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INTERPOLATION AND/AS INTERPRETATION IN THE EARLY MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF DANTE'S *COMMEDIA*

K. P. CLARKE

ABSTRACT · THIS ESSAY EXAMINES THE PHENOMENON OF INTERPOLATION AS OBSERVED IN SOME EARLY MANUSCRIPTS OF DANTE'S *COMMEDIA*, FOCUSING ON HOW IT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT, AND OVERLOOKED, EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY RECEPTION OF THE POEM. MANY OF THESE INTERPOLATIONS REVEAL THE CHALLENGES OF IMITATING DANTE'S *TERZA RIMA*, BUT THEY ALSO SHOW HOW THE STYLE OF THE *COMMEDIA* WAS RESONATING WITH EARLY READERS. PARTICULAR ATTENTION IS PAID TO AN EIGHTEEN-LINE INTERPOLATION IN *INFERNO* XXXIII, WITNESSED IN SIX MANUSCRIPTS, WHERE AN INTERPOLATOR INSERTS ANOTHER CHARACTER BETWEEN LINES 90 AND 91, WHO PROCEEDS TO ENGAGE IN LIVELY DIALOGUE WITH THE CHARACTER DANTE.

KEYWORDS · *COMMEDIA*, DANTE, INTERPOLATION,

The problem of interpolation in classical and medieval texts has a long and rich history of scholarship.¹ Defined as a non-authorial composition added subsequently to the text, and which becomes part of the transmission of that text, interpolations raise many problems in respect of literary style, imitation, and reception.² They can take a wide variety of forms : a line of verse might be reworked or expanded for clarification ; a line might be transposed from elsewhere in the same work, or indeed drawn from another work ; a text known and read in one context might be inserted into another ; or a piece of text might be composed to look like the original, and metrically ‘fit’ its new context. Classicists have long debated the criteria by which one may identify an interpolation in the first instance, and how, once identified, they are

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¹ See, for example, R. J. TARRANT, *Towards a Typology of Interpolation in Latin Poetry*, « Transactions of the American Philological Association », CXVII, 1987, pp. 281-298 ; IDEM, *The Reader as Author. Collaborative Interpolation in Latin Poetry*, in *Editing Greek and Latin Texts. Papers Given at the Twenty-Third Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 6-7 November 1987*, ed. by John N. Grant, New York, AMS Press, 1989, pp. 121-162 : and IDEM, *Texts, Editors, and Readers. Methods and Problems in Latin Textual Criticism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, esp. pp. 85-104. On medieval interpolations see : *Texte dans le texte. L'interpolation médiévale*, ed. by Annie Combes, Michelle Szkilnik, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2013 ; SOPHIE RABAU, *Pour une poétique de l'interpolation*, « Fabula-LHT », v, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.58282/lht.828> ; EADEM, *L'art d'assaisonner les textes: théorie et pratique de l'interpolation*, Toulouse, Anacharsis, 2020 ; HANNAH WEAVER, *Interpolation as Critical Category*, « New Literary History », LIII, 1, 2022, pp. 1-32 ; and EADEM, *Experimental Histories: Interpolation and the Medieval British Past*, Ithaca-London, Cornell University Press, 2024.

² PASCALE BOURGAIN, OLIVIER GUYOTJEANNIN, FRANÇOISE VIELLIARD, *Conseils pour l'édition des textes médiévaux*, 3 vols, Paris, Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques – École nationale des Chartes, 2001-2002, III, *Textes littéraires*, 2018², p. 213 : « Transformation volontaire apportée par un copiste, un remanieur ou un éditeur à un texte dont il assume la transmission. Ces transformations peuvent viser à améliorer le texte (mises à jour, gloses, références ou précisions additionnelles) ; elles peuvent aussi viser à en changer la portée, avec l'intention de faire passer les éléments étrangers à la teneur originelle sous l'autorité du texte primitif ».

to be handled by an editor. More recently, scholars have begun to consider the phenomenon of interpolation not so much as a deliberate act of forgery, and thus simply an embarrassing textual flaw to be excised, but rather as revealing insights relating to the reception of a text.³ R. J. Tarrant, who has written most sensitively about the phenomenon, speaks of « collaborative interpolation », where « a reader seems to take on the role of a co-author ». ⁴ Recent work on what has been termed « the philology of reception » takes as points of departure the notion of the scribe as ‘editor’ ; the phenomenology of the single manuscript ; and the variability of the text, whereby each version has the status of a text in its own right, rather than being regarded as a corrupted original.⁵ The problems raised by interpolation impinge upon definitions of the author, the text, and the reader, blurring distinctions between them.

Dante Alighieri’s *Commedia* prompted an exceptionally rich array of responses. Not only is there a vast tradition of commentary material, virtually unprecedented for a vernacular text, but the poem also elicited polemical sonnets in *tenzoni* between Cino da Pistoia (?), Giovanni di Meo Vitali, and Bosone Novello da Gubbio.⁶ The interpolations in the manuscript tradition of the *Commedia*, however, are rarely studied as critical resources in the early reception of the poem.⁷ The number of interpolations observed in manuscripts of the *Commedia* is small, certainly when compared to those found, for example, in medieval romance cycles.⁸ The

³ See TARRANT, *The Reader as Author*, cit., p. 126 : « the origins of interpolation are not primarily to be looked for in the operations of a few unscrupulous deceivers but rather in the ways ancient and medieval readers in general encountered and responded to texts ».

⁴ Ivi, p. 137 ; Tarrant distinguishes three main types of « collaborative interpolation » : those which smooth a transition or fill an ellipse in the argument or narrative; those which extend, amplify or heighten a point; and those which add emphasis or weight to a conclusion.

⁵ These three premises are respectively set out in ELSPETH KENNEDY, *The Scribe as Editor*, in *Mélanges de langue et de littérature du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier, professeur à la Sorbonne par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis*, 2 vols, Geneva, Droz-Paris, Minard 1970 (« Publications romanes et françaises », 112), I, pp. 523-531 ; D’ARCO SILVIO AVALLE, *La critica testuale*, in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, ed. by Hans R. Jauss and Erich Köhler, vol. I, *Généralités*, Heidelberg, Winter, 1972, pp. 538-558, reprinted as *Fenomenologia ecdotica del medioevo romanzo*, in IDEM, *La doppia verità. Fenomenologia ecdotica e lingua letteraria nel Medioevo romanzo*, Tavarnuzze (FI), SISMEL-Editioni del Galluzzo, 2002 (« Archivio romanzo », 1), pp. 125-153 ; and PAUL ZUMTHOR, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1972, esp. pp. 70-75. For an excellent discussion, see LINO LEONARDI, *Filologia della ricezione. I copisti come attori della tradizione*, « Medioevo romanzo », XXXVIII, 1, 2014, pp. 5-27.

⁶ For the commentary tradition, see *Censimento dei commenti danteschi*, I. *I commenti di tradizione manoscritta (fino al 1480)*, 2 tomes, ed. by Enrico Malato, and Andrea Mazzucchi, Rome, Salerno, 2011. On the *tenzoni*, see DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Opere di dubbia attribuzione e altri documenti danteschi*, II, *Opere già attribuite a Dante e altri documenti danteschi*, ed. by Paolo Mastandrea, with Michele Rinaldi, Federico Ruggieri and Linda Spinazzè, Rome, Salerno, 2020 (« Nuova edizione commentata delle Opere di Dante », 7)pp. 293-319.

⁷ MARCELLA RODDEWIG, *Dante Alighieri*, Die göttliche Komödie. *Vergleichende Bestandsaufnahme der Commedia-Handschriften*, Stuttgart, A. Hiersemann, 1984, pp. 405-406 ; FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni nella tradizione manoscritta della Commedia*, « Storie e linguaggi », IX, 1, 2023, pp. 83-109.

