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According to early commentators, he was killed in 1299 by a member of the Guelf Bostoli of Arezzo, but other sources report that he died in 1291 while fighting to regain control of his family lands in the Casentino.

Antonio Illiano

**Federigo Tignose**

A relatively obscure figure who probably lived in the first part of the thirteenth century. A member of the Tignosi of Rimini, although said to have lived in Bertiinoro, he was renowned for his wealth and generosity, as Guido del D u ca claims in his praise of him and of other worthy figures on the second terrace of Purgatory (Purg. 14.106).

Paul Celitti

**Feltre**

City in northeastern Italy whose modern-day name is Feltre, referred to prophetically by Cunizza da Romano in Par. 9.52-53. In Inf. 1.105, the phrase, *sua nazione sarà in Feltro e Feltrino* ("His birth will be between felt and felt"), is used to refer prophetically to the birth of the Veltrino, or "greyhound," a figure Dante believes will deliver Italy from corruption and evil. Many different interpretations of the line—depending, in a large part, upon the broader problem of the identification of the Veltrino—have been proposed. For some, the line, read as *in Feltro e Feltrino* ("between Feltro and Feltro"), is interpreted as specifying the area in which the Veltrino will be born. Most take the line as referring to the cities of Feltre and Montefeltro (in which case the Veltrino would be identified with Cangrande or with Benedict XII); although, if the Veltrino is identified with Uguncione della Faggiaiola, San Leo Feltrio and Macerata Feltria may be intended. For others, the fabric, felt, is indicated, suggesting that the Veltrino will be of humble origins, or that he will be a friar. Other interpretations include: a link with the Tartars, whose leaders were buried wrapped in felt; an indication that the Veltrino will be born under a favorable constellation; a reference to the felt-lined urn used in the communions, for the voting-in of magistrates; or an allusion to the traditional felt caps of Castor and Pollux, the twins of the sign of Gemini. In this case the Veltrino would be identified with Dante himself, who was born under this sign, as he recalls in Par. 22.114.

Bibliography


Claire Honess

**Ferdinando IV di Castiglia**

Ferdinando, king of Castile and Leon (1295-1312). One of the negligent and irresponsible rulers referred to by the Eagle in the Heaven of Jupiter, blamed for his luxury and effeminacy (Par. 19.125). He is in office at the time that the poet's action is conceived to take place (1300).

R. A. Malagi

**Fiesso**

Etruscan city, situated on a hill close to Florence. More important, culturally and commercially, than its neighbor until the tenth century, its fortunes fell as those of Florence rose, culminating in the city's destruction at the hands of the Florentines in 1125.

Dante is concerned, above all, with the legendary history of the city, which attributed the foundation of Fiesole to Atlas, whose son Daranus had founded Troy and thus set in motion the series of events which brought Aeneas to Italy to found the Roman Empire. According to these legends Catinelle had held out against the Romans in Fiesole after his conspiracy against Cicero, and traditionally, it was to avenge this act that Julius Caesar had ordered the destruction of Fiesole, and the construction of a new city—Florence, the *bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma* ("most beautiful and famous daughter of Rome," Com. 1.3.4)—which was peopled by a mixture of Fiesolans and Romans.

It is to these legends that Ciacccigia alludes in Par. 15.125-126 in his depiction of the good Florentine mother of his day, *signorinha de sua famiglia / di Tretoni, di Fiesole e di Roma* ("told with her household tales of the Tretoni, of Fiesole, and of Rome"). Here the passing on of civic history is presented as an important element of good citizenship.

