

Dante, Eschatology, and the Christian Tradition

Festschriften, Occasional Papers, and Lectures

Dante, Eschatology, and the Christian Tradition



Essays in Honor of Ronald B. Herzman

Edited by

Lydia Yaitsky Kertz and Richard K. Emmerson

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Lydia Yaitsky Kertz and Richard K. Emmerson

Introduction

The nineteen essays collected in *Dante, Eschatology, and the Christian Tradition* are authored by former students, colleagues, and friends of Ronald B. Herzman to honor his more than fifty years of exemplary teaching, outstanding scholarship, and substantial contributions to medieval studies. Although his love of Dante's *Commedia* and fourteenth-century Italy receive pride of place, the essays represent the full range of his contributions to our understanding of the Christian culture of the western Middle Ages from the Early Christian to the Early Modern periods—from second-century Carthage to seventeenth-century London, from Tertullian to Shakespeare. These studies exemplify not only Herzman's inspiration of countless undergraduate students over forty-nine years of teaching at the State University of New York, Geneseo, where he retired as a Distinguished Teaching Professor of English in 2018, but also his unmatched ability to collaborate with colleagues and friends in producing significant scholarship. As indicators of his ongoing influence, the contributors to this volume include five colleagues, five teachers with whom he co-taught courses, seven former students, and seven co-authors of his many publications. Most importantly, all essays are by his friends, written for this volume as testaments of his enduring friendship and support.

The volume's concluding essay details the honoree's important achievements and the extent to which Herzman represents the often praised but rarely accomplished balance of teaching, scholarship, and service. Written by his long-term colleague and friend, William R. Cook, with whom he published *The Medieval World View* and won the Medieval Academy's first annual CARA Award for Excellence in Teaching Medieval Studies, the essay describes Herzman's sustained efforts to make "Dante for Everyone" a reality. Particularly stressing his ability to collaborate with colleagues and students alike, Cook calls him "the greatest collaborator I have ever met or witnessed." Those of us who have been privileged to co-author or co-teach with Herzman agree unreservedly. For example, although not contributing to this volume, his Geneseo English Department colleague Beth McCoy has told us of Ron's enthusiasm when invited to team-teach a course on Dante and African American Literature, praising "Ron's amazing knack for communicating so much complex context conversationally," thus making the medieval accessible to non-specialists and undergraduates. Such collaborative teaching has made a tremendously positive impact on Geneseo undergraduates and has

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earned Ron the appointment of Distinguished Teaching Professor of English. His Geneseo colleague in Mathematics Gary Towsley, with whom Herzman taught Poetry and Cosmology in the Middle Ages eighteen times over thirty years, notes that two students in the course wrote final research papers that won the Undergraduate Paper Prize from the Dante Society of America.

The volume is organized in four parts representing Herzman's research and teaching interests. Part 1: Dante and Italy places Italy and its most important poet at the volume's forefront and begins with an essay responding to Cook and Herzman's Bernardo Lecture regarding the theological significance of Siena within the *Commedia*, with Siena presented as a model for Florence, while Sienese citizens are held above their Florentine counterparts. Vittorio Montemaggi draws out a similar parallel between divine justice and human vengeance, reconciled in the *Commedia* with Dante's confession of his own sin of pride and vanity, both of which he also assigns to the Sienese. Siena thus becomes a lesson in humility, internalization of which would lead to healing the rifts of factionalism and ultimately to salvation. Next, Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran Cruz's reading of Brunetto Latini as an encapsulation of everything that is wrong with Florence stands as a fitting counterpart to Dante's treatment of Siena. Placed deep in Hell, Brunetto's soul appears to be answering for a multitude of sins, most stemming from a singular focus on worldly fame and material remuneration. Moran Cruz argues that Dante levies accusations of sodomy and hypocrisy against Brunetto for his failure to support Dante early in his career as both a politician and a poet. William Stephany, Herzman's longstanding collaborator and co-leader of NEH seminars, turns our attention to Dante's anxieties regarding his future, offering a reading of *Paradiso* 17 as a form of Boethian consolation for both the pilgrim and the poet. In a conversation with Cacciaguida, presented as an antithesis and a corrective to Brunetto Latini, Dante learns to see time from a larger cosmic perspective and gains a recuperative outlook on his exile as part of a larger Christian pilgrimage and a movement away from concerns with earthly fame and toward eternal salvation. Robert Hanning's essay moves to Dante's compatriot Boccaccio to discuss *Decameron* 10.3 with a sustained critique of liberality and generosity as a means of establishing an excellent reputation and long-lasting legacy. The deadly competition between Natan and Mitridanes reveals the darker side of generosity, since extreme generosity as a relationship of power generates a sense of indebtedness in the recipients, particularly in cases where reciprocity is not available. The last essay in Part 1 returns to Siena. Bradley Franco and Grant Hobbs carefully reassess the group of dancers in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes of *Good and Bad Government*, whom they identify as the Nine Virtues. The harmony and unity represented through dance exemplify the political achievements of the Sienese government of the Nine (in direct contrast to the factionalism of Florence discussed in Montemaggi's opening essay).

The five essays in Part 2: Lay Eschatologies and Christian Devotional Practices explore topics that have long engaged Herzman's teaching and scholarship. Focusing on the early years of the Christian tradition, the essay by Herzman's college friend Thomas Heffernan offers a new theory for dating Tertulian's *Ad martyras* and argues that the purpose of the text was to console Perpetua and other young martyrs who, as described in *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitas*, awaited execution in Carthage for profession of their Christian faith. Herzman's former student Eve Salisbury examines Hildegard of Bingen's concept of *viriditas* as a holistic approach to wellbeing and healthcare, recognizing "greening" as an actual substance within human bodies in addition to the four humors. Salisbury understands the concept of *viriditas* as a connective thread between Hildegard's medical and metaphysical writing, connecting the human and the divine as well as humans and the rest of creation. Richard Emmerson, who has co-authored and taught with Herzman, offers a feminist analysis of four female figures from the Book of Revelation as they are depicted in late medieval illustrated Apocalypse manuscripts. Focusing on the representation of four drastically different women both in visual form and in feminist exegesis—the Woman clothed with the Sun, the Whore of Babylon, the Bride of the Lamb, and the prophet Jezebel—Emmerson attends to the figures as women rather than mere concepts. Continuing attention to medieval representations of women, Herzman's Geneseo colleague Graham Drake situates the short text "Proprietates mulieris" within its literary and manuscript context in which it shares a folio opening in MS Bodley 57 with "Ave maris stella." The text and glosses expound on negative stereotypes of women, making the visual juxtaposition with a poem that glorifies Mary rather startling; and yet, the contrasts created by the two texts invite attentive readers to consider the question of woman more deeply, thus encouraging a form of learning and devotional practice. The essay by another of Herzman's former students, Hannah Schmidt, continues to focus on medieval women and their representation in manuscripts, but shifts attention to their devotional practices as depicted in reader portraits in four English books of hours, the *Taymouth Hours*, *Neville of Hornby Hours*, *Beaufort Hours*, and *Egerton Hours*. Arguing that the images encourage a mental immersion in salvation history, Schmidt shows how time is understood based on Augustine's and Aquinas's theorizations, Dante's understanding of which is addressed earlier in the volume by Stephany.