⁸ See HUW GRANGE, *Interpolation, dés-interpolation, ré-interpolation. Le Tristan en prose et l’Agravain*, in *La tradition manuscrite du Tristan en prose. Bilan et perspectives*, ed. by Damien de Carné, Christine Ferlampin-Acher, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2021 (« Civilisation médiévale », 45), pp. 89-102 ; FANNI BOGDANOW, *L’invention du texte, intertextualité et le problème de la transmission et de la classification de manuscrits. Le cas*

poem's early authority, as well as its novel metrical scheme, may have contributed to a certain textual stability, or at least increased the technical difficulty of incorporating an interpolation.⁹ Though not numerous, the interpolations in the manuscripts of the *Commedia* nevertheless present a series of fascinating insights into how the poem was read in the fourteenth century, and in particular how its authority was renegotiated and reappropriated.

The *Commedia* interpolations range from single tercets, or snippets of text, to more extensive compositions, some the length of an entire canto. Several of the interpolations are extant in multiple witnesses, while others are uniquely attested, in single manuscripts. All of these interpolations will be discussed in what follows, but the primary focus will be on an eighteen-line text inserted into *Inferno* XXXIII. This interpolation is unusual in being witnessed in no fewer than six manuscripts. Its stylistic and narrative features are best appreciated in the wider context of surviving interpolation.¹⁰

Between the final two lines of *Inferno* XXI, a tercet has been added in two manuscripts, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS Hamilton 203 (Ham.) and Cagliari, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 76 :¹¹

coi denti verso il lor duca per cenno
Chosi andando per la ripa mala
che va ne l'autra bolgia maladetta
ove sença temensa non si cala
Et elli avea del chulo fatto tronbetta

(citing Ham., f. 20rA, *Inf. XXI* 138//139).¹²

des versions de la Queste del Saint Graal post-Vulgate et du Tristan en prose, « Romania », CXI, 441/442, 1990, pp. 121-140. On the musical interpolations in the *Roman de Favel*, see EMMA DILLON, *The Art of Interpolation in the Roman de Fauvel*, « Journal of Musicology », XIX, 2, 2002, pp. 223-263.

⁹ On the authority of the *Roman de la rose* as discouraging interpolation, see ANDREA VALENTINI, *Quand un texte devient intouchable. Ou n'interpolez pas le poème de Jean de Meun !*, in *Texte dans le texte. L'interpolation médiévale*, ed. by Annie Combes and Michelle Szkilnik, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2013, pp. 143-161.

¹⁰ Some frequently used bibliographical abbreviations in what follows are : Rodd. = MARCELLA RODDEWIG, *Dante Alighieri*, cit. ; Cens. = *Censimento dei commenti danteschi*, cit. ; MBR = MARISA BOSCHI ROTIOTTI, *Codicologia trecentesca della Commedia: entro e oltre l'antica vulgata*, Rome, Viella, 2004 (« Scritture e libri del medioevo », 2) ; MBR Cens = MARISA BOSCHI ROTIOTTI, *Censimento dei manoscritti della Commedia: Firenze, biblioteche Riccardiana e Moreniana, Società Dantesca Italiana*, Rome, Viella, 2008.

¹¹ See, respectively : Rodd. 15, MBR 8, Cens. 12 (F. Franceschini) ; and Rodd. 56, MBR 22, Cens. 34 (P. Maninchedda).

¹² For a transcription and digital facsimile of Ham., see DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Commedia. A Digital Edition*, ed. by Prue Shaw, Florence, Fondazione Ezio Franceschini-Saskatoon, Inkless Editions, 2021², online at <https://dantecommedia.it>. For an image of this interpolation in Cagliari, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 76, f. 21r, see KARL PHILIPP ELLERBROCK, *Die Poetik des Ungesagten in Dantes Commedia*, Paderborn, Wihlelm Fink, 2021, p. 386, Taf. 9, and on the manuscript, see PAOLO MANINCHEDDA, *Il testo della Commedia secondo il codice di Cagliari*, , Rome, Bulzoni, 1990 (« Università degli studi di Cagliari, Dipartimento di filologie e letterature moderne », 3).

The memorable conclusion to this canto sees the devils blow a raspberry at Malacoda, their leader, who in turn, responds in kind (139) : « ed elli avea del cul fatto trombetta ». ¹³ In line 136, « Per l'argine sinistro volta dienno », the narrative itself ends, signaled in that use of *dare* in the *passato remoto*, in an archaic form placed in rhyme position. The verbs in lines 137 and 139 are in the anterior past (*trapassato prossimo*) : that is, the narrative pauses and momentarily turns back upon itself here, affording another glance at the grotesquely comical devils. ¹⁴ This moment of narrative transition, with its temporal wrinkle, seems to have created a need for a clearer marking of transition between *bolge*. The interpolation does not significantly add any information to the story. One might pause, however, over the use of *temensa*, which is relatively rare in the poem (occurring only twice, in *Purg.* VI 102 and *Purg.* XXVII 31), and note how it focuses attention in quite a specific way on fear in *Inferno* XXI, where Virgil risks being deceived by the devils and, in the process, risks his own safety. If here « *temensa* » draws into *Inferno* a word only used by Dante in *Purgatory*, then with the phrase « non si cala » at the end of a line, a similar tendency is observed, since it is not used by Dante in *Inferno* but only in the other two canticles (*Purg.* II 105, and *Par.* X 90).

Inferno XXIII concludes with Virgil realizing he has been tricked by Malacoda, and, after becoming (in l. 146) « turbato un poco d'ira », he strides away leaving Dante to catch up. The scene has often been noted for its unusual characterization of Virgil, angry and storming off, rather than maintaining a dignified composure. ¹⁵ After the final line of *Inferno* XXIII, another tercet is added in two manuscripts, Cagliari, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 76, and Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, MS 316 : ¹⁶

Senza parola dicere alcuna
seguendo io dritto lui, ed ei davante
passando per la valle tanto bruna.

(*Inf.* XXXIII 148//, citing from Rodd. 535) ¹⁷

¹³ All citation to the *Commedia* will be to DANTE ALIGHIERI, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by Giorgio Petrocchi, 2nd rev. corr. edn, 4 vols, Florence, Le Lettere, 1994.

¹⁴ See FABIAN ALFIE, *Diabolic Flatulence. A Note on Inferno 21: 139*, « Forum Italicum », XLV, 2, 2011, pp. 417-427 : 418.

¹⁵ See, for example, MARGHERITA FRANKEL, *Dante's Anti-Virgilian Villanello* (*Inf. XXIV, 1-21*), « Dante Studies », CII, 1984, pp. 81-109 : 85-86.

¹⁶ Rodd. 535; the tercet is mentioned briefly in KARL WITTE, *Dante-Forschungen. Altes und Neues*, 2 vols, Halle, G. E. Barthel, 1869-1879, II, pp. 492-493. For an image of this interpolation in Cagliari, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 76, f. 21r, see KARL PHILIPP ELLERBROCK, *Die Poetik des Ungesagten*, cit., p. 387, Taf. 10.

¹⁷ The order of the verses in both manuscripts has been confused by the scribes resulting in a rhyme scheme *davante : alcuna : bruna*, and has been emended here, following Witte and Roddewig.

The interpolation essentially reiterates what has already been said in the final line of the canto, which describes how Dante followed Virgil in the wake of his master's beloved footsteps, « dietro a le poste de le care piante » (148). But it also strongly recalls the canto's opening tercet, where the walking in single file of Dante and Virgil is compared to a line of Franciscan friars :

Taciti, soli, sanza compagnia
n'andavam l'un dinanzi e l'altro dopo,
come frati minor vanno per via.

