

PETRUS IOHANNIS OLIVI AND DANTE

A RESEARCH PROJECT*

Without the key, the precise statement of the person who formed the allegory, in the best of cases a probable interpretation could be found on the basis of other passages of the author and the books he reads, though it may not be converted into certainty; to be certain *ipse dixit* is required.

BENEDETTO CROCE¹

Culture is a school of quick associations.

- catch on quick and you are ready to understand the allusions: This is Dante's favourite eulogy.

OSIP MANDEL'STAM²

I. Dante and the Spiritual Franciscans: an unfinished hermeneutics **II.** Awaiting reformation in the Autumn of Christian Middle Ages. **III.** *Lectura super Apocalipsim* and *Commedia*: rules of correspondence between the texts. **IV.** Time of the Church and time of the man. **V.** Memories of Santa Croce. **VI.** The art of memory and preaching reform. **VII.** Research prospects: a key to understanding the allusions.

I. Dante and the Spiritual Franciscans: an unfinished hermeneutics.

«Paupertatis nostre, ipsa sancta [mater], emulabitur gloriam [...] Caritatis et pacis in nobis uinacula seruabit illesa». Poverty extending from the Order of Friars Minor to the entire Church, and peace according to the words of Saint Francis (who interpreted his own vision) quoted in the *Memoriale* of Tommaso da Celano: these are the two cornerstones which (in 1890) Franz Xaver Kraus - supporter of the *Kulturkampf* and the need to reform the Church after the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) - recognised in Dante's ideal Catholicism and reform³.

Kraus placed several passages from the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu* by Ubertino of Casale (1305) - which almost a century later Charles T. Davis defined as "striking"⁴ - next to Dantesque verses. A debate was opened in Italy. Whereas *Sulle orme del Veltro* by Vittorio Cian (1897), appreciated by Pascoli, actually considered Ignaz von Döllinger's⁵ studies on prophetism, no mention was made of the Spiritual Franciscans. Conversely, in 1902, Felice Tocco held a *lectura* on *Purg.* XXXII in Orsanmichele and subsequently published Chapter XVII of the *Lectura super*

* Translation by Susan Aulton.

¹ B. CROCE, *La poesia di Dante*, Bari, Laterza, 1952⁷ (1920¹; Scritti di storia letteraria e politica, XVII), p. 7.

² O. MANDEL'STAM, *Conversazione su Dante*, edited by R. Faccani, Genova, il melangolo, 1994 (1933¹), p. 51.

³ F. X. KRAUS, *Dante. Sein Leben und sein Werk. Sein Verhältniss zur Kunst und zur Politik*, Berlin, G. Grote'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1897, pp. 720-746: p. 737; THOMAS DE CELANO, *Memoriale*. Editio critico-synoptica duarum redactionum ad fidem codicum manuseriptorum, curaverunt F. Accrocca - A. Horowski, Roma, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2011 (Subsidia scientifica franciscalia, 12), 17.6 [Q 24], pp. 54-55 (Kraus cited the work as *Vita secunda*).

⁴ CH. T. DAVIS, *veltro*, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana), V, Roma 1984² [= ED], p. 911.

⁵ V. CIAN, *Sulle orme del Veltro. Studio dantesco*, Messina, G. Principato, 1897, pp. 13-15, 115 note 3.

Apocalipsim by Olivi based on the Laurentian manuscript *Conv. Sopp.* 397⁶. Then, fully aware of the Franciscan influence in Dante's works, Umberto Cosmo underlined the ineluctable differences: «[...] the Franciscan assumptions were merely contradictory fragments of truth [...] inebriated with invectives, dreams and hope», devoid of any elevated political idea capable of converting them into practical reality»⁷.

