

Dante's Reception by 14th- and 15th-century Illustrators of the *Commedia*¹

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In *Purgatorio* XI, 79-84, Dante describes his meeting with the illuminator Oderisi da Gubbio on the purgatorial mountain terrace where the sin of pride is punished:

'Oh!', diss' io lui, 'non se' tu Oderisi,
l'onor d'Agobbio e l'onor di quell' arte
ch'alluminar chiamata è in Parisi?'
'Frate,' diss' elli, 'più ridon le carte
che pennelleggia Franco Bolognese;
l'onore è tutto or suo, e mio in parte.'

Many manuscripts of the *Commedia* provide examples of this 'art' of 'smiling pages'; in fact, there are well over five hundred codices of the poem from the 14th and 15th centuries which contain some form of illumination. In the great majority of these – some 370 manuscripts – the illustration consists merely of a few schematic drawings, coloured initials here and there, or decorative ornament. In others, however, there has been some attempt to depict scenes from the poem itself: roughly 130 manuscripts contain miniatures at the beginning of each *cantica* with some figurative content. A further 60 contain all or part of a narrative cycle with scenes depicting events from Dante's text.² Many of these manuscripts contain illuminated pages of which their creators may have been justifiably proud.

The earliest illustrated *Commedia* with a precise date was produced in Florence in 1337 (Milan, Biblioteca dell'Archivio Storico Civico e Trivulziana, MS 1080).³ However, there are a few illuminated copies of the poem which may have been completed even earlier during the 1330s, although it is difficult to establish this accurately, as there are no written dates to be found in the manuscripts themselves.⁴ These illustrated copies from the early Trecento represent the beginning of a

tradition of *Commedia* illumination, one which culminated in Botticelli's designs for the poem, produced during the 1480s.

The majority of manuscripts still in existence were commissioned by families from the wealthy, educated classes of the period, and illustrated in workshops by professional craftsmen. In these workshops, patterns of *Commedia* iconography were quickly devised and established, and they changed surprisingly little in the 150-year period during which manuscripts of the poem were produced. The wealthy laity who commissioned these manuscripts was responsible to some extent for this consistency in the illustrations from manuscript to manuscript. A collector would expect to see certain things in the manuscript that had been made for him, and if a neighbour also had a copy of the poem, he would want his to measure up to that of his acquaintance.⁵

A second factor in the establishment of a pattern of *Commedia* illustration was the workshop method of production. Creative originality was not expected from medieval artists in the way that it is from their modern counterparts, and when looking at the illuminations

It is important to break away from the modern notion that an artist should strive for originality and that a creator has a kind of monopoly on his own designs. A medieval artist was expected to work according to a specific formula, and this must often have meant using designs and compositions with a familiar precedent.⁶

Tradition was important in the art of the Middle Ages, and it was hard to break away from what was considered to be an accepted image.⁷ This meant that once a few illustrators had completed successful sets of illuminations for the poem, other artists started to follow one – or a combination – of these 'patterns' and to copy various motifs and compositions.⁸ There were also practical reasons for this, as the use of existing visual models, sometimes collected and reproduced in the form of a pattern book, could speed up the process of designing the initial drawings.⁹

Manuscript illuminators usually worked together as a team, and the tasks were often divided into stages between illustrators. The designs were sketched using pencil or plummet in the spaces assigned to them that had been left by the scribe after he had finished the text. These drawings were then picked out in pen and ink, and if gold was to be

added it was done at this stage and then burnished. The colours were then applied with a brush with the basic pigments introduced first and then gradually worked up to culminate in the fine details, such as faces and hands, which would have been added last of all.¹⁰ Different artists would carry out different stages of this process; often the colourist was not the same person as the artist executing the designs, or the more experienced illustrators would be responsible for the small details such as faces. There was a hierarchy of activity where a leading illustrator might execute the main illustrations – the title page, the first miniature of the manuscript – and the rest would be the work of a less gifted artist.

It was common practice to give different sections ('gatherings') of the same manuscript to different scribes to speed up production, and it is also apparent that a different artist would often contribute to each separate gathering. This is demonstrated in a Florentine manuscript dating from c.1335-50, currently at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence (MS Palatini 313).¹¹ On fol. 30v, for example, in the illumination for *Inferno* XIII, the work of a first illustrator is seen, but a second artist – or artists – has executed the illustration for *Inferno* XXXII, seen on fol. 74v [figs 1 & 2]. The poets are differently dressed in each of these miniatures, and the second artist uses a different colour palette and demonstrates greater sophistication as a draughtsman. As the *Commedia* required a great number of miniatures to illustrate the narrative thoroughly, it is not surprising that more than one artist was involved.

The large quantity of illuminations needed to illustrate the narrative of the poem effectively also meant that very few manuscripts of the *Commedia* were ever completely finished, and it is possible to see the evidence of the process of illumination in the half-finished miniatures in some codices, as in a Florentine manuscript from the late 14th century in the collection of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence (MS Strozziiani 148).¹² The illustrations attempted for the *Inferno* have only managed to reach the early stages, and on fols 13v and 16r, for example, there are miniatures in which the artist has completed the initial drawings only [figs 3 & 4].

From this collaborative workshop process, where miniatures were often built up in stages and in sections, two basic systems of illustration for the *Commedia* emerged and became established. The first of these schemes consisted of one miniature for each *cantica* of the poem, often positioned in the initial letter of the title page. The

second, more complex scheme attempted to present a cycle of miniatures describing the narrative, usually employing one illustration for each canto of the poem.

In the first of these two systems of illustration for the *Commedia*, in which there is just one miniature for each *cantica*, the artists were not able to represent a full narrative but instead created a general image on the title page of the *cantica*. The vast majority of examples of this scheme were produced in Florence, where there seems to have been a great demand for illustrated copies of the poem, particularly in the mid-14th century, and again in the early years of the 15th century, judging by the large number of copies of the *Commedia* produced in the city. The use of this much simpler scheme of illustration would seem to be the result of the pressure in Florence to make copies of the poem, which created a real 'production-line' approach at times, an attitude reflected in the many extant copies of the *Commedia* from the mid-Trecento – the first period of heavy Florentine demand – which have virtually identical miniatures (although apparently by different illustrators). These manuscripts form part of the 'Cento' tradition: a group of Tuscan manuscripts of the *Commedia* with similar text features, so-called because they were supposedly written by the same Florentine scribe, Ser Francesco di Ser Nardo da Barberini, who was said to have made one hundred copies of the poem to provide dowries for his daughters. In the instances where the miniatures were produced at the same time as the text, the illustrations are almost identical, with only the smallest variations. Extant illustrated Cento manuscripts are: Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1010; Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MSS Pluteo 40.12, Pluteo 40.14, 40.16, Pluteo 40.35, Pluteo (Gaddiani) 90 sup. 126, Ashburnhamiani Appendice Dantesca 8, Strozziiani 149, Strozziiani 152 (initials), and Strozziiani 153; Biblioteca dell'Archivio Storico Civico e Trivulziana MS 1077; Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense MS AC XIII 41 (AN XV 17); Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana MSS Barberiniani latini 3975, and Urbinati latini 378; Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS It. IX 34 (=6201); British Library MS Egerton 2628; Pierpont Morgan Library MS M 289; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vitrina 23.2 (initials). MS Strozziiani 149 at the Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence, is a prime example. The illustration for the *Inferno* (fol. 1r), showing Dante and Virgil about to embark on their journey, is typical of this group [fig. 5].¹³

The motifs and compositions used in manuscripts with an illustration for each *cantica* were reused throughout the period of Dante illumination.¹⁴ There were small variations in the compositions of the miniatures in these manuscripts, but the pattern was essentially the same for more than one hundred years: *Inferno*'s initial would most often contain an image of Dante and Virgil, perhaps at the foot of the mountain or in the dark wood, or occasionally there would be a picture of Dante seated at his desk writing, and in some manuscripts a half-portrait of Dante with his book, as demonstrated in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1004 (fol. 4r), a Florentine manuscript from 1426.¹⁵ The style and quality of the miniatures vary from manuscript to manuscript, but the basic components are the same, as seen in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1109 from the mid-15th century, where the *Inferno* miniature also has a half-portrait of Dante, again clutching his book (fol. 2r) [fig. 6].¹⁶

The *Purgatorio* initial almost invariably had a miniature of Dante and Virgil, or Dante alone in a boat on the sea, as demonstrated in a Florentine manuscript from the late 14th century, from the Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence (MS Pluteo (Gaddiani) 90 sup. 126), where Dante is shown inside the initial letter P hoisting the sails in a boat, sailing between two sandy banks (fol. 36r) [fig. 7].¹⁷ This is almost certainly a literal depiction of the 'navicella' of Dante's 'ingegno' (*Purg.* I, 1-2) – and here Dante is shown lifting the sails, as described in line 1 – but could also result from some confusion with the angel's boat in *Purgatorio* II, 13-45. It is more likely to be the former, as the illustrators were fond of this sort of literal depiction: they cannot possibly have thought that Dante was really setting sail in the little boat of his genius, but this is perhaps the only way they could describe it to the reader in visual terms. This literal interpretation of metaphors and similes is part of the currency of medieval illustration, and as medieval models for the *Commedia* were repeated into the Renaissance, then images like these became a permanent fixture. There were many variations on this motif, but the essential elements of the composition are always the same, as shown in Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1004, fol. 93r [fig. 8].

The *Paradiso* initial usually depicted Dante kneeling before Beatrice, often on a blue background studded with stars, with Beatrice pointing upwards towards the heavens. Again, there were variations on this format, as in the Florentine MS Ashburnhamiani Appendice Dantesca 8 (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana) from the end of the 14th

century, where Beatrice is just a head with a halo in the corner of the miniature (fol. 138r).¹⁸ Sometimes the *Paradiso* initial would contain an image of God or Christ with an open book, occasionally surrounded by seraphs, as in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatini 319, although here the artist has also added Dante and Beatrice at the bottom of the page (fol. 47r) [fig. 9].¹⁹

The second system of illustration, in which a cycle of miniatures is used to describe the narrative – usually one illustration per canto – is seen in MS Palatini 313 [figs 1 & 2], which contains 37 framed miniatures within, below, or above the text; 32 for *Inferno*, two for *Purgatorio*, and three for *Paradiso*. This manuscript is fairly typical, in that the artist has managed to complete miniatures for the *Inferno*, but only manages a couple of illustrations for *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. It seems that artists often started illustrating at the beginning of the *Inferno* and worked their way systematically through the poem, often running out of steam before they had reached the end. Consequently, there may be a few miniatures for *Purgatorio* and fewer still for *Paradiso* – for example, the illustration in MS Palatini 313 of Dante and Beatrice with Piccarda and Costanza, depicting the events of *Paradiso* III (fol. 165r) [fig. 10]. There are, however, very few manuscripts which have a full set of miniatures right up to the end of the *Paradiso*. This might also have something to do with the fact that *Inferno* contains a greater variety of familiar experiences and motifs, as it has rivers, sand, a wood, rain, darkness, filth, rocks... all kinds of everyday images with which the artists were familiar. This is also true of *Purgatorio* to a certain extent, whereas *Paradiso*, with its emphasis on light and music, is far more difficult to describe in visual terms. As *Paradiso* was represented infrequently, this led to a lack of established images and models for subsequent illustrators to copy, ensuring its continuing lack of popularity as far as illuminations were concerned.

Some artists, however, did manage to complete a cycle of illustrations for the whole poem. MS Banco Rari 39, now in Florence at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, was produced in Lombardy around 1400, and contains a cycle of miniatures which extends to the end of the *Paradiso*.²⁰ This manuscript exhibits a rich and ornate decorative style typical of Lombard illumination of the period. The miniatures are placed inside the initial letters of the cantos rather than in the margins, and the page layout and spaces for illuminations were obviously carefully planned and firmly ordered. However, despite

working within the restrictive format of miniatures in the initials, the artist has managed to achieve an astonishing degree of detail and a strong sense of landscape and setting within the illustrations. The integrated and harmonious appearance of these folios is due in part to the relatively small scale of the illustrations, which are surrounded by the text of the poem and by the smaller script of Francesco da Buti's commentary. The script itself is so finely written and delicately arranged that it equals the high standard of the illumination and is not overshadowed by it, creating an interesting and cohesive folio design, as seen on fols 180r and 202r (*Purgatorio* IX and XIII) [fig. 11]. The artist uses the forms of the letters containing the miniatures with great artistic skill; on fol. 418v in the initial for *Paradiso* XXV, the whirling souls of the blessed – looking like glow-worms – follow the curving shape of the letter S in which they are enclosed [fig. 12].

The artists who made these cycles of illustrations were most often concerned with the narrative of Dante's poem above any allegorical or symbolic interpretation of it. In their depiction of that narrative the illustrators were faced with a choice as to whether to depict the story in successive stages as 'stations' of the journey; or whether to illustrate one important or defining moment of the canto. In MS Strozzi 152 (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana), a Florentine manuscript produced c.1350, the illustrator opts for a representation of the 'stations' of the narrative, with the action progressing in a continuous strip from left to right on the page.²¹ In this miniature for *Inferno* IX (fol. 8r), Dante and Virgil are first seen in front of a motif representing the city of Dis, with the three Furies above the entrance [fig. 13]. Dante's eyes are shielded by both his own hands and by Virgil's, just as described in the text (*Inf.* IX, 58-60), against the possible appearance of Medusa, who would turn Dante to stone if he were to gaze upon her. Next, Dante and Virgil are seen again in front of Dis, with the assembled hordes of devils on the battlements, watching as the messenger from God opens the gate for them. Finally, the poets are depicted walking through the gate and into the next circle, where they encounter the flaming tombs of the heretics.

In another example, a manuscript produced c.1380-85, possibly in Naples (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 676), an identical method is used, this time in the artist's interpretation of *Inferno* VI (fol. 11v) [fig. 14].²² The two poets first encounter Cerberus, who holds a sinner in each hand and tramples others

underfoot, and then they speak to Ciaccio who has risen up to talk to them from among the crowd of gluttons languishing in the mire.²³

This 'frieze-like' format was particularly popular in the Trecento, but early fifteenth-century artists also adopted it, adapting it to their needs. The *Paradiso* illustrations in MS Medicei Palatini 74 (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana), dating from c.1400, are a good example of this scheme taken one stage further: the artist has used the same format of figures placed in a strip with the action reading from left to right, but instead of a flat stage, the figures here stand on an arch-shaped ground with the heavenly spheres that the protagonists have already passed through indicated beneath their feet, as seen on fol. 32v [fig. 15].²⁴ This arch-shaped band increases in depth the further Dante and Beatrice progress towards God, with an increasing number of heavens indicated beneath their feet, until the bands of the heavens fill more than half these large miniatures, such as in the illustration on fol. 340r [fig. 16]. This artist has taken a well-used format of 'landscape', that of a continuous frieze-like strip, and transformed it into a more descriptive system that is able to show not only where the figures of the poet and his guide are at that moment, but also where they have been. There is a sense of progression upwards as the band beneath the figures becomes higher and higher.

