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Dante's Reader

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Leone Gazziero, « Dante's Reader »

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Dante : Introduction

Even if Dante's work involves a fair amount of autobiographical material and occasionally fashions itself as a record of personal experiences, his writings reveal surprisingly few facts about his life. With one exception though : Dante's banishment from Florence, which first occurred in January 1302 and soon escalated into permanent exile. As the first excerpt from [T1] shows, it is a testament to the callous expediency with which Dante's enemies took him out of the Florentine political equation that the whole proceeding (criminal conviction and first proscription) was carried out while Dante was on a diplomatic mission to Rome, precisely where his fate – and the fate of other prominent White Guelfs, his political associates within the local pro-papal faction – had been decided ahead of his embassy. As the second excerpt from [T1] also shows, exile marked something of a turning point in Dante's life, a defining moment which he came to embrace both as a man and as a literate. First and foremost, it meant leaving behind everything he held dear, living thereafter in bitter need : blame, hardship and humiliation being then and always the outcast's lot. More to the point, the death warrant, confiscation of property and loss of citizenship which were repeatedly forced upon him (and, eventually, when they came of age, upon his sons) not only crushed whatever hope he had to set foot in Florence again, but ultimately shaped his mature views on the civil unrest and periodical bloodshed that had plagued Italy's recent history. How to redeem the country from the evils partisan politics had brought upon the Italian peoples became Dante's first concern and constant preoccupation. While the solution he advocated was by no means original and – politically speaking – as much a thing of the past as the Sicilian vernacular that has risen to prominence with Frederic II and Manfred, his answers to Italy's past and current predicaments were rooted in a line of argument whose philosophical breadth, formal rigour and overall coherence were, if not unparalleled, at least second to none and – philosophically speaking – more compelling than most. Excerpts from [T2] present us with Dante's plea for peace, the cornerstone of his philosophy of man. The path that leads to peace as well as the means to maintain and eventually restore it are the keys to Dante's understanding not only of the purpose of authority throughout history, but also – and more fundamentally – of man's true nature and destination as a rational being. According to [T2], peace is the ultimate goal of human society and – by the same token – the very reason why men associate in the first place. Should they live together as one family instead of seeking after goods that benefit some and harm others, then humanity, free from conflict and oppression, would achieve its full potential, which Dante identified with its intellectual progress, intelligence being what sets man apart from every other worldly creature.

For the core tenets of Dante's thought revolve around the idea that, in order to reach perfection, humanity must be at peace and, in order to be at peace, humanity must be ruled by a single unified authority, it does not come as a surprise that Dante rejected everything that stood in the way of a universal monarchy, be it the greed of clergymen who turned the Church of Christ into an harlot and let the French kings seize her and hold her captive, the short-sightedness of his fellow citizens eager to fight each other as soon as they ran out of outside enemies, the cruelty of the warlords who held sway in the North of the peninsula, or the pettiness of the German princelings undeserving of sitting on the imperial throne and unable to fulfil their imperial mission. As a result, one would be hard-pressed to find a stauncher supporter of the separation between secular power and temporal government, on one side, and pastoral care and religious authority, on the other. It would be equally hard to find a more sturdy advocate of the supremacy of the Emperor over and against all kinds of local, regional or national jurisdictions. Excerpts from [T3] address both issues, most eloquently.

On the other hand, it might come as a surprise that of all the worthy men whose example prompted Dante to expose his contemporaries' failures and shortcomings, the one who definitely stands out is Manente degli Uberti, a damned soul Dante meets in his journey through the Underworld. Though it is no accident that Farinata burns in Hell, his demeanour and everything he says in [T4] speak volumes about Dante's political anthropology. As an Epicurean heretic, Farinata may very well feel nothing but contempt for divine justice and retribution ; likewise, as a Ghibelline chieftain, he may very well display an unyielding attachment to his party and lineage. That being said, his character possesses – along with honour, courtesy and valour – one redeeming quality, namely an uncompromising love for his homeland which he refused to identify with himself, his power base or his legacy. Whatever Dante deemed Farinata's ultimate destiny ought to be, he depicted him as a man who – when it mattered most – raised himself above partisan passions and saved the City he had contributed to tear apart from its destruction at the hands of his allies who were more than willing to rip their enemies' cause out, root and stem. Even though – in the aftermath of the victory at Montaperti (1260) – strength and right were on his side, Farinata refused to deal a mortal blow to those who had cast him out and chose to share his homeland with them rather than make certain that it will never be theirs again. As the dialogue between Dante and Farinata unfolds, it becomes clear that there's no love lost between the two. It also becomes clear that what drives both – the very thing Dante cherished above all and Farinata lost but managed, almost single-handedly, to pass on to the next generation – is a dream of peace, the only hope men ever had to make a broken community whole again.

Dante : Texts

[T1 Dante] Excerpt 1

Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia. Paradiso*, G. Petrocchi (ed), Firenze, Le Lettere, 1994, XVII, 46-69 :

« Qual si partio Ipolito d'Atene
per la spietata e perfida noverca,
tal di Fiorenza partir ti convene.
Questo si vuole e questo già si cerca,
e tosto verrà fatto a chi ciò pensa
là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca.
La colpa seguirà la parte offensa
in grido, come suol ; ma la vendetta
fia testimonio al ver che la dispensa.
Tu lascerai ogne cosa diletta
più caramente ; e questo è quello strale
che l'arco de lo essilio pria saetta.
Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
lo pane altrui, e come è duro calle
lo scendere e 'l salir per l'altrui scale.
E quel che più ti graverà le spalle,
sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia
con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle ;
che tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
si farà contr' a te; ma, poco appresso,
ella, non tu, n'avrà rossa la tempia.
Di sua bestialitate il suo processo
farà la prova; sì ch'a te fia bello
averti fatta parte per te stesso ».