In Par. 16.121-122 Ciacccigia refers to immigration to Florence from Fiesole—*Gli eroi / di Caposcano / e di Fiesole / già di Fiesole* ("Already Caposcano had come down from Fiesole")—while in the encounter with Brunetto Latini, the factional conflicts in Florence are seen as deriving from the Fiesolan element within the city, and from the fact that Florence's Roman inheritance no longer serves as a model for its citizens. The Florentines are thus defined as quello ingusto popolo malgna / che discese in Firenze ab antico ("that ungrateful, malicious people who came down from Fiesole of old," Inf. 15.61-62), and as le heste fiesolane ("the Fiesolan beasts," Inf. 15.73), while Dante is la semente sante / di quei Romani che vi rimase quando / fu fatto il nido di malizia tanto ("the holy seed of the Romans who remained there when that nest of so much malice was built," Inf. 15.76-78).

The Fiesolan support for Cattelan is referred to in Par. 19.53-54, when Justinian remarks that the imperial eagle a quel collo / sott' uno cervo / ne necessari vedi ornare ("to that hill under which you were born [...] seemed bitter"); and in Epist. 6.24 the miseria Fiesulanorum propogo ("most wretched offshoot of Fiesole"), which had opposed Rome at the time of Catteline, is seen as rebelling once more against the empire, this time in its resistance to Henry VII.

Claire Honess

**Figurallsm**

In his groundbreaking essay "Figurum" (1939), Erich Auerbach adopted the term "figurum" in order to clearly distinguish Dante's realistic mode of representation in the *Commedia* from that of other modes of allegory and symbolism that were popular during the Middle Ages. Although like other modes it is used to signify one thing by another, figurallsm always has to do with concrete, historical realities, not with abstractions, personifications, or mere analogical correspondences to an invisible, purely spiritual (Neoplatonic) universe. Modeled on the Bible, the characters and events represented by the method of figurallsm are recorded.

In figurall representation in the Bible, historical realities are understood to be intrinsically related to each other by special correspondences. Specifically, persons and events of the Old Testament are taken to signify persons and events in the New Testament. Both members of the figurall relation are equally real and historical, but the New Testament personality or event is considered to be the "fulfillment" of the corresponding "figure" in the Old Testament.

To the extent that the figurall relation one thing is signified by another, it can be called "allelouyrical" in a broad sense. This usage is in fact current in the literature of and on "biblical allegory." (see De Lubac). Nevertheless, the figurall relations of prefiguration and fulfillment obtaining between what are reputedly real historical facts and individuals cannot be produced by allegory as a merely rhetorical technique. An allegory may refer to what is no more than a construction of figurative language, or it may be an elaborate metaphor for something more abstract or merely mythical or fictitious. In figurall relations, on the other hand, it is not language but the realities themselves that signify, and what they signify is the reality in which they will ultimately be fulfilled and have their final meaning revealed.

This makes the figurall essentially realational reality. When presented as figures, personages or events are in specific relations and have determinate significances. For instance, Moses receiving the Law on Mount Sinai stands as a figure of Christ promulgating his new commandment in the Sermon on the Mount. Both individuals are taken as fully historical, but the meaning of each is understood as determined by the other. The figure of Moses handing down the Law to the Israelites provides the way for understanding the significance of Jesus' new teaching and his law of love. At the same time, the full significance of Moses is disclosed only retrospectively, when the Christian gospel appears as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law. In a sense special to figurallism, Moses represents Christ in a preliminary, veiled and incomplete form, while Christ's full historical reality and significance are achieved through his fulfilling the role of a new Moses.

In general, the figural of the Old Testament is point to or signify the central figure of the New Testament—namely, Christ—and other person...
and things (like Rahab as a figure for the Church) related to him. This system of biblical figurality is known alternatively as “typology,” and the Old Testament figure is termed the “type,” while its fulfillment in the New Testament goes by the name of “antitype.” Abraham’s setting about to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, who carries for his father the wood up the mountain of Moriah (recounted in Gen. 12), is a type for the sacrifice by God the Father of his only-begotten Son, who bears his wooden cross up Mount Calvary. Even Adam, in his created perfection, is a type or figure of Christ, the New Adam (1 Cor. 15:47), who has returned to pay the outstanding debt of the old one.