The frieze format developed in other ways and continued to be used well into the 15th century, as demonstrated in the first two *cantiche* of MS Yates Thompson 36 (London, British Library).²⁵ The illustrations for *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* were produced in the early 1440s, but this artist constructs his miniatures in a similar pattern to that used by his counterparts from the previous century, although with a few interesting additions. In the illustration for *Inferno* XXXIII (fol. 61r), although the miniature is enclosed by a frame, the illustrator still presents the action proceeding from left to right and repeats the figures of Dante and Virgil, as occurs in many earlier manuscripts [fig. 17]. This artist also shows that it is possible to involve scenes that took place in the earthly lives of the characters that Dante meets, and combine them in the same miniature with the events of the narrative taking place in Hell. This is something that happens only rarely in 14th-century illustrations, but is more common in a 15th-century manuscript. Here, the story of Ugolino is represented in an illustration which shows not only Dante's encounter with him in Hell, but also the way in which he died, was imprisoned and starved in a tower with his four sons. In the background on the left-hand side of the miniature

the artist has painted four nude figures being chased by hounds representing the prophetic dream of Ugolino (*Inf.* XXXIII, 28-36).²⁶ The representation of this dream is unique in extant *Commedia* miniatures, and by illustrating it the Sienese artist has depicted three layers of events in this miniature: Dante's journey through Hell, Ugolino's story of the events that actually befell him, and Ugolino's account of events which took place only in his dream.

The illustrator has managed to blend all these factors together in one illustration without losing the sense of continuity and narrative. In part this is due to the landscape, which the artist uses cleverly to separate the different events: the tower in which Ugolino and his sons are imprisoned acts as a division between the tale of Ugolino and Dante's meeting with Fra Alberigo on the right of the miniature, so that the different events are not confused. The events of Ugolino's prophetic dream are placed on a rocky slab in the background, part of the same landscape but cleverly separated from the main narrative which proceeds from left to right in the miniature. The landscape separates the different events but also links them together; the figure nailing shut the door of Ugolino's tower stands firmly on the same rocky ground (which here has replaced the frozen lake) in which the souls of the traitors are embedded, and the shaft of light which enters the small window of Ugolino's prison comes from the top left of the picture, just above the scene of the dream. This artist has adapted the method of continuous landscape and repeated figures to include a variety of scenes without disrupting the flow of the narrative.

This method of representing the events of the poem – by means of a frieze showing several 'stations' of the journey in a particular canto – was adapted in different ways throughout the *Commedia*'s illuminated history. Botticelli chose a variation on this format for his illustrations produced in the 1480s, as in his illustration for *Inferno* IX, where the narrative progresses across and down the miniature, and the figures of Dante and Virgil are repeated many times [fig. 18]. Botticelli's use of repeated figures and simple landscape motifs to divide the journey are derived from earlier patterns and compositions.²⁷

While he is a clever and versatile enough artist to adapt these models there is, in fact, little that is completely new in his *Commedia* drawings. Barbara Watts claims that while Botticelli may have made use of the medieval idea of repeating figures in a narrative sequence in *Inferno*, his arrangement of that progression to move down and 'through' the page rather than across it was an innovation.²⁸ The artist

of Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Fonds italien 2017/Imola, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 32 (c.1440), however, had already made use of this device in several miniatures. This is particularly evident in the miniatures representing the events taking place in the Malebolge. On fol. (Paris) 298v (*Inferno* XXVI), for example, Dante and Virgil stand on the bridge that overlooks the bolgia containing the souls of the fraudulent counsellors. The illustrator has attempted to show that the bridge actually spans the gap above the ditch, and the poets cross it from top to bottom (or from the back towards the front, as the artist presumably wished to indicate). There is certainly an indication of the figures moving from the background to the foreground, and a sense of progression downwards.²⁹ Other artists, such as that of Naples, Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini, MS 420 from c.1350, had also – albeit crudely – depicted the descent of the characters through Hell. This is notable, for example on fol. 42r (*Inferno* XVII).³⁰ A second innovation with which Watts credits Botticelli is the representation of the end of one episode at the start of the next, to emphasize the progression of the journey, and also the divisions between the different sections.³¹ This was, in fact, a device common to earlier manuscripts, for example in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Holkham misc. 48 (c.1350-75), where each episode overlaps the next on the same folio, while different landscape features are used to make separations between the different sections. This can be seen by looking at p. 33, where the devils and barrators of *Inferno* XXII are pictured, and then over the page to the matching rocky landscape of p. 34 (*Inferno* XXII again), which then continues across the next folio and into the next canto (the hypocrites of *Inferno* XXIII; p. 35). No definite distinction is made as to where one canto ends and another begins, and the overriding effect is that of an unbroken journey.³² Botticelli was able to adapt and refine the images that he found, but there is little that is wholly innovative about his version. In some instances he has reverted to much older models, as in the case of Virgil, who appears to have been modelled on the Virgil of Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 597, produced almost a century and a half before.³³

Another method of canto-by-canto narrative illustration also persists throughout the history of *Commedia* illumination. It is first seen in early Trecento manuscripts, as in MS Palatini 313, where one incident or defining moment is depicted in each miniature rather than a series of events, as in the miniature depicting the poets approaching the gates of Dis and the Furies in *Inferno* IX (fol. 21r) [fig. 19].

Illustrations of this type, showing one incident of the canto per miniature, are usually enclosed by a frame and therefore stress the episodic nature of the *Commedia*, rather than the continuous narrative of the journey. In a second Trecento example, a Neapolitan manuscript produced c. 1350 (Naples, Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini, MS 420), the artist gives his version of the events in *Inferno* V (fol. 14r); Virgil stands to the left, while Paolo and Francesca lean out of the darkness, and Dante is shown having fainted from pity as he does at the end of the canto (*Inf.* V, 139-42) [fig. 20].³⁴

This format of enclosed miniatures for each canto was also developed in various ways through the period of *Commedia* illumination, as seen in an example from a later manuscript, illuminated in Ferrara by Guglielmo Giralaldi and assistants c. 1478 (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Urbinati latini 365), which also shows the artist's interpretation of *Inferno* V (fol. 14v) [fig. 21].³⁵ The obvious development here is that of a deep and naturalistic evocation of environment – the landscape is no longer just a series of motifs. In spite of his skill, and his use of new learning on perspective, the illustrator seems to have rather missed the point, depicting a tranquil scene with no hint of the infernal storm that is supposed to be punishing the souls of the lovers. Giralaldi appears more concerned with a representation of idealized Renaissance beauty than with an accurate depiction of Dante's lines, and in this respect, the much earlier artist is actually more successful in his representation of the canto, in spite of his more limited painterly abilities.³⁶

Although it is usual to see miniatures depicting one incident or defining moment of a canto enclosed in a frame, there are also some unframed miniatures of this type, as demonstrated in a manuscript from Padua, produced c. 1375-1400 (Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, MS 67).³⁷ Throughout this manuscript, the illustrator has tried to encapsulate the events of each canto in just one scene at the start of the particular canto. In his illustration for *Inferno* XVII (fol. 52v), for example, he depicts the usurers, whom Dante is supposed to have met before climbing onto the back of Geryon, but here the artist has already placed Dante and Virgil on the back of the monster, and shows one usurer looking up at Dante, sticking out his tongue as he is described as doing during his meeting with the poet (*Inf.* XVII, 74-75) [fig. 22]. There is no sense of the real sequence of events and the order in which they occurred, as the artist has instead distilled what he

feels to be the relevant points into one image, where everything is supposedly taking place at once.

Previous scholarship on the illustrations has often suggested that the *Commedia* illustrators of the late medieval period used the first scheme of illustration (the continuous depiction of narrative in sequence), and the later illustrators preferred the second method (a depiction of a single event). This is not the case, as both methods are in evidence throughout the whole period of *Commedia* illumination, culminating in the miniatures of Botticelli and Giraldi, respectively.

In these different schemes of *Commedia* illustration, the rapidly established motifs are used and adapted over a long period of time, and although the format was tight and the iconography broadly consistent, there were variations within these restricted patterns. But who were the illustrators, and how did they receive information in order to formulate these images? One source of information was the schemes and images from other contemporary manuscripts which could be adapted to illustrate Dante's poem. As the *Commedia* was a relatively new work with a short visual history, models or patterns devised for other works were also adapted to it, and the influence of possible patterns from chivalric romances can sometimes be found in *Commedia* manuscripts. This is evident in illustrations in MS 1076 of the Biblioteca dell'Archivio Storico Civico e Trivulziana, Milan, where it seems unlikely that some of the images were actually developed specifically for the *Commedia*. On fol. 12v (*Inferno* V) the row of well-dressed ladies and knights in armour have a demure and elegant appearance bearing little relation to the actual events of the canto they are supposed to be illustrating.³⁸

The influence of illustrations from secular romances was particularly noticeable on artists in the North of Italy and in Naples and Sicily, where French chivalric manuscripts were very much in evidence:

In France the tradition of illustrating literary manuscripts probably began with versions of the Tales of King Arthur. The Lancelot romance exists in many forms [...], and it brings together the legends of Camelot, the Lady of the Lake, the Holy Grail, and the death of Arthur, which all still form part of our folk culture.³⁹

This was one of the major secular romances to influence illustration in these regions of Italy. Dante actually mentions stories from Arthurian legend in the *Commedia* itself – the story of Lancelot in Canto V of the *Inferno*, and Arthur's killing of the treacherous Mordred in *Inferno* XXXII, 61-62 – and medieval readers and artists would themselves have had some knowledge of Arthurian tradition.⁴⁰ Stories connected with King Arthur had long since penetrated the visual arts of Italy: over the Porta della Pescheria at Modena Cathedral there are carvings from the early 12th century depicting scenes taken from the the Arthur legend, and there were also many Arthurian romances in French written out by Italian scribes – for example Bibliothèque Nationale MS nouv. acq. fr. 5243.⁴¹

The depiction of any scenes involving kings, queens, and other stately persons in particular provided a great excuse for Arthurian-style illumination. MS Banco Rari 39, for example, contains the scene of the Emperor Trajan (*Purgatorio* X), the format of which could well have been lifted directly from an Arthurian romance. This is unsurprising, as the second artist who worked on these illustrations is considered by Millard Meiss to paint in the style of an illuminator known as the Paris Lancelot Master.⁴² Whether this is actually the work of this Master, or of an artist influenced by him, it shows a relationship between the illustrations of the *Commedia* and the Lancelot cycles, and demonstrates that the same illustrators would have been commissioned to illuminate a variety of different works.

The range of commissions an illuminator was expected to complete often explains the similar motifs and styles of composition which occur in manuscripts containing very different subjects. The popular romances of the period included the *Chanson de Roland*, the romances of King Alexander, and the *Roman de la Rose*, all of which were frequently and sumptuously illustrated, and could have provided material for Dante's illustrators in the areas where they could be found. The Venetian illustrators of Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS It. IX 276 have depicted some scenes that would not look out of place in a chivalric tale: in the miniature depicting Dante's meeting with Cunizza da Romano, for example, there is a row of courtly ladies in contemporary fashions, wearing brightly coloured clothes and standing on a bed of grass and flowers (fol. 58v).⁴³ Behind them is a pattern of red and gold flowers on a deep blue background, a decorative form of design found frequently in manuscripts of the romance epics.⁴⁴

In addition to images in other manuscripts, artists were undoubtedly influenced in their reception of the *Commedia* by other forms of the visual arts, such as fresco painting. In a reverse process, the text of the *Commedia* itself influenced the motifs of monumental painting in Florence, which in turn fed back into the *Commedia* manuscript illuminations. Nardo di Cione's 1350s fresco in S. Maria Novella, Florence, shows an arrangement of Hell which corresponds in many ways to the layout of Dante's *Inferno*. The sinners are stacked in descending rows, and the figures of Minos, Cerberus, and the Harpies in the suicides' wood are amongst the Dantesque imagery present in the composition.⁴⁵ MS Fonds italien 74 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale) was illuminated in Florence by Bartolomeo da Fruosino c.1420, and contains a full-page illustration at the beginning of the *Inferno* which resembles Nardo's fresco in both composition and the choice of much of the iconography, for example, the many tombs across one band of the composition with the lids pushed to one side by the heretics.⁴⁶ Bartolomeo's only major addition to Nardo's design is the introduction of Dante and Virgil, whose figures are repeated five times (six times in Dante's case) across the composition. The Florentine manuscript 2263 of the Biblioteca dell'Archivio Storico Civico e Trivulziana, Milan (dated 1405) contains nine miniatures which reflect the artist's interpretation of the same fresco; there are particular similarities in the positioning of figures and motifs in some of the miniatures, notably the posture of Cerberus with a sinner grasped firmly in each hand (fol. 18v), and the flaming tombs of the heretics (fol. 31v).⁴⁷

Other Florentine illustrators also owe a debt to this fresco; the artist of MS Vaticanani latini 4776 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana takes his cue from Nardo in several compositions, such as the representation of the virtuous heathen in the castle of *Inferno* IV (fol. 13v), and the depiction of the centaurs around a red pool in *Inferno* XII (fol. 42v). The miniature for *Inferno* IV in MS Pluteo 40.7 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, (late 14th-century, probably Florentine) also shows a very similar castle arrangement to that seen in the fresco (fol. 9v).⁴⁸ As noted by Millard Meiss, these repetitions are hardly surprising when it is considered that drawings of scenes from the fresco circulated among the Florentine workshops that illuminated the *Commedia*.⁴⁹

Scenes depicted in other frescoes around Florence also began to crop up as illustrations in Dante manuscripts: inside the front cover of the

Florentine MS Strozzianni 148 codex, for example, is a coloured woodcut which is a copy of Domenico di Michelino's 1465 fresco of *Dante and his Poem* from the Duomo of Florence. Dante also appears very similar to Domenico's depiction of him in the *Purgatorio* initial miniature of the Florentine MS Medicei Palatini 72 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (1442).⁵⁰

As patterns became established the illustrators' main source of information very quickly became each other, as they adapted and refined the *Commedia* imagery, discarding less successful iconography along the way; for example, the compositions of MS 1005 (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana), an *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* from Bologna c. 1330-50, which consisted of icons in the initial letters of the cantos representing the various sins under discussion in a particular canto, rather than scenes from the narrative of Dante's journey. In the illustration for *Purgatorio* XXII (fol. 158), for example, there is an image of a woman eating at a table to represent the sin of gluttony [fig. 23]. This early scheme did not catch on, probably because it was too far removed from the narrative of the poem.