J. and R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri. Paradiso*, New York, Doubleday, 2007 :

« As Hippolytus was forced to flee from Athens,
because of his stepmother, treacherous and fierce,
so shall you be forced to flee from Florence.
This is the plan, already set in motion,
that soon will bring success to him who plots it
where Christ is bought and sold all day.
The populace shall blame the injured party,
as it always does, but vengeance
shall bear witness to the Truth that metes it out.
You shall leave behind all you most dearly love,
and that shall be the arrow
first loosed from exile's bow.
You shall learn how salt is the taste
of another man's bread and how hard is the way,
going down and then up another man's stairs.
But the heaviest burden your shoulders must bear
shall be the companions, wicked and witless,
among whom you shall fall in your descent.
They, utterly ungrateful, mad, and faithless,
shall turn against you. But soon enough they, not you,
shall feel their faces blushing past their brows.
Of their brutish state the results
shall offer proof. And it shall bring you honor
to have made a single party of yourself alone ».

[T1 Dante] Excerpt 2

Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, F. Brambilla Ageno (ed.), Firenze, Le Lettere, 1995, I, III, 3-5:

« Ahi, piaciuto fosse al dispensatore dell'universo che la cagione della mia scusa mai non fosse stata! ché né altri contra me avria fallato, né io sofferto avria pena ingiustamente, pena, dico, d'essilio e di povertate. [4] Poi che fu piacere delli cittadini della bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma, Fiorenza, di gittarmi fuori del suo dolce seno – nel quale nato e nutrito fui in fino al colmo della vita mia, e nel quale, con buona pace di quella, desidero con tutto lo core di riposare l'animo stancato e terminare lo tempo che m'è dato –, per le parti quasi tutte alle quali questa lingua si stende, peregrino, quasi mendicando, sono andato, mostrando contra mia voglia la piaga della fortuna, che suole ingiustamente al piagato molte volte essere imputata. [5] Veramente io sono stato legno sanza vela e sanza governo, portato a diversi porti e foci e liti dal vento secco che vapora la dolorosa povertade; e sono apparito a li occhi a molti che forse che per alcuna fama in altra forma m'aveano immaginato, nel conspetto de' quali non solamente mia persona invilio, ma di minor pregio si fece ogni opera, sì già fatta come quella che fosse a fare ».

R.H. Lansing, *Dante's* Il Convivio, New York, Garland, 1990 :

« Ah, if only it had pleased the Maker of the Universe that the cause of my apology had never existed, for then neither would others have sinned against me, nor would I have suffered punishment unjustly – the punishment, I mean, of exile and poverty. [4] Since it was the pleasure of the citizens of the most beautiful and famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me out of her sweet bosom--where I was born and bred up to the pinnacle of my life, and where, with her good will, I desire with all my heart to rest my weary mind and to complete the span of time that is given to me – I have travelled like a stranger, almost like a beggar, through virtually all the regions to which this tongue of ours extends, displaying against my will the wound of fortune for which the wounded one is often unjustly accustomed to be held accountable. [5] Truly I have been a ship without sail or rudder, brought to different ports, inlets, and shores by the dry wind that painful poverty blows. And I have appeared before the eyes of many who perhaps because of some report had imagined me in another form. In their sight not only was my person held cheap, but each of my works was less valued, those already completed as much as those yet to come] ».

[T2 Dante] Excerpt 1

Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, P.G. Ricci (ed), Firenze, Società Dantesca Italiana, 1965, I, I, 5 - III, 7 :

« [I, 5] Cumque, inter alias veritates occultas et utiles, temporalis Monarchie notitia utilissima sit et maxime latens et, propter non se habere inmediate ad lucrum, ab omnibus intemptata, in proposito est hanc de suis enucleare latibulis, tum ut utiliter mundo pervigilem, tum etiam ut palmam tanti bravii primus in meam gloriam adipiscar. […]. [II, 1] Primum quidem igitur videndum quid est quod "temporalis Monarchia" dicitur, typo ut dicam et secundum intentionem. [II, 2] Est ergo temporalis Monarchia, quam dicunt "Imperium", unicus principatus et super omnes in tempore vel in hiis et super hiis que tempore mensurantur. [II, 3] Maxime autem de hac tria dubitata queruntur: primo nanque dubitatur et queritur an ad bene esse mundi necessaria sit; […]. [II, 4] Verum, quia omnis veritas que non est principium ex veritate alicuius principii fit manifesta, necesse est in qualibet inquisitione habere notitiam de principio, in quod analetice recurratur pro certitudine omnium propositionum que inferius assummuntur. Et quia presens tractatus est inquisitio quedam, ante omnia de principio scruptandum esse videtur in cuius virtute inferiora consistant. [II, 5] Est ergo sciendum quod quedam sunt que, nostre potestati minime subiacentia, speculari tantummodo possumus, operari autem non; velut mathematica, physica et divina; quedam vero sunt que, nostre potestati subiacentia, non solum speculari sed etiam operari possumus: et in hiis non operatio propter speculationem, sed hec propter illam assummitur, quoniam in talibus operatio finis. [II, 6] Cum ergo materia presens politica sit, ymo fons atque principium rectarum politiarum, et omne politicum nostre potestati subiaceat, manifestum est quod materia presens non ad speculationem per prius, sed ad operationem ordinatur. [II, 7] Rursus, cum in operabilibus principium et causa omnium sit ultimus finis – movet enim primo agentem –, consequens est ut omnis ratio eorum que sunt ad finem ab ipso fine summatur. […]. [II, 8] Illud igitur, siquid est, quod sit finis universalis civilitatis humani generis, erit hic principium per quo omnia que inferius probanda sunt erunt manifesta sufficienter: esse autem finem huius civilitatis et illius, et non esse unum omnium finem arbitrari stultum est. [III, 1] Nunc autem videndum est quid sit finis totius humane civilitatis : quo viso, plus quam dimidium laboris erit transactum, iuxta Phylosophum ad Nicomacum. [III, 2] Et ad evidentiam eius quod queritur advertendum quod quemadmodum est finis aliquis ad quem natura producit pollicem, et alius ab hoc ad quem manum totam, et rursus alius ab utroque ad quem brachium, aliusque ab omnibus ad quem totum hominem; sic alius est finis ad quem singularem hominem, alius ad quem ordinat domesticam comunitatem, alius ad quem viciniam, et alius ad quem civitatem, et a!ius ad quem regnum, et denique optimus ad quem universaliter genus humanum Deus ecternus arte sua, que natura est, in esse producit. Et hoc queritur hic tanquam