Meanwhile, influenced by Herbert Grundmann's studies (1929, 1932), the issue had started a fertile line of hermeneutic research and was extended to Dante's actual knowledge of works by Joachim of Fiore⁸. In 1929, whilst transcribing the *Lectura* from the manuscript 382, kept in the Biblioteca Angelica, Ernesto Buonaiuti suggested to Pietro Fedele that «the idea of a “corpus Joachimitarum” could bring to the light of history the voice of the preachers who probably nurtured Dante's aspirations»⁹, having found Olivi's work to be the «ideal scheme» in which Dante «could set his love for Beatrice»¹⁰. This opinion was proudly contested by Michele Barbi and Bruno Nardi. The former believed that the *Commedia* was certainly both a prophesy and a revelation, though the Holy Scriptures were sufficient for Dante who did not need an exegesis¹¹. The latter declared that any attempt to make Dante's ideas coincide with those of the Joachimites was unnatural:

There was something of anarchic romanticism in their aspirations which, as a reaction to a restless, turbulent and tyrannical sociopolitical life are occasionally reasserted in the course of history. Dante had studied his Aristotele and Virgil too extensively as to underrate life on earth to this extreme. He had also fought, loved and suffered too much to forget, even in the light of the heavens, «l'aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci» including Florence¹².

However, the absence, in the *Commedia*, of the name Petrus Iohannis Olivi (Sérignan 1248? - Narbonne 1298), remained a deafening silence. Dante had probably heard the friar in Santa

⁶ *Il Canto XXXII del Purgatorio letto da Felice Tocco nella sala di Dante in Orsanmichele* (10 aprile 1902), Firenze, Sansoni, 1903, pp. 39-53.

⁷ U. COSMO, *L'ultima ascesa. Introduzione alla lettura del Paradiso*, Bari, Laterza, 1936, pp. 152-155: p. 155.

⁸ A. FRUGONI (*Gioachino da Fiore*, in *ED*, III, p. 167) believed that the issue concerning the relationship between the *Liber figurarum* and Dante's works «should be treated very cautiously» (In 1940 Tondelli suggested that there was certainly a relationship).

⁹ Cf. *Lettere a Raffaello Morghen, 1917-1983*, selected and annotated by G. Braga, A. Forni e P. Vian, introduction of Ovidio Capitani, Roma, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1994 (Nuovi studi storici, 24), p. 83 note 2 (the letter from Buonaiuti to Fedele is dated 10th December 1929).

¹⁰ E. BUONAIUTI, *Storia del Cristianesimo*, II, Milano, dall'Oglio, 1941, p. 544. Chapter XVIII of part II (*Evo Medio*) of this book is a revision of Chapter V (*L'Apocalissi dantesca*) in *Dante come profeta*, Modena, Guanda, 1936 (*Uomini e idee*), in which (p. 151) the author wrote in a less assertive way: «Perhaps he heard Pietro Olivi interpret in a Joachimit way precisely the canonical Apocalypse there [in the Franciscan school of the old Santa Croce]. However, he had an excellent knowledge of the canonical and apocryphal texts of the prophetic tradition that flourished on the Sila at the dawning of the thirteenth century and spread along the backbone of the Italian Apennines».

¹¹ M. BARBI, *Il Gioachimismo francescano e il Veltro*, in «Studi danteschi», 18 (1934), pp. 209-211; *L'Apocalissi dantesca*, *ibid.*, 22 (1938), pp. 195-197; *Veltro, Gioachimismo e Fedeli d'Amore: sbandamenti e aberrazioni*, in *Nuovi problemi della critica dantesca*, *ibid.*, 23 (1938), pp. 29-46.

¹² B. NARDI, *Dante e la cultura medievale. Nuovi saggi di filosofia dantesca*, Bari, Laterza, 1942 (Biblioteca di cultura moderna), pp. 270-271.

Croce where he read theology between 1287 - 1289¹³, hence before the death of Beatrice in 1290 and attending philosophy lessons in the «scuole delli religiosi» (cf. *Convivio* II, xii, 7). Ubertino of Casale and Matthew of Acquasparta are cited in the «Sacred poem». Ubertino of Casale was the most important posthumous propagator and advocate of Olivi's works and another former listener in Santa Croce. Matthew of Acquasparta was the general Minister who sent Olivi to Florence so he would not be involved in the controversies within the Order. Both were criticised: one for strictly applying the Rule which the other relaxing avoids, according to Bonaventure's (which Olivi heard in Paris between 1266 and 1268) statement (*Par.* XII, 124-126). Beyond the evident convergence with his Franciscan background, the Poet's undeniable knowledge of the Spirituals' vicissitudes also emerges, as likewise those of individuals such as Pier Pettinaio whose holy prayers reduced the time of Sapia the Sienese's purgation (*Purg.* XIII, 125-129) and who was the mentor of Ubertino of Casale in «archana Ihesu»¹⁴.

