redaction there is an allusion to 'moral Inferno', while the references to 'ymaginarius' in the second and third redaction follow similar paths in referencing St. Augustine De Genesi ad litteram book 12 and concluding with '… scilicet quod pene Inferni secundum ymaginariam visionem erant, et quod locus Inferni non erat corporeus sed ymaginarius. Berthier in his commentary (1892-1897), which is to Inferno only and, hence, just postdates the Civezza and Domenichelli edition of the Comentum, endorses Serravalle's conception of the term 'ymaginarius' to the extent of quoting directly from Serravalle's 'introduction'. Serravalle concludes the second 'preambulum' with a discussion linking the three states of Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso to three states of the human condition ('anime humane'). Some of the more controversial elements of the subject matter discussed above have been addressed from the start of the commentary tradition. Other contributions, for example, include the third redaction of L'Ottimo Commento (1338), and Benvenuto da Imola in his final

87 Pietro Alighieri (1), DDP, Inferno 1.100.
88 Pietro Alighieri (2), DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota. See Francis X. Newman, 'St. Augustine's Three Visions and the Structure of the Commedia', MLN 82, (1967), 56-78, especially pp. 58-59: 'The three Pauline “heavens” are really figures for the three kinds of human vision, that is, the three fundamental modes of human awareness. The first of these is the visio corporalis ... The second is the visio spiritualis or imaginativa, knowledge by means of imagination. ... The third and highest of the classes of vision is intellectualis ...
89 P. Gioachino Berthier, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota: 'L'ultima e bellissima testimonianza sia quella di Fra. Giov. da Serravalle, ... ymaginarius infernus est homo sciens, yimaginans, cogitans ista sceler, obstinationem in illis, et tormenta que merentur talia operantes', concerning Purgatorio, '... ymaginarium est homo sciens et cogitans talia peccata, et tormenta eis convenienция, et penitentiam faciendam', and finally concerning Paradiso, '... sicut quando homo imaginatur virtutes et earum operationes atque premia eis benemerentia convenienция'.
90 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p.9.
91 Jacopo Alighieri, DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota: ‘... dicendo ch'el principio delle intenzioni del presente autore è di dimostrare di sotto alegorico colore le tre quali di dell'umana generazione. Delle quali la prima considera de' vizi mortali, chiamandola Inferno, a dimostrare che 'l mortale vizio opposito alla altezza della virtù siccome suo contrario sia. Onde chiaramente s'intende che il luogo determinato de' rei è detto Inferno, per lo più basso luogo e rimosso dal cielo. La seconda considera di quegli che si partono da' vizi per procedere nelle virtudi, chiamandola Purgatorio, a mostrare la passione dell'animo che si purga nel tempo ch'è mezzo dall'uno operare all'altro. … La terza e l'ultima considera degli uomini perfetti, chiamandola Paradiso, a dimostrare la beatitudine loro, e l'altezza dell'animo congiunto con la felicità, senza la quale non si discerne il Sommo Bene.'
92 L'Ottimo Commento (3), DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota: 'La prima condizione è de l'anime dannate, a li quali per luogo di pena eternale s'assegna lo inferno, luogo situato nel centro della terra. La seconda è de l'anime che si purgano della ruginia del peccato, a li quali per luogo di temporale pena s'assegna il purgatorio, lo quale l'autore situa in su la terra. La terza è de l'anime glorificate, a le quali s'assegna il paradiso, dove si vede l'ultima felicitade, sommo bene, infinito et eterno gaudio.'
93 Pietro Alighieri (3), DDP, Inferno Intro. Nota: 'Ad Infernum primum predictum essentialem descenditur tribus modis: veraciter, scilicet dum anima mala a corpore migrans descendit ad eum in eternum debite punienda; item fictae et fantasticae ... Secundum unum intellectum, ad allegoricum predictum Infernum descenditur duobus modis: uno modo virtuose, alio vitiose. Virtuose quando quis
redaction of 1375-80. 94 However, Serravalle's account represents a detailed and straightforward analysis of these basic concepts. It is demonstrated below that Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae addresses the concept of the triple state of the human spirit in similar terms.

**Ferrara recollectae**

Aliqui dicunt quod materia huius libri est comedia sed non est verum, imo est stilus, non materia. Sed materia vel pars subjectiva huius libri est status anime ita coniuncte cum corpore, sicut a corpore separate, ubi nota et diligenter adverte quod triplex est status anime. Omnis enim anima aut est imbusta vitiis et maculata, et sic est in Inferno morali donec vivit. Quando est separata a corpore, tunc est in Inferno essentiali, si moritur obstinata. Et nunc penitens loquor. Secundus status est quando anima recedet a vitiis et tendit ad virtutes, et sic est in Purgatorio morali, quia se vitiis purgat, et quando recessit a corpore, est in Purgatorio essentiali. Tertius status anime est quando anima est in [perfecto] statu virtutis, que rarissima est. Tamen aliqua sunt, que anima tunc coniuncta cum corpore est in Paradiso morali quia extracta est a rebus terrestribus et variis, Deum tota mente contemplans, ita quod est in Paradiso quantum in mundo isto misero possibile est. Quando vero a corpore separata est, vadit in Paradisum essentiale ut eterna Dei visione gaudet et maiestate divina.

**Serravalle**

Et ad istius secundi preambuli notitiam habendam, notandum est, quod in presenti mundo triplex potest dici status anime humane, et sic triplex in alio mundo: aut humana anima est totaliter vitiosa, sceleribus et sordibus peccatorum repleta, in quibus stat pertinaciter, nec vult resilire ab illis, et sic merito dicitur esse in Inferno, scilicet morali; et si homo sic moritur in hoc mundo, anima sua obstinata, recedens a corpore, ad Infernum esentialem per divinam iustitiam deputatur: aut est in peccatis et fuit, sed ipsorum eorumdem penitet, [et] de ipsis facit penitentiam; sic est in Purgatorio morali; et in tale statu moriens homo, eius anima ad esentiale Purgatorium deportatur: vel anima humana est in perfecto statu virtutum, sine ullis peccatis; et tales raro reperiuntur; et sic potest dici quod ipsa est in Paradiso morali; et moriente homine in tali statu, ipsa anima subito ad celum evolut et in Paradisi essentialis gloria collocatur.

---

94 Benvenuto da Imola, *DDP, Inferno* Intro. Nota: 'Materia, sive subjectum hujus libri, est status animae humane tam junctae corpori, quam a corpore separatae: qui status universaliter est triplex, sicut autor tres facit partes de toto opere. Quaedam enim anima est posita in peccatis, et ista dum vivit cum corpore, est mortua moraliter, et sic est in Inferno morali: dum est separata a corpore, est in Inferno essentiali, si obstinata insanabili moritur. Alia anima est quae recedit a viciis, et ista dum est in corpore, est in Purgatorio morali, scilicet in actu poenitentiae, in quo purgat sua peccata: separata vero a corpore, est in Purgatorio essentiali. Tertio est alia anima in perfecto habitu virtutis, et ista vivens in corpore est quodam modo in Paradiso, quia in quadam felicitate, quantum est possibile homini in hac vita miseriae: separata post mortem, est in Paradiso coelesti, ubi fruitur visione Dei, in quo est vera et perfecta felicitas. Similar concepts are to be found in the glosses on *Purgatorio* I.100-108 and *Paradiso* I.10-12.

95 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 3v – fol. 3r.

96 Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 9.

It is evident that there are close correspondences between the accounts of Benvenuto and Serravalle. Although the nature of the material, i.e. 'triplex est status anime', might be considered to lead to some commonality of interpretation, these dependencies have not been noted previously by scholars.

With reference to the text of the Ferrara recollectae, Benvenuto now considers the third item of the 'type C' prologue, namely: What is the purpose of the work? To enable a comparison to be made with Serravalle's contribution to this theme, it is necessary to return to the beginning of the first 'preambulum', in which Serravalle states that the intention of the author was to provide encouragement for evildoers to acknowledge their crimes, to repent of them, and to follow a new lifestyle which would permit them to escape eternal punishments and to merit a life enduring through eternity.\footnote{Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 7: 'Primum preambulum est, quod tota et totaliter intentio auctoris in hoc libro est et fuit, homines vitirosos, peccatores et in scelerum sordibus defedatos, seu deturpatos, ab ipsis vitiis et sceleribus retrahere, et reducere ipsos ad virtutes et ipsarum opera, atque ad penitentiam faciendam, ut, penas eternas evadentes, vitam accipere mererentur perheniter duraturam'} There is emphasis on the importance of having an adequate understanding 'vitiorum, scelerum et peccatorum, penarum et tormentorum, que talia agentibus a iusto iudice tribuuntur.\footnote{Ibidem.} This is supported by a quotation, ostensibly from Horace\footnote{Horace, \textit{Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica}, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1978), pp. 354-355: 'oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore / tu nihil admittes in te formidine poenae.'} stating that, while the good do not err because of their love of virtue, the evildoers avoid sinful ways because of their fear of punishment. It is clear that Serravalle's gloss has much in common with Benvenuto's similar comments, which include the quotation from Horace and which is
also to be found in the Introduction to *Inferno* in the second and third redactions of Pietro Alighieri's commentary. However, Benvenuto broadens the discussion with a reference to the 'utilitas' of the work, and concludes with the suggestion that 'intentio fuit extendere famam suam'. In spite of these differences, the comparison of the two passages, presented below, makes clear the substantial dependencies of Serravalle's commentary on the *recollectae*.

### Ferrara *recollectae* ¹⁰⁰


### Serravalle ¹⁰¹

Primum preambulum est, quod tota et totaliter intentio auctoris in hoc libro est et fuit, homines vitiatos, peccatores et in scelerum sordibus defedatos, seu deturpatos, ab ipsis vitiis et sceleribus retrahere, et reducere ipsos ad virtutes et ipsarum opera ... Cum opposita sint sibi invicem virtus et vitium, ad huius modi fugam, illius vero sequelam, oportet utriusque habere notitiam; ne, cum ad virtutis celsitudinem tendimus, errore devio, quasi ignari, labamur in vitium: et merito, quia noscentes peccata et tormenta eis debita, virtutes et premia eis convenientia, abstinent a vitiis et imitantur virtutes, declinantes a malo et bonum facientes. Dicit enim Horatius, licet paganus fuerit: Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore: oderunt peccare mali, formidine pene.

To effect a comparison between the next two items, namely the fifth and sixth on Benvenuto's list of requirements for a 'type C' prologue', it is necessary to return to the discussion following Serravalle's eighth 'preambulum', where there is an account of the philosophy underpinning the *Commedia*, followed by a discussion on the implications of the title given to the work.

¹⁰⁰ Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 3r. ¹⁰¹ Serravalle, Civezza and Domenichelli ed., p. 7.
It is readily seen that the two accounts have much in common, with both commentators considering that the work is mainly based on 'Ethics', and both use the Song of Solomon to illustrate their argument.

The fourth 'preambulum' concerns the three 'styles' of poetry, namely Tragedy, Satire and Comedy. Serravalle provides an elementary introduction to these three genres, offering no indication as to his authority for these definitions. He notes: 'Et dicitur tragedia a tragos (τράγος) grece and later 'et dicitur comedia a comos (κόμμους) grece. The Commedia is identified with all three styles. Benvenuto's discussion in the recollectae provides material which, in view of its correspondence to that to be found in Serravalle's gloss, clearly represents a direct influence. Both commentators suggest that Dante used
the term 'comedia' for his work out of humility.

Ferrara recollectae


Serravalle

Quartum preambulum est, quod poetarum triplex stilus reperitur, qui sunt: tragedia, sathyra et comedia. Tragedia est que tractat de rebus altis et magnis cum superbo, idest alto, stilo, sicut sunt subversiones regnorum et provintiarum, diluvia, strages; quo stilo tragedico usi sunt Homerus, Virgilius, Lucanus et Statius. ... Sathyra dicitur secundus stilus, qui est reprensivus vitiorum: hoc stilo usi sunt Horatius, Persius, Iuvenalis; ... Tertius stilus est comedia, que tractat de rebus infimis et plebeis, cum suo stilo baxo et humili; ... Iste liber Dantis potest dici tragedia, quia tractat de magnis rebus et letis, scilicet de Summis Pontificibus, Imperatoribus, Regibus, Cardinalibus, Ducibus, Marchionibus, Civitatibus et Episcopis, etc. Potest etiam dici sathyra, eo quia reprehendit vitia audacter et corrigit, nemini parcens, ... Potest etiam dici comedia propter stilum baxum et vulgarem, quia hic liber incipit a tristibus, scilicet ab Inferno, procedens ad Purgatorium, demum finit in rebus letis, scilicet in Paradiso et in visione Divine Maiestatis. Tamen auctor, ex humilitate, comediam hoc opus voluit appellare.

The naming of Homer, Virgil, Lucan and Statius, followed by Horace, Persius and Juvenal, the similarity of the definitions of the three genres, and the discussion relating to the appropriate genre to which the Commedia should be assigned are common not only to the recollectae and Serravalle's Comentum, but also to Benvenuto's final redaction.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is considerable evidence, based on precise correspondence in topics selected, points made, and examples and authorities adduced that Serravalle drew on some version of the Ferrara recollectae in writing the introduction to his commentary, which has not been noted by modern or earlier commentators on

---

106 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 3r.
Serravalle. At the same time it has been shown that Serravalle's 'introduction' is much more extensive than that provided by Benvenuto for the Ferrara recollectae. In particular, it is readily seen that much of the material of 'Preambula' 3, 5, 6 and 7, is not covered at all by Benvenuto. Of course, it has already been noted that it is highly probable that Serravalle had access to a superior version of the recollectae, where it is possible that Benvenuto might have embarked on a more extensive treatment of the themes which he considered to be appropriate for his introductory material. However, this would seem to be unlikely, since the introduction to Benvenuto's final redaction, once the laudatory material to his patron and the poetry are excluded, is for the most part a more stylistically accomplished version of the themes already developed in the Ferrara recollectae. It is, perhaps, more likely that Serravalle was conscious of a need to reach out to a wide audience that might have been expected to include ecclesiastics of various nationalities, dignitaries of moderate scholastic ability and enthusiastic laymen whose only relevant common ground could possibly be a working knowledge of medieval Latin. This could offer an explanation for the elementary nature of some of the material covered, for example, the time frame of the journey in the sixth 'preambulum', the description of the structures of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven in the seventh preambulum, the overview of the work as a whole, the reasoning behind the choice of guides and the need to absolve both himself and Dante from any suspicion of heresy. If this be the case, it could be deemed to provide evidence that Serravalle was conscious of, and effected by, the special ambiance relating to the Council of Constance while he was writing the 'Preambula'.
Chapter 4

Serravalle's Treatment of Florence in the *Commedia*

It has been established that Serravalle was an important member of the Italian Nation at the Council of Constance and, hence, he was probably party to the complexities of the processes through which the Council arrived at its decisions. Since Dante's relationship with Florence, the city of his birth, is an important constituent in the context of interpreting the *Commedia*, Serravalle's treatment of Florence is investigated in its own right as a central theme and also for evidence that his commentary in glosses pertinent to the city might have been influenced by the deliberations and decisions involving the Council. During the last decade of the fourteenth century and the early years of the fifteenth century, Serravalle spent periods of extended residence in Florence, and, hence, account is taken of Serravalle's personal views, which, in general, will be shown to be supportive of the Florentine Commune.

Serravalle taught theology at the Franciscan *Studium* in Santa Croce between 1393 and 1397 and also between 1400 and 1404, while his services as *predicatore* were officially requested on three separate occasions. A connection between Serravalle's *Comentum* and some version of the Ferrara *recollectae* of Benvenuto has already been established, and the degree to which Serravalle's commentary might be considered to depend on the *recollectae* is considered in this chapter through Serravalle's treatment of Florence. Florence was strongly represented at Constance, with, for example, Cardinal Zabarella being prominent in the proceedings of the Council and Cosimo de' Medici, who had accompanied Pope John XXII to Constance, being active in financial matters conducted on the fringes of the Council's formal agenda. This chapter, then, assesses Serravalle's commentary for evidence whether the Council of Constance had any influence, direct or indirect, on the *Comentum* in regard to the glosses relating to Florence. The extent of Serravalle's dependence on the Ferrara *recollectae* with regard to his discourses on Florentine topics is investigated by making a direct comparison with the relevant glosses from the two sources.

Though the focus is primarily on Serravalle, it is important to note that Benvenuto also had some connection with Florence in that for some months between 1373 and 1374 he had been in the city and attended the lectures on Dante delivered by Giovanni

---

1 Bellomo, p. 163.
Boccaccio. Hence, there is a possible link between Boccaccio's lectures and Serravalle's commentary via the Ferrara recollectae of Benvenuto. The Bertoldi family belonged to the Guelf faction in San Marino and in 1253 were forced into exile in the castello of Serravalle. However, this lapse of time was probably of sufficient length to preclude any feelings of bitterness on Serravalle's part that might have been provoked by the family's exile. In the case of Benvenuto da Imola, on the other hand, the pain was personal in that in 1365, after the failure of an embassy to Pope Urban V, he and his wife were forced into exile from Imola. In addition, after establishing himself at Bologna, as the result of his implication in a scandal, he was forced to leave in 1375 for Ferrara. Although Benvenuto makes no reference to the reasons for his abrupt departure from Bologna in either the Bologna or the Ferrara recollectae, in his final redaction he offers a defence of his actions which in some ways is reminiscent of the bitterness displayed by Dante over his own exile.

At this stage it is probably useful to set out formally the present writer's intentions in presenting material which is drawn from the recollectae and the Comentum and used in the remaining chapters of this dissertation. The glosses from the recollectae are often short and, even where Benvenuto provides a more lengthy set of comments, his contribution is often dwarfed by Serravalle's corresponding gloss. To some extent this disparity in length is due to the note-taking format of the recollectae. However, while Serravalle provides a text consistent with the requirements of his intended readership, he also takes the opportunity to insert material relating to his own personal circumstances. The resulting lengthy glosses are a feature of the Comentum.

In what follows the commentaries on verses from the Commedia are displayed.

---

2 Bellomo, p. 142.
3 Lombardi, p. 100.
4 Bellomo, p. 142.
5 Ibidem.
6 Benvenuto, DDP, Inferno 15.110-114. 'Et hic nota, lector, quod vidi aliquando viros sapientes magnae literatae conquerentes, et dicentes, quod pro certo Dantes nimis male locutus est hic nominando tales viros. Et certe egoquoando primo vidi literam istam, satis indignatus fui; sed postea experientia teste didici, quod hic sapientissimus poeta optime fecit. Nam in MCCCLXXV, dum essem Bononiae, et legerem librum istum, reperi aliquos vermes natos de cineribus sodomorum, inficientes totum illud studium: nec valens diutius ferre foetorem tantum, cuius fumus jam fuscabat astra, non sine gravi periculo meo rem patefeci Petro cardinali Bituricensi, tunc legato Bononiae, qui vir agnae virtutis et scientiae detestans tam abhominabile scelus, mandavit inquiri contra principales, quorum aliqui capti sunt, et multi territi diffugerunt. Et nisi quidam sacerdos proditor, cui erat commissum negotium, obviasset, quia laborabat pari morbo cum illis, multi fuissent traditi flammis ignis; quas si vivi effugerunt, mortui non evadent hic, nisi forte bona poenitudo extinxerit aqua lacrymarum et compunctionis. Et hoc autem incurrir capite odium et inimicitiam multorum; sed divina justitia me contra istos hostes naturae huc usque benigne protextit. See also Benvenuto's comment, in effect a postscript on his gloss to Paradiso 25.1-9, where he returns to the first verse 'Se mai continga …', for a similar possible expression of personal empathy with Dante.'
side by side with the contribution from the *recollectae* lined up with the corresponding gloss from the *Comentum*. As a result there are gaps where there is no contribution from Benvenuto to match Serravalle's insertions, additions and anecdotes. It is considered important to display these contrasting features of the two commentaries. In addition, the quotations from the *Comentum* are taken from the *DDP* database. There are very occasional errors to which attention is drawn in a note. The situation concerning the *recollectae* is more complex. Extensive use has been made of Cappelli's dictionary of Latin and Italian abbreviations where transcriptions from medieval shorthand tend to be written in classical Latin. The present writer does not consider himself competent to suggest how the original copyist would have transcribed his own shorthand. As a separate issue, there are many occasions where a transcription can be made without reference to Cappelli's dictionary but the result is sometimes clearly divergent from classical Latin, for example, *capud* for *caput*. In addition, there are occasions when words are repeated and errors are made which are probably due to the copyist mishearing or misinterpreting the original. Such glitches have been left in the text, the intention being to preserve the specificity and identity of the *recollectae* which, for better or for worse, represent student note-taking.

This chapter is divided into five sections. Section 1 provides an outline of those periods of the history of Florence which are particularly relevant to this study. The emphasis is on providing a historical background for Cacciaguida's observations concerning twelfth-century Florence, for Dante's own lifetime, and for the two decades bracketing the end of the fourteenth century, which will assist in setting Serravalle's career in Florence into context. In addition, some attention is given to the concept of citizenship where it is noted that modern commentators benefit from their consideration of Dante's prose works, whereas the references to the prose works in the early commentaries to the *Commedia* are rare. Section 2 commences with an analysis of an event reported in Serravalle's account and relating to Florence which may owe its origin to moralizing concerns rather than to historical accuracy. The details described by the two commentators are straightforward, requiring little interpretation. Therefore, this allows an assessment of the degree of correspondence between the two commentaries which is not complicated by subtleties related to contrasting opinions on a particular topic. This section continues with a discussion on the sixth canto of each of the cantiche where there is a distinctly political emphasis. Section 3 considers Dante's criticisms of Florentine behaviour both at the macroscopic level of the city and at the level of individual citizens. This is achieved in the context of the comportment of its citizens, some of whom were very influential. Section 4
is devoted to Dante's perspective on Florence through the medium of the Cacciaguida cantos (Paradiso XV-XVII), and a conclusion to the chapter is provided in section 5.

4.1. Florence in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

During the thirteenth century the political landscape of Western Europe in general and of Italy in particular was beset by factionalism as the various contenders for supremacy, both spiritual and temporal, attempted to manoeuvre themselves into an advantageous position.⁷ Although Pope Gregory X made a serious attempt to resolve these divisive issues,⁸ his efforts, 'if indeed truly realistic, came to little.'⁹ It is clear that Dante reached adulthood in an era that could only be described as politically very volatile. The labels 'Ghibelline' and 'Guelf' became entrenched during the reign of Frederick II of Sicily.¹⁰ The empire, consisting as it did of independent principalities, seven of which were involved in the election of the emperor, remained decentralized.¹¹ Caferro points out that, although Dante in Monarchia 3.15.13 described the electors as 'proclaimers of divine providence',¹² 'they were often corrupt, and the process permeated with graft.'¹³ In the diverse political situation in Italy the most cohesive force was the papacy. However, between 1254 and 1294 the average tenure of popes was only three-and-a-half years, thereby reducing the likelihood of consistent policy.¹⁴ In addition, the use of the terms Guelf and Ghibelline often functioned as a convenient marker, divorced from the papacy and the empire, the

---

⁸ Caferro, p. 9: 'In June 1273 Pope Gregory X … travelled to Florence to make peace between the Guelf and Ghibelline factions. … Gregory went next to Lyons, where at an ecumenical church council (1274) he confirmed the election of Rudolf of Hapsburg … as Holy Roman Emperor and arranged religious peace with Byzantium and its emperor Michael Palaeologus … who had retaken Constantinople in 1261. The act united the Greek and Roman Churches.'
⁹ Caferro, pp. 9-11: 'He (Gregory) had hardly left Florence when the factions repudiated their accord and began quarrelling anew. Rudolf of Hapsburg became mired in intramural battles in the north against a rival claimant … and failed to take up his Italian inheritance and the imperial crown … Charles of Anjou and Michael Palaeologus launched mutual attacks against each other … and Anjou's own authority in southern Italy was soon undermined by revolt in Sicily (1282). Meanwhile, Palaeologus' religious accommodation at Lyons was repudiated at home, and when he died in 1282 he was denied Christian burial by angry Greek prelates.'
¹⁰ Caferro, p. 10: 'The aggressive policies of Frederick intensified antagonisms among already bellicose city-states and left a legacy of conflict with popes who excommunicated him twice and deposed him in 1245.'
¹¹ Caferro, p. 11.
¹³ Caferro, p. 11.
¹⁴ Caferro, p. 13.
interpretation of which could be exploited for political purposes. Although prior to his exile Dante ostensibly belonged to the White Guelf party, in the following years his political thinking seemed to take on a Ghibelline perspective, while continuing to display his characteristic independence. Peter Armour, in commenting on the misuse of the Guelf/Ghibelline labelling, uses the encounter between Dante-pilgrim and the spirit of Manfred, described in Purgatorio III, to argue that the choice of Manfred might be construed as an indicator of Dante's latent Ghibelline leanings. However, the ambiguity in Florentine politics around 1300 is made manifest by the evidence that the Black Guelfs were colluding with Boniface VIII, while the Whites were opposing the Pope's meddling in the affairs of Florence. It is likely that Dante's opposition to papal interference in Florentine politics was not driven by any support for the Empire, but that Dante and the White Guelfs 'were opposing Boniface VIII as Florentines, as an independent republic or popolo resisting the man who, as pope, claimed to be also the emperor.' Whether this position be Ghibelline, that is anti-papal, or Guelf, that is anti-imperial, is not really relevant. The White Guelfs were simply denying the Pope's claim to have inherited, albeit only temporarily until the election of a new Emperor, jurisdiction over all earthly rulers.

It is understandable that Dante considered the sentence of death, pronounced by the Neri during his absence from Florence in 1302, to be motivated entirely by the political situation of the time and to be unjust. However, Dante himself acted under similar political constraints when, in an effort to suppress civil discord involving the Bianchi and Neri, the leading members of the two factions were banished from Florence on June 24 1300. This occurred during Dante's time as prior and, hence, in attempting to facilitate good governance of the city, Dante at the very least acquiesced in the exile of his first friend, and prominent Guelf, Guido Cavalcanti.

However base the motives of the major players in the events of 1302-1303 in

---

15 Caferro, pp. 16-17. As an example, Ceferro cites the alliance in 1289 between the Guelf ruler Obizzo II Este of Ferrara with the Ghibelline ruler Alberto della Scala of Verona against his Guelf neighbours.
17 Armour, pp. 29-30. This meeting causes Armour to speculate as to Dante's purpose in 'presenting, as his first example of last-minute repentance, the soul of the great Ghibelline Prince who died in battle, excommunicated and with many horrible sins against his name.' Armour's conclusion is that 'by choosing to save him, … , the poet may also be indicating, even obliquely proclaiming, his own 'Ghibelline' allegiance.
18 Ibidem: 'The Pope's self-proclaimed legal position … was that, when there was no emperor (vacante imperio), he possessed the imperial jurisdiction, authority and rights.'
19 Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Inferno 2, commentary, p. 152.
20 Ibidem.
Florence, it cannot be denied that the city was virtually ungovernable and that drastic action had to be taken. Dante's response to his banishment is to be found among the numerous direct references which he makes to the city of his birth in the *Commedia*, some of which refer to the history of Florence. John Barnes has provided a study relating to Dante's knowledge of Florentine history, in which he notes that 'the term “history” includes pseudo-history, because without any doubt some of what passed for Florentine history in Dante's time was purely mythical.' Barnes provides a list of probable sources available to Dante, but argues that the surviving written sources do not account fully for Dante's knowledge of Florentine history, suggesting that, either Dante was drawing on oral tradition, or that Dante made use of sources which have been lost. A substantial number of Dante's references to Florence do have a political content and show him in an unforgiving mood, conscious of her failings, and seemingly driven by retrospective thinking which harkens back to the time of the Florence of his ancestor Cacciaguida who followed the Emperor Conrad III on the second Crusade around 1147. Further evidence of Dante's antipathy towards the city of his birth can be inferred from his letter to Emperor Henry VII of April 17 1311, urging him to move against Florence. However, it should be noted that Florence joined the Guelf league army sometime after the battle of Benevento in 1266 and remained a member of the Guelf league even after the political reforms of the late thirteenth century, and it was as a member of the league that Florence opposed Henry VII in 1311-1313.

Studies enquiring into Dante's conceptions of citizenship and the proper

---


22 The anonymous *Chronica de Origine Civitatis*, Sanzanome's *Gesta Florentinorum*, a reconstructed anonymous work also known as the *Gesta Florentinorum*, which contains the earliest known account of the Buondelmonte murder in 1216, and the anonymous chronicle known as the chronicle of Pseudo-Brunetto Latini.

23 Barnes, pp. 113-114.

24 Simon Gilson, 'Reading Florence in Dante's Commentators, 1324-1510' in *Se Mai Continga ... Exile, Politics and Theology in Dante*, ed. Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne (Ravenna,: Longo, 2013), pp. 105-124.

25 Gilson, 'Reading Florence in Dante's Commentators', p.105. The city's failings include the implication of Florence in the disorder and corruption besetting the Italian states (*Purgatorio* VI, 127-51, hostile descriptions such as the city is a ‘nido di malizia tanta' (*Inferno* XV, 78) or a 'terra prava' (*Inferno*, XVI, 9), and the condemnation of the florin as the source of greed which is considered to be endemic in the Church hierarchy, and, consequently, represents a major negative factor affecting the moral judgement of their congregations.


27 Caferro, p. 15.
ordering of society have been undertaken by Claire Honess\textsuperscript{28} and Catherine Keen,\textsuperscript{29} with both scholars providing a comprehensive account linking themes such as the chaos and civic disorder to be found in Dante's portrayal of 'civic' behaviour in Inferno with the order and serenity of that existing in Paradiso.\textsuperscript{30} A distinction is drawn between Dante the poet and Dante the pilgrim, with the one personage 'speaking' about the penitential journey of the other personage through the realms of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. The opening canto of the Commedia commences with the description of a desolate landscape which seems in allegorical terms to represent a suitable setting for the penitent traveller, wearied with the travails of this world and his own shortcomings. Dante-pilgrim's attempts to find a better way are thwarted by his encounters with three beasts, representing in personified allegorical terms facets of man's sinful nature.\textsuperscript{31} In effect, the pilgrim seems to be travelling in an ethereal, dreamlike environment where the boundaries between the real world and the world of the Commedia often become blurred. These opening verses make it clear that the pilgrim has no hope of escaping his moral failings, represented in allegorical terms by his surroundings and its inhabitants, and, hence, he has need of a guide to facilitate his path to the way of righteousness. Dante-poet introduces the Roman poet Virgil as the guide who will lead the pilgrim through the realms of Inferno and Purgatorio until, at the boundary of Earthly Paradise, Virgil, as a pagan, can go no further on the journey. This imaginative description is, of course, allegorical,\textsuperscript{32} and the use of allegorical representation, when applied generally, is helpful in freeing the reader from questioning too closely the factual accuracy of every detail of the historical events recorded in the Commedia.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{28} Claire E. Honess, \textit{From Florence to the Heavenly City, The Poetry of Citizenship in Dante} (London: Legenda, Italian Perspectives 13, 2006).
\textsuperscript{29} Catherine Keen, \textit{Dante and the City} (Stroud: Tempus, 2003).
\textsuperscript{30} Honess, \textit{From Florence to the Heavenly City}, p.5. In distinguishing between the two studies, Honess notes that Keen stresses 'the importance of Dante's engagement with the city in the secular context of historical time', whereas her own study 'aims to use historical earthly cities as the starting point for a discussion of broader, theological and poetic concerns; thus, whereas Keen emphasises, in particular, Florence and other local Italian towns, a key city for my analysis in the present book is the city of Jerusalem – a city which functions as much on a religious and metaphorical plane as on a 'real' political one.'
\textsuperscript{31} Singleton, \textit{Inferno} 2: Commentary, pp. 10-13.
\textsuperscript{33} As an example, consider the case of Dante's treatment of the liaison between Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, recounted in Inferno V.88-142. Singleton provides a commentary on these verses- Singleton, \textit{Inferno} 2: Commentary, pp. 84-95 which draws attention to the fact that, while the poem brilliantly illustrates a dangers of a love, based on human passion, which allows a defence of 'none may withstand Love's power' (p.89), the historical details reveal that, far from this being a
At this stage it is appropriate to introduce a third Dante personage, namely the one who lived in the real world. This real world, as Catherine Keen notes, was centred on a Florence which was enjoying a period of increasing prestige and prosperity of which the chroniclers Giovanni Villani and Dino Compagni bore witness, recording 'the excitements and the tensions of life in the constantly changing metropolis.' Keen describes the constant factionalism in Florentine politics, starting, at least nominally, from the murder of Buondelmonte dei Buondelmonti, through the years of the Guelf-Ghibelline struggles and the subsequent Popolo movement and its successors to the rivalries between the Black and White Guelfs of Dante's era. Of most concern to the present study is the condition of Florentine politics in the years immediately after the Guelf victory at the battle of Campaldino in 1289. Dino Compagni charts the subsequent sequence of events at Florence, starting with the arrogance of the magnates which provoked the rise to prominence of Giano della Bella and the passing of the Ordini della Giustizia to counter their oppressive power over the general populace of the city:

Ritornati i cittadini in Firenze, siresse il popolo alquanti anni in grande e potente stato; ma i nobili e grandi cittadini insuperbiti faceano molte ingiurie a' popolani, con batterli e con altre villanie. Onde molti buoni cittadini popolani e mercatanti, tra' quali fu un grande e potente cittadino (savio, valente e buono uomo, chiamato Giano della Bella, assai animoso e di buona stirpe, a cui dispiaceano quest ingiurie) se ne fe' capo e guida, e con l'aiuto del popolo (essendo nuovamente eletto de' Signori che entrarono a di XV di febbraio 1292) e co' suoi compagni, a fforzorono il popolo. … E fecesi leggi, che si chiamorono Ordini della Giustizia, contro a' potenti che facessono oltraggio a' popolani.

Compagni continues by describing how the dominant Popolani, strongly encouraged by della Bella, frustrated the Magnates by rigorous enforcement of the Ordinances during 1293, how the Magnates incited hostility towards della Bella among the Popolani during 1293-1294, and how della Bella, after riots against the Podestà, was driven from the City in 1295:

Il di sequente, si raunò il Consiglio; e fu diliberato, per onore della città, che le cose rubate si rendessono al podestà, e che del suo salario fusse pagato. E così si fe': e partissi. La città rimase in gran discordia. I cittadini buoni biasimavano quello che case of a liaison between two young lovers, 'at the time of their tragic death-if it took place ca. 1285-1288'. Francesca had a nine-year-old daughter by Giansotto, and Paolo, who was about forty and had been married some sixteen years, was the father of two sons.' (p. 84). It seems to the present writer that any comparison with Virgil's treatment of Dido of Carthage can only be limited. Francesca and Paolo are historical figures, while Dido is a figure of legend.

34 Keen, pp. 22-23.
35 Keen, pp. 30-36.
36 Dino Compagni, Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suoi, 1.11, available online at www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/testo/bibit000140, accessed 19/08/2020.
37 Compagni, 1.12.
38 Compagni, 1.13.
era fatto; altri dava la colpa a Giano, cercando di cacciarlo o farlo mal capitare; altri dicea: ‘Poi che cominciato abiamo, ardiamo il resto’: e tanto romore fu nella terra, che accese gli animi di tutti contro a Giano. E acciò consentirono i Magalotti suoi parenti; i quali lo consigliorono che, per cessare il furore del popolo, per alquanti di s'assentasse fuori della terra: il quale, credendo al loro falso consiglio, si partì; e subito fu dato bando:e condannato nell'avere e nella persona.39

In his essay, entitled 'Dante and Florence', 40 John Najemy discusses the background to Dante's early political career, suggesting that, although it might be considered to hold promise, it was probably typical of the opportunities offered by the new order in Florentine politics:

What little is known of Dante's political life before 1302 suggests that he played a role quite typical of those politically active Florentines who did not belong to the elite of economically powerful and influential families. … From about the mid-1290s, Dante held a number of important posts and was several times a member of the advisory boards convened by the government to give advice and support to its policies. In 1300 he served a two-month term on the chief executive magistracy of the priorate, apparently the first of his family to do so. … The city's republican constitution and the popular movement that came to power in the early 1290s created the conditions for the participation in communal politics of large numbers of men like Dante: citizens who took their turn in office but who were not outspoken leaders of the various factions of the political class.41

Dante's political career continued to flourish with his stance on Florentine politics seemingly 'aligned with the more moderate position of the Whites' and also generally indicative of 'a sceptical line over papal demands in his recorded interventions in public debates and in the policies pursued when he served as one of the priors in July and August 1300.'42 The ideals of citizenship and world order, which after his exile Dante outlines in the Commedia and in his prose works, might well have represented his idealized view, but this is far from asserting that he ever believed that his ideals were attainable. In view of Dante's letter to Emperor Henry VII of Luxembourg, to which reference has already been made, whatever justification Dante might have felt that he could offer, there can be little doubt that many of his fellow citizens would not have supported his early return to Florence. Although there is some doubt as to the authorship of the treatise entitled Discorso o dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua, written about 1525, and usually attributed to the Florentine statesman Niccolò Machiavelli, it is clear that, even two centuries later, Dante's attitude towards his native city still, even though the poet's merits were freely

---

39 Compagni, 1.16.
42 Keen, p.35.
acknowledged, provoked, at the best misunderstanding as to his motives, and at the worst
downright hostility.\(^{43}\)

In their individual analysis of how Dante viewed the politics and civic behaviour
of Florence, both Keen and Honess make liberal use of Dante's prose works, *Convivio, Monarchia,* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia,* with only the occasional references to the *Vita Nuova.* On the other hand, a routine search of the database reveals no direct reference to the *Monarchia,* with the exception of Pietro Alighieri's second and third redactions, in the early commentaries.\(^{44}\) There is an isolated mention of the *Convivio* in the third redaction of the *Ottimo Commento,* and of the *Vita Nuova* in the *Ottimo Commento,* Benvenuto's commentary, Benvenuto's final redaction and the commentary of the *Anonimo Fiorentino*.\(^{45}\) The emphasis placed by modern commentators, such as Honess and Keen, on the later prose works allows them an insight into the issues underpinning the political
theory expressed in the *Commedia* which was not available to, or even possibly ignored
by, the early commentators. Nevertheless, there exists a link between Boccaccio's *Trattatello in laude di Dante,* Benvenuto's redactions\(^{46}\) and Serravalle's commentary, with
Serravalle referring to 'Boccatius' on three occasions.\(^{47}\) Boccaccio directly links the
*Monarchia* to the arrival of the Emperor Henry VII in Italy.\(^{48}\)

\(^{43}\) Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorso o dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua,* ed. Mario Martelli, in Biblioteca Italiana, 2004, available online at https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/31060427.pdf, accessed 30/04/2020: ‘… ma mi fermerò sopra di Dante; il quale in ogni parte mostrò d'essere, per ingegno, per dottrina e per giudizio, uomo eccellente, eccetto che dove egli ebbe a ragionare della patria sua; la quale, fuori d'ogni umanità e filosofico instituto, perseguitò con ogni specie d'ingiuria. E non potendo altro fare che infamarla, accusò quella d'ogni vizio, dannò gli uomini, biasimò il sito, disse male de' costumi e delle leggi di lei; e questo fece non solo in una parte della sua Cantica, ma in tutta, e diversamente e in diversi modi; tanto l'offese l'ingiuria dell'esilio! tanta vendetta ne desiderava! e però ne fece tanta quanta egli poté.’ See, also, ‘Apologia di Dante’ in *Comento di Cristophoro Landini Fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Danthe Alighieri Poeta Fiorentino.*

\(^{44}\) There is a single reference to the *Monarchia* in the proemio to Inferno 21 in Pietro's second redaction, and two references, *Paradiso* 7.19-125 and *Paradiso* 13.55-142, in his third redaction. It is possible that the activities of the papal legate Bertrand de Poujet in Bologna around 1329 condemning the work as heretical acted as a deterrent to contemporary commentators. See Kay, *Monarchia,* pp. xx-xxi.

\(^{45}\) The reference to the *Vita Nuova* in the gloss to *Purgatorio* 30.109-117 of Benvenuto's definitive commentary is interesting because it occurs in all three redactions. On the other hand, Serravalle in his gloss to *Purgatorio* 30.115-120 makes no reference to the *Vita Nuova* itself, limiting himself to 'Iste fuit talis in sua vita nova, idest quando erat adoleescens ...'

\(^{46}\) Benvenuto, *DDP,* Inferno 15.73-78 '... quod sicut scribit Boccatius de Certaldo in suo libello de vita et moribus Dantis.' This reference does not occur in the glosses to these verses to be found in either the Ferrara *recolletae* or in Serravalle's commentary.