(Inf. XXIII 1-3)

By creating a parallel between the beginning and ending of the canto, the interpolation renders much more explicit what has often been observed : namely, that « [t]he canto ends as it began, with Dante following behind his master ». ¹⁸ The interpolation emphasizes the sense of transition, with the verbs *seguire* and *passare* in the gerund opening the second and third lines. The third line of the tercet also adds a certain atmospheric touch, where « la valle tanto bruna » could describe this particular *bolgia* (or perhaps Hell more generally), while with the adjective *bruna* the interpolator seems to acknowledge stylistically Dante's own habit of placing that word – whether used as adjective or noun – always in rhyme position. ¹⁹

A relatively small number of *Commedia* interpolations comprise liturgical texts and prayers. Such a phenomenon may be accounted for by the participative, collaborative nature of these sacred texts, understood as a 'shared voice' for the faithful. ²⁰ In one instance, a scribe has added prayers to the text of Saint Bernard's prayer to the Virgin in *Paradiso* XXXIII 1-21, and to the Pater Noster in *Purgatorio* XI 1-21. ²¹ But these two fragmentary passages are gathered together with a more extensive collection of religious treatises and *laude*, so that this is less an example of interpolating into the *Commedia* than of excerpting it in order to anthologize specific passages. In another instance (Imola, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 31), the three opening

¹⁸ REGINA F. PSAKI, *Inferno* XXIII, in *Dante's Divine Comedy: Introductory Readings*, I. *Inferno*, ed. by Tibor Wlassics, Charlottesville, VA, University of Virginia Press, 1990, pp. 297-306 : 304.

¹⁹ For *alcuna* : *bruna* see *Inf.* xxvi 133-135, and *Purg.* xxviii 29-31.

²⁰ See, for example, HELENA PHILLIPS-ROBINS, *Liturgical Song and Practice in Dante's Commedia*, Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 2021 (« The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante and Medieval Italian Literature », 19).

²¹ See Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS A I sup. Misc., ff. 72v-73r. On the manuscript, see Rodd. 428, and ANGELO EUGENIO MECCA, *I manoscritti frammentari della Commedia*, Siena, Edizioni Università per stranieri di Siena, 2021, pp. 43-44, n. 114.

lines of the *Te Deum* are inserted after *Purgatorio* XV 39, where Dante and Virgil hear « [b]eati misericordes » being sung, the fifth of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 7).²² To this Latin *incipit*, Dante adds a phrase in vernacular, « Godi tu che vinci ! », which does not directly translate the New Testament, and whose source has not been satisfactorily identified. The Latin words of Christ in Matthew's gospel seem to morph into the vernacular, with a certain resonance of a liturgical hymn.²³ The *Te Deum* was « the Church's hymn of thanksgiving, sung on occasions of deliverance and victory ».²⁴ So it is possible that the liturgical resonance, combined with the reference to victory, recalled the *Te Deum* in the mind of the scribe, who then proceeds to supply it.²⁵

The term 'interpolation' seems inappropriate to describe the remarkable scribal intervention in 'Rb', an important early manuscript of the *Commedia* accompanied by the commentary of Iacomo della Lana.²⁶ On f. 58v, at *Inferno* XXII, the commentary and the text have become out of sync, and the scribe, Maestro Galvano, decides to fill the empty box at the center of the page planned for the poem with some text of his own devising : *Quive non vuol testo, ma pur la vista face*. The passage comprises twenty-two lines of hendecasyllabic *terza rima*, is written in the first person, and appeals to the reader with an *excusatio* of what has happened in the problematic sequencing of text and commentary.²⁷ While it is not metrically dextrous, and has

²² For the manuscript, see Rodd. 369 ; for a brief discussion of the interpolation, see FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni*, cit., pp. 88-89.

²³ See BRUNO NARDI, *Il canto XV del Purgatorio* [1953], now in « *Lecturae* » e altri studi danteschi, ed. by Rudy AbardoFlorence, Le Lettere, 1990 (« Quaderni degli studi danteschi », 6), pp. 127-138 (esp. 130).

²⁴ PETER ARMOUR, *The Door of Purgatory. A Study of Multiple Symbolism in Dante's Purgatorio*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 110 ; cfr. JOHN C. BARNES, *Vestiges of the Liturgy in Dante's Verse*, in *Dante and the Middle Ages. Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. by John C. Barnes and Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1995, pp. 231-269 : 239.

²⁵ Dante hears *Te Deum laudamus* being sung in *Purg.* IX 140 and *Par.* XXIV 113.

²⁶ The manuscript is now in two parts : Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Riccardiano 1005, and Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS AG XII 2 ; see Rodd. 302 & 463, MBR 146, and Cens 345 (G. Pomaro) & 460 (L. C. Rossi). For a facsimile, see *Il manoscritto riccardiano-braidense della Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. by Arianna Terzi, Mirko Volpi, Rome, Salerno, 2007. See the exhibition catalogue *La ricezione della Commedia dai manoscritti ai media. Roma, Palazzo Corsini, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei Corsiniana 26 marzo 2022-25 giugno 2022*, ed. by Roberto Antonelli, Silvia De Santis, Luciano Formisano, Rome, Bardi Edizioni, 2022, cat. 4-5, pp. 43-45 (schede by F. Gallori, M. L. Grossi Turchetti, S. De Santis).

²⁷ See the (unsigned) *scheda* at <https://www.mirabileweb.it/title/quine-non-vuol-testo-ma-pur-la-vista-face-title/40277>, where the text is described as a « capitolo ternario », and, further, « si rilevano varie ipometrie, ipermetrie e irregolarità nello schema rimico ». The interpolation was noted in SALOMONE MORPURGO, *I codici Riccardiani della Divina Commedia*, « *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana* », XIII-XIV, 1893, 19-144 : 34, and the text included in *Rimatori bolognesi del trecento*, ed. by Lodovico Frati, Bologna, Romagnoli dall'Acqua, 1915, p. 183. The text is also included by Giorgio Petrocchi in the apparatus of his edition : see DANTE ALIGHIERI, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, cit., II, p. 330 ; and discussed in GABRIELLA POMARO, *I copisti e il Testo. Quattro esempi dalla Biblioteca Riccardiana*, in *La Società Dantesca Italiana, 1888-1988. Convegno internazionale*, Firenze, 24-26 novembre 1988, ed. by Rudy Abardo, Milano-Napoli, Ricciardi, 1995, pp. 517-

no literary ambition, it is an *unicum* in the tradition. The text represents a remarkable moment when the scribe steps forward and makes himself heard right in the center of the text, while such a scribal voice is more typically only heard in a colophon.²⁸ That he should be keen to make this text *look* right, as if it ‘belongs’ on the page, suggests that Maestro Galvano had a strong sense of what has recently been termed the « immaterial text » : the notion of the page or book to be found in the mind of the scribe.²⁹ This interpolation – for certainly one may call Galvano’s text a type of interpolation – fulfills what might be called Maestro Galvano’s *idea di Dante* ; nevertheless, it stands apart in the manuscript tradition of the *Commedia*, and indeed, analogous examples in medieval manuscripts of literary texts are not easy to find.

Amongst those longer *Commedia* interpolations, two are witnessed in single manuscripts, and each represents a striking effort at imitating the style and voice of Dante’s poetry. First, at the end of *Inferno* XXIX in Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell’Archiginnasio, MS A 322, on f. 58r, an interpolator has added thirty lines of text, forming an uninterrupted narrative flow,³⁰ whereby the figure Capocchio continues to speak after line 139, in what Luciano Scarabelli called a « finta prosecuzione ».³¹ That this act of falsification should happen just as Dante’s Capocchio declares himself to be « di natura buona scimia » is a delicious irony. The interpolator’s Capocchio refers to being in the company of one « Zambon da Vilanova », explaining to Dante that Zambon is keen to speak to the poet, and that, like Capocchio himself, he was a falsifier of metal through alchemy, as well as a coin cutter. In the dialogue that follows Zambon explains why he is in Hell, confessing to barratry, and, in respect of Saint Francis, to the sins of « ingano » and « malicia » (l. 16).³² After asking forgiveness on the grounds of « puericia » (l. 18), he had tried unsuccessfully to join the Franciscans, and returned to the

518. The most recent transcription is in IACOMO DELLA LANA, *Commento alla Commedia*, ed. by Mirko Volpi, Arianna Terzi, Rome, Salerno, 2009, p. 575, with further remarks by Gabriella Pomaro, ibi, p. 2713 and n. 26.

