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## READING DANTE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY: THE BENTLEY ALDINE *DIVINE COMEDY* AND ITS MARGINALIA

*Paul Dover, Kennesaw State University*

PERHAPS NO WORK of literature generates a wider range of reader reactions than does the *Divine Comedy*. This is in part because it is a work that seeks to encompass the whole world and all of human experience as they were known to Dante. It can seem that everything and everyone makes an appearance in its pages: there is simply so much to which to respond. This essay examines how one early sixteenth-century Italian recorded his responses to reading the poem, in the form of copious and varied annotations added to the margins of his Aldine edition of 1502. These notes were added in the years immediately after the book's publication by an educated, well-traveled reader who at one point served as a chancellor in Modigliana, a commune just to the south of Faenza. We can identify him only by his first and middle names of Antonio Teobaldo; his surname has been rendered unreadable by page trimming. His marginal reactions to the text are by turns personal, political, and scholarly, and occasionally polemical. He demonstrates his own learning by mentioning parallels, cross-references, and resonances with other works. Dante's invocations of places and people prompt him to remark on the state of the Italian church and politics in his own day, thus mirroring the preoccupations of Dante some two hundred years earlier. He

laments the actions of two antagonists above all: the Republic of Venice and Pope Alexander VI. He is also periodically prompted to record things he has done and seen in his travels to locales that receive mention in the *Comedy*. Among this remarkable set of glosses is his mention of seeing in Rome the famed *Laocoön* statue group shortly after it had been discovered on the Esquiline Hill. Antonio's reading of the *Divine Comedy* was an active and useful one. On several occasions, it is evident that he came back at a later date to revisit his prior notes. This suggests "use" (and "reuse") rather than simply reading, in keeping with the motto that appeared in sixteenth-century emblem books: *usus libri, non lectio prudentes facit*.<sup>1</sup> In Antonio's hands Dante's poem entered into conversation with his own learning and experiences and with the social and political realities of Italy in his lifetime.

The book bearing these annotations is housed at the Bentley Rare Book Library at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia, under the call number SC #K1147. This relatively obscure domicile surely explains why the book has remained unstudied up to this point. The Bentley Library was seeded in the late 1980s by the Georgia lawyer and book collector Fred Bentley, who donated his collection to the university.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This motto appears in Geoffrey Whitney's *Choice of Emblemes, and other devises, for the most parte gathered out of sundrie writers* (Leiden: Christopher Plantyn, 1586), 171. It has been reproduced in a modern edition by John Horden (Menton, 1969). The emblem with which this motto is associated is also accompanied by a poem that emphasizes the importance of taking notes in the book while reading as a means of "using," rather than just reading a book:

The volumes great, who so doth still peruse,  
 And dailie turns, and gazeth on the same,  
 If that the fruicte therof, he not use,  
 He reapes but toile, and never gaineth fame:  
 First reade, then marke, then practise that is good,  
 For without use, we drinke but LETHE flood.

This emblem from Whitney's work is discussed in Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzi, *Book Use, Book Theory, 1500–1700* (Chicago, 2005), 1–4. The motto previously appeared in another emblem book, Joannes Sambucus, *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1564), 62. This was almost certainly the source for Whitney. William Sherman argues for a language of use, rather than reading, when discussing the interface of early modern people with their books in the introduction to *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Bentley Rare Book Museum, "History," <http://rarebooks.kennesaw.edu/about/history.php>.



The collection consists primarily of English-language material, with an especial focus on literary first editions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But it also contains a number of intriguing late medieval and Renaissance-era printed works, the Aldine Dante among them. The book was purchased for the Kennesaw State collection from Bauman Rare Books in Philadelphia in the early 1990s. It received a new binding at some point in the nineteenth century and was then rebound once more by the Kennesaw State conservator after purchase. The first eighteen pages of the text, as well as the final eight, are cut out from another copy of the same edition, pasted onto new sheets of paper, and inserted into the bound copy. The text of the title, for example, has been cut out and affixed to a blank page (it has also been bound in reverse, with the frontispiece of *Le terze rime di Dante* on the verso of the first leaf instead of the recto, with *Lo'nferno e'l purgatorio e'l paradiso di Dante Alighieri* on the reverse). The famous Aldine anchor-and-dolphin emblem is missing altogether. What happened to the missing, original twenty-six leaves is unknown.

The marginalia to the Bentley Dante are scattered throughout the book: *Paradiso* is as heavily glossed as is *Inferno*. The annotations are almost exclusively in Latin, although the annotator does break into the vernacular on at least two occasions to deliver particularly emotional commentary. The glosses appear on the inner and outer margins, and some general comments are also found on the top and bottom of pages. All of this marginalia is in a single hand, almost certainly that of the original owner of the book, given that there are dated glosses from just after the publication date of 1502. Unfortunately, in one of the episodes of rebinding, the pages were trimmed, meaning that in many cases letters or whole words of the annotations have been cut out. In many cases the missing text can be inferred, but some details have been lost. What remains is more than enough to provide a fascinating a window into how one sixteenth-century reader made his copy of the *Divine Comedy* his own.

Aldus Manutius published the *Divine Comedy* in 1502 under the title of *Le terze rime di Dante*. The *Comedy* was not the first work in the vernacular to come off the Aldine presses; that honor goes to the *Canzoniere* of Petrarch, which were printed in the previous year. But in choosing to publish Dante's poem, Aldus was continuing his fascination with language and its proper use. Dante and Petrarch were of course pioneers in the use of the literary vernacular and were touchstone figures in the

Renaissance conversation over Tuscan as a universal Italian language. Aldus was friends with the humanist cardinal Pietro Bembo, who was a high-profile advocate of the use of Tuscan, and Carlo Dionisotti sees this relationship as vital in Aldus's decision to publish the *Comedy* early on.<sup>3</sup> It was Pietro Bembo who prepared the text for Aldus, from an early manuscript of the poem owned by the Bembo family, and Pietro had also shepherded the edition of Petrarch to publication.<sup>4</sup> Aldus's choice to publish Dante was an important declaration of belief in Italian's potential as a literary language. Dante was to be an anchor author for Italian in the same way that Cicero or Virgil had been for classical Latin.

The Aldine Dante is a spare edition, with no supporting apparatus. The first printed version of the *Comedy* had emerged from the shop of Johann Neumeister in Foligno in 1472. The previous six editions before 1502 had all included the commentaries of Cristoforo Landino, which had first appeared in a Florentine edition of 1481.<sup>5</sup> But Bembo unpacked the abbreviations that had remained in the incunabula, added punctuation marks, divided up many words that had been previously combined, and regularized the use of accents. Bembo had worked from an early manuscript of the poem owned by his father, Bernardo, and had copied out the text by hand himself for Aldus to use. The result was an edition of unprecedented clarity and readability.<sup>6</sup> It was also, as one of the first octavo editions, designed to be portable.

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<sup>3</sup> See Carlo Dionisotti, "Aldo Manuzio umanista," in *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence, 1963), 213–43.

<sup>4</sup> Manlio Dazzi, *Aldo Manuzio e il dialogo veneziano di Erasmo* (Vicenza, 1969), 30. See also Cecil Clough, "Pietro Bembo's Edition of Petrarch and His Association with the Aldine Press," in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture*, ed. David Zeidberg (Florence, 1998), 47–80.

<sup>5</sup> On this publication history, see the website for the University of Illinois Library's exhibit on *Dante at Illinois*, curated by Christopher Cook: <http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/exhibitions/Dante/index.html>; see also the site for the Notre Dame exhibition *Renaissance Dante in Print*: <http://www.italnet.nd.edu/Dante/index.html>. On the Landino commentary, see Corinna Salvadori, "Landmarks in the Fortunes of Dante in the Florentine Quattrocento," in *Dante Metamorphoses: Episodes in a Literary Afterlife*, ed. Eric Haywood (Dublin, 2003), 43–70; and Simon Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, 2005), 163–230.

<sup>6</sup> See Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca, NY, 1979).



As much recent work has shown, early modern Europeans were zealous notetakers, in notebooks, on loose leaves and scraps of paper, and in the pages of their books.<sup>7</sup> In recent years, there has been a great profusion of studies of notes in early modern books.<sup>8</sup> Scholars have used them to understand the lives and scholarly practices of major intellectual figures and as aids in constructing a history of early modern reading. They offer one means of getting elusive answers as to “how” early moderns read their books. The availability of books in print in early modern Europe provided additional blank spaces in which readers could respond to, argue with, and reflect upon texts. Heidi Brayman Hackel has suggested that there are three types of marks in early modern books: marks of active reading such as queries, underlining, and cross-referencing; marks of ownership, indicating possession; and marks of recording, of items such as debts, events, recipes, and personal experiences.<sup>9</sup> The first and third of these categories are evident in the Bentley Dante. Antonio’s glosses supply evidence of active reading that engages other works that he has read or with which he is familiar. He also uses the white space of his book to record personal experience and express opinions. While many of the acts of recording he adds are autobiographical, there are no remaining formal

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<sup>7</sup> Two excellent works exploring early modern note-taking are Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT, 2010) and Richard Yeo, *Notebooks, English Virtuosi and Early Modern Science* (Chicago, 2014). For a concise overview, see Blair, “The Rise of Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe,” *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010): 303–16.