The next five essays constitute Part 3: Dante, Performance, and the Christian Tradition. They begin with David Bevington, Herzman's late mentor and friend, whose analysis of Dante's spiritual journey in the *Divine Comedy* connects the poem to medieval church drama as two forms of staging liturgical knowledge and understanding of the Christian afterlife. Bevington argues that in Dante's poem as well as in medieval church experience that privileges the liturgy, aided by visual art, music, processions, and ceremonial objects, readers and participants become

witnesses to the drama of salvation. Lydia Yaitsky Kertz, Herzman's Geneseo colleague, addresses this liturgical drama as a learning environment for the laity in William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. Like Dante, Langland centers his dream vision on the spiritual journey of his protagonist, Will the Dreamer, whose allegorical journey from error to truth involves physical obstacles, distractions, and outright battles between virtues and vices as well as difficult lessons that need to be fully internalized. One of the most memorable episodes in Langland's poem involves the highly performative confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins, most of whom feign ignorance as defense against sinful behavior. Since the prescribed remedy is knowledge, Kertz asks us to consider the poem within the context of late medieval learning aids—charts and diagrams that visualize canonical knowledge. Daniel Schultz's essay on the hyper realism of Franciscan Sacri Monti studies Counter-Reformation art as a direct response to the efforts of Christian Reformers by showing how these visual dioramas provided an immersive experience of the Holy Land for Christian pilgrims. These New Jerusalems in Northern Italy made Old Jerusalem available by creating sacred spaces and events that enabled a penitential performance of pilgrimage that immersed the pilgrim into the drama of salvation. William Porter, another former student of Herzman, shifts our focus from Catholic to Reformation theology while continuing the themes of this volume of positioning the human in relation to the divine. Examining the enigmatic pirate episode in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Porter brings our attention to the deliberate obfuscations of the dramatist and the title character trying to resolve seemingly contradictory interpretations informed by Calvinist predestination theology. William Kennedy continues this line of analysis of Shakespearean drama in his reading of *Othello* and traces the staging of the theological shift from Catholicism to Protestantism, particularly in relation to the performance of penance and repentance. Kennedy shows how the confusion surrounding the redemptive promise of confession and atonement for a character like Othello, caught between Catholic and Reformist theologies, between the precarity of absolution and the inevitability of sin, leads to the destructiveness of despair.

The four essays of Part 4: Dante In and Out of the Classroom recognize the importance of teaching medieval studies to a wide range of audiences. Christopher Kleinhenz offers a pedagogical meditation on the nature of punishment in *Inferno*, dividing the punishments into four major categories based on mode and agent. While walking us through the structure and nature of Dante's *contrapassi*, Kleinhenz demonstrates how Dante teaches his reader how to read and respond to his eschatological text. Erik Johnson provides first-hand insight into the NEH seminars on Dante's *Commedia* in Siena that Herzman and Stephany co-directed and how they have enriched K-12 teachers, approach to Dante. From in-depth discussions on the literary distinction between Dante the protagonist and Dante the

poet to learning how to broaden Dante's poem through inter-textual reading practices, Johnson's survey of pedagogical practices informed by these seminars culminates in his readings of *Inferno* 13, 27, and 32–33 alongside illuminating biblical passages. Johnson's deeply reflective essay demonstrates how his NEH experience has impacted his teaching, which in turn has enabled him to help his students connect with the poem's moral and psychological depths. Weston Kennison and Glenn McClure bring us back to the subject of Lorenzetti's Dancers, but this time from the perspective of study abroad participants and leaders. Arguing for the benefits of studying abroad, particularly at sites like Sala della Pace in Siena, Kennison and McClure demonstrate how these experiences serve as gateways for student connections between the past and the present while encouraging them through structured reflection to envision and build better futures. Finally, as noted above, William Cook provides a retrospective on his long collaboration with Herzman in teaching and research. From their very first pilgrimage to the Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the many medieval seminars taught at SUNY Geneseo and abroad, their co-authoring *The Medieval World View* and recording lectures for the Teaching Company, and their work with K-12 teachers and prisoners at Attica, Cook and Herzman as a dynamic duo prove that Dante is indeed for everyone.

Part 1: **Dante and Italy**

Vittorio Montemaggi

Chapter 1

Dante and Siena: Vanity, Humility, and the Mystery of Salvation

It is both an honor and a delight to write this essay in celebration of Ronald Herzman. For both professional and personal reasons—and indeed for reasons in which the two are inextricably intertwined—I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity of acknowledging the debt owed to Ron; a debt that is significantly related to Dante, to Siena, and, as my title indicates, to the relationship between the two. As I have written elsewhere, I believe that as much as from scholarly writing, I have learned about Dante from Siena and the life of its *contrade*, with the latter in particular providing, on a personal level, living insight into Dante's understanding of both civic and spiritual community.¹ But it was not until meeting Ron, and learning about his work on Dante and Siena and his courses on Dante in Siena, that I realized just how significant Siena might have been for Dante. I owe to Ron's scholarship and friendship the possibility of devoting more of my own work to exploring such significance.² To further such exploration is the aim of

1 Vittorio Montemaggi, *Reading Dante's Commedia as Theology: Divinity Realized in Human Encounter* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 17–18, 55–57, 155–56.