In addition to visual sources, it has been suggested that the illustrators were influenced by written commentaries on the *Commedia*, and this is certainly true, but only in a minority of cases. Commentaries often swayed illustrators from the depiction of Dante's actual text to the representation of a secondary field of imagery which does not appear in the poem at all, and this is demonstrated clearly in MS Yates Thompson 36 at the British Library. The manuscript was completed in the mid-15th century for Alfonso V of Aragon, King of Naples. This would have been a very important commission and so would have been overseen by a scribe or scholar who may have insisted on the inclusion of explanations from the commentary.⁵¹ The Sieneese artist, Giovanni di Paolo, who carried out the illuminations for the *Paradiso*, was clearly influenced by the commentary that accompanies the text in this manuscript (the *Ottimo* commentary).⁵² An example of this influence is seen in the miniature for *Paradiso* III, where Piccarda and Costanza are shown being torn from their respective convents, something that Piccarda describes to Dante (*Paradiso* III, 106-08, 113-14), but then Henry VI's grandson Conrad is seen pulling down the walls of Naples with the arms of Aragon at his feet (fol. 134r) [fig. 24]. This event is mentioned only in the *Ottimo* commentary and not by Dante himself in the text of the poem, but the artist almost certainly included it as an incident which

may have been of interest to his patron Alfonso V of Aragon, King of Naples.

The influence of commentators on illustrators is most obvious in a handful of manuscripts where the commentary in question actually accompanies a copy of the poem, as in Yates Thompson 36, and particularly if the commentator himself was overseeing the production process.⁵³ A commentator could generally be presumed to be a literate individual, whereas the average illustrator of the Trecento and earlier Quattrocento was often nothing of the kind.⁵⁴ The days when educated monks were the main producers of manuscript illuminations were already coming to an end by the time the first Dante illustrations were produced in the first half of the 14th century.⁵⁵ Monasteries did, however, produce some secular books, but 'from the thirteenth century book production and ownership were predominantly in the hands of the laity'.⁵⁶ Illuminators were increasingly itinerant professionals, sometimes drafted in to assist monks at their bookmaking tasks, but more usually employed directly by a commentator, or a secular workshop. It is very unlikely that these semi-literate artists ever read the *Commedia* itself, let alone the commentaries on it. Commentaries were also often in Latin, putting them beyond the reach of most artists. Commentators and artists would have been approaching the poem from different directions and with a different set of objectives in mind. It is therefore untrue to say, as Peter Brieger does, that 'commentaries and illustrations were closely connected, since both tried to interpret the meaning of the new poem.'⁵⁷ The illustrator's role was less to do with interpretation than with narrative representation using familiar models, and the Trecento illustrators in particular were not able to represent coherently the many layers of meaning in Dante's poem. The commentators, on the other hand, were concerned with as many levels of meaning and nuance as was possible to find in the text, sometimes over-complicating and obscuring Dante's lines, and sometimes – in the case of some Latin commentators – actively looking to shut out a section of the poem's potential readership:

Judging the poem to be too open and accessible for its own good, they attempted to keep the illiterate at bay by 'classicizing' the text behind a high wall of Latin commentary. The fact that the Comedy was written in Italian and not in

Latin became a source of acute embarrassment for Italian humanists.⁵⁸

A more profound influence on the illustrators may have been achieved through oral recitation of the poem in public places. The tradition of the reading out of poetry was one that went back centuries: 'Elements of vernacular literature go back to campfires and taverns, centuries before anything was written down. The jongleurs of France were certainly singing and dancing from time immemorial',⁵⁹ and the traditional oral culture would have assisted the illustrators in their understanding of the text. The fact that the poem was written in the vernacular meant that when read out it could be understood by anyone on a basic level, and it was tremendously popular among all sections of Trecento society, much to the disgust of some scholars:

Dante himself received complaints about performances of the *Comedy* in his last years. Giovanni del Virgilio, a Bolognese professor of rhetoric, reprimanded him ca. 1318-19 for not writing the *Comedy* in Latin. He thought the subject too serious for illiterates (*gens ydiota*) and inappropriate for street performance.⁶⁰

There was a tradition of the recitation of all or part of the *Commedia* in prominent places in Florence and other cities on particular days of the year; Boccaccio, for example, was engaged by the Commune of Florence to give public recitations of the *Commedia* at the church of S. Stefano di Badia, Florence, which began on 23 October, 1373.⁶¹ The artist of MS Ashburnhamiani Appendice Dantesca 3 (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana) shows Dante in the act of reading his poem in the miniature for *Paradiso* (fol. 152r).⁶² His mouth is open and it is possible to see his tiny, neatly-painted teeth – exactly as if he were reading aloud. For this artist to choose to depict Dante reciting the *Commedia*, he may have been influenced by observing public readings or performances of the poem. There is evidence that it was not just scholars who read out the poem in public; in fact Petrarch wrote to Boccaccio in 1369 complaining that ignorant people in shops and market places knew Dante, and his verses were 'defiled' by such unskilled tongues in performance.⁶³

Whatever the complaints about public performances of Dante's poem, it is certain that apart from this, pictorial images would have

been about the only direct experience that the illuminators, in their semi-literate state, would have had with the *Commedia*. Any other experience would require the mediation of a scribe, commentator, scholar, or other literate person. The impact of these performances must have had an effect on their visualization as expressed in their miniatures, and perhaps, in part at least, is responsible for illustrations where the figures are seen standing as if on a 'stage'.⁶⁴ This is exemplified in MS Conventi Soppressi C III 1266 (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale), where in the illustration for *Inferno* IX (fol. 4r) the figures of Dante, Virgil, and the Furies have the distinct appearance of performers on a platform [fig. 25].⁶⁵

The influence of drama on the visual arts was not a new phenomenon, as liturgical drama in the 12th century appears to have had an impact on visual images. Otto Pächt comments: 'This inner affinity to stagecraft [in the visual arts] – has it not perhaps a concrete historical reason? [...] The style of pictorial narrative as such had been influenced by the new venture of presenting the Bible story as a staged drama, in a basically theatrical form'.⁶⁶ As evidence of this he points to the façade of Notre-Dame-la-Grande at Poitiers, 'where the iconographic programme seems to presuppose the existence of some kind of Prophet-drama'.⁶⁷ Could it not also be the case then, that *Commedia* illustrators were influenced by theatrical images of the poem being performed in public?

As far as the exact identities of many of the illustrators is concerned, little is known for certain. In the Trecento the earliest Dante illustrators were most commonly of the artisan classes.⁶⁸ As they were largely anonymous craftsmen, the presence of anything approaching a signature is rare indeed.⁶⁹ Sergio Samek-Ludovici has detected what he believes to be an artist's signature in certain designs in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana MS It. IX 276; one can be seen in the centre of the illustration of Brunetto Latini (fol. 11), and the remains of an identical one on the miniature depicting Mohammed (fol. 20), while there is another on the illustration of Queen Amata (fol. 39).⁷⁰ In MS Pluteo 40.2 at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana there is a symbol incorporated into the composition on fol. 3v which I would also identify as a form of signature; it serves no decorative or other function in the design [fig. 26]. Self-portraits of artists, like their signatures, were not common, and that of the illustrator and commentator Arnesto Pidi in MS 1083 at the Biblioteca dell'Archivio

Storico Civico e Trivulziana may be the only extant example of an artist's self-portrait amongst the *Commedia* illustrators.⁷¹

In the mid- to late 15th century the book trade was flourishing and employed many people, and by this stage some illuminators must undoubtedly have been fairly wealthy members of the community, particularly those who undertook prestigious commissions such as the King of Naples' *Commedia* (Yates Thompson 36). The status of illuminators had begun to alter, and this is well illustrated in the miniature on folio 1 of a copy of Giovanni Colonna's *Mare Historiarum* of 1448-49 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 4915). Here an illuminator is seen in his workshop receiving a visit from his patron, Jean Jouvenel des Ursins, Chancellor of France. The fact that the miniature is modelled on others where a patron visits an author in his study, and that the illuminator remains seated in such illustrious company shows a certain sense of self-importance on the part of the artist.⁷²

By the time Botticelli came to produce his drawings for the *Commedia* the artistic climate in Florence and elsewhere had changed, as had the view of the artist and the class from which he came. The Renaissance shift in emphasis meant that painters could be viewed alongside architects or mathematicians; in fact some artists were all three. Although Botticelli produced his Dante illustrations for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, it can be assumed that he would have been given a certain freedom to express his own ideas; he was educated and had certainly read the *Commedia* himself, and most importantly he was not a small cog in a large production machine. He may have had the help of assistants to colour the work, but would have been able to direct the designs himself and control them throughout. Assuming that this was the case, the resulting illustrations by Botticelli for the *Commedia* are surprisingly traditional, and although he never managed to complete his illustrations, his designs as they stand today give a clear indication of the debt he owed the earlier illustrators. The only new element he brings to them is his superior skill as a draughtsman. The sketchy *Paradiso* drawings are the area that shows the greatest potential for innovation, but the *Inferno* illustrations are surprisingly 'old-fashioned' in their iconography. It may be that Botticelli had a sentimental fondness for the heritage of *Commedia* illumination, displaying his knowledge and admiration by 'quoting' from earlier illustrators in order to pay his respects to what was, by that time, a long-standing tradition.

Botticelli's flat and diagrammatic illustrations, with their many references to the miniatures of previous illuminators, contrast with those of his near contemporary, Guglielmo Giraldi, who had incorporated the Renaissance interest in perspective into his illustrations, creating a deep and complete landscape setting for his figures. However, while Botticelli's illustrations filled entire folios, with their only boundary being the edge of the page itself, Giraldi's miniatures were still contained within decorative borders on folios containing script. Each artist had therefore used something of previous miniature or page design, but had taken his illuminations to opposite conclusions. As the Renaissance progresses, and 'as artistic individuality is more and more stressed, the activity of book illumination, with its processes of creation by transmission and in collaboration with others, becomes more and more marginalized'.⁷³ The importance of prominent artists like Botticelli and Giraldi in the history of *Commedia* illumination cannot be overlooked, but it is also vital that they do not completely overshadow all that came before them – the earlier illuminators to whom they owe several debts, and to whose tradition they conform in many ways.

Botticelli is also assumed to have made the designs for the engravings for the Florentine 1481 printed edition of the *Commedia*, engravings that were subsequently copied into woodcuts and other engraved editions. In this way, the iconography of the *Commedia* that had been developed in the Trecento workshops was collected by Botticelli and repeated in printed editions of the *Commedia* throughout the Renaissance. The early illuminations were the result of the interests and understanding of the *Commedia*'s early artists, but they had a far-reaching effect, influencing not only the way contemporary readers understood the poem but also, through the engravings and woodcuts, the views of succeeding generations.

NOTES

¹ I should like to acknowledge the assistance of a travel grant awarded by the University of London Central Research Fund, which enabled me to visit Italy to study the manuscripts discussed in this article.

² The figures I have given here can only be approximate as I have not had the opportunity to view all these manuscripts at first hand. Instead, I have had to rely on Marcella Roddewig's *Dante Alighieri: Die göttliche Komödie: vergleichende Bestandsaufnahme der*

Commedia-Handschriften (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1984). In some cases, the descriptions of the miniatures in this catalogue are too brief to ascertain their precise content.

³ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: P. Colombe de Batines, *Bibliografia dantesca, ossia Catalogo delle edizioni, traduzioni, codici manoscritti e commenti*, 4 vols (Prato: Tipografia Aldina Editrice, 1846), II.iv, *I codici manoscritti & commenti inediti*, no. 257; G. Porro, *Catalogo dei codici manoscritti della Biblioteca Trivulziana* (Turin: Paravia, 1884), pp. 106, 107; K. Täuber, *I capostipiti dei manoscritti della Divina Commedia* (Winterthur: Ziegler, 1889), pp. 103-10; A. Bassermann, *Dantes Spuren in Italien* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1897), p. 214, pls 9-11; L. Volkmann, *Iconografia dantesca: le rappresentazioni figurative della Divina Commedia* (Florence: Olschki, 1898), p. 15; P. D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina (secoli XI-XVI)*, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1914), I, 25-26, 28, 29; II, no. 184; L. Rocca, *Il codice trivulziano 1080 della Divina Commedia, riprodotto in eliocromia* (Milan: Hoepli, 1921); P. D'Ancona, *La Miniature italienne du Xe au XVIe siècle* (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1925), p. 36, pl. XXXIV; S. Vagaggini, *La miniatura fiorentina nei secoli XIV e XV* (Milan: Electa, 1952), p. 7; *Mostra storica nazionale della miniatura. Palazzo di Venezia, Rome 1953*, catalogue ed. by G. Muzzioli, 2nd edn (Florence: Sansoni, 1954), pp. 215-16, no. 327; M. Salmi, *La miniatura fiorentina gotica* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1954), pp. 39-40, pl. XXV; M. Salmi, *Italian Miniatures*, 2nd edn (New York: Abrams, 1956), p. 25; M. Salmi, *La miniatura italiana* (Milan: Electa, 1956), p. 23; C. Santoro, *I codici miniati del Rinascimento italiano* (Milan: Castello Sforzesco, 1952), pp. 71-72, no. 42; D. Hughes Gillerman, 'Trecento Illustrators of the *Divina Commedia*', *77th Annual Report of the Dante Society of America* (Boston: The Dante Society of America, 1959), pp. 4-6, 22; M. Salmi, 'Problemi figurativi dei codici danteschi del Tre e del Quattrocento', in *Atti del Congresso Nazionale di studi danteschi: Dante nel secolo dell'unità italiana* (Florence: Olschki, 1962), pp. 176-77; C. Santoro, ed., *Mostra Dantesca. Manoscritti ed edizioni della Biblioteca Trivulziana* (Milan: Castello Sforzesco, 1954), no. 1, pp. 10-12; C. Santoro, *I codici miniati della Biblioteca Trivulziana* (Milan: Castello Sforzesco, 1958), no. 74; B. Degenhart, 'Die künstlerische Stellung des Codex Altonensis', in *Dante*

Alighieri, Divina Commedia, Kommentarband zum Codex Altonensis, ed. by H. Haupt (Berlin: Mann, 1965), pp. 68, 69, 70, figs 1, 2, 3; C. Santoro, *I codici medioevali della Biblioteca Trivulziana* (Milan: Castello Sforzesco, 1965), no. 401; P. Brieger, M. Meiss & C. S. Singleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy*, 2 vols (Princeton: Bollingen Foundation, 1969), I, 280-81; M. Rotili, *I codici danteschi miniati a Napoli* (Naples: Libreria Scientifica Editrice, 1972), p. 6; G. Bologna, *Miniature italiane della Biblioteca Trivulziana* (Milan: Castello Sforzesco, 1974), p. 81, figs pp. 89-91; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 451; *Pagine di Dante. Le edizioni della Divina Commedia dal torchio al computer*, exhibition catalogue ed. by R. Rusconi (Perugia: Electa & Editori Umbri Associati, 1989), pp. 82, 83; L. B. Kanter *et al.*, *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300-1450* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), p. 57.