\(^{48}\) Boccaccio, pp. 637-638: ‘Similmente questo egregio autore, nella venuta di Arigo VII imperatore, fece un libro in latina in latina prosa, il cui titolo è quand'era *Monarchia,* il quale secondo tre quistioni, le quali in esso determina, in tre libri divise: nel primo, loicamente disputando, prova che al bene essere del mondo sia di necessità essere imperio, la quale è la prima quistione; nel per agomenti istoriografi procedendo, mostra Roma di ragione ottenere il titolo dell'irzo per argumenti imperio, che è la seconda quistione. Nel teletogico prova l'autorità dell'imperio immediatamente
The dating of the Monarchia has long been disputed. For example, Richard Kay provides evidence to suggest that the composition dates to 1317 or a little bit later, while, more recently, Diego Quaglioni in reopening the debate, insists that the Monarchia is not Dante's last work. While Robin Kirkpatrick considers the Monarchia to represent 'Dante's most original contribution to Medieval philosophy', there is a consensus that the Monarchia is a political tract. A date of composition prior to 1313 would support the hypothesis that it might have been written in support of Henry VII of Luxembourg, while a dating around 1317 would lend support to the beneficiary being Dante's protector Can Grande della Scala. It is sufficient, for present purposes, to note that, whereas Benvenuto acknowledges the existence of the Monarchia in his final redaction, there is no reference to this work in the corresponding glosses of the two recollectae and no direct reference at all in Serravalle's commentary. In effect, this provides further evidence denying the likelihood of Serravalle's being influenced by Benvenuto's final redaction.

Probably the most significant verses of the Commedia, which help to establish Dante's thinking concerning the city of his birth, are to be found in the cantos of Paradiso where Dante, the pilgrim, meets his ancestor Cacciaguida. In these verses Dante, the poet, appears to display retrospective approval for the customs and practices which he assumes distinguished the Florence of Cacciaguida's lifetime from the Florence of say 1300. In his commentary on Paradiso XV.91 Singleton discusses the problems in assigning a realistic date for Cacciaguida's birth, but the date of his death fighting in the second Crusade is

procedere da Dio, e non mediante alcun suo Vicario, come gli cherici pare che che vogliamo; e questa è la terza quistione.'

Kay, pp. xxii-xxx.


Quaglioni, pp. 323-324: 'Nell'introduzione alla mia edizione, volgendo in negativo l'affermazione di uno studioso recente, dico subito che la Monarchia non (Quaglioni's emphasis) è l'ultima opera di Dante. Che la cronologia di composizione delle opere di Dante offra “un quadro a dir poco disperante” è cosa nota. Marco Santagata ha scritto: “Di fatto, se si eccettuano alcune Epistele (VI, VII, X), la Questio (se autentica) e uno sparuto gruppetto di rime, tutti gli scritti di Dante sono di datazione congetturale. E in molti casi si tratta di congetture con un ampio arco di oscillazione: esemplare il caso della Monarchia, le cui ipotesi di datazione si spingono dal 1308 circa, passando per il 1312-13, fino al 1317-18.'


Kay notes the possibility that, owing to the intervention of Pope John XXII after the death of Emperor Henry VII with the issue of the bull Si fratrum on 31 March 1317, Dante's patron, Can Grande della Scala of Verona, in support of his own political objective, needed to deny papal authority in the the interregnum period following the death of an emperor. The Monarchia would have represented a useful tract in support of this argument.

Kay, pp..xx-xxx.
suggested to be around 1147.\textsuperscript{55} It is likely, therefore, that the formative years of Cacciaguida's life occurred during the establishment in Florence of the Commune.

The first public meeting for the establishment of the Commune was convened by Bishop Ranieri in 1105.\textsuperscript{56} The events, which Cacciaguida considers detrimental to the governance of the city, occurred after this date. The turbulent nature of Florentine politics during Dante's formative years up to the time of his exile has already been discussed. However, Florence, both politically and culturally, underwent considerable change over the last decades of the fourteenth and the early decades of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{57} In particular, Florence was almost constantly on a war footing between 1390 and 1454.\textsuperscript{58} The war between Florence and Milan, which lasted from 1390-1402, and approximately spanned the duration of Serravalle's time in Florence, was triggered by the fear exhibited by the Tuscan cities that they were in danger of coming under the direct dominance of Florence.\textsuperscript{59} The practice, followed by the major participating cities in such conflicts, of employing mercenaries to fight their battles caused problems, both financial and civic.\textsuperscript{60}

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that the Florence of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was very different from the 'ideal' imagined by Dante which dated back to the time of Cacciaguida. Serravalle too would have encountered a Florence which had moved on since Dante's times and was enjoying a prestige and commercial prosperity which most ordinary citizens might well have considered an improvement in the quality of their daily life compared with that of the previous generation. Whatever Dante's reservations, it is clear that Serravalle did not consider the citizens of Florence to be lacking in piety and spiritual well-being, and his time there, both as teacher and preacher, seems to have been well received. Also, Serravalle's time in Florence coincided with a developing interest in humanism in intellectual circles. A negative view of the humanist movement was provided by a Florentine patrician Cino Rinuccini, written sometime before 1417, in a work called \textit{Invective against certain calumniators of Dante},

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{55}{Singleton, \textit{Paradiso} 2, commentary, pp. 258-260.}
\footnotetext{57}{John M. Najemy, \textit{A History of Florence 1200-1575} (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), p. 188: 'The half-century from the 1380s to the 1430s is the watershed of Florence's republican history. Realignments among the classes transformed politics, intellectual life, social attitudes, and institutions. More changed in these decades than in the previous hundred years.'}
\footnotetext{58}{Ibidem: 'Within Florence, government authority to police and control, discipline and punish, provide charity and assistance, and enforce norms of behaviour and morality significantly expanded.'}
\footnotetext{59}{Najemy, p. 189.}
\footnotetext{60}{Najemy, p. 190.}
\end{footnotes}
Petrarch and Boccaccio. A summary of Rinuccini’s more serious objections can be found in Holmes’ essay. On the other hand, a powerful advocate of the humanist cause was Coluccio Salutati, born in 1331 and a successful chancellor of Florence from 1375 until his death in 1406. Salutati was a keen student of classical literature, had a strong interest in Dante, and was a follower of Petrarch’s revival of the Latin language. Although Serravalle, by acknowledging in the Comentum that there would be those who would criticize his use of Latin, was clearly aware of these developments, there is no clear evidence that humanist ideas influenced his commentary.

The intention this section has been to establish a reference point from which the treatment of Florence in Serravalle’s commentary and in Benvenuto’s Ferrara recollectae might be evaluated. Among the items discussed is the significance of an allegorical interpretation of the poem which frees the reader from any requirement to be excessively critical in interpreting historical data. Consideration has been given to developments in the history of Florence of importance to Dante’s earlier career. It has been shown that the early commentators, unlike their modern counterparts, made no substantial use of Dante’s prose works and that this, at least to some extent, would seem to have inhibited them in their interpretation of the Commedia. Attention has been given to the changing political landscape which distinguished the perception of Florence in the eras of Cacciaguida, Dante and finally, for the person of most concern for the present study, the commentator Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle.

4.2. Perceptions of Florence
Two themes are considered in this section. The first involves Serravalle’s version of an event, probably apocryphal, which appears in a different form in Benvenuto’s redactions and which Serravalle transferred to a Florentine setting. The second theme is the political element exhibited in the sixth canto of the three cantiche and its relevance to Florence.

---

62 Holmes, p.3: They were insufferably detached from the normal Florentine’s involvement in the affairs of his commune. “In politics they do not know which form of government is best, the rule of one or of more, or of many, or of an elected few. They evade responsibility, affirming that he who serves people in common serves no one, and they neither give counsel to the republic in their robes nor defend it with arms.” Finally it was even doubtful whether they accepted the basic tenets of the Christian faith. “As for divine philosophy, they say that Varro wrote many books of the observation of the gods of the pagans in the most elegant style and they praise him excessively, secretly preferring him to the doctors of our catholic faith; and they dare to say that those gods were truer than this one, forgetting the miracles of our saints.”
63 Holmes, p. 6.
64 Ibidem.
4.2.1. The Repentant Murderer

The commentaries of Benvenuto and Serravalle on the verses of Inferno III.121-126 contain a reference to an 'historical' event where a criminal is compelled by his conscience to admit his crime because he cannot support the burden of his guilt. The main aim of the verses is to emphasize that those who die in the wrath of God are eager to cross Acheron because Divine Justice so urges them on that their fear is changed to desire. The uncomplicated nature of the contents of these glosses enables a straightforward evaluation to be made of the way in which Serravalle drew on the Ferrara recollectae.

Ferrara recollectae


Serravalle

Or: figliuol mio, disse el maestro. Or, fili mi, dixit magister: hec est quinta et ultima pars huius capituli, in qua removetur dubia: nam, supra, Dantes petiit, que gens esset, et quare erat ita prompta ad transitum. Dicit magister curialis: Fili mi, illi qui moriuntur in ira Dei, idest in obstinatione, omnes conveniunt huc ex omni regione, et prompti sunt ad transeundum rivum, quia divina iustitia premit eos calcaribus in tantum, quod eorum timor convertitur in desiderium. Vult dicere Virgilius, quod anima dampnata cum tanta voluntate vadit ad penam, cum quanta ibat ad peccandum: et hoc provenit a vi et fortitudine divine iustitie. Aliquando accidit quod homo, qui commicetit grave scelus, divina iustitia et humana pingunt eum ad mortem. Fortuna, peccatum, omnia ista talia, concurrunt ad ducendum furem et latronem ad furcam. Ego predictus Episcopus audivi, dum essem lector et magister regens in Conventu Fratrum Minorum de Florentia anno Domini millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo quinto, quod quidam, qui commiserat magnum delictum, quia interfecerat unum suum sotium in lecto, propter hoc quia de sero sotium suum habere vidit triginta florenos in bursa, de nocte interfecit eum et sepellivit in stabulo sub fimo equorum. Diu hoc scelus latuit; tamen de morte interfeciit eum et sepellivit in stabulo sub fimo equorum. Dii hoc scelus latuit; tamen de morte interfeciit eum et sepellivit in stabulo sub fimo equorum. Diu hoc scelus latuit; tamen de morte interfeciit eum et sepellivit in stabulo sub fimo equorum. Diu hoc scelus latuit; tamen de morte interfeciit eum et sepellivit in stabulo sub fimo equorum.

---

65 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 13v.
66 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 3.121-126.
67 Clearly ‘dampnata’ is intended. However, the required abbreviation sign over the first ‘a’ is missing in the text.

Serravalle's comments may be viewed as comprising two separate entities. The first might be considered to be a more presentable rewriting of Benvenuto's 'note form' comments, while the second entity is a justification of the concept that there is no escape from divine justice. It is to be noted that Serravalle begins his account of the criminal, whose conscience forced him to confess, with the formula 'Ego predictus Episcopus'. Serravalle sometimes uses this, or a similar formula, to introduce what might seem to be extra material, perhaps added to an existing text, to amplify basic ideas discussed in his comments on particular verses in the Commedia, with this extra material often involving anecdotes of a personal nature. It is to be noted that the story of the malefactor wrestling with his conscience is not mentioned in the Bologna recollectae, is set in Verona in the Ferrara recollectae and, in a more concise form in Benvenuto's final redaction, the location, in which the events are supposed to have taken place, is not identified. It is probable that the story, which originates in the Ferrara recollectae, should be regarded as apocryphal and that Serravalle, following common practice, borrowed and embellished it for his own purposes. Serravalle describes the story in more detail, but the setting is in Florence with
the writer claiming: 'Hanc narrationem audivi ab illo Potestate qui eum fecit decapitari.'
Serravalle's opening formula could be interpreted as an attempt to add an aura of authenticity to his remarks. However, if it be possible to question the authority of such interventions on Serravalle's part, it has implications on the weight to be attached to some of his other comments, for example, the much criticized assertion that Dante studied at Oxford which has been discussed in the previous chapter.

4.2.2. The Political Element in the Sixth Canto of the Three Cantiche.
The sixth canto of each of the three cantiche has a strong underlying political theme. In the assessment of Dante's judgement as to the state of the political health of contemporary Florence, *Inferno* 6 is an important canto in which the poet introduces the city for the first time in the *Commedia*.\(^{68}\) The discussion opens with the pilgrim's meeting with the glutton Ciacco in verse 40, with both commentators reserving the bulk of their comments for verses 64-69. These glosses focus chiefly on providing the reader with an account of the events leading to the assumption of power in Florence by the Neri under the leadership of Corso Donati and the subsequent expulsion of the leadership of the White Guelfs, of whom Dante was one. Both commentators provide a similar account of the intrigues of Pope Boniface VIII and Charles de Valois in facilitating this usurping of power. Serravalle begins his commentary with a preface mainly devoted to a criticism of the gloss on these verses provided by one of Dante's sons.\(^{69}\) There then follows a discussion in which Serravalle draws attention to the erroneous suggestion that there was a struggle between Guelf and Ghibelline factions in Pistoia. Since the commentary of Iacopo Alighieri (1322) covers only 6.7-12, 6.13-15 and 6.52-54, the reference could be to the third redaction of Pietro Alighieri (1358-1364), although a similar gloss is to be found in Pietro's first redaction (1340-1341),\(^{70}\) while in the second redaction (1357-1358) there is no reference

---

\(^{68}\) Singleton, *Inferno* 2, commentary, p100.

\(^{69}\) The commentary of Serravalle also makes reference to 'filius Dantis' in *Purgatorio* Intro. Nota, *Purgatorio* 1. Nota, 'Dantulinus = (filius Dantis Petrus)', *Purgatorio* 1.88-90, and the genitive 'filii Dantis' in *Inferno* 1.106-108. In the case of the reference to *Inferno* 1, there is a corresponding brief mention of 'filius Dantis' in the *recollectae*. However, there is no such corresponding match with the three references in *Purgatorio*. Since two of these are to be found in the *Introduction to Purgatorio* and there is no real introduction or *Proemio to Purgatorio* in the *recollectae*, this should occasion no surprise. The present author would hesitate to draw any conclusions from the references to *Purgatorio*. It should be remembered that *Purgatorio* is in the hand of Tedaldo della Casa (Bellomo, p. 146), is in general terse, with complex shorthand techniques and abbreviations, and often difficult to decipher. Tedaldo was no mere copyist, and it cannot be excluded that to some extent his version of *Purgatorio* might represent some editing on his part of the *recollectae*.

\(^{70}\) Pietro Alighieri (1), *DDP, Inferno* 6.64-69 'Cuí respondet, quod post longam contentionem pars silvæstris, idest Guelfa, et pars Ghibellina venient ad bellum, sed causam non dicit.'
to a Ghibelline party.\textsuperscript{71} It should also be noted that two of the early major commentators on the \textit{Commedia}, namely Iacopo della Lana (1324-1328)\textsuperscript{72} and Graziolo Bambaglioli (1324),\textsuperscript{73} would seem to make the same error. It is seen below that there is little difference between the two commentaries in their handling of the 'intervention' of Dante's son.

\textbf{Ferrara recollectæ}\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{E quegli:} Respondet Ciacus. Filius proprius Dantis dicit in isto passu quod Ciacus loquitur de parte Guelfa et Gебelina etc. Sed falsum est hoc, nam primo per multa tempora Gебelini expulsi erant. Dicit hic etiam quod redibit ista pars infra tres annos et Gебelini numquam redierunt. Sed loquitur de parte alba et nigra que tunc nata est in Florentia et utraque erat Guelfa.

\textbf{Serravalle}\textsuperscript{75}

Dicet etiam filius Dantis, super illam questionem: si aliquis est iustus; quod Dantes loquebatur de Iure civilii, idest si iura civilia observabantur in Florentia, vel canonica. Nec bene dicit, quia Dantes loquebatur hic de se ipso et de Guido de Cavalcantibus; nam ipsi duo erant boni, iusti et valentes. Dantes erat maximus poeta et Guido erat optimus philosophus; ideo auctor loquitur ita obscure, nolens nimis clare loqui de se ipso.

Concerning the first point, in his third redaction Pietro Alighieri comments: '… quod de mclxxxviiº seu viiiº in civitate Pistorii, existentibus duabus partibus, scilicet Guelfa et


\textsuperscript{72} Jacopo della Lana, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 6.64-66: 'Intende qui parte selvaggia che è contra l'imperio, lo quale è regolare della civiltà e della comunicazione umana, så che se la domestic è imperiale, quella che è contra essa per opposito è selvaggia. Or dice: la guelfa parte caccerà la ghibellina con molta offensione.'

\textsuperscript{73} Graziolo Bambaglioli, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 6.52-66: '… Cui respondet et dicit quod post multas et longas discordias ipsi Florentini ad effusionem proprie sanguinis deducuntur et pars Gelfia partem Ghibelinae expellet; quam scilicet partem Guelfam silvestrem idcirco appellat, quia imperii mandata non sequitur, immo adversatur et obviat.'

\textsuperscript{74} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 21v and fol. 21r.

\textsuperscript{75} Serravalle, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 6.64-69.

\textsuperscript{76} Should probably read 'verecundans'.
Ghibelina, ...’ Pistorium (Pistoia), although about 30 km from Florence, had been under the control of Florence since 1254. The Ghibellines were expelled from Florence in 1267, and, although there was a pact in 1280, the most powerful Ghibelline families were excluded.\textsuperscript{77} Therefore, there might well have been a Ghibelline faction in Pistoia in 1297, but it would probably have been bereft of serious leadership. Both commentators acknowledge that the problems between the \textit{Neri} and \textit{Bianchi} factions had their origin in Pistoia. This is supported by Giovanni Villani.\textsuperscript{78} Concerning Serravalle's second criticism, it would seem more likely that 'giusti son due' refers to people rather than to civil or canonical laws. The commentary of the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} on verses 64-69 and the corresponding comments of Serravalle are shown below. It is to be noted that Benvenuto provides further discussion on these verses after the completion of the glosses on verses 70 to the end of the canto. This feature occurs quite frequently in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae}, and a discussion of Gennaro Ferrante's analysis as to how Serravalle incorporated it into his own commentary has already been provided in chapter 1. This revision is shown in bold type. Even without Benvenuto's revision, it is clear that, although Serravalle's contribution is much the longer, the two commentaries on these verses have much in common.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Ferrara recollectae}\textsuperscript{79} \hspace{2cm} \textbf{Serravalle}\textsuperscript{80}
\end{center}


Pro vera intelligentia textus et veritatis, notandum hic quod in millesimo trecentesimo, in civitate Pistorii nata fuit una divisio, sive partialitas, in domo illorum de Cancellariis, inter duos cusinos, idest inter duos, qui erant filii duorum germanorum carnalium; et tota civitas Pistoriensis fuit in se divisa propter istos duos, adeo quod civitas Pistorii erant in pexima disposicione. Florentini, credentes pacificare civitatem Pistorii et destruere talem parcialitatem, preceperunt, ut principaliores et capita istarum partium venirent Florentiam et habitarent ibi: quod factum est. Aliqui illorum habitatant ultra Arnum, aliqui citra Arnum. Unus fluvius, qui vocatur Arnum, vadit [et] fluit per medium civitatis Florentie (est pulcher fluvius et bene habundans aquis), et sic civitas Florentie dividitur a fluvio isto, scilicet Arno. Illi, qui stabant ultra Arnum, sciverunt tam bene locui, quod

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{77} Singleton, \textit{The Divine Comedy}, \textit{Inferno} 2, commentary, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{78} Giovanni Villani, \textit{Nuova cronica}, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols. (Parma: Guanda, 1991), reprinted as Giovanni Villani, ed. by Giulio Cura Curà (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2002), 9.XXXVIII, p.395: ‘... Ma come l'una pecora malata corrompe tutta la greggia, così questo maladetto seme uscito di Pistoia, istando in Firenze corruppono tutti i Fiorentini e partiro, che prima tutte le schiatte e' casati de' nobili, l'una parte tenea e favorava l'una parte, e gli altri l'altra, e appresso tutti i popolari’
\textsuperscript{79} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 21r, 21v, 22r, 22v.
\textsuperscript{80} Serravalle, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 6.64-69.
\end{flushleft}


Tandem, una dierum, ivit dominus Verius ad papam, et dixit ei: Cur tenetis me hic in curia? Dominus papa, audiens dominus Verius, recessit a papa et rediit voluntatem meam: vadas in nomine diaboli tui. Quod


81 Should probably read ‘rurales’.

Serravalle's contribution benefits from being continuous, thereby allowing him to set out his thoughts in a logical manner. Benvenuto in effect covers the same ground twice, but much more briefly with his arguments less well developed. Serravalle's more expansive commentary allows him to emphasize Charles de Valois' treachery by noting that in the first instance he was well-received by Bianchi who were then in power in Florence. However, the fundamental description of events is consistent across the two commentaries.

In verse 58 of Purgatorio VI Virgil, in his capacity as the guide of Dante-pilgrim, draws Dante's attention to a soul seated alone who has his eyes turned towards them. This turns out to be the poet Sordello. Although the focus of this chapter is on the city of Florence, it is impossible to ignore the implications of Sordello's entrance into the narrative of Purgatorio leading to the invectives of Dante-author against Italy in the first instance, followed by a condemnation of the current state of his native city, Florence. Claire Honess
has provided a scholarly work linking Canto 6 of each of the three cantiche.\(^82\) As Honess points out this lack of association with any group of fellow souls is almost unique in the Commedia.\(^83\) In addition, she demonstrates that Sordello's earthly conduct was 'far from being an example of perfect Mantuan citizenship', and there is, therefore, a significant disconnect between the earthly Sordello and the Sordello, who, in Ante-Purgatory, has become 'an emblem of political unity'.\(^84\) Honess makes an important point in noting: 'The second half of Purgatorio vi constitutes, in fact, a 'freeze-frame' moment; time here stands still and restarts only with the transition to the next canto.'\(^85\) These intervening verses allow Dante-author the opportunity to promote his conviction that Italy's problems are due to those directing the governance of the various entities making up fourteenth-century Italy, whether they be city-states, minor kingdoms or any other political grouping, being totally unable to put aside their own self-interests for the common good of Italy.

Dante's solution required a monarch of sufficient integrity and prestige who was able to impose the necessary discipline on the governments of the separate communities of which Italy and Europe were composed. Such a ruler did not seem to be available in 1300, the year in which the Commedia is set, since the Office of Emperor was in the hands of Albert I of Austria, emperor (1298-1308), whose election, although he was never crowned, was recognized by Boniface VIII in 1303 'in consideration of the advantages of his alliance against the pope's mortal enemy, Philip the Fair of France.'\(^86\) However, Albert's successor, Henry VII of Luxembourg, appeared to offer more promise,\(^87\) although this spirit of optimism should have been viewed with some caution.\(^88\) Robert Hollander, while acknowledging the uncertainty involved in assigning the dating of Purgatorio VI to 1308-10, suggests that three stages may be identified in Dante's response to Henry's election.\(^89\)

---


\(^{83}\) Honess, 'Divided City, Slavish Italy, Universal Empire', p. 123.

\(^{84}\) Honess, 'Divided City, Slavish Italy, Universal Empire', p. 125.

\(^{85}\) Honess, 'Divided City, Slavish Italy, Universal Empire', p. 120.

\(^{86}\) Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Purgatorio 2, commentary, p. 129.


\(^{88}\) Pertile, p. 3: 'Henry's main preoccupation was in establishing his authority as Emperor over Italy, while most Italian cities, especially Florence, were determined to defend their autonomy. Although Henry's formal authority was considered to be an important factor and his military strength needed to be taken seriously, he clearly had insufficient resources to enforce that authority. The Church was also in a difficult position, with the Pope in Avignon and widely considered to be 'a pawn to the house of France'.

\(^{89}\) Robert Hollander, DDP. Purgatorio, 6.97-102: 'initial dubiety (1308-10), (2) great excitement as the campaign to put Italy under the governance of a true Roman emperor begins, (3) eventual wary
In this context, one should also take into account the three, presumably open, 'political' letters written by Dante in support of Henry between Autumn 1310 and the end of April 1311.\(^90\) Recent commentators have tended to review verses 129 to the end of the canto, which Dante devotes to an invective against Florence, in the context of the poet's invective against Italy and his condemnation of the part played by Florence in the opposition to Henry VII.\(^91\) While the Ferrara recollectae and Serravalle's commentary provide the main focus for this work, it should be noted that only Benvenuto in his final redaction makes any real attempt to set the invective against Florence in context. Serravalle's commentary on these verses can best be described as 'routine', while Benvenuto's corresponding commentary in the Ferrara recollectae is brief. The copyist, Tedaldo della Casa, who divides each page into two columns, only provides about half a column of comment on the fourth part of the canto, i.e. that which relates directly to Florence. With considerable use of what seems to have been his own 'medieval shorthand', Tedaldo's text is in places very brief and somewhat difficult to decipher. However, as shown below, both Benvenuto and Serravalle do devote space to a discussion concerning the impact of the laws of Athens and Sparta.

Ferrara recollectae\(^92\)


Serravalle\(^93\)

Nota quod Athene et Lacedemonie, due civitates in Greta, fuerunt, ut dicit Titus Livius, in armis optime et in scientia, et habuerunt et fecerunt optimas leges. Athenienses habuerunt a Solone; Lacedemonienses habuerunt a Licurgo. Romani antiquitus bene per tercentos annos vixerunt sub propriis legibus; sed transactis illis annis, miserunt legationem pulcherrimum ad Gretiam, et habuerunt duodecim tabulas, super quibus fundate sunt leges.

The points of similarity are clear, with the essential message of the two commentaries being that, while the laws of Athens and Sparta, instituted by Solon and Lycurgus respectively, endured, the laws of Florence are so ephemeral that, as Serravalle puts it: '…

---

\(^{90}\) A translation of these letters, numbered v, vi, and vii, is available. See: Claire E. Honess, *Dante Alighieri: Four Political Letters*, MHRH Critical Texts vol. 6 (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2007).

\(^{91}\) See, for example, the commentaries on these verses of Robert Hollander and Nicola Fosca on the database of the *DDP*.

\(^{92}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 82va.

\(^{93}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Purgatorio* 6.139-144.
In the heaven of Mercury Dante-pilgrim encounters the spirit of the Roman Emperor Justinian, who introduces himself in \textit{Paradiso} VI.10-12. The early commentaries on \textit{Paradiso} VI are centred on a literal understanding of Dante's verses and there is little direct reference to Florence. An electronic search across the Dartmouth Dante Project database for \textit{Florentia} and its corresponding case endings has revealed only a handful of positive responses, several of which are routine and relate to verses 52-54 involving the destruction of Fiesole and the subsequent foundation of Florence. Only Benvenuto in his final redaction and Serravalle directly associate the Guelfs of verses 103-108 directly with Florence and then only very briefly.\(^95\) The only substantial direct reference to Florence is to be found in Serravalle's commentary on verses 10-12. This represents a digression on Serravalle's part, in that it is sandwiched between two elements devoted to the positive benefits of Justinian's reign which have much in common with the account to be found in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae}.

\textbf{Ferrara \textit{recollectae}}\(^96\)

Duo fecit: primo reformavit leges quibus pro maiori parte mundus regitur, quae primo erant tam longe quod tota etas non sufficiebat ad addiscendum; sed iste cum suis sapientibus reduxit ad modica volumina.

\textbf{Serravalle}\(^97\)

Duo maxima bona fecit: primum est, quod ipse cum suis sapientibus leges reformavit, quibus pro maiori parte mundus regitur, quae primo erant tam longe, quod tota etas hominis non sufficiebat nem ad addiscendum, sed nec ad videndum; Iustinianus vero cum suis sapientibus reduxit eas ad modica volumina, sed ex eis resecavit omnia inutilia. Nota quod a Iulio Cesare usque ad Constantinum Imperatorem ...

\textit{Quia auctor vocat hic aqulam avem Dei, multi dicunt quod ipse fuit perfidus Gebellinus, et non dicunt verum; imo ipse fuit de parte guelfa, ut satis patet in decimo capitolo Inferni. Si bene notantur ea que dixit Farinate, et per ea que audivit ab codem, fuit de parte Alba, propter quam fuit expulsus de...}

\(^{94}\) Ibidem.

\(^{95}\) There is only the briefest of comments on \textit{Paradiso} 6.103-108 in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} with no reference to Florence. On the other hand, Benvenuto da Imola,\textit{DDP, Paradiso} 6.100-111: '… Carolus vetus, quem appellat novellum, quia primus venit in Italiam, et acquisivit regnum Siciliae; qui multum persequutus est ghibellinos, et reduxit guelphos in Florentiam.' Also, Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Paradiso} 6.103-108: '… iste Karolus, scilicet Cioctus, id est secundus, cum Guelfis suis, id est Florentinis et eorum sequacibus, ...

\(^{96}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 130r.

\(^{97}\) Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Paradiso} 6.10-12.
Florentia. Verum est tamen quod illi, qui fuerunt expulsi de Florentia, qui primitus erant Guelfi propter partem albam, adheserunt parti gebelline. Sed Dantes hoc non fecit: nedum adhesit parti gebelline, sed nec partem albam voluit amplius sequi; sed vacavit studio, relinquens omnia alia, et tunc extra Florentiam composit hoc opus tam solemne. ...

Secundum bonum, quod fecit Iustinianus, fuit, quia commisit Bellisario suo vicario arma; qui Bellisarius cum signo aquile fecit mira, quoniam primo liberavit Italiam a Gotis, ...

In essence, Serravalle has noted that Dante's reference to the eagle as 'avem Dei' has caused people to suggest that Dante was espousing Ghibelline sentiments. This Serravalle refutes and at the same time distances the poet from the Guelf faction, concluding that the writing of the Commedia took place 'extra Florentiam', with the inference being that this included being outside the influence of Florentine politics. Serravalle ends his commentary on these verses with a reference more appropriate to lines 16-18, with Honess noting that the historical accuracy of the facts is open to doubt.

4.3. Florence through the eyes of Prominent Citizens

In this section consideration is given to Dante's usually negative assessments of Florence and the behaviour of its citizens. Dante-poet records these events via encounters between Dante-pilgrim and prominent citizens or representatives of distinguished Florentine families in which they recount their crimes and acknowledge the aptness of their punishments.

Ideally a commentator on the Commedia is required to provide his own insight into, and analysis of, the themes treated by Dante. Although inevitably commentators drew at least to some extent on the work of previous writers, some individuality can usually be found particularly in those elements where the writer had expertise. In the case of Serravalle, although the influence of Benvenuto's Ferrara recollectae is clear, he uses his

98 Ibidem: 'Agaipitus tamen Papa convertit eum, qui ostendit sibi quomodo in Christo sint due nature, scilicet divina et humana; qui audiens informationem Pape Agapiti, conversus est, et recte ac fideliter creditit, sicut credere tenebatur.

99 Honess, 'Divided City, Slavish Italy, Universal Empire', p. 130: 'This account, however, is not entirely historically accurate, for Agapetus is known to have visited Constantinople only in 536 CE, some seven years after Justinian's reordering of Roman law was promulgated.'
expertise as a theologian to enhance his glosses with interventions which might well not have occurred to Benvenuto. However, there is another important element for the commentator to consider, namely the public reception of the Commedia contemporaneous with the writing of his commentary. It has already been noted in chapter 3.2 that the two prelates, Guido da Pisa and the bishop of Fermo, were most anxious to emphasize the fictional or allegorical nature of the poem and to absolve themselves from any suggestion of heretical opinions. In addition, it was also indicated that Pietro Alighieri, for whom there would have been severe financial implications if a charge of heresy had been substantiated against his father, also considered the poem to be a work of fiction.

4.3.1. The Meeting with Farinata degli Uberti
Canto X of Inferno records the meeting of Dante, the pilgrim, with the shades of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, the father of Guido Cavalcanti, and Farinata degli Uberti, the Ghibelline leader largely responsible for the heavy defeat of the Guelfs at Montaperti in 1260. Since both Cavalcante and Farinata were reputed to be Epicureans, the political dimension to Farinata's later career and his 'espousal' of an heretical doctrine are somewhat intertwined in Dante's narrative as described in this important canto. However, for the purposes of the present discussion the main point of interest is Dante's treatment of Farinata's part in the events leading up to Montaperti and its aftermath, and, hence, discussion on the Epicurean element is postponed until chapter 6 which deals with Dante's approach to heresy as revealed in the Commedia. There is no doubt that the slaughter at Montaperti left an indelible scar on the public conscience at Florence and, although attempts were made in 1267 to reconcile Guelfs and Ghibellines by means of strategic marriage alliances\textsuperscript{100} and again in the 'peace' of 1280 when the most powerful Ghibelline families, including the Uberti, were excluded, after their expulsion in 1267 the Ghibellines never returned to Florence as a viable political party.\textsuperscript{101}

The text of Inferno X.46-48 is concerned with the initial moments of the meeting of Dante-pilgrim with Farinata. The commentaries discuss in similar fashion Farinata's success in expelling the Guelfs from Florence on two separate occasions. Both

\textsuperscript{100} Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Inferno 2, commentary, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{101} Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Inferno 2, commentary, p. 150.
Serravalle\textsuperscript{102} and Benvenuto\textsuperscript{103} deny that Dante, at least in the Jubilee year of 1300, was a Ghibelline.

When consideration is given to the verses of \textit{Inferno} X.76-81, the salient point involves Farinata's prophecy that Dante will be expelled from Florence within fifty months of their meeting and will never return. Both Benvenuto\textsuperscript{104} and Serravalle,\textsuperscript{105} following Dante himself, note that the fact that the Ghibellines have not been able to return to Florence pains Farinata more than his current predicament. In commenting on verse 81, 'che tu saprai quanto quell' arte pesa', Benvenuto in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} is content with: 'Ideo dicit non transibunt tresanni quibus tu pelleris et numquam redibis'.\textsuperscript{106} Serravalle is more explicit, writing: '... quod tu eris expulsus de Florentia, et nunquam redibis; et tunc tu scies quantum ponderat illa ars, idest non scendi redire.'\textsuperscript{107} Both commentators identify 'la donna che qui regge' with the Moon, and both take the opportunity to digress with a discussion on the widely held 'beliefs' concerning the influence of the Moon on facets of everyday life.

Benvenuto in the Ferrara \textit{recollectae} provides a substantial commentary concerning the historical background, the intrigues leading up to and during the battle of Montaperti in 1260, and Farinata's political defence of his native city in the immediate aftermath of the Guelf defeat. Benvenuto's commentary is mainly concerned with verses up to 120, with his later comments on the verses up to the end of the canto mostly being very brief. However, after the comment on verse 133 Benvenuto returns to the theme of the battle of Montaperti with a gloss which follows his practice of providing further clarification of an earlier gloss at the end of the commentary on the canto. Serravalle provides a long commentary on verses 88-93 which includes a full description of the events


\textsuperscript{103} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 29v: 'si che per doi: bis expulit partem Guelfam et per consequens Aldeggerios. dispersi: per mundum, expelendo eos de propia [civitate]. Dantes in MCCC erat de Prioribus in Florentia et tunc erant Gebelini expulsi; ergo [notatur] quod nullo modo potuisset esse Gebelinus.' Benvenuto in the Bologna \textit{recollectae} suggests that Dante became a Ghibelline after his exile from Florence to spite Pope Boniface VIII: 'Sed factus est Gibellinus postea, in despectum Pape Bonifaci:quia Papa iste erat Guelfus, & Dantes voluit effici Gibellinus.'

\textsuperscript{104} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 29v: 'quellarte: scilicet de non redire ex hoc. Magis doleo quam de ista pena et facit sicut illi qui contendunt cotidie de ista parte.'

\textsuperscript{105} Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 10.76-81: 'Et continuans primum dictum, Si, scilicet mei, de parte mea, illam artem, scilicet redeundi, nesciverunt, idest male, di[cit], hoc me tormentat plusquam iste lectus, idest pena, quam habeo in hoc lecto, idest sepulcro.'

\textsuperscript{106} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 29v.

\textsuperscript{107} Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 10.76-81.
before and after the battle of Montaperti, as well as a description of the battle itself. Although Serravalle's account is substantially longer, there is little difference in substance between his version and that of Benvenuto. Nevertheless, Serravalle's gloss does contain an account of the immediate family history of Frederick II. This account would have been expected to have been covered in a gloss to verse 119, 'qua dentro è 'l secondo Federico'. Benvenuto covers the same material more briefly in the supplementary commentary after his gloss on verse 133. However, Serravalle provides a lengthy comment concerning Constance of Altavilla, the mother of Frederick II, which is not to be found in Benvenuto's recollectae. As Robert Hollander indicates, the reputation of Constance became a victim of Guelf propaganda designed to discredit her son Frederick II. Serravalle, along with some other early commentators, erroneously considers Constance to be the daughter of 'rex bonus Gulielmus rex Sicilie', whereas she was in fact the daughter of Ruggero II of Sicily.

Probably the most natural setting for a discussion of the biographical details relating to Constance is to be found in the glosses subsequent to Paradiso III.109, for example, L'Ottimo Commento (1333), Chiose ambrosiane (c.1355), Pietro Alighieri (1359-64), and Benvenuto (1375-80). It is of interest to note that Giovanni Villani also accepts much of this alternative history.

Towards the end of his commentary on verses 88-93 Serravalle adds a brief gloss on Cardinal Ottaviano de Ubaldinis, which is similar to that to be found in the recollectae and includes Ottaviano's rueful lament: 'Si anima est, centiens amisi causam pro parte Gebelina (Benvenuto), and: 'Si mille animas haberem, omnes sponte perderem amore partis gebelline' (Serravalle). Serravalle's use of 'sponte' would seem to imply a lack of contrition on the part of Ottaviano which perhaps goes further than that implied in

---

108 Robert Hollander, DDP, Paradiso 3.109-120.
109 Ibidem: 'Frederick II, the 'Antichrist' would then have been born to an ex-nun who was at the same time a woman of a certain age, and thus opposing the precepts of every law, whether human or divine. … Constance, in fact, had never been a nun and had married Henry at the age of 31.'
110 Chiose Filippine, note 41, p. 270.
111 L'Ottimo Commento, DDP, Paradiso 3.109-120: 'Alcuni dicono, ch'elli dice di Gostanza, figliuola dello re Guiglielmo di Sicilia …',
112 Chiose ambrosiane, DDP, Paradiso 3.120: 'Domina Costancza fuit filia regis Guilielmi rgis Sicilie'.
113 Pietro Alighieri(3), DDP, Paradiso 3.109-130: 'Qui rex Guillielmus mortuus est unica filia relicta puella, scilicet supradicta Constantia …'
114 Benvenuto da Imola, DDP, Paradiso 3.109-114: '…quod haec magna Constantia fuit filia Guilelmi quondam optimi regis Sicilie.'
115 Villani, 6.XVI, p. 172: '…che Gostanza serocchia che fu del re Guglielmo, e diritta ereda del reame di Cicilia, la quale era monaca in Palermo … e era già d'età di più di L anni, sì lla fece uscire dal munistero, e dispensò in lei ch'ella potesse essere al secolo e usare matrimonio.'
116 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 29r.
117 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 10.88-93.
Benvenuto's version. Serravalle then returns to verse 91. Although Serravalle's intervention at this late stage in his commentary on this verse seems to be out of place, considering that he had already provided a comment similar to that shown below for Benvenuto, his final gloss is succinct and perhaps more reflective in setting out Farinata's defence of his conduct towards his native city.

---

**Ferrara recollectae**

Modo Farinata excusat se quam melius potuit. *Non fui solus qui dedi conflictum, sed solus tutus fui causa semel.* Ista pars Gebelina ad Empoli colegerunt se et habebant tractatum in Florentia et multi dicebant: *Quamvis capiamus, non poterimus tenere. Ideo decretum fuit quod, facta predicta, cremenetur et displantetur tota.* Et tunc dominus Farinata surexit et dicit quod numquam hoc [a]sentiret, imo potius nec ipse nec [suos] volebat redire umquam. Ymo evaginavit ensem, dicens: *Quicumque hoc dicerebat, sentiret ensen per pectus suum sicut fecit Scipio; ita quod solus iste deffendit eam.*

**Serravalle**

*Ad hoc non fui ego solus:* quia omnes exules Florentini fuerunt mecum ad ordinandum illam stragem Florentini sanguinis, unde aqua Arbie fluminis facta fuit rubea. *Nec certe sine causa; quia eram exul, et quia volebamus redire ad domum meam; nec sine causa me movissem cum aliis exulis et Gebellinis ad hoc faciendum.* Sed bene fui solus ubi determinabatur destructio Florentie, quia eam defensavi vultu aperto, quando dixi: *Qui plus dixerint verbum de destructione Florentie, sentient hunc ensen in viscibus. Et sic vultu aperto defensavit Florentiam.*

---

Certainly animosity towards the Uberti seems to have been deep-seated. In the peace of 1280 the most powerful Ghibelline families, including the Uberti, were excluded from the terms of the agreement. In 1283 Farinata and his wife Adaleta were posthumously condemned for heresy and 'le sue ossa, che dal 1264 riposavano nella chiesa di S. Reparata, vennero esumate e i beni pervenuti ai figli e ai nipoti vennero confiscati.' It is perhaps noteworthy that neither Dante nor the commentators, up to and including the time of Serravalle, make any reference to the judgement against Farinata and his wife. This is interesting in that Salomone da Lucca, *inquisitore dell'eretica pravità,* who pronounced the judgement, was also a Franciscan.