<sup>8</sup> Recent books include H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers’ Writing in Books* (New Haven, CT, 2001); Sherman, *Used Books*; and the slight Stephen Orgel, *The Reader in the Book: A Study of Spaces and Traces* (Oxford, 2015). A classic and influential article is Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy,” *Past and Present*, no. 129 (1990): 30–78. Two recent studies examining marginalia in early modern editions of ancient geographical writing are Paul Dover and Christopher McDonough, “Of Camels, Crocodiles and Human Sacrifice: The North Carolina MS of Solinus’ *De Situ Orbis Terrarum* and Readings of Classical Geography in the Renaissance,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 18, no. 2 (2011): 167–200; and Paul Dover, “How Heinrich Bullinger Read His Solinus: Reading Ancient Geography in 16th-Century Switzerland,” in *Solinus: New Studies*, ed. Kai Brodersen (Heidelberg, 2014), 171–95.

<sup>9</sup> Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), 138.

marks of ownership. Of course, these may have originally appeared on the pages that are missing.

As mentioned above, we know that the annotator of SC #K1147 was named Antonio Teobaldo. Evidence of this comes from a lengthy marginal note that appears alongside the end of canto 6 of *Purgatorio*, which includes Dante's famous extended lament on the parlous state of Italy in his own day, a disquisition that consumes more than seventy lines of verse. As we will see, our glossator clearly sees resonances with events in his own day, which for Faenza had been tumultuous. Faenza was at the center of a tug of war for influence between Florence, Venice, and Pope Alexander VI. Astorgio Manfredi had been installed as lord in Faenza at age three with the support of Lorenzo de' Medici's Florence, and had subsequently ruled under a regency. The regents had enlarged participation in government, with forty-eight representatives from the city of Faenza and an additional forty-eight from the communes of the Val di Lamone. After the collapse of the Medici regime in 1495, Faenza increasingly fell under the influence of Venice. In December 1495, Astorgio signed a *condotta* with Venice. This arrangement was hastened by the military maneuvers of Ottaviano Manfredi, who mustered forces from the Val di Lamone under Dionigi and Vincenzo Naldi, two brothers from a prominent family of condottieri hailing from Brisighella, the citadel town at the head of the Val di Lamone. The immediate threat from Ottaviano subsided, but the commissioner sent to Faenza by Venice, Domenico Trevisan, sought systematically to undermine the regency council there. After protests from Astorgio, Trevisan was removed and the *condotta* with Venice renewed in September 1498. By 1500, however, the conquest of much of the Romagna by Cesare Borgia changed the political landscape: Venice, pressed in the eastern Mediterranean by the Ottoman Turks, essentially gave Alexander VI and his son free reign. In April 1501, Faenza fell to Cesare. His forces were led by Dionigi Naldi. Astorgio was shipped off to Rome, where he was incarcerated in the Castel Sant'Angelo and then strangled and tossed in the Tiber as an inconvenient inmate in 1502.

Antonio's annotations reflect upon the events of the following year, and he makes it clear that he sees Venice as the primary author of Faenza's troubles. The year 1503 was for Faenza, according to the *Historie di Faenza* (1675) of Giulio Cesare Tonduzzi, a year "ripieno di

molti travagli” (full of many trials).<sup>10</sup> Antonio writes that now (*nunc*) on November 17, 1503, he was serving as the chancellor of Modigliana, a commune about twenty kilometers south of Faenza — the gloss reads *Antonius Thebaldo (—) meo cui sum cancel. Mutiliane*.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the trimming of the page has left only the final three letters of his last name, and thus we have to content ourselves with calling him Antonio. I have been unable to identify precisely this individual, nor who was the chancellor of Modigliana in 1503. Niccolò Machiavelli, who was a legate of the Florentine Republic in Rome at the time, paid particularly close attention to events in and around Faenza and recounted, in the course of October and November 1503, with mounting dismay how the machinations of Dionigi Naldi delivered Faenza and its environs into the hands of the Venetians. But while Modigliana is mentioned several times in the correspondence related to this legation, at no point is a chancellor of Modigliana mentioned.<sup>12</sup>

The autobiographical note begins a lengthier annotation that informs us that Antonio had been sent on November 17, 1503, to meet the Venetians, who were poised to take Faenza and had been bombarding the Val di Lamone, several kilometers to the west of Modigliana. The dispatches summarized in the *Diarii* of the Venetian nobleman Marino Sanudo describe in some detail Venice’s campaign against Faenza, and there we read that on November 17 a delegation of eight envoys representing

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<sup>10</sup> Giulio Cesare Tonduzzi, *Historie di Faenza* (Faenza, 1675), 565. Digitized version online at <https://archive.org/details/historiedifaenza00tond>.

<sup>11</sup> The whole gloss (which appears on 191) considered here reads: xvii<sup>o</sup> novembris 1503 ut nunc Antonius Thebaldo (—) meo cui sum cancel. Mutiliane event in expectatione nuntii, qui sunt veneti faventiam occupaverunt quam ipsi vallislamone — titi opera Dyonisii Naldi (?) ipam obsident et bombardirunt haec fecit Dyonisine sub Astorgio non Faventie domino, cui fuit (vic)tor vivent, cui quidem re universa italia de populus venetos superbientes nequam. verius si Gal. vincet ve a questi porcani becchi fottui! All subsequent page number references to marginal notations refer to SC #K1147 in Kennesaw State University’s Bentley Library, the book under consideration in this article.

<sup>12</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Legazioni, commissarie, scritti di governo*, vol. 3, ed. Fredi Chiappelli (Rome, 1984), 81–172. The letters from Florence and from Rome regularly update the news coming from Faenza, the Val di Lamone, and elsewhere in the region. Letter #117 (138–39), dated November 13, 1503, indicates that the *Dieci* in Florence had received a letter from the *commissario* of Modigliana, but this individual is not named.

the commune of Faenza and the Manfredi arrived at the Venetian camp to agree to articles of capitulation.<sup>13</sup> The members of the delegation are not named in the dispatches quoted by Sanudo, and we cannot be sure that Antonio was among this group. The annotation also indicates that the Venetians were bombarding the Val di Lamone in an operation that Antonio describes as *opera Dionysii*. This appears to be a reference to the aforementioned Dionigi Naldi.<sup>14</sup> As we have seen, Dionigi had overseen Cesare Borgia's siege of Faenza in 1500–1.<sup>15</sup> With the death of Cesare's father, Alexander VI, in the summer of 1503, however, Borgia authority across the Romagna crumbled. Dionigi now sought to make the best deal for himself that he could, and he and his brother Vincenzo had apparently long had an understanding with Venice.<sup>16</sup> In early November, the forces of Dionigi had prevented the Manfredi claimant, Francesco, who had the support of Florence, from returning to Faenza following the collapse of Borgia authority there. Dionigi, with the support of much of the region's important families and many troops raised in the Val di Lamone, delivered the citadels of the valley, including Brisighella on November 1, into the hands of the Venetian *provveditore* Niccolò Balbo. Dionigi convinced the castellan in Faenza to surrender secretly the citadel of the city to the

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<sup>13</sup> *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, vol. 5, ed. Federico Stefani (Venice, 1881), 358: *Da campo, de li proveditori, date a la Observantia, date ivi a dì 17, hore 8 di note*. "Come, da poi manzar, veneno da loro 8 oratori faventini con do module de capitoli, una per el signor Franceschetto e Astor de Manfredi, l'altra per la comunità e populo. E sono stati tuto ozi su ditti capituli per avantazar le cosse de la Signoria nostra, e *tandem* li hanno concluso; quali, per esser l'hora tarda, non li hanno mandate, ma li manderano per le prime lettere. Et hano messo ordine, col nome di missier Jesu Cristo e di l'evanzelista missier San marco protetor nostro, doman a hore 15, ch'è domenega, far l'intrata in la terra, e farano zurar fideltà."

<sup>14</sup> On Dionigi Naldi, see Alessandro Bazzocchi, *Dionigi e Vincenzo Naldi: La ricerca storica e archivistica su Dionigi e Vincenzo Naldi in rapporto alla dominazione veneziane nella valle di lamone* (Faenza, 2010) and Mario Tabanelli, *Dionigi di Naldo da Brisighella: Condottiero del Rinascimento* (Faenza, 1975).

<sup>15</sup> Michael Mallett, *The Borgias: The Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Dynasty* (London, 1969), 170–71. See also John Lerner, "Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli and the Romagnol Militia," *Studi Romagnoli* 17 (1966): 253–68. On the conquest of Faenza, see Sarah Bradford, *Cesare Borgia: His Life and Times* (New York, 1976), 139–40.