²⁸ Maestro Galvano is likely also to be the author of a sonnet, *Eo [ho] provate molte alegreçce*, which he includes elsewhere in the manuscript, in a box in the commentary space at the bottom right of f. 100r of Ricc. 1005 ; see SALOMONE MORPURGO, *I codici Riccardiani*, cit., p. 36; *Rimatori bolognesi*, cit., pp. 182-183 ; IACOMO DELLA LANA, *Commento alla Commedia*, cit., pp. 2686, 2688.

²⁹ DANIEL WAKELIN, *Immaterial Texts in Late Medieval England. Making English Literary Manuscripts, 1400-1500*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022.

³⁰ Rodd. 31; MBR 13; Cens. 23 (A. Stefanin). For an image of this interpolation in the manuscript, see KARL PHILIPP ELLERBROCK, *Die Poetik des Ungesagten*, cit., p. 388, Taf. 11, and pp. 373-376 for a transcription and paraphrase in Italian. For a brief discussion see FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni*, cit., pp. 102-105 (with text on p. 102).

³¹ See JACOPO DELLA LANA, *Comedia di Dante degli Allagherii*, ed. by Luciano Scarabelli, 3 vols, Bologna, Tipografia Regia, 1866, I, p. 463.

³² Citation to the text and line numbers in FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni*, cit., p. 102.

Dominicans, was buried, and then damned by Minos for his deceit, first in respect of Francis and then of the Dominicans (« E perché inganai / prima el Francesco e po' lo nero e 'l bianco », ll. 24-25).

The interpolation is full of characters and narrative drama, and emerges out of a keen familiarity with the *Commedia*'s dynamics of damnation : its infernal judge ; the rhythms of confession and revelation ; Dante's silence in response, closing the encounter at line 30 – « ch'io me partì senza moto più dirli » – which echoes Ugolino's description of looking into the faces of his children « senza far motto », in *Inferno* XXXIII 48. Certain phrasings are reprised from elsewhere in the poem, such as « dolce mondo » in line 13 (which appears in *Inf. VI* 88 and *Inf. X* 82).

Even if the overall sense of the interpolation can be understood, the text at certain moments shows evidence of confusion, such as lines 11-15.³³ Here, the narrator-Dante seems to suggest that he and Zambon kept company together « nel dolce mondo » (l. 13), and finding this acquaintance in Hell comes as a surprise, eliciting a strong emotional reaction (l. 15, « sì pauroso e paventoso fieme »). The invented scene recalls other encounters in the poem where Dante is surprised to find an acquaintance (Brunetto, *Inf. XV* ; or Branca Doria *Inf. XXXIII*), while the confession that follows suggests the sins in question were unknown to Dante in life.

The identity of this Zambon figure is not obvious, but the name may recall – or is perhaps a confused form of – Arnaldo da Villanova (1240-1311), a well-known physician, theologian, and mystic, also notorious in the Middle Ages as an alchemist.³⁴ Indeed, Arnaldo was spared an attempt at arrest and execution after the intercession of Boniface VIII, who was grateful for having been cured by the doctor. Just two cantos earlier, in *Inferno* XXVII, it is this same Boniface who is figured as a patient with a fever, cured by Guido da Montefeltro's skill (that is, the pope's feverish desire to suppress his enemies is 'cured' by Guido's skillful stratagems). In that same canto, Guido described a remarkable death scene, where Saint Francis arrives to take his soul, only to be thwarted by a devil; soon after, Guido finds himself taken before Minos, who indicates his fate with eight turns of his tail.

In Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS S. Pantaleo 8, meanwhile, two long pieces of text have been appended to the end of *Purgatorio*.³⁵ Several scribes collaborated on the book, and

³³ Both Ellerbrock and Marchetti refer to these lines as textually problematic.

³⁴ See MICHELA PEREIRA, *Arnaldo da Villanova e l'alchimia. Un'indagine preliminare*, « Arxiu de textos catalans antics », XIV, 1995, pp. 95-174.

³⁵ Rodd. 721; Cens. 615 (C. Cassiani). See too *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche* (20 aprile-31 ottobre 1965), Florence, R. Sandron, 1965, cat. 57, p. 49, a *scheda* written by Gianfranco Contini, and *Dante e il suo tempo nelle biblioteche fiorentine: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Biblioteca Riccardiana* (23 settembre 2021-14 gennaio 2022), ed. by Gabriele Albanese, Sandro Bertelli, Sonia Gentili,

its complex construction suggests a coordinated effort to gather texts relating to Dante : the *Commedia*, a series of lyrics by Dante and his contemporaries, and several of Dante's political letters.³⁶ The interpolations consist of two « *capitoli* », written in the vernacular in hendecasyllabic *terza rima* ; and of all the *Commedia* interpolations discussed here, these two, each of 151 lines, are by far the lengthiest, comprising two compositions that may be considered complete cantos. The manuscript was previously dated to the end of the fourteenth century, but recent work suggests it might have been made somewhat earlier, perhaps as early as the middle of the century.³⁷ If the two interpolations can be dated to the middle of the fourteenth century, then they are early examples of the *capitolo*. That they name individuals, and identify them as sinners, lends the two *capitoli* a distinctly invective quality, which Ignazio Baldelli noted as a feature of uses of *terza rima* subsequent to Dante.³⁸

The two interpolations are rubricated with headings indicating that one treats of the sin of usury, and the other the sin of gluttony (two sins with perhaps a certain comic dimension to them).³⁹ The gluttonous Forese Donati, expiating his sin in *Purgatorio* XXIII, had engaged in a scurrilous poetic exchange with Dante ;⁴⁰ and while a focus on usury recalls, for example, the work of Cecco Angiolieri or Meo dei Tolomei, in which moneylending and usury are prominent themes,⁴¹ it is also striking as an early response to the *Commedia*, in which this sin does not

Giorgio Inglese, Paolo Pontari, 2 vols, Florence, Mandragora, 2021, cat. 271, I, pp. 270-272 (*scheda* by M. Signorini), and *La ricezione della Commedia dai manoscritti ai media*, cit., cat. 14, pp. 61-62 (*scheda* by V. Longo and M. Signorini). The manuscript has been digitized and may be consulted online : <http://digitale.bnc.roma.sbn.it/tecadigitale/visore/#/main/viewer?idMetadato=21264967&type=bncr>

³⁶ See DOMENICO DE ROBERTIS, *Censimento dei manoscritti di Rime di Dante (VII)*, « *Studi danteschi* », XLIII, 1966, pp. 205-238 : n. 365 (pp. 224-225), now in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Rime*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, 3 vols in 5 tomes, Florence, Le Lettere, 2002, I, pp. 623-625, and ANTONIO MONTEFUSCO, *Le Epistole di Dante. Un approccio al corpus*, « *Critica del testo* », XIV, 1, 2011, pp. 401-457 (esp. 442-445).

³⁷ In addition to the most recent *schede* cited in the previous note, see too the discussion in MADDALENA SIGNORINI, *Sul S. Pantaleo 8 della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma. Una miscellanea dantesca di metà Trecento*, « *Scrineum* », XVIII, 2021, pp. 177-202.