⁴ These manuscripts include: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1005; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatini 313; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Pluteo 40.35; London, British Library, MS Egerton 943; Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS AG XII 2 (AN XV 19); Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS AC XIII 41 (AN XV 17).

Further information on these manuscripts can be found from the following sources:

Ricc. 1005: Batines, nos 24 & 253; F. X. Kraus, *Dante. Sein Leben und sein Werk, sein Verhältnis zur Kunst und zur Politik* (Berlin: G. Grote, 1897), p. 566; Volkman, p. 22; Hughes Gillerman, p. 7; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 249; Roddewig *Dante Alighieri*, no. 302; *Pagine di Dante*, p. 82, fig. p. 83.

Pal. 313: Batines, no. 163; Kraus, p. 568, fig. 33; Volkman, pp. xv, 10, 24-25, 59; Hughes Gillerman, pp. 8-9, 16-17; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 245-48; Rotili, pp. 5-6; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 263, fig. 11; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 82, 83, 85, 88, fig. p. 82; P. E. Nassar, *Illustrations to Dante's Inferno* (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994), pp. 195, 230, 238, 257; B. J. Watts, 'Sandro Botticelli's Drawings for Dante's *Inferno*: Narrative Structure, Topography, and Manuscript Design', *Artibus et Historie*, 32 (XVI) (1995), 163-201 (fig. 5, p. 169).

Plut. 40.35: Batines, no. 23; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 49, no. 154; G. Folena, 'Überlieferungsgeschichte der altitalienischen

Literatur', in *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur*, 2 vols (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1961-64), II, 319-535 (p. 468); Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 127.

Eger. 943: Batines, no. 537; Kraus, pp. 592-93; Volkmann, pp. 25-26, 38; Hughes Gillerman, pp. 14-15, 26; Degenhart, pp. 102-3, figs 52-55; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 262-69; Rotili, p. 7; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 392; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 82-83, 88, fig. p. 84; L. Battaglia Ricci, *Parole e immagini nella letteratura italiana medievale: materiale e problemi* (Pisa: Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale e la Libreria del Lungarno, 1994), pp. 43-44; Nassar, pp. 212, 267, 334; C. H. Taylor & P. Finley, *Images of the Journey in Dante's Divine Comedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), figs 173, 243; G. Baldissin Molli, G. Mariani Canova & F. Toniolo, eds, *La miniatura a Padova dal Medioevo al Settecento* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1999), no. 33, pp. 110-12.

Br. AG XII 2: Batines, no. 253; Kraus, p. 566; Volkmann, p. 22; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 50, 249; F. Flores D'Arcais, 'Il manoscritto trecentesco del *Paradiso*, Braidense AG XII 2, già a S. Giustina in Padova: Problemi cronologici e iconografici', *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, 90 (1978), 33-41; G. Cantoni Alzati, *La Biblioteca di S. Giustina di Padova* (Padua: Antenore, 1982), p. 43, no. 27; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 463; M. Levi D'Ancona, 'I due miniatori del codice Rb della *Commedia*', in *Studi danteschi*, 58 (1986), 374-79; M. Boskovits, G. Valaguisa & M. Bollati, eds, *Miniature a Brera 1100-1422: Manoscritti dalla Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense e da Collezioni private* (Milan: Federico Motta Editore, 1997), no. 23, pp. 158-67.

Br. AC XIII 41: Batines, no. 251; Volkmann, p. 14; *Dante: Mostra nazionale dantesca*, catalogue ed. by U. Parricchi (Rome: De Luca, 1965), p. 322; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 460; Boskovits, no. 28, pp. 190-93.

⁵ J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 52-53, notes that the contract between illustrator and patron occasionally specifies in detail what was to be represented by the artist in his programme of miniatures; however, I can find no such specific contractual instructions in relation to any *Commedia* manuscript. It

may be that such instructions once did exist for Dante manuscripts but are now lost, although I have no evidence for this.

⁶ C. de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1997), pp. 194-95.

⁷ Dante himself notes the common practice of repeated models and painting from example in *Purgatorio* XXXII, 67: 'come pintor che con essempro pinga [...]'.

⁸ The transferring of motifs from one manuscript to the next through copying was often limited to a few motifs selected from other *Commedias*; for example, similar images of the wheel of Fortune are seen in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conventi Soppressi C III 1266, Budapest, University Library, MS Ital. I, and Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 10057 (see note 65, and Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 212-15, 244-45, 276-79), and the hoarders and spenders, with round shields rather than stones, are seen in Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS (Ital. 474) ∞ R 4.8, and Rimini, Biblioteca Civica Gambalunga, MS S.C. 1162 (see Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 282-91, 323-24). However, the wholesale copying of an entire scheme of illustration was not unheard of, as demonstrated by the artist of Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Pluteo 40.1, who undoubtedly copied the illustrations of Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, MS 67. See note 37 for more information on this manuscript and its imitator.

⁹ See R. Scheller, *A Survey of Medieval Model Books* (Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1963), and by the same author *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900- ca. 1470)*, trans. by M. Hoyle (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995). In the second of these works the author discusses the value of model-books as 'vehicles of transmission' (pp. 70-71). See also J. J. G. Alexander, 'Facsimiles, Copies and Variations: the Relationship to the Model in Medieval and Renaissance European Illuminated Manuscripts', in *Retaining the Original. Multiple Originals, Copies and Reproductions* (Studies in the History of Art, vol. 20), ed. by K. Preciado (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1989), pp. 61-72.

¹⁰ For a contemporary description of the operation of a medieval workshop and the details of how materials were obtained to produce pigments etc., see *Il Libro dell'Arte*, the craftsman's handbook written c.1400 by Cennino d'Andrea Cennini, ed. by F. Brunello, reprint

(Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1998). This work is also available in English, trans. by D. V. Thompson Jr. (New York: Dover, 1960). See also Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, pp. 35-51.

¹¹ See note 4 for more information on this manuscript.

¹² Further information on this manuscript can be found in: A. M. Bandini, *Supplementum Bibliothecae Leopoldinae ad Catalogum Codicum graecorum, latinorum, italicorum Bibliothecae Laurentianae*, 3 vols (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1791-93), II, 548-49; Batines, no. 28; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 151, no. 157; Degenhart, p. 79; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 201.

¹³ The Cento group was defined and labelled by Karl Witte, *Prolegomeni critici all'edizione della Divina Commedia ricorretta sopra quattro dei piú autorevoli testi a penna* (Berlin: R. Decker, 1862), p. xlv. On the manuscripts in the Cento tradition, see also: E. Moore, *Contributions to the Textual Criticism of the Divine Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889), p. viii; G. Petrocchi, Introduction to *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by G. Petrocchi, 4 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1966-67), I, 289-317; de Hamel, p. 157.

¹⁴ An indication of the rapid rate of production of the Dante manuscripts over many years in Florence can be seen in Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1045, which contains an area on the *Inferno* title-page where it would be usual to find the coat of arms of the family for whom the manuscript had been designed. Here, however, the family crest is missing. As in all other respects the ornament and illuminations are completed, it can only be assumed that these manuscripts were produced with no-one particular in mind; when a buyer was found, the details of their coat of arms would be swiftly added in the blank spaces left for this purpose. The producers of these codices must have been sure that the demand for illustrated copies of the *Commedia* in Florence was great enough that they could produce such copies without a specific commission, confident that they would be snapped up by wealthy buyers. Further information on Ricc. 1045 can be found in Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 326.

¹⁵ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 143; S. Morpurgo, 'I codici Riccardiani della *Divina Commedia*', *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, 13-14 (1893), 19-142 (pp. 28-31, no. 2); S. Morpurgo, *I manoscritti della R. Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze* (Rome: Presso i principali librai, 1900), p. 5;

D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 161-62, no. 174; M. L. Scuricini Greco, *Miniature Riccardiane* (Florence: Sansoni antiquariato, 1958), p. 187, no. 171; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 301

¹⁶ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 157; Morpurgo, 'I codici Riccardiani', pp. 111, 112, no. 33; Morpurgo, *I manoscritti della R. Biblioteca Riccardiana.*, pp. 130-36; Scuricini Greco, *Miniature Riccardiane*, pp. 202-03, no. 189; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 335.

¹⁷ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Bandini, V, 400-01; Batines, no. 24; Volkmann, p. 22; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 154, no. 162; C. Frati, *I codici danteschi della Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna* (Florence: Olschki, 1923), p. 175; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 148.

¹⁸ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 188; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 155, no. 164; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 188.

¹⁹ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 167; F. Palermo, *I Manoscritti Palatini di Firenze*, 3 vols (Florence: Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, 1853-68), I, 538-39, n. 470; L. Gentile, *I Codici Palatini della R. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*, 2 vols (Rome: Presso i principali librai, 1885-99), I, 534; Volkmann, p. 16; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 160, no. 171; Degenhart, p. 82; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 269.

²⁰ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 102; *Esposizione dantesca a Firenze*, ed. by C. Guasti & Gaetano Milanese (Florence: Le Monnier, 1865), pp. 16-17; A. Bartoli, *I manoscritti italiani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze*, ser. I (Codici Magliabechiani), 3 vols (Florence: Carnesecchi, 1879), I, 7; Kraus, fig. 30, p. 569; Volkmann, pp. 23-24, 52, 100; G. Biagi, ed., *La Divina Commedia nella figurazione artistica e nel secolare commento*, 3 vols (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1924-39), I, figs. on pp. 701, 717, 741, 809; II, figs on pp. 157, 161, 173, 185, 217, 241, 277, 289; III, figs on pp. 105, 145, 205, 257, 261, 365, 373, 409, 417, 425, 453, 469, 493, 509; P. Schubring, *Illustrationen zu Dantes Göttlicher Komödie, Italien, 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Zurich & Vienna: Amalthea-Verlag, 1931), figs on pp. 20, 27, 28, 163, 175, 176, 223, 224, 229, 232, 329, 342, 361, 362, 367; I. Toesca,

'Miniatures at the Palazzo Venezia', *Burlington Magazine*, XCVI (1954), 22-23 (p. 22f); *Arte Lombarda dai Visconti agli Sforza*, catalogue of exhibition at Palazzo Reale, Milan, ed. by G. A. Dell'Aqua (Milan: Silvana, 1958), no. 99, pp. 43-44, pl. LX; Hughes Gillerman, p. 15; Salmi, 'Problemi figurativi', pp. 174-81 (p. 179); Degenhart, p. 113; *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, exhibition catalogue (Florence: Sandron, 1965), pp. 93-94, no. 128 & pl. XIV; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 240-44; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 224; *Pagine di Dante*, p. 90, fig. on p. 55; A. Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 42, pl. 14; Nassar, pp. 50, 347; C. Nerucci, *Un'officina lombarda operosa per i Duchi di Milano: la 'Divina Commedia' B.R. 39* (Tesi di laurea, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Firenze, 1995-96); Taylor & Finley, figs 111, 202; F. Franceschini, ed., *Dante, Il Buti e gli Appiani: Un codice tra Piombino, Piacenza e il Massachusetts* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 1998), pls 5, 12, 24.

²¹ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Bandini, II, 550-51; Batines, no. 31; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 153, no. 160; Biagi, I, fig. on p. 321; Salmi, 'Problemi figurativi', p. 178; *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, p. 65, no. 83; Degenhart, p. 79; B. Degenhart & A. Schmitt, *Corpus der italienischen Zeichnungen 1300-1450* (Berlin: Mann, 1968), I.i, no. 28, pp. 72-73, figs 114-16; I.iii, pls 53a-b; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 234-38, 49; Rotili, pp. 6, 46-47; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 204; *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*, ed. by A. Galeazzi (Florence: Nardini, 1986), p. 142, pl. XCII; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 84, 87-88, fig. p. 84; B. J. Watts, 'Sandro Botticelli's Drawings for *Inferno* VIII and IX: Narrative Revision and the Role of Manuscript Tradition', *Word and Image*, 11, no. 2 (April-June 1995), 149-73 (figs 2, 7, pp. 151, 152, 154).

²² Further information on this manuscript can be found in: B. Da Costa Greene & M. P. Harrsen, *The Pierpont Morgan Library: Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts Held at the New York Public Library* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1934), no. 91, pl. 73; S. De Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, 3 vols (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1935-40), II, 1480; T. De Marinis, *La biblioteca napoletana dei Re d'Aragona*, 4 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1947), II, 61, nm 111, pls 4-7;

M. P. Harrsen & G. K. Boyce, *Italian Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1953), p. 26, no. 47, pls 38, 39; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 295-300; Rotili, pp. 8, 51-53, 89-93, pls XXVI-XXVIII; *Italian Manuscript Painting 1300-1550*, catalogue of Pierpont Morgan Library exhibition (New York: Stinehour Press, 1984), no. 18; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 506; Nassar, pp. 144, 375; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for Dante's *Inferno*', fig. 3; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for *Inferno* VIII and IX', figs 5, 8, 9, pp. 152, 154, 157; Taylor & Finley, figs 161, 182, 203, 217.

²³ Here, Cerberus is represented as a medieval devil rather than the classical monster of the *Aeneid*. In the earliest and latest manuscripts of the *Commedia*, Cerberus, Charon, Phlegyas, the Minotaur, and other characters of classical origin are usually depicted as the classical figures described by Dante and the authors from whom he took them. However, in the middle period of *Commedia* illustration when this manuscript was produced, these classical figures have become medieval devils, in accordance with the suppression of classical tendencies in art across Europe after the plague – the style of International Gothic. See M. Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), in which the author discusses the various effects of the plague on society and the arts.

²⁴ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Bandini, III, 225-26; Batines, no. 39; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 151, no. 156; *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, p. 83, no. 112; Degenhart & Schmitt, I.ii, no. 180A, pp. 276-77; I.iii, pls 202a-b; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 198.