### 4.3.2. The Florentine Suicides

There are three major points of interest in the content of *Inferno* XIII.139-151. The first is the identity of the suicide who is speaking, the second concerns the conversion of Florence.
to Christianity and the fate of the statue of Mars, and the third is the reference to the
supposed destruction of Florence by Attila. Singleton notes that the identity of the suicide
is in doubt, with some of the early commentators unwilling to speculate as to his identity.\textsuperscript{124}
Bambaglioli, Lana, and the \textit{Anonimo fiorentino} identify him as Lotto degli Agli, a
Florentine judge who committed suicide after delivering an unjust verdict.\textsuperscript{125} Another
candidate is Rocco de' Mozzi, who hanged himself in despair at finding himself
bankrupt.\textsuperscript{126} Among recent commentators Robert Hollander also expresses hesitation in
identifying the suicide.\textsuperscript{127} However, the online commentary by Nicola Fosca, while noting
that the majority of the earlier commentators opt for Lotto degli Agli or Rocco de' Mozzi,
suggests that the identity of the suicide was of less significance to the poet than the fact
that he was a Florentine.\textsuperscript{128} Serravalle, once more in line with Benvenuto, opts for Lotto
degli Agli.\textsuperscript{129}

\textbf{Ferrara recollectae}\textsuperscript{130}


\textbf{Serravalle}\textsuperscript{131}

… iste fuit dominus Lottus de Alliis, qui fuit magnus doctor in iure civili. Quia in anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo septuagensimo iste dominus Lottus de Alliis dedit unam falsam sententiam in Florentia; et in illo anno, in domibus suis, cum propria corrigea suspendit semetipsum; ... Multi tamen in eodem anno se suspenderunt, saltem quinque, in civitate Florentie. Et forte hac de causa, quia plures fuerunt qui se suspenderunt, non curavit auctor ponere nomen alicuius; sed quia dictus dominus Lottus de Alliis fuit multum notabilis homo, puto ego quod de ipso intelligat auctor.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{124} Singleton, \textit{The Divine Comedy}, \textit{Inferno} 2, commentary, pp. 222-223.
\textsuperscript{125} Singleton, \textit{The Divine Comedy}, \textit{Inferno} 2, commentary, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{126} Singleton, \textit{The Divine Comedy}, \textit{Inferno} 2, commentary, pp. 222-223.
\textsuperscript{127} Robert Hollander, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 13.130-135: 'Various of the early commentators identify him as either Lotto degli Agli or Rocco de' Mozzi, ... yet some of these commentators also suggest that Dante left the name 'open ' because so many Florentines committed suicide in this way that he wanted to suggest the frequency of the phenomenon in his native city.'
\textsuperscript{128} Nicola Fosca, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 13.151: 'Tuttavia a Dante interessa probabilmente non tanto l'identità del suicida, ma piuttosto la sua cittadinanza. Anche in questo caso incombe la figura di Giuda, la cui prefigurazione veterotestamentaria è Achitofel, traditore e suicida; ora quest'ultimo, in manoscritti medievali, è raffigurato impiccato nella propria casa.'
\textsuperscript{129} Serravalle, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 13.139-151.
\textsuperscript{130} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 37r.
\textsuperscript{131} Serravalle, \textit{DDP}, \textit{Inferno} 13.139-151.
\textsuperscript{132} The text has 'uno met'. It is assumed that this is an extension of the use in Classical Latin of 'met' as a pronominal suffix to add emphasis. Here it would seem to imply 'in a single year many people hanged themselves out of desperation'.
\textsuperscript{133} The text reads \textit{otto}, but probably \textit{octo} is intended.
\end{flushright}
Both commentators seem to be reluctant to make a positive identification on account of there being so many suicides in Florence at that time. However, both somewhat cautiously opt for Lotto on account of his pre-eminence. In his final redaction Benvenuto's preferred solution is to recognize that the author's intention is to emphasize the number of suicides, but, if a candidate has to be selected, it should probably be the judge on account of his standing and the seriousness of his guilt.134

4.3.3. Christian Florence

The two commentators report in similar fashion the conversion of Florence to Christianity and the banishing of the statue of Mars to the entrance to the Ponte Vecchio. Both Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae and Serravalle note that the attribution of divine power to the statue is 'ereticum' (Benvenuto) or the 'opinio aliquorum, minus catholicorum' (Serravalle), and both make reference to Boccaccio's anecdote concerning the probable fate of youths who throw stones at the statue. Both commentators interpret the text as implying that, while Florence held Mars as her patron, by fortitude and virtue she was always successful in arms. However, when St. John the Baptist became her patron, the citizens of Florence took to worshipping the florin, on which was depicted the head of the Baptist, leading to Serravalle's comment that, while Florence adhered to Mars, she was always victorious, but, after Florence chose the Baptist, that is the florin, the citizens of Florence gave themselves over to 'lucris in Honestis et illicitis'. Although Serravalle provides a more polished commentary, in essence the two commentaries are very similar as reference to the two extracts, shown below, reveals.

**Ferrara recollectae**135

Sed Dantes dat unum motum mordax Florentie, idest, dum Florentia dilexit Martem et fortitudinem et virtutem et actum armorum, aquisivit multas vitorias. Sed dimisit et dedit se Iohanni, idest floreno in quo est sculptus florenus. Ita quod dedita est lucro.

**Serravalle** 136

Florentia, dum dilexit Martem et adhesit Marti, idest fortitudini et virtuti, ipsa semper fuit victrix, habuit semper victoriam, et triumphavit de inimicis suis; sed postquam cives Florentini dimiserunt Martem, idest fortitudinem et virtutes, et sequuntur Baptistan, idest florenum, in quo est sculptura Baptiste, idest avaritiam, et dediti sunt cives Florentini lucris in honestis et illicitis, non vadunt bene facta

134 Benvenuto, *DDP, Inferno* 13.143-145: 'Ad quod sciendum, quod non potest bene conjecturari, de quo autor loquitur hic, quia multi fuerunt florentini, qui suspendentur se laqueo eodem tempore, sicut quidam de Modiis nomine Ruchus, et quidam dominus Lothus de Aglis jurista, qui data una sententia falsa ivit domum, et statim se suspendit; et multi alii, quorum nomina non memini. Et crede, quod autor de industria sic fecerit, ut possent intelligi de unoquoque talium, licet forte possit intelligi potius de judice, quia erat maioris pretii, et gravius deliquit.'

135 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 37r.

136 Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 13.139-151.
Serravalle continues by offering in contrast his personal, but informed, opinion of the Florence of his own day, to which reference has already been made:

Quidquid sit, Dantes vult dicere, quod, nisi essent adhuc aliqui boni cives in Florentia, qui studerent virtutti et essent virtuosi, civitas cito deficeret; sed ita posset dici et debet dici de qualibet civitate. Dum sunt boni et virtuosi cives qui regunt, bene stat civitas; si boni cives deficiunt, [male stat civitas]. Et certe, esto quod in civitate Florentie sunt multi virtusi, pro certo etiam sunt ibi plurimi virtuosi; et si est terra in Ýtalia, ubi fiant eleemosine magne, et hospitalia optima, et ubi cives vadant, saltem tempore quadragesimae, ad predicationes ecclesiasticas, sunt in Florentia pro certo. Et ego scio quod sic est: nam per quattuor annos in civitate Florentie fui, steti, predicavi, et vidi mores Florentinorum, ita quod possum esse bonus testis de virtutibus istis. ... Quidquid sit, Florentia est optima civitas, in qua fiunt multa, multa; et sunt cives sapientes et prudentes, et bene sciunt se regere, et sciunt servire Deo et mundo, quando oporet; et in illa civitate optime honorantur valentes viri, et maxime boni predicatores.137

This is clearly in contrast to the opinion expressed by Dante in the *Commedia*. However, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Serravalle's observations. While he might not have wished to offend the susceptibilities of the Florentine delegates at Constance, there is clear evidence that the somewhat eulogistic nature of his comments above reflect the esteem in which he was held during his two sojourns in Florence. Serravalle only rarely intervenes in this way, with another notable exception being his defence of Pope Celestine V in *Inferno* III. There is a certain lack of modesty to be found since he would presumably have numbered himself among the 'boni predicatores', although it is clear that he was highly regarded as a preacher.138

Both Serravalle and Benvenuto in his Ferrara *recollectae* comment on the supposed destruction of Florence by Attila. Both commentators report in very similar terms the account of how the city fell due to the treachery of Attila, with both making reference to unnamed Florentine chroniclers. Singleton suggests that the doubts have arisen due to the confusion between Attila and Totila, king of the Ostrogoths (541-552), whose forces besieged Florence in 542.139 Singleton continues that Villani gives an account of the destruction of Florence by Totila which he dates to 440, 'thus hopelessly confounding the two', and concludes: 'There appears to be no truth in the tradition that Florence was destroyed, either by Attila or by Totila, and rebuilt by Charlemagne, as both Dante and

---

137 Ibidem.
138 Bellomo, p. 163.
Villani believed.\textsuperscript{140} The likely source is the \textit{Nuova cronica} of Giovanni Villani in that, with the exception of the attribution of the treachery to Attila rather than to Totila, the details of the supposed fall of Florence and its aftermath, to be found in the two commentaries, are virtually identical to the account given in Villani's chronicle.\textsuperscript{141}

\subsection*{4.3.4. The Meeting with Brunetto Latini}

In the third ring of the seventh circle Dante the pilgrim meets with the shade of Brunetto Latini, whom Dante had known while Brunetto was alive. A concise, but informative outline of Brunetto's career in public service has been provided by Singleton\textsuperscript{142} in which it is suggested that the commonly held belief that Brunetto was Dante's 'master' is due to a misunderstanding of verses \textit{Inferno} XV.82-85.\textsuperscript{143} However, more recently, Robert Hollander has commented that Dante has recognized his old 'teacher' and that 'the entire scene is staged as a reunion between teacher and former student',\textsuperscript{144} while Nicola Fosca summarizes suggestions that Brunetto's 'sin' was something other than his putative homosexuality.\textsuperscript{145} Richard Kay also supports the probability that there was an alternative explanation for Brunetto's 'sin',\textsuperscript{146} suggesting a political dimension.\textsuperscript{147} Among the earliest commentators there is a willingness to acknowledge Brunetto's accomplishments and there seems to be little appetite to accuse him directly of sodomy.\textsuperscript{148} However, as already

\begin{footnotes}
\item[140] Ibidem. For a comprehensive review of the sources behind this confusion see Thomas Maissen, 'Attila, Totila e Carlo Magno fra Dante, Villani, Boccaccio e Malispini. Per la genesi di due leggende erudite', \textit{Archivio Storico Italiano}, 152, (1994), 561-639.
\item[141] Villani, p. 96.
\item[142] Singleton, \textit{The Divine Comedy, Inferno} 2, commentary, pp. 255-258.
\item[143] Singleton, \textit{The Divine Comedy, Inferno} 2, commentary, p. 255.
\item[144] Robert Hollander, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 15.28-30.
\item[145] Nicola Fosca, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 15.26-30.
\item[147] Kay, 'The Sin(s) of Brunetto Latini', p. 19. Kay notes that it was Dante's belief, which he discusses in \textit{Monarchia}, that 'it was God's will that world government be exercised by the Roman emperor, not the pope'. Therefore, Kay suggests that 'Dante would consider Brunetto was advocating violence against nature in his most famous book, the \textit{Tresor}, because it rejects monarchy in favor of independent city-states, at least for Italy. Indeed, the primary purpose of the \textit{Tresor} was to provide instruction for the professional administrators of Italian communes, so Brunetto not only advocated autonomous city government but also supplied the means by which it might be realized.'
\item[148] For example: '... si trova un Fiorentino nominato ser Brunetto Latino, il quale fu valorosa e natural persona, come ne' suoi Tesori testimonianza si vede' (Jacopo Alighieri, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 15.31-33). 'In parte ista invenit auctor animam domini Burnetti Latinii de Florentia qui fuit optimus astrolagus, phylosophia et moralitate preclarus, et inter alia composuit quendam librum qui vocatur Thesaurus, in quo multa pulcra et utilia pertractantur' (Grazio Bambaglioli, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 15.31-32). Jacopo della Lana adds: '... Il qual ser Brunetto fu un tempo maestro di Dante, e fu si intimo domestico di lui, che li volle giudicar per astrologia, e predisse per la sua nativita com'elli doveva pervenire ad eccelso grado di scienzia' (Jacopo della Lana, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 15.31-33).
\end{footnotes}
intimated, it is in the final redaction of Benvenuto that a blunt condemnation of Brunetto is to be found. Benvenuto's hostility towards Brunetto appears to have been long-standing. In the Bologna *recollectae* Benvenuto notes of Brunetto: '... fuit intelligens, civilis & moralis, sed habuit magnas opiniones de semet ...' In addition, Benvenuto follows Boccaccio in recounting Brunetto's refusal to admit to an error in the performance of his duties as a notary. It has already been noted that Benvenuto in 1375, while still at Bologna, brought accusations of sodomy against colleagues which resulted in his (enforced) departure for Ferrara. This might well account for the more critical evaluation of Brunetto in the Ferrara *recollectae*, echoes of which are to be found in Serravalle's gloss on these verses.

---

**Ferrara *recollectae***


---

**Serravalle***

Nota etiam quod iste ser Brunectus fuit civis Florentinus, quem vivum Dantes vidit et novit; fuit famosus notarius, magne eloquentie et intelligentie; magnus moralis. Ultra istud vitium sodomie, in quo fuit involutus, etiam in hoc deficiebat, quod nimirum presumebat de se ipso. Semel commisit unum errorem in una carta, in uno instrumento, et fuit ita obstinatus, quod, antequam vellet confiteri se male fecisse, vel ex inadvertentia, vel alio modo se excusare, quod poterat bene facere, per prius se permisit banniri, et per e compuose una nobilissima opera intitulata *Tesorus pauperum*, opera generalissima intitulata al re de Francia. E D. pone qui questo ser Bruneto cum questi sodomiti.'

The commentary of Giovanni Boccaccio, *DDP, Inferno* 15.31-33 goes somewhat further: '… ma la sua principale facultà fu notaria, nella quale fu eccellente molto.' Boccaccio then recounts that Brunetto made an error and was accused of 'falsità', whereupon, not wishing to acknowledge his mistake, he departed in a huff for Paris, where Boccaccio believed he died. Boccaccio continues: 'E, per ciò che mostra l'autore il conoscesse per peccatore contro a natura, in questa parte il discrive, dove gli altri pone, che contro a natura bestialmente adoperaron.'

---

149 Benvenuto da Imola, *DDP, Inferno* 15.29-30: 'Siete voi qui ser Brunetto, quasi dicat: vos miramini de me quod juvenis et vivens vado per infernum ut fugiath vitia; sed certe non minus mirum est de vobis qui eratis tantum moralis et civilis, quod sitis mortuos in tam turpi crimine, et hinc ita coctus adustus? et adverte quod loquitur sibi in plurali propter reverentiam tamquam patri et maiori.'

150 Talice 1, p. 220.


152 Singleton comments somewhat differently concerning Brunetto's exile in France, which was prompted by his hearing of the defeat of the Guelfs at Montaperti as he was returning from an embassy to Alfonso X of Castile in 12601266. In these comments he is generally supported by Robert Hollander. Singleton also notes the comment by Villani on the death of Brunetto in 1294, which is entirely positive in describing Brunetto as a 'gran filosofo, e fu maestro in rettorica, … e maestro in digrossa re i Fiorentini, e farli scorti in bene parlare, e in sapere guidare e reggere la nostra repubblica secondo la politica' (Singleton, *The Divine Comedy, Inferno* 2, commentary, pp. 255-257). More recently there has been a renewed effort to establish the importance of Brunetto's writings on the Florentine elite and, in particular on Dante's writings. See Claudio Giunta, *L'Indice*, 05/2020, at https://www.salernoeditrice.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/dante-giunta.pdf, accessed 19/08/2020.

153 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 40v.

Serravalle's commentary on *Inferno* XV.61-69 is lengthy and opens with a denunciation of the people of Fiesole which is essentially a translation into Latin of verses 61-64. There follows a reference to the connection of Catiline with Fiesole, although it should be noted that the Roman historian Sallust is sparing in his references to Faesulae (Fiesole) in his history *Bellum Catilinae*. Serravalle continues with a condemnation of the influence of their descendants. In conclusion, Serravalle provides a long discourse on verse 67 in which he records at length the deception of the Pisans concerning their 'reward' offered to the people of Florence for their support against an invading army while the Pisans were on an expedition to conquer Majorca from the Saracens in 1117. In the Ferrara *recollectae* Benvenuto comments in similar adverse fashion on the deceit of the Pisans, covering essentially the same ground as Serravalle's account in providing an explanation for the 'blindness' of the Florentines.

In verses 108-114 Brunetto identifies Priscian, the Latin grammarian of the early sixth century, Francesco d'Accorso a thirteenth-century jurist of Bologna and the Florentine bishop Andrea de'Mozzi, for none of whom is there any independent evidence of their being homosexual. Benvenuto and Serravalle discuss the bishop's failings in very similar terms, describing him as 'simplex' and making similar references to the more lurid contents of his sermons. Benvenuto and Serravalle agree that Andrea's translation in 1295 was due to Pope Nicholas III. Since Pope Nicholas died in 1280, the glosses of Benvenuto and Serravalle on this point cannot be correct, and Boniface VIII,  

---

156 ... et quia ficus est fructus bonus et suavis, sorbes sunt aspere et dure, et amare; ideo dixit de Dante ficus, idest Dantes, bonus, iustus et prudens, non bene stat cum sorribus asperis et amaris, idest Fiexulanis.
157 See also Villani, 5.XXI, p. 155 and Giovanni Boccaccio, *DDP*, 15.67.
158 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 40r: 'Florentini, hoc videntes, ceperunt dicere: bene fuimus orbi, fidimus Pisanis vulpibus veteribus.' and Serravalle, *DDP*, *Inferno* 15. 61-69: 'Bene fuimus ceci, non videntes primo columnas istas, antequam portaremus eas huc Florentiam: omnes sumus ceci; Florentini sunt ceci.'
160 Ibidem. Hollander records that Andrea was made bishop of Florence in 1287 and was transferred to Vicenza by Boniface VIII in 1295 'for his riotous habits'.
161 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 41v.
162 Serravalle, *DDP*, *Inferno* 15.109-114: 'Florentini … fecerunt ipsum a domino papa Nicolao de Ursis transferri ad Vicentiam.'
elected in 1294, must be the pope who ordered Andrea's translation. This error remains uncorrected in Benvenuto's gloss on these verses in his final redaction.

The shade of Brunetto Latini has departed and, as Dante progresses, three shades come running towards him, having recognized Dante by his dress as being from Florence. These are identified in the verses of *Inferno* XVI.38-45 as Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi and Iacopo Rusticucci. Benvenuto and Serravalle comment at length and in similar fashion on the legend surrounding the marriage of Guido's grandmother Gualdrada to Guido Guerra IV. Their grandson, also named Guido Guerra, was a Guelf leader who was prominent in restoring the Guelf party to Florence after the defeat at Montaperti in 1260 and in guiding the party to victory at Benevento in 1266. Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, of the Adimari family was a contemporary and ally of Guido, and along with Guido he strongly advised the Florentines against the proposed expedition against Siena which resulted in the defeat at Montaperti. Benvenuto in the *Ferrara recollectae* and Serravalle comment in similar fashion on these two Guelfs of noble families, with both commentators expounding on Tegghiaio's obduracy in trying to convince his fellow citizens of the difficulties involved in the Sienese undertaking. Once again it is to be noted that no evidence is provided concerning their supposed homosexuality. It is only against the speaker, Iacopo Rusticucci, that such a charge is laid. It is shown below that both Benvenuto in the *Ferrara recollectae* and Serravalle follow the ancient commentators in assigning the alleged disagreeable nature of his wife as being the root cause of Iacopo's homosexuality.

**Ferrara recollectae**

Dominus Jacobus fuit popularis curialis et dilectus multum. Habuit, propter suum infortunium, uxorem sibi adeo molestam quod numquam dimictebat eum vivere. Tunc vovit se numquam tacturum feminam.

**Serravalle**

Iacobus de Rusticutii fuit civis florentinus et bene curialis, homo bone prudentie et bene dilectus ab omnibus civibus florentinis, et fuit homo boni consili. Habuit unam uxorem, nomine Beccham, brigosam, iracundam; semper tenebat

---

164 Ibidem.
165 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 42v.
166 Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 16.43-45.
167 However, in their commentaries on these verses Hollander (*Inferno* 16.28-42) and Fosca (*Inferno* 16.43-45) discuss an alternative explanation for Iacopo's presence in the third ring of the seventh circle. Fosca comments: 'Può anche darsi che Iacopo alluda alla tendenza della moglie ad avere rapporti anali (sempre improduttivi, comunque), pratica che era fatta rientrare nel sesso innaturale,' with Hollander adding that such an interpretation might owe its origin to remarks in the third redaction of Pietro Alighieri. Guglielmo Maramauro (*Inferno* 16.40-45) invites the reader to choose between three explanations for Iacopo's behaviour.
168 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 42v.
In verses 66-72 Iacopo enquires into the current political and social condition of Florence, and in verses 73-75 Dante gives his reply: 'La gente nuova e i sübiti guadagni / orgoglio e dismisura han generata, / Fiorenza, in te, sì che tu già ten piagni.' This is a familiar response with Dante seeming to blame the decline, as he sees it, in public values on the influx of outsiders into the city, a theme continued in Paradiso XVI. Both commentators provide similar glosses on these verses.

**Ferrara recollectae**

... dicit quod non est etc., quia nova gens venit Florentia[m] et facte sunt divitie nove. Dolet Dantes quod sit ipse et ali nobiles expulsi et loco ipsorum poniti sunt rustici et plebei et facti sunt de Prioribus. subiti: idest male aquisiti. rigoglio: arogantia, vilanesta et superfluitas.

**Serravalle**

Vult dicere quod non est virtus, nec curialitas, in Florentia, sicut solebat; et assignat causam, quia gens nova et ruralis venit Florentiam, et facte sunt divitie nove, subite idest de malo lucro uxorario. ... Hic dolet auctor quod ipse et nobiles viri, veri cives florentini, sint expulsi, et sint positi loco ipsorum rustici et plebei et facti sint de Prioribus.

---

4.3.5. Hypocrisy and the Frati Godenti

Dante and Virgil have reached the sixth bolgia of the eighth circle which is devoted to the punishment of those guilty of hypocrisy. Among such sinners Dante-pilgrim encounters the shades of two frati Godenti, Catalano di Guido di Ostia and Loderingo degli Andalò, who were among the founders of Ordo Militiae Beatae Mariae in 1261. Serravalle, in providing a long commentary on Inferno XXIII.73-81, repeats the error to be found in the Ferrara recollectae, namely in ascribing the foundation of the Order to the papacy of Boniface VIII, while in his final redaction Benvenuto correctly assigns the foundation of the Order to the papacy of Pope Urban IV, thereby providing further evidence that Serravalle was not acquainted, at least in detail, with Benvenuto's final redaction. Both Catalano and Loderingo had considerable experience in the role of podestà.

---

170 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 42v.
171 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 16.73-78.
172 The text reads 'sit'. However, it is immediately followed by a word that has been crossed out and might be an indication that the copyist has been distracted.
173 The text reads 'rigoglo', but in the context it should probably read 'orgoglio'.
174 Benvenuto, DDP, Inferno 23.103.
175 Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Inferno 2, commentary, p. 401.
after the Battle of Benevento, Pope Clement IV arranged for the two friars to share the office of *podestà* at Florence. This in itself was unusual since the office was normally exercised by a single person. Serravalle is somewhat ambivalent towards Catalano and Roderingo, on the one hand commenting 'reputabantur inter alios excellentiore', while, on the other hand, writing 'ita quod duo Fratres non fuerunt causa pacis populi Florentie, vel boni status, sed oppositum evenit.' The conduct of the two friars is discussed in fairly similar terms by the two commentators.

**Ferrara recollectae**


**Serravalle**

Istii duo Fratres fuerunt requisiti a Florentinis, quid deberent ire Florentiam ad morandum, ut sedarent partialitates magnas, quae erant in Florentia. Tunc enim temporis, ex quo rex Manfredus, filius Frederici secundi, qui erat rex Sicilie, prope Beneventum fuit victus et interfactus a Karolo primo, omnes Gebellini de Ytalia male veluerunt et in Tuscia maxime. Guelfi, qui diu fuerant expulsI de Florentia, voluerunt redire, et, mediante dicto Karolo rege, erant multum potentes; et quia iste partes erat in Florentia, florentini miserunt pro istis duobus Fratribus Gaudentibus, sive devotis Beate Marie Virginis, ut venirent Florentiam, et ibi morarentur ad sedandum partialitates pro bona pacem populi et pro bene statu civitatis. Interdum isti venerunt Florentiam, steterunt ibi; Guelfi intraverunt Florentiam, et cum peximis provisionibus istorum Fratrum Gaudentium, scilicet Cathellani et Loderingi, Gebellini fuerunt expulsi de Florentia.

Serravalle in his gloss on verses 103-108 provides further adverse comment consistent with the previous denunciation.

---

176 Ibidem.
177 Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 23.73-81.
178 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 54r.
179 Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 23.73-81.
180 Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 23.103-108: ‘Istii duo Fratres reputabantur boni, et unus eorum, antequam intraret talem Religionem, erat Gebellinus, et alter Guelfus. Credebatur quod isti pacificarent populum Florentie, divisum per partes guelfam et gebellinam; et ipsi non fuerunt causa pacis, ymo divisionis maxime, quia Guelfi intraverunt Florentiam et expulerunt omnes Gebellinos.’ However, in defence of the two friars, Singleton notes: ‘... Pope Clement IV arranged for Catalano and Loderingo to share the office of *podestà* in Florence. ... Clement's actual purpose, however, was to further the interests of the Florentine Guelphs, while ridiciling himself of the Ghibellines who remained in Florence with an army of German mercenaries and constituted a threat to his power. Since Catalano and Loderingo owed absolute obedience to the pope by virtue of their having taken religious orders, their previous political affiliations meant very little; in practice they were controlled by the pope', *(The Divine Comedy, Inferno 2, commentary, p. 401).*
4.3.6. Florence and Pistoia

In the seventh bolgia of the eighth circle Dante-pilgrim encounters the shade of the violent and sacrilegious thief Vanni Fucci. The verses of *Inferno* XXIV.142-151 concern the interference of Florence in the affairs of Pistoia as seen through the eyes of Vanni.\(^{181}\) Vanni was the illegitimate son of Guelfuccio di Gerar detto de' Lazzari, of a noble family of Pistoia, and a violent partisan of the Neri.\(^{182}\) Both commentators discuss the fate of Pistoia with reference to the struggle between the Bianchi and Neri parties in Florence. Pistoia, which remained under the government of the Bianchi after the Neri had taken control of Florence in the events following the entry into Florence of Charles de Valois on All Saints Day in 1301, was besieged by a coalition led by the Neri of Florence and eventually captured on April 10 1306.\(^{183}\) Both commentators make reference to Sallust (*Bellum Catilinae* I.VII, 1-3) on the defeat of Catiline, as justification for the name *Campo Piceno*. In the Ferrara *recollectae* Benvenuto provides only the briefest of details of these events, including a simple acknowledgement of Sallust.\(^{184}\) On the other hand Serravalle provides a long, and somewhat repetitious account of the same events, including a similar reference to Sallust.\(^{185}\) Benvenuto's gloss is worthy of further consideration.


The word 'nubili' is totally inappropriate in this context and almost certainly 'nuvoli' was originally intended. There are other examples of such errors in the *recollectae* which are not so obvious, but probably reflect the conditions under which the copyist was working. The earliest references to Sallust, similarly a basic acknowledgement, in this context appear to be in the second redaction of Pietro Alighieri,\(^{186}\) followed by a similar reference in his third redaction,\(^{187}\) and a brief reference in the commentary of Gugliemo Maramauro.\(^{188}\) The likely influence of Pietro's redactions on Benvenuto has already been noted.

\(^{182}\) Singleton, *The Divine Comedy, Inferno* 2, commentary, p. 420.
\(^{184}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 56r.
\(^{185}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 24.142-151.
4.3.7. The Five Thieves

As Dante-pilgrim continues along the seventh bolgia he encounters the shades of five thieves who are introduced in the preliminary note to Serravalle's commentary on *Inferno* XXV:


Little is known about these five men, other than that they were all from noble families of Florence.190 The descriptions of their punishments seem to prepare the reader for Dante's bitter and ironic opening verses to canto XXVI: 'Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' si grande / che per mare e per terra batti l'ali / e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande! / Tra li ladron trovai cinque cotali / tuoi cittadini onde mi ven vergogna, / e tu in grande orranza non ne sali.' As Fosca notes:191 'I cinque Fiorentini incontrati nella bolgia dei ladri erano tutti di elevata condizione sociale (cotai): guelfi e ghibellini, il che attesta che per Dante lo sfascio di Firenze non è questione di parti.' Neither Benvenuto in the Ferrara *recollectae* nor Serravalle develop this theme beyond routine descriptions of the individuals and the punishments they are undergoing. Both commentators note that Dante is speaking ironically when, at the beginning of canto XXVI, he suggests that the fate of the five thieves should be a cause for rejoicing among the citizens of Florence. From a comparison of the glosses to *Inferno* XXVI.1-3, it may readily be seen that the two commentators make no serious attempt to explore Dante's underlying convictions evoked by these powerful verses.

---

190 See, for example, Robert Hollander, *DDP, Inferno* 25.43, 25.68, 25.82-90 and 25.148.
191 Nicola Fosca, *DDP, Inferno* 26.4-6.
192 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 58r.

4.3.8. The Sowers of Schism

In the ninth bolgia of the eighth circle, which is devoted to the sowers of discord and schism, Dante encounters the spirit of the Florentine Mosca dei Lamberti. Hollander notes that Mosca's career was not without merit, but, as the instigator of the murder of Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti, Mosca could be seen to be the principal cause of the events leading to the Guelf-Ghibelline rivalry in Florence. Benvenuto's and Serravalle's commentary on the verses of *Inferno* 28.103-108 are mainly devoted to the rather commonplace events leading to Buondelmonte's jilting of a girl of the Amidei family and marrying instead a girl from the Donati family, thereby provoking the murder of Buondelmonte by Mosca and others.

Ferrara *recollectae*¹⁹⁵


Serravalle¹⁹⁶


---

¹⁹⁵ Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 64r.
¹⁹⁷ ‘viduam’ in the text.
¹⁹⁸ ‘servavoram’ in the text.
Trucidetur iste iuvenis, qui intulit nobis hanc verecundiam.

Benvenuto's accounts across his three redactions are consistent and represent the family details concerning the two girls which are generally accepted, with these commentaries providing a résumé of the account to be found in the Nuova cronica of Giovanni Villani.\textsuperscript{199} Serravalle's account clearly has much in common with that to be found in the Ferrara recollectae. However, he introduces an additional detail, namely that Buondelmonte had turned down a girl from the Uberti family prior to agreeing to marry the girl from the Amidei family. Although it makes little difference since both the Amidei and the Uberti were Ghibellines, after the marriage to a member of the Guelf Donati family, Benvenuto attributes the family dishonour to the Amidei family with Serravalle attributing it to the Uberti. While Villani provides much more detail, the commentators confirm that the murder of Buondelmonte provided the catalyst for the struggles between Ghibellines and Guelfs in Florence: 'Mors istius fuit magna causa totius scismaticis inter Gelfos et Gebelinos' (Ferrara recollectae).\textsuperscript{200} and 'Mors istius iuvenis fuit magna causa magni scysmatis inter Gebellinos et Guelfos' (Serravalle)\textsuperscript{201} Both commentators, in discussing the part played in the murder by Mosca de' Lamberti, note the alternative interpretation of verse 105, 'si che 'l sangue facea la faccia sozza', with Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae commenting: \textsuperscript{202} 'Nam sanguis quem fecit effundi fuit ille qui offuscavit famam et gloriam suam. Nam prius erat apreciatus miles et iam dictum est alicquid de ipso', \textsuperscript{203} and Serravalle concurring: \textsuperscript{204} 'idest turpem: nam sanguis, quem fecit effundit, fuit ille, qui obscuravit sibi famam et gloriam suam, quia prius erat appretiatus miles, et iam omnes abominantur ipsum'.

4.3.9. Florentine Women

Serravalle opens his commentary on Purgatorio XXIII.88-96\textsuperscript{205} with a translation into Latin of verses 88-93, which in effect establishes the virtue of Forese's widow Nella. Her chastity and general behaviour stand out in contrast to the perceived lax comportment of the general female population of Florence: \textsuperscript{206} 'Quasi dicens: In Florentia sunt pauce vidue

\textsuperscript{199} Villani, pp. 183-184.
\textsuperscript{200} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 64r.
\textsuperscript{201} Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.103-108.
\textsuperscript{202} MS, florence BML Ashburnham 839, fol. 64r.
\textsuperscript{203} 'ipo' in the text.
\textsuperscript{204} Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.103-108.
\textsuperscript{205} Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 23.88-96.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibidem.
bone et mulieres ...' Dante continues by commenting on the apparent 'similarity' in behaviour of the Florentine women to that of the remnants of the Saracen women who were pushed into the Barbagia, a mountainous region of Sardinia, after the reconquest of the island. Benvenuto in the Ferrara recomlectae\(^207\) and Serravalle\(^208\) comment in similar terms. It is worth noting that, Serravalle, in line with his vocation and echoing the similar sentiments expressed by Dante in verses 98-102, comments on the lack of leadership of both the spiritual and temporal authorities in addressing the 'immodest' behaviour of some of the women of Florence.\(^209\)

4.3.10. The Plant of the Devil

In the heaven of Venus Dante-pilgrim encounters the spirit of the Provençal troubadour Folquet de Marseille who in verses 112-115 draws the pilgrim to the spirit of Rahab. In his commentary on Paradiso IX.109-111 Serravalle in a long note discusses the part played by Rahab in the capture of Jericho. A similar account is to be found in the Ferrara recomlectae of Benvenuto.\(^210\) However, Serravalle alone, somewhat tenuously, links Rahab to Florence,\(^211\) continuing with a denunciation of the malign effects of the florin on the activities of the Church, perhaps suggestive of his appetite for reform.\(^212\) Both commentators, in brief notes towards the end of their commentaries on Paradiso IX, return to the description of Florence as 'the plant of the Devil'.

Ferrara recomlectae\(^213\)

la tua cita: scilicet Florentia que est planta diaboli; ille, qui vertit primo terga Deo, fuit angelus Lucifer. Pianta: quia propter invidiam suam fuit danatus mundus; ideo bene plangitur, quasi dicat: civitas tua est illa que cudit florenos qui tenent

Serravalle\(^214\)

Tua civitas, que illius est planta, qui prius vertit terga suo Factori, idest Luciferi, qui prius se rebellavit suo Factori, scilicet Deo, et cuius est invidia tantum planta (idest Florentia est planta invidie), producit, scilicet Florentia, et expandit maledictum florem,
Bonefacium ad hoc et propter hoc sequitur quod non vacatur scripture sancte, sed decretalibus.

idest florenos, qui, scilicet florenus, deviavit, idest extra viam posuit, oves et agnos, ex eo quia fecit lupum de pastore propter istum, scilicet florenum. Evangelium et doctores magni, sicut sunt Hieronimus, Augustinus, libri eorum, et Sacra Scriptura, sunt derelicti, et solum ad Decretales scilicet actenditur, sive in decretalibus studetur, ita quod appareat suis vivagnis (vivagnia, Florentie, extremitates pannorum vocantur): idest, de operibus ipsorum, qui student solum Decretales, appareat quod qualiter et quare student.

In essence, both Benvenuto and Serravalle are echoing the poet's condemnation of the perceived negative features of the florin, namely its part in corrupting the senior clergy which, in turn, leads to the departure from Scripture and the interpretations of the great theologians of antiquity, and instead places a reliance on a study of the Decretals. However, as might have been expected from a Franciscan, who, besides being a bishop, had also spent some years teaching aspects of theology, Serravalle's account elaborates considerably on the simple facts stated in the recollectae.215 Benvenuto's comments reflect a layman's approach, while Serravalle is, of course, demonstrating the insight of a distinguished ecclesiastical scholar. Among the early commentators Serravalle's reflections represent a unique viewpoint. Only Guido da Pisa provides a commentary written from the point of view of an ecclesiastic and his commentary is limited to Inferno only.

Although Florence was strongly represented at the Council of Constance, there is no substantial evidence that the proceedings of the Council had any impact on Serravalle's commentary. Serravalle clearly felt an affinity with the city, but this was probably driven by his successful tenures at Santa Croce some years earlier. It has been noted above that Serravalle's Comentum was the only full commentary to the Commedia written by an ecclesiastical scholar. Therefore, in matters relating to the Church his insight is unique and valuable. However, in relation to Florence the link between Serravalle's commentary and the Ferrara recollectae is undeniable. Benvenuto drew on earlier commentaries, such as Pietro's redactions, and it is likely that the Nuova cronica of Giovanni Villani provided the source for the description of some of the major historical events. Although lengthy passages, particularly from Serravalle's commentary, have

215 Serravalle's condemnation of reliance on Canon Law to the exclusion of the writings of such luminaries as Augustine is reminiscent of Dante's own concerns expressed in Letter XI, the letter to the Italian cardinals. See Honess, Dante Alighieri Four Political Letters, pp. 92-93.
needed to be quoted to illustrate the point, Serravalle often embeds almost identical wording to that of Benvenuto at some point in his glosses to particular verses. The more lengthy passages often include anecdotes particular to Serravalle and, hence, are not to be found in the recollectae. In trying to assess the amount by which Serravalle modified the glosses to be found in the Ashburnham manuscript, it has to be remembered that there is evidence to suggest that he had available to him a superior copy.

4.4. The Cacciaguida Cantos

Cantos XV-XVII are devoted to the meeting in the heaven of Mars of Dante-pilgrim with his ancestor Cacciaguida, about whom nothing is known other than what can be gleaned from the references to the crusader's life in this canto.216 The main theme of canto XV is the distinction to be drawn between the idealized behaviour of the citizenry of the Florence of Cacciaguida's lifetime when compared with the alleged dissolute behaviour of the citizens of Dante's own era. Both Claire Honess217 and Catherine Keen218 draw attention to the fact that Dante illustrates his condemnation of contemporary Florence almost exclusively with reference to the supposed differences in the social behaviour of the female 'citizens' of the two eras. Honess emphasizes that such 'citizens', on a political level, would not have enjoyed the same advantages as their male counterparts.219 However, there is an advantage to be gained in the use of female figures to illustrate the decline of Florence's society,220 in that, if Dante had used, as examples of good behaviour in the Cacciaguida era and examples of bad behaviour in the Florence of 1300, the careers of prominent male Florentines, it would have been impossible to separate the individual from his achievements, good or bad.221 Hence, by avoiding the likelihood of narrow political inferences being drawn, Dante's choice of female exemplars reveals 'far more a decline in morals than the failure of one party or another in the government of the city.'222 The choice of virtuous women and the examples of appropriate behaviour described by Honess conform to the idealized standard of feminine behaviour extolled by Cacciaguida.

In commenting on verses 97-99 Serravalle concentrates on a description of the

---

217 Honess, *From Florence to the Heavenly City*, p.45.
218 Keen, *Dante and the City*, pp. 207-213.
219 Honess, *From Florence to the Heavenly City*, p.45.
221 Honess, Feminine Virtues and Florentine Vices, p. 112.
222 Ibidem.
Florence of Cacciaguida's time with particular emphasis on the church of S. Stefano, concluding his gloss with the observation that, although Florence was then smaller, her citizens lived in greater security, and ends with the comment: "Tunc cives vivebant sobrie et pudice, fugiebant superfluitates, tam homines quam mulieres." Robert Hollander draws attention to the privileged position of Benvenuto concerning the church of S. Stefano, in that it was in that church that he listened to Boccaccio's lectures on the *Commedia*. Benvenuto, in commenting on the state of disrepair of the church does allude to his hearing Boccaccio lecture on the *Commedia*. However, this comment does not occur in the Ferrara *recollectae*, nor in Serravalle's gloss to these verses.