<sup>16</sup> This is the suggestion of Bartolomeo Righi, *Analli della città di Faenza*, vol. 3 (Faenza, 1841), 43–44.

Venetian procurator in the Romagna, Cristoforo Moro, on November 5.<sup>17</sup> After this, he participated in the Venetian siege of Faenza proper, where there was still resistance. Venetian artillery, under Moro, bombarded the city from its positions near the convent of Osservanza. Faenza agreed a surrender and opened its gates on November 19.

The marginal note referring to these events makes it clear that they troubled Antonio greatly. Antonio suggests that these moves by Venice are evidence that the “haughty, vile Venetians” (*populi venetos superbientes nequam*) want all of Italy (*re universa italia*) to live under their rule. If his feelings toward the Venetians are in any doubt, he ends his gloss on a profane note, breaking into the vernacular as if to emphasize his disgust: “truly, let the French conquer these dirty fucking pigs!” (*verius si Gal. vincet ve a questi porcani becchi fottui!*).<sup>18</sup>

In another marginal note, Antonio records the fall of Faenza to Venice. Prompted by Dante’s mention of the “città di Lamone et di Santerno” at *Inferno* 27.49 (a reference to the two rivers that run through Faenza), he writes: “today it is true that [this city] is not under the Manfredi [Ordelaiffi, the family that had formerly ruled Forlì, is crossed out here]; on Saturday, November 23, 1503, at 5 o’clock at night, under the conjunction of the moon and Venus, the Venetians came to Faenza and this was the result.”<sup>19</sup> His resentment over the series of events that had recently befallen Faenza explains his damnation of the Venetians and likely contributes to his bitter denunciations of Alexander VI, who had sponsored Cesare Borgia’s original conquest of the Romagna.

Antonio would have occasion to revisit the annotation on page 191 that condemned the Venetians as dirty pigs. In a note evidently added at some later point (the ink is considerably darker), inserted just below the original gloss, he writes that the Venetians had been defeated on May 14, 1509: *anno 1509 die 14 mai venit ve venetis*. This is, in fact, the date of the crushing defeat of the Venetian army at the hands of the French at Agnadello, after which Venice lost virtually her entire *terra firma* empire. His wish had been granted, apparently.

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<sup>17</sup> These events are recounted in Tonduzzi, *Historie di Faenza*, 568–70, and in Tabanelli, *Dionigi di Naldo*, 113–19.

<sup>18</sup> 191. See note 11, above.

<sup>19</sup> 123: hodie vero non sub ~~ordelaiffi~~ manfredi est 1503 xviii novembris die sabati quod a v horam di nocte sub coniunctio lune venerisque venetos venit Favente et notarei exitum.

The great majority of Antonio's annotations are not nearly as effusive as these. Most in fact, are precisely the sort we would expect a learned, inquisitive reader to append. There are numerous short, simple glosses that serve as a marginal index, often merely repeating words that appear in the text; such handwritten indices are very common in early printed works. Other labels added by hand seek to provide signposts for the poem's organization. For example at the beginning of *Inferno* 28, he has written *commetitori et seminatori divixeria et scisma* (committees and sowers of division and schism), a label indicating the shades that are about to be punished in the lines that follow. A few cantos later, in canto 32, he outlines the organization of the four circles of the floor of Hell in which traitors are punished: *Caina, Antenora, Ptolomea, Judaica*.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Antonio frequently provides shorthand notation for the action unfolding in the poem. At the end of *Inferno* 20, as Virgil points out the setting of the moon (described symbolically as Cain carrying a crown of thorns), indicating the beginning of a new day, we read the note *hactenus 2 dies per inferna natus est*, marking his awareness that the pilgrim's second day in hell has begun. The long-awaited appearance of Beatrice in *Purgatorio* 30 is noted with *Beatrice apparet, inscribit theologiam*, as well as *Ecce Beatrix*, while the simultaneous disappearance of Virgil is also marked, with *Virgil abit*.<sup>21</sup> When Beatrice departs in *Paradiso* 31, to be replaced by St. Bernard for the remainder of the canticle, we read the note: *Hactenus de BEATRICE, SANCTUS Bernardus sequitur*.<sup>22</sup> At the description of the scouring of hell in *Inferno* 21, Antonio notes that Jesus was thirty-three years old at the time of his death and that the action of the poem takes place in the year 1300.<sup>23</sup> On more than one occasion he makes note of parallels between the canticles of the poem.<sup>24</sup>

Glosses at *Paradiso* 15 offer a good example of how Antonio uses marginal notation to keep tabs on the action that was unfolding. This canto is taken up almost entirely by a conversation between the pilgrim and Dante's great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida, and, accordingly, Antonio

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<sup>20</sup> 145: Traditori 3 cap inquis 4 sunt circuli: Caina Antenora Ptolomea Judaica Conditoria.

<sup>21</sup> 304 ("Beatrice appears, writes theology") and 305.

<sup>22</sup> 484: "up to now Beatrice, from now on Saint Bernard."

<sup>23</sup> 95: Christus vixit 33 and nel 1300 po comp.

<sup>24</sup> For example, on 405: In xi Inferno etiam predictum in 17 Purgatorio idem.



writes *Messer Caccia Guida loquitur per totum capitulum*.<sup>25</sup> Later in the same canto, as Cacciaguida recounts the generations of Dante's family, a note reads *Frons qua Cacciaguida fuit ex eodem arbore*.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the canto, where Cacciaguida describes his death alongside Emperor Conrad in the Second Crusade, we read, in Italian: *Poeta de se. Imo Messer Caccia Guida che mori nell'anpresa*.<sup>27</sup>

There are a number of glosses that reflect on the historical events referenced by Dante in the poem. The pilgrim's encounter with the avaricious Pope Adrian V (Ottobuono de' Fieschi), who was pope for only thirty-eight days in 1276, before dying in Viterbo, prompts Antonio to remark: *Adrian V de Fiescho uno mense et viii dies 1276 cuis corporis est viterbii*.<sup>28</sup> He identifies Romeo of Villanova as a good and praiseworthy man when his light appears in *Paradiso* 6.<sup>29</sup> In *Paradiso* 8, we meet the eldest son of Charles II of Anjou, Charles Martel, whom Dante probably knew personally and considered a particularly promising monarch, but who died young in 1295, short of his twenty-fifth birthday. He is identified in the margin by Antonio as "Charles Martel, king of Croatia, son of the king of Hungary, Charles of Anjou, and brother of Robert, king of Apulia."<sup>30</sup> Antonio also shows interest in the appearance of Peter Damian (1007–72) in *Paradiso* 21. Aware of Damian's reputation as a teacher and spiritual reformer, Dante has him draw a sharp contrast between the humility and asceticism of SS. Peter and Paul and the practices of churchmen in Dante's day. In his marginal note to this passage, Antonio labels Peter "a sinner without rule" (*pertinano senza regola*) and notes that he resided at the basilica of Santa Maria at the Pomposa abbey near Ravenna, Peter's birthplace. Antonio's interest in Peter Damian may be rooted in his association with Faenza, where Peter died (specifically at the monastery church of Santa Maria *foris portam*, where he had traveled

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<sup>25</sup> 395: "Messer Cacciaguida speaking for the whole chapter."

<sup>26</sup> 395: "the branch from which Cacciaguida comes is from the same tree."

<sup>27</sup> 397: "Poet of the self. Beneath, Sir Cacciaguida, who died in the enterprise."

In the following canto, Antonio also notes the birth date of Cacciaguida: *Qui natus sit Caccia Guida 1160* (398). This date, incidentally, is incorrect. Cacciaguida was born in 1091.

<sup>28</sup> 252: "Adrian V of Fieschi, one month, whose body is in Viterbo."

<sup>29</sup> 352: Romeo aulico Raymondi comitis provincie vir probis et laudando.

<sup>30</sup> 360: Pannonie rex Karolus Martellus. Rex ungarie filus Kar ciacti et Frater Roberti regis apulie.

from the monastery of Fonte-Avellana, of which he was abbot) and where he was (and continues to be) venerated.<sup>31</sup> Peter Damian, in many of his letters, referred to himself as *Petrus peccator monachus*, so why Antonio appends *senza regola* here is unclear. (It is also notable that he employs the moniker in Italian here.)<sup>32</sup> Damian was a strict enforcer of the rules of his Benedictine tradition and advocated harsh asceticism and self-flagellation. It is possible that this is an ironic statement — Antonio employs irony elsewhere in his marginalia.