Raoul Manselli, who was the most convinced advocate of Olivi's influence on Dante, argued that it is impossible to deny the link between Dante's religiousness, and his criticism of ecclesiastic hierarchy, and one of the most restless schools of thought in the thirteenth century that was led by Joachim of Fiore and subsequently adopted by the Spiritual Franciscans. Manselli represented the latest and most advanced stage of hermeneutics that had raised the question of Dantesque prophetism. The *Lectura super Apocalipsim* was discovered through Manselli's¹⁵ constant research on the meaning of 'Spirituals', though he did not publish the entire text. The difference between Olivi and Joachimism was clarified and the posthumous opinion of Ubertino of Casale was detached from Olivi's. However, Manselli merely compared their often coinciding ideas regarding the reform of the Church and the *Ecclesia Spiritualis*. Essentially, Manselli's line

¹³ UBERTINO DA CASALE, *Sanctitati apostolicae* (1311), in F. EHRLE, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Concils von Vienne*, «Archiv für Litteratur- und Kirchengeschichtedes Mittelalters» 2 (1886), p. 389: «[...] nam per dominum N[icolaum] iiii non solum nunquam fuit condempnatus ipse vel eius doctrina, sed fuit multipliciter commendatus ab eo et de eius voluntate primo per dominum fratrem Matheum tunc generalem factus est lector Florentiae in studio generali quoad ordinem nostrum et postmodum per fratrem Raymundum Gaufridi lector Montispeulanus».

¹⁴ Cf. C. M. MARTÍNEZ RUIZ, *De la dramatización de los acontecimientos de la Pascua a la Cristología: el cuarto libro del Arbor Vitae Crucifixae Iesu de Ubertino de Casale*, Roma, Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 2000 (*Studia Antoniana*, 41), p. 166 and note 51.

¹⁵ R. MANSELLI, *Dante e l'«Ecclesia Spiritualis»*, in *Dante e Roma*. Atti del Convegno di studio a cura della «Casa di Dante», sotto gli auspici del Comune di Roma, in collaborazione con l'Istituto di Studi Romani, Roma 8-9-10 aprile 1965, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1965, pp. 115-135, republished in ID., *Da Gioacchino da Fiore a Cristoforo Colombo. Studi sul francescanesimo spirituale, sull'ecclesiologia e sull'escatologismo bassomedievali*, ed. P. Vian, Roma 1997 (Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo. Nuovi Studi Storici, 36), pp. 55-78. The volume edited by Vian contains several essays concerning the relationship between Dante and Olivi such as: *A proposito del cristianesimo di Dante: Gioacchino da Fiore, gioachimismo, spiritualismo francescano*, pp. 317-344 (= *Letteratura e critica. Studi in onore di Natalino Sapegno*, II, Roma, Bulzoni, 1975, pp. 163-192); *Dante e gli spirituali francescani*, pp. 627-640 (= *Lecture classensi*, 11, Ravenna, Longo, 1982, pp. 47-61).

of research never changed; the historiography of Olivi, which even David Burr has extensively investigated, subsequently focused on history within the Franciscan Order¹⁶.

The first objective of this project is to verify if the line of research to be followed should be ‘Dante and the Franciscans’¹⁷ or ‘Dante and the Spirituals’, ‘Dante and Johachism’¹⁸ or even ‘Dante and Theology’¹⁹ (which have recently delivered important results), almost as if these themes should be treated aside from the ingenious and too different poem, the indisputable prophetic and visionary side of which has nevertheless inevitably produced an unfinished hermeneutics. Alternatively, should historians attempt to discover the way in which Dante adapted the prerogatives that theology had reserved for the Church and relative history to humanity as a whole, together with its exigencies such as language, philosophy and monarchy? Dante had completed a process that had started a long time before, on the subject of which father Chenu wrote:

[...] the evangelical reference will prepare for, or rather encourage within the state of grace, the discovery of natural laws, awareness of the mind’s needs and the value of society’s structure: one state of grace, again in which nature, mind and society will be able to better serve faith and grace as much as they shall no longer do so under an infantile protection but through independent methods [...] Dante will witness again a static hierarchy in which the «states of the world» will remain as if under the subsurface of a sacred society. However, they have already started to affect the entire behaviour of Christians [...]²⁰.