In verses 100-102 Dante, through the words of Cacciaguida, opens a denunciation of the failings of the Florentine women of his own time compared with the virtuous behaviour of the women of Cacciaguida's era, stressing that the women of the present adorn themselves more than is decent and beyond their station. The content of verses 103-105 seems to represent a tirade which 'turns toward marriage contracts, with their two related ills, the lowering age at which fathers feel forced to “sell” their daughters to a man and the rising cost of doing so … The two details manage to make the Florentine institution of marriage sound more like sexual bondage than matrimony.' Serravalle provides substantial detail, whereas Benvenuto's contribution in the Ferrara *recollectae* is very brief.

Dante-author continues, through Cacciaguida, to castigate the citizens of the Florence of his own era for their lack of moderation and extravagant behaviour, leading to the suggestion that in Cacciguida's time a Cianghella ('mulier florentina valde vana ... fuit enim lasciva') or a Lapo Salterello ('... iudex tempore Dantis, qui fecit multas baractarias et multum fuit adversarius auctori'), would have been as great a marvel as those two paragons of Roman virtue, Cincinnatus and Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi, would have been in Dante-author's own lifetime. These verses are treated in very similar terms by Benvenuto, in somewhat less detail in the Ferrara *recollectae*, and by Serravalle. The closing verses of the canto deal with Cacciaguida's participation in the disastrous second
crusade which ended with his death at the hands of the Saracens. Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae provides only the briefest detail. However, Serravalle is much more judgemental:

Retro ipsum, idest secutus sum ipsum; ivi contra iniquitatem illius legis, scilicet Sarracenorun, cuius, scilicet legis, populus usurpat, propter culpam pastorum, scilicet Ecclesie, vestram iustitiam, idest Terram Sanctam, que iuste deberet esse nostra; sed non est nostra propter defectum pastorum, et maxime Pape, qui faciebat guerram cum Christianis, et negligebat guerram cum Sarracenis. 232

This condemnation by Serravalle seems to be based on the failure of Christendom to retake the Holy Land from the Saracens. Although the reference to the failures of the clergy might have been driven by Serravalle's understanding of the need for reform of the Church, it is more likely that he was exasperated by the numerous examples of the Church being involved in military actions which seemed to be motivated by considerations of temporal politics rather than spiritual needs. In addition, it should be remembered that Serravalle himself had undertaken a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1398. As he recounts in his commentary to Inferno XXXIV.115-117, he was much moved by his visits to the Holy Sites and by his celebration of the Mass at the tomb of Christ.

In Paradiso XVI Dante-author considers the decline of Florence from another perspective in which he passes from 'the private detail of the domestic scene to the consideration of families as aggregates of their individual members.'233 Honess sums up the implications of this transition very succinctly:

When Cacciaguida goes on, in canto XVI, to discuss the city's decline from a different perspective, that of the passing of its noble families, he returns to a more conventional point of view, identifying the families by their male heads, and presenting history primarily as the story of important men. Yet the image of the Florentine women put forward in Paradiso XV serves as a very clear illustration that, for the poet, both men and women function as citizens, and that both are able to function as examples, conveying a fundamental lesson about the relationship between individual and community.234

The canto is mainly devoted to a description in the decline of the fortunes, or even total eclipse, of families that were of importance in Cacciaguida's Florence, many of which the Florentine Secondo Popolo of the 1290s classified as 'magnates' and excluded from government participation, punishing the violence with which they manifested their aristocratic sense of superiority and of honour in vendetta and faction-politics. Dante's disapproval of this development is clear from his disparaging comments on Giano della

---

232 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 15.142-144.
233 Keen, Dante and the City, p. 213.
234 Honess, From Florence to the Heavenly City, p.51.
Bella, chief formulator of the 1293 anti-magnate Ordinances, to be found in Paradiso XVI.127-132.235

In the commentaries on Paradiso XVI.46-48 the spirit of Cacciaguida makes observations concerning the boundaries and citizen numbers applicable to the city of Florence of his time. Benvenuto and Serravalle acknowledge that the extent of Florence, for the purposes of the discussion, is limited to between 'Marte e 'l Batista'. There is little basic difference between the facts to be found in the brief account of the Ferrara recollectae236 and Serravalle's gloss.237 However, Serravalle, anticipating his gloss on verses 58-63, adds an observation concerning the increase of the citizen population: '… rurales homines de comitatu, facti sunt cives; et hoc propter discordiam pastorum Ecclesie cum Imperatore, qui pastores Ecclesie deberent esse mater Imperii et sunt noverca.'238 While Benvenuto's comments on verses 58-63 are very brief,239 Serravalle takes the opportunity to leave the reader in no doubt as to the significance of 'noverca'.240 Both commentators agree that the citizen population of Florence in Cacciaguida's time was about one fifth of the present citizen population, i.e. 6000-8000 citizens.241 Of further interest is that Benvenuto, as a gloss on mio tempo, confirms his opinion that this relates to 1154.242

Both commentators, as may be seen from the extracts below, write briefly in similar fashion on the verses of Paradiso XVI.49-51.

**Ferrara recollectae**243  
_Ma:_ dicit quod Florentia est facta plena quia expulsi sunt nobiles propter discordias et repleta [stat] rusticis di campi: de uno rure sic dicto, _di Certaldo:_ castrum in Valdelsa et

**Serravalle**244  
Sed civilitas, que nunc est mixta de Campis, Certaldis et de Fyghinis (Campi est unum rus, una villa, in comitatu Florentie; Certaldum est castrum, etiam in comitatu

---

235 Keen, _Dante and the City_, p. 215.
236 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 151r.
238 Ibidem.
239 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 151r.
240 Serravalle, _DDP, Paradiso_ 16.58-63: 'Vult dicere auctor in effectu, quod si gens illa, que tralignat, idest degenerat, scilicet pastores Ecclesie, qui degenerant a Sanctis Patribus qui fuerunt boni, non fuisset in discordia cum Imperatore, cuius pastores Ecclesie debent esse mater et ipsi sunt noverca, Florentia non esset ita divisa.'
241 Singleton, _The Divine Comedy, Paradiso 2, Commentary_, p. 271: 'According to Casini-Barbi, who cites Villani (VIII,39) as his evidence, in 1300 Florence had a total population of more than 30,000 citizens, perhaps around 40,000, and those subject to military service (all men from the age of eighteen to sixty) must have been approximately 10,000. Therefore in the time of Cacciaguida, the population would have been between 6,000 and 8,000 citizens, and those subject to military service would have been approximately 2,000.'
242 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 151r.
243 Ibidem.
244 Serravalle, _DDP, Paradiso_ 16.49-51.
The commentaries on *Paradiso* XVI.58-63 and XVI.64-66 are mainly devoted to a straightforward elaboration of the facts with the comments in Benvenuto's Ferrara *recollectae* being particularly brief. However, Serravalle adds comments which are of interest. In his gloss on verses 58-63, Serravalle sums up the problem, namely that the Guelfs in expelling the Ghibellines, have admitted into Florence people from outside of the city itself. Although the glosses on verses 64-66 cover similar ground, Serravalle begins his commentary on these verses with the negative judgement: '... nobiliores sunt expulsi de Florentia propter rusticos advenientes, et propter divisiones civitatis.' Serravalle now introduces his understanding as to the cause of the problem: 'Que intervenerunt ex defectu pastorum Ecclesie, maxime Bonifacii octavi, qui misit Karolum Sineterra, sub nomine pacificandi civitatem, et ipse divisit civitatem amplius quam erat: unde comites perdiderunt Montem Murlum, qui comites fuerunt expulsi et perdiderunt illud castrum ...' It is difficult to know why Serravalle blames the Church in this fashion. Pope Boniface can hardly be blamed for events which took place much earlier. In addition, Charles de Valois came to Florence in 1301, while the Conti Guidi were forced to sell their castle Montemurlo to Florence in 1254 because they were unable to hold it against Pistoia. It could be suggested that these and similar comments, reflecting negatively on the conduct of the Church hierarchy, are consistent with Serravalle's very public position concerning reform of the Church.

The verses of *Paradiso* XVI.88-139 represent a catalogue of the once great families of Florence. Both commentators, in writing on *Paradiso* XVI.109-111, identify

---

245 Serravalle, *DDP, Paradiso* 16.58-63: 'Quia Papa (presumably Pope Innocent IV is intended) acceptit partem guelfam, Imperator reputatur gebellinus: et sic Guelfi, expellentes Gebelinos, receperunt multos rusticos de comitatu, ut replerent civitatem loco illorum expulsorum.'


247 Ibidem.


249 Robert Hollander, *DDP, Paradiso* 16.88-139. Such literary catalogues are usually little more than a statement of names and basic attributes of the protagonists, such as the verses describing the assembly of the Argonauts at the beginning of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius. The best known is the catalogue of ships in Homer's *Iliad* II, justly described by Hollander as 'the first and possibly best of
the same two families as being undone by their pride, namely the Uberti and the Lamberti, with most of the emphasis being on the Lamberti. Benvenuto describes the Lamberti in the following terms: 'Isti fuerunt Lamberti qui maiores omnibus stirpibus fuerunt et maiora fecerunt', 250 while Serravalle writes in confirming the pre-eminence of the Lamberti: 'Nam illa domus, que portabat pallas de auro, gubernabat Florentiam in omnibus suis factis magnis'. 251 Of interest is Serravalle's comment on the influence of the Lamberti in ecclesiastical appointments in Florence: 'Semper, quando episcopatus Florentie vacabat, ipsi promovebant successorem episcopum, a quo recipiebant et habebant magnas pecunias, et sic fiebant divites, ita quod isti erant promotores episcopi et ecclesie episcopalis'. 252 This viewpoint is confirmed more succinctly and in somewhat different language by Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae: 'Quandocumque vacabat episcopatus, ipsi erant dispensatores episcopatus et tunc gaudebant et stabant pingues recipiendo praebendas.' 253

In Paradiso XVI.140-141 Cacciaguida inveighs against Buondelmonte for jilting a girl of the family of the Amidei on his wedding day in 1215 for a daughter of the Donati. 254 Benvenuto limits himself to: 'Autor conqueritur de isto iuvene qui renuntiavit prime sponte ad consilium illius matris.' 255 Serravalle writes in similar fashion: '… quantum male fugisti nuptias suas …', with the only direct reference to Florence being '… unde Florentia ex tunc nunquam habuit bonum statum …' 256 However, some consideration should be given to the identification of 'La casa' at the beginning of verse 136. This is usually taken to be a reference to the Amidei family and such identification leads naturally to the commonly accepted account of the causes of the Buondelmonte murder. However, some of the early commentators consider it to be a reference to the Uberti family, 257 among these is Serravalle who in effect contradicts Benvenuto's identification. 258 Serravalle, unlike Benvenuto whose comments in the recollectae are very brief, gives a full account

---

250 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 152v.
251 Ibidem.
252 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 152v.
253 Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Paradiso 2, Commentary, p. 283. The circumstances concerning the murder of Buondelmonte have already been discussed in the context of the part played by Mosca dei Lamberti, described in Inferno XXVIII.103-108.
254 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 152r.
255 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 16.140-141.
257 This is named as 'de Amideis' in the recollectae (Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 152r), while Serravalle comments: 'auctor loquitur de domo [de] Bondelmontibus, quia ab illo iuvene, qui promiserat desparsire illum de domo de Ubertinis, recognita fuit inuria, et ideo fuit interfectus luste, saltem quantum ad mundum.' (Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 16.136-139).
of the events leading to the murder which ought to be a repetition of his gloss to *Inferno* XXVIII.103-108. Serravalle describes how Buondelmonte was accosted by a woman of the Amidei family who, wishing to promote the availability of her daughter 'quam fecit quasi spoliatam in una camera stare solam in una camisia subtilissima' described the rival as 'nigra, turpis et male formata'. Since both the Uberti and the Amidei belonged to the Ghibelline faction, the part played by Guelf/Ghibelline rivalry, provoked by the murder and emphasized in the commentaries on *Inferno* XXVIII.103-108, no longer seems applicable. Why Serravalle adopted a different version of events can only be a matter of speculation. However, according to the *Cronica* of Pseudo Brunetto Latini, the origin of the marriage contract was the settlement of a feud which had resulted from a brawl between Buondelmonte and Oddo Arrighi. The settlement involved Buondelmonte's agreeing to marry the daughter of Lambertuccio de'Amidei. By breaking the marriage contract, Buondelmonte not only 'insulted' Arrighi, but, also, separately the Amidei and their supporters. There might have been a punitive element, in that the jilted girl might have had little to recommend her as a suitable wife for a Florentine noble. This could be at the back of a jibe attributed to Gualdrada, the wife of Foresi Donati in which she suggested that Buondelmonte, seemingly to take a wife out of fear of the Uberti and Fifanti, would be forever disgraced. The text of the Ferrara recollectae, which glosses verses 140 to the end of the canto is reproduced below, along with the salient points from Serravalle's more lengthy contributions.

**Ferrara recollectae**

_O Buondelmonte:_ Autor conqueritur de isto iuvene qui renuntiavit prime sponte ad consilium illius matris.

_Se Gio:_ idest si numquam i Buondelmonti venissent _ad Ema:_ flumen prope Florentiam, idest si ibi fuisses submersus; vel non venisset ulterior;

Quia Florentie, quando facta est christiana,

---

**Serravalle**

O Bondelmontes ... quantum male fugisti nuptias suas, idest illius puelle de Ubertainis, propter alterius malas confortationes ... idest matris illius puelle de Amydeis, que male suasit isti Bondelmonti, ut spreta illa puella de Ubertainis, desponsaret filiam suam.

Multi essent leti, qui nunc sunt tristes ... si Deus concessisset tibi ad emam, vel duxisset te ad emam.

sed oportet facere sacra Marti, scilicet ille


261 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 152r.

Con queste tanto che 'l giglio: Scis quod quando hostes cap[tr]aversent signum hostium, suspenderunt cum capite transverso; sed hoc nondum erat. Vermiglio: notatur quod ferebant olim lilium album sed illi qui remanserunt converterunt in rubeum.

Nota quod lilium ... solebat esse album, et stare in vexillo rectum; modo stat per transversum, secundum tamen quod portatur asta. In guerra, que facta fuit circum Faventiam per Imperatorem, Imperatore petente vexillum a Florentinis, una pars ivit cum lilio albo, sicut solebat esse; alia, in despectum istorum primum euntium, fecerunt depingi liliun rubeum: et sic duravit hucusque et durat. Vult dicere auctor, quod ita habuit pro malo, ille dyabolus qui stabet in illo ydolo Martis, quod Florentia fieret christiana, quod semper procuravit discordias, et auxit illas, et conservavit illas; ideo illa civitas semper est divisa, etc.'

The commentaries on Paradiso 16.142-144 suggest how much better it would have been for the well-being of the future citizens of Florence if Buondelmonte had drowned in the river Ema, with both commentators implying that the intention of Dante-author was to emphasize that it would have been even better if the family of Buondelmonte had never left the countryside to come to the city in the first place. In the glosses on verses 145-147, the commentators, briefly in Benvenuto's case, discuss the significance of the mutilated statue of Mars which guarded the entrance to the Ponte Vecchio. Both commentators consider the history of the change of the colour of the lily in the glosses on verses 151-154, but in somewhat different terms, with Serravalle directly identifying the people with Florence.263

Canto XVII is essentially about Cacciaguida's predictions concerning Dante's life. This would seem to be at odds with Inferno X.130-132 and XV.88-90 where it is indicated that Beatrice will be the one to reveal to Dante the course of his future life.264 A solution has been proposed by Marguerite Mills Chiarenza,265 who argues that, just as

---

263 Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Paradiso 2, Commentary, p. 284: 'In 1251, after the expulsion of the Ghibellines, the Guelphs altered the Florentine standard from a white lily in a red field to a red lily in a white field. The Ghibellines kept the old colours.'
Aeneas is told that the Sybil will tell him of the future of Rome (Aeneid 3.458-460) but in fact she leads him to his father, Anchises, who actually reveals these secrets to him (Aeneid 6.756-886), so it is Beatrice who leads Dante-pilgrim to his ancestor and it is Cacciaguida who provides the prophecy concerning Dante's future.266

In verses 46-49 Cacciaguida states that Dante-author will depart from Florence in a manner similar to the departure of Hippolytus from Athens, banished by his father Theseus after a false accusation by his stepmother Phaedra, the key point being that Hippolytus owed his death to his father and to a promise that could not be broken.267 Chiarenza links the two events to passages in the Polycraticus of John of Salisbury268 and the De officiis of Cicero269 where these events are used to illustrate the thesis that 'a promise should not be kept when time has so altered the situation that what was intended to be beneficial may become harmful'.270 Chiarenza comments:271 'Dante certainly knew both texts. His familiarity with the writings of John of Salisbury is demonstrated in many places in his works272 and, as for the passage in the De officiis, he alludes directly to it in Paradiso V.64-72.' Singleton considers that Dante's inspiration for these verses is to be found in Ovid's Metamorphoses XV, 497-505.273 However, in the Bologna recollectae Benvenuto ascribes the source of the legend to the tragedians,274 and in his final redaction to a tragedy of Seneca.275 Although the accounts of both commentators cover similar ground, Serravalle does not acknowledge any source for the legend in his commentary. Nevertheless, as may be readily seen, Serravalle's account has much in common with that to be found in Benvenuto's Ferrara recollectae.

266 Chiarenza, p. 134.
267 Chiarenza, p. 138.
269 Cicero, De officis III.xxv, tr. Walter Miller (London and New York: William Heinemann and The Macmillan Co., 1913), p. 370: 'Sol Phaëthonti, ut redeamus ad fabulas, facturum se esse dixit, quicquid optasset; optavit, ut in currum patris tolleretur; sublatus est. Atque is, ante quam constitit, ictu fulminis deflagravit. Quanto melius fuerat in hoc promissum patris non esse servatum! Quid, quod Theseus exegit promissum a Neptuno? cui cum tres optationes Neptunus dedisset, optavit interitum Hippolyti filii, cum is patri suspectus esset de noverca; quo optato impetrato Theseus in maximis fuit luctibus.'
270 Chiarenza, p. 139.
271 Chiarenza, p. 140.
272 See also André Pézard, 'Du Policraticus à la Divine Comédie : Deuxième article', Romania, 278 (2), 1948-1949, 163-191.
274 Talice, vol. 3, p.221.
275 Benvenuto, DDP, Paradiso 17.46-48.
In verses 49-54 Cacciaguida relates to Dante the circumstances surrounding the triumph of the Black Party and the defeat and expulsion from Florence of the prominent members of the White Party. Both commentators describe the familiar story of the intrigues involving the leaders of the two parties and Pope Boniface VIII, which culminated in Charles de Valois' being authorised to impose order on Florence. There are several direct references to Florence, but they all fit naturally into the narrative and in no way indicate any judgement on the city. As a typical example, Serravalle records: 'Tandem dominus Veri de Circulis, caput partis Albe, que tunc regebat in Florentia, dixit Pape: Cur me tenetis hic in curia?', while Benvenuto in the Ferrara *recollectae* writes in similar vein: 'Sed dominus Veri de Cerchis, qui tunc regnabat, fuit ita fatuus quod dixit: Quare teneris me hic? Cur non permittitis me ire?' Robert Hollander has commented on the possible identification of the events implied in the reference to 'la vendetta' in verse 53. Benvenuto and Serravalle opt for the most obvious explanation. In the Ferrara *recollectae* Benvenuto comments: 'Ostendet que pars fuerit iusta. Hoc dicit, quia in 1307, dominus Cursius fuit expulsus et, fugiens, cecidit ab equo qui traxit eum et occidit. Et similiter Bonefacius male ivit paucos dies post'. Serravalle provides a similar comment, but without the reference to Boniface: '... vindicata Dei ostendet, que pars fuit culpabilis. In millesimo tercentesimo Dantes fuit expulsus de Florentia; et in millesimo tercentesimo septimo dominus Cursius de Donatis fuit etiam expulsus, et fugiens mortuus est, ut dictum est superius.' In his final redaction Benvenuto provides further clarification: 'Et dicunt aliqui quod autor credidit per divinam vindicatam redire in patriam, quod tamen non fuit.

---

276 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 153r.
278 Serravalle, *DDP, Paradiso* 17.49-54.
279 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 154v.
280 Robert Hollander, *DDP, Paradiso* 17.52-54.
281 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 154v. The *recollectae*, being in note form, are a cause of confusion here since Boniface VIII died on October 12 1303. Also, Corso Donati died on October 6 1308.
282 Serravalle, *DDP, Paradiso* 17.49-54.
Sed certe non oportet hic facere autorem mendacem, quia nihil dicit hic de reditu, sed de vindicta; et respicit ad mortem acerbam domini Cursii de Donatis praedicti, de qua dictum est in hoc Purgatorio.²⁸³

Verses 46-99 might be considered to represent a retrospective view of the last two decades of Dante's life. Although the setting for Dante-pilgrim's meeting with his ancestor is in the Jubilee year of 1300, Dante-author was writing these verses towards the end of his life when the key events mentioned in these lines have all occurred. In addition, he was hardly in a position to be anything other than generous in the praise he bestowed on his benefactors. In the verses of Paradiso XVII.103-111 Dante is seeking advice from his ancestor Cacciaguida concerning the dilemma that the poet faces, namely: Should he continue to tell the truth or should he mitigate 'his bitter words in complaint of the human iniquity found in other parts of Italy lest he be denied shelter and support in his exile'?²⁸⁴ Cacciaguida's answer occupies the rest of the canto. Serravalle's comments on these verses are of some assistance to the reader, but the glosses from the Ferrara recollectae are extremely brief, with the comments relevant to Cacciaguida's reply only occupying the last eight lines of the commentary to this canto. Serravalle goes to some length to depict Dante-pilgrims dilemma, commenting: 'Ex quo de Providentia est bonum quod ego me armem, ita quod, si locus est michi arreptus magis carus, scilicet Florentia, etiam domus mea, ego non perdam alia propter mea carmina; que nulli parcunt, quin ipsa manifestent veritatem, que dicunt mala de summis pontificibus, cardinalibus, imperatoribus, regibus, prelatis, magnis dominis. Quasi dicat: Sum perplexus, nec scio eligere meliorem partem: si dixero ea qua vidi, odior ab omnibus, et propter hoc expellar ab omnibus locis.'²⁸⁵ On the other hand, Benvenuto limits his gloss to 'si che loco piu caro: scilicet patria propria. [Carni]: propter carmina mea dicendo malum de aliis'.²⁸⁶ There is no clear explanation for the brevity of Benvenuto's comment. In his final redaction Benvenuto glosses freely on these verses. However, [Carni] in Benvenuto's comment above should read 'carmi' (Paradiso XVII.111). Therefore, the brevity of these glosses may simply be a reflection of the realities of student note taking.

At the beginning of Paradiso XXXI Dante-pilgrim sees the blessed seated on their seats which are arranged in the form of an immense white rose. Before such a

²⁸³ Benvenuto, DDP, Paradiso 17.52-54.
²⁸⁴ Robert Hollander, DDP, Paradiso 17.109-111.
²⁸⁵ Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 17.103-111.
²⁸⁶ Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 154r.
wondrous spectacle Dante-pilgrim feels the astonishment and wonder felt by barbarians when they view Rome for the first time. Verse 39, ‘e di Fiorenza in popol giusto e sano’, represents the only direct reference to Florence. On this verse Singleton notes the judgement of Grandgent: 287 “This phrase, the climax of the tercet, is Dante’s last and bitterest fling at Florence.” 288 Although Serravalle provides the more polished version, the glosses reflect the same sentiments, with Benvenuto commenting: ‘io che al divino dal umano era venuto dal umano: scilicet a terra et al eterno dal tempo et a Firenze, idest, et veneram ab una terra Italie plena omni scandal; et loquitur ironice, idest iniquus et insanus’, 289 and Serravalle: ‘... de Florentia, ab yma terra Ytalie, plena omni scandal, briga, dissensionibus, et tribulationibus infinitis, etc.; ego, qui ad divinum ad humano et ad eternum a temporali veneram, et de florentino populo, iusto et sano, idest iniusto et insano (nam loquitur hic yronice per antiphrasim), quo, idest quanto, stupore debebam esse completus, idest repletus!’ 291

There is no evidence that events at the Council influenced Serravalle's judgement concerning Florence. In the extract from Paradiso XXXI quoted above which was almost certainly written at Constance, Serravalle makes no attempt to moderate Dante's harsh judgment on the city of his birth. The only time Serravalle expresses a personal opinion is to be found in the commentary on Inferno XIII.139-151, where, as a result of his success as teacher and predicatore at Florence, he was able to offer a balanced and favourable judgement of the city and its citizens.

The full discussion provided on Inferno III.121-126 was intended to establish the connection between Serravalle's commentary and some version of the Ferrara recollectae. This passage was chosen because it mainly consisted of historical facts requiring little interpretation, although the purpose of the two commentators was to emphasize that the malefactor cannot escape the consequences of his crime. The subsequent comparisons of passages relating to Florence, which have been discussed in this chapter, have been shown to confirm that there is correspondence between the glosses of the recollectae and the Comentum. In particular, when attention is focussed on to

287 Singleton, The Divine Comedy, Paradiso 2, Commentary, p. 516.
288 Robert Hollander goes a little further: ‘This is the fifteenth and last time we hear the word Fiorenza in the poem … While in fact Florence had replaced Rome as the greatest city of Italy, Dante here reverses that equation, making old Rome the type of the celestial city, while new Florence is portrayed as the city of the lost’, (Robert Hollander, DDP, Paradiso 31.39).
289 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 178v.
290 Although the text reads ‘ad’, it should surely be ‘ab’.
291 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 31.31–42.
Serravalle's more lengthy glosses, it is readily seen that he has the habit of including extra material, often of a personal nature, to embellish his commentary. Nevertheless, in such cases one can usually find phrases, or even a sentence, embedded in the gloss which are almost identical to the corresponding comments in the *recollectae*. However, it should be recognized that Serravalle's commentary is no mere copy and represents his own, possibly in some cases hurried, thinking concerning the interpretation of Dante's verses.
Chapter 5  
France and England in the Commedia

In this chapter the Commedia is considered from the point of view of Dante's perceptions concerning the influence of the French royal family on European politics from the establishment of the Capetian dynasty up to, and including, his own lifetime. Although Dante concentrates on the French influence on Italian politics, there is also evidence of some understanding of the complexities of Anglo-French politics as they unfolded throughout the later Middle Ages. These features are examined, as in the previous chapter and the following one, through the medium of a direct comparison between the glosses on relevant topics from Benvenuto da Imola's Ferrara recollectae and Serravalle's Comentum. The intention is to test the extent of Serravalle's dependence on Benvenuto's recollectae on a theme divorced from those considered previously.

The second objective of this chapter is to examine whether the environment of the Council of Constance impacted on Serravalle's glosses on those verses of the Commedia which treat of Anglo-French influence on European politics. Of especial interest for the present study is Serravalle's interpretation of Dante's understanding of the reasons behind the often difficult relations between England and France up to and including the poet's own lifetime. In effect, the Commedia was written against the backdrop of recent hostilities between Edward I of England and Philip IV of France. Approximately one hundred years later, the political situation was much the same. Serravalle's commentary was written during the later stages of the Hundred Years War when relations between England and France were at their most fraught, with Henry V of England campaigning in France throughout the duration of the Council of Constance. The bishop of Fermo was an accomplished diplomat and it would, at least in principle, be not unreasonable to examine his commentary for indications that he had established the connection between Anglo-French relations prior to the writing of the Commedia with those contemporaneous with the writing of his own commentary.

The first of these two basic themes, developed in section 2, relates to Dante's condemnation of French influence on Italian politics. This is particularly evident in the censorious words which Dante puts into the mouth of Hugh Capet condemning the actions of the later kings of the Capetian dynasty in Purgatorio XX. Section 3 of this chapter provides a short history of the members of the dynasty whose reigns were subsequent to
Provence's becoming a dependency of the Royal House and whose actions aroused the poet's severe criticism. In section 4 consideration is given to Dante's interpretation of the French influence on Italian politics which is mainly devoted to the actions of Charles I and Charles II of Naples, Charles Lackland and Philip the Fair. The actions of such individuals are assessed via a comparison between the glosses in Benvenuto's Ferrara *recollectae* and Serravalle's *Comentum*. The second theme, discussed in section 5, considers some elements of English history in which there is some historical connection with the French monarchy. It is noted that hostile relations between England and France were a feature of the political environment, both at the time of writing of the *Commedia* and during the timespan of the Council of Constance. In particular, the *Comentum* is considered for any evidence to suggest that the bishop of Fermo, who was also an experienced diplomat, was prepared to pass any judgment concerning the similarity between the Anglo-French political difficulties of Dante's time and those pertaining to the Council where Henry V's influence must have been apparent to all.

A previous study, devoted mainly to *Purgatorio* XX, has considered the contributions to the commentary tradition provided by some of the more important commentators who flourished before the end of the seventeenth century. However, there was only a limited reference to Serravalle's *Comentum* and the two *recollectae* of Benvenuto were not considered at all. This chapter aims to address these omissions.

The Hundred Years War between France and England is today conventionally dated from 1337 or 1338 when, after a French fleet had attacked Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, Edward III declared that he no longer regarded the truce agreed in 1337 as binding. However, hostilities between the two countries were by no means continuous. Commentators, such as Benvenuto and Serravalle, who lived through part of these turbulent years, might well have regarded each episode in isolation rather than considering such episodes to be part of a single protracted war. In addition, the root cause of the problems between France and England goes back to the Norman conquest. William I was not only King of England but, as Duke of Normandy, he was also a vassal of Philip I of France. The Capetian kings exploited this conflict of loyalty or interest to the detriment of the English monarch. In addition, unlike the House of Capet where family quarrels and


2 M. H. Keen, p.122.
examples of family disloyalty were extremely rare, the opposite was the case with the Plantagenet kings of England. Fawtier, in assessing the abilities of Philip I, provides an accurate indication of some of the achievements of the earlier Capetian kings in exploiting this weakness in the English royal house. In general, when the King of England was a strong military leader, the King of France was seen to come under considerable military pressure. With the accession to the throne of England of Henry V in 1413, the French came under such military pressure, with their defeat at Agincourt taking place a year later. During the time span of the Council of Constance the hostile relations between France and England were important factors in the rivalries displayed in the Council's deliberations.

From Serravalle's commentary there is no evidence to suggest that he had any reason for personal animosity to either France or England. There clearly existed cordial relations between him and Bishops Hallum and Bubwith of the English delegation at Constance. The situation with Benvenuto is more complicated. There is reason to question Benvenuto's objectivity when interpreting some of his glosses concerning France. This topic has been considered by Domenico Pantone in the setting of the diminishing influence of the French language in scholastic and literary circles with the advent of humanism in the second half of the fourteenth century. The reason for Benvenuto's hostility is unclear. However, in 1365 he acted as an ambassador for the government of Imola to plead its case for the preservation of the liberty of the Comune of Imola before the Papal Court of Pope Urban V at Avignon. The mission failed and Benvenuto went into exile in Bologna. La

---


4 See, for example, Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years War* 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.6: 'The *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, for example, was probably written in 1416-17 to justify in England and at the Council of Constance Henry V's invasion of France both past and intended. Here Henry was portrayed as a model Christian prince. In emphasising Henry's success both against heretics in England and against the French, it revealed God as being unequivocally on the side of the English.'

5 For example, Benvenuto, *DDP*, *Inferno* 29. 121-123: 'Galli sunt genus vanissimum omnium ab antico, sicut patet saepe apud Iulium Celsum, et hodie patet de facto; videmus enim, quod omni die adveniunt novos habitus, et novas formas vestium. Unde non est membrum in eis, quod non habeat suam fogiam; portant enim catenam ad collum, circulum ad brachium, punctam ad calceum, pannos breves, ita quod ostendunt supra, partem obscenam corporis occultandum, et caputium ante faciem ad tegendam partem corporis honestam potius manifestandum; et ita de multis vanitatibus.'


7 Helps, p. 35. 145
Favia notes that in his commentary 'he empathizes with Dante as 'exul immememus'.

1. The Capetian Dynasty of France

For the purpose of providing some historical context for the analysis to follow, it should be noted that at the start of the Capetian dynasty, with the election of Hugh Capet as King of France (987-996), only the duchy of Francia was under the direct rule of the King. By the end of the dynasty, as a result of a continuous application of the Feudal Code and successful marriage alliances, royal power extended over most of modern France. When Dante makes reference to contemporary people and events in the Commedia, he almost always uses the appropriate province or area, as, for example, in St. Peter's denunciation of the Church in Paradiso XXVII 40-66, where in verses 58-60 Pope Clement V and Pope John XXII, both Frenchmen in the modern sense of the term, are dismissed with 'Del sangue nostro Caorsini e Guaschi / s'apparecchian di bere.'

While the Capetian dynasty began with the election of Hugh Capet as King of France, it is unlikely that those who were responsible for Hugh's election necessarily believed that they were inaugurating a new dynasty. The early Capetian kings countered this potential problem by having the heir apparent crowned in their own lifetimes. In addition, the kings took care that the heir was seen to be involved in the processes of government. This precaution, together with the long reigns of the early members of the dynasty, undoubtedly was a prominent factor in the seamless transition from one reign to the next. However, the Capetians never made a specific claim to an hereditary right to the throne, and the idea of an election was never completely lost during the duration of the dynasty. After the death of Philip IV, followed quickly by the premature deaths of his three sons, the succession depended on the consensus reached by Assemblies, whose members consisted of prelates, nobles and prominent citizens of Paris. This mechanism ensured that the claims to the throne of the granddaughters of Philip the Fair were ignored, and, more importantly for the present work, it shows why Edward III of England, the surviving grandson of Philip the Fair, was never going to be successful in his claim to the French throne.

A further point of interest is the lack of balance shown by Dante and the early

---

8 Ibidem.
9 Helps, pp. 15-20.
10 Helps, p. 8.
11 Fawtier, p. 49.
12 Fawtier, pp. 50-51.
commentators in assessing the motives and conduct of Charles de Valois, often associated with the derogatory term 'Lack-Land', in the Commedia and the early commentary tradition, particularly with regard to his involvement in Florentine and Italian politics. It is clear that Charles, with the assistance of his brother Philip the Fair, made strenuous efforts to promote a kingdom for himself. However, in 1301, when he was on the point of entering Italy in the service of the Pope, Charles issued a declaration, setting out his objectives, which were limited to assisting the Pope and Charles II of Naples, committing himself to a prompt return to France should his brother have need of his services, and specifically denying that he had any intention of travelling to Constantinople to assume the throne to which he had a claim through his second wife.\(^\text{13}\) Although the outcome of the mission of Charles de Valois as peacemaker to Florence was not to the satisfaction of the White Party, there is little doubt that Charles had met the requirements of Pope Boniface. The campaign to aid Charles II of Naples in Sicily was of very limited success. However, the reason for the abrupt departure of Charles for France in 1302 was almost certainly the catastrophic defeat of the French army at Coutrai on 11 July 1302. Among the fatalities was the Count of Artois, the brother of Philip the Fair. Clearly the death of Philip's brother would have left a serious gap in the military leadership whose loyalty to the Crown was beyond question. Philip's military experience at this time was very limited and Charles, an experienced military leader, was required to fill the void.\(^\text{14}\) The return of Charles from Italy can clearly be seen to be in accord with the declaration that he had made in 1301 before embarking on his Italian adventure.

Although the Council of Constance was heavily influenced in its deliberations by contemporary politics,\(^\text{15}\) this chapter focuses – for reasons of scale – only on those references to France and England, which show a political dimension. It analyses such points across the three 'cantiche' of the Commedia by considering how Benvenuto and Serravalle interpreted Dante's references to the political conduct of both France and England and by examining Serravalle's contributions for evidence that the political pressures exerted by Henry V's representatives influenced his commentary.

---

\(^{13}\) Fawtier, pp. 55-56. Fawtier provides a translation of this important document in modern French.

\(^{14}\) Helps, pp. 121-122.

2. The French Influence on Italian Politics

In the verses of *Inferno* XXIX.121-123 Dante pronounces an invective against the people of Siena whose vanity he compares with that of the French. There is clear correspondence between the gloss of the Ferrara *recollectae* and the more polished version of Serravalle. Both commentators take the opportunity to discuss the presumed vanities of the French people in very similar terms. However, as may be seen from the extracts below, not only is the general similarity between the two glosses evident, but the reference in both commentaries to Julius Celsus is particularly pertinent in that it represents clear evidence of Serravalle's debt to Benvenuto.

**Ferrara recollectae**

*Certo:* respondet sibimet quod, quamvis gens francisca sit ita vana, tamen etc. Illa gens semper omni tempore fuit vana; etiam hodie omnes vestes veniunt ab ipsis. Etiam dicit Julius Celsus quod tempore suo ferebant sonalia ad barbas. Ymo dicunt Italic quod Franagine sunt morigerati magis omnibus et melius locuntur.

**Serravalle**


The reference to Julius Celsus is also interesting because it is difficult to establish his identity. In the commentaries on the *DDP* database, there is a single reference to Julius Celsus in the *Codice cassinese* and eight references in Benvenuto's final redaction. There is also a single reference to Iulius Celsus in the commentary of Guido da Pisa and two references in the *Comentum* of Serravalle, one of which refers to the gloss above. In Benvenuto's final redaction the gloss reads: '...Galli sunt genus vanissimum omnium ab antiquo, sicut potest saepe apud Iulium Celsum ...' Singleton translates this as: 'Since antiquity, the French have been the vainest of peoples. Julius Caesar remarked it often.'

In the absence of a credible candidate for 'Julius Celsus' it would seem to the present author that Singleton's identification is the most likely, with it being in accord with the sentiments expressed in *De Bello Gallico* VI.11-20.

---

16 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 67v.
17 Serravalle, *DDP*, *Inferno* 29.121-123.
18 Benvenuto, *DDP*, *Inferno* 29.121-123.
19 Singleton, *DDP*, *Inferno* 29.123.
A more specific attack on the French monarchy is to be found in the verses of *Inferno* XIX.52-117, which ostensibly cover the meeting between Dante-Pilgrim and Pope Nicholas III in the third bolgia of the eighth circle, namely that of the Simoniacs. Since Pope Nicholas, mistakenly, is under the impression that Pope Boniface VIII has arrived in Hell prematurely, there is scope for both commentators to discuss features of Boniface's papacy, such as the intrigues involving the resignation of his predecessor Celestine V, his subsequent election as Pope and the involvement of Philip IV of France in Boniface's imprisonment at Anagni. This is followed by a denunciation of the behaviour of Pope Clement V in which Philip IV of France was also judged to have played a prominent role. Giovanni Villani covers the affair at Anagni\(^{20}\) and Clement's election as Pope\(^{21}\), and it is likely that these contributions from Villani formed a key source for Benvenuto's commentaries, and, via the Ferrara *recollectae*, also for Serravalle's commentary. Villani's account of the intrigues of Cardinal del Prato at the Conclave to elect a new pope after the death of Benedict XI and the secret collusion between Bertrand de Got, the future Clement V, and Philip IV form the basis of similar accounts for both commentators. In his final redaction Benvenuto closes his gloss on verses 85-87, which dismisses Bertrand de Got as 'a new Jason', with a comment suggesting that another Clement, Clement VI (Pierre Roger 1342-1352), was supposedly even more corrupt and also in thrall to the King of France.\(^{22}\) In view of the strong denunciation of Clement VI, it is perhaps surprising that this does not feature in either the Ferrara *recollectae* or in Serravalle's commentary on these verses. The commentaries represent a résumé of the details concerning these events which were current at the time, and in Serravalle's account there is no evidence of any reflective thought which might be attributed to events at the Council of Constance.

The glosses on verses 100-114 from Benvenuto's Ferrara *recollectae* and Serravalle's *Commentum*, reproduced below, reflect the poet's denunciation of Nicholas's stewardship.

---

\(^{20}\) Villani, pp. 421-424.

\(^{21}\) Villani, pp. 442-445.