There are numerous glosses suggestive of Antonio's scholarly inclinations, where he demonstrates his awareness with Dante's sources or with instances where the subjects or personages of the poem appear in other works. At the end of *Inferno* 18, where the shades guilty of flattery are found swilling in feces, he writes that one can read of the perils of such flattery in the first book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and in Horace's discussion of the plainspoken Telephus and Peleus in *Ars poetica*.<sup>33</sup> Antonio is particularly aware of the instances where Dante has borrowed characters of stories from the works of Ovid, which served as a vast treasury of ancient exempla for medieval thinkers and remained widely read in the sixteenth century. Thus the mention of Achilles's spear in *Inferno* 31 as a weapon that could heal as well as wound is occasion to quote directly (using a series of abbreviations) from the first part of *Remedia Amoris*, where Ovid describes this weapon: *Ovid re amo vulnus achilleo quondam q[uae] f[ecerat] h[oste] vulneris auxili[um] Pe[lias] a[sta] tu[lit]*.<sup>34</sup> In *Paradiso* 2, Beatrice tells the pilgrim that were she to smile at him he would be reduced to ashes, as was Semele. The reference is to a story from book

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<sup>31</sup> Peter was resident at Santa Maria Pomposa, on a small island in the mouth of the Po, for two years. The gloss is at 425: *Pier Damiano loquitur fu pertinano senza regola stettum in Santa Maria di Ravenna*.

<sup>32</sup> Derek Baker, "The Whole World a Hermitage": Ascetic Renewal and the Crisis of Western Monasticism," in *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Dennis L. T. Bethel*, ed. Marc Meyer (London, 1993), 214.

<sup>33</sup> 82: oportet autem loqui sed enim subiectam materiam. Ari primo metaphi et horatius in poetica cum dicit Thelepus et peleus ref. The story in *Ars Poetica* is at lines 95–118. Aristotle's discussion of flattery in the Nichomachean Ethics is at 1159a 12–17.

<sup>34</sup> 141: "Ovid *Remedia Amoris*. The wound of Achilles 'that once wounded Telephus, his enemy, also brought the cure for the wound.'" The quotation is from Ovid's *Remedia amoris*, lines 47–48, trans. A. S. Kline, at <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/CuresforLove.htm>.

3 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where Jupiter's lover Semele is tricked by the jealous Juno who, assuming the form of Semele's nurse, convinces her to ask Jupiter to appear to her in his full glory. When Jupiter does so, Semele is promptly incinerated.<sup>35</sup> Antonio's marginal glosses here provide some background on Juno's scheme: *quae non potuit ferre concubitur Iovis eo pacto primo cum Iunone*.<sup>36</sup> In a gloss to *Purgatorio* 20, he quotes a passage from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 8.484: *Ovi. In scelus addendum scelus est, in funera funus. Ita Carolus* (Ovid: crime must be heaped on crime, ruin on ruin. Just like Charles). Here he cites Ovid not because Dante is borrowing directly from him, but instead because this Ovidian maxim echoes the poem's declaration that Charles I of Anjou compounded his misdeeds. After treacherously capturing and then beheading Conradin, the grandson of Frederick II, Charles was widely believed to have poisoned Thomas Aquinas, an apocryphal story to which Dante evidently subscribes.<sup>37</sup> Antonio also invokes Ovid at Dante's mention in *Paradiso* 31 of Helice (also known as Callisto), the nymph whom Juno turned into a bear and Jupiter later installed in the night sky, along with her son Arcas, as the constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Dante's mention of "Leda's nest," referring to the constellation of Gemini, is occasion for Antonio to recount the famous myth of the birth of the twins Castor and Pollux: *quia Castor et Pollux Gemini fuerunt filii Lede* [i.e., Leda] *ex Io. conugo in cignum*. By the sixteenth century, the story of

<sup>35</sup> The story is at *Metamorphoses* 3.251–314.

<sup>36</sup> 423: "who was not able to become the Jove's concubine before this pact with Juno." The story of Semele is recounted by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 3.253–315.

<sup>37</sup> 256. The reference in *Purgatorio* to Charles's misdeeds is at 20.67–69:

Carlo venne in Italia, e, per ammenda,  
vittima fé di Curradino; e poi  
ripinse al ciel Tommaso, per ammenda.

<sup>38</sup> The mention of Helice, as the constellation crossing the sky with her son, is at *Paradiso* 31.31–33:

Se i barbari, venendo da tal plaga,  
che ciascun giorno d'Elice si cuopra,  
rotante col suo figlio ond'ella è vaga.

The story as told by Ovid occurs in *Metamorphoses* 2.401–507. The gloss, on page 483, reads: *Ovi de Helice*. In what appears to be a separate gloss immediately beneath these words, Antonio writes *herba quo vertit se ad solem*. It may be that he is comparing the way that the shades in this canto follow the light emanating from the Godhead with the way grass bends toward the sunlight.

Zeus (or Jupiter, here) taking the form of a swan to seduce Leda, resulting in the birth of Castor and Pollux, had become a popular theme for artistic representation. Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Correggio were among those who depicted Leda and the swan.<sup>39</sup> The rape of Leda is mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6.105, whereas the deaths of Castor and Pollux are recounted in *Fasti* 5.693–720.

Antonio also makes note of Dante's frequent use of themes and imagery from scripture. Dante's invocation in *Inferno* 31 of the false accusation of Joseph by Potiphar's wife is identified by Antonio as coming from Genesis 39.<sup>40</sup> The appearance of Leah in *Purgatorio* 27 prompts a mention of Genesis 29, which tells the story of her and her sister Rachel.<sup>41</sup> When Leah mentions her sister Rachel in the same canto, our reader notes the common association in the Middle Ages of Rachel with the contemplative life: *Rachel vita contemplativa*.<sup>42</sup> And at the beginning of canto 26 of *Paradiso*, John the Evangelist tells the pilgrim that Beatrice has the power to restore the sight he has lost by gazing upon the light emanating forth from John — she is described as having the power of Ananias in her hand. This is, of course, a reference to the disciple Ananias, who cured Paul of his blindness after Christ appeared before him on the road to Damascus. Here our annotator identifies him as a disciple of the apostles in Damascus and sources the story to Acts of the Apostles 9, which indeed tells how Ananias restored Paul's sight at the house of Judas.<sup>43</sup>

References to medieval philosophers and theologians also make their way into the marginal notes. In *Paradiso* 30, the disoriented pilgrim sees a river of light generated from the souls gathered at the Godhead, flowing between banks covered in beautiful flowers. In reading about this "living water," Antonio sees resonance with patristic writings on the subject: "Here it follows Origen (who said the heavens that are above this water

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<sup>39</sup> The gloss is found on 465. The verses in the poem are at *Paradiso* 27.97–99:

E la virtù che lo sguardo m'indulse,  
del bel nido di Leda mi divulse,  
e nel ciel velocissimo m'impulse.

On the depiction of the myth in Renaissance art, see Malcolm Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods: Classical Mythology in Renaissance Art* (Oxford, 2005), 167–69.

<sup>40</sup> 139: Genesis c. 39 uxor pharaonise.

<sup>41</sup> 291: Lia V acti Genesis 29.

<sup>42</sup> 292.

<sup>43</sup> 457: fuit discipu. apostolarum in domasco ut acti apo 9.

are a spiritual substance). Augustine to Orosius [i.e., *Liber ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas*] on the blessed waters or also see Revelation 22, where we read of the river of living water.<sup>44</sup>

At the conclusion of canto 2 of *Paradiso*, Beatrice comes to the end of a long disquisition in response to the pilgrim's query about why spots appear on the surface of the moon, explaining that it is the virtue of the angelic intelligences, in conjunction with the stars and planets, which leave markings on the lunar surface. Antonio notes that she has thus cleared up the pilgrim's doubt (*solvit dubium*). Antonio then cross-references book 5 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (presumably because of its discussion of causality), but notes that Gaetano da Thiene (1387–1465), one of the more prominent Averroist commentators on Aristotle of the fifteenth century and a professor of natural philosophy at the University

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<sup>44</sup> The gloss, located on 478, reads: Hic sequitur Origene (qui dixit aquem ille que super coelos sunt. sunt spirituales substantive) Augu ad orosium de benedicti aque o.q.s.e. Apocalip 22 conditur flumen acque vive. The corresponding passage from Dante is *Paradiso* 30.61–63:

'e vidi lume in forma di rivera  
fulvido di fulgore, intra due rive  
dipinte di mirabil primavera.

The mention of Origen here appears to be a reference to his first homily on the book of Genesis, where, when speaking of Genesis 1.6–7 and the creation of the sky that separates the water on earth from the heavenly waters, Origen describes the heavens in their totality as a spiritual substance. He writes: "For since everything which God was to make would consist of spirit and body, for that reason, heaven, that is, all spiritual substance upon which God rests as on a kind of throne or seat, is said to be made 'in the beginning' and before everything." *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine (Washington, DC, 1982), 49.

In the *Ad Orosium*, written in 415, Augustine makes a case against what he sees as the heresies of the Priscillianists and Origenists. See Robert O'Connell, "St. Augustine's Criticism of Origen in the *Ad Orosium*," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 30 (1984): 84–99. An English translation of the text, under the title "To Orosius in Refutation of the Priscillianists and Origenists," is in *Arianism and Other Heresies*, trans. Roland Treske, ed. John Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY, 1995), 104–15.