Along this line, any foregoing of earthly belongings or the monastic communism abhorred by Nardi, the presumed Johachism, whether established or challenged, and even the expected end of the world would take on a very different meaning, balanced between a state of grace and *saeculum humanum* which, after Dante, would have never been reached again. First of all an exhaustive investigation of the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* should be performed, since this is an evagelic milestone placed (in 1300) at a jubilee crossroad where providential history and the work of mankind, collective anguish and individual incidents, all intertwine. Even though this book is no longer completely forgotten subsequent to Raoul Manselli’s investigations, as yet it has certainly not been published unabridged and is therefore still unknown and its influence on

¹⁶ Cf. D. BURR, *The Spiritual Franciscans. From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis*, University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001, in which Dante is mentioned only thrice.

¹⁷ Cf. N. HAVELY, *Dante and the Franciscans. Poverty and the Papacy in the ‘Commedia’*, Cambridge University Press, 2004; *Dante and the Franciscans*, edited by S. Casciani, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2006 (The Medieval Franciscans, 3).

¹⁸ Cf. S. CRISTALDI, *Dante di fronte al gioachimismo. I. Dalla «Vita Nova» alla «Monarchia»*, Caltanissetta-Roma, Sciascia, 2000.

¹⁹ Cf. *Dante’s Commedia. Theology as Poetry*, edited by V. Montemaggi and M. Treherne, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2010 (The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante Studies).

²⁰ M.-D. CHENU, *La teologia nel dodicesimo secolo*, ed. P. Vian, Milano, Jaca Book, 1986 (1957¹) (Biblioteca di cultura medievale), pp. 272-273.

contemporaries entirely appreciated. Once this millenary has been thoroughly read and the words remembered, the results of a comparison with the *Commedia* will be more certain.

II. Awaiting reformation in the Autumn of the Christian Middle Ages.

A work, which was probably the last on the history of human salvation inherited from the Christian Middle Ages²¹, was written after the author had moved from Florence to Montpellier (1289) and he was still attending to it in 1297²² before he died a year later in Narbonne. The manuscript of the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* circulated immediately in Italy: Pope Boniface VIII (deceased on the 11th October 1303) entrusted the Augustinian Egidio Romano with a confutation which has not reached our days and Ubertino of Casale had it by his side as he wrote the *Arbor vitae* in La Verna (1305). Of the sixteen witnesses handed down by the manuscript tradition, twelve are from Italy and only four from France²³. The *summa* of life, ideals and way of thinking of this Franciscan from Béziers, was also the Spirituals' vexillum and endured unparalleled persecution for over twenty five years «even after the author's death, when his bones were pitilessly unearthed and insulted, his works confiscated and destroyed, his name abhorred and never mentioned»²⁴. Such persecution - which was actually a single trial against Olivi's works held

²¹ Cf. P. VIAN, *Tempo escatologico e tempo della Chiesa: Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e i suoi censori*, in *Sentimento del tempo e periodizzazione della storia nel Medioevo*, Atti del XXXVI Convegno storico internazionale. Todi, 10-12 ottobre 1999, Spoleto 2000 (Centro Italiano di Studi sul Basso Medioevo - Accademia Tudertina / Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità Medievale dell'Università degli Studi di Perugia), pp. 137-183: p. 183: «[...] con la sua concezione del tempo e della storia, appare come l'estrema espressione dell'escatologismo medievale [...] | [...] with his idea of time and history it appears to be an extreme expression of medieval eschatology [...]».

²² Cf. *Lectura super Apocalipsim* (= LSA), cap. XII, Ap 12, 6 [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 713 (= Par. lat. 713), f. 134ra; cf. *infra*, notes 35-36]: «[...] sic in fine huius tertii decimi centenarii incarnationis Christi terminabuntur quadraginta due generationes seu mille ducenti sexaginta anni, de quo numero non restant nunc nisi tres anni». On this work cf. R. MANSELLI, *La «Lectura super Apocalipsim» di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi. Ricerche sull'escatologismo medioevale*, Roma 1955 (Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo. Studi Storici, 19-21) and the abundant works by D. BURR, in particular *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom. A Reading of the Apocalypse Commentary*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993 (Middle Ages Series).