\(^{22}\) Benvenuto, *DDP, Inferno* 19.85-87: *Sed quid dixisset Dantes si vidisset alium Clementem VI, qui fuit multo corruptior et carnalior quam praedictus, qui totum thesaurum magnum ecclesiae effudit in subsidium Johannis regis Franciae contra regem Angliae; sed tamen et pecunia et victoria transivit ad anglicos ipso rege debellato in campo et capto.* Pantone uses this gloss as evidence of Benvenuto's hostility towards France (Pantone, p. 151). Benvenuto's source is probably Matteo Villani, *Cronica* 3.XLIII. Villani, in reporting Clement's death, takes the opportunity to provide a very negative opinion concerning the Pope's personal behaviour in the conduct of his duties as Supreme Pontiff.
Ferrara recollectae

Serravalle
Et si non esset quia adhuc michi denegat reverentia summaram clavarium, quas tu tenuisti in vita leta, idest mundiali, que leta est respectu vite quam habet iste in Inferno. Vult dicere, quod adhuc dixisset asperiora verba isti pape Nicolao, nisi quod abstinuit propter reverentiam clavium, etc. Ego uterer verbis adhuc gravioribus: scilicet, quod vestra avaritia mundum contristat, calcando, idest deprimendo, non exaltando, bonos, et sublevando pravos, idest dando ei, pro pecunia, beneficia. De vobis pastoribus, scilicet Ecclesia, s'accorsit, idest perpendit, Evangelista, scilicet Ioannes, in libro Apocalypsis, quando illa, que sedet super aquas, meretricari cum regibus fuit visa, idest ostensa. Inter alia que fuerunt revelata Sancto Ioanni Evangeliste in libro Apocalypsis, quod interpretatur revelatio Dei, fuit sibi ostensa una mulier meretrix, sedens super aquas, et circa ipsam stabant multi reges, quos ipsa osculabatur et adulterabatur. Ista mulier, potestas papalis, sive gubernatio pastorum Ecclesie, sedet super aquas, idest super populos. Aque multe, populi multi sunt. Adulteratur cum regibus, sicut sepe fecit cum rege Francie et multis aliis. Ista habebat septem testas, idest capita, idest septem dona Spiritus Sancti, vel septem virtutes, quatuor cardinales et tres theologicae; decem cornua, idest decem precepta Decalogi bene observata. Illa, que cum septem testis, idest capitibus, nata est, et a decem cornibus habuit argumentum, quosque virtutes suo marito, idest pape, placuerunt. Fecistis vobis Deum de auro et argento: quid est inter vos et ydolatras? idest que differentia est inter vos et ydolatras, nisi quod ipsi unum, idest Deum, adorant, de auro, et vos, idest, sed vos adoratis centum, idest quot florenos habetis, tot Deos honoratis? Nunc exclamat auctor.

---

23 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 47r.
24 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 19.100-114
25 'ipsam' in the text.
These verses have particular significance in that they immediately follow Dante-pilgrim's injunction to Pope Nicholas in verses 97-99:

Però ti sta, ché tu se' ben punito;
   e guarda bene la mal tolta moneta
ch'esser ti fece contra Carlo ardito.

The reference, 'contra Carlo', is probably to Charles of Anjou's rejection in contemptuous terms of Nicholas's attempt to ally himself to the French Royal House by means of his accumulated wealth. Once more, in keeping with the ideals of his Order and also with his public stance at Constance, the bishop of Fermo is seen to condemn the excesses prevalent in the lives of some members of the Church hierarchy.

The verses of Purgatorio XX.34-96 could be considered to represent Dante's version of French history, interpreted to suit his own agenda. Serravalle begins his commentary on these verses by noting: 'Hec est secunda pars huius capituli, in qua ponitur unus spiritus modernus, involutus in vitio avaritie, que [anima] recitat multa peccata commictenda per suos descendentes.'

This comment accords well with the tenor of the poet's own opinions as he delivers his condemnation of the shortcomings of the French monarchy expressed through these verses. The two commentators discuss the origins of the Capetian dynasty in similar terms, with both commentating similarly on Hugh Capet's genealogy.

Ferrara recollectae

… quamvis cronice Franciscenarum dicant quod fuerit nobilissimus homo, Dantes, qui diu stetis Parysius, investigavit ortum eius qui fuit figlius unius beccarii.

Serravalle

Et licet Cronice regum Frantie dicant, quod iste Ugo Ciapetta fuit nobilis valde, Dantes, tamen, scilicet auctor, credens bene scire veritatem, quam perquisivit Parisius, ubi diu stetit et studuit, investigando ortum eius, dicit quod ipse, scilicet Ugo Ciapetta, fuit filius unius beccarii, scilicet macellatoris.

Dante's adoption of the legend of the supposed humble origins of the founder of the

---

27 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 97rb.
29 Should probably read 'Francisenarum'.
Capetian dynasty accord well with his generally negative opinion of the dynasty's
ingvements. Both commentators accept Dante's account although its historical accuracy
is open to question.

Dante dismisses the early kings of the dynasty in verses 61-63 with his
suggestion that before the acquisition of Provence the kings did little harm:

Mentre che la gran dota provenzale
al sangue mio non tolse la vergogna,
poco valea, ma pur non facea male.

Both Benvenuto and Serravalle seem to accept this assessment, although, as will be
discussed later, from the English point of view it would not be entirely supported. Both
commentators gloss in similar terms concerning the marriages of Louis IX and Charles of
Anjou.

**Ferrara recollectae**

Ludovicus et Karolus habuerunt duas sorores in uxores, filias Ramandi Berlinghierii de Provincia, et propter hoc usurpaverunt sibi Provinciam, etiam vivente patre uxorum. Et Karolus retinuit, qui venit in Italiam, Provinciam pro dote uxoris sue.

**Serravalle**

Nam Ludovicus, rex Frantie, et Karolus eius frater ... habuerunt duas sorores in uxorum, filias comitis Raimundi Berlingerii, comitis Provintie; et propter hoc usurparunt comitatum Provintie, etiam vivente patre uxorum suarum. Sed Karolus retinuit Provintiam pro se pro dotibus uxoris sue.

With the marriage of Charles of Anjou to Beatrice, the heiress of Raymond Berenger IV, Provence became a dependency of the royal house of France, remaining formally in the possession of the house of Anjou until its annexation to the French crown in 1486.

Dante returns to the marriages of Raymond Berenger's four daughters in *Paradiso* VI.127-132. These verses recount the story of a supposed pilgrim, Romeus, who, as legend has it, came to Raymond's court, notably restored Raymond's fortunes and succeeded in arranging the marriages of Raymond's four daughters. Inevitably, he aroused the enmity of the court, and, when asked by Raymond to account for his stewardship, he gave up his position and resumed his life as a pilgrim. Romeo of Villeneuve (1170-1250) was Raymond's chamberlain and Singleton provides an account of how, as recounted in the

---

30 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98va: 'Non erant homines depravati illi quamvis non fuerunt homines magnanimi multum.'
31 Serravalle, *DDP, Purgatorio* 20.64-66: '. . . non erant mali reges, nec multum depravati: satis boni homines erant, licet non multum magnanimes.'
32 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98va.
34 Singleton, *Purgatorio* 2: Commentary, p. 479.
*Nuova Cronica* of Giovanni Villani, the legend of Romeo the pilgrim developed. The main point of interest for the present discussion concerns the marriages of Raymond's four daughters. Since Raymond had no male heir, these marriages assumed considerable political importance.

**Ferrara recollecta**

Et breviter scivit ita facere quod in breve tempore omnia debita persolvit et quattuor filias feminas quattuor regibus maritavit: primam Ludovico qui fecit passagium bis, secundam fratri suo, Karlo veteri, tertiam regi Anglie, quartam regi Aragonie; et breviter fama omni die crescebat huius comitis.

**Serravalle**

Iste Romeus scivit adeo bene facere, quod in brevi tempore soluta sunt omnia debita, et ultra hoc congregavit tot pecunias, quod ipse comes potuit bene maritare suas quatuor filias: et sic maritavit unam regi Frantie; aliam regi Anglie; aliam regi Arragonie; aliam edidit germano regis Frantie, scilicet Karolo duci Andagavie, qui fuit postmodum rex Cicilie, et fuit pater regis Karoli Ciocti, patris regis Ruberti: ita quod omnes quatuor filie comitis Raymundi, fuerunt regine ex industria Romei.

In order of seniority, Margaret of Provence married Louis IX, Eleanor married Henry III of England, Sanchia married Richard of Cornwall, bother of Henry III, elected King of Germany in 1256 and crowned King of the Romans in 1257, and Beatrice who married Charles of Anjou. It is clear that for Dante Charles' acquisition of Provence marked the beginning of France’s intervention into the politics of Italy.

While the reputation of Louis IX, Saint Louis the crusader, was probably beyond reproach, the same could not be said of his brother Charles of Anjou, by now the master of Provence. Charles had been invited by Pope Urban IV to assume the crown of Naples and Sicily, and in 1265, at the request of Pope Clement IV he entered Italy. Within three years due to his victories over Manfred at Benevento in 1266 and Conradin at Tagliacozzo in 1266 he had established his authority in his kingdom. It is clear from verses 67-69 that Dante did not welcome his presence, among other things in effect accusing him of instigating the murder of Thomas Aquinas.

---

35 Villani, p. 251.
37 Florence, BML, Ashburnham 839, fol. 133v.
39 englishmonarchs.co.uk/plantagenet_76.html, accessed 25/05/2018.
Singleton comments that Thomas was already ill at the start of his journey in January 1274 and that, although 'the belief that he had been poisoned at the instance of Charles of Anjou was current in Dante's day', the charge seems to have been completely unfounded.\[43\]

The commentaries on verses 70-78 are devoted to an account of the exploits of Charles de Valois in Italy between 1301 and 1302. The essential details are to be found in the commentary by Singleton.\[44\] Briefly, Boniface VIII summoned Charles to Italy in 1301 to act as a peacemaker in Florence and to help Charles II of Naples against Frederick II of Sicily. In return, the Pope promised to secure the election of Charles as emperor. Dante's comment that Charles came 'sanz' arme' is readily explained.\[45\] The reference to 'non terra' in verse 76 refers to his description as 'fils de roi, frère de roi, oncle de trois rois, père de roi, et jamais roi', having unsuccessfully aspired to the crowns of Aragon, Sicily, Constantinople and of the Empire.\[46\] It has already been explained above that the one-sided interpretation of Charles' conduct in Italy, provided by Dante and endorsed by the two commentators, is unlikely to represent a balanced judgement. The two commentaries differ in detail with the Ferrara recollectae presenting a fuller description. Benvenuto interprets 'sanz' arme' in verse 73 as: 'quia venit in modum pacis', while Serravalle, with slightly different emphasis, comments 'non conduxit gentes armorum'.\[47\] Once again, at the end of his gloss on verses 76-78, Serravalle provides a note which acts as a summary of the

\[41\] Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98va.
\[42\] Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 20.67-69.
\[43\] Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, p. 484. See Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 20.67-69, in which he succinctly sums up: 'Ita quod Karolus commisit ista duo mala, scilicet mortem Corradini et mortem Sancti Thome de Aquino. Ideo dicit textus: Carolus venit in Ytaliam, et propter emendationem victimam fecit de Corradino, et postmodum repulit ad celum Thomam propter emendationem.'
\[44\] Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, pp. 484-486.
\[45\] Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, p. 485: 'Charles came with only a small force of cavalry, since, for his campaign in Sicily, he expected to have the army of Charles II and to have full support in arms and money from Pope Boniface.'
\[46\] Ibidem.
\[47\] Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98vb. Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 20.73-75.
previous comments. In verses 79-81, Dante continues his condemnation of the French royal house by recounting in concise form the events relating to the commonly held view that Charles II of Naples effectively 'sold' his daughter to Azzo VIII.

In L'altro, che già uscì preso di nave, veggio vender sua figlia e patteggiarnne come fanno i corsar de l'altre schiave.

Both commentators devote considerable space to a description of the events leading up to this marriage. There is an account of how Charles, disobeying the instructions given to him by his father, was outwitted and totally defeated in a naval battle outside Naples by the Sicilian admiral Ruggiero di Loria, who was in command of the fleet of Pedro III of Aragon. There is reference to the intervention of Pedro's wife who forbade the execution of Charles in revenge for his father's treatment of Conrado in 1268. Inevitably, with such a topic there are considerable similarities between the two commentaries. Neither commentator mentions that Pedro's wife was Constance, daughter of Manfred and Beatrice of Savoy, through whom Pedro claimed the throne of Sicily. In addition, she was Conrado's cousin and so her intervention might be considered as a singular act of clemency.

Ferrara recollectae

Et captus Karolus ductus est in Syciliam ad civitatem Messinem et ibi [carceratus], et amore Coradini vix [...] truncatam caput nisi fuisset uxor domini Petri regis Aragonie.

Serravalle

... ductus ligatus Ciciliam in civitatem Messinensem, et ibi positus fuit in carceribus, et vix evasit quin decolleratur, propter mortem Corradini, quem pater istius Karoli secundi, scilicet Karolus primus, fecerat decollari. Sed uxor don Petri regis non permisit quod decollaretur.

As they stand the words used by Dante and the two commentators in castigating Charles over the arranged marriage of his daughter Beatrice to Azzo are less than fair. Children

---


49 Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, p. 486: 'Beatrice, youngest daughter of Charles II of Naples, was married in 1305 to Azzo VIII, marquis of Este, in consideration, it was said, of a large sum of money. ... To add to the disgrace of the proceeding, it appears that Azzo was a great deal older than Beatrice.'

50 Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, p. 60.

51 Florence, BML, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98vb.

52 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 20.79-81.
born into a royal family had little say in the choice of their marriage partner. Such arrangements almost always were influenced by affairs of state, often dictated by the need to promote strategic alliances. However, in the matter of simple facts it has been shown that Charles' motives in arranging the marriage were not as straightforward as the commentators imply. In particular, the marriage contract still survives in the Archivio di Stato in Modena, a summary of which may be found in the essay by Trevor Dean. Due consideration of the terms of the contract would suggest that Charles did not profit directly from the marriage agreement and that his main purpose was to secure his daughter's future. Beatrice is the last in a series of strategic marriages arranged by Charles for his children. Both commentators close with noting that Charles was 'liberalissimus' (Benvenuto) and 'valde liberalis' (Serravalle), and both agree that Charles' son Robert was 'sapientissimus'. In conclusion, Benvenuto writes: 'Si iste Karolus [ ... ] liberalis fuit, utitur illa avaritia, quid alii avari facere debent?' Serravalle poses the same question: 'Si ille Karolus Cioctus, qui fuit liberalis, utitur avaritia, quid faciunt alii de sanguine Frantie, qui sunt avari?' Benvenuto in his final redaction, when commenting on verses 82-84, encapsulates the perceived moral dilemma succinctly: 'Et hic nota, quod iste maxime dolet de avaritia istius Caroli, quia fuit valde liberalis inter reges sui temporis. Sed certe amor pecuniae vindicat amorem naturalem, et res impossibiles facit possibiles.'

In commenting on verses 85-87 both writers acknowledge the introduction of Philip the Fair into Hugh Capet's denunciation of his descendants.

Ferrara recollectae

Modo loquitur de Philippo, qui fecit mori Bonefatum, fratre Karoli qui venit Florentiam et eius proditore fugata

Serravalle

Modo fit sermo de Philippo, qui fecit mori Bonifacium octavum. Iste Philippus fuit frater istius Karoli Sineterra, qui fecit tot

53 Helps, pp. 83-84.
54 Trevor Dean, 'The Sovereign as Pirate: Charles II of Anjou and the Marriage of his Daughter, 1304', English Historical Review, 111 (441) (1996), 350-356. See p.351 for details relevant to the present discussion: 'The agreement contains eleven conditions. First, and most significantly, Charles was to give Beatrice to Azzo without dowry, but secondly, 'notwithstanding the inequality, which thus arises', Azzo was to make a nuptial gift, from his own resources of 51,000 fl. This large sum was to be distributed as follows: 30,000 was to be used to buy lands in the kingdom of Sicily ('around Faro'); the rest was to be assigned in land 'in the marquisate of Este, in appropriate places'. Fourthly, Azzo was to hold the lands purchased near Faro in fief of the king, for them to pass to Azzo's descendants after his death and that of Beatrice. Fifthly, it was then declared that the first-born son of the marriage should succeed Azzo 'in the marquisate and the principal lordship …'

55 Helps, p. 84.
56 Florence, BML, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98vb.
57 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 20.79-81.
58 Benvenuto, DDP, Purgatorio 20.82-84.
59 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98vb.
60 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 20.85-87.
Serravalle continues his commentary with an account of the scandalous treatment of Pope Boniface VIII at Anagni which, as he himself admits, 'dictum fuit in Inferno decimonono capitulo.' However, in this later comment the focus is different and the contribution is much shorter.

Verses 88-93 are devoted to the suppression of the Templars in France by Philip. It is likely that Dante's main purpose was to remind his readers, most of whom were probably acquainted with the more lurid details, of Philip's ruthlessness in pursuing his aims. Neither Dante nor Benvenuto is known to have visited the Holy Land. However, Serravalle, as has already been noted, did make a pilgrimage in 1398, and it is likely that this competent diplomat will have formed his own opinion of the realities of the Christian position. Certainly, when Benvenuto comments: '... facto processu contra eos quia ipsi fuerant illi qui fecerunt amici Terram Sanctam,' there is no corresponding endorsement in Serravalle's commentary.

Some estimate of the strength of the criticisms of the military Orders, particularly by the French, can be obtained by considering the somewhat confused commentaries of Benvenuto on Purgatorio 7.103-111. 'E quel Nasetto' at the opening of verse 103 is identified in the Bologna recollectae as Louis IX. A brief description of the personal difficulties faced by Louis in his two crusades follows. The comment ends with the identification of the second shade as 'Guigliermum, regem Navarre, filium illius boni regis Thebaldi, ...' The commentary on these verses in the Ferrara recollectae is written in very similar terms. However, in his final redaction Benvenuto begins by noting that many people identify the king as Louis IX, but then goes on to deny this attribution, concluding with the correct identification of the shade as that of Philip III, the son of Louis IX. Serravalle, on the other hand, correctly identifies the shade: 'Ille nasutus fuit rex

61 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98ra.
62 Talice, Purgatorio, p. 93.
63 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 82rb.
64 Benvenuto, DDP, Purgatorio 7.103-111: 'Hic Sordellus nominat alios duos reges simul. Ad cognitionem primi oportet hic scire, quod multi dicunt, quod iste, qui mortuus est, deflorando lilium, fuit bonus Ludovicus Franciae rex, qui bis fecit passagium primo contra Soldanum in Aegyptum, ubi fuit captus et dimissus; secundo in Barbariam contra Tunitium, ubi amisit magnam partem exercitus
Philippus, rex Frantie, germanus Karoli primi, qui venit in Ytaliam, et qui interfecit regem Manfredum, et fuit rex Cicilie. He continues: 'Hic Philippus dicitur nasutus, quia habebat magnum nasum: vocabatur Philippus pulcher.' This is clearly open to criticism in that Philip III had a small nose, the Charles in question, i.e. Charles of Anjou, was the brother of Louis IX and, hence, Philip's uncle, and the epithet 'pulcher' is usually applied to Philip's son Philip IV. The relevant passages from the Ferrara *recollectae* and Serravalle's commentary are shown below for the purposes of comparison. It is clear that, while Serravalle correctly identifies 'quel nasseto' as Philip III, he then confuses matters by assigning to Philip, in very similar words to those to be found in the *recollectae*, the events around Damiatata and in Tunisia which were pertinent to the crusades of his father, Louis IX. Confusion concerning the genealogy of the French royal house seems to have been commonplace among the early commentators.

---

**Ferrara *recollectae***

*Et quello: [Pot] Ludovicum regem Francie, fratrem Carli primi qui venit in Ytaliam, qui fecit duo passagia, primum contra Soldanum in Egypto, ubi statim cepit Damatiam. Sed circumventus fuit in Nilo qui dicitur ibi El Caligino, qui fuit fractus [super se]. Unde coactus fuit dedere se et iurare numquam iret contra ipsum, et dimisit Corpus Christi sacratum in pignus. Postea fecit secundum in Barbariam, et coactus est adhuc recedere, et fuit infelix et ibi infirmatus est et mortuus est.*

**Serravalle***

*Hic (Philippus) fecit duo passagia ultra mare contra Saracenos: primum contra Soldanum in Egyptum, ubi expugnavit Damiatam, bonam civitatem Egypti; sed circumventus fuit ab inundatione Nili, que inundatio dicitur Calligo, et fuit ruptus fluvius super exercitum suum: unde fuit coactus reddere se, et iurare nunquam amplius ire contra Soldanum; et dimisit Soldano pro obside corpus Christi consecratum, sive in pignus fidei prestite. Secundo fecit suum passagium in Barbariam, et nec profecit, quia fuit coactus ex pestilentia, et ipse infirmatus, mortuus est in itinere. Sed nullo modo potest intelligi de praedicto, tum quia non est mortuus deflorando lilium, fugiens, tum quia iste fuit vir sanctus, et est positus in catalogo sanctorum; ideo non debet potius hic in numero negligentium. Dicendum est ergo, quod potius poeta loquitur de filio eius, qui vocatus est Philippus Nasellus.*

---

66 Ibidem.
68 The early commentaries available on the Database bear witness to the confusion in identifying 'quel nasseto'. Jacopo della Lana (1324-28): ‘Quel nasetto: questo fu lo re Filippo di Francia, ch'era nasello, il quale fu prodissimo uomo; morìo in caccia, chè uno porco cinghiaro lo scontrò.’ In this case Philip III is confused with his son Philip IV. L'Ottimo Commento (1333): ‘E quel nasetto: Questi fu il buono re Lodovico di Francia … Anzi fue questo Filippo re di Francia, il quale mosse la guerra contro a Piero d'Araona … Questa chiosa è tratta di diverse chiose; però pare varia.' Pietro Alighieri (3) (1359-64): ‘… item umbra regis Phylippi nasecti, filii Lodoyci regis Francie canonizati olim in sanctum … Item scendum est quod iste dictus Phylippi cum exercitu potentissimo invasit regnum Aragone …’ The correct identification of the shade contrasts with the confused gloss to be found in Pietro's first redaction of 1340-42.
69 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 82rb.
71 Possibly 'ponit' is intended.
72 'ad' in the text, but should surely read 'ab'.
Philip III, urged on by his wife Mary of Brabant and his uncle Charles of Anjou, recklessly entered into a war with Aragon, which failed disastrously with Philip dying miserably when in full retreat at Perpignan on 5 October 1285.73 This account would be a better fit for Dante's comment of verse 105: 'mori fuggendo e disfiorando il giglio.' The description, applied to the other shade, identifies Henry I, the Fat, king of Navarre from 1270-74, who was the son of Thibaut I and brother of Thibaut II whom he succeeded.74 His daughter Jeanne married Philip the Fair and, hence, he and Philip could be described in Dante's words in verse 109 as 'Padre e suocero son del mal di Francia'. The comments of Serravalle and Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae75 concerning the identification of this shade are similar but unreliable.

The references to the failure of Louis IX's crusades outlined above serve as an indication of the strength of feeling roused by the failure of the Christian world to retake possession of the Holy Land. Naturally, a reason for this failure was sought, and, certainly, enmity towards the Templars in some quarters appears to have been quite long standing.76

Among the points made, probably the most significant is the collapse of the Christian military position in the states bordering the Holy Land, culminating in the loss of Acre in 1291.77 This, naturally, lead to speculation that the military Orders had outlived their usefulness. Nevertheless, military action to recover the Holy Land was still an option in fourteenth century Europe.78

Criticism of the Templars certainly dated back to the twelfth century.79 For example, John of Salisbury, writing about the failure of the Christian army under Louis VII at Damascus in 1148, notes:80 'Celebre est intervenisse prodicionem et circumventum esse Christianissimum regem; quod alii Templariis diu imposuerunt, alii vero hiis quos amor patrie revocabat; sed rex fratres Templi semper studuit excusare.' Perhaps of even

73 Fawtier, p. 38.
74 Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, p. 152.
75 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 83va.
76 Helps, pp. 116-118.
78 Hallam and Everard, p. 412.
79 Helps, p. 117.
more relevance to the present discussion is the chronicle of the Benedictine monk Matthew Paris. Matthew Paris was well informed, with one of his informants being especially critical of a speech attributed to Robert I of Artois, the brother of Louis IX, at the time of the military disaster around Damietta in 1250. These intemperate remarks, which arguably contributed greatly to the defeat of the Crusaders, are clearly indicative of the general mistrust in which the Templars and the other military Orders were held. However, it is clear that Philip, who had been engaged in military activity for much of his reign, was perpetually in need of finance to support his next campaign. This is confirmed by Giovanni Villani, who was in Flanders between 1302 and 1307 on behalf of the Peruzzi Company, and who was in a position to comment on Philip's devaluation of the currency. After the disastrous defeat at the Battle of Courtrai in 1302, Philip resorted to further devaluation and increased taxation for a renewal of military action in Flanders, of which Villani provides considerable detail. Villani also confirms the recall of Charles de Valois from Italy in response to the defeat at Coutrai.

Philip was not alone in his need of money to support what he regarded as France's legitimate interests. Edward I of England, for example, appropriated the lands of priories in England that owed obedience to French monasteries in 1295 after war had broken out between England and France. The ruthless efficiency, with which the Order of the Temple in France was despoiled of its wealth, suggests that the planning for the operation was of long standing. Philip always chose to act under the cloak of at least pseudo legality, and he prevailed upon Pope Clement to dissolve the Order in 1312. However, he bore the

---

81 Helps, p. 117.
82 Ibidem.
83 Matthew Paris, Chronicles, ed., tr., and with an introduction by Richard Vaughan (Gloucester and New York: Alan Sutton, St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 2-5: 'See the time-honoured treachery of the Temple! […] What deceit, hidden for a long time, now appears openly in our midst! This is what we predicted long ago in a prophecy which has now come true. The whole of the East would have been conquered long ago had it not been for the Templars and Hospitallers who call themselves religious, who have hindered us, the laymen with their deceit. … For the Templars and their associates, who are fattened by ample revenues, are afraid that, if the country is subjected to Christian laws, their supremacy will come to an end.'
84 Helps, p. 118. It has been argued that, once the reason for their existence had ostensibly vanished, no monarch would really want a military Order in possession of huge wealth and owing allegiance to the Pope, present on their territory.
85 Helps, p.58.
86 Villani, p. 411: 'E per fornire le spese della cominciata guerra di Fiandra lo re di Francia, per male consiglio di messer Biccio e Musciatto Francesi nostri contadini, si fece peggiorare e falsificare la sua moneta …'
87 Villani, p. 416.
88 Ibidem: '… e in Italia mandò per messer Carlo di Valos suo fratello, che rimossa ogni cagione dovesse tornare in Francia; e così fece poco appresso.'
89 M. H. Keen, p. 215.
responsibility for the actions of his officials, which he, on his death bed, acknowledged. Maurice Keen, quoting from the poem *Piers Plowman* by William Langland written in the later years of the fourteenth century, demonstrates that few were convinced by the official explanations for the appropriation of Church wealth:

> Both rich and religious that rood they honour  
> That on groats is engraven and on gold nobles.  
> For covetousness of that cross men of Holy Church  
> Shall turn as Templars did: the time approacheth fast.\textsuperscript{91}

In commenting on the closing verses of Hugh Capet's denunciation of the behaviour of his descendants (verses 94-96), both writers start by setting out the same vehicle for comparison.

**Ferrara recollectae:** Ista littera est fortis quando accidit quod quis fecit tibi iniuriam et tu vides quod facturus ita visurus es vindictam, tu gaudes in mente tua, dicens: Solvam sibi certissime. Ita dicit iste, quando gaudebo facere vel videre vindictam que facit dulcem iram tuam in tuo secreto.

**Serravalle**\textsuperscript{93}

Ista littera est difficilis: pro qua intelligenda notandum est, quod quando aliquis recipit iniuriam ab aliquo, et videt de proximo vindictam, gaudent in mente sua. Ita fecit Deus, qui noscit omnia futura. Tunc, quando Deus offenditur et ipse Deus prescit vindictam de proximo faciendam, in secreto, sive in arcano consilio, Dei, fit dulcis ira ipsius Dei, idest placatur.

The comparison itself is identical in both commentaries, and it is not to be found in Dante's text. Serravalle, while improving on the explanation, takes the opportunity to make reference to God's vengeance. Both commentators later write that Philip's death in a hunting accident is attributable to God's vengeance, and both also note the early deaths of Philip's three sons and the public condemnation of two of their wives as adulteresses, with Serravalle's account being the more concise. Benvenuto concludes with: ' ... et dominus Francie venit ad Karolum Senza Terra qui factus est rex, etc.'\textsuperscript{94} Serravalle, also erroneously, writes: ' ... ita quod regnum postea devenit ad Karolum Sineterra.'\textsuperscript{95} Charles died in 1325, thereby predeceasing his nephew Charles IV who died in 1328. Hence, the kingdom of

\textsuperscript{90} Helps, pp. 113-118. Fawtier, p.38, quotes from a communication to the King of Aragon, dated 7 December 1314: 'Et inter cetera dixit et recognovit defectus et vitia sua et quod in multis erraverat et offenderat Deum, malo consilio ductus, et quod ipsum erat causa mali consilli sui.'

\textsuperscript{91} M. H. Keen, pp. 214-216.

\textsuperscript{92} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98ra.

\textsuperscript{93} Serravalle, *DDP, Purgatorio* 20.94-96.

\textsuperscript{94} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 98ra.

\textsuperscript{95} Serravalle, *DDP, Purgatorio* 20.94-96.
France passed to the son of Charles de Valois who assumed the title of Philip VI of Valois.

Canto XXXII is set in Earthly Paradise. The procession has returned and stopped at the 'symbolic' tree. There is a description of detrimental effects on the chariot, representing the Catholic Church, due to the activities of the 'eagle', the 'fox' and the 'dragon', while the verses of 142-147 refer to the hideous distortion that the chariot has undergone, with the subsequent verses continuing this theme of decay. The allegory behind 'il carro', 'la puttana' and 'il drudo' has been discussed in an earlier study.96

Ferrara recollectae97

Sicura: ostendi et dicit quod inspiciendo [super] veniebat femina lubrica et lascivia et vana que stabat in illo curru et volvebat se cum gygante magno et commicebat adulterium cum illo osculando. Quando ipsam inspexit, gygas indignatus verberavit eam99 et traxit eam in potestatem longinquam. Ista meretrix est pessima prelacio pastorum et specialiter intelligit [ipsa] de Bonefacio. Gygas est rex Francie, potentissimus omnium regum ad cuius postulationem fiebat Papa. Sed ipsa inspicit Dantem, idest Bonifatius inspexit Ytalias, quia Dantes erat Ytalicus, et venit in Ytalias et ipse secutus est eam quia insecutus est Bonifatium per Sciarram de Columpna et traxit currum quia ex hoc omnis mutata est Curia ultra montes. Et basiavisi: Quia aliquando Bonifatius fuit amicus regis Phylippi et inde inimicus est sibi et ideo dicit quod iratus traxit currum et duxit eam meretricem ultra montes ita quod non poterat eam videre propter loci distantiam, etc.

Purgatorio 32.148-150

Secura, quasi roccha, idest archez, in alto monte, sedere super ipso, scilicet monstro, una meretrix dissoluta michi apparuit, cum superciliiis circumpromptis, idest [in]verecundis et inhonestis.

Purgatorio 32.151-153

Et, ad hoc ut sibi non esset ablata, vidi sedere prope ipsam unum gygantem, et osculabantur se invicem aliquando. Vult dicere auctor quod dum respiceret sic in circum, supervenit una femina lubrica et lasciva, que stabat in illo curru cum illo gygante. Osculabantur aliquando se invicem, idest meretricabantur et commictebant adulterium. Ista meretrix et femina pexima, secundum istum auctorem, est prelacio Ecclesie pastorum, sive potestas; et specialiter intelligebat tunc auctor de prelatione Bonifacii octavi. Gygas erat rex Francie, ad cuius nutum fiebant summi pontifices.

Purgatorio 32.154-156

Sed quia oculos cupidum et vagantem, idest vagabundum, ad me convertit, scilicet illa meretrix, ille ferox drudus suus, idest amasius, illam flagellavit a capite usque ad plantas. Sed quando prelacio Bonifacii respexit Dantem, idest Ytalias, quia [rex] volebat [papam] stare extra Ytaliam, ipse persecutus est eam, et percussit, quando [per]

96 Helps, chapter 7, pp. 94-106.
97 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 115va.
98 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 32.148-156.
99 'eum' in the text.
Among the early commentators on the *Commedia* there is ready acceptance that the transformation of the chariot represents the degeneration of the Church from the ideals of its foundation to the corrupt institution of Dante's lifetime. Similarly, the harlot is considered to be symbolic of the excesses of the generally self-serving papacy of the later thirteenth century and early fourteenth century. The giant is sometimes identified as the House of France, but in most of the early commentaries is directly linked with Philip the Fair.¹⁰⁰ Both Benvenuto and Serravalle, as the extracts reproduced above clearly indicate, adopt the conventional identification of the giant with Philip the Fair.

Both Serravalle and Benvenuto provide similar commentaries on the verses of *Purgatorio* XXXIII.34-36. The references to France concentrate on the death of Philip the Fair, followed in quick succession by the deaths of his three sons. Both commentators make the mistake of claiming that the succession passed to Charles de Valois, while in reality it passed to his son, who became king as Philip VI of Valois. Benvenuto and Serravalle reject the suggestion that Pope Boniface VIII, having allegedly obtained the Papacy by fraud in encouraging Pope Celestine V to resign, was not truly a pope in that Celestine's resignation was not in some eyes canonically possible. Benvenuto writes:¹⁰¹ '... nam licet renuntiaverit Celestinus papatum, non est res nova. Nam Clemens primus etiam renuntiavit.' Similarly, Serravalle comments:¹⁰² 'Quia si Celestinus renuntiavit, hoc potuit facere. Sic enim fecit Clemens primus.' However, very little is known about Clement, and even his martyrdom is deemed 'legendary'.¹⁰³ It has been shown that both commentators tend to follow Dante's

¹⁰⁰ Helps, pp. 100-104. However, see *L'Ottimo Commento* (1333), *Purgatorio* 32.148-150 and 157-160: '... e quale era il suo drudo Bonifazio, e non ligittimo sposo, secondo l'oppinione di molti.' Also, the comment on verse 157, 'd'ira crudo', would certainly fit Boniface, who was known to be choleric of temper, rather than Philip the Fair. The author of the *Ottimo Commento* also writes, referring to the giant, 'questo drudo della romana Corte dilunga la Chiesa dall'albero', thereby implying that it was Boniface who was responsible for dragging the chariot into the wood. Clearly, if the commentary of the *Ottimo Commento* be correct, these verses would have little direct effect on a discussion as to the influence of the French monarchy on Church matters.

¹⁰¹ Florence, BML, Ashburnham 839, fol. 115vb and 115ra.

¹⁰² Serravalle, *DDP. Purgatorio* 33.34-36.

¹⁰³ Britannica.com/biography/Saint-Clement-I, accessed 24/05/2018
critical assessment of the French monarchy and his negative opinions concerning their influence on the Italian politics of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Attention is now given to the poet's assessment of the relations between England and France after *la gran dote provenzale* which so distressed Hugh Capet, and the consequent interpretations of the two commentators.

### 3. Dante and England

In general, Dante is much less critical of the Plantagenet dynasty of England than he is of the Capetian dynasty of France. This probably reflects the minimal impact which English domestic politics and even the politics of the Anglo-French rivalries had on events pertaining to the Italian peninsula. There are criticisms relating to the failure to maintain peace with Scotland, but in the main Dante's purpose seems to be to paint the English monarchy as a victim of French duplicity. Although England and France were at war throughout the majority of Dante's political career, Dante makes no reference to any political inferences that may be drawn.

The verses of *Inferno* XII.118-120 relate to the murder of Henry of Cornwall at Viterbo in 1271.\(^{104}\) The source for the commentaries of Benvenuto is probably the *Nuova Cronica* of Giovanni Villani.\(^{105}\) Serravalle provides a very lengthy commentary with geographical allusions to England and an outline of the historical events leading up to the presence of Guy de Montfort at Viterbo. Similar descriptions are to be found in the two *recollectae* of Benvenuto and in his final redaction. Both commentators provide a description of the murder of Henry and the subsequent transportation of his body for burial in England.

#### Ferrara *recollectae*\(^{106}\)

Corpus autem Henrici in Angliam latus est. Ibique in quadam capella super Tamesis [flumen] in civitate Londre que olim dicebatur Trinonantum; in qua capella reges omnes sepelliuntur ponitum est.

#### Serravalle\(^{107}\)

Corpus nobilis Henrici sepultum est in Anglia, in civitate Londoniarum, que antiquo tempore vocabatur Trinonantum, et etiam tempore Cesaris, in uno monasterio monachorum, quod vocatur Westmonasterium. In cuius monasterii ecclesia est pulcherrimus chorus, demum pulcherrima cappella, in cuius circum sunt sepulture

---


\(^{105}\) Villani, pp. 288-290.

\(^{106}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 35v.

\(^{107}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 12.118-120.
regum et regalium, inter quas est sepulchrum in quo sepultum est corpus predicti nobilis, scilicet Henrici.

The account of Serravalle and that of the Ferrara recollectae are the only two glosses which refer to 'Trinonantum', while Serravalle's reference to the 'pulcherrimus chorus' might suggest that he had actually visited the chapel.\textsuperscript{108} There are inaccuracies in the accounts of Villani, Benvenuto and Serravalle. The King of England at the time of the Battle of Evesham in 1265 was Henry III (died 1272) and his army was commanded by his son, the future Edward I. Henry of Cornwall was the first cousin of Guy and his brother Simon who was also involved in the murder.\textsuperscript{109} The assassination was carried out in revenge for the killing of the brothers' father, Simon de Montfort, at the battle of Evesham and the subsequent desecration of his corpse. As Singleton reports, the murder took place in the church of San Silvestro at Viterbo in 1271 during the assembly of cardinals to elect a successor to Pope Clement IV.\textsuperscript{110} Both commentators provide a simple description of the events, but the main emphasis is on the scandal itself, namely its timing and place, rather than on attempting to draw any political conclusions.

In the ninth bolgia of the eighth circle the sowers of discord are punished. Here Dante, the pilgrim, encounters the shade of Bertran de Born. In his commentary on Inferno XXVIII.133-135 Singleton notes that Bertran was a soldier and troubadour.\textsuperscript{111} Historically, little is known about Bertran's part in the revolt of Prince Henry against his father Henry II of England, with the source of Dante's information being identified as an old Provençal biography.\textsuperscript{112} Although Henry II was an accomplished ruler, he had considerable difficulties controlling the ambitions of his four sons whose disloyal actions were encouraged by their mother Eleanor of Aquitaine. Henry's difficulties were successfully exploited by Louis VII and by Philip II Augustus, culminating in Fawtier's assessment that 'Le 6 juillet 1189 Henry II mourait de chagrin.'\textsuperscript{113} Therefore, it is likely that Bertran's part in provoking any rebellious conflict between father and sons was probably minimal.

Both commentators write at length on verses 133-135. It has to be

\textsuperscript{108} Serravalle relates how he passed through the Straits of Gibraltar 'quando redibam de regno Anglie ad partes Italie per mare.' Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 20.127-130.
\textsuperscript{110} Singleton, Inferno 2: Commentary, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{111} Singleton, Inferno 2: Commentary, p. 521.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{113} Fawtier, pp. 136-140.
acknowledged that there are inaccuracies of historical fact in the main commentaries on
these verses up to and including Serravalle's commentary. The essential details may be
summarized as follows. As a historical fact, Richard I produced no legitimate son. The
king, to whom reference is made, must be Henry II. Henry's second son, also named Henry,
was crowned twice during his father's lifetime and was generally known as 'the Young
King'.\textsuperscript{114} His father's refusal to hand over some of the lands in France, which were part of
his heritage, provoked open hostility between father and son until the younger Henry's
death in 1183 of fever.\textsuperscript{115} The early commentaries up to the time of Guglielmo Maramauro
are very short, and the historical detail is minimal. There is usually a reference to the
'Young King', but there is also confusion between Henry (the Young King) and his brother,
later to become King John. There is also a difficulty concerning the Young King's father,
with Graziolo Bambaglioli opting for Richard, Guido da Pisa for Edward, the \textit{Ottimo
Commento} for Richard and Maramauro, correctly, for Henry. The \textit{Ottimo Commento}
provides a typical brief gloss on these verses.\textsuperscript{116} Similar errors are to be found in the Ferrara
\textit{recollectae} and in the commentary of Serravalle, as is revealed in the extracts shown below.

\textbf{Ferrara \textit{recollectae}}\textsuperscript{117}

\textit{al re giovane i mal conforti}: Ut non procedam obscure. Notatur: Quis fuerit iste rex? Ricardus de Anglia
habuit filium suum dictum regem Johannem, sed vulgariter dicebatur rex Iovene. Iste cum esset puer, fuit
missus a patre Parisius ad curiam regis Francie ut ibi fieret valens.