2 See Montemaggi, *Reading Dante's Commedia as Theology*; Vittorio Montemaggi, "Vanità e verità: *Inferno* XXIX, Siena e il percorso spirituale della *Commedia*," in *Così "intra per lo cammino alto e silvestro": Attraversare l'Inferno dantesco con Roberto Benigni*, ed. Franco Musarra, Pacifico Ramazzotti, Andrea Aldo Robiglio, and Bart Van den Bossche (Florence: Cesati, 2021), 243–54. On Dante and Siena see also Bartolomeo Aquarone, *Dante in Siena: Ovvero accenni nella Divina Commedia a cose sanesi* (Siena: Ignazio Gati, 1865); *Dante e Siena* (Siena: Lazzeri, 1921); Rachel Jacoff, "Diligite Iustitiam": Loving Justice in Siena and Dante's *Paradiso*," *Modern Language Notes* 124, Supplement (2009): S81–S95; and Pietro Rossi, *Dante e Siena* (Siena: Betti, 2015). In line with Jacoff's essay it is important to note the role that might be played in reflection on Dante and Siena by the visual arts. This is suggested by William R. Cook and Ronald Herzman in *Dante from Two Perspectives: The Sienese Connection*, Bernardo Lecture Series 15 (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, SUNY at Binghamton, 2007), 17, where the authors note the significant presence of Sienese artists in Florence in Dante's time. For a specific example of the potential Dantean significance of the latter (Duccio's frescoes in Santa Maria Novella), see Vittorio Montemaggi, "Dante and Gregory the Great," in *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, 2 vols., ed. Claire Honess and Matthew Treherne (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), 1:258–59. Since completing the essay, I have become aware of two further important studies on Dante and Siena: Eleonora Buo-

this essay, offered in gratitude to Ron, for all he has taught me, both through his writings and in person, including many hours of convivial conversation in Siena itself.

In *Dante from Two Perspectives: The Sienese Connection* William Cook and Ronald Herzman offer a compelling reading of the deep significance of Dante's references to Siena in the cantos of the Terraces of Pride and Envy in *Purgatorio*. They suggest that Dante's engagement with Siena—one of Florence's historical arch-rivals—ought to be read as an active exercise in humility on the poet's part, and therefore as a living embodiment of what his fiction depicts as the foundation of spiritual journeying. Building on the insights of Cook and Herzman—and inspired by what I have learned over years of conversation with Ron about Dante and Siena—the present essay offers theological reflection on the wider significance of Dante's references to Siena in the *Commedia*, especially those in the *Inferno*. My aim is to show that such references can be read as a key element in Dante's metaliterary presentation of possible connections between his poem and the mystery of salvation.³ I begin by reviewing some of the central insights offered by Cook and Herzman in their essay, drawing out some of their theological implications relative to key questions animating the *Commedia*. I then focus on *Inferno* 29 and 30, suggesting that Dante's references to Siena in these cantos provide invaluable elements towards an interpretation of Dante's understanding of his poem as potentially salvific for his readers, in and through what they reveal about Dante's awareness not only of the spiritual potential of his poem, but also of its infernal limitations. I conclude by proposing that, taking the lead from Cook

nocore, "The Other Model: Siena as a Purgatorial City in Dante," in *Vedere nell'ombra: Studi su natura, spiritualità e scienze operative offerti a Michela Pereira*, ed. Nicola Polloni and Cecilia Panti (Florence: SISMEL del Galluzzo, 2018), 131–42; and Theodore J. Cachey, "Lettura e interpretazione del canto XIII," in *Voci sul Purgatorio di Dante: Una nuova lettura della seconda cantica, Purgatorio VIII–XIV*, organized by Zygmunt G. Barański and Maria Antonietta Terzoli (Basel, December 14–16, 2022). I further wish to acknowledge with great gratitude the debt owed to inspiration in reflection on Dante and Siena to ongoing conversations with Luca Bonomi, Giacomo Capannoli, Leonardo Francalanci, Jennifer Sliwka, Giovanni Stanghellini, and Lucio Viligiardi. I should finally point out that the present essay was completed during a period of illness with "long Covid," which did not allow me to return to the sources mentioned above with the attention I had anticipated. I am especially grateful to Richard K. Emmerson and Lydia Yaitsky Kertz for their generous understanding and editorial support.

³ A fuller treatment of the question would also take into account the figure of Virgil, which space does not permit to address in the present essay. In this connection, too, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity of learning from Ron's work. See Ronald Herzman and Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran Cruz, "Virgil's Mission: Dante and the Salvation of the Pagan World," *Mediaevalia* 44 (2023): 125–84.

and Herzman, it is possible to read the relationship between Dante and Siena in the *Commedia* as one of the most significant theological elements of the poem.

The latter is indeed already suggested by Cook and Herzman in the conclusion to their essay:

If what we have said is in any way accurate, there is no getting around the fact that Dante was holding Siena up as something of a model for Florence. That Dante was able to build this dynamic into his poem provides us with one of the most interesting ways in which the poem shows the pilgrim in the very process of negotiating with his own pride. Through what must have been for Dante a radical act of re-evaluation, a willingness to give up some inherited and long cherished beliefs, Dante's treatment of Siena can be read as an act of humility no less public, and certainly no less difficult, than that of Provenzan Salvani begging in the Campo of Siena.⁴

If Cook and Herzman's suggestions are accurate—and I believe they are—the importance of Siena in the *Commedia* can indeed be read as of the utmost theological significance.⁵ The specific reference to Provenzan Salvani humbly begging in the Campo at the end of their essay compellingly opens up this interpretive trajectory. Even just a brief consideration of the passage in question reveals what might be at stake.⁶ Manuscript illuminator Oderisi da Gubbio explains to Dante how it is possible that Provenzan Salvani is already in Purgatory proper and not still confined to Antepurgatory:

“Quando vivea più glorioso,” disse,
 “liberamente nel Campo di Siena,
 ogne vergogna diposta, s'affisse;
 e lì, per trar l'amico suo di pena,
 ch'e' sostenea ne la prigion di Carlo,
 si condusse a tremar per ogne vena.
 Più non dirò, e scuro so che parlo;
 ma poco tempo andrà, che ' tuoi vicini
 faranno sì che tu potrai chiosarlo.
 Quest' opera li tolse quei confini.”⁷

4 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 19.

5 A fuller study of the implications of Cook and Herzman's work would, of course, need to take into account the political dimension of Dante's thought too.