The reference to the book of Revelation is 22:1–2: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

of Padua, remains silent on the issue.<sup>45</sup> He also makes at least two references to Petrarch. In *Purgatorio* 21 Virgil and the pilgrim meet the Roman poet Statius. In a gloss that is partially lost to page trimming, the reader indicates that he is aware that Statius was from Naples (rather than from Toulouse as Dante suggests). He also compares the encounter with Statius with a scene from Petrarch's *Trionfo d'Amore*, book 2, where Petrarch meets the shades of Seleucus and his son Antiochus. Seleucus speaks to Petrarch after hearing his Latin speech, and then apologetically introduces his son as one who had warred against Rome. In fact, as Antonio's annotation points out, the Seleucid Empire under Antiochus was unfamiliar with the Romans, who were not yet a power in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>46</sup> Antonio is a confident enough reader, therefore, to correct both Dante and Petrarch.

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<sup>45</sup> 334: solvit dubium — in 22, huic Arist in methe Liber 5 ubi Gaietanus connivet. On Gaetano, see Silvestro da Valsanzibio, *Vita e dottrina di Gaetano di Thiene, filosofo dello studio di Padova, 1387-1465* (Padua, 1949), and Eckhard Kessler, "The Intellective Soul," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Eckhard Kessler (Cambridge, 1988), 490-92.

<sup>46</sup> 262: Homo Neapolitanus fuit et Eusebius fuit [fals?]am ut deciperoris. depravit etiam Petrarcha in loquitur in triumphis de Antiocho, qui si bene advertas nunquam novit romanos. The corresponding passage in Petrarch is *Trionfo d'Amore*, book 2:

Io Seleuco son, questi è Antioco  
mio figlio, che gran guerra ebbe con voi;  
ma ragion contra forza non ha loco.  
Questa, mia in prima, sua donna fu poi,  
ché per scamparlo d'amorosa morte  
gliel diedi, e 'Idon fu lecito tra noi.  
Stratonica è 'l suo nome, e nostra sorte,  
come vedi, indivisa; e per tal segno  
si vede il nostro amor tenace e forte,  
ch'è contenta costei lasciarme il regno,  
io il mio diletto, e questi la sua vita,  
per far, vie più che sé, l'un l'altro degno.

The other reference to Petrarch comes at the famous encounter of Dante with Arnaut Daniel, the Occitan troubadour poet, at the end of *Purgatorio* 26, where Arnaut addresses Virgil and the pilgrim in French. Here our annotator has labeled the interaction with *francioso*. *Arnaut provenzale dicitore in rima de Petrarca de bo in [?] triumph' amoris* (288). Petrarch describes Arnaut as foremost among the love poets he encounters in book 4 of *Trionfo d'Amore*:

In canto 13 of *Paradiso*, in the circle of the sun, Thomas Aquinas undertakes a lengthy answer to the puzzlement of the pilgrim over the brightness with which Solomon shines. At lines 101–2, Thomas invokes a familiar geometrical problem: that any triangle inscribed in a semicircle must contain a right angle. Then the pilgrim himself, at the outset of the following canto, describes water moving from the center of a circle to its circumference and back again, as in a round chalice. In both cases, these instances of geometric imagery prompt Antonio to write the name of Lucas de Burgo, here identified as *mathematico*. This is none other than Luca Pacioli (the “Burgo” refers to Luca’s hometown of Borgo Sepolcro in Tuscany), the mathematician and father of modern accounting. The likelihood here is that Antonio owned, or at least had consulted, a copy of Pacioli’s famous *Summa de arithmetica, geometria. Proportioni et proportionalità*, which had been published for the first time in 1494.<sup>47</sup>

Antonio also occasionally uses the pages of his Dante to take his scholarly ruminations well beyond the boundaries of the poem’s text. The lengthiest annotations in the book reflect the reader’s interest in the alleged role of the Athenian tyrant Peisistratus (sixth century BCE) in gathering together all the versions of the Homeric epics, having them written down, and dividing them into the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>48</sup> Belief in Peisistratus’s editorship was widely shared in the Renaissance and had its origins in Cicero’s assertion of Peisistratus’s

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Fra tutti il primo Arnaldo Daniello,  
gran maestro d’amor, ch’a la sua terra  
ancor fa onor col suo dir strano e bello.

<sup>47</sup> Luca Pacioli, *Summa de arithmetica, geometria. Proportioni et proportionalità* (Venice, 1494). It is possible, but considerably less likely, that our reader had instead consulted *Divina Proportione*, which was completed by 1498 and circulated in manuscript before it was first published in 1509: *Divina proportione: opera a tutti gl’ingegni perspicaci e curiosi necessaria . . .* (Venice, 1509). He also might have consulted one of Pacioli’s manuscript works that were never published in print. At least two of these were concerned with mathematics and geometry: *Tractatus mathematicus ad discipulos perusinos*, a textbook he had written for students while teaching at the University of Perugia; or *De viribus quantitatis*, a work on the interface of mathematics and magic that was complete by 1508. See P. Speziali, “Luca Pacioli et son oeuvre,” in *Sciences de la Renaissance*, ed. A. Buck et al. (Paris, 1973), 93–106.

<sup>48</sup> On this, see T. W. Allen, “Pisistratus and Homer,” *Classical Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1913): 33–51; and J. A. Davison, “Peisistratus and Homer,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955): 1–21.

role in *De oratore*.<sup>49</sup> Peisistratus appears in *Purgatory* 15 as an exemplar of gentleness, based on a story that Dante had likely read in Valerius Maximus's *Memorable Doings and Sayings* (5.1 ext 2a), which recounts Peisistratus dissuading his wife from pursuing revenge. Antonio fills the bottom margins of two pages with commentary on Peisistratus as collector of Homer.<sup>50</sup> His marginal commentary goes well beyond the brief comments of Cicero on the topic; he describes a Peisistratus who sent seventy-two well-educated men (*perdoctis viris*) throughout Greece looking for the scattered pieces of the poem and ordered them consolidated into twenty-four books. Antonio then remarks that even in his own day one can travel through many Greek cities and hear men perform with song and lyre the tales of the Trojan War.

One of the more compelling (and confounding) features of the *Paradiso* is Dante's complex cosmology, cobbled together from Aristotelian and medieval observations and speculations. The general structure of paradise is based upon the concentric spheres of the "planets" (the moon,

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<sup>49</sup> *De oratore*, 3.137: "Quis doctior eisdem temporibus illis aut cuius eloquentia litteris instructor fuisse traditur quam Pisistrati? Qui primus Homeri libros confusos antea sic disposuisse dicitur, ut nunc habemus. Non fuit ille quidem civibus suis utilis, sed ita eloquentia floruit, ut litteris doctrinaque praestaret." (Whose learning is reported, at the same period, to have been greater, or whose eloquence to have received more ornament from literature, than that of Pisistratus? who is said to have been the first that arranged the books of Homer as we now have them, when they were previously confused. He was not indeed of any great service to the community, but was eminent for eloquence, at the same time that he excelled in erudition and liberal knowledge.) Translation by J. S. Watson, *Cicero on Oratory and Orators* (New York, 1875). Online text hosted by Pomona College at [http://pages.pomona.edu/~cmc24747/sources/cic\\_web/de\\_or\\_3.htm](http://pages.pomona.edu/~cmc24747/sources/cic_web/de_or_3.htm).

<sup>50</sup> 232: sic qui ut ipse divisit in locis plurum minor ve cecinisset. Ita varia totium operis membra per omnem greciam dispersa erant Pisy. igitur homeri amanti pro fortasse non minor gloriam sunt huic rei perquirens. In omni grecia per preconem nuntiati iussit ut et sic rapsodia in 24 libros redacta est pisistrato auctore. The annotation then continues on the next page (233): Pisistratus non parte(?) laudis meret et si atheniensium tyrannus extiterit: ob id sunt qui sua opera et impensis factum est, adhibitis lxxii praedoctis viris uti Rapsodia 1 consummatum cantum homeri poete primarii et divini per ut est legamus(?). Antea si quidem non integrum homeri opus, sed discissum, non uno in loco sed in variis dissipatum erat, ut nec capitulum unum perfectum, nec ullus continens ordo illius unque reperiret historie. Nam hodie iam ceteris cumulas urbes grecie peragraret illustrium virorum laudes ac nobile illud troianum bellum eo — more poetarum discantabat qui lyra et cantu inconviuii poemata recitare soliti erunt.



Mercury, Venus, the sun, Jupiter, and Saturn), followed by the fixed stars, Prime Mover, and Empyrean. A large number of Antonio's notes betray a particular interest in the poem's cosmological and astronomical details, and only a few can be discussed here. Near the beginning of *Paradiso* 23, as the travelers enter into the realm of the fixed stars, Beatrice instructs the pilgrim to look upon the fruits of heaven harvested from the revolution of the spheres.<sup>51</sup> Antonio reacts to Beatrice's instruction with a note that reads: "because in the eighth sphere there are images and constellations of a nature similar to the planets," a reference to the spheres of the planets that they passed through in paradise up to that point.<sup>52</sup>

In *Paradiso* 16, in the circle of Mars, where Cacciaguida remarks that the planet has passed through the constellation Leo 580 times since his birth, Antonio makes note of this, but adds that Mars takes twice as long to revolve around the sun: 580. *Revoluciones martis. Revol martis comprehendit 2 annos solares.*<sup>53</sup> His interest in the length of Martian years is on display again in the next canto. When Cangrande della Scala is described as only nine years old, Antonio writes out the equivalent in *revoluciones martis*. (Unfortunately the result of his calculation has been cut off.)<sup>54</sup> Antonio had sufficient knowledge of astronomy and mathematics to be able to convert solar and lunar years into Martian ones.