principium inquisitionis directivum. [III, 3] Propter quod sciendum primo, quod Deus et natura nil otiosum facit, sed quicquid prodit in esse est ad aliquam operationem. Non enim essentia ulla creata ultimus finis est in intentione creantis, in quantum creans, sed propria essentie operatio: unde est quod non operatio propria propter essentiam, sed hec propter illam habet ut sit. [III, 4] Est ergo aliqua propria operatio humane universitatis, ad quam ipsa universitas hominum in tanta multitudine ordinatur; ad quam quidem operationem nec homo unus, nec domus una, nec una vicinia, nec una civitas, nec regnum particulare pertingere potest. Que autem sit illa, manifestum fiet si ultimum de potentia totius humanitatis appareat. [III, 5] Dico ergo quod nulla vis a pluribus spetie diversis participata ultimum est de potentia alicuius illorum; quia, cum illud quod est ultimum tale sit constitutivum spetiei, sequeretur quod una essentia pluribus spetiebus esset specificata: quod est impossibile. [III, 6] Non est ergo vis ultima in homine ipsum esse simpliciter sumptum, quia etiam sic sumptum ab elementis participatur; nec esse complexionatum, quia hoc reperitur in mineralibus; nec esse animatum, quia sic etiam in plantis; nec esse apprehensivum, quia sic etiam participatur a brutis; sed esse apprehensivum per intellectum possibilem: quod quidem esse nulli ab homine alii competit vel supra vel infra. [III, 7] Nam, etsi alie sunt essentie intellectum participantes, non tamen intellectus earum est possibilis ut hominis, quia essentie tales speties quedam sunt intellectuales et non aliud, et earum esse nichil est aliud quam intelligere quod est quod sunt, quod est sine interpolatione, aliter sempiterne non essent. Patet igitur quod ultimum de potentia ipsius humanitatis est potentia sive virtus intellectiva ».

P. Shaw, *Dante. Monarchy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996 :

« [I, 5] Now since among other truths which are hidden and useful, a knowledge of temporal monarchy is both extremely useful and most inaccessible, and since no one has attempted to elucidate it (on account of its not leading directly to material gain), I propose to draw it forth from where it lies hidden, so that my wakeful nights may be of benefit to the world, and so that I may be the first to win for my own glory the honour of so great a prize. […]. [II, 1] Firstly therefore we must see what is meant by "temporal monarchy", in broad terms and as it is generally understood. [II, 2] Temporal monarchy, then, which men call "empire", is a single sovereign authority set over all others in time, that is to say over all authorities which operate in those things and over those things which are measured by time. [II, 3] Now there are three main points of inquiry which have given rise to perplexity on this subject : first, is it is necessary to the well-being of the world ? […]. [II, 4] Now since every truth which is not itself a first principle must be demonstrated with reference to the truth of some first principle, it is necessary in any inquiry to know the first principle to which we refer back in the course of strict deductive argument in order to ascertain the truth of all the propositions which are advanced later. And since this present treatise is a kind of inquiry, we must at the outset investigate the principle whose truth provides a firm foundation for later propositions. [II, 5] For it must be noted that there are certain things (such as mathematics, the sciences and divinity) which are outside human control, and about which we can only theorise, but which we cannot affect by our actions; and then there are certain things which are within our control, where we can not only theorise but also act, and in these action is not for the sake of theory, but theorising is for the sake of taking action, since in these the objective is to take action. [II, 6] Now since our present subject is political, indeed is the source and starting-point of just forms of government, and everything in the political sphere comes under human control, it is clear that the present subject is not directed primarily towards theoretical understanding but towards action. [II, 7] Again, since in actions it is the final objective which sets in motion and causes everything – for that is what first moves a person who acts – it follows that the whole basis of the means for attaining an end is derived from the end itself. […]. [II, 8] Therefore whatever constitutes the purpose of the whole of human society (if there is such a purpose) will be here the first principle, in terms of which all subsequent propositions to be proved will be demonstrated with sufficient rigour; for it would be foolish to suppose that there is one purpose for this society and another for that, and not a common purpose for all of them. [III, 1] We must therefore now see what is the purpose of human society as a whole; when we have seen this, more than half our work will be done, as Aristotle says in the Ethics. [III, 2] And to throw light on the matter we are inquiring into, it should be borne in mind that, just as there is a particular purpose for which nature produces the thumb, and a different one for which she produces the whole hand, and again a purpose different from both of these for which she produces the arm, and a purpose different from all of these for which she produces the whole person; in the same way there is one purpose for which the individual person is designed, another for the household, another for the small community, yet another for the city, and another for the kingdom; and finally the best purpose of all is the one for which God Everlasting with his art, which is nature, brings into being the whole of mankind. And it is this purpose we are seeking here as the guiding principle in our inquiry. [III, 3] Consequently the first point to bear in mind is that God and nature do nothing in vain; on the contrary whatever they bring into being is designed for a purpose. For in the intention of its creator qua creator the essential nature of any created being is not an ultimate end in itself; the end is rather the activity which is proper to that nature; and so it is that the activity does not exist for the sake of the essential nature, but the essential nature for the sake of that activity. [III, 4] There is therefore some activity specific to humanity as a whole, for which the whole human race in all its vast number of individual human beings is designed; and no single person, or household, or small community, or city, or individual kingdom can fully achieve it. Now what this activity is will become clear when once we clarify what is the highest potentiality of the whole of mankind. [III, 5] I say therefore that no faculty

shared by many different species is the highest potentiality of any one of them; because, since it is precisely that highest potentiality which is the defining characteristic of the species, it would follow that one and the same essential nature was specific to several species; and this is impossible. [III, 6] So the highest faculty in a human being is not simply to exist, because the elements too share in the simple fact of existence; nor is it to exist in compound form, for that is found in minerals; nor is it to exist as a living thing, for plants too share in that; nor is it to exist as a creature with sense perception, for that is also shared by the lower animals; but it is to exist as a creature who apprehends by means of the potential intellect: this mode of existence belongs to no creature (whether higher or lower) other than human beings. [III, 7] For while there are indeed other beings who like us are endowed with intellect, nonetheless their intellect is not "potential" in the way that man's is, since such beings exist only as intelligences and nothing else, and their very being is simply the act of understanding that their own nature exists; and they are engaged in this ceaselessly, otherwise they would not be eternal. It is thus clear that the highest potentiality of mankind is his intellectual potentiality or faculty ».