²⁵ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 475; R. Fry, 'A Note on Giovanni di Paolo', *Burlington Magazine*, VI (1905), 312; B. Berenson, *Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York & London: G. P. Putnam, 1907), p. 177; W. Mathie, 'Die Handschrift Batines 475', *Deutsches Dante-Jahrbuch*, 15 (1933), 185-87; J. Pope-Hennessy, *Giovanni di Paolo* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937), p. 114; Biagi, III, figs on pp. 393, 497, 673, 689, 717, 737, 741; De Marinis, II, 62-63, 207; III, pls 81-87; J. Pope-Hennessy, *A Siennese Codex of the Divine Comedy* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1947); J. Pope-Hennessy, *Siennese Quattrocento Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1947), p. 16;

G. Robertson, Review of J. Pope-Hennessy, *A Sienese Codex*, *Burlington Magazine*, 91 (1949), 26-27; F. Wormald, 'The Yates Thompson Manuscripts', *British Museum Quarterly*, 16 (1951), 4-6; Salmi, *La miniatura fiorentina gotica*, p. 47; Salmi, 'Problemi figurativi', p. 178; Degenhart, pp. 82, 83, 85, 86, fig. 26; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 269-76; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 404; J. Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso: The Illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993); *Pagine di Dante*, p. 91; Nassar, pp. 110, 133, 159, 187, 196, 348; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for Dante's *Inferno*', fig. 8, p. 176; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for *Inferno* VIII and IX', figs 6, 10, pp. 152-53, 157; Taylor & Finley, figs 18, 21, 26, 44, 91, 102, 108, 116, 135, 149, 153, 163, 184, 187, 194, 198, 205, 211, 215, 218, 224, 227, 230, 234, 237, 240, 242, 245, 246, 251 and figs on pp. 112, 188; F. Carey, ed., *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come* (London: British Museum Press, 1999), p. 92, no. 21; L. S. Malke, ed., *Dantes Göttliche Komödie: Drucke und Illustrationen aus sechs Jahrhunderten* (catalogue of exhibition at the Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) (Leipzig: Faber & Faber, 2000), pp. 10, 65, 70, 74, figs 55, 57, 61, 65, 66, 67.

²⁶ It is interesting to note that the artist has portrayed both the dream figures and the earthly figures of Ugolino and his family in the tower as being naked, just as if they were souls in Hell. This could have been a device intended to provide continuity between these scenes and those taking place in Hell itself. The four figures shown in the dream sequence appear to be the figures of the sons, the artist having omitted the father figure here. These figures should really be 'lupicini' as described in the dream (*Inf.* XXXIII, 29), but perhaps this is the artist's attempt at clarification.

²⁷ For further information on Botticelli's illustrations see: Batines, no. 331 and no. 502, and I, 300, Anm. 2; F. Lippmann, *Drawings by Sandro Botticelli for Dante's Divina Commedia* (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896); Volkmann, pp. 33-34, and III, 44; J. Shapely, 'A Note to *Purgatory* X, 55-63', *Art Bulletin*, IV (1921), 19-26 (pp. 24, 25, 26 and pl. 4, fig. 3); A. Venturi, *Il Botticelli interprete di Dante* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1921); G. Mambelli, *Gli annali delle edizioni dantesche* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1931); *Quinto centenario della Biblioteca Vaticana: Miniature del Rinascimento*, exhibition catalogue (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1950), pp. 35, 36, no. 41;

Y. Batard, *Les dessins de Sandro Botticelli pour la Divine Comédie* (Paris: O. Perrin, 1952); L. Donati, *Il Botticelli e le prime illustrazioni della Divina Commedia* (Florence: Olschki, 1962); L. Donati, 'Vicende dei disegni botticelliani per la *Divina Commedia*', *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia*, XXXIII (1965), 52-61; *Dante: Mostra nazionale dantesca*, pp. 181-82, and figs 2, 3, 4; K. Clark, *The Drawings of Sandro Botticelli for Dante's Divine Comedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); M. Roddewig, 'Rezension zu Kenneth Clark', *Deutsches Dante-Jahrbuch*, 53/54 (1978/79), 157-67; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 684; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 91-92, 93, 94; C. Gizzi, ed., *Botticelli e Dante* (Milan: Electa, 1990); Pope-Hennessy, *The Illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo*, p. 19, fig. 13; Nassar, pp. 35, 134, 146, 152, 159, 167, 174, 198, 204, 213, 222, 232, 239, 251, 261, 268, 279, 286, 299, 303, 313, 323, 337, 348, 361, 379, 380; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for Dante's *Inferno*', pp. 163-201; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for *Inferno* VIII and IX', pp. 149-73; J. Risset & P. Dreyer, *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri, illustrazioni di Sandro Botticelli* (Paris: Le Lettère, 1996); Taylor & Finley, figs 3, 33, 40, 45, 56, 63, 96, 106, 107, 119, 123, 133, 141, 145, 152, 160, 162, 165, 169, 170, 176, 179, 183, 188, 191, 192, 201, 212, 222, 226, 233, 238, 241, 254 and full-page illustration p. 6; Malke, pp. 9-10, 17-44, 45-62, figs 2, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 29, 35, 37, 59, 68; *Sandro Botticelli: the Drawings for Dante's Divine Comedy*, exhibition catalogue (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2000).

²⁸ Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for *Inferno* VIII and IX', p. 157.

²⁹ For further information on this manuscript see: Batines, no. 443 (I, 652-53, II, 249); P. I. Prompt, 'I codici parigini della *Commedia*', *Alighieri*, III (1891-92), 301-24 (pp. 317-18); L. Auvray, *Les manuscrits de Dante des bibliothèques de France* (Paris: E. Thorin, 1892), pp. 115-27, no. XII, pls I, II; R. Galli, *I manoscritti e gli incunaboli della Biblioteca Comunale d'Imola* (Imola: Tipografia d'Ignazio Galeati e Figli, 1894), pp. 56-57; C. Morel, *Une illustration de l'Enfer de Dante* (Paris: H. Weller, 1896); Kraus, pp. 588-91, figs 45-47; Volkmann, pp. 29-30; P. Toesca, *La pittura e la miniatura nella Lombardia dai più antichi monumenti alla metà del Quattrocento* (Milan: Hoepli, 1912), pp. 530-31, 580, figs 431-33; Biagi, I, figs on pp. 553, 573, 625, 641, 697, 733; P. Toesca,

Monumenti e studi per la storia della miniatura italiana, vol. 1: *La collezione di Ulrico Hoepli* (Milan: Hoepli, 1930), p. 110, pl. 93; Schubring, figs 48, 49; Pope-Hennessy, *A Sienese Codex*, p. 8; *Mostra storica nazionale*, p. 180, no. 266; E. Pellegrin, *La bibliothèque des Visconti et des Sforza, ducs de Milan au XVe siècle* (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1955), p. 392; F. Di Pretoro, *Codici e principali edizioni della Divina Commedia* (Bibliotechina della rassegna di cultura e vita scolastica, 14) (Rome: Gismondi, 1956) p. 38; *Arte Lombarda dai Visconti agli Sforza*, catalogue of exhibition at Palazzo Reale, Milan, ed. by G. A. Dell'Aqua (Milan: Silvana, 1958), no. 208, pp. 67-68, pl. LXXIX; Salmi, *Problemi figurativi*, p. 179; Degenhart, pp. 83, 86, 87, figs 27, 28, 29; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 38, 318-21; A. Stones, 'An Italian Miniature in the Gambier-Parry Collection', *Burlington Magazine*, III (Jan. 1969), 7-12; I. Toesca, 'In margine al "Maestro delle Vitae Imperatorum"', *Paragone*, XX, no. 237 (Nov. 1969), 73-77; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 574; E. Carpugi, 'Contributo alla conoscenza dell'*Inferno* Parigi-Imola e del suo miniatore, detto il Maestro del Vitae Imperatorum', in *La Miniatura Italiana tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, ed. by Sesti, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1985), I, 285-96; *Pagine di Dante*, p. 93; Pope-Hennessy, *The Illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo*, p. 9, fig. 3; Nassar, pp. 34, 89, 90, 109, 158, 164, 165, 172, 268, 336; Taylor & Finley, figs 34, 84, 95.

³⁰ Further information on this manuscript can be found in note 34.

³¹ Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for Dante's *Inferno*', p. 176.

³² For further information on this manuscript see: Batines, no. 511; Volkmann, p. 41; Biagi, III, fig. on p. 121; Hughes Gillerman, p. 29; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 252-57; W. O. Hassall, *The Holkham Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 26, pls 77-84; Rotili, pp. 7, 53-56, 73-77, pls I, II, IV, V; A. C. De la Mare, 'Further Manuscripts from Holkham Hall', *Bodleian Library Record*, X, 6 (1982), 327-38 (pp. 333-34); A. C. De la Mare, 'Further Italian Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library', in *La miniatura italiana tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, ed. by E. Sesti, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1985), I, 127-54 (p. 131); Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 364; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 84-85; Watts, 'Botticelli's Drawings for *Inferno* VIII and IX', figs 3, 4, 11, p. 152; Taylor & Finley, figs 138, 139, 147, 148, 220, 249; Malke, p. 78, fig. 70

³³ On this manuscript see note 53.

³⁴ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 407; Bassermann, pp. 217-19, pls 21-24; E. Mandarini, *I codici manoscritti della Biblioteca Oratoriana di Napoli* (Naples: A. & S. Festa, 1897), pp. 3-20; Volkmann, pp. 26-27; A. Bellucci, 'La raccolta dantesca della Biblioteca Oratoriana di Napoli', *Bollettino del Bibliofilo*, 3 (1921), 1-64 (pp. 50-64, pl. 4); L. Montalto, 'Le miniature del cod. Filippino della *Divina Commedia*', *Napoli Nobilissima*, n.s. II, 17 (1921), 22-29; Biagi, I, figs on pp. 463, 477, 797; A. Bellucci, 'La biblioteca dei Girolamini di Napoli', *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia*, IV (1930), 38-64 (pp. 53-61, figs on pp. 56, 58, 60); *Codici e principali edizioni della Divina Commedia*, p. 38; Salmi, *La miniatura italiana*, pp. 33-34; Hughes Gillerman, pp. 9, 16-17, 24; Salmi, 'Problemi figurativi', pp. 177-78; Degenhart, pp. 84, 86; *Mostra Dantesca. Manoscritti e libri a stampa posseduti dalle biblioteche napoletane*, exhibition catalogue, ed. by G. Guerrieri (Naples: Biblioteche Napoletane, 1965), no. 1; *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, pp. 70-71, no. 92; Degenhart & Schmitt, I.i, no. 17, pp. 49-50; I.iii, pl. 43; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 291-92; Rotili, pp. 7, 15-23, 81-84, pls VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII; P. Giannantonio, 'I codici danteschi miniati a Napoli', *Dante Studies*, 91 (1973), 159-61; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 501; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 85, 88; Nassar, p. 231; A. Putaturo Murano & A. Perriccioli Saggese, eds, *Codici miniati della Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini di Napoli* (Naples: Edizione Scientifiche Italiane, 1995), pp. 31-39, no. 5, pls 1-8.

³⁵ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 339; G. Franciosi, *Il Dante Vaticano e l'Urbinate descritti e studiati per la prima volta* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1896), pp. 18-19, 29-60, 83-101; Bassermann, pp. 46-50, 224-26, pl. 35; Kraus, pp. 574-76, figs 35-39; Volkmann, pp. 30-32, 75-78, 123, pl. V; D'Ancona, *La Miniature italienne*, p. 68; Schubring, pls 16, 34, 89, 181, 198, 200, 295; Salmi, *La miniatura fiorentina gotica*, p. 64; Salmi, *La miniatura italiana*, pp. 57, 60, fig. 76; M. Bonicatti, 'Contributo al Girdaldi', *Commentari*, VIII (1957), 195-210; M. Salmi, *Pittura e miniatura a Ferrara nel primo rinascimento* (Milan: Silvana, 1961), p. 46 and figs 40b, 39b; *Dante: Mostra nazionale dantesca*, pp. 179-80, fig. facing p. 48; L. M. Tocci & M. Salmi, eds, *Il Dante Urbinate latino della Biblioteca Vaticana 365*

(facsimile), 2 vols (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1965); Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 331-32; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 690 and fig. 53; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 91, 92, 93-94, fig. p. 93; Morgan, p. 25, pl. 7; Nassar, pp. 61, 79, 145, 151, 166, 173, 197, 221, 377, 378; G. Mariani Canova, *Guglielmo Giraldi: Miniaturista estense* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1995); Taylor & Finley, figs 43, 61; M. Collareta, 'Visibile Parlare', *Prospettiva*, 86 (April 1997), 102-04 (pp. 102-03, fig. 1).

³⁶ The struggle to incorporate the ideas of the Renaissance into what was essentially a medieval format for painting was apparently no easy task, and there is some truth in Peter Brieger's remark that 'the further the Renaissance illuminators progressed toward realism and a classical sense of beauty, the further they moved away from the original meaning of the poem' (Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 90).

³⁷ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 281; D. Barbaran, 'Illustrazione di quattro codici della *Divina Commedia* esistenti nel Seminario Vescovile di Padova', in *Dante e Padova* (Padua: P. Prosperini, 1865), pp. 391-406 (pp. 400-02); Kraus, p. 584; Volkmann, pp. 42-43; *Mostra storica nazionale*, pp. 163-64, no. 244, p. XLV; Salmi, *La miniatura italiana*, p. 39; Degenhart, pp. 111, 116, fig. 83; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 305-08; L. Armstrong, *Renaissance Miniature Painters and Classical Imagery* (London: H. Miller, 1981), p. 89, no. 16; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 534; *Pagine di Dante*, pp. 88-89, fig. p. 85; P. Mario, *Una Divina Commedia illustrata del Seminario di Padova*, (Tesi di laurea, University of Padua, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 1991-92); Pope-Hennessy, *The Illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo* p. 56, fig. 33; Nassar, pp. 109, 278; G. Mariani Canova, 'I manoscritti miniati', in *Il Seminario di Gregorio Barbarigo. Trecento Anni di Arte, Cultura e Fede*, ed by P. Gios & A. Spiazzi (Padua: Seminario di Padova, 1997), pp. 151-77 (pp. 160-62); P. Mario, 'L'illustrazione di Dante nel tardo gotico padano: una *Divina Commedia* della biblioteca del Seminario di Padova', *Rivista di storia della miniatura*, 1-2 (1996-97), 141-45; Taylor & Finley, figs 177, 210.

³⁸ See Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 280.

³⁹ De Hamel, p. 149.

⁴⁰ See E. G. Gardner, *Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature* (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1930), pp. 130-151;

R. S. & L. H. Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), in particular ch. X, 'Italian Manuscripts', pp. 114-21; *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. by R. S. Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959); D. Branca Delcorno, 'Romanzi arturiani', in *E.D.* IV, 1028-30; M. Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), pp. 25-136.