In the strict sense, then, figurality concerns the relation of the Old Testament to the New. Its sources are in the Gospel of Matthew and St. Paul’s interpretations of Old Testament events as being “types or examples for us.” In what became a touchstone text for the Middle Ages and specifically for Dante, Paul interpreted the Exodus figure as a type for the pilgrimage of the Church, and the saving of the Hebrews in the Red Sea served as a figure of baptism (1 Cor. 10:1–11). Paul similarly interpreted the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, as figures for the synagogues of Christianity: Ishmael born to Abraham as a slave, Hagar, and the other to his wife, Sarah, prefigure, respectively, the old covenant of bondage to the Law and the new covenant of freedom offered to the children of God, heirs to the kingdom of Heaven (Gal. 4:21–31). Consistently, Paul saw in Jewish rites and religion “a shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:17)—that is, a figure of Christ and the Christian liberty that frees from the Law through grace. “The old law is a figure of the new law” (Lex vetus figura est nova legi. Heb. 7:19).

The early Church fathers followed Paul’s lead in interpreting the Old Testament figurally, but at the same time they mixed figural interpretation with forms of interpretation based on various sorts of allegory. Origen, in particular, while not unimportant to the development of the figurative interpretation of the historical realities of Scripture, tended to favor a more abstractly spiritual- or moral-allegorical method of exegesis in which the supposedly historical contents of Scripture were interpreted as signifying inner states of the soul or philosophical doctrines. In St. Augustine, however, these divergent exegetical tendencies are harmonized by according a clear priority to historical-figural—that is, real-prophetic—interpretation. In addition to relying on the Pauline source texts to validate figurative interpretations, Augustine finds the method to be authorized by John 5:46, in which Christ says, “If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me” (see City of God 20.28). Accordingly, the Penateuch, of which Moses was considered to be the author, and by extension the whole of the Old Testament, was held to be “about Christ”; that is, everything in it was held to signify him, in his various relations, figurally.

From such early interpretive practices emerged the fourfold method of scriptural exegesis that became canonical in the Middle Ages and which Dante outlines in Conv. 2.1, exactly applying it to the interpretation of his poem in Epist. 13.20–25 (assuming he wrote it). The method makes room for a moral-allegorical level of meaning alongside the literal-historical and strictly figurual or typological meaning, and it includes as well as an anagogical meaning by which historical prefigures what is beyond history—the kingdom to come. The fourfold method of exegesis thus integrates figurative with allegorical interpretation broadly considered, and this integration is especially suited to and evident in Dante’s adaptation of these exegetical methods to his own purposes.

There is, however, a serious obstacle to taking Dante’s poem as figurual in the sense that is defined by the Bible and its exegesis. For Dante emphasizes that what he sees is damnation or salvation realized, not just prefigured. It is the state of souls in eternity (status animerum post mortem, Epist. 13.24) and not just a figure for this. Dante’s souls do not signify anything beyond themselves, and nothing is going to come after to fulfill them. However, a qualification is necessary here, for the souls will be reunited with their bodies after the Last Judgment, and their state will then be perfected (Inf. 6:103–111; Purg. 1.73–75; and Par. 14.37–66). Nevertheless, this “perfecting” still does not involve a relation between two historical entities, but only the more intense realization of an existence already accorded by history. The main point about the souls Dante sees in the afterlife is that they already have their fulfillment in themselves, and this is what so radically distinguishes them from all this-worldly, historical beings.

In order to understand the Commedia as basically figural, we need to consider the earthly existences of the individuals that Dante encounters in the afterworld. It is this historical life that is the figure of what Dante sees fulfilled in the afterlife. The historical life is not directly represented by Dante in his encounter with the souls in the afterlife but is generally related by the characters themselves—or, at any rate, it "shows through" as the kind of life—its decisive act or crucial moment—that would inevitably lead to such a state in eternity as Dante does see and represent. On this basis, it is to be a figural connection, it must generally be established backward to the earthly existence that, while not necessarily represented in the poem, in fact constitutes the basis for Dante’s representations of eternity. In other words, Dante indirectly represents human character as it was on earth, and this representation is the figure of what is fulfilled in the afterlife of Dante’s poem.