[T2 Dante] Excerpt 2

Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, I, IV, 1-2 and 5 :

« [IV, 1] Satis igitur declaratum est quod proprium opus humani generis totaliter accepti est actuare semper totam potentiam intellectus possibilis, per prius ad speculandum et secundario propter hoc ad operandum per suam extensionem. [IV, 2] Et quia quemadmodum est in parte sic est in toto, et in homine particulari contingit quod sedendo et quiescendo prudentia et sapientia ipse perficitur, patet quod genus humanum in quiete sive tranquillitate pacis ad proprium suum opus, […], liberrime atque facillime se habet. Unde manifestum est quod pax universalis est optimum eorum que ad nostram beatitudinem ordinantur. […]. [IV, 5] Ex hiis ergo que declarata sunt patet per quod melius, ymo per quod optime genus humanum pertingit ad opus proprium. et per consequens visum est propinquissimum medium per quod itur in illud ad quod, velut in ultimum finem, omnia nostra opera ordinantur, quia est pax universalis, que pro principio rationum subsequentium supponatur ».

P. Shaw, *Dante. Monarchy* :

« [IV, 1] Now it has been sufficiently explained that the activity proper to mankind considered as a whole is constantly to actualise the full intellectual potential of humanity, primarily through thought and secondarily through action (as a function and extension of thought). [IV, 2] And since what holds true for the part is true for the whole, and an individual human being "grows perfect in judgment and wisdom when he sits at rest", it is apparent that mankind most freely and readily attends to this activity – […] – in the calm or tranquillity of peace. Hence it is clear that universal peace is the best of those things which are ordained for our human happiness. […]. [IV, 5] From the arguments developed so far, it is clear what is the better, indeed the best, way of enabling mankind to engage in the activity proper to humanity; and consequently we see the most direct means of achieving the goal to which all our human actions are directed as to their final end. That means is universal peace, which is to be taken as the first principle for the arguments which follow ».

[T2 Dante] Excerpt 3

Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, I, V, 1-10 ; X, 1 - XI, 2 ; XI, 8-12 and 20 :

« [V, 1] Resumens igitur quod a principio dicebatur, tria maxime dubitantur et dubitata queruntur circa Monarchiam temporalem, que comuniori vocabulo nuncupatur “Imperium” ; et de hiis, ut predictum est, propositum est sub assignato principio inquisitionem facere secundum iam tactum ordinem. [V, 2] Itaque prima questio sit: utrum ad bene esse mundi Monarchia temporalis necessaria sit. Hoc equidem, nulla vi rationis vel auctoritatis obstante, potissimis et patentissimis argumentis ostendi potest, quorum primum ab autoritate Phylosophi assummatur de suis Politicis. [V, 3] Asserit enim ibi venerabilis eius autoritas quod, quando aliqua plura ordinantur ad unum, oportet unum eorum regulare seu regere, alia vero regulari seu regi; quod quidem non solum gloriosum nomen autoris facit esse credendum, sed ratio inductiva. [V, 4] Si enim consideremus unum hominem, hoc in eo contingere videbimus, quia, cum omnes vires eius ordinentur ad felicitatem, vis ipsa intellectualis est regulatrix et rectrix omnium aliarum: aliter ad felicitatem pervenire non potest. [V, 5] Si consideremus unam domum, cuius finis est domesticos ad bene vivere preparare, unum oportet esse qui regulet et regat, quem dicunt patremfamilias, vel eius locum tenentem, iuxta dicentem Phylosophum: “Omnis domus regitur a senissimo”; et huius, ut ait Homerus, est regulare omnes et leges imponere aliis. Propter quod proverbialiter dicitur illa maledictio: “Parem habeas in domo”. [V, 6] Si consideremus vicum unum, cuius finis est commoda tam personarum quam rerum auxiliatio, unum oportet esse aliorum regulatorem, vel datum ab alio vel ex ipsis preheminentem consentientibus aliis; aliter ad illam mutuam sufficientiam non solum non pertingitur, sed aliquando, pluribus preheminere volentibus,