6 For further reflection on *Purgatorio* 11 relative to the questions explored in this essay, see Vittorio Montemaggi, “Image as Theology in Dante's *Commedia*: Praying for Each Other's Good,” in *Image as Theology: The Power of Art in Shaping Christian Thought, Devotion, and Imagination*, ed. Mark McInroy, Casey Strine, and Alexis Torrance (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), 143–157.

7 The *Commedia* is quoted from Dante, *Commedia*, ed. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi, 3 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 1991–1997).

“When he could boast, in life, most glorious fame,
 freely he took a stand,” the answer was,
 “in Campo di Siena, free from shame,
 and there, to save his friend the punishment –
 incurred in his imprisonment to Charles –
 he brought himself to tremble down each vein.
 I’ll say no more (I know I speak dark words,
 but little time will pass till those near you
 will act in ways that mean you can explain).
 Provenzan’s deed removed him from those bounds.”⁸
 (*Purgatorio* 11.133–42)

“Vena” in line 138 can be read as caught between two of the other three uses of the word in *Purgatorio*. In *Purgatorio* 9.102 it is used to refer to blood, to the color of which the third of the three steps of the gate of Purgatory can be compared. As such it is part of what is generally interpreted as a symbolic reference to the love and sacrifice by which healing satisfaction can be made of sinful wrongdoing. Later, in *Purgatorio* 23.75, the word is used metonymically to refer to Christ’s love and sacrifice that heals and redeems humanity from sin, “quando ne liberò con la sua vena” (“when through his open veins he made us free”). *Purgatorio* 11.138 resonates both with *Purgatorio* 9.102 and 23.75,⁹ suggesting that Provenzan Salvani’s action can be seen as a specific example of particular goodness that leads a human being closer to God and, as such, an action the ultimate significance of which is made possible by the Cross, the spiritual dynamics of which it also reflects and participates in. The latter seems to be confirmed by how Provenzan Salvani’s actions are said to be oriented not towards his own but another’s well-being. It also seems to be confirmed by the resonance between “liberamente” in *Purgatorio* 11.134 and “liberò” in *Purgatorio* 23.75, which in turn can be related to the purpose of Dante’s journey through Purgatory as described by Virgil in *Purgatorio* 1.71.¹⁰

Dante’s own circumstances are referred to specifically also in *Purgatorio* 11.139–42, in which he is told by Oderisi that what awaits him after his journey through the afterlife will allow him to understand or “gloss” Provenzan Salvani’s

8 Translations of the *Commedia* are from Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Robin Kirkpatrick, 3 vols. (London: Penguin, 2006–2007).

9 The fourth use of “vena” in the *cantica* is in *Purgatorio* 28.121, where it is used to refer to the miraculous source of the two rivers in the Earthly Paradise, immersion in which is the final step in attaining full freedom in ascending to heaven. The word is not used in *Inferno*. In *Paradiso* it is used once (12.99) to refer metaphorically (with an echo of Isa. 59:19) to Dominic as a source of waterways irrigating the Church, especially against heresy.

10 For a critique of selfish giving and liberality in Boccaccio see Robert W. Hanning, “Decameron 10.3: Lives (and Near Death) of the Rich, Famous, Generous, . . . and Insecure,” 59–74, in this volume.

actions. As Cook and Herzman suggest, Dante seems indeed to be presenting himself through Oderisi's words as (ideally) comparable to Provenzan Salvani; and, correspondingly, to be presenting his poem (written during the period of Dante's life referred to by Oderisi) as itself an act of humility comparable to that of the Sienese politician. In this sense we can legitimately ask ourselves who is Dante's "amico" that he might be wishing to restore to freedom. An obvious answer to this might be all who encounter his poem, which according to Beatrice is to be written "in pro del mondo che mal vive" ("to aid the world that lives all wrong") (*Purgatorio* 32.103) and, as stated by the *Letter to Can Grande*, aims to lead human beings towards salvation. In this sense the "libertà" that Dante is said to be seeking in *Purgatorio* 1.71 is not only his but ours too.

Be that as it may, it is certainly the case, as Cook and Herzman argue, that the end of *Purgatorio* 11 has an extremely significant autobiographical dimension that is inextricably tied to engagement with Siena. In their essay Cook and Herzman present compelling reflection on this, relating it to the wider presence of Siena in the *Commedia*. In particular, they analyze Dante's engagement with Siena in the *Purgatorio*, starting with Pia dei Tolomei in *Purgatorio* 5—clear emblem of *senesità*—and focusing especially then on the cantos of the Terrace of Pride and those of the Terrace of Envy, and on the figures of Omberto Aldobrandeschi and Provenzan Salvani in *Purgatorio* 11, and Sapia dei Tolomei and Pier Pettinaio in *Purgatorio* 13. Cook and Herzman's overarching argument is framed primarily in and through a contrast between Dante's engagement with Siena and his engagement with Florence, especially through the figure of Farinata degli Uberti in *Inferno* 10. They propose that if compared to the latter, the Sienese figures stand out, in their different ways as positive examples, showing how human beings might journey towards God in recognition of human limitations and failings. Unlike Farinata, and Florence more generally, the Sienese figures referred to in the *Purgatorio* seem, according to Cook and Herzman, to stand for the possibility of transcending polarizing factionalism and, especially, the pride to which it is inextricably tied.

In the latter sense Cook and Herzman argue Dante's encounter with Sapia dei Tolomei is especially significant. It is to Sapia that Dante confesses his own pride and the proleptic acknowledgement of his need to spend much time on the first terrace of Purgatory (*Purgatorio* 13.136–38). It is as if, having been given the opportunity by Oderisi to recognize himself in Provenzan Salvani, Dante acknowledges to Sapia that, like him, he will have to spend much time to purge himself of pride. Cook and Herzman highlight how profound and radical the specific terms of this acknowledgement are.¹¹ They ask their readers to imagine Dante—born during the six-year period of Ghibelline rule in Florence after its defeat by Siena

11 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 13–14.

in the battle of Montaperti—playing as a child in the rubble of Farinata’s *palazzo*, after it was razed to the ground upon the Guelphs’ return to power in 1266.¹² Later, as suggested by *Inferno* 10, at the time of writing the *Commedia*, Dante seems embroiled (at least as character) in polarizing factionalism, an “us and them” mentality that fuels both political violence and spiritual ill-health.¹³ In the light of this, the prominence of Sienese figures in the *Purgatorio*, and the way Dante integrates it in his depiction of the spiritual journey is, indeed, radical. It is a very public act of humility: recognizing in one’s rivals both goodness and an example to learn from, which is only possible in and through the abandonment of the pride by which one thinks oneself and one’s faction inherently superior to others.