⁴¹ See P. Deschamps, 'La légende arthurienne à la cathédrale de Modène et l'école lombarde de sculpture romane', *Monuments Piot*, XXVIII (1925-26), 93, and 'Etude sur la paléographie des inscriptions lapidaires de la fin de l'époque mérovingienne aux dernières années du XIIe siècle', *Bulletin monumental*, LXXXVIII (1929), 5-86; D. H. Gerould, 'Arthurian Romance and the Date of the Relief at Modena', *Speculum*, 10 (1935), 355-76.

⁴² Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 240-44.

⁴³ For a copy of this miniature, see Taylor & Finley, fig. 196.

⁴⁴ See Whitaker, illustrations 2a, 2b, 2c, 3. See also Battaglia Ricci, *Parole e immagini*, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁵ The tradition of charts of Hell in relation to the *Commedia*, leading up to Botticelli's version, are summarized by Giovanni Morello in 'Sandro Botticelli's Chart of Hell', in *Sandro Botticelli: the Drawings for Dante's 'Divine Comedy'*, pp. 318-25 (p. 323, figs 63, 64).

⁴⁶ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 419; G. Mazzatinti, ed., *Inventario dei manoscritti italiani delle biblioteche di Francia*, 3 vols (Rome: Presso i principali librai, 1886-88), I, 8; Auvray, pp. 77-82, no. XXX; Kraus, p. 564, figs 25, 43, 44; Volkmann, pp. 8, 29; A. Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, 11 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1901-07), V, 1016; Biagi, I, figs on pp. 569, 581, 673; II, figs on pp. 137, 165, 233; Pope-Hennessy, *A Siennese Codex*, pp. 11-12, fig. IV; Salmi, *La miniatura fiorentina gotica*, pl. LVIII; Hughes Gillerman, p. 34; M. Levi D'Ancona, 'Bartolomeo di Fruosino', *Art Bulletin*, 43 (1961), 81-97; M. Levi D'Ancona, *Miniatura e miniatori a Firenze dal XIV al XVI secolo* (Florence: Olschki, 1962), pp. 44ff; Salmi, 'Problemi figurativi', p. 178; Degenhart, pp. 76, 78, 82, figs 14, 21; Degenhart & Schmitt, I.ii, 284, fig. 389a; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 314-16; Roddewig *Dante Alighieri*, no. 550 and fig. 36; *Pagine di Dante*, p. 89; Pope-Hennessy, *The Illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo*, p. 9, fig. 4 and p. 14, fig. 7; Nassar,

pp. 131, 150, 171, 186, 203, 213, 259, 267, 279, 286, 303, 328; Taylor & Finley, figs 69, 85, 92; Malke, fig. 235.

⁴⁷ See Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 282.

⁴⁸ The design is the same way around as in the fresco, but is reversed – a mirror image – from that used in Vat. lat. 4776, and some details are different; the seated, crowned female figure (Lavinia) on the left of the Laur. 40.7 miniature, for example, is absent in the Vatican illustration and in the fresco. It may be that this artist copied the fresco design directly, or remembered it, adding details of his own, whereas the Vat. lat. 4776 artist may have traced a cartoon or pattern of the composition – hence the reversed image.

⁴⁹ See Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 282.

⁵⁰ On MS Medicei Palatini 72 see: Batines, no. 62; D'Ancona, *La miniatura fiorentina*, II, 149-51, no. 155; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 196.

⁵¹ See Pope-Hennessy, *The Illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo*, pp. 12-13.

⁵² The *Ottimo* was produced in three redactions: the first in 1333-34 and found, for example, in Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Pluteo 40.19; the second, slightly later and found in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1004; the third after 1337 but before 1340, as seen in Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barberiniani latini 4103 or MS Vaticani latini 3201. See F. Mazzoni, 'Ottimo commento', in *E.D.* IV, 220-22.

⁵³ One such example is Chantilly, containing the commentary of Guido da Pisa. The commentator himself oversaw this prestigious project and clearly had a profound influence on the skilled artist who produced the illustrations. Lucia Battaglia Ricci discusses the relationship between the illustrations and Guido's commentary in this manuscript in 'Testo e immagini in alcuni manoscritti illustrati della *Commedia*: le pagine d'apertura', in *Studi offerti a Luigi Blasucci dai colleghi e dagli allievi pisani*, ed. by L. Lugnani et al. (Lucca: mpf editore, 1996), pp. 23-49 (pp. 32-43).

⁵⁴ In his 'Singing the Book: Orality in the Reception of Dante's *Comedy*', in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by A. A. Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 214-39, John Ahern defines four groups or levels of literacy among the population of the Italian communes of the time: illiterates, semi-literates, vernacular literates, and Latin literates. The illustrators

mostly would have belonged to the second group: 'The semi-literates or *indocti* were unschooled artisans and craftsmen, members of the *populo minuto* and *arti minori*, whose livelihoods required access to written data. Their rudimentary pragmatic literacy allowed them to sign their names and haltingly decipher bills of sale, simple accounts, and like documents. For more complex operations, they employed notaries' (p. 218). It can be assumed that commentators belonged to the fourth group

⁵⁵ A handful of Dante manuscripts are, however, known to have been illustrated by members of the monastic orders. A major example was Don Simone Camaldolese, who completed some illustrations for three extant Florentine copies of the *Commedia*. For further information, consult Kanter, pp. 198-201.

⁵⁶ Whitaker, p. 27.

⁵⁷ Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 83.

⁵⁸ A. J. Minnis & A. B. Scott, eds, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 439.

⁵⁹ De Hamel, p. 142.

⁶⁰ Ahern, p. 215. On Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio see *Egloga I*, ed. by E. Cecchini, in *Opere minori*, II, 652-61, and also G. Martellotti, 'Giovanni del Virgilio', in *E.D.* II, 193-94.

⁶¹ Boccaccio is seen in a portrait on the frontispiece of his *Bucolicum carmen* (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS 34.49, dated 1379) in the act of lecturing on a book before a circle of seated monks. It has been suggested that this book may be the *Commedia*. See V. Kirkham, 'Renaissance Portraits of Boccaccio', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 16 (1987), 284-305 (pp. 288-90).

⁶² On MS Ashburnhamiani Appendice Dantesca 3 see: *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, pp. 118-19, no. 165; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 183.

⁶³ Petrarch, *Familiares* 21.5, in *Le Familiari*, ed. and trans. by U. Dotti, 3 vols (Rome: Archivio Guido Izzi, 1991-94). See Ahern, p. 215.

⁶⁴ There appears to have been a tradition of public performances of acting out scenes from Hell, such as one recorded in Florence in 1304. See P. Armour, 'Comedy and the Origins of Italian Theatre around the time of Dante', in *Writers and Performers in Italian Drama from the Time of Dante to Pirandello*, ed. by J. R. Dashwood &

J. E. Everson (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), pp. 1-31 (pp. 8-9).

⁶⁵ Further information on this manuscript can be found in: Batines, no. 94; Bassermann, p. 216, pl. 17; Kraus, p. 594; Volkmann, p. 36; Biagi, I, figs on pp. 245, 277, 343, 403, 459; Vagaggini, p. 7, pl. 17; Hughes Gillerman, pp. 11, 12, 16; *Mostra di codici ed edizioni dantesche*, pp. 62-63, no. 79 and pl. VI; Brieger, Meiss & Singleton, I, 244-55; Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 289.

⁶⁶ Otto Pächt, *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 32.

⁶⁷ Pächt, p. 33.

⁶⁸ In fact Florentine illuminators in the Trecento belonged to the Guild of the *Medici e Speziali*, whose members also dealt in the raw materials used by artists. See Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, p. 30. This was Dante's own guild.

⁶⁹ Alexander notes that few 13th-century illustrators identified themselves by signatures or self-portraits compared with their 12th-century predecessors, and explains that this may be due to changed social circumstances in which they worked and their social situation relative to those for whom they worked (*Medieval Illuminators*, p.23).

⁷⁰ S. Samek-Ludovici, with N. Ravenna, *Dante's Divine Comedy*, trans. by P. J. Tallon (Geneva: Miller Graphics, 1979), pp. 32, 40.

⁷¹ For fuller information on this manuscript and its illustrator, see M. P. Mossi, 'Prima notizia sul Codice Trivulziano 1083 della *Divina Commedia*', *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo, Classe di lettere*, 106 (1972), 714-25, and by the same author, *Nuova notizia particolareggiata del codice trivulziano 1083*, *Memorie dell'Istituto Lombardo, Accademia di Scienze e Lettere*: XXXVI, 4 (Milan: Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, 1979).

⁷² See Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, p. 32, fig. 49.

⁷³ Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, p. 149.



Fig. 2: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatini 313, fol. 74v. By permission of the Italian Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

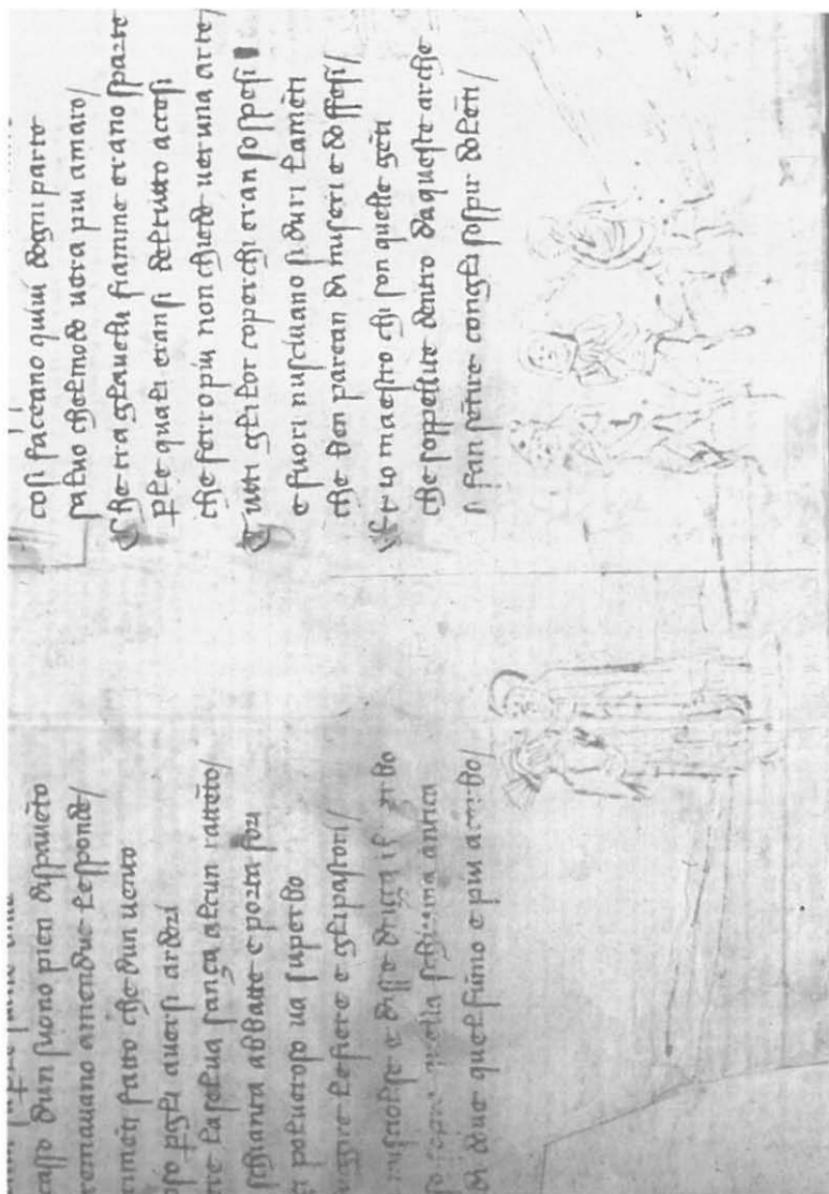


Fig. 3: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS laur. Strozziani 148, fol. 13v. By permission of the Italian Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.



Fig. 4: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS laur. Stroziani 148, fol. 16r. By permission of the Italian Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

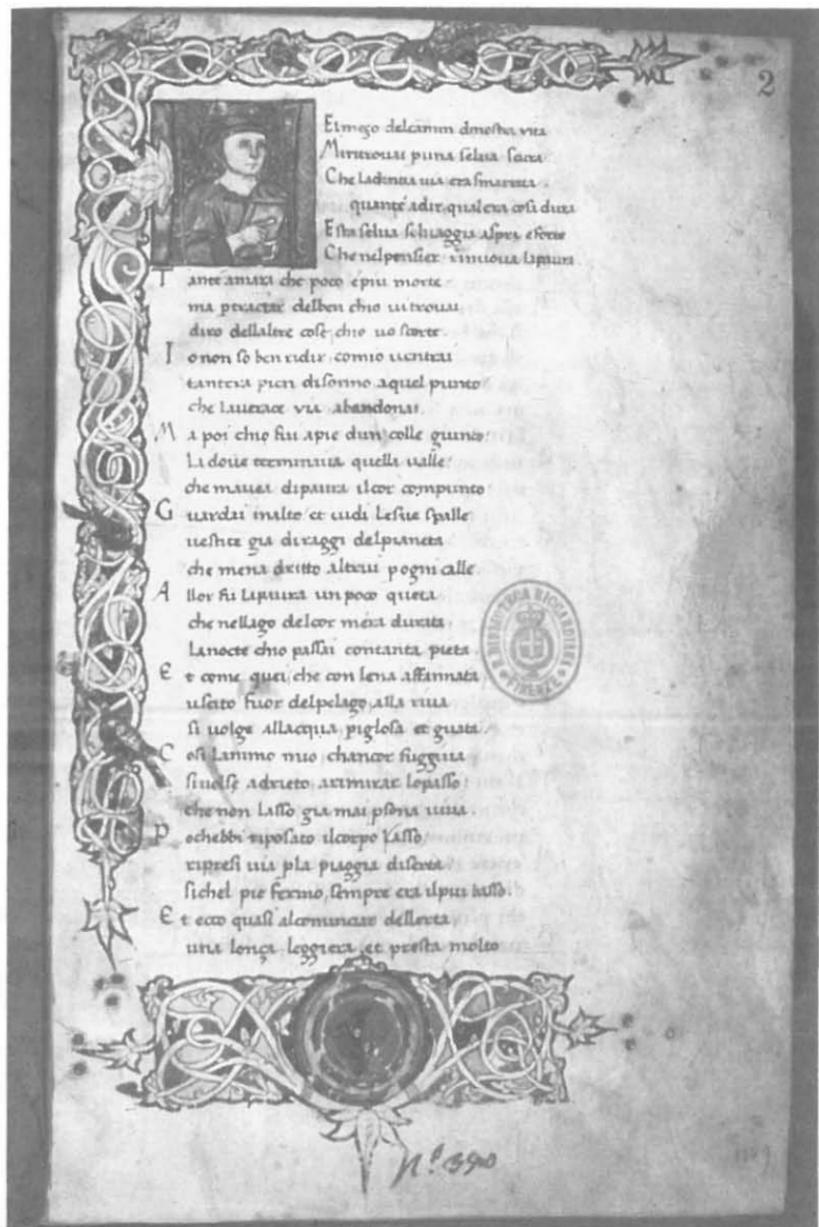


Fig. 6: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1109, fol. 2r. By permission of the Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