This relation to historical reality is evident in the example on which Auerbach’s exposition turns—namely, the historical Cato as figure of what he is to become in the afterlife. The pagan Cato, known to Dante from tradition for his unyielding integrity, is recognizable in the venerable, albeit rigid and unyielding, solitary old man (vego solo) astonishingly revealed on the shore of Purgatory as its guardian. The historical Cato of Utica valued political freedom above his own life—which he himself took in order to avoid outliving the free Roman republic—making him an apt prefigurement of the watchman over Christian freedom that he becomes in the realm of the afterlife. Moreover, as a guardian of the Law, Cato shows up in the guise of a pagan Moses, as is also hinted at in his transfixed face. This sort of allusion to an Old Testament figure who parallels the figure evolved from ancient pagan history suggests that Dante’s procedure constitutes an extension of figurality from its originally biblical application to the wider field of universal history. Just as Christian interpreters had read the Old Testament, so Dante reads ancient history figurally.

Dante’s representations, then, can be of figures taken from universal history. Yet still, the fulfillment of these figures seems not to be historical and hence not to fit exactly the definition of figurality. For the souls as Dante sees them are in eternity. Here a somewhat more complicated model than one based simply on the relation between the Old and the New Testaments, which defines typology or figurality in the strictest sense, becomes necessary.

The system of figural correspondences in the Bible itself was indeed not limited solely to relations between the Old Testament and the New, but could be extended further from the New Testament to subsequent history in such a way that events of Christ’s life were taken to signify what was to happen in the age of the Church. Jesus’ miracles—for example, the feeding of the five thousand—came to be read as figures of the sacraments, and his parables of the kingdom of Heaven were taken as prophecies of the establishment of the Church on Earth. Martin and Mary, the two leaves of the Tree of Jesse, were widely held to be figures, respectively, of the active and contemplative lives and callings of Christians Peter’s healing of a paralyzed man by the gate of the temple, as recounted in Acts 3, was read as a figure of baptism.

But a further step is nevertheless necessary to make Dante’s new use of figurality represent the afterlife comprehensible in terms of its biblical precedent. Indeed, biblical figurality, too, turns out to have a further, ultrahistorical dimension, to the extent that the historical events of the New Testament themselves figure something to be realized only at the end of time, in the eschaton Christ incarnate and his actions on Earth prefiguring what will be consummated at his Second Coming. This is the "anagogical" sense in which Scripture represents what it fact exceed history in fulfilling it.

This reference to what may be beyond history does not weaken the historical specificity—the reality both of figure and fulfillment—of figurality, but rather raises it to another level. For the consummation of history in eternity reveals that final individual destiny: making it even more real the historical reality itself. Dante’s representations of the eternal states of souls thus comprehends the historical reality while projecting it into the supranatural eschatological existence where history is perfected and fulfilled.