vicinia tota destruitur. [V, 7] Si vero unam civitatem, cuius finis est bene sufficienterque vivere, unum oportet esse regimen, et hoc non solum in recta politia, sed etiam in obliqua; quod si aliter fiat, non solum finis vite civilis amictitur, sed etiam civitas desinit esse quod erat. [V, 8] Si denique unum regnum particulare, cuius finis est is qui civitatis cum maiori fiducia sue tranquillitatis, oportet esse regem unum qui regat atque gubernet; aliter non modo existentes in regno finem non assecuntur, sed etiam regnum in interitum labitur, iuxta illud infallibilis Veritatis: "Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur". [V, 9] Si ergo sic se habet in hiis et in singulis que ad unum aliquod ordinantur, verum est quod assummitur supra; nunc constat quod totum humanum genus ordinatur ad unum, ut iam preostensum fuit; ergo unum oportet esse regulans sive regens, et hoc "Monarcha" sive "Imperator" dici debet. [V, 10] Et sic patet quod ad bene esse mundi necesse est Monarchiam esse sive Imperium. […]. [X, 1] Et ubicunque potest esse litigium, ibi debet esse iudicium; aliter esset inperfectum sine proprio perfectivo: quod est inpossibile, cum Deus et natura in necessariis non deficiat. [X, 2] Inter omnes duos principes, quorum alter alteri minime subiectus est, potest esse litigium vel culpa ipsorum vel etiam subditorum – quod de se patet – : ergo inter tales oportet esse iudicium. [X, 3] Et cum alter de altero cognoscere non possit ex quo alter alteri non subditur – nam par in parem non habet imperium – oportet esse tertium iurisdictionis amplioris qui ambitu sui iuris ambobus principetur. [X, 4] Et hic aut erit Monarcha aut non. Si sic, habetur propositum; si non, iterum habebit sibi coequalem extra ambitum sue iurisdictionis: tunc iterum necessarius erit tertius alius. [X, 5] Et sic aut erit processus in infinitum, quod esse non potest, aut oportebit devenire ad iudicem primum et summum, de cuius iudicio cuncta litigia dirimantur sive mediate sive inmediate: et hic erit Monarcha sive Imperator. Est igitur Monarchia necessaria mundo. [X, 6] Et hanc rationem videbat Phylosophus cum dicebat: "Entia nolunt male disponi; malum autem pluralitas principatuum: unus ergo princeps". [XI, 1] Preterea, mundus optime dispositus est cum iustitia in eo potissima est. […]. [XI, 2] Iustitia potissima est solum sub Monarcha: ergo ad optimam mundi dispositionem requiritur esse Monarchiam sive Imperium. […]. [XI, 8] Ex hac itaque declaratione sic arguatur: iustitia potissima est in mundo quando volentissimo et potentissimo subiecto inest; huiusmodi solus Monarcha est: ergo soli Monarche insistens iustitia in mundo potissima est. [XI, 9] Iste prosillogismus currit per secundam figuram cum negatione intrinseca, et est similis huic: omne B est A; solum C est A: ergo solum C est B. Quod est: omne B est A; nullum preter C est A: ergo nullum preter C est B. [XI, 10] Et prima propositio declaratione precedente apparet; alia sic ostenditur, et primo quantum ad velle, deinde quantum ad posse. [XI, 11] Ad evidentiam primi notandum quod iustitie maxime contrariatur cupiditas, ut innuit Aristoteles in quinto ad Nicomacum. Remota cupiditate omnino, nichil iustitie restat adversum; unde sententia Phylosophi est ut que lege determinari possunt nullo modo iudici relinquantur. Et hoc metu cupiditatis fieri oportet, de facili mentes hominum detorquentis. Ubi ergo non est quod possit optari, inpossibile est ibi cupiditatem esse: destructis enim obiectis, passiones esse non possunt. [XI, 12] Sed Monarcha non habet quod possit optare: sua nanque iurisdictio terminatur Occeano solum: quod non contingit principibus aliis, quorum principatus ad alios terminantur, ut puta regis Castelle ad illum qui regis Aragonum. Ex quo sequitur quod Monarcha sincerissimum inter mortales iustitie possit esse subiectum. […]. [XI, 20] Satis igitur declarata subassumpta principalis, quia conclusio certa est: scilicet quod ad optimam dispositionem mundi necesse est Monarchiam esse ».

P. Shaw, *Dante. Monarchy* :

« [V, 1] Returning then to the point made at the beginning, there are three main points of inquiry concerning temporal monarchy (or empire as it is more commonly called) which have given rise to and continue to give rise to perplexity; and as we have already said, it is our intention to investigate these questions in the order in which we set them out and taking the principle we have just established as our starting-point. [V, 2] So the first question is this: is temporal monarchy necessary for the well-being of the world? That it is necessary can be shown with powerful and persuasive arguments, and neither reason nor authority provides any strong counter-argument. The first of these arguments may be taken from the authority of Aristotle in his Politics. [V, 3] Now this revered authority states in that work that when a number of things are ordered to a single end, one of them must guide or direct, and the others be guided or directed; and it is not only the authors illustrious name which requires us to believe this, but inductive reasoning as well. [V, 4] For if we consider a single person, we shall see that what happens in the individual is this: while all the faculties are directed towards happiness, it is the intellectual faculty which guides and directs all the others; otherwise happiness is unattainable. [V, 5] If we consider a household, whose purpose is to prepare its members to live the good life, there must be one person who guides and directs, who is called the "pater familias" or his representative, in line with Aristotle's observation that "Every household is governed by the eldest" ; and his role, as Homer says, is to guide everyone and impose rules on the others. Hence the proverbial curse: "May you have an equal in your house". [V, 6] If we consider a small community, whose purpose is neighbourly support in relation both to people and to goods, there must be one person who guides the others, either appointed by someone from outside or emerging as leader from among their number with the agreement of the others; otherwise not only will they fail to achieve that neighbourly collaboration, but sometimes, if a number of people contest the leadership, the whole community is destroyed. [V, 7] If we consider a city, whose purpose is to be self-sufficient in living the good life, there must be one ruling body, and this is so not only in just government, but in perverted forms of government as well; if this should not be the case, not only is the purpose of social life thwarted, but the city itself ceases to be what it was. [V, 8] Lastly, if we consider an individual kingdom - and the purpose of a kingdom is the

same as that of a city, but with greater confidence that peace can be maintained - there must be one king who rules and governs; otherwise not only do those who live in the kingdom not achieve that purpose, but the kingdom itself falls to ruin, in accordance with those words of the infallible Truth: “Every kingdom divided against itself shall be laid waste”. [V, 9] If this holds true in these cases and in individuals who are ordered to one particular goal, then the proposition advanced above is true; now it is agreed that the whole of mankind is ordered to one goal, as has already been demonstrated: there must therefore be one person who directs and rules mankind, and he is properly called “Monarch” or “Emperor”. [V, 10] And thus it is apparent that the well-being of the world requires that there be a monarchy or empire. […]. [X, 1] Now wherever there can be conflict there must be judgment to resolve it, otherwise there would be an imperfection without its proper corrective; and this is impossible, since God and nature never fail in their provision of what is necessary. [X, 2] There is always the possibility of conflict between two rulers where one is not subject to the other's control; such conflict may come about either through their own fault or the fault of their subjects (the point is self-evident); therefore there must be judgment between them. [X, 3] And since neither can judge the other (since neither is under the other's control, and an equal has no power over an equal) there must be a third party of wider jurisdiction who rules over both of them by right. [X, 4] And this person will either be the monarch or not. If he is, then our point is proved; if he is not, he in his turn will have an equal who is outside the sphere of his jurisdiction, and then it will once again be necessary to have recourse to a third party. [X, 5] And so either this procedure will continue ad infinitum, which is not possible, or else we must come to a first and supreme judge, whose judgment resolves all disputes either directly or indirectly; and this man will be the monarch or emperor. Thus monarchy is necessary to the world. [X, 6] And Aristotle saw the force of this argument when he said: “Things do not wish to be badly ordered; a plurality of reigns is bad; therefore let there be one ruler”. [XI, 1] Furthermore, the world is ordered in the best possible way when justice is at its strongest in it. […]. [XI, 2] Justice is at its strongest only under a monarch; therefore for the best ordering of the world there must be a monarchy or empire. […]. [XI, 8] Building on this exposition we can argue as follows: justice is at its strongest in the world when it resides in a subject who has in the highest degree possible the will and the power to act; only the monarch is such a subject; therefore justice is at its strongest in the world when it is located in the monarch alone. [XI, 9] This prosyllogism is of the second figure with intrinsic negation, and it takes this form: all B is A; only C is A; therefore only C is B. That is: all B is A; nothing except C is A; therefore nothing except C is B. [XI, 10] And the first proposition is established by the preceding exposition; the second is shown as follows, firstly in relation to volition, and then in relation to power. [XI, 11] To clarify the first of these it must be noted that the thing most contrary to justice is greed, as Aristotle states in the fifth book of the Ethics. When greed is entirely eliminated, nothing remains which is opposed to justice; hence Aristotle’s opinion that those things which can be resolved by law should in no way be left to the judge's discretion. And it is fear of greed which makes this necessary, for greed easily leads men's minds astray. But where there is nothing which can be coveted, it is impossible for greed to exist, for emotions cannot exist where their objects have been destroyed. [XI, 12] But there is nothing the monarch could covet, for his jurisdiction is bounded only by the ocean; whereas this is not the case with other rulers, whose sovereignty extends only as far as the neighbouring kingdom, as is the case, for instance, with the kings of Castille and of Aragon. From this it follows that of all men the monarch can be the purest embodiment of justice. […]. [XI, 20] The minor premiss of the main syllogism has been sufficiently proved and the conclusion is certain, namely that the best ordering of the world requires the existence of a monarchy ».