\textbf{Serravalle}\textsuperscript{118}

Nunc facit auctor mentionem de uno alio spiritu qui seminavit maximum scandalum et scysma
inter patrem et filium. Iste fuit miles nobilis de Anglia; aliqui dicunt, quod fuit de Vasconia. Qui diu
habuit curam de uno filio regis Ricardi, regis Anglie. Pro quo sciendo, notandum est, quod quidam serenisissimus rex Anglie,
Ricardus nomine, inter alios habuit unum filium generosum valde, qui vocabatur rex Ioannes, vulgariter
dicebatur rex Iovene. Hunc filium suum dictus rex Ricardus, rex Anglie, cum predicto milite, qui
vocabatur dominus Beltramus de Bornio, misit ad Frantiam et ad

\textsuperscript{114} Singleton, \textit{Inferno} 2: Commentary, pp. 521-522.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{L'Ottimo Commento} (1333), \textit{DDP, Inferno} 28.134-136; 'Fu dunque costui, ch'è cosi diviso,
Beltramo dal Bornio, uomo sottile, e valoroso in arme, e fu signore d'uno castello in Inghilterra nome
Altafort: fue prima del consiglio del buono re Riccardo d'Inghilterra; e famigliarissimo; poi s'apogió
al re Giovanni figliuolo del detto re Riccardo, intra quali seminò tanto scandalo, che il giovane re si
rubellò dal padre, con lui lungamente guerreggiò; finalmente nella detta guerra da lo sforzo del suo
padre fu morto.'
\textsuperscript{117} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 65v.
\textsuperscript{118} Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 28.133-135.
Benvenuto's glosses in the two *recollectae* and Serravalle's gloss on these verses are substantial with the same anecdotes being used by both authors. If account be taken of the tendency of Benvenuto to amplify the gloss as he moved from the Bologna *recollectae* to the Ferrara *recollectae* and Serravalle's inclination to enforce his own personality on his commentary, it is relatively straightforward to detect a natural progression from the earlier *recollectae* through to Serravalle's commentary. However, in his final redaction Benvenuto provides a much shorter commentary which is closer to historical fact. An interesting solution to the problem of the differing interpretations of the historical facts has been proposed by Nicola Fosca, who suggests that the confusion might have been caused by the irregular accentuation to be found in verse 135.

In *Purgatorio* XX verses 64-66 Dante indirectly makes a reference to the consequences of the rebellious activities of Henry's four sons against their father as evidence of France's arrogant behaviour subsequent to the acquisition of Provence.

While the issues concerning the status of Ponthieu and Gascony were a matter of dispute between Edward I and Philip the Fair, the aftermath of Philip's defeat at Courtrai in 1303 forced the French king to make peace with Edward. However, Normandy had fallen to France during the reign of Philip Augustus in 1204, some forty years before the union of Provence with France in 1246, although the English did not formally renounce their claim until some time later, with Edward III using Normandy as a pretext for invading France in...
Neither Benvenuto in his three redactions nor Serravalle in his Comentum offer any further explanation of Dante's text other than a simple acceptance of the poet's version.

In Paradiso XIX.118-123 the discussion has moved to circle VI where the Eagle speaks of the 'male azioni di principi cristiani'. Firstly, Philip the Fair is criticized for his decision to devalue the French currency so that he could fund a new campaign in Flanders after the French defeat at Courtrai in 1302. Then the Kings of England and Scotland are censured for their inability to coexist without resorting to military action. A discussion on these topics, including the identity of the English king concerned, can be found in the commentary of Bosco and Reggio. The glosses of Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae and Serravalle are reproduced below for the purposes of comparison.

Ferrara recollectae


Serravalle

Modo loquitur de Philippo, rege Frantie, qui fecit fieri monetam falsam supra Sennam. Senna est fluvius, qui fluit per Parisius. Hic, dum iret venatum, fuit interfectus ab uno apro silvestro; et quia aper habet duram pellem et setosam, ideo auctor vocat hic porcum silvestrem, sive aprum, cotennam. Ibi videbitur in illo libro criminum, dolus, scilicet fraus, quem supra Sennam, idest Parisium, civitatem per quam fluit Senna (nomen fluvi), inducit, falsificando monetam, ille, scilicet rex Philippus, qui morietur de culpo cotenne; idest de ictu cutis, quia aper, qui habet cotennam, idest cuticam, interficiet eum.

Paradiso 19.121-123

Modo vult dicere de regibus Anglie, scilicet Eduardo, et Scotie, qui voluerunt acquirere ultra sortem ipsorum; et dicit quod superbia ipsorum facit eos stultos, quia non sunt contenti de dominiis ad ipsos pertinentibus, sed voluerunt extendere se ultra metas eorum. Ibi videbitur superbia que sitire facit, vel sitibundum reddit et facit, Scotum et Anglicum fatuam,

---

121 Singleton, Purgatorio 2: Commentary, pp. 480-483.
122 Bosco and Reggio, Paradiso, pp. 353-354.
123 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 158v.
124 Serravalle. DDP, Paradiso 19.118-123.
It is readily seen that Benvenuto's commentary, although much shorter, is the source of the basic facts which are to be found in Serravalle's commentary. Dante's interpretation of the French influence on Italian politics is invariably hostile. Therefore, the main vehicle for this expression of hostility would be expected to involve historical figures whom the poet has located in Hell. The poet chose to place Hugh Capet, the founder of the Capetian dynasty and against whom he had no reproach, in Purgatory. This choice caused much of Dante's criticism concerning the later members of the dynasty to be recounted in Purgatorio XX. The account involving the confusion of Philip III with the crusader Louis IX probably owes its inclusion in Purgatorio VII to the acknowledged saintly reputation of Louis. In 1297 Pope Boniface VIII recognized Louis IX as a saint. The canonization, as Fawtier acknowledges, was no doubt in recognition of the king's qualities, but it was also the result of diplomatic pressure exercised by his grandson Philip the Fair. In the setting of Heaven it would be expected that there would be fewer candidates suitable for conveying Dante's condemnation of the actions of the French kings. The references in Paradiso XIX outlined above are simply part of a catalogue of events where the questionable actions of the perpetrators resulted in unforeseen consequences detrimental to the people that ideally they were supposed to serve.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the material in this chapter is that the relationship between Benvenuto's recollectae and Serravalle's Comentum shows the same pattern as that highlighted in previous chapters. The second conclusion is that there is no evidence that the dramatic events, unfolding at the Council of Constance, played any part in Serravalle's thought processes as he wrote his commentary on those sections of the Commedia where Dante is exploring his own thoughts concerning the influence of the French Royal House on contemporary politics. There is no evidence that either Serravalle or Benvenuto really understood the history behind the negative effects on Western European politics of the constant friction between the Capetian dynasty of France and the Plantagenet dynasty of England which had endured almost constantly from the date of the Norman conquest of England. The influence of Henry V of England, with his successful military campaign in France during the timespan of the Council, the forceful position in the business of the Council taken by the English delegation under Robert Hallum, Bishop

---

125 Fawtier, p. 60.
of Salisbury, and the subtle influence of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, the uncle of Henry V and effectively Hallum's replacement, on the election of Pope Martin V, must have been evident to all. In addition, the Emperor Sigismund was absent on diplomatic business from the Council from 17 July 1415 to 17 January 1417. During this period, Sigismund visited England, and, as Cardinal Fillastre notes in his diary, shortly after his return to Constance he 'publicly announced that he intended to declare war on the French King and drew up a declaration of war.'\textsuperscript{126} Cardinal Fillastre continues with an account of the severe implications for the Council if an official declaration of war were to be delivered to the French King.\textsuperscript{127} In other words, even though he was not present in person at the Council, the influence of Henry V was a potent and omnipresent factor in the Council's deliberations. Nevertheless, neither commentator seems to have made any effort to interpret Dante's views in the context of the politics, either of Dante's own time or of their own lifetime.

\textsuperscript{126} Loomis, p. 327.
\textsuperscript{127} Loomis, pp. 328-329.
Chapter 6

Heresy, Schism, Simony and Reform of the Church

In this chapter attention is focussed on three themes, namely heresy, schism and Church reform which, unlike the topics discussed in chapters four and five, were definitely part of the Council’s agenda. Although the beginning of the Western Schism is formally dated to 1378, and therefore just pre-dates Benvenuto’s final redaction, the heresies under investigation at Constance came into prominence after Benvenuto’s death, although their origins could probably be traced to earlier events. It would seem not unreasonable to expect the bishop of Fermo to make some reference to the ongoing problems provoked by current heresies as he commented in his glosses on Dante's interpretation of past heretical practices. In addition, Dante's criticisms of some aspects of papal behaviour, particularly those involving simony, seemed to be pertinent a century later. As C.M.D. Crowder puts it: 'The spirit of gain was more prominent than the gaining of spirits.' While the need for reform of the Church was widely recognized, finding the collective will to effect a solution proved to be difficult. Since Serravalle is not adverse to embellishing glosses in the Comentum with his personal anecdotes, it is considered possible, therefore, that some links may be found relating to the Council’s proceedings and, also, that some points of divergence may be established between the recollectae and the bishop's commentary.

The methodology adopted in the previous chapters, whereby key words are identified and matches obtained via the DDP database, continues to be applicable. Key cantos for the discussion of heresy have been identified, in particular Inferno X, Inferno XIII and Paradiso XI and XII relating to heresy, while cantos Inferno XIX and Paradiso XXVII have important implications for the topic of simony. Section 1 provides an overview of information which will be of assistance in interpreting the context of the following sections. Attention is next given to the topic of heresy with this section being divided into five subsections. Firstly, the influence of Epicurus, in particular via the persona of Farinata degli Uberti and Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, is analysed. Secondly, in the circle of the violent through the medium of Pier della Vigna consideration is given to those who have committed violence against their own persons, i.e. the suicides, and to the difficulties raised by Pier's punishment with its overtones of heresy. The sowers of schism are next considered, with particular emphasis on the references to Mohammed to be found.

---

1 Crowder, p. 21.
in *Inferno* XXVIII and *Purgatorio* XXXII. The influence of Plato's *Timaeus*, with its suggestion that the Creator assigns a soul to a star at birth, to which the individual returns after completion of a satisfactory life, is investigated. The section concludes with the allusions to heresy to be found in *Paradiso* XI and XII being evaluated in the passages where St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura criticize the perceived shortcomings of their Orders. The following section is devoted to simony, a topic which is condemned in the strongest terms by both Dante and Serravalle. This is illustrated with particular reference to *Inferno* XIX and *Paradiso* XXVII where the conduct of popes Nicholas III, Boniface VIII, Clement V and John XXII is criticized. Where appropriate, attention is given to the topic of schism as an almost inevitable consequence of heresy. Finally, some discussion is provided in the final section on simony concerning those areas where the two commentators invoke the need for Church reform.

### 6.1 Serravalle and Church Reform

The Council began consideration of measures for reform of the Church within a few months of its formal opening. During the duration of the Council three reform commissions were appointed, the first in August 1415 after John XXIII's removal from office, the second in the summer of 1417, when the council had resolved to give priority to the election of a new pope, and the third was instituted by the new pope, Martin V, to assist him in finding an interim solution.\(^2\) However, as Crowder notes, the situation was exacerbated by the absence of Sigismund from Constance from mid-July 1415 until the end of January 1417. During this time Sigismund had mandated the Council that it was not permitted to take decisions which might impinge on what he considered his legitimate interests.\(^3\) Cardinal Fillastre comments on the lack of progress in his diary: 'Tanta fuit in hiis difficultas, quod nichil in materia reformacionis potuit fieri. Et fuit cessatum per mensem et amplius. Legati enim studiorum volebant, quod ad papam solum beneficiorum collacio pertineret, ut provideretur studentibus.'\(^4\) Eventually, in session 43 on 23 March 1418 certain statutes were promulgated on the reform of the Church concerning such topics as exemptions, unions and incorporations, intercalary fruits, simoniaes, dispensations, tithes and other duties, and the life and probity of clerics.\(^5\) Session 44 involved the venue for the next

---

\(^2\) Ibidem.

\(^3\) Ibidem.

\(^4\) Finke, p. 162.

\(^5\) Council of Constance 1414-18, *Papal Encyclicals Online*.
Council, and the final session on 22 April 1418 concerned the dissolution of the Council and the granting of indulgences.\(^6\)

It has already been noted in chapter 2 that Martin only arrived in Rome on 28 September 1420. Michael Ott acknowledges that Martin had an enormous programme of rebuilding Rome and re-establishing Church authority throughout the Papal States and Italy, and that he resorted to overwhelming the Colonna family with 'important civil and ecclesiastical offices'.\(^7\) Whatever the realities of the Pope's political and administrative difficulties, this recourse to what his critics would consider to be nepotism might well have seemed at odds with the ideals of Church reform. In view of his prominent position in the Italian nation it is likely that Serravalle was fully aware of the lack of progress being made in the proceedings outside of the formal sessions of the Council. However, all that can be said with any degree of certainty is that any formal resolutions endorsed by the Council in sessions 40 and 43 occurred too late to have had a direct influence on Serravalle's commentary.

The importance of Serravalle's homily 'Caro mea vere est cibus' preached at Constance on 18 June 1416 has already been noted in chapter 2. In this homily, Serravalle denounces the buying and selling of religious artefacts and benefices in the strongest terms, condemns the practice of simony and provides his own understanding of the motivation for those who engage in such practices: 'Propter execrabilem cupidinem fame et detestabilem desiderium episcopari, in sede episcopati presidere, primos accubitos in cenis habere et salutaciones in foro et ab omnibus vocari: Rabi! Quod quidem ... desiderium, scilicet papari vel episcopari non puto nec credo esse sine peccato mortali, nisi tale desiderium dirigatur et reguletur caritate vera.'\(^8\) When due allowance is made for the extravagant rhetorical style to be expected in a homily preached in the cathedral of Constance before a distinguished congregation, it is seen that the contents of the homily are in good agreement with the sentiments expressed by Serravalle when commenting on the verses of the Commedia concerning the failings of the contemporary Church.

Serravalle was clearly far removed from the popularly accepted stereotype of the humble Franciscan friar. Paolazzi, for example, is critical of what he sees as Serravalle's departures from the ideals of his Order, in particular noting: 'Già nell'aprile

---

\(^6\) Ibidem.
\(^8\) Teuwsen, pp. 21-22.
1410, in risposta a una petizione dell'interessato, Gregorio XII concedeva al vescovo Giovanni da Serravalle suo “cubicolare” (e dunque non residente nella diocesi) piena e libera licenza “testandi et ordinandi ac disponendi libere de omnibus bonis ad te pertinentibus, cuiuscumque quantitatis seu valoris fuerint, etiam si illa ex proventibus ecclesiasticis, seu ecclesiis tibi commissis ... ad te pervenerint et pervenient in futurum”.

It might be argued that Serravalle's petition to Pope Gregory, requesting that the revenues of the See of Fermo should be consigned to him, shows hints of hypocrisy when coming from a Franciscan. However, Paolazzi goes further, citing Serravalle's commentary on Purgatorio XXXII.124-129, in which Serravalle offers a justification for the acceptance of the donation of Constantine.  

Serravalle's defence of the Donation of Constantine is reproduced below. In it may be seen echoes of society's negative understanding of poverty, an acceptance of the failings of some members of the Church, but an endorsement of the behaviour of others, and culminating in a rejection of any notion that in the present circumstances the Church should forgo its temporal benefices.

Sed, salva reverentia auctoris et omnium aliorum, qui tenent opinionem auctoris, ego non sic credo, saltem pro isto tempore, quia adeo populus Christianus est depravatus et avaritie deditus, quod decimas solvere non vult, imo reges iam et domini volunt quod Papa remictat eis decimas et omnes introytus. Et ultra hoc, hodierna die pauperes omnio despiciuntur, et paupertas pro crimine existimatur, et sic sacerdotium in paupertate despicitur et contemnitur sine fallo. Praeterea, viri ecclesiastici sunt minus boni quam tempore Apostolorum, sunt minus exemplares, sunt minus perfecti, non sunt boni nominis, sicut deberent esse; et ideo si bona ecclesiariarum auferrentur ab ecclesiis, ecclesiastici nimis male starent, et oporteret viros ecclesiasticos deficiere, et sic deficeret cultus divinus. Praeterea, etsi sunt mali prelati, qui male vivunt et male expendunt bona Ecclesiarem, etiam multi sunt boni et qui bene vivunt et bene expendunt et bene dant pauperibus, sicut tenentur. Unde puto quod, pro certo, tempore isto nunc currenti, non expedit quod Ecclesia perdat bona sua, iura et possessiones, atque dominium, ullo modo.

There is a discernible aura of worldly cynicism in what he has written, with an implied...

---

9 Paolazzi, p. 12: 'Sbaglierebbe di grosso chi ritenesse che il neo eletto vescovo di Fermo portasse con sé una concezione politico-religiosa, se non proprio vicina a quella degli Spirituali francescani che un secolo prima negavano alla Chiesa il diritto di possedere domini e beni temporali, almeno in qualche modo informata ai grandi ideali di povertà e minorità che avevano infiammato l'esperienza di Francesco d'Assisi e della sua prima fraternità.


11 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 32.124-126.
condemnation of ecclesiastical misconduct by some prelates, and his assertion that the 'populus Christianus est depravatus et avaritie deditus' concords well with the contents of his homily and those parts of the commentary where he supports Dante's condemnation of simony and misconduct by some of the Church hierarchy. However, Serravalle's belief that the Church should not weaken its position in the contemporary world by renouncing its wealth and influence leads Paolazzi to concludes with: 'Con questo, Giovanni da Serravalle dichiara in una sola volta la sua distanza da un nodo centrale del pensiero politico di Dante, dal pauperismo francescano, e in definitiva da tutti coloro che in una Chiesa povera vagheggiavano non solo un più efficace annuncio apostolico, ma anche un più degno e santo “culto divino”.'

The reference to 'The Donation' in the Ferrara recollectae is limited to: 'Ponit persecutionem modo que secuta est propter dotationem Constantini.' The brevity of this gloss might reflect the difference in emphasis to be expected between a layman, such as Benvenuto, and a senior cleric, such as Bishop Serravalle. However, this is one of many terse comments in the manuscript on Purgatorio, which might be more reflective of the idiosyncratic note taking of Tedaldo della Casa, or possibly the 'author' of his source, than of the commentary delivered by Benvenuto in his lectures. Although the Donation was later proved to be a forgery, there can be little doubt that Dante and the two commentators accepted it to be genuine.

The foregoing discussion has tended to confirm the impression that Serravalle's concept of Church reforms was limited to the obvious abuses of patronage, the failure of high clerics to oversee their duties appropriately and the excessive greed of some members of the clergy. It would seem that he had no real interest in returning the Church to its roots. Whether this be from an entirely personal standpoint, or from his conception that the practical realities of the current political climate rendered such an idea impracticable, cannot be determined.

The interpretation of the ideals of poverty established by St. Francis was a matter of deep concern for the Franciscan movement. In 1210, Pope Innocent III verbally sanctioned St. Francis's Rule, but it was not until 1223 that Pope Honorius III gave official

---

12 Paolazzi, p. 13.
13 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 114rb.
14 Singleton, Inferno 2: Commentary, pp. 344-345: 'Lorenzo Valla, who flourished more than a century after Dante's death, proved the Donation to be a forgery: it is now thought to have been composed at the papal court or in France in the second half of the eighth century.'
approval for the Order, the reason for Innocent's concerns being the severity of the Rule.15
By 1300, the Franciscan movement was divided into two factions, the Spirituals who held
fast to the Order's founding ideals and the Conventuals who, while accepting the ideals of
poverty in principle, recognized that there was a need for an appropriate infrastructure if
the Order was to succeed in its mission. Nick Havely discusses the origins and the
development of these tensions.16 While Havely makes it clear in his introduction that he
wishes to avoid identifying Dante as a 'crypto-Spiritual',17 he successfully identifies the
influence of the concept of poverty in Dante's thinking throughout the Commedia, with the
emphasis being on the necessity for the Church to be seen to embrace St Francis's ideals
and to eschew worldly values.18 It is likely that the bishop of Fermo, at least in principle,
would also subscribe to these views. In Dante's case, whatever the deprivations of his
exile, it is very unlikely that he followed the lifestyle advocated by the Spirituals. From a
political point of view in accord with his belief in the separation of spiritual and temporal
authority, his main aim would probably have been to caution the Church against the
acquisition of such wealth and influence that it was seen as a threat to the temporal powers.
In the case of Serravalle, although he spent his career in environments ranging from
convents to palaces and he appears to have been well aware of the necessity of finance to
support the infrastructure necessary for an efficient operation, there is no evidence to
suggest that the acquisition of wealth and privilege was of concern to him.

In Paradiso XII.121-126 Dante, through the medium of St. Bonaventura, seems
to imply that a proper understanding of the Franciscan Rule lies between the opinions of
Ubertino da Casale, a noted Spiritual Franciscan, and those of Matteo or Matthew of
Acquasparta, a Paris-trained theologian, Minister General of the Order and ally of
Boniface VIII. 19 While Benvenuto's gloss on these verses is somewhat superficial,
Serravalle ends his comments with: 'Vult dicere, quod illi, qui sunt boni Fratres in Ordine
Sancti Francisci, sunt simplices, non illi qui sunt multum litterati, sicut fuerunt magnus
magister, scilicet Pater Ioannes de Casali, [et] magister Mattheus de Aquasparta, unde
veniunt tales ad Scripturam, quod unus illam fugit, et alius eam coartet.'20 When account
is taken of the diplomatic approach to be expected from the bishop of Fermo, it would

15 Singleton, Paradiso 2: Commentary, p. 203.
17 Havely, p. 2.
18 Havely, chapters 2, 3 and 4.
19 Havely, pp. 150-152.
It has already been noted in chapter 1 that the date of Serravalle's arrival at the Council of Constance cannot be determined with accuracy. However, in view of his closeness to Pope Gregory XII and his friendship with Carlo I Malatesta, it is likely that he arrived at Constance with Malatesta on 15 June 1415. Therefore, it is probable that Serravalle was not present when, in Session 8 on 4 May 1415, the Council issued the sentence against Wycliffe, listing forty-five of his articles, and noting that the doctrinal authorities at the University of Oxford had identified a further 260 instances of Wycliffe's departures from orthodoxy. Some of the forty-five articles addressed practices outside of purely theological considerations and had scope for considerable repercussions in the secular world and, by extension, in the world of the religious politics of the time. Of
particular interest to Serravalle might have been items 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, and 34 in the Council's list of Wycliffe's heresies, with their general hostile tone concerning religious orders being summed up by article 34 with its declaration that all the members of mendicant orders are heretics, and those who give them alms are excommunicated. The council formally declared Wycliffe a heretic and ordered his body to be exhumed and his remains scattered far from consecrated ground. On 6 July 1415 session 15, the Council condemned the 260 articles of John Wycliffe and pronounced sentence against John Hus, whose execution followed immediately. Session 21, held 30 May 1416, was devoted to the condemnation of Jerome of Prague as a heretic whose execution also followed immediately upon his condemnation. The concern with which the medieval Church regarded these heresies cannot be doubted.27

Michael Van Dussen, via recent access to Czech archives, has been able to construct a new approach to the history of the Great Schism of 1378-1417 as it impacted on the religious politics of Bohemia and England during this period. Van Dussen notes that 'England's alliance with Bohemia was negotiated in response to the eruption of schism in 1378'.28 Although Van Dussen downplays the role of Anne of Bohemia, Richard II's first queen who died in 1394, it is likely that, as Queen of England, she would have facilitated the exchange of culture between the two countries.29 Van Dussen argues for the existence of a courier network which enabled the transmission of documents in both directions.30

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, made serious efforts between 1407-1411 to exercise some control over the University of Oxford concerning Wycliffe's teachings, with the convocation of Canterbury in 1407 requiring 'a committee of twelve to assess the orthodoxy of Wycliffe's theological texts'.31 Perceived procrastination by the University induced the Archbishop 'to focus less ambiguously on Oxford as an important center of heretical activity'.32 Van Dussen sums up by noting that, up to the beginning of the Council of Constance, Wycliffe had never been condemned as a heretic. Although the

29 Van Dussen, pp 12-14.
30 Van Dussen, p. 69. On the 'traffic' between England and Prague Van Dussen notes: 'Wycliffe's doctrines began to receive a warmer reception in Prague during the 1390s when Jan Hus and others first encountered Wycliffe's metaphysical texts. Not long afterwards Jerome of Prague was at Oxford (c.1399-1401) and later claimed to have returned to Prague with Wycliffe's Dialogus, Triologus and two other texts on the Eucharist which he does not specify.'
31 Van Dussen, p. 96.
32 Ibidem.
Lollard problem had been a cause for concern in the reign of Henry IV, the failure of the Oldcastle revolt in January 1414 and Henry V's efficient dealing with the aftermath left Henry in a position to leave his kingdom in security in 1415 to campaign in France, with victory at Agincourt taking place on 25 October 1415, and again in 1417 and 1421. In effect, Lollardy went underground in England. Bishop Alnwick of Norwich conducted a vigorous prosecution of heretics in his diocese from 1428 to 1431, leading to the death of their leader, William White. Fears of England's heresy being reinforced by events in Bohemia inspired by the Hussite movement led to actions against heretics in Kent, Essex and Suffolk. The importance of Wycliffe to the Hussite movement was confirmed when Pope Martin V in 1427 ordered the sentence of the Council of Constance, concerning the exhumation of Wycliffe's body, to be carried out. In conclusion, the heresies, which were gaining ground in Bohemia and England, both drawing inspiration from the teachings of Wycliffe, were perceived as posing a serious threat to the Roman Church. Therefore, it is understandable that the Council of Constance took the action it did against John Hus, Jerome of Prague, and, posthumously, against John Wycliffe.

Against this background consideration will now be given in the sections that follow to Dante's treatment of heretics, especially in Inferno X, and schismatics, especially in Inferno XXVIII, and Serravalle's interpretation of the effects of the heresies identified. Serravalle's contributions are compared with those of Benvenuto in the Ferrara recollectae. While it is accepted that heresy, particularly a heresy which attracts a substantial number of adherents, inevitably leads to schism, in Dante's treatment of the schismatics in Inferno XXVIII schism is not always associated with questions of religious interpretation and, hence, some presumed schismatics, such as Bertran de Born, cannot be associated with the spread of heretical opinions deemed to be inimical to the Catholic Church. However, Fra Dolcino and his followers, while in effect setting up their own 'commune' embracing teachings and behavioural patterns distinct from Catholic orthodoxy and, in effect, provoking schism in the Christian ranks, undoubtedly were guilty of heretical beliefs. A more serious difficulty, to be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, involves the provision of an interpretation of the rationale behind Dante's inclusion of Mohammed and

33 Allmand, p. 125
34 Catto, pp. 113-115: 'Lollardy as a group of believers in direct succession to the circle of Wyclif cannot be shown to have survived 1428, when the last Oxford pupil of Peter Payne was brought to trial.', p. 114.
35 Lambert, p. 269.
36 Ibidem.
37 Ibidem.
Ali ibn-abi-Tālib among the schismatics. It is argued that, if the medieval Church believed that Mohammed was a Catholic cleric or had been directly exposed to an alternative Christian teaching preached by a renegade or disaffected Catholic cleric, then heretical doctrine, as far as it pertained to the Catholic Church, must be involved. On the other hand, Dante, following the accepted tradition concerning the foundation of Islam, might well have considered the rise of a religion, which had come to rival Christianity, as a tragic schism with severe consequences for Mankind.

In the first instance, consideration is given to the interpretations of allusions to heresy and schism to be found in the Ferrara recollectae and in the Comentum. Heretical doctrines, which often attracted regional support, were an obvious concern for the Catholic Church. While it has been established that such heresies might threaten the authority of the established leadership of the Church, they were potentially divisive when the Church needed to show a united front against a perceived common enemy, the Crusades being a particular example. In Serravalle's lifetime, such problems became acute, with the social unrest, which widespread heresy tended to provoke, becoming a major problem for the secular rulers. Benvenuto, writing some forty years earlier, could not know of the impact of the Lollard uprising in England and the Hussite rebellion in Bohemia, and, hence, one might expect to see some differences in treatment between the glosses of Benvenuto and Serravalle, with the latter being immersed in the socio-political problems surrounding the Council's deliberations.

6.2. Dante's Treatment of Heresy and Schism in the Commedia

It has been noted previously that, with the probable exception of session 8, it is very likely that Serravalle was present at Constance when the proceedings against heresy were being debated. He was probably at Constance when the sentence against John Hus was carried out, and he was certainly present when Jerome of Prague was condemned. On investigating Serravalle's commentary on the database of the Dartmouth Dante Project for matches with 'hereticus' and its corresponding case endings, and in a similar fashion for matches with 'heresis' and its case endings, at least 39 matches were found, with fourteen in Inferno, seven in Purgatorio and eighteen in Paradiso. It is proposed to disregard those matches which were found in Serravalle's introductory synopsis to each canto. This material is usually replicated in more detail when the commentator comes to provide the commentary
to the appropriate verses of the canto. Finally, analyses of those glosses where the reference to heresy is minimal and superficial will be omitted unless there are strong reasons for their inclusion. As a general comment, Serravalle restricts himself to a narrow interpretation focussing strictly on Dante's text. In particular, he avoids stepping outside of the time frame employed by Dante. This clearly has implications for the establishing of a link with the events taking place at the Council of Constance.

An early reference to heresy by the two commentators is to be found in the glosses referring to *Inferno* II.91-92 in which Beatrice explains to Virgil why she had no concerns about her descent into Hell. The two commentators note in similar terms Beatrice's immunity from the effects of heretical doctrines and philosophical subtleties. More significantly, Serravalle provides a long commentary on *Inferno* IX.112-117 in which he enlarges on Dante's description of the geographical features at Arles and Pola, and, again following the poet, comments on the similarity of the appearance of tombs submerged under water at these two sites with that of the unevenness of the appearance of the tombs in Dis. Commentary on the sight of fire descending on the tombs mirrors that of previous comments. However, both Benvenuto and Serravalle comment further.

**Ferrara recollectae**

Cupercula stant sic ad notandum quod potest [penire] usque ad ultimum diem vitae et potest redire ad unitatem Ecclesie. Sed quando positum est cuperculum, idest mortuus est, non est amplius penitentie locus in mundo quando vult redire ad fidem. Cremantur.

**Serravalle**

Stant sepulchra nondum clausa, in signum quod heretici usque ad mortem possunt penitere, et indulgendum est volentibus redire ad gremium Ecclesie; nec debent comburi nisi obstinati.

Although both Hus and Jerome of Prague were given the chance to recant, the comment merely represents standard procedure in trials relating to heresy. As might have been expected from an ecclesiastic, Serravalle comments further on the subject of heresy, offering the following judgement, which is not to be found in the *recollectae*: 'Ponuntur heretici in archis, sive sepulchris ad denotandum quod vitium heresis est communiter

---

38 Such references are to be found in the introductory synopses to *Inferno* 9, *Inferno* 10, *Purgatorio* 28, *Purgatorio* 32, and *Paradiso* 6, *Paradiso* 12. Although such references are often routine, sometimes they do provide focus. For example, in the *Nota to Paradiso* 6: 'Et dicit: Caesar fui et sum Justinianus, qui rectificavi leges. Et concedit se fuisse hereticum.' also in the *Nota to Purgatorio* 32: 'Postea supervenit una vulpis, et intravit in vehiculum, sed reprehensa a Beatrice, aufugit. Hec vulpis fuit heresis, quae pullulavit.'

39 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 28v.

occultum, sepultum quasi occulte in mentibus hereticorum.\footnote{Ibidem.} This, of course, is indicative of the secretive behaviour of many heretics, hardly surprising in view of the penalties they potentially faced if their beliefs came to the notice of the Church authorities.

In his gloss on the verses of Inferno IX.124-133 Serravalle names several proponents of early heresies in the Christian Church, namely Epyentus, Arius, and Sabellius, who were far removed from his own time, for example Arius (c. AD 250-336). In addition, he later identifies an earlier figure, Epicurus, whose teachings still had relevance in Dante's era. The three redactions of Benvenuto offer routine glosses on these verses, with some proponents of early heresies, such as Nestorius, Arrius, Faustus and Fotinus being named in Benvenuto's final redaction. Neither commentator dwells on the nature of the heresies. However, it is particularly striking that Serravalle limits himself to these historic heresies and makes no mention of the contemporary heresies that took up so much of the Council's time at Constance. The reference to Epicurus in Serravalle's commentary is limited to a comment on verse 129, namely: 'Carche: idest plene, quia in qualibet est princeps cum tota sua sequela, ut cum Epicuro omnes Epicurei.'\footnote{Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 9.124-133.} while in the Ferrara recollectae on the same verse Benvenuto comments: 'Carche: quia in qualiter est princeps cum tota sua sequela, idest cum omnes Epicuri sunt cum Epicurro.'\footnote{Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 28v.} While both commentators make a similar reference to Epicurus, Dante himself does not mention Epicurus by name until canto X.

6.2.1. Farinata, Cavalcante and Epicurean Philosophy

George Corbett has produced a recent study on Dante's reception of Epicurean philosophy.\footnote{George Corbett, Dante and Epicurus, A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment (London: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2013).} In his introduction, Corbett notes that Dante, the committed Christian, believed in the immortality of the soul, wrote the Commedia as a vehicle for depicting a vision of the afterlife and God's divine justice, considered Christianity as providing a path to eternal salvation and believed in the Creation and Divine Providence.\footnote{Corbett, p.1.} This is contrasted with Epicurus, a pagan philosopher, who taught that the soul was mortal, who sought to liberate mankind from the fear of death and consequent final judgement, who considered the concept of religion to be a superstition devised by the wise to control those
uneducated in the use of reason and who believed that the world, having neither beginning nor end, consisted of indivisible atoms which collide arbitrarily in an infinite vacuum.\textsuperscript{46} Therefore, it would seem entirely appropriate for Dante to pay serious attention to the teachings of Epicurus, particularly since it was widely believed that prominent figures of his own time held such heretical beliefs. However, as Corbett notes, all the Epicureans named in \textit{Inferno} are prominent thirteenth-century citizens whom Dante clearly held in respect.\textsuperscript{47} Drawing on the general acceptance of the Epicurean school for its 'education of man's distinctively rational nature', Corbett suggests that in this sense Epicurus is for Dante an ethical ally.\textsuperscript{48} By highlighting Dante's dualistic approach, typified by the separation of man's temporal and spiritual 'existences', Corbett considers that the Epicurean, as far as Dante is concerned, can only aim for 'human nobility' as the limit of his secular aspirations.\textsuperscript{49} Such reasoning leads Corbett to suggest that the limbo of the virtuous pagans, described in \textit{Inferno} IV, represents man's secular goal.\textsuperscript{50} The exclusion of the Epicureans from the body of the virtuous pagans is consistent with an understanding that Epicureans, even if demonstrably virtuous, totally rejected the concept of the afterlife.

Corbett traces, from pre-Christian times, the generally hostile criticism of aspects of the natural philosophy attributed to Epicurus, while noting that Epicurus himself was generally considered to have been a morally upright person.\textsuperscript{51} However, citing in support the Roman poet Horace, Corbett notes that '… a misinterpretation of the Epicurean doctrine of \textit{voluptas} – to signify merely the pursuit of purely sensual pleasure – appears to have assailed Epicurean ethics from its inception.'\textsuperscript{52} Serravalle's description in the introductory note to \textit{Inferno} X represents the simplistic understanding of the philosophy of Epicurus displayed by many commentators: 'Ymo posuit felicitatem in voluptibus, credens animam mori cum corpore et non esse perpetuam'.\textsuperscript{53} By his personal example it is clear that Epicurus did not imply that the mortality of the soul along with the body gave licence to his followers to indulge in excess.

Although Epicurus died in 270 B.C., his philosophy is linked to two spirits that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[Ibidem.]
\item[Ibidem.]
\item[Ibidem.]
\item[Ibidem.]
\item[Ibidem.]
\item[Corbett, p. 3.]
\item[Corbett, p. 11, quoting Cicero, \textit{De finibus bonorum et malorum} II. xxv. 80: 'Quis, quaeso, illum negat et bonum virum et comen et humanum fuisse? De ingenio eius in his disputationibus, non de moribus quaeirit,' \item[Corbett, pp. 11-12.]
\item[Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 10.Nota.]
\end{footnotes}
Dante encountered, namely that of the Ghibelline leader Farinata degli Uberti and that of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, the father of Guido Cavalcanti. Although the attention of many commentators on *Inferno* X has tended to focus on the colourful and forceful personality of Farinata, Corbett demonstrates convincingly that the canto divides naturally into five sections, namely verses 1-39 (principal character Virgil), verses 40-51 (principal character Farinata), verses 52-72 (principal character Cavalcante), verses 73-120 (principal character Farinata) and verses 121-136 (principal character Virgil), and that it is the central section, featuring the dialogue between Cavalcante and Dante-pilgrim, which represents the focal point of the canto.

Serravalle describes Farinata as: ‘totus epicur[e]us’ and Cavalcante in terms of ‘qui eiusdem secte fuit epicuree’. Singleton cites Boccaccio and Benvenuto in confirming Cavalcante was an Epicurean. The situation concerning Farinata is more complex. Farinata and his wife Adaleta were condemned for heresy some 19 years after Farinata's death with at least a suspicion of political motivation being involved. Serravalle notes the aptness of the fate of Farinata and Cavalcante, in that, while they were alive, they did not believe in the hereafter, so now in death they can see the future but are totally ignorant of the present. In the commentaries on verses 13-15 there is considerable correspondence between the commentary of Serravalle and that to be found in the Ferrara *recollectae*, with Serravalle enhancing the more terse comments of Benvenuto. This is particularly the case when both commentators seek to justify their rejection of the heresy attributed to Epicurus by intimating that, if such concepts were valid, Dante's labours in the *Commedia* would have been in vain.

---

**Ferrara recollectae**


---

**Serravalle**

Suum cimiterium in hac parte habent cum Epicuro omnes sui sequaces, qui mori cum corpore animam posuerunt, idest asseruerunt pertinaciter. Notandum quod auctor hic utitur magna arte, quasi dicens: Varie fuerunt et sunt species heresis et hereticorum, in tantum quod varii facti libri sunt, et aliqui habuerunt multos scolares, et

---

54 Corbett, p. 91.
56 Ibidem.
58 Bosco and Reggio, *Inferno*, p. 166.
60 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 28r.
Modo si Dantes voluisset describere omnes species, totum volumen non suffecisset. Ideo eligit peiorem, scilicet illius qui dicebat quod anima simul cum corpore moreretur, quod est non solum contra theologiam sed contra omnem philosophiam, etiam paganicam ut Platonicam et Aristotelicam etc. Omnes posuerunt animam immortalem ut dicit Tullius ad quid [ ] etc. Hoc presuposito statim sequitur quod non sit dare Infernum nec Purgatorium nec Paradisus. Et tunc potius dicere: Dantes recede! Nam quod habeo facere de istis penis vel premiis etc. Ergo totum opus auctoris erat perditum si hoc esset. Ideo magister istam damnat. Fuit paganus. Tamen suus error fuit tantum quod erat contra philosophiam etc. ut dixi. Et iste Epicurus etiam habet multos sequaces. Morta fanno: Iste est species eresis.

Both commentators conclude their glosses with the affirmation that even in their time the teaching of Epicurus continued to attract many followers.

Farinata's final act before departing the scene is to indicate to Dante-pilgrim that Frederick II and Cardinal Ottaviano are among the Epicureans in this part of the cemetery. Serravalle's comment on verses 112-120, as far as Cardinal Ottaviano is concerned, is limited to: 'Et cardinalis, scilicet dominus Octavianus, de quo sufficienter superius fuit dictum'. This is a reference to Serravalle's very long historical commentary on verses 88-93. Below the text of the Ferrara recollectae for the relevant part of the commentary on verses 112-120, and the corresponding text from Serravalle's commentary on verses 88-93, are provided for the purposes of comparison.

---

62 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno, 10.112-120.

Ferrara recollectae

Eius tempore dominus Octavianus de Ubaldinis fuit cardinals, qui quasi regebat totam curiam romanum, qui favebat Imperatori et detrahebat Pape, favebat parti gebelline et persequebatur partem guelfam. Habuit dicere: Si mille animas haberem, omnes sponte perderem amore partis gebelline. Isti duo Frederici, scilicet Imperator et iste Cardinalis, fuerunt epicuri, non credentes alium mundum esse nisi presentem: et ideo auctor ponit eos in istis sepulchris dampnatos cum Epicuro et sequacibus eiusdem.

Both commentators note Ottaviano's pre-eminence, his adherence to the Ghibellline cause and that he was worldly and a heretic, although only Serravalle specifically associates him with Epicurean beliefs.