Dante’s reinterpreted eschatology, his representation of the eternal states of souls in the shape of the human individuals, makes the line between figure and fulfillment, but in this it is actual consonant with the Christian theology of the Chri event. For the Resurrection of Christ is already if fulfillment of history, the eschaton; it is paradoxically the end of history within history, though full implications are still to be worked out by its further development and consummation for all that is definitively achieved already in Christ.” This extent, the relation of figure and fulfilling
The figure of the Roman, in which the historical reality is defined as the object of divine revelation, is central to this consideration. As a result of this, figures generally develop in a process of construction that is subject to historical reality, but may also be constructed independently of it. The figure of the Roman is used in the language of medieval Christianity to express the relationship between figures and historical reality. This relationship is illustrated by the figure of the Roman, as well as by the figure of the queen of heaven. As a result, the figure of the Roman is used to express the relationship between figures and historical reality in a process of construction that is subject to historical reality, but may also be constructed independently of it. The figure of the Roman is used in the language of medieval Christianity to express the relationship between figures and historical reality. This relationship is illustrated by the figure of the Roman, as well as by the figure of the queen of heaven. As a result, the figure of the Roman is used to express the relationship between figures and historical reality in a process of construction that is subject to historical reality, but may also be constructed independently of it. The figure of the Roman is used in the language of medieval Christianity to express the relationship between figures and historical reality. This relationship is illustrated by the figure of the Roman, as well as by the figure of the queen of heaven. As a result, the figure of the Roman is used to express the relationship between figures and historical reality in a process of construction that is subject to historical reality, but may also be constructed independently of it. The figure of the Roman is used in the language of medieval Christianity to express the relationship between figures and historical reality. This relationship is illustrated by the figure of the Roman, as well as by the figure of the queen of heaven. As a result, the figure of the Roman is used to express the relationship between figures and historical reality in a process of construction that is subject to historical reality, but may also be constructed independently of it.
Israel

"Israel" is the name given in Gen. 32:27-28 to Jacob, son of Isaac; son of Abraham, in view of his becoming father of the progenitors of the twelve tribes of the people known collectively by this name. Daniel uses the name "Israel" for Jacob in Is. 45.9, and for the whole Jewish people (quello popolo d'Israel) in Rom. 2.15; DVE 1.7.8, Epist. 7.19 and 29 and 13.21; and Mos. 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 2.7.5, and 8. Dante's references typically reflect the view of the Jews as blind to salvation, even though God had spoken to them through their prophets (Com. 2.5.1-2). In this respect Dante is in line with traditions dominant in the Middle Ages that represented Israel as stubbornly unbeliefing in Christ the Messiah. And yet, Israel has symbolic value in the Bible as the promised land—not only the land promised the Jews, but the true and final spiritual home of all human beings. Accordingly, in the Middle Ages Israel was also the symbolic place of redemption, the holy land, as well as the figure of the chosen souls destined for eternal life. This connotation of the name "Israel" as the people and place of promise is conveyed by Dante especially in a phrase (In excito Israel de Aegypo) he quotes from the Psalms on three different occasions, in Purg. 2.46, Conv. 2.1.6, and Epist. 13.21. In Purg. 2.46, Dante quotes In excito Israel de Aegypo, the first verse or "incipit" of Psalm 113 in the Vulgate (= 114 + 115 in the Hebrew and Protestant Bibles), as a way of keying the whole of the second cantica in a special way to the Exodus paradigm. Meaning "When Israel went out from Egypt," the verse is sung by the souls as they arrive at the shore of the mountain of Purgatory, ferried by an angel over the sea covering the Southern Hemisphere. Dante quotes only the opening verse but explains that all the souls "were singing all together with one voice, with as much of that psalm as is written thereafter" (cantavant tuti insieme ad una voce / con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scriptum). The Latinism—scripto instead of the Italian scritto—calls attention to the fact that this writing is "scriptural." The singing in union may allude to choral chanting of the psalm in the liturgy. Dante's explanation may also be understood as spelling out a convention whereby psalms were cited by their incipits only, even when the psalm in its entirety was meant—as seems to be the case, for example, in the gospels with Jesus' citation from the Cross of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Like Psalm 22, Psalm 113 as a whole celebrates the passage from death to life by grace of the saving act of God, as becomes more explicit in its concluding verses: "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence, but we who live bless the Lord." The psalm's theme literally is the Exodus, the successful flight of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, their passing through the Red Sea (which the psalm conflates with their crossing over the Jordan into the promised land, as recounted in Joshua 3) by the miraculous intervention of God—the founding event of early Israelite, Mosaic religio. The souls' leaving behind the perils of the world and reaching Purgatory, "Israel"—that is, the promised land of Christian salvation—is thereby understood to be a fulfillment of what had been prefigured by the Exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt. In accordance, moreover, with the traditional meaning of the Exodus as prefiguring the Christian's escape from death and passage to resurrection, glorified life, Dante's emergence from Hell and a condition of sin to a state of grace is presented in this light allegorically as an Exodus. As such, the verse becomes a letimmoir for Dante's redemptive, paschal poem in its entirety, brought to focus in the passage to Purgatory set at dawn on Easter morning, 1300. Dante refers to his journey as an Exodus again in a number of places, significantly in Par. 25.55-56.