[T3 Dante] Excerpt 1

Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia. Inferno*, G. Petrocchi (ed), Firenze, Le Lettere, 1994, XIX, 1-6 and 112-117 :

« O Simon mago, o miseri seguaci
che le cose di Dio, che di bontate
deon essere spose, e voi rapaci
per oro e per argento avolterate,
or convien che per voi suoni la tromba,
però che ne la terza bolgia state.
[…]
Fatto v’avete dio d’oro e d’argento;
e che altro è da voi a l’idolatre,
se non ch’elli uno, e voi ne orate cento?
Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
che da te prese il primo ricco patre! ».

J. and R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri. Inferno*, New York, Doubleday, 2000 :

« O Simon Magus! O wretches of his band,
greedy for gold and silver,
who prostitute the things of God
that should be brides of goodness!
Now must the trumpet sound for you,
because your place is there in that third ditch.
[…]
You have wrought yourselves a god of gold and silver.
How then do you differ from those who worship idols
except they worship one and you a hundred?
Ah, Constantine, to what evil you gave birth,
not by your conversion, but by the dowry
that the first rich Father had from you! »

[T3 Dante] Excerpt 2

Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia. Purgatorio*, G. Petrocchi (ed), Firenze, Le Lettere, 1994, VI, 76-96 :

« Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello,
nave sanza nocchiere in gran tempesta,
non donna di province, ma bordello!
Quell' anima gentil fu così presta,
sol per lo dolce suon de la sua terra,
di fare al cittadin suo quivi festa;
e ora in te non stanno sanza guerra
li vivi tuoi, e l'un l'altro si rode
di quei ch'un muro e una fossa serra.
Cerca, misera, intorno da le prode
le tue marine, e poi ti guarda in seno,
s'alcuna parte in te di pace gode.
Che val perché ti racconciasse il freno
Iustinïano, se la sella è vòta?
Sanz' esso fora la vergogna meno.
Ahi gente che dovresti esser devota,
e lasciar seder Cesare in la sella,
se bene intendi ciò che Dio ti nota,
guarda come esta fiera è fatta fella
per non esser corretta da li sproni,
poi che ponesti mano a la predella ».

J. and R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri. Purgatorio*, New York, Doubleday, 2003 :

« Ah, Italy enslaved, abode of misery,
pilotless ship in a fierce tempest tossed,
no mistress over provinces but a harlot!
How eager was that noble soul,
only at the sweet name of his city,
to welcome there his fellow citizen!
Now your inhabitants are never free from war,
and those enclosed within a single wall and moat
are gnawing on each other.
Search, miserable one, around your shores,
then look into your heart,
if any part of you rejoice in peace.
If there is no one in your saddle, what good
was it Justinian repaired your harness?
Your shame would be less great had he not done so.
Ah, you who should be firm in your devotion

and let Caesar occupy the saddle,
if you but heeded what God writes for you,
see how vicious is the beast not goaded
and corrected by the spurs,
ever since you took the bridle in your hands »

[T3 Dante] Excerpt 3

Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia. Purgatorio*, XVI, 106-112 and 127-129 :

Soleva Roma, che ’l buon mondo feo,
due soli aver, che l’una e l’altra strada
facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.
L’un l’altro ha spento; ed è giunta la spade
col pasturale, e l’un con l’altro insieme
per viva forza mal convien che vada;
però che, giunti, l’un l’altro non teme;
[…]
Dì oggimai che la Chiesa di Roma,
per confondere in sé due reggimenti,
cade nel fango, e sé brutta e la soma ».

J. and R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri. Purgatorio* :

« Rome, which formed the world for good,
once held two suns that lit the one road
and the other, the world's and that to God.
The one has snuffed the other out, the sword
is fastened to the crook, and these two,
forced to be together, must perforce go ill,
since, joined, the one fears not the other.
[…]
Spread the word, then, that the Church of Rome,
confounding in herself two governments, stumbles
in the mud, befouling herself and her burden ».