The travellers are still in the sixth circle, the circle of the heretics, when, as the poet describes, they come across a tomb from which there emanates a 'orribile soperchio del puzzo'. This is the tomb of Pope Anastasius. In his commentary on Inferno XI.4-9 Serravalle does not employ the Latin equivalents of heretic or heresy in his commentary concerning the fate of Pope Anastasius II, and follows the tradition that it was Pope Anastasius, rather than Emperor Anastasius, who was led into heresy. Serravalle notes: 'Fotinus fuit grecus, de civitate Thessalonica'. However, he then confuses his identity with that of Bishop Photinus, with his comment: 'Iste Fotinus, episcopus Smirne, ...' A comparison between the texts of Serravalle's commentary and that of the Ferrara recollectae on these verses is provided below.

---

63 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 29r. In his final redaction, Benvenuto, DDP, Inferno 10.120, Benvenuto, while noting the Cardinal's abilities, comments: 'Fuit tamen epicureus ex gestis et verbis eius ...'; continuing: 'et degli altri mi taccio, quia nimis esset longum enarrare viros magnificos de secta epicureorum, et etiam esset inhonesta et malum exemplum audientibus infamare homines de tali haeresi, nisi sit omnino manifesta. Ah quot sunt haeretici, qui simulanter videntur catholicci timore vel poenae vel infamiae!'

64 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno, 10.88-93.

65 Possibly, 'Mugello' a district of Tuscany is meant.

66 Singleton, Inferno: commentary, p.163. Singleton notes that medieval tradition seems to have confused Pope Anastasius, 496-498, with Anastasius I, emperor 491-518. Singleton continues: 'Emperor Anastasius is said to have been led by Photinus, a deacon of Thessalonica (not to be confused with the better-known Photinus, bishop of Sirmium), into the heresy of Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 488).'

67 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 11.4-9.

68 Ibidem.

Although some of the details and the order in which facts are presented vary, there is clear evidence from the commonality of the vocabulary that Serravalle drew heavily on Benvenuto's second redaction. In particular, Serravalle follows Benvenuto's errors in confusing the identities of Anastasius and Photinus. In addition, in both the Ferrara recollectae and in his final redaction Benvenuto hints that Pope Anastasius supposedly was facing calls for him to be deposed.72

6.2.2. Intimations of Heresy in Circle 7, the Circle of the Violent

In circle 7 are punished those convicted of violence. In the second girone, among those guilty of violence against oneself, i.e. those who have committed suicide, is to be found the spirit of Pier della Vigna, formerly minister of Emperor Frederick II.73 Pier committed suicide in prison, after falling into disgrace due to accusations, which were probably untrue.74 The glosses of Benvenuto and Serravalle on Inferno XIII.103-105 are reproduced below, in which it is seen that both commentators consider that the statement attributed to Pier, namely that at the Last Judgement those who have committed suicide will not reclote

69 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 30r.
70 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 11.4-9.
71 Smirre in the text.
72 Benvenuto, DDP, Inferno 11.8-9: ‘Quo tempore multi clerici et praesbyteri recesserunt a comunione ipsius Anastasii, quia communicaverat Photino praedicto, tenendo et defendendo errorem eius; nam in casu haeretica pravitatis papa potest deponi si non vult emendari.’
73 Singleton, Inferno: commentary, p. 209.
themselves in their flesh, represents heresy.\textsuperscript{75} As a moral judgment, both commentators conclude with an assertion that, if a prospective suicide understood the future implications for his soul, this individual would never take his own life.

\textbf{Ferrara recollectae}\textsuperscript{76}

\textit{Rivesta:} scilicet carnum quia, quando quis privat se sponte una re, non est dignum quod rehabeat. Si proicit librum apertum in mari sequitur quod habeat pro derelicto. Molesta: inimica corperi ita quod non coniungeretur secum. Hoc videtur esse ereticum ereticissimum et est difficillius dictum quam qui sit in Dante. Sed nota quod auctor intendat. Ponit istam conclusionem, scilicet de morte et resurrectione\textsuperscript{78} morali non essentiali [...] penam horum. Ecce omnes anime aliciorem tamen habent hoc de prerogativa, scilicet quod potest se emendare et sanare: gulosus potest effici sobrium, sic avarus, sic superbus potest humiliari, acidiosus potest incipere se exercitare et sic discurrendo, sed infelis qui desperat non habet penitentie locum. Ideo vult auctor retrahere omnes ab ista desperatione. Alia ratio est melior, scilicet quod introductit desperatum ad dicendum, scilicet si iste desperatus fuisset unquam imaginatus quod anima reindueret\textsuperscript{79} carnum et fuisset passura tot penas, numquam desperasset.

\textbf{Serravalle} \textsuperscript{77}

Quando homo quispiam se privat sponte aliqua re, non est dignum nec iustum quod rehabeat. Hic punctus fortis est; et non videtur verus, nec catholicus, sed hereticus. Sed notandum est quod hic loquitur auctor de Inferno morali, et hic loquitur de morte morali et resurrectione morali: nam omnes vitiosi in alii vitiis, et mortui in alii vitiis, resurgere possunt; desperati autem non. Gulosus potest fieri temperatus, superbus humilis, luxurious castus, etc.; sed infelix qui desperat de gratia Dei, nunquam resurgit. Sic patuit in Cayn; ideo obstinatio est maximum peccatorum, ex qua sequitur peccatum finale impenitentie. Vel dic, et bene, quod desperatus habet dicere, quod si ipse cognovisset, vel imaginatus fuisset, quod anima deberet reindueret carnum, et pati tot, tales et tantas penas, numquam desperasset se.

The interpretation of these verses caused considerable disquiet among the early commentators, as, for example, the commentaries of Graziolo Bambaglioli\textsuperscript{80} and the author of the \textit{Ottimo Commento}\textsuperscript{81} clearly show. However, the clearest account of the concerns expressed by an individual commentator is probably that due to Giovanni

\textsuperscript{75} Singleton, \textit{Inferno}: commentary, p. 217: ‘Virgil has asked (vss. 89-90) whether any spirit in the wood ever frees itself from its bush. This answer clearly implies that only at the Last Judgment … will any of these souls be permitted to leave their plant bodies. On that day, like all other souls, they will assemble in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, but, unlike the rest, they will not reclothe themselves in their flesh. They will return, as explained in vss. 106-8, only to be reincarcerated forever, each in its own bush.’

\textsuperscript{76} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 36r.

\textsuperscript{77} Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 13.103-105.

\textsuperscript{78} ‘surrectione’ in the text.

\textsuperscript{79} ‘reindueret’ in the text.

\textsuperscript{80} Graziolo Bambaglioli, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 13.103-104.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{L’Ottimo Commento, DDP, Inferno} 13.103-105.
Boccaccio.\textsuperscript{82} There is, of course, some logic in the words attributed to Pier. However, the \textit{Commedia} is steeped in allegory and there are passages in which the characters are supposedly expressing their own views, which may not, of course, be consistent with Dante's personal beliefs. However, as it stands, the opinion, expressed as fact by Pier, would be considered heretical, and Dante ran the risk of such an interpretation. On the other hand, as Boccaccio suggests, it could simply be a case of poetic licence.

It was noted in Chapter 3 that in the introduction to his commentary Serravalle discusses the concept of essential and moral Hell in the second 'preambulum'.\textsuperscript{83} Both commentators, in invoking the concept of 'Inferno moralis', are justifying the idea that the taking of one's own life is a mortal sin and is, in this sense, to be judged differently from the sins of human frailty, such as greed, pride and extravagance. Those who commit sins of the flesh can renounce their failings, but the one who has committed suicide and, therefore, 'qui desperat de gratia Dei, nunquam resurgit.'\textsuperscript{84} Both Benvenuto and Serravalle, as may be inferred from the passages shown for comparison above, express their surprise, almost shock, at the punishment due to the suicides, with Benvenuto in his final redaction going further in writing that the author, as a Christian, could not, and should not, express such a view.\textsuperscript{85} However, Dante's treatment of those who commit suicide is not always consistent, as is shown by his placing Dido in the second circle of \textit{Inferno}, and his deployment of Cato Uticensis as the gatekeeper of Purgatory. Although neither Benvenuto in the \textit{recollectae} nor Serravalle in his gloss on these verses suggests that Dante is simply employing poetic licence to emphasize the enormity of the sin of suicide, Benvenuto in his final redaction expresses sentiments similar to those attributed to Boccaccio above.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{82} Giovanni Boccaccio, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 13.103-108: 'Ma qui è attentamente da riguardare, per ciò che quello che questo spirito dice è dirittamente contrario alla verità cattolica, per la qual noi abbiamo che tutti risurgeremo e riprenderemo i nostri corpi e, con essi risucitati, verremo al giudizio universale ad udire l’ultima sentenza; e chi dice «tutti» non eccettua alcuno, dove questi dice che l’anime di coloro, che se medesimi uccisono, non rientreranno ne’ corpi e per conseguente non risurgeranno, e così contradice alla nostra fede. È qui da credere che l’autore non ha qui fatte narrar queste parole a questo spirito, sì come ignorante degli articoli della nostra fede, per ciò che tutti esplicitamente gli seppe, sì come nel \textit{Paradiso} manifestissimamente apare; ma, dovendo questo error recitare, ha qui usata una cautela poetica, la quale è che, quant’e volte i poeti voglion porre una oppinione contraria alla verità, essi si guardano di recitarla essi in propria persona, ma inducono alcun altro, e a lui, si come quello cotale, ch’è indotto, tenesse, li fanno racontare.'

\textsuperscript{83} Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} Intro.Nota.

\textsuperscript{84} Serravalle, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 13.103-105.

\textsuperscript{85} Benvenuto, \textit{DDP, Inferno} 13.106-108: 'Sed circa istum passum fortem et arduum, quo nullus reperitur fortior in toto poemate isto, est totis viribus animi insistendum, quia illud quod autor hic dicit non solum videtur erroneum, sed expresse haereticum. Quod enim animae istorum non reinduant carnem suam est contra fidem ommino, nec autor fidelis christianus potuit vel debuit hoc dicere.'

\textsuperscript{86} Ibidem: 'Dico breviter et tute, quod autor artificiosae fingeit istum desperatum dicere hoc, non quia sit verum, sed quia sic creditis; nam si credidisset resurrectionem corporum, nunquam se occidisset, imo
It might reasonably be suggested that, while the essentials of their glosses on these verses are substantially similar, Benvenuto is the more aggressive in his reaction. On matters on which he felt strongly Benvenuto seems to have been willing to express his opinion in a forthright manner as his defence of his conduct which led to his departure from Bologna would indicate. Serravalle, the diplomat as well as ordained cleric, would have been expected to make his point clearly in line with established doctrine but avoiding unnecessary polemics.

Serravalle devotes a long commentary to verses 139-150 of Inferno XIII, outlining the early history of Florence and, in particular, providing a discussion on the changing priorities which surfaced when Florence converted to Christianity and changed its patron from the Roman god Mars to St. John the Baptist. Benvenuto's commentary on these verses from the Ferrara recollectae is compared with Serravalle's commentary below.

It is readily seen that the two commentaries have much in common, with both acknowledging that the idea that the pagan statue could have beneficial or inimical powers concerning the city amounted to heresy. In addition, both commentators cite the same anecdote which they attribute to Boccaccio. While some of this material has already been discussed in section 4.4 of chapter 4, in this instance it is considered appropriate to include it without comment for reasons of continuity.

### Ferrara recollectae


### Serravalle

Notandum hic, pro intelligentarum textus, quod quando Florentia fuit primus fundata, secundum anotationem astrologorum fundata fuit sub influentia Martis: ideo sumperunt in suum patronum Martem, Deum belli, et habebant unum magnum idolum, quod vocabatur Mars; et stabat illudidolum in illa pulcherrima ecclesia rotunda, que nunc vocatur ecclesia Sancti Ioannis. Quia, quando Florentia conversa fuit ad Christum, removerunt de illa ecclesia idolum Martis, et, semidestructum, fuit positum in Ponte Veteri, qui pons est principalior qui sit in Florentia; et illa ecclesia fuit consecrata in honorem Dei et Beati Ioannis Baptistae. Et licet dimiserint cultum Martis, adhuc, dum illud idolum stetit

---

87 Benvenuto, *DDP, Inferno* 15.110-114.
88 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 37r.
89 Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 13.139-151.

illic ad Pontem Veterem, adhuc erat aliqua opinio de ipso. Ecce quod cives civitatis Florentie, primum patronum, scilicet Martem, mutaverunt in Baptistam; unde ille Mars, scilicet ille diabolus, qui stabat in illo idolo, indignatus contra Florentiam, semper conatur facere Florentiam tristem arte sua, idest discordia. Et ita appareet quod Florentia male valeat ex hoc, quod facta fuit christiana, et mutavit patronum, scilicet Martem in Baptistam. Florentia, dum dilexit Martem et adhesit Marti, idest fortitudini et virtuti, ipsa semper fuit victrix, habuit semper victoriam, et triumphavit de inimicis suis; sed postquam cives Florentinini dimiserunt Martem, idest fortitudinem et virtutes, et sequuntur Baptista, idest florenum, in quo est sculptura Baptiste, idest avaritiam, et dediti sunt cives Florentini lucris inhonestis et illicitis, non vadunt bene facta civitatis Florentie. Dicebat domini Ioannes Boccacius, quod sepe, dum esset iuvenes, videbant puerus proiicentes cenum et lapides in illud idolum, et tunc antiqui dicebant pueris: Nolite, filii, hoc facere; quia sepe vidimus plures proiicientes lapides et cenum, sicut vos facitis, et omnes vel suffucati sunt in Arno, vel fuerunt suspensi; et omnes tales mala morte perierunt.

Unsurprisingly, Serravalle takes the opportunity, where appropriate, to embellish Benvenuto's factual gloss with opinion which reflects his ecclesiastical training. For example, while both commentators note the supposed connection between Mars and war or civic discord, Serravalle alone, with his references to 'illud idolum' and 'diabolus' identifies the cause as being the presence of the Devil inside the statue.90 Boccaccio's commentary on these verses has much in common with the commentaries of Benvenuto

90 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 13.139-151: 'Ecce quod cives civitatis Florentie, primum patronum, scilicet Martem, mutaverunt in Baptistam; unde ille Mars, scilicet ille diabolus, qui stabat in illo idolo, indignatus contra Florentiam, semper conatur facere Florentiam tristem arte sua, idest discordia.' This interpretation is consistent with the condemnation of such practices expressed by Augustine in De civitate Dei, 2.
and Serravalle, including a denunciation of any suggestion that the statue of Mars possessed any property that could conceivably influence the future of Florence. However, the anecdote attributed to Boccaccio by both commentators does not appear in Boccaccio's own commentary on these verses.91

6.2.3. The Sowers of Discord

In the ninth bolgia of circle 8 Dante-pilgrim encounters the shades of Mohammed and Ali. Serravalle's glosses on Mohammed in this canto are supplemented later with the pungent comments to be found in his commentary to the relevant verses of Purgatorio XXXII. The content of these glosses will be discussed later since they depend on the identification of the 'draco' with the prophet. In the first instance, the focus will be on Mohammed as a schismatic, although inevitably there are to be found overtones of heresy.

The historical background necessary for an appreciation of Serravalle's understanding of Islam is to be found in the belief, current in the Middle Ages, that Mohammed was an apostate Christian,92 possibly a high cleric motivated by 'il rancore della mancata sua elezione al papato'.93 Alternatively, it may be, 'as Sapegno points out, the poet may have placed Mohammed here because he considered the founding of Islam a divisive factor in religious unity.'94 There is a suggestion that Dante considered Judaism and Islam to be 'unfulfilled or misfulfilled manifestations of Christianity', out of which developed the legend that Mohammed was a 'heresiarch', a legend which is attested no earlier than the end of the thirteenth century.95 As Ziolkowski points out: 'Seen from this vantage point, the misrepresentation of Muhammad as a schismatic did not render him a hostile and dangerous “other” but rather an insider whose sin (truly) was to have ruptured the harmony of a religion and civilisation that previously had been unified.'96

---

91 There are at least three different versions of the transcription of 'Boccaccio' into Latin to be found in Benvenuto's final redaction. A search on the Database revealed 19 matches. Only the search for matches for 'Boccattius' resulted in any success when applied to Serravalle's commentary. There were 8 matches in Benvenuto's commentary and 3 in Serravalle's commentary. However, the direct references to Boccaccio to be found in Purgatorio 21. 109-111 and Paradiso 33.67-75 of Serravalle's commentary do not occur in Benvenuto's final redaction. The remaining reference, namely Inferno 13.143-145, occurs in both commentaries. There is no reference to Boccaccio in the gloss to Purgatorio 21. 109-111 in the Ferrara recollectae. However, Serravalle's gloss to Paradiso 33.67-75, is very similar to that to be found in Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 181r, although there is no direct reference to Boccaccio in the latter case.

92 Singleton, Inferno: commentary, p. 503.
93 Bosco and Reggio, Inferno, p. 450.
94 Singleton, Inferno: commentary, p. 503.
96 Ibidem
There is no evidence that Dante had a working knowledge of Arabic nor any decisive proof that Dante had read the Koran. Two translations of the Koran into Latin are known to have been made in Spain, one by Robert of Ketton in 1142-43 and the other by Mark of Toledo in 1210-11, and more significantly, perhaps, Ricoldo da Monte di Croce 'brought an intimate knowledge of the Qur'an back to Florence when he returned from his long sojourn in Palestine, Syria, and Iraq in 1300.' Although Guido da Pisa, the author of the Codice Cassinese, and Benvenuto da Imola all make references to the Koran in their commentaries on Inferno XXVIII, in view of Dante's election as Prior in 1300 and his subsequent political difficulties relating to his exile in 1302, there must be some doubt as to the extent of any influence which Ricoldo's presence in Florence might have had on the poet. If Dante could be shown to have been aware of these legends concerning the possibility of Christian influences on Mohammed's teachings, whether he believed them or was simply using them as a poetic artifice is probably not relevant, then it would lend support to Dante's categorizing Mohammed as a schismatic. The glosses of the two commentators on the verses of Inferno XXVIII.22-27 are provided below for the purposes of comparison.

**Ferrara recollecte**

*Che merda fa:* loquitur proprius venter [coquit] 104 cibum sicut lebes. Partem grossam mittit ad intestina, [partem] 105 puram ad pulmonem ita quod convertitur in sanguinem, quasi dicat scientia et doctrina que intravit in istum corrupti et fetidavit totum mundum quasi, scilicet in suam falsam credulitatem; Suriam, Ethiopiam, Armeniam et omnes quasi partes orientales traxit secum. Dicunt quasi omnes quod fuit iste magnus Cardinalis cui fuit promissus papatus. Nec fuit Christianus, scilicet fuit de Arabia de Lamecha, ubi hodie est et adoratur. Sed fuit sagatior omnibus de mundo. [Partitio] [fuerat] cum diabolo in malitia. Scis tu quomodo fecit istam

**Serravalle**

Loquitur proprius auctor: stomacus coquit cibum, sicut lebes, et partem mittit ad intestina, partem puram ad pulmonem, qua convertitur in sanguinem. Quasi dicat auctor: Scientia et doctrina, quae intravit in Machometum, corruptit quasi totum mundum, totam Suriam, in suam falsam credulitatem, Ethiopiam, Armeniam pro magna parte, etiam aliquam partem Indie, et pro maiori parte regiones orientales. Nota quod de isto Machometo sunt varie opiniones. Aliqui dicunt, quod Machometus fuit unus magnus cardinalis, cui fuit promissus papatus, qui originaliter fuit de Lamech. Lamech est una maxima civitas, ubi hodie est corpus ipsius Machometi in regione Arabie. Fuit

---

97 Ziolkowski, p. 19.
100 Ibidem.
101 However, see Brenda Deen Schildgen, 'Philosophers, Theologians, and the Islamic Legacy in Dante: “Inferno” 4 versus “Paradiso” 4’, *Dante Studies*, 125 (2007), 113-132, p. 120.
102 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 63v.
104 'quoquet' in the text.
105 'parte' in the text.
conversionem? Ecce, cum vidit se non posse habere [dominium], finsit se esse profetam missum adeo ad declarandum libros missos ad Ebreos et legem christianorum Christianis, et fuit ita pravus quod faciebat occidi omnes valentes Arabie ut non detegerent factum. Ibant post ipsum quia naturale est quod omnes vadant post concupiscentias et iste concedebat quod licebat habere coitum cum omnibus et habere plures uxores.

Serravalle provides a lengthy gloss on these verses, and only the material relevant to the comparison with the recollectae has been shown above. It is readily seen that the recollectae, when allowance is made for its note-form version, could be interpreted as the source for Serravalle's more polished gloss. Aly or Ali refers to 'Ali ibn-abi-Tālib, the fourth of the caliphs or successors of Mohammed. After the death of Mohammed in AD 632 the claim of Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed and his closest male relative, was bypassed until after the death of the third caliph in AD 656.107 Ali is considered to be the founder of the Shiite sect, and, hence, responsible for the division of Islam into Sunnites and Shiites.108

In his commentary on the later verses of Purgatorio XXXII Serravalle provides a harsh condemnation of Mohammed. With the gloss to verse 109 Dante begins a description of 'a series of tableaux enacted around the tree of justice … which prove to represent seven principal calamities that have successively befallen the Church …'109 The verses of Purgatorio XXXII.118-120 represent the beginning of an allegorical description of the second of these calamities which links the vixen to heresy.110

---

106 Should surely be 'legem'.
109 Singleton, Purgatorio: commentary, p. 797.
110 Singleton, Purgatorio: commentary, p. 799.
Ferrara recollectae


Serravalle

Nunc ponitur secunda persecutione Ecclesie, figurata per unam vulpem, significantem malitiosam et iniquam heresim, et persecutionem hereticam pravitatis. Nam, converso Constantino, amplius pro tunc imperatores non persequabantur Ecclesiam, et tunc surrexerunt heretici. Sed Beatrix per sacros doctores Sacre Theologie fugavit illam vulpem, que venit ad currum et voluit adventare, scilicet saltare in cunam currus. Ista vulpis omnis boni pastus et omnis boni cibi erat ieiuna, idest veritatis omnis erat vacua. Quam vulpem expulerunt doctores cum suis dictis; sicut fecit Augustinus Faustum, Hieronimus Jovinianum. Quamvis Ecclesia tunc esset pauper, tamen habuit victoriam contra hereticos. Postea vidi adventari, idest saltare, in cunam triumphalis vehiculi, idest currus, unam vulpem, idest astutiam hereticam pravitatis, que omnis pastus boni, idest omnis bone doctrina, apparebat, idest videbatur, ieiuna. 121-123 Sed reprehendo eam de turpibus culpibus, idest omnibus culpibus, falsitatibus, heresibus, domina mea, scilicet Sacra Scriptura, misit, idest posuit, ipsam in tantam fugam, quantam sustinuerunt ossa sine pulpis. Quia Sacra Scriptura, quando non sufficiunt verba et disputaciones, dat ignem, idest condempnat hereticos ad ignem, ne corrupant alios.

Both commentators imply that the conversion of Constantine represented a significant time for the rise of heretical practices. Serravalle continues with: 'Ista vulpis omnis boni pastus et omnis boni cibi erat ieiuna, idest veritatis omnis erat vacua.' By this Serravalle is stating that, although the heretic has heard the true message, its meaning is lost to him due to his being influenced by the onset of a particular heresy. Both commentators, at a slightly different point in their gloss, make reference to Augustine's condemnation of

---

111 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 114r.2.
112 Serravalle, DDP, Purgatorio 32.118-123.
113 The abbreviation in the text, here and also below, indicates 'sicud', although clearly normal Latin usage would indicate 'sicut'.
114 Ibidem.
Faustus of Mileve and Jerome's rebuttal of Jovinian. In commenting on *Purgatorio* XXXII.121-123 Serravalle describes how Beatrice, or Sacred Scripture, puts the vixen to flight, adding: 'Quia Sacra Scriptura, quando non sufficiunt verba et disputationes, dat ignem, idest condempnat hereticos ad ignem, ne corrumpant alios.'\(^{115}\) This statement of the Church's position in dealing with heresy is endorsed in similar fashion by Benvenuto in the Ferrara *recollectae*.

In his commentary on verses 130-135 Serravalle identifies the 'draco' with the prophet Mohammed. Although Nicola Fosca (2003-2015) identifies the 'draco' with Satan,\(^{116}\) Singleton, citing Edward Moore,\(^{117}\) notes that several of the early commentators believed that the reference was to Mohammed.\(^{118}\) In his support for this interpretation Singleton notes that Moore considers that this viewpoint is consistent with 'the position assigned to Mohammed in the *Inferno*, where he figures as the most conspicuous and typical example of the 'Schismatics.'\(^{119}\) The comments in the Ferrara *recollectae* and those to be found in Serravalle's commentary on these verses are given below for the purpose of comparison.

---

**Ferrara *recollectae*\(^{120}\)**

Poi: Ponit [ultimo] maiorem persecutionem iste [ ] Malcommetto qui exivit de terra quia fuit totus terrenus. Iste posuit se inter ambas rotas, vetus et novum testamentum et dicebat quod Dominus Christus fuerat bonus homo et [sanctus] propheta; tamen ipse erat melior ipso. Et iste serpens fuit Malcomettus qui fuit totus filius terre. Iste dicebat quod venerat adeo ut notificaret novum et vetus testamentum et magnam partem traxit; fecit etiam pars que remanxit fuit venenata quia pastores, qui remanxerunt in fide, vestiverunt se illas pennas quia dederunt se vitiis et divitiis mundanis.

---

**Serravalle\(^{121}\)**

Iam ponitur quarta persecutio Ecclesie, quam fecit ille porcus Machometus, qui de terra venit, quia fuit totus terrenus, lascivius, luxuriosus, gulosus, avarus; nihil habuit de celo, nec aliquid de celestibus sensit. De terra aperta exivit et venit intra ambas rotas idest inter ambo Testamenta, scilicet novum et vetus, quia de utroque Testamento sumpsit aliqua ad condendum legem suam, asserens Christum fuisse bonum hominem, magnum prophetam, non tamen ita magnus sicut erat ipse Machometus, qui erat missus a Deo, ut informaret homines de utroque Testamento. Iste Machometus, venit ut draco, qui fixit caudam suam super currum sursum, et traxit ad se caudam

---

\(^{115}\) Serravalle, *DDP*, *Purgatorio* 32.121-123.

\(^{116}\) Nicola Fosca, *DDP*, *Purgatorio* 32.130-135: 'Il drago, o grosso serpente, è figura di Satana, che tenta di distruggere la Chiesa (cfr. Apoc. 12.3-4).'


\(^{118}\) Singleton, *Purgatorio*: commentary, p. 802.

\(^{119}\) Ibidem.

\(^{120}\) Florence, BML, Ashburnham 839, fol. 114r.b and Florence, BML, Ashburnham 839, fol. 115va.

\(^{121}\) Serravalle, *DDP*, 32.130-135.
malignam, cum qua traxit multa de fundo currus et recessit vagus. Postea visum fuit, scilicet michi, quod terra aperiretur inter ambas rotas, et vidi ex illa exire unum draconem, qui per currum sursum caudam fixit, et sicut vespa, que retrahit acum, idest aculeum, ad se trahendo caudam malignam, traxit de fundo, idest derobavit Christianitatem, quia multos Christianos traxit ad suam heresim et legem inhonestissimam; et recessit vagus, idest avidus ad male faciendum.'

It can be seen from the above that both commentators identify the 'draco' of Purgatorio XXXII.130-135 with the prophet Mohammed, with Serravalle being especially hostile. The reason for Serravalle's unrestrained language is unclear. Certainly, it is not the language one would expect from an accomplished diplomat. However, Serravalle had been to Palestine and would have been able to appreciate from personal experience the effect of the loss of the Holy Land on the Christian conscience. In addition, while Islam was not formally on the agenda of the Council of Constance, the bishop of Fermo might have considered a strong rebuttal of Islam and its prophet to be appropriate for the readers of his Comentum. Although Moore and Singleton concur, the modern view, as expressed by Fosca above, tends to associate the 'draco' with Satan. This discrepancy might be explained by noting that Western perception of Islam in the later Middle Ages was dominated by the Crusades, with Dante's relative, Cacciaguida, for example, being a victim of the Saracens. Modern scholarship, being several centuries removed from such religious prejudices is, perhaps, able to take a more detached view.122

Serravalle's commentary on verses 55-60 contains a long note chiefly devoted to Dolcino Tornielli of Novara, known as Fra Dolcino.123 At the beginning of his commentary on these verses Serravalle describes Dolcino as:124 ' ... unus scysmaticus .. unus Fraticellus De la Opinione, qui fuit de civitate Novarre.' Singleton notes Fra Dolcino's connection with the sect of the Apostolic Brothers of which he became the acknowledged head around 1300.125 This sect was concerned with the reform of the

122 See Brenda Deen Schildgen, 'Dante and the Crusades', Dante Studies, 116 (1998), 95-125. Schildgen argues, p. 95, that 'Inter-Christian fighting, papal interference in temporal affairs, and human cupiditiy are the focus of his crusade, and the suffering and death resulting from the fight against these corruptions define martyrdom.'
123 Singleton, Inferno: commentary, p. 507.
124 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.55-60.
Church, advocating a return to the simplicity of Apostolic times and the destruction of the
temporal power of the clergy.\footnote{Ibidem.} Singleton notes that 'Fra Dolcino … was accused by his
opponents of holding heretical doctrines, including the community of goods and
women.'\footnote{Ibidem.} Serravalle is rather more explicit, commenting that: 'concedebat eis (his
followers) omnem coitum ad modum Machometi; quare multi homines et mulieres
adherebant sibi'.\footnote{Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.55-60.} Upon capture, Fra Dolcino 'fuit pertinacissimus in sua heresi', and was
hideously put to death.\footnote{Ibidem.} Serravalle also records that a similar fate befell his companion
Margaret of Trent. The commentary of Bosco and Reggio offers some variations in that,
for example, Dolcino Tornielli is described as 'forse novarese'.\footnote{Bosco and Reggio, p. 451.} However, more
significantly they comment: 'È questi l'unico eretico ricordato nella Commedia, il che
indica forse, in un'epoca pullulante di eresie, la grande fama che Dolcino continuò ad avere
dopo la sua morte.'\footnote{Ibidem.} The implication is that the notoriety of Fra Dolcino's sect continued
to have resonance with public opinion after his execution, which is securely dated to 1307.
While Fra Dolcino and his followers were not easily put down by the Church, the heresies
involved were straightforward and worldly, with the exception of his statement to
Margaret that 'se resurrecturum die tertia'.\footnote{Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.55-60.} The account to be found in the Ferrara
recollectae is substantially in accord with Serravalle's account. Both commentaries note
that Pope Boniface excommunicated Fra Dolcino and that a crusade was mounted against
him and his followers. In addition, both commentators record that Fra Dolcino was given
the chance to recant, but only Serravalle uses the term heresy to describe Fra Dolcino's
obduracy.

6.2.4. Dante and Plato's Timaeus

In Paradiso IV Dante-poet through the medium of Beatrice refers to Plato's contention,
expressed in the Timaeus, in which it is stated that the Creator assigned each soul to a star
to which the individual would return, upon completion of a satisfactory life, after death.\footnote{Singleton, Paradiso: commentary, p. 77.} Marta Cristiani implies that Dante's acquaintance with the work itself was probably

---

\footnote{Ibidem.} \footnote{Ibidem.} \footnote{Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.55-60.} \footnote{Ibidem.} \footnote{Bosco and Reggio, p. 451.} \footnote{Ibidem.} \footnote{Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 28.55-60.} \footnote{Singleton, Paradiso: commentary, p. 77.}
Following Grandgent, Singleton, after making the point that 'this doctrine is contrary to Christian faith', notes that 'Plato's theory appealed strongly to some of the early Christian theologians, but had to be abandoned after A.D. 540, when the Council of Constantinople decided that every soul is created by God at the birth of its body.' In verses 22-27 Beatrice comments on this aspect of 'Plato's teaching', describing it in terms of 'che più ha di felle', implying most poisonous and potentially heretical. To some extent, perhaps due to the particular nature of the content embodied in these verses, both commentators could be considered to be paraphrasing Dante's verses. However, in the Ferrara recollectae Benvenuto, commenting on verses 58-60, gives further evidence of his concerns in interpreting this passage. Benvenuto continues with a probable reference to Purgatorio XVI.73-75, where the spirit of Marco Lombardo is discoursing on the subject of Free Will. This reference to verses 73-75 of Purgatorio XVI is clearly relevant to the discussion. However, it is not mentioned in Serravalle's commentary at this point. While Serravalle's commentary on these verses might seem somewhat light, given that he was a theologian, in a very long gloss on verses 28-36 he provides a lengthy discussion on some of these issues. He begins with a statement of Plato's position, as expressed in the Timaeus, and goes on to denounce it as heretical. Serravalle then addresses the suggestion that Plato's words should not be taken too literally, at this point making the same reference to Purgatorio XVI as that to be found in the Ferrara

134 Marta Cristiani, 'Timeo', Enciclopedia Dantesca, available online at treccani.it/enciclopedia/timeo(Enciclopedia-Dantesca), accessed 15/07/2020. Cristiani notes that Dante cites the Timaeus on only two occasions, Convivio III V 6 and Paradiso 4.49, without demonstrating familiarity with the themes of the work.

135 Singleton, Paradiso: commentary, p. 77.

136 Cristiani, draws attention to the references to the Timaeus to be found in Boethius' Philosophiae Consolationis III.9. In a note to verse 18, 'Tu causis animas paribus vitasque minores/ Provehis ...', S.J. Tester comments: 'The lesser souls are the souls of men, each assigned to a star as its chariot, and each returning when purified after a good life in the body to the heavens.' S.J. Tester, Boethius The Theological Tractates, tr. H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand and S.J. Tester and The Consolation of Philosophy, tr. S.J. Tester (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1973, reprinted 2003), pp. 272-273. The reference to Boethius is particularly apt since Boethius composed the work just prior to his execution in A.D. 524, marginally pre-dating the decision of the Council of Constantinople.


138 Ibidem: 'quia alibi dixit: dato ve al ben, al vero et a malitia.' See Purgatorio 16.73-75: 'Lo cielo i vostri movimenti inizia: / non dico tutti, ma, posto chi' i dica, / lume v'è dato a bene e a malizia.'


140 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 4.28-36: 'Modo ista opinio est falsa et heretica, cum omnes anime creentur a Deo de nihil, nec aliqua earum unquam fuit ante corpus suum.'
The commentary continues with comments on the association of the planets with human values which is similar to that found in the recollectae.

6.2.5. Allusions to Heresy in Paradiso XI and Paradiso XII

In the verses of Paradiso XI.28-36 Dante has the spirit of Thomas Aquinas introducing 'due principi' who will guide the Church, namely St. Francis and St. Dominic. Serravalle takes the opportunity to note that the lifetime of the two saints was concurrent with the world being in a difficult situation owing to the prevalence of heresy. Serravalle in his commentary on Paradiso XII.87-105, through the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, emphasizes that St. Dominic did not seek benefices and honours from the Pope, but only authority to act 'contra mundum, idest homines errantes et hereticos'. Dante's choice of a Dominican to criticize some aspects of his own Order is matched later in the canto by the choice of the Franciscan, St. Bonaventura, to perform a similar function with the Franciscan Order. The commentaries on these verses are shown below, with some elementary explanatory details provided by Serravalle being excluded.

Ferrara recollectae

Imbianca: siccatur ista vinea si pastores sunt mali. [Vult] modo dicere quod ivit ad conspectum pape, non ad petendum quod remiteret decimas plurium annorum vel quod daret primam vacantem, nec quod exiret ordinem ut exiret iugum obediencie, sed solum quisivit posse persequi hereticos. Fuit primus inquisitor. Constate! Et non adimando dispensare due et tre per sei; idest quinque pro sex

Serravalle

Verses 87-96. Et ad sedem, que iam fuit benigna plus pauperibus iustis, non pro ipsa, idest nen defectu ipsius sedis, sed proper illum qui sedet et tralignat, idest deviat, delirat, et recedit a moribus Santorum Patrum; non dispensare duo et tria pro sex, idest quinque pro sex, idest non petit dispensationem transeundi de Uno Ordine ad aliu m, propter fugere iugum obedientie, vel ut melioretur; non fortunam prime vacantis

141 Ibidem: 'Dicit tamen auctor, quod forte Plato aliter intellexit quam sua verba sonant, ita forte quod non esset sua opinio ex toto deridenda; quia si ipse intelligeret, quod honor et vituperium influentie stellarum inclinent homines ad bene vel ad male agendum, licet nullo modo necessitant aut necessitare possint, ut declaratum est in decimosexto capitulo Purgatorii, forsan in aliquod verum intraret opinio sua et in parte esset vera.'

142 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 11.28-36: 'Nam quando illi, scilicet Sancti Dominicus et Franciscus, floruerunt, mundus erat male dispositus, quia erant multi heretici.'

143 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 12.87-96.

144 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 144v.

145 Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 12.87-105.

146 'qui sivit' in the text.

147 This unexpected use of the Imperative mood also occurs in Benvenuto's final redaction where the sense becomes clear. Benvenuto, DDP, Paradiso 12.88-96: 'Nunc expone literam, et construe sic: cape primo illud 'E', quod est in principio istius primi rhythm...'

148 It has already been noted that the convention, usually followed in the recollectae, is to underline the Italian text of the Commedia, reproduced here in italics. Singleton, as he notes on p.371 of the text of and commentary on Inferno, has adopted the text of the Commedia established by Giorgio Petrocchi. While differences are to be expected, given the nature of the recollectae, it has to be noted that in Singleton's edition verse 91 begins 'non dispensare. ...' and verse 94 commences with 'addimandò

*Poi con dotrina:* et bono velle et habuit autoritatem. *Quasi torrente:* qui venit cum impetu.

*Stirpe:* venenosos hereticos ubi plus potentie et malicie inveniebat, quasi dicit: contrarium hodie. Solum pauperes amicis et divites devaris dant inquisitores arborcelli fratres etc.

(quia sepe accidit quod impetrans moritur antequam ille qui possidet; ideo auctor vocat fortunam illud expectare), non decimas que sunt pauperum Dei (idest hec non petit, Sanctus Dominicus, nec impetravit a Papa), petivit (a Sede Apostolica, supple), sed contra mundum, idest homines errantes et hereticos, licentiam, scilicet predicandi, disputandi pro semine, idest pro Verbo Dei, quod est semen, ut habetur in Evangelio, a quo fasciantur, idest vestiuntur, vigintiquatuor plante. Aliqui dicunt vigintiquatuor libri veteris Testamenti; sed ego dico quod debent dici vigintiquatuor animae, que sunt in illis duabus coronis, ut supra dictum est sepe, et inter illas vigintiquatuor animas sunt viginti doctores solempnes.

Verses 97-102. Postea cum doctrina et cum voluntate simul officii apostolici (idest habuit auctoritatem predicandi, quod est officium apostolicum) se movit, quasi torrens quem alta vena premit (...); et in stipites hereticos percutit, idest hereticos persecutus est, impetus suus vivacius ibi, idest audacius, vel amplius, ubi resistentie erant grossiores, idest ubi heretic erant poteniores. Iste Sanctus Dominicus, qui fuit primus inquisitor de Religiosis, quia omnis Episcopus est inquisitor in sua diocesi, sed ipse fuit inquisitor heretic pravitatis in tot diocesibus in quot Papa eum instituit; et ubi erant fortores, sufficieniores, doctores, periculosiores heretic, ubi ipse resistebat et persequebatur illos. Sic non faciunt hodierna die inquisitores, tam de Ordine Sancti Dominici quam Sancti Francisci, qui magnates, potentes ac divites, dimictunt et pertranseunt, et solum contra pauperes et impotentem procedunt.

Verses 103-105. De eo facti fuerunt quamplures diversi rivi; idest de Ordine suo fuerunt plures optimi Religiosi, unde, idest ex quibus, hortus catholicus irrigatur, idest Ecclesia catholica; ita quod sui arbusculi, idest plantule, idest viatores catholic, stant

…' However, Benvenuto in his final redaction also opts for 'E non addimandò dispensare o due o tre per seî.'

149 Not underlined in the text. However, note verse 89: 'più a' poveri giusti, non per lei'.

150 'some' in the text.

151 'erant' requires a plural subject. It is possible that the copyist has neglected to include Dante's companion Beatrice in the text.
It is clear that, while the sentiments expressed by the two commentators are substantially in accord, much of the text from the *recollectae* seems to reflect hurried and abbreviated note taking, and probably does not do due justice to the Magister's lectures.