Cook and Herzman further argue that the autobiographical dimension of Dante’s poem has a spiritual aspect whereby Dante might be seen not only as like Provenzan Salvani, but also like Pier Pettinaio, whose prayers allow Sapia to ascend the mountain of Purgatory with relative swiftness.¹⁴ Indeed, Sapia asks for Dante’s prayers too (*Purgatorio* 13.145–47) and, as Cook and Herzman suggest, Pier Pettinaio’s association with the Franciscans might have made him an especially attractive point of comparison for Dante, given the evident importance to him of Francis and the Franciscans too (whatever Dante’s own formal connections with the order might have been). Alongside this, I would like to suggest the potential significance of a further detail of Pier Pettinaio’s life that, as Cook and Herzman point out, it is not unlikely Dante would have been familiar with (even though the first *vita* of Pier Pettinaio was not written till after Dante’s death): “He prayed to the Virgin Mary, patron and Queen of Siena, in the cathedral, Santa Maria Assunta. Pier prayed that a man he knew would not carry out a vendetta.”¹⁵

I have argued elsewhere that the way that Dante engages in the *Commedia* with the vendetta culture of his day is extremely significant from a theological point of view, providing an interpretive lens with which to read the *Purgatorio* as, in part, a critique of the *Inferno* and more generally of the pride inherent in Dante’s presumption in writing a poem that appears to ascribe to himself the authority to judge as God judges.¹⁶ In my previous writing I focused on specifically Florentine components of Dante’s treatment of vendetta in the *Commedia*. These are to be found especially in the reference to San Miniato al Monte in *Purgatorio* 12.100–108, which is used as a point of comparison to describe Dante’s ascent from the Terrace of Pride to the Terrace of Envy; and in the near-encounter be-

12 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 5.

13 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 14.

14 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 14–16.

15 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 15.

16 Montemaggi, *Reading Dante’s Commedia as Theology*, 215–23.

tween Dante and his relative Geri del Bello straddling the narrative of *Inferno* 28 and 29, which seems to be used at least in part to critique the earthly practice of vendetta relative to divine judgment and the mystery of salvation.¹⁷

Indeed, in the *Commedia* the word “vendetta” is used primarily to refer to divine judgment, relative to which human vendetta can be seen as a violent manifestation of polarizing factionalism causing rifts in society and in the relationship between human beings and God. This is particularly pertinent to *Inferno* 28–29, given that these are the cantos treating the sowing of discord. In comparing his ascent from the first to the second terrace of Purgatory to the ascent from the center of Florence to the church of San Miniato al Monte that overlooks it (the term “soggioga” in *Purgatorio* 12.101 itself seems to suggest the subjugation of pride), Dante seems to propose, implicitly but significantly, a comparison between himself and Saint Minias, the first Florentine martyr. Having been beheaded in what is today Piazza della Signoria (that is, precisely where Cook and Herzman ask us to imagine Dante as a child playing in the rubble of the Uberti’s possessions), the saint picked up his head and walked up the hill to where the church dedicated to him would stand. The figure of Saint Minias is, in this sense, inversely comparable to that of Bertran de Born, the poet of war whom Dante encounters at the end of *Inferno* 28 and presents to us as emblematic of the principle of the *contrapasso*. Bertran is also thereby presented to us as a metaliterary emblem of the pride and divisiveness inherent in the poetry of the *Commedia*, in which a human author presumes to craft a work structured around such a principle, the wielding of which can ultimately pertain only to God’s own wisdom.

In suggesting a comparison between himself and Saint Minias in the ascent from the Terrace of Pride to the Terrace of Envy, Dante seems to want to suggest to us a journey by which the pride and divisiveness of his infernal poetry might be healed and redeemed—a journey from the pride of writing others into Hell to the humility of writing oneself as proud, seeking freedom for oneself and others, in imitation of Christ. Moreover, in recalling the church of San Miniato al Monte, Dante might also have in mind the figure of Saint John Gualbert, who, having escaped to said church so as to avoid carrying out a vendetta, received miraculous approval for his actions from the church’s crucifix, in the light of which he dedicated himself to the contemplative life. Be that as it may, it is indeed significant to note that in describing his ascent from the Terrace of Pride to the Terrace of Envy,

17 For Geri del Bello see Enrico Faini, “Ruolo sociale e memoria degli Alighieri prima di Dante,” *Reti Medievali Revista* 15, no. 2 (2014): 203–42, esp. 228–31. On vendetta culture see Andrea Zorzi, “La cultura della vendetta nel conflitto politico in età comunale,” in *Le storie e la memoria: In onore di Arnold Esch*, ed. Roberto Delle Donne and Andrea Zorzi (Florence: Florence University Press, 2002), 135–70.

Dante recalls the figure of the first Florentine martyr, as part of his transition between the references to Provenzan Salvani and the encounter with Sapia dei Tolomei, as if to further mark his acknowledgement of his own pride and to indicate the kind of poetic work that can be involved in healing it. Differently put, by the time Dante encounters Sapia dei Tolomei on the Terrace of Envy, confesses his pride to her and receives her request for prayers, and thereby also invites a comparison between himself and Pier Pettinaio, he has already indicated to us, on a metaliterary plane, his awareness that such a comparison requires a move away from a poetry of vengeance and pride to a poetry of love and humility.