Antonio's interest in astronomy extends into his own day. In *Paradiso* 25, Dante describes having his sight impaired as if he had tried to

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<sup>51</sup> *Paradiso* 23.19–21:

e Beatrice disse: "Ecco le schiere  
Del triunfo di Cristo e tutto 'lfrutto  
Ricolto del girar di queste spere!"

<sup>52</sup> 432: quia in viii<sup>o</sup> spera sunt imagines et constellationes totium nature similis planetis.

<sup>53</sup> 398. The corresponding passage in *Paradiso* is 16.37–39:

al suo Leon cinquecento cinquanta  
e trenta fiate venne questo foco  
a rinfiammarsi sotto la sua pianta.

<sup>54</sup> 405: 9 anni lunares sunt revolutiones (—) marti. The corresponding passage at *Paradiso* 17.79–81 is:

Non se ne sono anchor le genti accorte  
Per la novella età: che pur nov'anni,  
Son queste ruote intorno di lui torte.

stare directly into a solar eclipse.<sup>55</sup> In response to reading the pilgrim's words, Antonio adds a note indicating that in 1502 an eclipse had taken place in Poland.<sup>56</sup> And indeed there was an annular eclipse that passed over Poland on October 1, 1502. Annular eclipses, also known as "rings of fire," are particularly hazardous for those viewing them, as the moon does not cover the entire disc of the sun.<sup>57</sup> This particular eclipse would also have been visible in partial form to Antonio were he in Italy.

Antonio's reading of the poem thus clearly intersected with his own reading and knowledge of literature, scripture, history, and natural philosophy. But what makes Antonio's reactions stand out is the way that they intersect not with books, but with lived experience. He records personal events and feelings in the margins as freely as he does scholarly cross-references. On several occasions, the mention of a locale in Dante's text prompts him to record related events in his own life. Some of these glosses make reference to experiences so mundane that they approach parody. For example, in *Inferno* 21, when the Malebranche are described as attacking a man the way a dog attacks a beggar, our annotator is reminded, in a note dated 1503, of the actions of the dog (presumably an aggressive one) of the lord Marcellus in Florence.<sup>58</sup> In one of the more famous scenes of the whole *Comedy*, in *Inferno* 25 the shade of Vanni Fucci, the Black Guelph and thief, reputed to have stolen silver tablets with images of the Virgin Mary, curses God and extends an obscene "fig" gesture to the heavens. He is promptly attacked by the beast Cacus and a pack of serpents. Dante calls him a man "of blood and of anger." And with this in mind, Antonio writes of one particular brand of anger that he has witnessed: "One sees much the same thing the Malebranche

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<sup>55</sup> *Paradiso* 25.118–20:

Qual è colui ch'adocchia e s'argomenta  
Di vedere ecleissar lo sole un poco,  
Che per veder non vedente diventa.

<sup>56</sup> 455: 1502 ut in hoc anno evenit al polonie. cum eorum cum episcopo(?) pagagnocino modo mag<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> For an animation of what the eclipse would have looked like in Poland, see this page supplied by Her Majesty's Nautical Almanac Office: [http://astro.ukho.gov.uk/eclipse/0331502/Warsaw\\_Poland\\_1502Oct01\\_anim.gif](http://astro.ukho.gov.uk/eclipse/0331502/Warsaw_Poland_1502Oct01_anim.gif). NASA's page on this eclipse is <http://eclipses.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsearch/SEsearchmap.php?Ecl=15021001>.

<sup>58</sup> 94: 1503 ut facit catellus domini Marcel in pala. Florentina.

did when one plays cards: anger and furor stirring up nefarious words directed against the Virgin. Again and again they are repeated.”<sup>59</sup>

In a similar vein, Antonio chooses to include a peculiar pair of annotations about the ring that he wears. In canto 15 of *Paradiso*, the pilgrim calls Cacciaguida, Dante’s great-great-grandfather, the “rich topaz, living gem within the setting of this precious jewel.”<sup>60</sup> This prompts Antonio to remark upon the topaz that graces the ring he is wearing in 1504: “1504 just like how in my intricate gold ring, where there is affixed not only amethyst but also topaz.”<sup>61</sup> This is not the only mention of his ring. In the festival of color in canto 30 of *Paradiso*, the pilgrim sees a river of light (the Empyrean) from which sparks emanate and then enter into adjoining flowers, “like rubies surrounded by gold.”<sup>62</sup> “This is like my ring,” we read in the margins — presumably rubies set into a gold ring.<sup>63</sup>

Mentions of vicious dogs, short-tempered gamblers, and colorful rings are joined in the margins by more serious recollections. Antonio tells us that he had seen the tomb of Augustine at the Church of Santa Maria in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia in 1495.<sup>64</sup> In fact, he has not remembered quite correctly in this case, for Augustine’s remains were actually to be found in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, where they had been relocated from North Africa in 725 by the Lombard king Liutprand. Boethius’s tomb is also to be found there; the translation of Boethius’s bones to San Pietro (called “Cieldauro” here by Dante) from Sardinia by Liutprand is mentioned in *Paradiso* 10, which is what prompts this annotation. It is quite

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<sup>59</sup> 112: (Si)mile quiddam fecit Malbrancha guardi in ludens cartulis (ve)deret: Ira n ac furore percitur ac nimis invectus virginem verbis nefandi. Identidem illam repetitis.

<sup>60</sup> *Paradiso* 15.85–87:

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

<sup>61</sup> 395: 1504 da quo ut est in meo anulo aureo contorto ubi est ligatus; etiam lapis iacintus ab extra autem est topatatus.

<sup>62</sup> *Paradiso* 30.64–66:

di tal fumina uscian faville vive,  
e d’ogne parte si mettien ne’ fiori,  
quasi rubin che oro circunscrive.

<sup>63</sup> 479: *Ut est meus annellus.*

<sup>64</sup> 372: Sta Maria in Celo aureo papie per ticini ego augustinum vidi 1495.

possible that Antonio had conflated this basilica with Santa Maria del Portico, also in Pavia, which also maintained a cult of Boethius.

Pavia is not the only locale in Lombardy that Antonio records visiting. When, in *Purgatory* 18, Dante makes reference of the town of Pietola (now known as Pietole), located a few kilometers from Mantua, he indicates that he went there in 1497 with the Duke of Milan, in the presence of the chancellor of Florence.<sup>65</sup> Pietole Vecchia is traditionally identified as the birthplace of Virgil, which may be why Antonio chooses here to make mention of it.



Dante's pointed criticism of popes and the state of the church in his own day resonated with many of his contemporaries and continued to do so in the centuries that followed. His disgust with the worldliness and political entanglement of the church is evident throughout the canticles, and offending popes number among the *Comedy's* most perfidious villains. It is striking, then, that Antonio uses the blank spaces of his copy of the poem to express his own brand of anticlericalism, as well as his antipathy for Rodrigo Borgia, Pope Alexander VI. His general dismay with the church is evident in notes he adds toward the end of *Purgatorio*. At canto 32, alongside the extended metaphor of the Gift of the Eagle, which represents the Donation of Constantine, a gloss declares that "sacred words were heard on the day that Constantine established the church. Today the poison has spread throughout the church of God."<sup>66</sup> Alongside one of Dante's denunciations of worldly men populating the priesthood at the end of *Paradiso* 8, Antonio has provided a dated note indicating a contemporary exemplar: *ut hip. Cardinalis Estensis 1505*.<sup>67</sup> This is a reference to Ippolito d'Este, who would become one of the richest cardinals in all of the Curia as well as one of the most politically active. Ippolito's name became a byword in the Renaissance for clerical corruption and

<sup>65</sup> 247: quo ego ivi 1497 cum duce Milani: apud quo erat Cancell Flor.

<sup>66</sup> 317: Verba sanctista quem die quam Constantia condotevit ecclesiam audita sunt. Hodie diffusum est venenum in ecclesiam dei.