²³ For the manuscript tradition of the work, cf. P. VIAN, *Appunti sulla tradizione manoscritta della Lectura super Apocalipsim di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*, in *Editori di Quaracchi 100 anni dopo. Bilancio e prospettive*. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale, Roma 29-30 maggio 1995, Scuola Superiore di Studi Medievali e Francescani, Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum, a cura di A. Cacciotti e B. Faes de Mottoni, Roma 1997 (Medioevo, 3), pp. 373-409. For the analysis of the codes cf. P. VIAN, *I codici vaticani della Lectura super Apocalipsim di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*, in *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, I, Città del Vaticano 1987 (Studi e testi, 329), pp. 229-257; ID., *I codici fiorentini e romano della "Lectura super Apocalipsim" di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi (con un codice di Tedaldo della Casa ritrovato)*, in «Archivum franciscanum historicum», 83 (1990), pp. 463-489; ID., *L'opera esegetica di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi: uno «status quaestionis»*, *ibid.*, 91 (1998), pp. 395-454: pp. 436-437, 449-450, 451-452. On the subject of ms. 382 kept in the Biblioteca Angelica in Roma also refer to ID., in *La città degli angeli. Profezia e speranza del futuro tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* [catalogo della mostra, Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, 24 gennaio-30 marzo 2003], Firenze, Ermes, 2003, pp. 140-141 [republished in *Il ricordo del futuro. Giocchino da Fiore e il Gioachimismo attraverso la storia*, a cura di F. Troncarelli, Bari, Adda, 2006, pp. 140-141].

²⁴ Cf. P. VIAN, *Introduzione a Pietro di Giovanni Olivi, Scritti scelti*, Roma, Città Nuova, 1989 (Fonti cristiane per il terzo millennio), p. 8.

in various stages starting from 1283²⁵ - intensified after the Council of Vienne (1311-1312) under the papacy of John XXII (1316-1334) by means of further censures, until the *Lectura* was definitely condemned «tamquam continentem pestiferum et hereticum dogma contra unitatem Ecclesie catholice et potestatem summi pontificis romani», as pronounced by the Pope in a public consistory on the 8th February 1326 witnessed by the Dominican inquisitor Bernard Gui²⁶.

Although the *Lectura* maintains the same sequence of the twenty-two chapters in the Apocalypse [= Rev.], Olivi suggests a different way of understanding and grouping the text. This method is based on the seven *status* of the Church, i.e. the ‘periods’ in the history of the Church as prefigured in the Old Testament. The first period is that of the Apostles’ Church and the second that of the martyrs. The third period starts with Constantine and is characterised by the doctors who, through *intellectus*, rationally refute heresies. The third period overlaps (for *concurrentia*) the fourth, that of the anchorites who lead a holy, contemplative and devoted life based on *affectus*, though in their *vita activa* they are also capable of strong deeds before the Arabs crush their proud blossom. The fifth period begins with Charlemagne (or his father Pepin) and is marked by condescendents (*condescensivi*) who mitigate the severe austerity of the previous period, adapting it with *pietas* to the needs of the multitude of faithful. This peaceful and long lived (five-hundred years) period, bestowed with all the spiritual gifts, was wonderful to begin with (*principium pulchritudinis*) though, due to the devastation brought by the Saracens in the Eastern Churches, it is restricted to the Roman Church: around the end of the fifth period the Church is corrupted and almost turned into a new Babylon. The sixth period is equivalent to modern times and starts with Saint Francis, though in the year 1300 it still overlaps the final stage of the fifth. This is the time of the second advent of Christ (which is quite different from the third that takes place in the *parousia*), thus that of the renovation of evangelical life when, as if in a circle, the Church is reunited with its apostolical origins. It is also a period of ordeal (when the beasts described in Chapter XIII of the Apocalypse are fought) and of psychological martyrdom, a fight between doubt and faith which even the most wary followers lose when faced with miracles and the authority and reputation of their persecutors. During the sixth period the malice of Babylon will be condemned and the Antichrist defeated. Therefore, the brief seventh period, insofar as it applies to this life, will be peaceful and quiet. Joachim of Fiore’s third age, that of the Holy Spirit, is equivalent to the sixth and the seventh periods of Church though, contrary to the Abbot, these are not appropriated to a person of the Trinity but to the Spirit of Christ which is central to history’s

²⁵ Cf. S. PIRON, *Censures et condamnation de Pierre de Jean Olivi: enquête dans les marges du Vatican*, in *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome- Moyen Âge*, 118 (2006), pp. 313-373.