Dante takes the Exodus, the most canonical of stories of return from exile, as the paradigm also for his method of interpreting scripture and, by extension, of building spiritual meaning into his own poem. In so employing the psalm, citing its incipit, as a key illustration in detailed expositions of scriptural allusion, the so-called allegory of the theologians, in Conv. 2.1.6-7 and the Letter to Cangrande (Epist. 13.20-25). The Exodus event, in fact, serves ideally to illustrate the four different levels of meaning ascribed to texts by the fourfold method of scriptural exegesis that had become canonical in the Middle Ages and that Dante himself adopted. On the first level, the literal, this text designates a historical event: Moses' leading the Israelites out of Egypt, the whole history of which is told in the book of Exodus. Next, the typological level of significance relates this event to Old Testament history to the New Testament, and specifically to its central event, Christ's redemption of humanity. This event, furthermore, has an inner, moral dimension: the freeing of the individual soul from sin, which constitutes the third level of significance of the Exodus event, its so-called tropological or moral sense. Finally, the Exodus signifies an exit of Christian souls from the corruptible world into eternal glory, and this is its analogical sense.

The meaning of the Exodus was firmly established in the exegetical tradition dedicated to this psalm verse, and more broadly in commentary on the book of Exodus, as a prefiguration of the events of Easter—Christ's resurrection from death, and beyond that, the general resurrection. St. Augustine in his sermons on this psalm says, "When we hear in the psalm, In excito Israel de Aegypo, [etc.], let us not think of past things narrated to us but rather of things future being taught: for those miracles in that place were and indeed are, but not without bearing signification of future things (sed non sine futurum significacione geraherantur, Enarrations in Psalms 113.1). According to Peter Lombard, "These miracles are figures of the spiritual mysteries of Christ and the Church, as exposition of the psalm makes clear" (In psalmis 113). Hugh of St-Cher defines the psalm as a sign of victory (sigillum victoriae).

Beyond its role in allegorical exegesis of the Bible, the verse has a life in the church liturgy. As dictated by the Roman Breviary, the psalm is sung regularly—that is, as part of the Ordinary, at Vespers on Sunday. Despite considerable variation, especially of psalms for the Proper (those that change day by day according to the seasons and feasts), it has a prominent role in the Easter liturgy. Furthermore, in the Middle Ages it was sung in the Office of the Dead, accompanying the transport of the deceased to their final resting place, symbolized thereby as an Exodus to the promised land of the afterlife. Certainly its familiarity to Dante in these contexts, as well as its already achieved exemplary status in exegetical tradition, impressed itself on his mind and contributed to its becoming a keystone for his reflection.

Bibliography


The concept of the present moment is central to the teachings of mindfulness. It is in the present moment that we can truly experience the world around us and become fully awake.

Mindfulness is the practice of being present and fully engaged in the moment. It involves a non-judgmental awareness of our thoughts, feelings, and sensations. By cultivating mindfulness, we can learn to observe our own mental and emotional processes without getting caught up in them. This helps us to be more aware of our own mind and emotions, and allows us to respond to situations more effectively.

The practice of mindfulness has been shown to have numerous benefits for mental health. It can help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, and improve overall well-being.