References to Florence are thus intertwined with references to Siena, enriching still further the interpretive perspectives opened up by Cook and Herzman. This significantly applies to the *Inferno*, too. As Cook and Herzman note, references to Siena in the *Inferno* are more interesting and surprising than might initially appear.¹⁸ While Montaperti looms large in *Inferno* 10 and 32 (and through this resonates throughout the *cantica*), and while there appears to be a significant cluster of references to Siena and figures related to it in *Inferno* 29–30 (the cantos of the tenth *bolgia* of the eighth circle of Hell, dedicated to the falsifiers), there is actually only one Sienese person who we are explicitly told is an inhabitant of Hell.¹⁹ Moreover, while the famous critique of Sienese vanity in *Inferno* 29 is indeed trenchant, when compared to Dante's treatment of other Tuscan and Italian cities, it stands out as relatively mild.²⁰

In light of Cook and Herzman's work and the suggestions offered above, I turn now to considering more closely the references to Siena in *Inferno* 29–30. Here I am greatly indebted also to the interpretation of *Inferno* 29 offered by Roberto Benigni in his complete cycle of public *lecturae* of the *Inferno* given as part of his show, *Tutto Dante*, in Piazza Santa Croce in Florence between 2006 and 2013.²¹ Indeed, with his comic profundity Benigni manages to capture an element of the canto that is often neglected, but without which the deeper theological dimensions of the canto and its implications for reading the *Commedia* as a whole are difficult to fathom.²²

Benigni proposes that one of the most astonishing aspects of *Inferno* 29 is the way in which Dante passes in it from tragedy to comedy, a transition that significantly allows Dante to evade hellishness at a particularly crucial juncture in his

18 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 3–4.

19 Lano di Ricolfo Maconi in *Inferno* 13.115–21.

20 Cook and Herzman, *Dante from Two Perspectives*, 4.

21 DVD, Melampo Cinematografica. Translations are my own.

22 I focus extensively on Benigni in the present essay as further expression of gratitude to Ron in the light of our conversation on Benigni's *lectura* of *Inferno* 5 in Piazza del Campo in Siena, which we had both attended.

journey. According to Benigni, at the end of the canto Dante distracts us from Hell to make us smile, to give us some necessary relief so as to be able then to progress into the final cantos of the *Inferno*, which otherwise would be “insopportabilmente tragici e umani” (unbearably tragic and human). Particularly important are Benigni’s comments on Dante’s direct critique of Sienese vanity: “E io dissi al poeta: ‘Or fu già mai / gente sì vana come la sanese? / Certo non la francesca sì d’assai!’” (*Inferno* 29.121–23) (“On land or sea, I turned towards the poet, / ‘was anyone as gormless as these Sienese? / Even the French aren’t that idiotic’”). Benigni notes a twofold character in these lines. On the one hand, we perceive on Dante’s part a genuine wish to condemn Sienese vanity. On the other hand, we perceive the need to voice this in a banter befitting everyday life, more earthly than infernal. Benigni refers to this as the tone of a “serena conversazione, divertita” (a light-hearted conversation) that is in its context extraordinary, offering detachment from purely infernal poetry, which neither we nor Dante could bear. Dante, Benigni says, manages to make us smile, healthily, in a place most putrefied by human wrongdoing (“ci riesce a far sorridere in uno dei luoghi più putridi delle nostre colpe”).

As such, Benigni’s commentary provides a constructive alternative to a widespread interpretation of the canto, according to which the canto’s poetry is characterized by a somewhat disjointed move from a higher- to a lower-level diction: from the first part of the canto, still focused on the encounter with Geri del Bello, to the second part of the canto, dedicated to the *bolgia* of the falsifiers. Commentators thus often find this canto less satisfying than most, lacking in the kind of drama and structural unity characterizing Dante’s narrative poetry at its best.²³ The second part of the canto is certainly extremely different from the first, in both style and level of intensity. At the same time it also provides a significant way for approaching important theological questions raised by the canto’s opening. In this respect the canto can in fact be seen as possessing a profound kind of theological unity, governed by specific poetic and metapoetic choices on Dante’s part that give life to a poetry that would not be excessively akin to death.²⁴

It should not be surprising that Dante should want to give underlying structural unity to this particular juncture of the text, given that in *Inferno* 29 we enter the tenth of the Malebolge, the final part of the most extended section not only of the *Inferno* but of the *Commedia* as a whole. What is surprising is how Dante sug-

²³ This is the case even in commentaries that are otherwise extremely sensitive and illuminating with respect to the theological dynamics of Dante’s poem. See, for example, Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi’s introduction to the canto in Dante, *Commedia*, 1:857; and Robin Kirkpatrick’s commentary in Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, 1:428–29.

²⁴ See also *Purgatorio* 1.7, 1.17–18, and *Inferno* 1.7, 34.22–27.

gests unexpected continuities between the themes of vengeance and vanity and, through this, an underlying unity in the poetry of the *Inferno* in its entirety. Such unity can be found in the smile that Benigni suggests is provoked by the unexpected light-heartedness of Dante's critique of Sienese vanity, that is, in recognizing that the *Inferno* is only possible with a healthy degree of detachment from its subject matter. Such an interpretation might at first appear relatively superficial. As we draw closer to the bottom of Hell, however, we are increasingly in need of recognizing, as integral to Dante's poetry, some kind of escape—lest we remain trapped in infernal rigidity.

Indeed, the peremptory assertion of the principle of the *contrapasso* at the end of *Inferno* 28 does appear to indicate that Hell is rigidly structured, according to this basic rule.²⁵ Yet it is ultimately only God that can ascertain and apply this, not human beings. As Benigni argues, the whole point of the encounter with Geri del Bello seems to be precisely that of detaching oneself from the temptations of vengeance. More broadly, Benigni suggests, the point of the *Inferno* is to show that only God knows what is appropriate for us for eternity, and it is only God who can, correspondingly, give us for eternity that which we have chosen for ourselves in and through the way we live.

That said, in pursuing this line of interpretation we soon run into a potential impasse. If according to Dante it is only God who can ultimately judge, why write the *Inferno* at all? How can Dante coherently suggest that only God can offer eternal judgment and at the same time invent the story that he tells in the *Commedia*? While it certainly seems to be the case that in his encounter with Geri del Bello Dante wishes to distance himself from human cycles of violence, Dante writes a text in which he plays God and shows us other human beings as judged for eternity. From a metaliterary point of view we could say that such invention is justified insofar as it allows Dante to produce a more vivid, concrete, and therefore more effective text. Theologically, however, this explanation is not enough; for to play God is, even on Dante's own terms, to be like Lucifer, who in his pride presumed to be like his Creator.²⁶ It is difficult to think that Dante might want to judge other human beings simply so as to be able to write a more effective text, given that according to his own theology he would by doing so be condemning himself more than anyone else.

To address this apparent impasse let us turn first of all to the relationship between the two parts of *Inferno* 29. Another link between these is provided in

²⁵ For a detailed discussion of *contrapassi* and the structure of *Inferno* see Christopher Kleinhenz, "Dante's Infernal Punishments Revisited," in this volume, 271–86, esp. Tab. 16.1, 277–78.