²⁶ Cf. VIAN, *Introduzione*, p. 27.

gradual progress²⁷. The *Lectura* divides ages in several ways: the traditional six ages of the world, the three laws (*lex nature, lex scripta, lex gratie*), Joachim's three general ages and Olivi's seven periods of the Church, all of which end in the three advents of Christ in the flesh, in the Spirit, in the judgement.

The Apocalypse is divided into seven visions: the seven Churches in Asia; the seven seals; the seven trumpets; the woman clothed with the sun (the seven wars); the seven vials; the fall of Babylon and heavenly Jerusalem. The first six visions may, in turn, be divided into seven periods, each of which refer to one of the seven periods (*status*) in the history of the Church. By assembling all the first elements of the first six visions (church, seal, trumpet, war, vial, the first phase of the fall of Babylon), all the second, all the third and so forth, seven groups of theological themes are obtained and coincide with all the themes concerning each of the seven *status*²⁸. Two more groups must be added to the first seven: the exegesis of the seventh vision (with no division relating to the seven periods) and the exegesis of the chapters in the Apocalypse, or parts thereof, that introduce the subsequent explanations of each vision in septenaries which Olivi defines as roots (*radicalia*). In this way nine groups are obtained: the proemial parts, the seven groups of septenaries and the seventh vision. The extensive Prologue (*generale principium*) to the *Lectura*, divided into thirteen *Notabilia*, may also be rearranged according to the seven periods²⁹.

Hence the prologue of a book (*the Lectura*) contains principles and criteria upon which a perspicacious reader is able to base another book that, whilst having the same contents, has been rewritten and organized in a different way. This organising method, suggested at the same time as Raimondo Lullo's works, was certainly a mnemonic aid: the seven periods may indeed be associated with the countless septenaries in the sacred history. In this way the exegesis of the last

²⁷ Cf. P. VIAN, *Fra Gioacchino da Fiore e lo spiritualismo francescano: lo Spirito Santo nella Lectura super Apocalipsim di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*, in «*lo spirito santo*», in «Parola spirito e vita. Quaderni di lettura biblica» 38 (1998/2) pp. 237-250: p. 248.

²⁸ The principle is clearly stated in the *notabilis* VIII of the prologue: «[...] si omnia prima membra visionum ad invicem conferas et consimiliter omnia secunda et sic de aliis, aperte videbis omnia prima ad idem primum concorditer referri et consimiliter omnia secunda ad idem secundum et sic de aliis. Et hoc in tantum quod plena intelligentia eiusdem primi multum clarificatur ex mutua collatione omnium primorum, et idem est de omnibus secundis et tertiis et sic de aliis» (Par. lat. 713, ff. 12vb-13ra).

²⁹ The manuscript tradition has not handed down any proof that the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* was organized by periods. However, this form is demonstrated by inquisitive sources. In 1318 two theologians, the Carmelite Guido Terreni and the Dominican Petrus de Palude, sent a memorandum to Pope John XXII containing forty-two erroneous articles taken from a compendium of Olivi's *Lectura* written in Catalan entitled *De statibus Ecclesiae secundum expositionem Apocalypsis*: cf. J. M. POU Y MARTÍ, *Visionarios, beguinos y fraticelos catalanes (siglos XIII-XV)*, Vich, Editorial Seráfica, 1930, pp. 255-258, 483-512. An abridged version of the fifth book of the *Arbor vitae* by Ubertino da Casale (ed. Venetiis 1516, 1525 [«incipit tractatus de septem statibus ecclesie iuxta septem visiones beati Johannis in Apocalypsi»]) has been passed down bearing the same title. This book is a rewrite of Olivi's comment, the first version of which was written in La Verna as early as 1305.

canonical book is indeed transformed into a theology of history that includes the entire Bible which, in turn, is the form, example and purpose of all science³⁰.