Incorporating mindfulness into our daily lives can be as simple as taking a few moments each day to focus on our breathing and be fully present in the moment. It can also involve more structured practices, such as meditation and yoga.

In conclusion, mindfulness is a powerful tool for improving our mental health and well-being. By cultivating mindfulness, we can become better equipped to handle the challenges of everyday life and live a more fulfilling life.

References:
- Mindful.org.
and won it back from Sansen dominion, under which it had fallen during the attacks against the Byzantine Empire in the ninth century. William died childless and was succeeded by his aunt, la gran Castanza, who married Frederick Barbarossa's son, Henry VI of Swabia, and gave birth to Frederick II, his [the House of Swabia's] third and last power," as Dante puts it (Pur. 3.118-120).

The "last of the Roman emperors" (Cow. 4.3.6) was thus produced by a mixing of the House of Hauteville's Norman blood with that of Holstein-sauken in the Swabian line, which makes William a forebear of the imperial dynasty, so supremely important in Dante's view.

Among William II's achievements still appreciable today is the Cathedral of Monreale near Palermo, chief monument of Norman architecture in Sicily. The sarcophagi of William II and his father are to be found there, in the south transept.

Bibliography

William Franke

William VII of Monforte
William (Guiglielmo), marquis of Monforte, is placed in the lowest position by Dante in the valley of the negligent princes in Ante-Purgatory: Quel che piu basso tra costor s'attirera, / guardando in suso, è Guiglielmo Marchese, / per cui è Alessandria ed a sua guerra / fo planger Monforte e Canavesa. ("The one that lower down sits on the ground among them, looking, is the marquis William, for whom Alexander and its war make Monforte and Canavesa weep," Pur. 7.133-136). William, born in 1254, was the apoge of his power around 1280, when he controlled nine Piedmontese and Lombard cities—including Milan, Turin, and Alessandria—constituting a powerful Glabeline league. When, in 1282, several of these cities seceded and joined the Guelfs, William requisitioned them by force, but when Alessandria, incited by Asti, rose against him, he was captured and imprisoned. He was put on display in his cell until, after seventeen months, on February 6, 1292, he died. His son—from his second marriage, to Beatrice, the daughter of Alfonso X of Castile—sought to avenge his father's humiliation and death by declaring war against Alessandria. Not only did William's son fail to defeat the City of Alessandria, but he furthermore failed to stop its troops from capturing several towns within the territory of Monforte—the cause of the mourning to which Dante alludes. Contemporary accounts stress William's excessive political ambition and his cruelty, while Dante's placement of him in the valley of flowers emphasizes his neglect of duty because of the lure of worldly things—represented in the valley by the nightly appearance of a serpent.

Claudia Rattazzi Papa

Witte, Karl

Karl Wittte (1800–1883) was a jurist who early in his life aroused attention because of his extraordinary learning capacity. At age 10 he enrolled at the University of Leipzig; there he wrote a Latin thesis on the Greek mathematician Nicomedes and obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Giessen at age 14. His attempt to do his Habilitation (an examination required in Germany for university teaching) failed because the university refused to give him access to its library to his young age. The Prussian minister of culture therefore gave him a grant to go on a trip for study and research, and Wittte went to Italy for two years, where he studied law, art history, and Italian literature. In this context he discovered Dante. In 1823 he was appointed professor of law, first at the University of Breslau and later at the University of Halle. He published several books on legal problems and, parallel to these activities, became the most advanced Dante scholar of his time. He edited the first scholarly and annotated edition of the Divine Comedy (Berlin, 1862), which he also translated into German (Berlin, 1865). Wittte then edited Dante's Monarchia (Vienna, 1874) and La Vita Nuova (Leipzig, 1876). His two-volume Dante-Forschungen appeared in 1882 (Halle) and in 1879 (Heidelberg). Wittte collaborated with Philalethes, i.e., King Johann Nepomuk of Saxony, who used this pseudonym for his work on Dante. Under his protection Wittte founded the Deutsche Dante-Gesellschaft (1865) and in the same year the Jahrbuch der Deutschen Dante-Gesellschaft (first issued in 1867). He also edited the fifth edition of Ludwig Canneiieisser's popular translation of the Göttliche Komödie in 1873.