³⁸ « La lettura della *Commedia*, come anche libello politico, suggerì l'utilizzazione della terzina in poemetti o in capitoli d'invettiva o di esortazione politica » : see IGNACIO BALDELLI, *terzina*, in *ED*, V, pp. 583-594 : 592), repr. in IDEM, *Studi danteschi*, ed. by Luca Serianni and Ugo Vignuzzi, , Spoleto, Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2015 (« *Medioevo francescano : Saggi* », 16), pp. 589-613 : 610. See too EMANUELA KROMANN, *Evoluzione del capitolo ternario*, « *Revue romane* », X, 1975, pp. 373-388.

³⁹ For the texts, see IGNACIO GIORGI, *Aneddoto di un codice dantesco*, « *Giornale di filologia romanza* », II, 1879, pp. 213-219. A brief mention is made in ELISABETTA CAVALLARI, *La fortuna di Dante nel Trecento*, Florence, Perrella, 1921, p. 87. The rubrics read, respectively : « *Capitulum De usurariis et nominatur bonafidanza* » (f. 86rA), and « *Hic incipit de Gulosis Capitulum* » (f. 88rA).

⁴⁰ See *Rime* 87-92, in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Rime*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, 3 vols in 5 tomes, Florence, Le Lettere, 2002, III, pp. 451-460, and cfr. the commentary in IDEM, *Rime*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis, Tavernuzze (FI), SISMEL-Editioni del Galuzzo, 2005, pp. 458-472.

⁴¹ See, for example, the sonnet *Caro mi costa la malinconia*, attributed—with some doubts—to Meo dei Tolomei, where the narrator refers to usury and its effect on him (ll. 3-4) : « *la disgraziata arte de l'usurare / la qual consuma la persona mia* » ; citing from *Poeti giocosi nel tempo di Dante*, ed. by Mario Marti, Milan, Rizzoli, 1956, p. 272 (and cfr. the doubts on attribution expressed in ANNA BETTARINI BRUNI, *Le rime di Meo dei Tolomei e di Muscia da Siena*, « *Studi di filologia italiana* », XXXII, 1974, pp. 31-98 : 39-40).

much occupy Dante's attention, being the focus merely of a brief, almost parenthetical, passage in a canto mostly taken up with the figure of Geryon and the descent to the eighth circle (*Inf.* XVII 34-78).⁴² That is, the *capitolo* on usury would appear to be an attempt on the part of the interpolator to supplement what little he found in the *Commedia*.

The interpolations resonate only in part with those cantos in the *Commedia* that address the sins of usury (*Inf.* XVII) and gluttony (*Inf.* VI and *Purg.* XXIII-XXIV). They have instead absorbed references from a very wide range of cantos. In the *capitolo* on gluttony, reference is made not only to Cerberus (ll. 2 and 21), but also to Pluto (ll. 9 and 149), as well as to « la schuola / del misero epycurio » (ll 54-55), so presumably to *Inferno* X. The *capitolo* on usury opens with reference to being turned to stone, clearly echoing the figure of Medusa in *Inferno* IX.⁴³ Distinctive cannibalistic imagery (« I' rodeva le carni a' poverelli », l. 64) is drawn from *Inferno* XXXII-XXXIII, while in lines 97-99 the interpolator evokes the reptilian metamorphoses of *Inferno* XXV.

These *capitoli* are richly and vividly drawn imitations of the *Commedia*, the work of a reader deeply immersed in the poem's narrative and stylistic features, whose response to it is marked by a creative, not to say fantastical, imagination. In the *capitolo* on usury, a certain « Bonafidanza » confesses to his sin and then, when asked by Dante about another figure close by, proceeds to pull out not just the tongue of this unnamed character, but also his heart: « allor la man li mise nella stroçça / e trasse fuor la lingua di colui » (ll. 86-87) ; « che 'l cuor del corpo li si svesle et venne / fuor de la boccha » (ll. 92-93). Most startling of all is Bonafidanza's inquiry as to whether Dante recognizes the character, and revelation that he is in fact Dante's neighbor : « or ti sie conto che fu tuo vicino » (l. 113). Both compositions comprise a heroic attempt at *terza rima*, clearly relishing the challenge of using difficult and unusual rhymes : *orme* : *forme* : *torme*, for example, or the bizarre *choncodrillo* : *cillo* : *aprillo*.⁴⁴ Much more work is needed on these interpolations, on their material context in MS S. Pantaleo 8, and their wider cultural and literary contexts.⁴⁵ The *explicit*, on f. 89rB, suggests that the two *capitoli* form a unit, and that they were not understood to be the work of Dante.⁴⁶ Further, their rather

⁴² GIORGIO PADOAN, *Canto XVII*, in *Lectura Dantis neapolitana : Inferno*, ed. by Pompeo Giannantonio, Napoli, Loffredo, 1986, pp. 287-300 : 289.

⁴³ The interpolator refers to three sisters sharing one eye, which can turn people to stone. This may also be a conflation of the Graeae, though Francesco da Buti (ad *Inf.* IX 49-54) reports an alternative version of the story of Medusa in which she is a queen who shares one eye with her sisters. See Francesco da Buti, *Commento sopra la Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. by Crescentino Giannini, 3 vols, Pisa, Fratelli Nistri, 1858, I, pp. 256-257.

⁴⁴ For *orme* : *orme* see *Inf.* XXV 101-105 and *Purg.* IX 56-60.

⁴⁵ FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni*, cit., p. 97, expresses his intention to do this work.

⁴⁶ « Explicant duo capitula facta per alium quam per Dantem ».

awkward placement at the end of *Purgatorio* might suggest that no clear ‘slot’ for their insertion in the *Commedia* was evident. But that they were nonetheless included, and formatted in exactly the same way as the rest of the poem, accords them a particular status, proximate to the canon if not part of it.⁴⁷

In six manuscripts dating mainly from the fourteenth century, a segment of text, comprising eighteen lines of verse in hendecasyllabic *terza rima*, has been inserted between lines 90 and 91 of *Inferno* XXXIII.⁴⁸ The manuscripts are :

- Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1106, s. XIV ex., Tuscan area ;⁴⁹
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. it. 103, 1443 ;⁵⁰
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS It. 540, s. XIV 2nd half, Veneto ;⁵¹
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L. VIII. 292, s. XIV med. ;⁵²
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Rossiani 463, s. XIV III quarter ;⁵³
- Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS Zanetti 54 (4780), s. XIV last quarter.⁵⁴

This interpolation has not attracted much attention, despite its early date and the ready availability of a text in the apparatus of Giorgio Petrocchi’s edition of the *antica vulgata*.⁵⁵ That it should be witnessed in so many manuscripts suggests it convinced a number of scribes

⁴⁷ Cfr. ff. 2r-46v, or 48rB, r. 5-56rA, r. 24, for passages of the *Commedia* in MS S. Pantaleo 8 executed in the hand of this scribe.

⁴⁸ The manuscripts are listed in RODDEWIG, *Dante Alighieri*, cit., p. 405 ; a set of parallel transcriptions is offered in ELISABETTA TONELLO, *The French Manuscripts of Dante’s Commedia*, in *Édition de textes canoniques nationaux. Le cas de la Commedia de Dante*, ed. by Susan Baddeley, Elisabetta Tonello, with Federico Marchetti, Paris, Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2020, pp. 57-58.

⁴⁹ Rodd. 334 ; SANDRO BERTELLI, *La tradizione della Commedia dai manoscritti al testo. 2: I codici trecenteschi (oltre l’antica vulgata) conservati a Firenze*, Florence, Olschki, 2016, n. 60 (pp. 547-548) ; MBR Cens. 36, (including, on p. 75, a transcription of the interpolation, copied on ff. 35v-36r), and Tav. 49 (f. 21v). See too *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, cit., cat. 71, p. 58, a *scheda* written by Gianfranco Contini with the heading « Un’interpolazione nel testo della Commedia ».