Olivi believes that sacred history is an evolution. The Revelation of Christ did not end with the first advent; it continues and grows just like individuals develop until they reach maturity. Contrary to the vision of the history of mankind held by Saint Augustine, the Fathers and the Gregorian Church, Olivi thought that the world was not ageing but painfully giving birth to a new era³¹. This, known as the «sixth period of the Church», is marked by the second advent of Christ, not in the flesh yet in the Spirit which was infused into the last Order of contemplators on heavenly matters and governors and even into individuals («singulares persone»). These individuals are the new image of Saint John the Apostle, who in the Apocalypse was told to prophesy again to many nations, peoples, tongues and kings (Rev. 10, 11); they imitate Christ and may assume His qualities like the numerous angels cited in the book's visions which were moved by Christ, though not in the same historical period.

Just as in the Old Testament the book was left unopened (though not entirely since the prophets managed to see into it through several fissures), in the New Testament the book was not fully opened with the first advent of Christ and the foundation of the Church, as this takes place gradually and in septenaries until the end of time. The *fabrica ecclesie* may be compared to a tree that grows from the roots to the branches, flowers and fruits or to a city that was gradually built from ditches, foundations, walls, doors and houses³². The sixth and seventh part of the visions, the most Christlike, are like the 'point' from which any understanding of the previous periods depends on, clarifying their appearance in history. The subsequent enlightenment of the mysteries, ranging from the most undisclosed to the most revealed and from the veto to tell to the order to speak, is accompanied by a gradual refinement of inner freedom and the will to speak about Christ and His doctrine. This is fully accomplished in the sixth period. Philadelphia, the sixth Church in Asia, is given the freedom to speak 'as dictated from within' (the *ostium sermonis* has been opened, Rev. 3, 8). She had kept the word of Christ: Philadelphia is interpreted as she who saves the heritage of the seed of faith. The angel of the sixth seal is given total freedom to reform the Christian religion

³⁰ «Si enim omnes septenarios in scripturis positos coaptas ad septenarios huius libri, innumerabilia misteria tibi clarescent, si diligenter attenderis ipsorum parilem concordiam et consignantiam [...]» (LSA, prologus, *notabile* XIII; Par. lat. 713, f. 20vb); «Ipsa [Scriptura] enim est principium omnis scientiae et comprehensiva omnis scientiae et forma seu exemplar omnis scientiae et finis omnis scientiae» (Cf. *De causis Scripturae*, § 4, in PETER OF JOHN OLIVI. *On the Bible. Principia quinque in Sacram Scripturam*, ed. D. Flood - G. Gál, St. Bonaventure University, New York 1997 [Franciscan Institute Publications, Text Series, 18], p. 44).

³¹ Cf. P. VIAN, *Dalla gioia dello Spirito alla prova della Chiesa. Il tertius generalis status mundi nella Lectura super Apocalipsim di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*, in *L'età dello Spirito e la fine dei tempi in Gioacchino da Fiore e nel gioachimismo medievale*, Atti del II Congresso internazionale di studi gioachimiti, San Giovanni in Fiore - Luzzi - Celico, 6-9 settembre 1984, a cura di A. Crocco, San Giovanni in Fiore Centro internazionale di studi gioachimiti, 1986, pp. 165-215; ID., *Tempo escatologico e tempo della Chiesa*, pp. 178-181.

³² LSA, cap. XXI, Ap 21, 12-13/21; Par. lat. 713, ff. 197ra, 199vb-200ra.

and open the age of the Spirit (Rev. 7, 2). When the sixth seal is opened the army of Christ is signed on the forehead and given the everlasting and magnanimous freedom to preach and publicly defend faith (Rev. 7, 3-4). All the previous elucidations help to enlighten the sixth period (which in the *Lectura* is always introduced as a *novum seculum*) upon which even all the malice of the past falls. In the sixth period, and even more in the seventh, teaching through the outer voice, associated with the human nature of Christ, is substituted by the inner voice which pertains to His Spirit; the *gustativa et palpativa experientia* of truth is added to the *lux simplicis intelligentie*.