<sup>67</sup> The gloss appears on 363. The corresponding lines in the poem are *Paradiso* 8.145–46:

Ma voi torcete a la religione,  
Tal che fu nato a congersi la spada.

worldliness. He was the head of an abbacy at age six, the archbishop of Esztergom in Hungary at age nine, and created cardinal by Alexander VI at age fourteen in 1493, although he did not reside in Rome until 1497. He was among the most enthusiastic pluralists of his age, and his fortunes became closely linked with those of the Borgia family when his brother Alfonso married Lucrezia Borgia in 1501. At the following canto, where Dante decries the influence of money in the form of the florin, which he calls the *maladetto fiore*, on the church, Antonio brackets the corresponding lines with the note *de Papa* and then adds *sim. lucrativa et contume* (lucrative and outrageous simony).<sup>68</sup>

In another annotation that once again sees him break into Italian, Antonio calls on the clergy of his day to pay heed to lessons of Dante's text. At *Paradiso* 22.88–90, where St. Benedict decries the corruption of holy orders and points to the contrasting poverty and humility of Peter, Francis, and himself, the glossator has added: *Notate preti et frati richi ribaldoni* (take note rowdy, rich priests and friars!).<sup>69</sup>

Such comments indicate a generalized dismay for clerical abuse, but the brunt of Antonio's impassioned critiques is borne by Pope Alexander VI. On the same page as his comment about the poisoned church, Antonio launches into an extraordinary diatribe against the pope on the occasion of his death: "Today on Friday, August 18, 1503, our burdens came to an end; on this day Pope Alexander died, in the same way as do the simoniacs, the wrathful, the cruel, the greedy, the avaricious, the murderers; [he was] without, without, without humanity [and] with infamy, abomination, every deviation and type of vice."<sup>70</sup> This is an extraordinary *cri de coeur*, likely rooted in a combination of Antonio's distress over Alexander's stewardship of the Roman church and the meddling role of the pope and his son Cesare in Faenza and the Val di Lamone. Indeed, such is the vituperative nature of this marginal outburst that he appears to have had regrets about issuing it. At the bottom of the same page, just below the condemnation of Alexander on the occasion of his death, he revisits his comments at some subsequent time (when — exactly — it is impossible to determine): "Listen reader: I certainly repent for what I wrote here about

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<sup>68</sup> 367.

<sup>69</sup> 429.

<sup>70</sup> 317: hodie die veneris 1503 18 august desiit onerati qui die obit Alexandris papa in modo morano qui simoniaci, scolerati, crudeli, avari, homicidi senza — senza senza humanitas infamia abominationis omni deviatores genere vitosissimi.

Alexander, as it was not meant to castigate him but to lead the pope and prelates toward better fruit.<sup>71</sup> If there is any doubt about the importance of this second note, Antonio adds a handsome manicule pointing to it. It is also a peculiar detail that he addresses a generic reader (*Audi lector*) in his note. Whom he thought that reader might be is impossible to determine here, but it does suggest that Antonio added his marginal notes in the expectation that they would be read by others at some point in the future. It suggests that the notes were not just for him and his use, but perhaps also for future readers as well. It is also telling that Antonio did not simply cross out the invective that he had launched against Alexander, but instead offers this secondary commentary. The clear suggestion here is that he still wished it be to be read, but felt it wise to temper his broadside with a follow-up annotation. The juxtaposition of the initial vitriol and subsequent *mea culpa* is striking, but also deliberate: they are meant to be read together.

In canto 27 of *Paradiso*, Dante has St. Peter denounce the popes, famously accusing them of turning his resting place of Rome into a “sewer (*cloaca*) of the blood and stench” that placates Satan.<sup>72</sup> Our annotator draws attention to the entire speech, bracketing it, and then adding the words: “1503 Lo! Alexander listen, listen to the words of Peter!”<sup>73</sup> In his day, Dante put the harsh words of this speech into the mouth of St. Peter himself with the hope that they would shame the holders of the See of St. Peter. Two hundred years later, a reader of Dante clearly desires that the pope in his own day would heed the same message.

Elsewhere in *Paradiso*, in canto 29, Dante (through words uttered by Beatrice) highlights the dangers of frippery and trifles in the preaching of his day, which stand in opposition to the foundational preaching of the Apostles. A short gloss, accompanying a bracketing of the speech, reads *In praedicatores. Fra Succhiel 1500*. This is evidently a reference to a preacher active in 1500. But exactly whom Antonio meant with this

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<sup>71</sup> 317: Audi lector: me quidem penitet hic de papa Alexander scripsisse: tanquam eum cuius non inter est velle castigatur et ad meliorem frugem redigere pontificem et prelatos S R ec.

<sup>72</sup> *Paradiso* 27.25–27:

fatt’ha del cimitero mio cloaca  
del sangue e de la puzza onde’l perverso  
che cadde di qua sù, là giù su placa.

<sup>73</sup> 463: verba petru heus alexander vi audi audi.

reference is not altogether clear, although there are some likely candidates. In the *Cronaca di Simone Filipepi*, which covers the year 1489–1509 in Florence, we learn of a Fra Succhiello, a conventual friar and member of the Compagnacci, who preached against Girolamo Savonarola in Florence.<sup>74</sup> In his collection of *facetie*, published in 1588, Lodovico Domenichi describes a Fra Suchiello who preached regularly in Orsanmichele church. He is remembered as a playful preacher. Domenichi tells a story that the workers who had gathered to hear him preach refused to pay him his alms upon finishing unless he gave them another sermon. He did so, and explaining to his listeners why he was giving one more sermon than usual, he told them to look at the letters OSM (representing Orto San Michele) in the church's banner and asked them if they knew what it meant. He then told them it stood for *O servitor minchioni* — “O servant of idiots!”<sup>75</sup>

In the third *Cena* of Anton Francesco Grazzini (commonly known as Lasca), first published in 1549, we learn of a young boy born to Mona Brigida and raised by her and his goldsmith father. When the father died, the child, who was ten years old, was placed in the monastery of Santa Maria Novella, where he became a celebrated preacher known for his “sugared eloquence,” thus garnering him the name Fra Succhiello. Lasca also mentions him in one of his *Rime*, entitled “In Praise of Spinach,” where he indicates that Fra Succhiello preached that before the Flood, humankind survived on spinach.<sup>76</sup> Whether a real or merely

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<sup>74</sup> From the *Cronaca di Simone Filipepi*, extracted in *Scelta di prediche e scritti di fra Girolamo Savonarola: con nuovi documenti intorno alla sua vita* (Florence: Sansoni, 1898), 489. On Simone Filipepi, see the entry on him by Raffaella Zaccaria in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 47 (Rome, 1997); available online at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/simone-filipepi\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/simone-filipepi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

<sup>75</sup> Lodovico Domenichi, *Facetie, motti et burle di diversi signori et persone private di nuovo del settimo libro ampliate . . .* (Venice, 1588), 419: “Ho detto di soprache con garbo si scherzo alcuna volta sopra il contrario di quell che noi aspettiamo, si come fece a Fiorenza Fra Succhello, che era molto burleivol predicatore. Havea egli predicato in Orto San Michiel, & chiedendo la sua limosina, gli Operai dissero di non volergliela dar, se prima non faceva un'altra predica. La fece egli, & rendendo la ragione ai suoi auditori, perche facesse quella predica di piu del consente, disse. Guardate in questo stendardo in quelle letter che visono (erano queste lettere in uno confalone, OSM, che significano Orto San Michele sapete voi cio che voglion dire? O servitor minchioni.”

<sup>76</sup> *Rime* di Antonfrancesco Grazzini detto il Lasca (Florence, 1742), 77.

representative figure, it is certain that Fra Suchiello was meant here to be a contemporary example of the honey-tongued preachers denounced by Beatrice in *Paradiso* 29.

Throughout his copy of the *Divine Comedy*, therefore, Antonio has seen it fit to record the ebbs and flows of fortune, for himself and for his native Italy. He had been swept up in the wake of the actions of the popes and other political actors of his day, much like Dante had been. In canto 16 of *Inferno*, when Dante's mentor Brunetto Latini asks the pilgrim whether courtesy and valor can still be found in their native Florence, Antonio answers for his own age in a dated annotation: "They have been banished thoroughly in our time (1507), nor does there remain malice, rivalry, ambition, avarice, and dissension."<sup>77</sup> It is a response that is clearly tongue-in-cheek — his age was just as turbulent and troubled as that of the poet. Indeed, in *Paradiso* 16, where Cacciaguida remarks on how the politics of his (and the poet's) native Florence fluctuate like the waves on the shore moved by turning of the moon,<sup>78</sup> Antonio sees unmistakable resonances with his own day, and he notes: *1503 ita se res habet nunc.*<sup>79</sup> As in Dante's time, so in his own.



There remains one last set of annotations that are worthy of our attention, again having to do with Antonio's own experiences, and its worth is chiefly art historical. One of the more celebrated archeological discoveries of the Renaissance occurred in Rome on January 14, 1506. In the vineyard of Felice de Fredis on the Esquiline Hill, near the ruins of the Baths of Titus, a statue of the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons was unearthed entirely by chance.<sup>80</sup> Pope Julius II, hearing of the discovery,

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<sup>77</sup> 71: exularunt penitus hac tempore 1507 non restitit ni malitia simultas ambitio avaritia et dissensio.