⁵⁰ Rodd. 516 ; Cens. 510 (M. Boschi Rotiroti). See too EDWARD MOORE, *Contributions to the Textual Criticism of the Divina Commedia, including the Complete Collation throughout the Inferno of all the MSS. at Oxford and Cambridge*, Cambridge, University Press, 1889, pp. 520-522, and on the interpolation, pp. 706-711.

⁵¹ Rodd. 566 ; MBR 227 ; Cens. 554 (F. Boccini). For a digital facsimile, see <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100336484>.

⁵² Rodd. 671 ; MBR 38. For a digital facsimile, see https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Chig.L.VIII.292.

⁵³ Rodd. 686 ; MBR 42 ; Cens. 84 (A. Mazzucchi). See too ANGELO EUGENIO MECCA, *I manoscritti frammentari*, cit., pp. 25-26, n. 33. For a digital facsimile, see https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ross.463.

⁵⁴ Rodd. 801 ; MBR 287 ; Cens. 675 (G. Voltolina). See ANTONIO FIAMMAZZO, GIUSEPPE VANELLI, *I codici veneziani della Divina Commedia*, « *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana* », XV, 1899, pp. 5-123 : 77-84, n. 58, and esp. pp. 81-82 for a transcription of the interpolation. For a digital facsimile, see <https://www.dante.unina.it/idp/public/preview/mirador/idms/263632>.

⁵⁵ DANTE ALIGHIERI, *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, cit., II, p. 573, which is based on Chig. L VIII 292. See FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni*, cit., pp. 97-99.

and editors of its authenticity, and while sometimes it appears as a later addition in the margins (in MS Chig. L. VIII. 292, and MS Rossi 463, for example), in other instances there is no indication of it being a problem text (MS Marc. Zan. 54, for example). A critical text of the interpolation is not currently available, and an attempt to establish one must grapple with the problem of a circulation that was active and largely independent of the text of the poem.⁵⁶ For the purposes of the present analysis, Chig. L. VIII. 292 (hereafter Chig.) will be the ‘base-text’, because of its isolated place in the textual tradition, but variants raising interpretative problems in the other manuscripts will also be noted.⁵⁷

The interpolation has long been known. Gregorio Palmieri first noted the lines in MS Can. 103, and reported the fact in a communication in the « *Athenaeum* » in 1875.⁵⁸ Two years later, Edward Moore dedicated a longer article to the text in the « *Athenaeum* » in which he described the manuscript in greater detail, and attempted to offer a reconstruction of the text, emending readings that were plainly unsatisfactory.⁵⁹ Moore reports private correspondence with Carlo Witte in which the German scholar expressed strongly negative views of the interpolation, describing them as « *versacci* ». In August 1878 letters were published in the « *Athenaeum* » from readers attempting to improve upon the text, with some stridently rejecting any attribution of the lines to Dante, and others defending their status.⁶⁰ Giacomo Poletto, in his 1894 commentary, refers to the interpolation as « *roba indegna della penna di Dante* ».⁶¹ One problem encountered by Palmieri, Witte, and Moore at this stage was the lack

⁵⁶ See ELISABETTA TONELLO, *The French Manuscripts*, cit., p. 58 for a stemma : Chig. stands apart from the rest of the manuscripts, which form an autonomous subgroup Tonello calls Int¹; within this subgroup, Marc. Zan. 54 and Par. 540 share some variants, suggesting the existence of an ancestor Int²; while Ricc. 1106 and Ross. 463 also share distinct variants, suggesting an ancestor Int³; and Can. 103 seems to derive from Int¹ independently. Each of these manuscripts witnesses a text of the poem belonging to different branches of the stemma.

⁵⁷ Petrocchi records that the interpolation is found on a loose leaf in Chig., and Tonello (*The French Manuscripts*, cit., p. 57, n. 11) states that the leaf is no longer in the manuscript, and that we must thus rely only on Moore’s transcription. The digital facsimile of Chig., however, includes a leaf at the end of the manuscript, currently numbered f. 122, with the interpolation copied on the left-hand column of the verso. It is in a contemporary hand, similar but not identical to that of the main scribe of the poem. On the right-hand column the same scribe has copied out Par. xxx 115-144, lines which have evidently been omitted in the text, and cross-references the addition with a large cross in the margin of f. 118v. The omission is also noted in a much later marginal gloss : « *qui mancano dieci ternari* ». Thus, while the interpolation is, strictly speaking, not part of the text, it sits on a page aimed at rectifying omissions in the text.

⁵⁸ GREGORIO PALMIERI, *Inferno, Canto XXXIII*, « *Athenaeum* », no. 2495, 21 August, 1875, p. 256.

⁵⁹ EDWARD MOORE, *A MS. of Dante in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, « *Athenaeum* », no. 2580, 7 April, 1877, 447-449.

⁶⁰ See the contributions of A. J. BUTLER and H. BOURTON under the heading *The Inferno, Canto 33*, « *Athenaeum* », no. 2652, 24 August, 1878, pp. 241-242. See too ALESSANDRO D’ANCONA, *Di alcuni pretesi versi danteschi*, « *La rassegna settimanale* », vol. 3, no. 55, 1879, pp. 49-52, repr. in IDEM, *Varietà storiche e letterarie*, 2 vols, Milan, Treves, 1883-1885, II, pp. 55-74 (esp. 55-72).

⁶¹ DANTE ALIGHIERI, *La Divina commedia con commento del prof. Giacomo Poletto*, 3 vols, Rome, Tip. liturgica di S. Giovanni Desclée, Lefebvre, 1894, I, p. 715 (ad *Inf. XXXIII* 88-90).

of any other documentary witnesses to the interpolation. In 1889 Moore returned to the question in his *Contributions to the Textual Criticism of the Divina Commedia*, this time in a discussion enriched by several other exemplars and a more detailed description of the text.⁶² It is surprising to observe that Moore's remains the most extensive discussion of this interpolation, though two recent contributions by Elisabetta Tonello and Federico Marchetti have begun some further philological work.⁶³

The interpolation runs as follows :

Quand' ebbe sì parlato la ristata, guardai dall' altro canto e vidi un fitto che piangeva, e gli tremava la corata.	3
Ed io gli dissi : « Perché sè qui fitto ? Io ti conosco ben che sè lucchese.	
Qual fallo ti recò costì confitto ? »	6
Ed egli a me : « Poiché tu sai mie offese, perché pur mi molesti ? Va a tua via, se tu ritorni sù nel buon paese ».	9
« Io non mi partirò », diss' io, « pria se non mi conti perché sè qua dentro, che non può esser senza gran follia ».	12
« Poiché ti piace, dico fuor talento che per l'inganno ch'io ai grandi usai, il popolo i' sommossi a tradimento.	15
Perpetuo son qui dentro a questi lai. Vanne, e più non mi far omai ambascia, poi ch'io t'ho detto li miei forti guai ».	18

The passage comprises a dialogue between a first-person narrator – to be identified with the Dante of the poem – and another, unnamed, character, whom the narrator recognizes as being from Lucca (l. 5 ; so identified here as ‘the Lucchese’)). Dante’s speech occupies two tercets, while that of the damned Lucchese occupies three. The Lucchese is introduced in line 3 as weeping, and upset : « che piangeva, e gli tremava la corata ». ⁶⁴ Dante wonders why this figure is here (l. 4), and what wrongdoing brought him to to this state (l. 6). This invitation to reveal, to confess, is resisted by the Lucchese, who wonders why, if Dante already knows of his crimes, he insists on pestering him (l. 8. ⁶⁵ The Lucchese then attempts to dismiss Dante (ll. 8-9), the tone perhaps ameliorated slightly by the use of augurative *se* ; Dante replies that

⁶² EDWARD MOORE, *Contributions to the Textual Criticism*, cit., pp. 706-711.