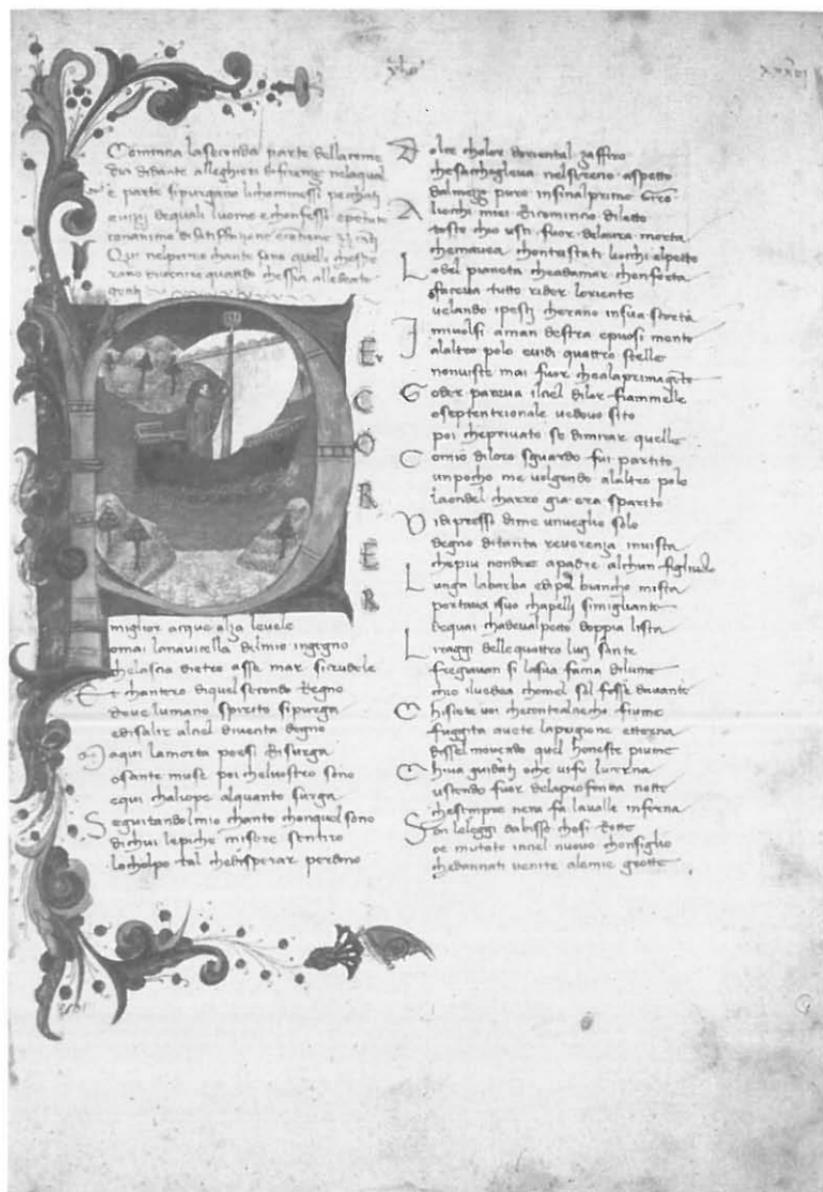


Fig. 7: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Pluteo (Gaddiani) 90 sup 126, fol. 36r. By permission of the Italian Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.



Fig. 8: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1004, fol. 93r. By permission of the Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.



Fig. 9: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatini 319, fol. 47r. By permission of the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

tanta gratia
 Chome da fabbro lar
 ce del martello:
 da tanti motori chon
 uen despiri:
Tl ael au tanti lumi
 fanno tello.
 de la mente profoda
 cholui uolue.
 prende lymage a se
 ne suggiello:
Qhomo lalma de retto
 a uostri plue
 per differentia men
 tra e confirmate.
 a diuerse potenze si
 tuolue:
Qhosi lanecelligenca i
 sua bontate
 esultiplica et per le
 stelle spi egna
 girando se soua sua
 unitate:
Virti diuersa fa diuer
 sa legna
 Chol prezioso corpo
 che laurua
 nel qual si chome
 vita in lui si legna

Per la natura licor
 onde derua.
 La uirtu mixta per
 lo corpo luce
 Chome leticia per
 pupilla uiua:
Da essa uen cio che
 da luce a luce
 par differente no
 da dento a tato.
 Et cio su mal pun
 cpio che produce
 hon forme a sua
 bonta lo carnel chaw
 Qui comincia il canto.

Si e il
 sol che pua
 damor s'hal
 dol petto.
 Di tella uerita ma
 uca chuerto
 prouando et n'pno



Si e il
 sol che pua
 damor s'hal
 dol petto.
 Di tella uerita ma
 uca chuerto
 prouando et n'pno

Fig. 10: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatini 313, fol. 165r. By permission of the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.



Fig. 13: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS laur. Strozziani 152, fol. 8r. By permission of the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

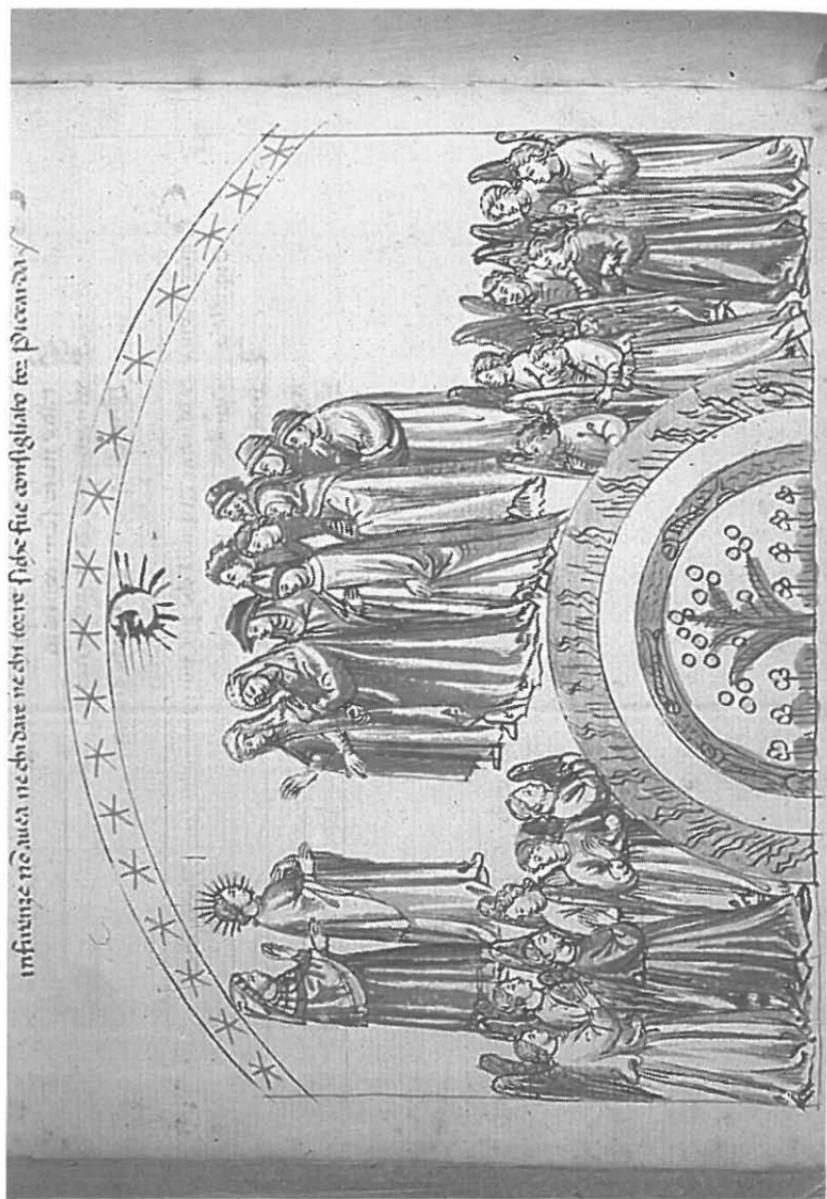


Fig. 15: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS laur. Medicei Palatini 74, fol. 32v. By permission of the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

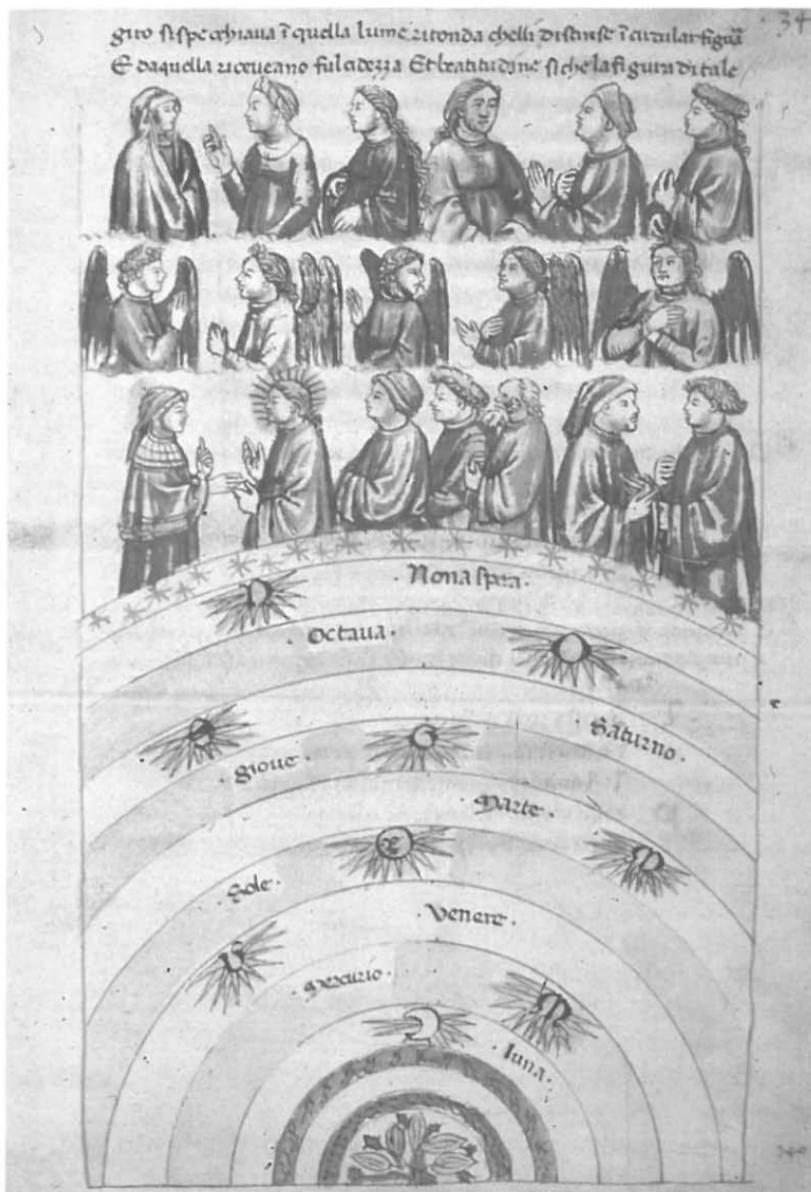


Fig. 16: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS laur. Medicei Palatini 74, fol. 340r. By permission of the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.



Fig. 17: London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 36, fol. 61r. By permission of the British Library.

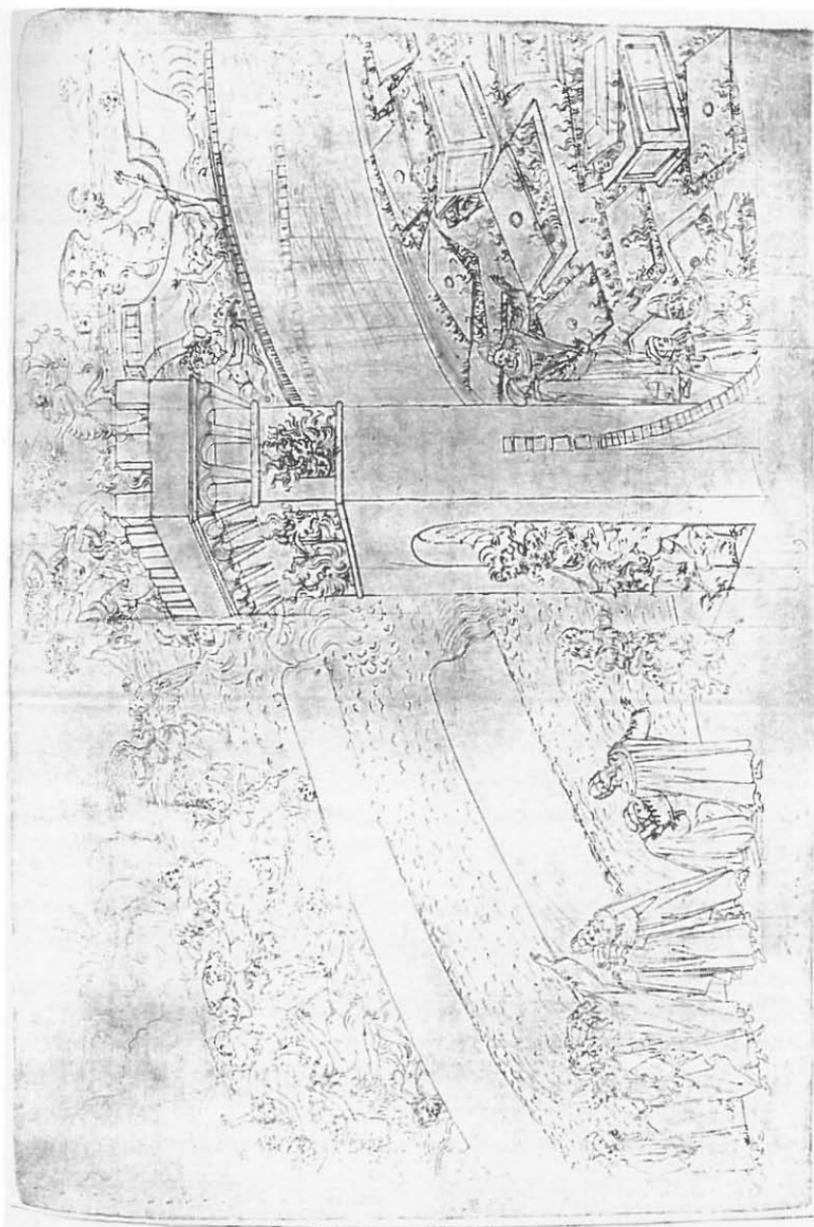


Fig. 18: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reginese latini 1896, fol. 97v. By permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