<sup>78</sup> *Paradiso* 16.82–84:

Et come'l volger del ciel la luna  
cuopre e discuopre I liti senza posa,  
così fa di Fiorenza la Fortuna.

<sup>79</sup> 400.

<sup>80</sup> Recent discussions of the discovery are in Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven, CT, 1999) and Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, *Group Identity in the Renaissance World* (Cambridge, 2011), 36–75. On the specifics of the likely location, see Rita



soon summoned the architect Giuliano da Sangallo to review the site, and Giuliano brought Michelangelo Buonarroti, who was in Rome to work on the pope's tomb, along with him.<sup>81</sup> The two men quickly recognized the statue to be one that Pliny the Elder described in book 36 of his *Historia naturalis*, where he mentions that it was carved from a single block (this soon proved not to be true) by three prominent artists and displayed in the palace of the emperor Titus (which also seems unlikely, given where it was discovered).

Although the sculpture was the object of many cash offers from cardinals and others, Pope Julius soon acquired the statue and by the summer had it installed in the Cortile del Belvedere at the Vatican Palace.<sup>82</sup> Above ground and as a central attraction in the pope's collection, it was much visited and much remarked upon, seen by many as the apex of classical art. Early on it became a subject for drawings and engravings; Jacopo Sansovino made a copy of the statue in wax for Cardinal Domenico Grimani, a copy that is no longer extant. Baccio Bandinelli made a bronze copy of the group, which is now in the Uffizi, and (Giorgio Vasari tells us) a wax model of Laocoön's arm, now lost. It continued for many years to be a subject of imitation.

Jacopo Sadoletto, a young humanist from Ferrara who was at the time of the discovery a secretary for Cardinal Oliviero Caraffa (and eventually a cardinal himself) was moved at that time to write a poem entitled *On the Statue of Laocoön* (1506), which begins with the shock of its unearthing:

Behold! From deep mass of earth and from ruin's  
Heart, long time has brought returned Laocoön again;  
That Laocoön which once in princely halls  
Had place and dignifies, O Titus, your own house.  
The image of a godlike art — skilled antiquity itself

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Volpe and Antonella Parisi, "Laocoonte: L'ultimo enigma," *Archeo* 299 (January 2010): 26–39; now translated at [http://www.digitalsculpture.org/laocoon/volpe\\_pari/index.html](http://www.digitalsculpture.org/laocoon/volpe_pari/index.html).

<sup>81</sup> This we know from a letter written in 1567 by Giuliano's son, Francesco, who was eleven years old at the time of the statue's discovery. See Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 1–4.

<sup>82</sup> A copy of the sales agreement is in Francesco Buranelli, Paolo Liverani, and Arnold Nesselrath, eds., *Laocoonte: Alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exhibition catalog (Rome, 2006), 130.

Looked not on nobler work — has now come back,  
 Freed from the shades, to see the lofty walls of a renewed Rome.<sup>83</sup>

As Sadoletto's breathless words suggest, the statue in many ways became a physical embodiment of the Renaissance fascination with antiquity, a locus of the interchange between past and present. The *Laocoön's* discovery and restoration were representative of the resurrection of Rome undertaken by Renaissance scholars, sculptors, and artists. But the statue served to connect not only past to present, but also text to image. The sculpture depicts a scene from the second book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, where a priest of Poseidon named Laocoön (who had appeared in the works of Sophocles and other Greek writers) seeks to warn the Trojans of coming Greek treachery by piercing the Trojan horse with a spear. At the very moment of doing this, serpents, sent by Minerva, fly across the city walls and attack Laocoön and his two sons, biting, constricting, and poisoning the three of them.

It is clear that this chilling tale of Laocoön was in Dante's mind when, in canto 25, in one of Dante's many incarnational parodies in *Inferno*, the shade of a thief is attacked by a grotesque serpent and then morphs into a figure that is neither one nor the other. It's certainly evident that Laocoön came to the mind of Antonio, because the scene prompts him to remark on the famous unearthing: "The Laocoön sculpture is the one discovered in Rome in January 1505 [1506 in modern dating], which Virgil wrote about in the second book of the *Aeneid* and Pliny in book 36."<sup>84</sup> Just below these words in a second annotation, evidently added at a later date (the ink is of a different hue), he adds that he had subsequently gone to see the

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<sup>83</sup> In Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (New York, 1961). There is an English translation and commentary on the poem as a description of art by Michael Baxandall, "Sadoletto's *Laocoön*," in *Words for Pictures: Seven Papers on Renaissance Art and Criticism*, ed. Michael Baxandall (New Haven, CT, 2003), 98–116.

And Pietro Aretino (unsurprisingly) remarked on the eroticism of the statue, likening the anguish of the three men to an orgy in his *Ragionamento della Nanna e della Antonia* (1534). This is pointed out by Salvatore Mellis and Sonia Maffei, in "La fama di Laocconte nei testi del Cinquecento", in Settis, ed., *Laocconte, fama e stile* (Rome, 1999), 85–230, here 200.

<sup>84</sup> 115: Qualis est Laocoon marmores repertus rome di gennaio 1505 de quam Vergilio 2<sup>o</sup> Enei et pli in 36.

statue himself: "I saw this statue returning from Naples in July 1507."<sup>85</sup> It is likely, therefore, that he had been aware of the discovery well before he made the effort to view it. By that time, the statue had already been installed in the so-called *Villetta di Belvedere*, a niche in the south wall of the courtyard between the statues of Apollo and Venus.<sup>86</sup> Thus Antonio must have visited the Vatican during his voyage back from Naples. In what capacity he was in Rome, or what he was doing in Naples, he does not tell us. We do know that he stopped at Ceprano on the way back from Naples, for he complains about the shabby welcome he received while there: "I received poor hospitality in Ceprano while coming back from Naples with N. V. in July 1507."<sup>87</sup> The mention in canto 28 of *Inferno* of the betrayal of Manfred by his barons at the pass at Ceprano in 1266 is what prompted this expression of annoyance.<sup>88</sup> Who "N.V." was we do not learn.



The *Divine Comedy* has been called a *summa* of medieval culture, society, and learning, an attempt to capture all of human experience in a poem. The voyage of the pilgrim was designed to be personal and universal, religious and political, theological and intellectual, material and ethereal. The poem was a vehicle by which Dante laid bare what he perceived as the degraded state of the Roman church in his day and condemned his various, and many, political enemies. It was also an intellectual exercise of immense depth and breadth, a sumptuous snapshot of medieval learning. And, of course, it was a deeply personal work, a journey that he had undertaken through a world populated by many people he himself had known. Dante intended his readers, too, to experience the poem as

<sup>85</sup> 115: *Quam statuum vidi rediens Neapoli 1507 di luglio.*

<sup>86</sup> Georg Daltrop, "The Belvedere," in *The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art* (New York, 1982), 57–61. For details on the location and the date of the relocation, see a letter of Grossino to Isabella d'Este of August 16, 1506, quoted by Settis and Maffei in "La fama di Laocoonte", 173.

<sup>87</sup> 127: *Ceperanum op v mal hospitatus sum rediens da Neapoli cum N. V. di luglio 1507.*

<sup>88</sup> *Inferno* 28.16–18:

A Ceperan, là dove fu bugiardo  
ciascun Pugliese, e là da Taglicozzo,  
dove sanz'arme vines il vecchio Alardo.

a political, religious, and intellectual undertaking, and to interface with the text in a personal way, suggested most succinctly in his address to the reader at *Inferno* 21:19–20: “Se Dio ti lasci, lettor, prender frutto di tua lezione.”

It is striking therefore, that Antonio Teobaldo, as the *lettor* of the Bentley Aldine Dante, responds to the text in many of the very same ways. His comments on the intellectual, theological, and cosmological scaffolding of the poem reveal that his reading was in many ways a scholarly *lezione*. His broadsides against Alexander VI are reminiscent of Dante’s unrestrained denunciations of Boniface VIII and Clement V. His various calls for priests and friars to reform their ways mirror the pained appeals of Dante that recur throughout the canticles. His marginal commentary on political foes in his day resemble Dante’s many bitter gripes about his Florentine and Italian antagonists. And the self-referential nature of Antonio Teobaldo’s commentary shows that his reading of the *Commedia* was intensely personal, presenting a series of opportunities to reflect on his experiences in response to what he had read. On several occasions, as we have seen, he revisits his previous annotations and adds or responds to them, indicating a reading (and glossing) process that was not confined to a single reading, but instead a prolonged “use” of the poem. If “using a book meant making it one’s own,” then Antonio did precisely this.<sup>89</sup> Whether these marginalia are evidence of a genuinely “fruitful” reading of the text, in the sense that Dante intended, is impossible for us to say at such historical remove. But there is no doubt that this book’s first owner engaged in a reading of Dante’s great poem that was active, and like so many of us who have read the work, he saw some part of his own life reflected in its magisterial verse.

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<sup>89</sup> Cormack and Mazziio, *Book Use*, 39.

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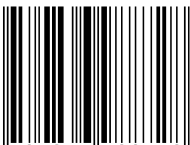
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