⁶³ ELISABETTA TONELLO, *The French Manuscripts*, cit., pp. 57-59 ; FEDERICO MARCHETTI, *Interpolazioni*, cit.

⁶⁴ MSS Marc. Zan. 54 and Par. 540 read here: « piangendo orribilmente tutta fiata ».

⁶⁵ In MSS Par. 540 and Marc. Zan. 54, line 7 reads : « Ed egli a me, quand' a guardar mi prese », omitting the statement that Dante already knows his offence, and instead suggesting that the Lucchese begins to speak when he catches sight of the poet.

he will not leave until the Lucchese tells him what he wants to know, since it cannot but be because of sheer madness (l. 12).⁶⁶ The Lucchese then reveals why he is in Hell (ll. 14-15) : he has used deceit and guile to subdue his people through betrayal. He ends his account by describing his state of eternal punishment (l. 16),⁶⁷ and once again sends Dante on his way, asking that the poet not prolong his suffering in recounting his misfortunes (ll. 17-18).⁶⁸

The passage is characterized by numerous echoes and resonances of the *Commedia*, and could only have been written by a highly engaged reader of Dante. Sometimes these echoes are of a passage very close to the context of Canto XXXIII. For example, « perché pur mi molesti ? » in line 8 recalls Bocca degli Abati's identical exclamation to Dante in Canto XXXII 81. But other moments resonate more widely across the poem. In line 9, « se tu ritorni sù nel buon paese », an echo can be heard of *Purgatorio* XXXII 105, « ritornato di là, fa che tu scrive », or *Purgatorio* V 130, « Deh, quando tu sarai tornato al mondo », as well as *Inferno* XXX 80, « del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona ». The term *ambascia*, used in line 17, is relatively unusual in the poem, but in this interpolation is witnessed only in Chig., possibly influenced by its appearing in rhyme position just a few lines later (*Inf.* XXXIII 96). All the remaining manuscripts correctly attempt to preserve a rhyme in *-ata*, needed to fit where the end of the interpolation meets the rest of the canto, and they do so with the much more prevalent word : *ambasciata*. The sense thus changes from « do not cause me any more suffering » (Chig.), to « do not report anything about me [scil. on earth] ».⁶⁹ When the Lucchese states, in line 16, « Perpetuo son qui dentro a questi lai », the tone is one of resigned sadness, with *lai* echoing *Inferno* V 46 and *Purgatorio* IX 13 (each occurrence also rhymed with *guai*). Dante never uses the term *perpetuo* in *Inferno*, reserving it only for the second two canticles. Indeed, the reading in Chig. here stands apart from the other manuscripts, which instead have « Lo 'nferno [or “Cocito”] mi riceve sempre mai », where the sense of resignation is still apparent in the line but rendered somehow more concrete and specific in the reference to « *Inferno* » or

⁶⁶ In MSS Par. 540 and Marc. Zan. 54, line 12 reads : « sè tanto basso tra la gente ria », emphasizing instead the depths in which the Lucchese now finds himself.

⁶⁷ The reading in MS Chig. is unique ; Ricc. 1106, Can. 103, and Ross. 463 all read : « L'onferno mi riceve sempre mai » ; while Par. 540 and Marc. Zan. 54 read : « Cocito mi riceve sempre mai ».

⁶⁸ These final lines are somewhat unsettled in the manuscripts, and the text as transmitted in Chig. stands apart. Three manuscripts (Ricc. 1106, Can. 103 and Ross. 463), with minor variations, witness another text : in Ricc. 1106 : « Vanne e non portar di me ambasciata / poiché trovato qua diricto m'hai » ; in Can. 103 : « vane e non portar di me ambasciata / perché qua dentro tu trovato m'ài » ; in Ross. 463 : « va' 'nde non portar di me 'nbasciata / poi che trovato qua dritto mai ». And another version again is found in two manuscripts : Par. 540 : « or ten va non dir di me ambasciata / poiché tra' traditori trovato m'ài » ; and Marc. Zan. 54 : « Or ti ne va non dir dimen basciata / Poi che coi traditori trovato m'ài ».

⁶⁹ TLIO, s.v. *ambasciata* at 1. 4 records the phrase « fare ambasciata » as « diffondere il messaggio di qno » (N. Tonelli).

« Cocito ».

It is clear that the author of these lines has also paid close attention to rhyme as a resource in the poem. In lines 14-18, *usai : lai : guai* draws together rhyme-words used elsewhere in the poem : *guai : lai* in *Inferno* v 46-48, and *usai* in *Inferno* XXIX 119.⁷⁰ Where *fitto* does appear in rhyme in the *Commedia*, it is not used in equivocal rhyme, as here in lines 2 and 4.⁷¹ In all witnesses except Chig., lines 16-18 have *mai : m’ài*, an example of ‘rima equivoca contraffatta’ (where phonically the rhyme comprises two joined words).⁷² There is no instance in the poem of the adjective *lucchese* (though for *bolognese* see *Inf.* XVIII 58, and *ferrarese*, *Par.* IX 56), but the decision to foreground the nationality of this figure may have been suggested by Dante’s placement of *Lucca* in rhyme, in *Inferno* XVIII 122 and *Purgatorio* XXIV 35. Where the word *tradimento* occurs only twice in the *Commedia* (*Inf.* XXVIII 81 and XXX 147), it is never placed in rhyme position ; the author of the interpolation, by contrast, chooses to do precisely this, lending a discernible emphasis to the Lucchese’s treachery.

The interpolation is steeped in the atmosphere and language of treachery, and the manner of the Lucchese’s interaction with the narrator strongly evokes the exchange in *Inferno* XXXII 73-123 between Dante and Bocca degli Abati.⁷³ The Lucchese is reluctant to engage with the narrator, dismissing him with « Va a tua via » (l. 8), and « Vanne » (l. 17), an imperative that Bocca directs at Dante, « “Va via”, rispuose, “e ciò che tu vuoi conta” » (*Inf.* XXXII 112). The narrator in the interpolation shows a certain obstinacy with respect to the sinner, insisting on hearing the Lucchese’s crimes – « “Io non mi partirò”, diss’ io, “pria / se non mi conti perché sè qua dentro” » (ll. 10-11) – which echoes Dante’s refusal to give up until he has learned the name of Bocca, even to the point of violence. In Chig., the Lucchese closes the encounter by asking the narrator to cease causing him suffering in recounting his sins (which itself echoes Ugolino’s similar statement in *Inf.* XXX 4-6), but in the other manuscript witnesses the final lines instead have the Lucchese ask the narrator not to bring news of him

⁷⁰ Note too how in *Inf.* XXXI 78, « pur un linguaggio nel mondo non s’usa », the verb *usare* is also placed at the end of the line.

⁷¹ In *Par.* 540, the equivocal rhyme *fiata : fiata* is used in ll. 1-3. On Dante’s use of *rima equivoca*, see K. P. CLARKE, *Humility and the (P)arts of Art*, in *Vertical Readings in Dante’s Comedy*, ed. by George Corbett, Heather Webb, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2015, pp. 203-221.

⁷² See ALDO MENICHETTI, *Metricsa italiana. Fondamenti metrici, prosodia, rima*, Padua, Antenore, 1993, pp. 577-578. Another example of *m’ài : mai* is found in ll. 1 and 4 in the sonnet *Ahi bella libertà, come tu m’ài*, no. 97 in Petrarch’s *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*.