[T3 Dante] Excerpt 4

Dante Alighieri, *Episolae*, E. Pistelli (ed), Firenze, Bemporad, 1960, V, 1 and 11-14

« [1] Universis et singulis Ytalie Regibus et Senatoribus alme Urbis nec non Ducibus Marchionibus Comitibus atque Populis, humilis ytalus Dantes Alagherii fiorentinus et exul inmeritus orat pacem. […]. [11] Pone, sanguis Longobardorum, coadductam barbariem; et si quid de Troyanorum Latinorumque semine superest, illi cede, ne cum sublimis aquila fulguris instar descendens adfuerit, abiectos videat pullos eius, et prolis proprie locum corvulis occupatum. [12] Eya, facite, Scandinavie soboles, ut cuius merito trepidatis adventum, quod ex vobis est presentiam sitiatis. [13] Nec seducat alludens cupiditas, more Sirenum nescio qua dulcedine vigiliam rationis mortificans. [14] Preoccupetis faciem eius in confessione subiectionis, et in psalterio penitentie iubiletis, considerantes quia “potestati resistens Dei ordinationi resistit”; et qui divine ordinationi repugnat, voluntati omnipotentie coequali recalcitrat; et “durum est contra stimulum calcitrare” ».

C.E. Honess, *Dante Alighieri. Four Political Letters*, London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 2007 :

« [1] To each and every one of the Kings of Italy, and to the Senators of the Holy City, and also to Italy’s Dukes, Marquises, and Counts, and to her people, a humble Italian, Dante Alighieri, a Florentine undeservedly in exile, prays for peace. […]. [11] Give up the savage ways you have adopted, you descendants of the Lombards: and if anything should remain of the seed of the Trojans and the Romans, yield to it, so that, when the heavenly eagle comes, descending like lightning, he does not see his own chicks cast out and the rightful place of hi s offspring occupied by ravens. [12] Come

now, you Scandinavian race, and make yourselves eager to receive, as is your duty, the one whose arrival you justifiably fear. [13] Do not let yourselves be seduced by the ploys of cupidity, which, like the Sirens, uses its charm to overcome the vigilance of reason. [14] Hasten before him and declare your obedience to him: rejoice in singing a psalm of penitence to him, bearing in mind that "anyone who resists authority is rebelling against God's decision", while anyone who rebel s against God's decisions is kicking out against an omnipotent will, and "it is hard to kick against the goad" »

[T4 Dante] Excerpt 1
Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia. Inferno*, VI, 49-87 :

« "La tua città, ch'è piena
d'invidia sì che già trabocca il sacco,
seco mi tenne in la vita serena.
Voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco:
per la dannosa colpa de la gola,
come tu vedi, a la pioggia mi fiacco.
E io anima trista non son sola,
ché tutte queste a simil pena stanno
per simil colpa." E più non fé parola.
Io li rispuosi: "Ciacco, il tuo affanno
mi pesa sì, ch'a lagrimar mi 'nvita;
ma dimmi, se tu sai, a che verranno
li cittadin de la città partita;
s'alcun v'è giusto; e dimmi la cagione
per che l'ha tanta discordia assalita."
E quelli a me: "Dopo lunga tencione
verranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia
caccerà l'altra con molta offensione.
Poi appresso convien che questa caggia
infra tre soli, e che l'altra sormonti
con la forza di tal che testé piaggia.
Alte terrà lungo tempo le fronti,
tenendo l'altra sotto gravi pesi,
come che di ciò pianga o che n'aonti.
Giusti son due, e non vi sono intesi;
superbia, invidia e avarizia sono
le tre faville c'hanno i cuori accesi."
Qui puose fine al lagrimabil suono.
E io a lui: "Ancor vo' che mi 'nsegni
e che di più parlar mi facci dono.
Farinata e 'l Tegghiaio, che fuor sì degni,
Iacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo e 'l Mosca
e li altri ch'a ben far puoser li 'ngegni,
dimmi ove sono e fa ch'io li conosca;
ché gran disio mi stringe di savere
se 'l ciel li addolcia o lo 'nferno li attosca."
E quelli: "Ei son tra l'anime più nere;
diverse colpe giù li grava al fondo:
se tanto scendi, là i potrai vedere ».

J. and R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri. Inferno* :

« "Your city, so full of envy
that now the sack spills over,
held me in its confines in the sunlit life.
You and my townsmen called me Ciacco.
For the pernicious fault of gluttony,
as you can see, I'm prostrate in this rain.
And in my misery I am not alone.

All those here share a single penalty
for the same fault". He said no more.
    I answered him: 'Ciacco, your distress so weighs
on me it bids me weep. But tell me,
if you can, what shall be the fate
    of the citizens within the riven city?
Are any in it just? And tell me why
such discord has assailed it".
    And he to me: "After long feuding
they shall come to blood. The rustic faction,
having done great harm, shall drive the others out.
    But it in turn must fall to them,
within three years, by power of him
who now just bides his time.
    These in their arrogance will long subject
the other faction to their heavy yoke,
despite its weeping and its shame.
    Two men are just and are not heeded there.
Pride, envy, and avarice are the sparks
that have set the hearts of all on fire".
    With that he ended his distressing words.
And I to him: "I wish you would instruct me more,
granting me the gift of further speech.
    Farinata and Tegghiaio, who were so worthy,
Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, and Mosca,
and the rest whose minds were bent on doing good,
    tell me where they are and how they fare.
For great desire presses me to learn
whether Heaven sweetens or Hell embitters them".
    And he: "They are among the blacker souls.
Different vices weigh them toward the bottom,
as you shall see if you descend that far" ».

[T4 Dante] Excerpt 2

Dante Alighieri, *Divina commedia. Inferno*, X, 1-51 and 73-108 :

« Ora sen va per un secreto calle,
tra 'l muro de la terra e li martìri,
lo mio maestro, e io dopo le spalle.
    "O virtù somma, che per li empi giri
mi volvi," cominciai, "com' a te piace,
parlami, e sodisfammi a' miei disiri.
    La gente che per li sepolcri giace
potrebbesi veder? già son levati
tutt' i coperchi, e nessun guardia face".
    E quelli a me: "Tutti saran serrati
quando di Iosafàt qui torneranno
coi corpi che là sù hanno lasciati.
    Suo cimitero da questa parte hanno
con Epicuro tutti suoi seguaci,
che l'anima col corpo morta fanno.
    Però a la dimanda che mi faci
quinc' entro satisfatto sarà tosto,
e al disio ancor che tu mi taci".
    E io: "Buon duca, non tegno riposto
a te mio cuor se non per dicer poco,
e tu m'hai non pur mo a ciò disposto".