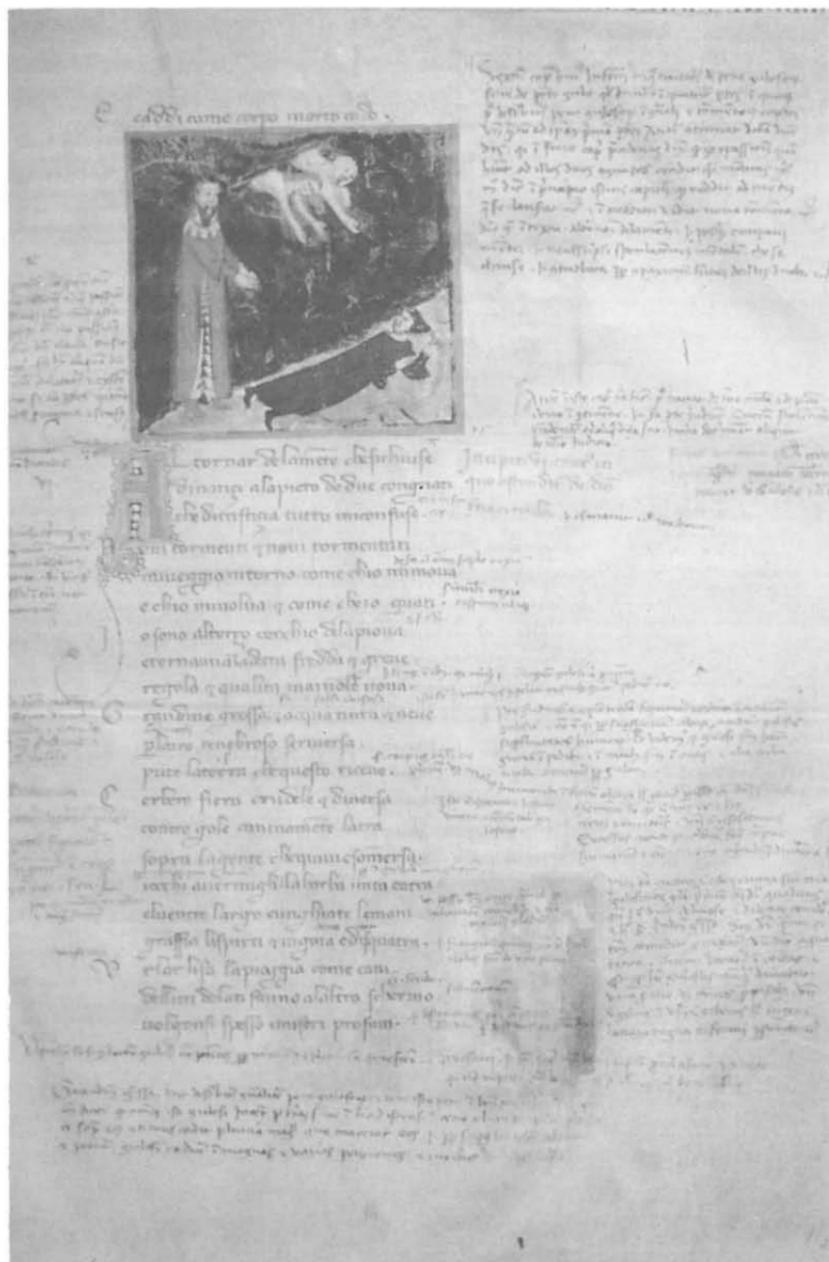


Fig. 20: Naples, Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini, MS 420, fol. 14r. By permission of the Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini.

P er piu fiare gli occhi et lo spinte
 quella le hura & scolora il viso
 ma sol un punto fu quel ce unte
 Q uando leggemmo il difiato riso
 esser habilitato da cotanto amore
 questi che non dante nonie diuoto
 L a bocca mi balc io tutto tremante
 a dalcotto fu il libro & che lo ferisse
 quel giorno piu non in leggemmo auante
 M entre che lui sputo quello disse
 l'altro piangesi che di pietade
 io uenni meneg si como marille
 E t caddi conte corpo morto cade



Fig. 21: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Urbinati latini 365, fol. 14v. By permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.



Fig. 22: Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, MS 67, fol. 52v. By permission of the Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile.



Fig. 23: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1005, fol. 158. By permission of the Biblioteca Riccardiana. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

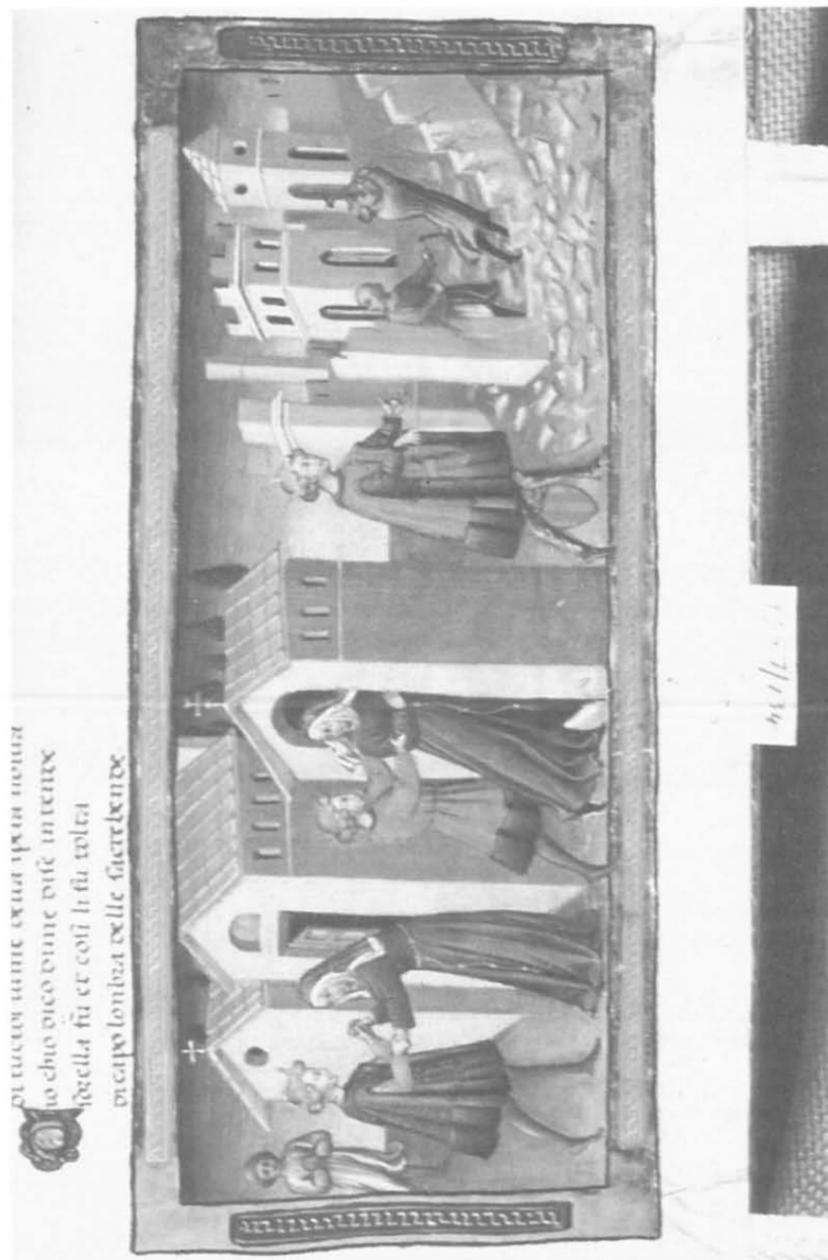


Fig. 24: London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 36, fol. 134r. By permission of the British Library.

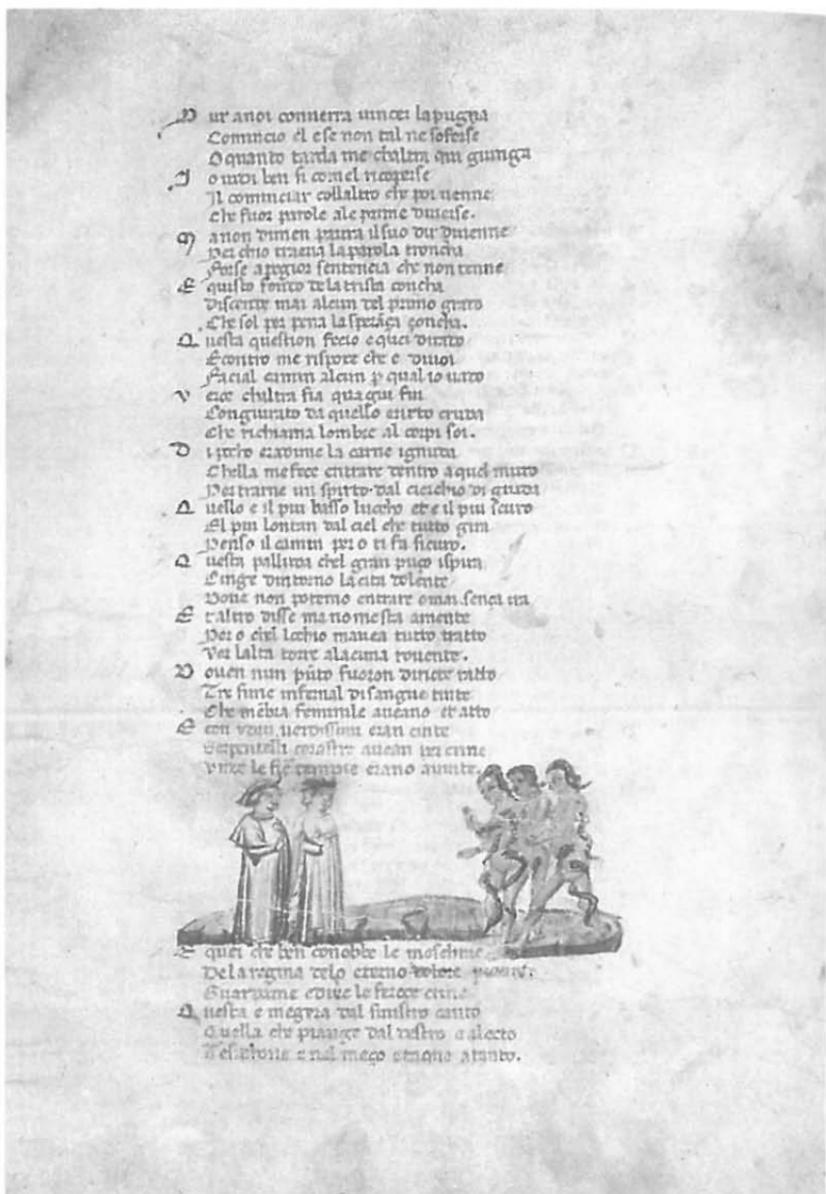


Fig. 25: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conventi Soppressi C III 1266, fol. 4r. By permission of the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali*. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

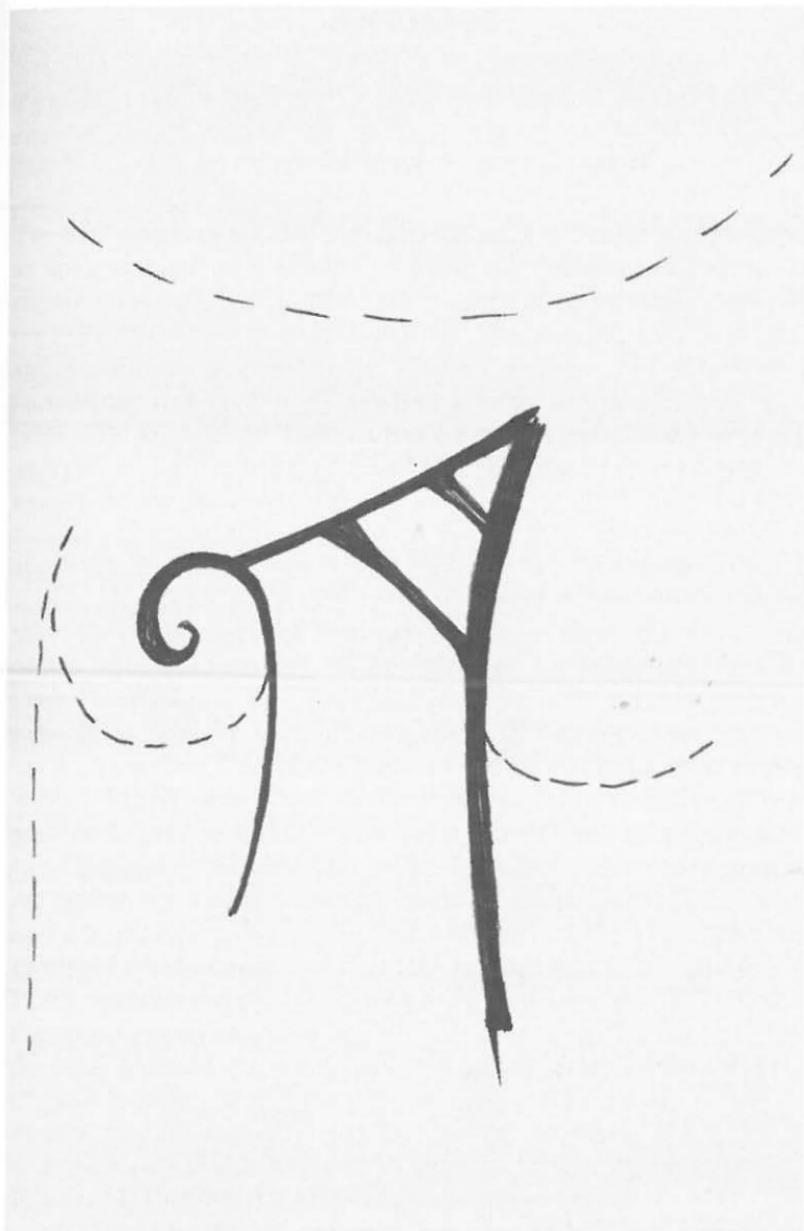


Fig. 26: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS laur. Pluteo 40.2, fol. 3v, artist's signature (author's copy).