Neither commentator identifies the errant occupant of the Apostolic Seat in verse 90. However, Benvenuto is probably correct, when in his final redaction he identifies him as Pope Boniface VIII. In addition, there is some difficulty with the identification of the 'ventiquattro piante' of verse 96. Both commentators note that there is common acceptance that this represents 24 books (*recollectae*) or 24 books of the Old Testament (Serravalle). However, both commentators insist that the reference is to the 'Doctors' of the Church. Continuing their description of the merits of St. Dominic in verses 97-102, Benvenuto provides only the briefest of glosses, while Serravalle, in a similar fashion to Dante in verses 97-102, compares him to a torrent in his action against heretics, and ends with an expression of regret that the 'inquisitores' of Serravalle's own time do not match up to the ideals of St. Dominic. While the expression of such a sentiment might readily be construed as being consistent with Serravalle's own views on the necessity for Church reform and even to be in accord with Reformist opinion at the Council of Constance, it is the view of the present writer that the most probable interpretation is that the bishop of Fermo was simply paying St. Dominic the respect due to one of the most respected saints of the Catholic Church. Serravalle's reference to every bishop being an Inquisitor in his own diocese is interesting in that it is possible to take it as a simple statement of fact, or it could be understood as an oblique reference to Serravalle's own status. If the latter be the case, it would date this particular contribution to the commentary to after 1410.

Verses 106-108 mark the beginning of the corresponding criticism of his own Order by St. Bonaventura, who is only named in verse 127. Benvenuto's gloss is very brief with only a short allusion to the failings of the Franciscans, and a brief reference to the destructive effects of Civil War. Serravalle's commentary is again reproduced with the explanatory notes, often in parentheses, omitted.

---

The reflective comment, expressed by Serravalle's last sentence, represents an observation that might have occurred to him at any time during the thirty to forty years that it is supposed he might have spent writing his commentary, which would, of course, include the time spent at Constance before the completion of his *Comentum*. This judgement, which would have been reinforced by the events in Bohemia following the processes against John Hus and Jerome of Prague, goes further in its condemnation than Benvenuto's comments. However, Benvenuto was writing his commentaries shortly after Wycliffe's death in 1384, and, therefore, his glosses on such matters would not be expected to reflect the same sense of urgency as those of Serravalle, for whom the problems associated with the Hussite 'heresy' during and after the timespan of the Council of Constance would have been a cause of constant concern. For the bishop of Fermo these events must have provided a constant reminder of the tragedy involved when Christians fought against Christians. However, it should be noted that it is likely that a sober assessment of the Church's struggles against heretics might well have compelled the more serious thinkers of the age to come to the same understanding.\(^{155}\)

Many of the conclusions of the previous chapters continue to apply. There is substantial evidence that Benvenuto's *Ferrara recollectae* provided the core material around which Serravalle composed the majority of his glosses concerning heretical practices. The commentaries accord with the perceived reception of the orthodox opinion...
of the era. Both Benvenuto and Serravalle concentrate on describing the historical figures who feature in the appropriate verses of the *Commedia*, and, consequently, they adhere to Dante's choices of heresy and heretics, and make no attempt to extend the discussion to the events of their own time. Serravalle, despite the Council of Constance being involved in the suppression of what its members considered to be serious heresies, makes no real attempt to draw comparisons with the events of his own time and with those events to which Dante makes reference.

6.3. Dante's Treatment of Simony in the *Commedia*

While the suppression of interpretations of orthodox Catholic doctrine deemed to be heretical served the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the established Church, the malpractices of some members of its hierarchy also represented a challenge to the maintenance of good governance. These individual malpractices were common knowledge, often involving the accumulation of wealth, the pursuit of personal ambitions, and nepotism. Since there was a perception that not even the Papal Office was immune, there was a clear danger that this might provoke discontent among the congregations, thereby possibly inciting a groundswell of popular appetite for root and branch reform.

While the Catholic Church was, and still is, a fundamentally conservative organization, some influential figures, among them Serravalle himself, at Constance recognized the danger and the need for action. However, although there was probably considerable discussion at the level of the individual nations, there is little evidence of any willingness to reach a satisfactory resolution at the level of the Council until after the election of Martin V as Pope. In the discussion to follow emphasis is placed on the practice of simony, that is the buying or selling of ecclesiastical preferment, condemned by both Dante and Serravalle. The methodology used in this section is similar to that employed in the previous section relating to heresy. The search facility, available on the Dartmouth Dante Project database, was used to identify Serravalle's references to simony, by searching for matches with *symonia* together with its appropriate case endings, and for *symoniacus* together with its case endings. Although there are references to simony in other cantos, which will be acknowledged in the discussions to follow, the main emphasis will be on *Inferno* XIX, which provides the main vehicle for Dante's strong condemnation of such practices.

It should be noted at the outset that Serravalle recognizes that there were many good priests who were discharging their responsibilities in accordance with the teachings
of the Church.  

Although Serravalle makes a single routine reference to simony in his introduction to *Inferno*, namely, 'septimum preambula ... tertia est symonia', a simple reference to the third bolgia of the eighth circle of Hell, the first comment to be considered is to be found in *Inferno* I.88-90. The context concerns Dante's entreating Virgil to free him from the menace of the she-wolf. Serravalle concentrates on an allegorical interpretation: 'Ecce quomodo Dantes supplicat Virgilio, idest rationi, ut liberet eum a bestia, idest ab avaritia; que avaritia suadet homini furari, usuras facere et fenerari, rapere aliena, vendere res sacras et beneficiæ, et symoniam committere.'

It is, perhaps, worth noting that, while some of the early commentators also make reference to 'avaritia' etc., Serravalle is the only major commentator to mention specifically 'simony'. In the gloss in the Ferrara *recollectae* Benvenuto suggests that Virgil was not above imitating Aristotle in denigrating the work of other philosophers to emphasize his own pre-eminence, and he is even more explicit in his final redaction. However, in his commentary on these verses Serravalle makes no mention of such practices. The presence of a reference to simony in a list of grievous failings attributed to some person or institution occurs frequently in Serravalle's commentary, with the commentator offering no further explanation. It is, therefore, readily seen not only how important this topic was to Serravalle, but, also, how it informs and even affects his treatment of Dante's poem. While the bishop's anxieties clearly pre-date the writing of the commentary, this concern, clearly informed by the contemporary context of Constance, is all the more notable given Serravalle's habitual conservatism in his following Benvenuto's second redaction in much of his *Comentum*.

In commenting on *Inferno* I.105, that is on Virgil's prophecy concerning the coming of the 'veltro' or greyhound to chase away the she-wolf, and whose birth will be the salvation of 'quella umile Italia', Serravalle, as do other commentators, acknowledges that 'Ista littera est fortis et difficilis'. At the end of what is a long commentary on this

---

156 Serravalle, *DDP*, *Purgatorio* 32.124-126: 'Praeterea, etsi multi sunt mali prelati, qui male vivunt et male expendunt bona Ecclesiæ, etiam multi sunt boni et qui bene vivunt et bene expendunt et bene dant pauperibus, sicut tenentur.'
158 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 7v: 'Fecit Virgilius sicut Aristoteles qui omnes philofohos qui praecesserant expullit de campo quia sibi omnia que erant bona abstulit et suos errores repugnavit.'
159 Benvenuto, *DDP*, *Inferno* I. 88-90: '.. nam de rei veritate Virgilius fuit circumspectissimus, et scivit facere de alieno suum, nam ab omnibus poetis prioribus defloravit quidquid dixerunt boni vel pulcri; unde post Virgilium omnes antiqui poetae latini fuerunt neglecti, sicut et post Aristotelem antiqui philosophi graeci fuerunt relegati.'
verse, Serravalle offers his own opinion concerning the likely interpretation of Dante's text.\(^{161}\) This effective postscript is given below, together with the corresponding gloss in the Ferrara *recollectae*, for the purposes of comparison.

**Ferrara recollectae**\(^{162}\)

Sed notatur permictendo superflua avaritia principaliter est radicata in praelatis et pastoribus. Ideo principaliter uxor sua est. Non audent habere uxorem, sed habent aliam quam numquam dimicturn usque ad mortem, scilicet lupam, ideat avaritiam, et quod sic sit semper autor, cum dicit de avaritia in ipsis, dicit radicaliter esse. Sed persecutor, idest canis erit, scilicet sicut vult ipse Dantes, est unus princeps Romanus venturus qui pellet istos pastores, scilicet privando eos. Ideo divino temporali, qui erit iustus et equus, et\(^{164}\) per consequens erit ablata lupa scilicet illis qui sunt principales huius avaritie, scilicet quod non per simoniam res ecclesiaticce vendentur etc.

**Serravalle**\(^{163}\)

Vult dicere hic autor: Dixi quod lupa, idest avaritia, maritabitur multis, idest fiet uxor multorum; idest hominum avarorum, diligentium solummodo terrena, et maxime clericorum et prelatorum Ecclesie, symoniacorum, vendentium res sacras; quousque venerit veltrus canis, qui plurimum inimicatur lupis et qui significat unum bonum rectorem. Quem, ut credo, Dantes putat esse unum bonum Summum Pontificem, quia contempnet dominia temporalia, divitias; et non erit symoniacus, ymo fugabit omnes symoniacos; odiet avaritiam; non promovebit ad cardinalatus nisi bonos homines et virtuosos; sic ad episcopatus, et alias dignitates et prelaturas.

Although there is some commonality, for example in the stress on how avarice is linked to the Church, this passage is noteworthy in that it reveals Serravalle's own interpretation of Dante's text, and, at least in outline, points the way to Serravalle's views concerning reform of the Church, among which is included the necessity for ensuring that only men worthy of the office attain positions of responsibility in the Church hierarchy. It is to be noted that, while Benvenuto does make some brief reference to simony in his gloss, the focus in Serravalle's commentary very much concentrates on the simony which he clearly believes to be rife in the Church.

With reference to *Inferno* XIX.1-3 both commentators make reference to Simon Magus as the first simoniac, and define simony in similar terms, that is in the buying and selling of sacred objects and the offices of the Church. In commenting on *Inferno* XIX.4-6 both commentators relate the story from Acts 8.20-25 concerning St' Peter's

\(^{161}\) Ibidem.

\(^{162}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 7v.

\(^{163}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 1.105.

\(^{164}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 7r.
condemnation of Simon for attempting to purchase the 'gratiam Spiritus Sancti'. The brief accounts of Simon's previous activities are in general agreement with those to be found in Acts 8.9-14. Neither commentator notes that in Acts 8.24 Simon replies to Peter: 'precamini vos pro me ad Dominum ut nihil veniat super me horum quae dixistis', which could be taken as implying Simon regretted his actions. Serravalle, however, goes further in commenting: 'Quare iste Symon indignatus, Serravalle relates the story of Elisha and Naaman from 2 Kings 5. A similar gloss is to be found in all three redactions of Pietro Alighieri, but not, however, in the Ferrara recollectae. In commenting on 'adulterate' at the end of verse 4, Benvenuto provides only a brief gloss, while Serravalle, as might have been expected, is much more explicit.

\[\text{Ferrara recollectae}\]

Facitis adulteras quia datis adulteris, idest malis et, indignis et non cum aliquo colore bono, sed per pecuniam. Et quia sic facitis, ideo solvam [vobis].

\[\text{Serravalle}\]

... sicut mulier maritata, habens virum, si se dat alis viris et cum eis coit, adulterium commictit; sic res divine, sicut sunt episcopatus, beneficia ecclesiastica, que sunt res divine et sacre, et sunt et debent esse sponse honorum virorum, qui dat eas viris indignis, malis, est causa adulterii, et fac[it] illas adulteras: quod sepe fit, quando pro pecunia dantur beneficia, et quando venduntur res sacre, que nullo pretio possunt vendi, neque emi.

---

166 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 19.4-5.
167 Serravalle writes that this story is to be found in 'quarto libro Regum'. Since Serravalle was writing before the Council of Trent (1545-63) confirmed the Vulgate as the Bible of the Catholic Church, Serravalle's citation goes back to a text in which the two Books of Samuel and the two books of Kings together formed the four books of Kings. See: Schets, Joseph. “Third and Fourth Books of Kings.” The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol.8 (New York Robert Appleton Company, 1910), accessed 12 July 2016 at www.newadvent.org/cathen/08652a.thm
168 Pietro Alighieri (1), DDP, Inferno 19.1-6. Pietro uses the story of Elisha and Naaman to make a direct comparison with the behaviour of Simon: 'Nam sicut Giezi in veteri Testamento voluit vendere sanitate Naaman collatam sibi ab Eliseo propheta gratis, ut habetur in IVº Regum, Capitolo Vº, et leprosus factus est, sic iste Simon voluit emere donum Dei pecunia.' Serravalle does not provide such direct comparison, but rather adds a much longer gloss on this story as a postscript to his lengthy comment on these verses.
169 Singleton, following the text of Giorgio Petrocchi, has 'avolterate'.
170 In his final redaction, Benvenuto, DDP, Inferno 19.1-6, offers further amplification: '. .. bigamus non potest esse sacerdos, quia sicut Christus non habuit nisi unicum sponsam et interemeratam, scilicet ecclesiavm, ita et sacerdos.'
171 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 46v.
172 Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 19.4-5.
With reference to *Inferno* XIX.13-15 the two commentators provide a straightforward interpretation of Dante's text. Both commentators interpret the situation of the transgressors, that is, being 'planted' head first, similarly. However, Serravalle, who earlier in the gloss directly refers to them as 'symoniaci', provides the better description with its emphasis that for such people contentment appears to lie 'in auro [et] argento'. With regard to verses 28-30 both commentators note that Dante is offering a comparison which provides an explanation for the movement of the flames.

The verses of *Inferno* XIX.31-36 introduce Pope Nicholas III, whom Serravalle characterizes as: 'primus notorius symoniacus'\(^{173}\) and Benvenuto in his final redaction as: 'quasi primus papa qui esset publice infamatus de simonia'.\(^{174}\) Serravalle notes that: '... antequam esset papa, erat cardinalis optimi nominis et reputatus bone vite',\(^{175}\) while in the Ferrara *recollectae* Benvenuto records: '... antequam esset Papa, nam erat Cardinalis, fuit reputatus optime vite.'\(^{176}\) Although Pope Nicholas was an important figure in the early history of the Franciscan movement, Dante and the commentators concentrate on his record for simony.\(^{177}\) Serravalle provides a list of Pope Nicholas' failings, which is similar to that provided by Benvenuto in the Ferrara *recollectae*. The text of *Inferno* XIX.52-60 relates to the initial meeting of the poet with Pope Nicholas, and the Pope's confusing Dante's arrival with the anticipated arrival of Pope Boniface VIII. Serravalle describes Boniface in terms of 'iste Bonifatius debeat esse maximus symoniacus'\(^{178}\) and includes a description of how Boniface became Pope by 'fraudulent' means, recounting the commonly held story, related in the *Cronica fiorentina* for the year 1294, that Pope Celestine V was persuaded to abdicate by hearing voices advising him that it was the will of God that he should do so.\(^{179}\) Serravalle, as a member of the Order of St. Francis, clearly felt an affinity with Celestine, and this is reflected in his glosses. Benvenuto's corresponding gloss in the *recollectae* is restricted to identifying Celestine, and defining 'strazio' in verse 57 in terms of 'tractando male ipsam'.

Verses 88-89 describe how Dante-pilgrim rebukes the spirit of Pope Nicholas for his simony, comparing his activities unfavourably with the example of Christ in giving the keys to Saint Peter ('Sequere vestigia mea; scilicet, imitare paupertatem, humilitatem')

---

\(^{173}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 19.31-36.
\(^{174}\) Benvenuto, *DDP, Inferno* 19.31-33.
\(^{175}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 19.31-36.
\(^{176}\) Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 46r.
\(^{177}\) Havely, pp. 50-53.
\(^{178}\) Serravalle, *DDP, Inferno* 19.52-60.
\(^{179}\) Singleton, *Inferno*: commentary, p. 50.
and that of Saint Peter in electing Saint Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot ('Nec Petrus, nec alii, petierunt a Mathia aurum nec argentum, quando fuit sortitus, idest per sortes electus, ad locum, quem perdidit anima rea ...').\textsuperscript{180} In the Ferrara recollectae Benvenuto comments in similar fashion.\textsuperscript{181}

Serravalle begins his commentary on Paradiso XVII.49-54 with: 'Istud vult, idest multi volunt hoc, et istud iam queritur, et cito veniet factum ab illis qui hoc cogitant, ibi ubi Christus coctidie mercatur, idest ubi venditur et emitur; idest in Curia romana, ubi, propter symoniam que continue commictitur in romana Curia, maxime per papam Bonifacium, Christus venditur et emitur.'\textsuperscript{182} This represents the only reference to simony in what is a long gloss, the remainder of which is devoted to an account of the expulsion of the White Party from Florence by the rival Black Party under Corso Donati, with the collusion of Pope Boniface and Charles de Valois. Benvenuto in both recollectae and in his final redaction describes the events leading to Dante's exile from Florence in terms similar to the account to be found in Serravalle's commentary. However, in none of the three works does Benvenuto make direct reference to simony in his commentaries on these verses, with, for example, in the Ferrara recollectae limiting himself to 'merca: venditur et revenditur, scilicet res Christi'.\textsuperscript{183} Essentially Serravalle has elaborated his gloss on verse 51, 'là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca', while Benvenuto has provided the minimum of comment. The linking of simony to the alleged practice of marketing the goods and benefices of the Church for the sake of profit has clear connotations with the sin of covetousness, the eradication of which is foretold in allegorical terms in Inferno I where Dante indicates that a 'veltro' will arrive to chase away the she-wolf of avarice. Both writers continue their commentaries with an immediate reference to Florentine politics and the establishment of the Black and White factions.

The verses of Paradiso XXVII.22-27, attributed to St. Peter, reflect Dante's condemnation of the acts of Pope Boniface VIII. If anything, Serravalle is more vitriolic in his condemnation of Boniface, particularly in his choice of vocabulary concerning the interpretation of verse 25, 'Fatto ha del cimiterio mio cloaca', and his comment: 'Fit

\textsuperscript{180} Serravalle, DDP, Inferno 19.88-99.
\textsuperscript{181} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 47r; '... quasi dicat mordacter Christus, primus auctor Ecclesie, quando creavit Petrum, quot pecunias requisivit ab eo et respondit ispemet: sequere mie, idest veni post mea vestigia, scilicet imitare paupertatem, humilitatem etc. Sed posset dicere: omnes non sunt Christus.
\textsuperscript{182} Serravalle, DDP, Paradiso 17.49-54.
\textsuperscript{183} Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 154v.
The beginning of Serravalle's commentary on these verses and Benvenuto's commentary in the Ferrara recollectae are given below for the purposes of comparison.

**Ferrara recollectae**

*S'io mi trascoloro*: idest si rubesco *che*: quasi dicat: Donec loquer de isto thomate omnes rubescunt quia turpis vitia cedit etiam ad verecundiam illorum. Dicit quod ille, qui usurpavit fraudenter sedem papalem, fecit de Ecclesia Dei cloacam, idest implevit simoniis et barateris et aliis turpidinibus. Et intellegit de Bonefacio qui arripuit cum fraude Celestino. *Loco*: scilicet sedem pontificalem et replicat ex indignatione. Dicunt aliqui quod dicit quod ille papa non fuit Papa, et per consequens aliis non fuerunt pape. Non disputat utrum esset papa sed de viciositate que degenerat ab aliis. *Che vaca*: quia non acceptus est Deo.

**Serravalle**

Ille qui usurpat (scilicet Bonifacius, qui usurpavit papatum a Celestino, ut dictum fuit decimonono capitolo Inferni) in terra locum meum, locum meum, locum meum (ter dixit ad maiorem expressionem) qui vacat in presentia Filii Dei (propter hoc volunt aliqui dicere, quod Dantes obliquebatur hic de domino Bonifacio octavo; et hoc bene verum est, quia ipse replevit Ecclesiam sanctam Dei symoniacis et baracteris, et qui fraudolenter usurpavit sedem apostolicam: sed dum dicunt, de intentione auctoris fuisse quod ipse Bonifacius non erat versus Papa, ex eo quod locum usurpasset, qui vacat in presentia Filii Dei, non bene dicunt; imo Dantes credidit bene, quod Bonifacius octavus esset versus Papa, sed malus et symoniacus ...)

Although the same basic points are covered, even allowing for the terseness of the wording of the recollectae, the glosses might seem to represent the different emphases of the two commentators. Serravalle's more targeted gloss is consistent with his public stance concerning the necessity for the reform of those practices of the Church which were attracting criticism. In *Paradiso* XXVII.58-60, St. Peter reproaches the conduct of Pope Clement V (Clement IV in Benvenuto's final redaction) and Pope John XXII.

**Ferrara recollectae**

*Caorsini*: Papa Clemens qui transportavit ultra montes, multum corupit Curiam. Alius post ipsum fuit Papa Johannes quo numquam fuit ditior in [tantum] quod in morte X et VII milia milium ducatorum reperta sunt. Per

**Serravalle**

De sanguine nostro Chaorsini (per istum de Chaorsini[s] intellige papam Ioannem, successorem Clementis de Vasconia, qui transtulit papatum ad partes galli[c]ias, qui fuit magnus symoniacus et corrupt multum curiam romanam: successor eius

---

185 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 170r.
187 Florence, BML, MS, Ashburnham 839, fol. 171v.
Caorsinis intellige Johannem de Caorsa, idest de Caturgio, civitas Francie; per Vascones, intellige Clementem et etiam suos sequaces.

fuit Ioannes papa, ditissimus papa, in cuuis morte reperti sunt de suis decem et septem milliones florenorum. ...'

The difference between the two glosses is indicative of the emphasis which Serravalle places on simony. However, again Serravalle is not really being polemical in his assessment in which he seems merely to be reflecting opinions which were commonly believed.

As an introduction to the commentaries on Paradiso XXX.145-148, it should be noted that, in commenting on verses 142-144, Singleton describes how Pope Clement, under threats from Philip the Fair, gradually abandoned Henry VII as the Emperor attempted to assert his rights in Italy. Serravalle's commentary, following the description in Inferno XIX, reiterates how the arrival of a new simoniac pope pushes down further into the well those simoniacs who preceded him. The gloss describes how the arrival of Clement, who only outlived Henry by about seven and a half months (six months in the Bologna recollectae and seven months in the Ferrara recollectae), will cause the previous occupants to push each other down further. Singleton makes some interesting observations in that verses 145-148 represent Beatrice's last words to Dante-pilgrim, amounting to a final denunciation of cupidity on earth, and, within the fiction of the poem, are the words of Beatrice reported by the poet, not the poet's own words. The contributions of the Ferrara recollectae and Serravalle's commentary on these verses are entirely factual, offering little insight into the poet's feelings.

In conclusion, the references to simony in the two commentaries for the most part appear in a list of faults attributed to Pope Nicholas III, Pope Boniface VIII and Pope Clement V. There is a reference to Pope John XXII in Paradiso XXVII.58-60, who is described as the richest of the popes, presumably due to simony. Occasionally the reader is given a glimpse of some of the activities that are classed as representing acts of simony. Unlike heresy, which was perceived as having the capacity to destabilize the Catholic Church and, hence, attracted severe countermeasures, simony and other corrupt practices seemed to have been regarded as individual failings. The formal sessions of the Council

189 Singleton, Paradiso 30: Commentary, pp. 508-510.
190 Singleton, Paradiso 30: Commentary, pp. 509-510.
where reform of the Church was on the agenda occurred shortly before the Council terminated its business, and, therefore, after the completion of Serravalle's commentary, with the result that the views of the bishop of Fermo concerning the minimal progress on a matter of such importance to him are unrecorded.

In this chapter, then, consideration has been given to Dante's treatment of the topics of heresy, schism and simony in the *Commedia*. Both commentators demonstrate an unwillingness to relate the problems described in the poem to the difficulties faced by the Catholic Church of their own lifetimes, which were arguably even more acute, particularly for Serravalle, than those of Dante's era. Benvenuto, in the Ferrara *recollectae*, displays a lay approach to these difficulties. On the other hand, Serravalle had held posts as a lecturer in theology, had served as private secretary to Pope Gregory XII, and, as bishop of Fermo, confessor to King Ladislaus of Naples and Sicily, was also a confidant of Carlo Malatesta, Gregory's proxy at Constance, and above all was a substantial presence at Constance. In view of these attributes, it is not surprising that Serravalle demonstrates a more nuanced understanding of the issues involved. There are hints of the ambiance of Constance influencing Serravalle's glosses and his support for Church reform was preached before the Assembly of the Council. However, his *Comentum* was completed after the executions of John Hus and Jerome of Prague, but before the election of Martin V as Pope, which preceded the Council's formal and abbreviated sessions on Church Reform. In this difficult and politically charged time, it is perhaps understandable that the politically astute bishop of Fermo seemed unwilling to provoke controversy which might have destabilized the outcome of the complex issues under discussion at Constance.
Conclusion

The publication of the *Translatio et Comentum* in the Civezza and Domenichelli edition of 1891 probably provided the impetus for a new appraisal of Serravalle's opus by the scholarly community. The research presented in this dissertation has confirmed several current critical judgements on Serravalle's *Comentum*, with the focus being mainly on the Ferrara *recollectae* of Benvenuto's lecture notes preserved in the manuscript Ashburnham 839, and building on the work of Michele Barbi and Carlo Paolazzi. The purpose of this research has been to conduct a new and extensive enquiry into the relationship between the Ferrara *recollectae* and the *Comentum*, and at the same time to investigate the influence of Serravalle's presence at the Council of Constance on his commentary.

The study of Serravalle's career, provided in chapter 1, shows clearly that he attended the Council of Constance as a respected delegate. An outline of his career as teacher, distinguished preacher, theologian, administrator and private secretary to Pope Gregory XII has been provided. Appointed Bishop of Fermo around 1410, he probably arrived at Constance in the company of Carlo Malatesta, Gregory's proxy with authority to effect Gregory's resignation as Pope, in February 1415. From the description of the workings of the Council provided in chapter 2, it is clear that the overriding preoccupation of the Council was to obtain the resignation of the three incumbent popes and to secure the election of a new pope acceptable to the Catholic Church. The suppression of the Hussite heresy was an important secondary issue, but it was evident that Serravalle's main interest, namely the reform of the Catholic Church, was not of such acute interest to many of the Council's prominent delegates. Nevertheless, Serravalle made his views known when he delivered his homily 'Caro mea vere est cibus' on this theme at Constance in June 1416. Serravalle was twice elected President of the Italian nation by his fellow Italian delegates, and his circle of acquaintances included Bishop Hallum, effectively Henry V's chief negotiator at Constance until his untimely death, and Cardinal Saluzzo, *camerlengo* of the Holy Roman Church. With this background, it must be considered highly likely that Serravalle was fully conversant with the intricate and convoluted workings of the Council. However, it is shown in chapters 4, 5 and 6 that it is very difficult to find evidence that the intrigues, which were part of the everyday politics of the Council, influenced Serravalle in the writing of the *Comentum*. Although there was a substantial Florentine presence at Constance, Serravalle limits himself to providing, based on his personal experiences during his earlier residence in the city, a rebuttal of Dante's criticism of his native city. A
personal intervention of this sort in a mainstream commentary is somewhat unusual. In addition, there is no indication that the presence of a substantial humanist element in the delegation influenced the writing of his comments. This is particularly apparent in his usage of non-classical Latin and in the relative paucity of his references to classical sources.

The difficult relations involving France and England are discussed in chapter 5. The problems, outlined by Dante in the *Commedia*, continued to play a significant role in European politics over a century later. Despite the ongoing negotiations between Henry V of England and the Roman Emperor Sigismund during the latter's absence from the Council resulting in an alliance potentially very detrimental to French interests, and the near paranoia exhibited by some French observers such as Cardinal Fillastre over the presence of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and Hallum's replacement at Constance, Serravalle makes no attempt to draw parallels between the two eras. Similarly, the dangers of heresy and schism, explored in some depth by Dante, evoke no clear willingness on Serravalle's part to attempt an interpretation of Dante's verses in the light of the serious problems which the Western Schism and the teachings of John Wycliffe and John Hus posed for the Church. Although, as the 'Preambula' reveal, Serravalle was very aware of the probable time constraints on his work and he might, therefore, have taken the decision not to involve himself in further time-consuming discussion, the most likely explanation is to be inferred from the 'Dedicatio' at the beginning of the *Comentum* where he makes it clear that he has no intention of departing from orthodoxy and, if any points of controversy were to be found, he undertook to accept the decisions of the learned Doctors of the Church. Whatever the reason, for the modern observer it is in the main a cause for regret that posterity has been deprived of the judgement of an accomplished theologian, who clearly possessed considerable political skills, who must have been party to the discussions at nation level and who had no particular allegiance to any of the major parties involved in the disputes that the Council was supposed to resolve. It is possible that Serravalle might have been more forthcoming on the subject of Church reform. However, this matter was only discussed in full session just before the Council's dissolution, and, therefore, the disappointing outcome postdated the completion of Serravalle's commentary.

In chapter 3 attention was paid to a comparison between the 'introductions' to the two commentaries, representing the first time that a detailed consideration has been given to these paratextual parts of the works. In the *recollectae* (MS. Ashburnham 839 fol. 3) this is to be found at the beginning of the commentary to *Inferno* 1. In the case of Serravalle's commentary this is covered at unusual length in the 'Preambula'. Although
there are some points of similarity in the contributions of the two commentators, it is clear that Serravalle's 'Preambula', known from internal evidence to have been written at Constance, are far more wide-ranging in their scope. The comparison shows the originality of this part of Serravalle's commentary and it should be noted that it represents an important set of exegetical notes dealing with a range of critical problems pertaining to Dante's text, including some questions of orthodoxy.

The main chapters, namely, 4, 5 and 6, are concerned with an evaluation of both the relationship between the Comentum and the Ferrara recollectae and with the context of Constance. Serravalle has a tendency to become prolix in those areas where he clearly possesses specialist knowledge, particularly when he takes the opportunity to recount anecdotes relating to his personal experiences. Nevertheless, embedded in these often lengthy contributions is almost always to be found a clause, sentence, or even sentences whose origin is clearly traceable to the corresponding text in the Ferrara recollectae. This represents an area that has not been studied in detail and the thesis offers a new insight into this topic. These three chapters offer documentation of such cases to illustrate the nature of Serravalle's dependency on Benvenuto, including examples representing differences of emphasis and even divergences of opinion. Some of the comments on individual verses in the recollectae can be extremely terse, and Serravalle usually provides sufficient clarification.

It is of significance to note that Serravalle saw fit to devote his homily 'Caro mea est cibus' to the condemnation of ecclesiastical malpractices, with particular reference to the apparent widespread practice of simony. Reform of such practices was on the agenda at Constance and it might have been expected that the bishop of Fermo would have been among the more conspicuous advocates of change. Here, in spite of earlier comments on the circumspection shown by Serravalle, elements are to be found which are influenced by the contemporary context and the commentator's reactions to it. These comments, of course, are not to be found in the Ferrara recollectae. In the section devoted to 'Heresy' in chapter 6, for example, Serravalle discourses at length in his gloss on Paradiso XII.97-102 on the failure of the modern-day 'inquisitores' to match the thoroughness of St. Dominic, with Benvenuto's gloss being devoid of such sentiments. Such considerations are completely in accord with Serravalle's position on these matters which he had made public to the Council. The section on 'Simony' also provides evidence of the subtle influence of the proceedings of Constance. This is again inferred from the comparison of the sparse, and merely factual, glosses of the recollectae, with the expansive commentary of
Serravalle, discoursing on a topic about which he clearly had strong feelings. This is evident, too, in the glosses on *Inferno* I.88-105 on the identity of the 'Veltro', where only Serravalle includes simony among the malpractices which the 'Veltro' will overcome and only Serravalle suggests that the 'Veltro' will be a superior Pontiff. Although other similar examples have been noted in chapter 6, Dante's and Serravalle's main vehicle for expressing their condemnation of simony is to be found in *Inferno* XIX, where Serravalle's extensive glosses, fully in accord with his homily of June 1416, make the case for reform of the Catholic Church and which, in their passion and eloquence, far exceed the basic factual glosses of Benvenuto in the Ferrara *recollectae*. 
Bibliography

Primary Sources

Manuscript

Benvenuto da Imola, *Ferrara recollectae*, MS. Ashburnham 839, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence

Giovanni da Serravalle, *Translation of and Commentary on the Commedia*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Capponi 1, Vatican City

Primary Items with an asterisk are available in the Dante Dartmouth Project Database


Alighieri, Jacopo (1322), [Inferno only] *Chiose alla Cantica dell'Inferno di Dante Alighieri scritte da Jacopo Alighieri, pubblicate per la prima volta in corretta lezione con riscontri e facsimili di codici, e precedute da una indagine critica per cura di Jarro*, edited by Giulio Piccini (Florence: R. Bemporad e figlio, 1915)*


Alighieri, Pietro (2) (1344-55[?]), [Partially edited] *Petri Allegherii super Dantis ipsius genitoris Comoediam Commentarium*. [Text of the edition prepared by Silvana Pagano as part of her Tesi di laurea, completed under the direction of Francesco Mazzoni in the Facoltà di Lettere of the Univ. of Florence]*


Anonimo Fiorentino (1400?), *Commento alla Divina Commedia d'Anonimo Fiorentino del secolo XIV, ora per la prima volta stampato a cura di Pietro Fanfani* (Bologna: G. Romagnoli, 1866-74)*

Bambaglioli, Graziolo (1324), [*Inferno only*] *Commento al ‘Inferno’ di Dante*, edited by Luca Carlo Rossi (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 1998)*

Benvenuto da Imola (1375-80), *Benvenuti de Rambaldis de Imola Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam, nunc primum integre in lucem editum sumptibus Guilielmi Warren Vernon, curante Jacobo Philippo Lacaïta* (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1887)*

Berthier, P. Gioachino (1892-97), *La Divina Commedia di Dante con commenti secondo la scolastica del P. Gioachino Berthier* (Friburgo: Libreria dell’Università, 1892-[97])*

Boccaccio, Giovanni (1373-75), [*Inferno 1-17 only*] *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante, a cura di Giorgio Padoan*, vol. VI of Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio, a cura di Vittore Branca (Milan: Mondadori, 1965)*

_____, *Opere in Versi (Corbaccio Trattatello in Laude di Dante Prose Latine· Epistole)*, edited by Pier Giorgio Ricci (Milan-Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1965)


Bonaventure, *Commentaria in iv libros Sententiarum*, in *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae s.r.e. episcopi cardinalis Opera omnia*, 11 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902)

Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, available online at www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/fin2.shtml#80, accessed 09/08/2020


Codice cassinese (1350-[75]), *Il codice cassinese della Divina commedia...per cura dei monaci benedettini della badia di Monte Cassino* (Tipografia di Monte Cassino, 1865)*

Compagni, Dino, *Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne’ tempi suoi*, E-book, available online at liberliber.it, accessed 16/04/2019


Francesco da Buti (1385-95), *Commento di Francesco da Buti sopra La Divina Commedia di Dante Allighieri*, editor: Crescentino Giannini (Pisa: Fratelli Nistri, 1858-62)*


Guido da Pisa (1327-28[?]), [*Inferno only*] *Guido da Pisa’s ‘Expositiones et Glose super Comediam Dantis’*, or *Commentary on Dante's Inferno*. Edited with Notes and an Introduction by Vincenzo Cioffari (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1974)*


Maramauro, Guglielmo (1369-73), [*Inferno only*] *Esposizione sopra l’”Inferno” di Dante Alighieri, a cura di Giacomo Pisoni e Saverio Bellomo* (Padua: Antenore, 1998)*


Villani, Filippo (1405), *[Inferno 1 only] Expositio seu comentum super “Comedia” Dantis Allegherii, a cura di Saverio Bellomo’* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1989)


**Secondary Sources**


Azzetta, Luca, 'Le chiose alla “Commedia” di Andrea Lancia, l’”Epistola a Cangrande” e altre questioni dantesche’, *L’Alighieri*, XXI (2003), 5-76

Barbi, Michele 'La lettura di Benvenuto da Imola e i suoi rapporti con altri commenti', in his *Problemi di Critica Dantesca*, seconda serie (1920-1937) (Florence: G.C. Sansone, 1965), pp. 452-469

Barnes, John C., 'Dante's Knowledge of Florentine History', in *Dante and His Literary
Precursors: Twelve Essays, edited by John C. Barnes and Jennifer Petrie (Dublin; Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 93-116


Bennett, Michael J., Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)


Crowder, C. M. D., Unity, Heresy and Reform, 1378-1460 The Conciliar Response to the Great Schism (London: Edward Arnold, 1977)

Curry, Anne, The Hundred Years War 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)


_____, 'Il commento dantesco di Giovanni da Serravalle e l'ascendente benvenutiano: tra compilatio d'autore e riproduzione inerziale', in Simona Bambrilla and Maurizio Fiorilla, eds., *La filologia dei testi d'autore: Atti del Seminario di Studi, Università degli Studi di Roma Tre, 3-4 ottobre 2007* (Florence: Cesati, 2009), pp. 47-71

_____, 'La ridestinazione del Commento di Giovanni da Serravalle a Sigisimondo di Lussemburgo: Implicazioni Testuali', *Rivista di Studi Danteschi*, 8/1 (2008), 143-167


Fiorentini, Luca, 'Per il lessico esegetico di Pietro Alighieri e Benvenuto da Imola (in rapporto all'Epistola a Cangrande e ad altre fonti)', *Bollettino di Italianistica*, 7/2 (2010), 120-155


Ghosh, Kantik, 'Logic and Lollardy', *Medium Aevum*, 76.2 (2007), 251-267


_____, 'Reading Florence in Dante's Commentators, 1324-1510', in *Se Mai Continga … Exile, Politics and Theology in Dante*, edited by Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne (Ravenna,: Longo, 2013), pp. 105-124


Helps, John D., *Dante and the French Monarchy: A study of Purgatorio XX and XXXII*
and their relation to the commentary tradition 1324-1568. An unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master by Research in Italian, University of Warwick, Department of Italian, 2012.


Keen, Catherine, *Dante and the City* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003)


Kelly, Henry A., 'Epistle to Cangrande Updated', *Dante Notes*, September 28, 2018, available online at dantesociety.org/publications, accessed 17/02/2020


La Favia, Louis M., 'Benvenuto da Imola's Dependence on Boccaccio's Studies on Dante', *Dante Studies*, 93 (1975), 161-175


Lombardi, Teodosio O.F.M., 'Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle tra i grandi cultori di Dante', in *Dante e il Francescanesimo*, ed. A. Mellone (Avagliano: Cava dei Tirenni,
1987), pp. 97-124


Newman, Francis X., 'St. Augustine's Three Visions and the Structure of the *Commedia*', *MLN* 82 (1967), 56-78

Pantone, Domenico, 'Misogallismi di Benvenuto tra Dante e Petrarca', *L'Alighieri*, 37 (2011), 151-159

Paolazzi, Carlo, 'Giovanni da Serravalle espositore della *Commedia* e Benvenuto da Imola (con nuovi accertamenti sul Laurenziano Ashb. 839)', in *Atti della Giornata di studi malatestiani a San Marino (17 ottobre 1987)*, ed. Dicastero pubblica istruzione e cultura (Rimini: B. Ghigi, 1990), pp. 5-37


Pézard, André, 'Du *Politicus* à la *Divine Comédie* : Deuxième article', Romania, 278.2 (1948-1949), 163-191.

Piana, Celestino, 'Il traduttore e commentatore della *Divina Commedia* fra Giovanni Bertoldi da Serravalle O.F.M baccalario a Ferrara nel 1379 ed altri documenti per la storia degli Studi francescani', *Analecta Pomposiana*, VII (1982), 131-183


**Internet Sources**


Bufano, Antonietta and Davis, Charles T., 'Veltro', *Enciclopedia Danresca*, 970), available online at swww.treccani.it/enciclopedia/veltro_(Enciclopedia-Dantesca)/, accessed 30/07/2020


Cristiani, Marta, 'Timeo', *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, available online at treccani.it/enciclopedia/timeo(Enciclopedia-Dantesca)/, accessed 15/07/2020

Dante Dartmouth Project. (A list of commentaries consulted and full publication details) Available online at http://dante.dartmouth.edu.

englishmonarchs.co.uk/plantagenet_76.html , accessed 25/05/2018

Falcioni, Anna, 'Malatesta, Carlo' in the *Dizionario degli Italiani*- Volume 68 (2007), available online at trecanniti/enciclopedia /carlo-malatesta_(Dizionario-Biografico), accessed 05/08/2020


Rosso, Paolo, 'Saluzzo, Amedeo di', Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, vol. 89 (2017), available online at treccani.it/ enciclopedia /amedeo-di-Saluzzo(Dizionario-Biografico)/, accessed 17/03/2020

'Saint Clement I', britannica.com/biography/Saint-Clement-I, accessed 24/05/2018


'The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church', available online at www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/cardinals.htm, accessed 14/03/2015