“O Tosco che per la città del foco
vivo ten vai così parlando onesto,
piacciati di restare in questo loco.
La tua loquela ti fa manifesto
di quella nobil patrïa natio,
a la qual forse fui troppo molesto”.
Subitamente questo suono uscìo
d’una de l’arche; però m’accostai,
temendo, un poco più al duca mio.
Ed el mi disse: “Volgiti! Che fai?
Vedi là Farinata che s’è dritto:
da la cintola in sù tutto ’l vedrai.”
Io avea già il mio viso nel suo fitto;
ed el s’ergea col petto e con la fronte
com’ avesse l’inferno a gran dispitto.
E l’animose man del duca e pronte
mi pinser tra le sepulture a lui,
dicendo: “Le parole tue sien conte”.
Com’ io al piè de la sua tomba fui,
guardommi un poco, e poi, quasi sdegnoso,
mi dimandò: “Chi fuor li maggior tui?”
Io ch’era d’ubidir disideroso,
non gliel celai, ma tutto gliel’ apersi;
ond’ ei levò le ciglia un poco in suso;
poi disse: “Fieramente furo avversi
a me e a miei primi e a mia parte,
sì che per due fïate li dispersi.”
“S’ei fur cacciati, ei tornar d’ogne parte,”
rispuos’ io lui, “l’una e l’altra fïata;
ma i vostri non appreser ben quell’ arte.”
[…].
Ma quell’ altro magnanimo, a cui posta
restato m’era, non mutò aspetto,
né mosse collo, né piegò sua costa;
e sé continüando al primo detto,
“S’elli han quell’ arte”, disse, “male appresa,
ciò mi tormenta più che questo letto.
Ma non cinquanta volte fia raccesa
la faccia de la donna che qui regge,
che tu saprai quanto quell’ arte pesa.
E se tu mai nel dolce mondo regge,
dimmi: perché quel popolo è sì empio
incontr’ a’ miei in ciascuna sua legge?”
Ond’ io a lui: “Lo strazio e ’l grande scempio
che fece l’Arbia colorata in rosso,
tal orazion fa far nel nostro tempio”.
Poi ch’ebbe sospirando il capo mosso,
“A ciò non fu’ io sol”, disse, “né certo
sanza cagion con li altri sarei mosso.
Ma fu’ io solo, là dove sofferto
fu per ciascun di tòrre via Fiorenza,
colui che la difesi a viso aperto”.
“Deh, se riposi mai vostra semenza”,
prega’ io lui, “solvetemi quel nodo
che qui ha ’nviluppata mia sentenza.
El par che voi veggiate, se ben odo,
dinanzi quel che ’l tempo seco adduce,
e nel presente tenete altro modo”.
“Noi veggiam, come quei c’ha mala luce,

le cose", disse, "che ne son lontano;
cotanto ancor ne splende il sommo duce.
Quando s'appressano o son, tutto è vano
nostro intelletto; e s'altri non ci apporta,
nulla sapem di vostro stato umano.
Però comprender puoi che tutta morta
fia nostra conoscenza da quel punto
che del futuro fia chiusa la porta" ».

J. and R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri. Inferno* :

« Now my master takes a hidden path
between the city's ramparts and the torments,
and I come close behind him.
"O lofty virtue", I began, "who lead me
as you will around these impious circles,
speak to me and satisfy my wishes.
'The souls that lie within the sepulchres,
may they be seen? For all the lids are raised
and there is no one standing guard.'
And he to me: 'All will be shut and sealed
when the souls return from Jehosaphat
with the bodies they have left above.
'Here Epicurus and all his followers,
who hold the soul dies with the body,
have their burial place.
'But soon your need to have an answer
will be satisfied right here,
as will the wish you hide from me.'
And I: 'Good leader, from you I do not keep
my heart concealed except to speak few words—
as you've from time to time advised.'
'O Tuscan, passing through the city of fire,
alive, and with such courtesy of speech,
if it would please you, stay your steps awhile.
'Your way of speaking makes it clear
that you are native to that noble city
to which I was perhaps too cruel.'
This voice came suddenly
from one sarcophagus, so that, startled,
I drew closer to my leader.
And he to me: 'Turn back! What are you doing?
Look, there Farinata stands erect—
you can see all of him from the waist up.'
Already I had fixed my gaze on his.
And he was rising, lifting chest and brow
as though he held all Hell in utter scorn.
At which my leader: 'Choose your words with care,'
and his hands, ready, encouraging,
thrust me toward him among the tombs.
When I stood at the foot of his tomb
he looked at me a moment. Then he asked,
almost in disdain: 'Who were your ancestors?'
And I, eager, held nothing back,
but told him who they were,
at which he barely raised his eyebrows
and said: 'They were most bitter enemies
to me, my forebears, and my party—
not once, but twice, I had to drive them out.'

‘If they were banished,’ I responded, ‘they returned
from every quarter both the first time and the second,
a skill that Yours have failed to learn as well.
[…].
But the other, that great soul at whose wish
I had stopped, did not change countenance,
nor bend his neck, nor move his chest.
And he, continuing from where he’d paused:
‘That they have badly learned this skill
torments me more than does this bed.
‘But the face of the lady reigning here
will be rekindled not fifty times before you too
shall know how difficult a skill that is to learn.
‘And, so may you return to the sweet world,
tell me, why are your people,
in every edict, so pitiless against my kin?’
Then I to him: ‘The havoc and great slaughter
that dyed the Arbia red caused them to raise
such prayers in our temple.’
He sighed and shook his head, then spoke:
‘I was not alone, nor surely without cause
would I have acted with the rest.
‘But it was I alone, when all agreed
to make an end of Florence, I alone
who dared speak out in her defense.’
‘So may Your seed sometime find peace,
pray untie for me this knot,’ I begged him,
‘which has entangled and confused my judgment.
‘From what I hear, it seems
you see beforehand that which time will bring,
but cannot know what happens in the present.’
‘We see, like those with faulty vision,
things at a distance,’ he replied. ‘That much,
for us, the mighty Ruler’s light still shines.
‘When things draw near or happen now,
our minds are useless. Without the words of others
we can know nothing of your human state.
‘Thus it follows that all our knowledge
will perish at the very moment
the portals of the future close” ».