²⁶ See *Paradiso* 19.40–69, 20.133–35, 21.91–99. See also *Inferno* 20. Compare Lk. 6:36–38.

lines 55–57, part of the introduction to the tenth *bolgia*: “la ministra / de l’alto Sire infallibil giustizia / punisce i falsador che qui registra” (“the power / of justice — minister of One on High — / will castigate those known on earth as frauds”). At first sight, these words simply seem to confirm that according to Dante only God can ultimately judge, and that in the tenth *bolgia* God chooses to punish the falsifiers. Even in this basic sense, these lines continue engagement with the theme of divine vengeance, the primary theme of the first part of the canto in lines 1–39. This does already provide significant structural unity, even from a theological point of view. But there might be more than first meets the eye. Consider the word “registra.” This is used only one other time in the *Commedia*: in *Purgatorio* 30.63, where it is used to draw our attention to the only explicit mention in the poem of Dante’s own name, which we are told is “registered out of necessity.”²⁷

Dante thus uses the same term to register the punishment of the falsifiers willed for by God and to register his own name in his poem.²⁸ It is possible, therefore, if not likely, that even in *Inferno* 29.57 there is a veiled but very significant reference to the author of the *Commedia*. This might suggest that in pointing to the punished falsifiers Dante is also pointing (perhaps primarily) to himself. In the encounter with Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise the speaking of Dante’s name is the first moment of a sharp call to repentance, without which Dante will not be able to progress towards the Empyrean. Relative to this, *Inferno* 29 can be read as an implicit but significant invitation to reflect on Dante’s own limitations relative to divine judgment. In other words, if in *Inferno* 29 Dante wants to register the punishment of the falsifiers by divine justice, he also perhaps wants to warn us that a falsifier that would merit such punishment is Dante himself, intent on counterfeiting what no human being can reproduce.

In the latter respect it is important to note that rather than focusing primarily on the actions of the falsifiers, the canto seems to focus more on the vanity of the Sieneese. While the accusations leveled against the Sieneese might indeed seem harsh, none of the Sieneese mentioned in the canto are actually inhabitants of Hell. Dante, together with falsifiers Griffolino and Capocchio, condemns Sieneese vanity, which is the source of evident excesses and abuses, including the violent death of Griffolino himself, who was burned at the stake at the whim of Albero from Siena. However, Dante’s judgment in this sense does not coincide with God’s and remains a human judgment, not presuming to be divine. There is, indeed, no circle of vanity in Dante’s Hell.

27 This can be related to the significance which Cook and Herzman (*Dante from Two Perspectives*, 13–14) find in Dante’s not giving his name to Sapia, but instead identifying himself as a proud human being.

28 In both instances “registra” rhymes with the same words: “ministra” and “sinistra.”

Moreover, Capocchio's words—"ma perché sappi chi s'è ti seconda / contra i Sanesi" ("To see, however, who (like you) speaks here / so anti-Sienese," 133–34)—seem all but explicitly to say that Dante's judgment towards Siena is, from a "divine" perspective, a falsification. And the vanity of which Griffolino accuses Albergo in lines 112–17 is arguably similar to that of the poet who presumes to condemn to eternal suffering other human beings, taking himself and his work exceedingly seriously, believing himself able to fly closer to divinity than one's wings actually allow.²⁹ Dante accuses the Sienese of vanity and in doing so implicitly accuses himself of the same.

The light-hearted tone that Benigni invites us to recognize in *Inferno* 29.121–23 can thus be taken as an indication of a twofold awareness on Dante's part of his inability to have his judgment coincide with God's. On the one hand, he seems to be accusing himself as he accuses the Sienese. On the other hand, his trenchant but light-hearted banter at lines 121–23 also suggests a constructively ironic acknowledgement of his limitations, as if to prefigure the explicit confession of these in the encounter with Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise. Moreover, such theological irony is arguably already present in Virgil's invitation to Dante in line 101 to speak with the falsifiers: "Di a lor ciò che tu vuoi" ("Just tell him what it is you want"). The words echo the way in which earlier in the *Inferno* Virgil refers to the divine will that makes Dante's journey in the realms of the afterlife possible.³⁰ As such, they seem to highlight all the more the falsity of Dante's journey. No matter how much Dante might want to ascribe divine authority to himself, his words cannot but be an ironic counterpart to God's word. Whatever Dante might wish to say, it will be only truthful if he does not presume to act as a substitute for divinity.

In the latter respect a further point made by Benigni is worth highlighting. In introducing his *lectura* he reminds his audience that the cantos dedicated to the last of the Malebolge can, as a continuation of Dante's extended reflection on fraud, be seen as focused on the abuse of free will, the greatest gift received by human beings from God, which constitutes them as in the image of God, that dimension of being human that, as Benigni puts it, is itself "deitade" (divineness). It is paradoxically in recognizing their limits that human beings can most profoundly reveal their inherent divinity,³¹ that is, their creatureliness, as an image of a love that infinitely *is* and infinitely *gives itself*, without seeking anything in return.³² In offering himself and us a surprising smile, in playfully accusing the Sienese of a failing that in fact is not

²⁹ See also *Inferno* 17.109–11.

³⁰ See *Inferno* 3.95–96, 5.23–24.

³¹ See also *Paradiso* 26.115–17.

³² For the metaphysics underlying Dante's thought in this respect, see Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

part of the sins punished in the *Inferno*, Dante not only offers us a moment of light-heartedness that can help us bear the rest of the journey towards the bottom of Hell, but also reminds us that no human attempt to imagine Hell can claim ultimate authority. If we take ourselves too seriously in this respect, we risk trapping ourselves into a Hell of our own making.³³ In this sense *Inferno* 29.121–23 is probably more significant, theologically, than *Inferno* 28.139–42, which is usually taken as the primary point of reference for understanding the “logic” of the *Inferno*.

Differently put, Dante’s references to the vanity of the Siennese in *Inferno* 29 enrich the theology of the *Inferno* by presenting us with a very significant interpretive choice. We are asked to consider whether, ultimately, Dante’s Hell ought to be read according to the principle of *contrapasso* and Dante’s attempt to construct a comprehensible order for Hell, or according to the light-hearted irony of *Inferno* 29.121–23, which deconstructs such an attempt. The latter might be a disorienting reading for us to embark upon, both because it destabilizes a very familiar image we might have of Dante, and also because it requires us to recognize ourselves as potentially complicit in generating a Hell of our own making every time we judge others without due humility. As Dante shows with the Siennese in the *Purgatorio*, we can bring ourselves to recognize divinity even in those we think deserve being berated.