Bibliography

Ernst Behler

Women

While in some ways Dante seems to have a traditional view of the roles of women in his work, in others he is quite unusual. There are echoes of ancient and medieval misogyny, particularly in Inferno, but there are also corrections of such misogyny in Purgatorio and Paradiso and an attempt to establish a place for women in his ideal world. And there is evidence as early as the Vita Nuova that Dante's relations with women went beyond the narcissism of the poet-lover, not only in his worship of Beatrice but also in his acceptance of criticism from women friends and his acknowledgment that that criticism moves him in a new direction. He finds that new direction, finally, in the Commedia, as the instrument of women: the Virgin Mary and her messenger, Beatrice.

Attitudes toward women in the Middle Ages were complicated and varied. Misogynist attacks arguing the inferiority of women and blaming them for the destruction of men from Eve and Delilah to contemporary seducers and shrews—drawing authority from Paul, Tertullian, Jerome, and a host of others down to Jean de Meun—are certainly a part of medieval culture, but there is another side. Women played important roles in medieval life, not only in the religious sphere as powerful abbesses, mystics, and reformers but also in the secular, as rulers, regents, and consorts. Women were among the instigators of texts—religious and historical as well as literary—by asking questions, making requests, or giving commissions; and many of them exerted an influence as friends and/or patrons of churchmen and intellectuals. There are medieval texts supporting women's political roles, or asserting the superior devotion of women to Christ, as well as courtly lyrics in which women may be silent objects of worship or anger or may be articulate debaters unmasking male postures. And there is literature by women, religious and secular, asserting their needs and expressing their views.

It is impossible to know much of this material, historical or literary. Dante knew or was aware of—perhaps very little. What one can say is that his work reflects most of the medieval attitudes toward women, negative and positive, and that he finally comes out on the positive side. There were many women in Dante's literary life, and presumably in his real life as well. The love lyrics in the Rime are addressed to a variety of named (Fiorella, Violenta, Liseta) and unnamed ladies, some of whom may be Beatrice or perhaps the lady at the window in the last part of the Vita Nuova. There is also a pargaletta and a "stona lady," cold and cruel, who inspired Dante's so-called rime petrose, or "stony poems." The Vita Nuova makes a revisionist attempt to explain new some of the early ones as shields Dante used to hide his love for Beatrice. In one poem no longer extant about sixty ladies of Florence, Beatrice's name was ninth; Dante interprets that as significant for her symbolic meaning, but the fact remains that he once put eight other names before hers. Though the Vita Nuova was written apparently to explain the significance Dante has come to see in Beatrice—her role as a Christ figure in his life—it is impossible for him to conceal altogether the feelings he had for a number of other women. He was apparently so embarrassed by the woman he turned it to for comfort after Beatrice's death—the gentile donna al Mondo, who showed compassion for his suffering—that he constructed an elaborate allegory in the Convivio to explain her as Lady Philosophy.

But women were not only objects of Dante's love; many were also friends, whom he addressed in the Rime, talking to them about his love, asking their comfort, or warning them against bad men. In the narrative of the Vita Nuova, women friends are even more important. They are sensitive but not always indulgent of his moods—comforting him when he is ill or grieving, making fun of him when he plays the swooning lover—and by their critical perceptions, they turn his poetry in a new direction. One friend (amicca persona) takes him to a gathering of lovely women (a wedding reception) for his pleasure, but Beatrice's presence makes him tremble, and they laugh at him; when, on the other hand, he grieves with them for Beatrice over the death of her father, they notice the