⁷³ For an excellent account of the language of treachery, see CLAUDIO SENSI, *Le langage des traîtres dans l’Enfer de Dante*, in *Felonie, trahison, reniements au Moyen Âge. Actes du troisième colloque international de Montpellier, Université Paul Valéry (24-26 novembre 1995)*, Montpellier, Université Paul Valéry, 1997 (« Les cahiers du C.R.I.S.I.M.A », 3), pp. 233-257. See too FRANCESCO TATEO, *Un percorso ‘politico’ di Dante fra le anime infernali (nota ai canti VIII, XVI, XXIV, XXXII dell’Inferno)*, in *Filologia e critica dantesca. Studi offerti a Aldo Vallone*, Florence, Olschki, 1989, pp. 113-127.

back to the living ; so too does Bocca reject an offer of fame : « Ed elli a me : “Del contrario ho io brama” » (*Inf.* XXXII 94).

The interpolator has chosen carefully where this new episode is to be placed : immediately following the intense and terrible invective against Pisa, which marks the close of Dante’s account of Antenòra, that part of Cocytus reserved for those who betray their country (described in *Inf.* XXXII 70-XXXIII 90). So this canto may have seemed an opportune place for an interpolation that reeks of an *improperium* against Lucca. Elisabetta Cavallari wondered whether it might be « opera di un copista pisano, nemico naturalmente acerrimo dei lucchesi ? »⁷⁴ The damned Lucchese joins a memorable cast of characters such as Bocca degli Abati, Buoso da Duera (or Dovera), and Ugolino della Gherardesca. This is a part of Hell that teems with notorious names : as Saverio Bellomo notes, « Mai in un solo canto compaiono in tale copia *exempla* di peccatori a illustrazione del peccato ».⁷⁵ It is thus striking that the interpolator resists naming the treacherous Lucchese. When such reticence is observed in the *Commedia* it is generally attributed to a given character being so well known that naming them is unnecessary (*Inf.* III 59-60, for example), with the silence also contributing a powerful poetic effect. However, in the interpolations discussed above, such as that in Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell’Archiginnasio, MS A 322, or in Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS S. Pantaleo 8, there is no hesitation in explicitly naming figures ; indeed, if anything there is perhaps a certain malicious delight at doing so. The withholding of the Lucchese’s name, then, is not inadvertent or casual, but rather part of a wider poetic art acquired from a close reading of the poem.

In the *Commedia*, when a character is not named, the commentary tradition often obliges. A good example of this phenomenon is the richly varied set of responses to *Inferno* III 59-60, where the identity of « colui / che fece per viltade il gran rifiuto » is the focus of intense speculation. Indeed, so strong is the impulse to ‘reveal’ the identity of this figure in *Inferno* III that a name appears in the early vernacular rubrics which accompany each canto and form part of the *antica vulgata* from a very early stage.⁷⁶ The *Inferno* XXXIII interpolation, too, has attracted readers who evidently found it impossible not to speculate on the identity of this Lucchese. In Rossi 463, the text of the interpolation has been transcribed at the bottom of the page, so not within the body of the text, and in the margin a gloss in red has been added by the same scribe, reading as follows : « Questi fu messer Guielmo Malaspina di Lucca li qual tradio

⁷⁴ ELISABETTA CAVALLARI, *La fortuna di Dante*, cit., p. 86.

⁷⁵ DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Inferno*, ed. by Saverio Bellomo, Turin, Giulio Einaudi (« Nuova raccolta di classici italiani annotati », 22), 2013, p. 510.

⁷⁶ See K. P. CLARKE, *Sotto la quale rubrica. Pre-reading the Comedia*, « Dante Studies », CXXXIII, 2015, pp. 147-176 : 155 and n. 44.

li grandi huomini da Lucca e sottomiseli al popolo fidandosi li g[ran]di di lui ». ⁷⁷ No one has as yet managed to excavate the identity of this Guglielmo Malaspina, and further archival work is needed. Amongst the early attempts at accounting for the historical circumstances of the interpolation, A. J. Butler suggested the tensions between Pisa and Lucca in 1355, where, according to Matteo Villani, an uprising against Pisan control in Lucca was unsuccessful due to the treachery of *lucchesi* such as the Anterminelli. ⁷⁸ The difficulty with this hypothesis, however, is that no evidence survives of involvement by the Malaspina, let alone of any infamous act of treachery. Given how reduced the fragment comprising Rossi 463 is, it is significant that the scribe elsewhere identifies yet another figure alluded to in the poem. On f. 1r, after *Inferno* XXXII has been copied, the scribe adds a gloss in red ink in the *bas de page*, revealing accurately the identity of « quel di Beccaria » — referred to with vengeful glee by Bocca degli Abati in *Inferno* XXXII 119 : « Questo di beccaria si fu l'abate di Valleonbrosa a chui li fiorentini talglaro la testa per parte ». ⁷⁹

Whatever the precise identity of its *lucchese* traitor, the interpolation reveals a reader who has learned the language of invective and judgment from the *Commedia* : one who is fully ‘interactive’, and who takes part in the story of the afterlife from the perspective of contemporary political events. ⁸⁰ The *Commedia* is, for this reader, an invitation to reimagine, to invent, and to reappropriate, but all within certain specific parameters. The passage has been composed for integration within a particular part of a particular canto, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the structure of the *Commedia*, at both a macro- and a micro-level.

Interpolations may be considered as a particular kind of response to the *Commedia*, to be distinguished from polemical sonnets in *tenzone* or the vast tradition of commentary material.

⁷⁷ GUIDO VITALETTI, *L'episodio del Marchese Alberto Malaspina lucchese interpolato nel frammento Vatic. Rossiano IX, 153 della Commedia*, « Giornale dantesco », xxv, 1922, pp. 345-351. Transcriptions are also provided in Rodd. 686, and ELISABETTA TONELLO, *The French Manuscripts*, cit., p. 57, though neither is quite accurate.

⁷⁸ MATTEO VILLANI, *Cronica*, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, 2 vols, Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo-Ugo Guanda, 1995, I, pp. 653-655 ; see too CHRISTINE MEEK, *The Commune of Lucca under Pisan Rule, 1342-1369*, Cambridge, MA, Mediaeval Academy of America, 1980, pp. 92-96.

⁷⁹ Tesauro dei Beccheria, abbot of Vallombrosa, legate of Pope Alexander IV in Tuscany, decapitated for treason in 1258 ; on whom, see GIORGIO PETROCCHI, « Beccaria (Beccheria), Tesauro di », in *ED*, I, p. 553.

⁸⁰ Roberto Antonelli has recently pointed out how « Dante crea le condizioni di un lettore che oggi potremmo definire *interattivo*, perché costretto implicitamente, sottilmente ma inesorabilmente, a *prender parte* e a interrogarsi sul mondo e su di sé ». ROBERTO ANTONELLI, *Dante poeta-giudice del mondo terreno*, Rome, Viella, 2021, p. 21. See too UGO DOTTI, *L'Inferno e il giudizio umano e politico di Dante*, « Giornale storico della letteratura italiana », CLXXI, 1994, pp. 1-59.

So too are these interpolations to be distinguished from a work such as the *Dittamondo* by Fazio degli Uberti, which as a response to the *Commedia* constitutes a creative rewriting which also remains fully autonomous from it. The *Commedia* interpolations, on the other hand, sit in intimate proximity with the poem : they are *in* and *by* the poem, both part and not part of it. They imitate the style and form, the ‘voice’ of Dante, and imagine new encounters for him. And while the authors of the interpolations may well have some familiarity with the prose commentary tradition, these responses are expressed in verse : this is a phenomenon emerging out of the poetry and poetics of the *Commedia*. The relatively few interpolations added to the *Commedia* reveal a particular attention paid to the form of the poem, especially in a striking use of rhyme and in the use of *terza rima*. Indeed, given the early date of some of these interpolations, there are not many other examples of *terza rima* available to a reader. The vivid figure of the character ‘Dante’ has also captured the imagination of the authors of these insertions. It is notable, for example, that in the three longer interpolations discussed above, each features a Dante who has a personal connection to the damned. The unique status of Dante, his voice, his experience, his authority, all exert a powerful force upon these readers, who cannot resist an attempt to make that voice their own.