This interpretive choice is in fact similar to that bitterly imagined by Master Adam in *Inferno* 30.76–78, which is linked to the last reference to Siena in this section of the poem. In these lines Adam (whose name appearing in Hell suggests a counterfeiting of original humanity) considers hypothetically whether he would prefer seeing in Hell those he believes deserve it or being able somehow to alleviate his own infernal suffering. Adam, who suffers from hydropsy, says he would choose the first of the two options, specifying that he would not exchange seeing in Hell those he would consign to it even for all the water of Fonte Branda. This reference to the famous Siennese fount (which might be related to the complex Siennese obsession with water referred to by Sapia at the end of *Purgatorio* 13) would at first appear not to be of great importance and is not generally commented upon as being theologically relevant. And yet, in the light of the perspectives on the significance of Siena in the *Commedia* opened up by Cook and Herzman, and in relation to the reading of *Inferno* 29 proposed above, *Inferno* 30.76–78 can be considered as one of the most important theological details of the *cantica*. Consistently with the interpretation of other references to Siena considered above, it is plausible to suggest that, faced with the same choice hypothetically imagined by Adam, Dante

33 Compare *Inferno* 33.54.

would choose Fonte Branda.³⁴ This reference to Siena stands for the wish to offer relief from infernal suffering, ironically deconstructing his own attempt at imagining infernal suffering as rigorously as possible.

In this sense *Inferno* 30.76–78 resonates with and, in proleptically looking forward to the references to Siena in the *Purgatorio* as interpreted by Cook and Herzman, draws out the implications of *Inferno* 28.54, in which Dante's narrative had already suggested that Dante's journey through Hell might have the ability of relieving infernal suffering. Dante's journey as a poet through Hell seems to aim not simply to describe infernal punishment, but to imagine infernal suffering in ways that might help us recognize it, in ourselves and others, and thus evade it, by deconstructing the rigid mentality that can make us incapable of preferring relief from vengeful infernal suffering to seeing others suffering infernally.

It might seem counterintuitive, if not outright ludicrous, to suggest that Dante could have written the *Inferno*, and imagined infernal suffering in such great detail, so as to demonstrate the vanity ultimately inherent in any such attempt. Yet Dante's references to Siena suggest precisely this: that in order to journey towards God, human beings need to recognize both their pride and their vanity and transcend both in and through a humility that can deconstruct our presumption to make the afterlife in our own image and that can thereby also free us from the risk of trapping ourselves in a divisive and destructive infernal mentality that renders us unable to appreciate salvation as mystery. Such humility and such freedom coincide with the openness of recognizing divinity in all, including those on the other side of polarizing divisions to which we can otherwise be tempted to give ultimate importance. In *Inferno* 29 Dante seems to indulge in polarizing banter against the Sienese, yet on closer inspection, if read in light of Cook and Herzman's work on the significance of Siena in the *Purgatorio*, such banter can be seen to be of great theological significance.³⁵ Simultaneously an expression of factionalism and an indication of what might allow us to transcend it, this banter reveals to us a Dante we are not accustomed to acknowledging, especially in the *Inferno*: a Dante intent as much if not more on healing infernal suffering as on detailing it.

In the latter respect it is important to note a difference between the metaphors respectively governing description of the suffering of the ninth and of the tenth of the Malebolge. In the ninth the governing image is that of the battlefield (*Inferno* 28.1–21), whereas in the tenth it is that of the hospital (*Inferno* 29.40–51).

³⁴ Compare Lk. 16:19–31.

³⁵ As indicated by the end of *Inferno* 30, this attitude too carries within it the inherent risk for infernal excesses, such as those that exceedingly attract Dante, for which he is told off by Virgil (*Inferno* 30.100–148).

To be sure, the hospitals Dante asks his readers to call to mind appear to be primarily intended to convey pain and suffering, vividly captured in the image of putrefaction. At the same time, they also convey notions of care and the desire to heal. We could, indeed, say that inherent in the metaphor of the hospital as used in *Inferno* 29 is the twofold character of Dante's poetry outlined above: on the one hand, it is poetic expression of Dante's attempt to describe in effective detail the pain and suffering of Hell; on the other hand, it suggests that this pain and this suffering are things Dante wishes to tend to and, ideally, heal.

We are very far still from the *Purgatorio* and from Dante's explicit confession of pride. Yet, in the *Inferno* too, Dante's poetry seems at least in part to tend towards the radical humility that according to Cook and Herzman makes the *Commedia* comparable to Provenzan Salvani's public act of self-giving for the good of others in the Campo. The references to Siena in *Inferno* 29 and 30 both confirm and strengthen the interpretation of Siena's significance in the *Commedia* suggested by Cook and Herzman. Dante's engagement with Siena in the *Commedia* is indeed of the utmost theological significance. It is one of the primary ways in which Dante engages in the hard but fruitful practice of humility, in the attempt to move from closed-minded divisiveness to genuine openness to the mystery of salvation, thereby also offering his work for us as aid in our own journey towards divinity.³⁶ Through his engagement with Siena in the *Commedia* Dante seems to signal to us that his portrayal of the afterlife, even in all its vivid detail of moral failing and of physical and mental suffering, is ultimately intended to heal that which it speaks of and which keeps us from each other and from God. The reading of the significance of Siena in the *Commedia* proposed by Cook and Herzman thus offers compelling insight both into Dante's presentation of himself and into the salvific effect that he hopes such presentation might have for us, drawing us more deeply into the mystery of salvation: that is, drawing us more deeply into awareness that eternal judgment pertains to God alone, and that such judgment ultimately coincides with divine, self-giving love, in which we are all called to participate by dedicating ourselves humbly to the good of others.

³⁶ Weston L. Kennison and Glenn L. McClure make a similar argument in their reading of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes in Sala della Pace in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, "Good Government in the Fourth Dimension: Keeping Time with Lorenzetti's Dancers," in this volume, 305–20, esp. detail of *Divisio*, Fig. 18.2, 310.