The *Lectura* was not written for university circles as it was devoted to «his Franciscan brothers and their destiny in which he believed»³³, insomuch as it contains ferments of the individual religious experiences that took place throughout the fourteenth century. Olivi anchors his urge for reformation to the Roman Catholic Church, which by no means has been entirely identified as the «Ecclesia carnalis» that always runs together with the «Ecclesia spiritualis» and its seed, even when it seems to have been reduced to little more than a relic, a seamless garment compared to the other clothes belonging to Christ which the soldiers shared out. Yves Congar wrote:

Olivi does not focus his interest on the Church, though on the form of evangelical life, marked by poverty, the truth of which was revealed to Saint Francis who lived in poverty and taught the Friars Minor to live likewise. However, neither Francis nor his Order is conceivable without the Church, except for a united form of institution in which, by the will of God, the Roman See holds the highest position³⁴.

III. *Lectura super Apocalipsim and Commedia: rules of correspondence between the texts.*

This research has been published on the website www.danteolivi.com where the following summary is explained³⁵. The digital publication of this research is undoubtedly invaluable for

³³ Cf. D. FLOOD, *Le projet franciscain de Pierre Olivi*, in «Etudes Franciscaines», n. s., 23 (1973), pp. 367-379: pp. 376-377, cited by VIAN in Pietro di Giovanni Olivi, *Scritti scelti*, p. 112. The fact that the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* was not addressed to university circles is demonstrated by the relatively few *quaestiones* which, conversely, are abundant in other exegetic works by this author and his comments to the Gospels.

³⁴ Y. CONGAR, *Les positions ecclésiologiques de Pierre-Jean Olivi d'après les publications récentes*, in *Franciscains d'Oc. Les Spirituels, ca 1280-1324* (Cahiers de Fanjeaux, 10), Toulouse 1975, p. 156 [republished in ID., *Etudes d'ecclésiologie médiévale*, London, Variorum Reprints, 1983] (personal translation).

³⁵ As to the 31st July 2012, in addition to the text of the *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, the following essays have been published on the website in PDF files: I. *Dante's «High War» between Latin and the Vernacular. Notes on Gustavo Vinay's research on the De vulgari eloquentia* [= I]; II. *The fight against doubt: a modern martyrdom (Francesca and the «Donna Gentile»)* [= II]; III. *The sixth seal* (chapters 1-12) [= III]; *The Lectura super Apocalipsim and the Commedia. Correspondence between the Texts* (chapters 1-2) [= IV]. The *Topografia spirituale della Commedia*, concerning *The Third Period of Church History. Reasoning corrects errors; The seventh vision (Heavenly Jerusalem; Apocalypse XX-XXII)* has been published. All the quotations herein refer to the essay and chapter (though not to the numbering of the synoptic tables which are still temporary). The presentation of this research project anticipated several aspects (which have been repeated and updated on the new website) namely in the Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, following Raffaello Morghen's school which was preeminent in this type of investigation. Cf. A. FORNI,

several reasons. Space and arrangement: since the entire *Commedia* (14,233 verses) has been compared with the *Lectura*, a printed version, capable of adequately demonstrating the relationship between the texts, is unconceivable. Quick links: hyper-textual links and coloured markings are indispensable in order to illustrate the cyclical presence in the verses of the semantic elements related to each of Olivi's seven periods. Updates: the results of an investigation which is still in the first stages could lead to new findings and are therefore subject to, even considerable, modifications. Since research is expected to be continued for quite some time, any further results will be constantly updated. The amount of space available and the clearness of the electronic version enable us to work on a kind of archaeology of the text and to discover and illustrate the deepest meanings of the «Sacred Poem». Thus the imperceptible truth, once lost by the author's contemporaries, becomes accessible to all. Even the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* based on the ms. lat. 713 kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, which amongst the sixteen surviving manuscripts is the most important witness for age, authority and historic value³⁶, has been published and contains hyper-textual links whereby the text may be rearranged according to the principles contained in the prologue. Here again this would have been impossible with a printed edition.

Even a superficial and purposely casual comparison (neglecting an analysis of the contents) between any chapter of the *Lectura* and any passage in the *Commedia* reveals the relationship between Dante's language and that of the biblical exegesis. Words, similies (Rev. 16, 17) and rhetoric expressions (Rev. 6, 2) are all converted from Latin into the vernacular³⁷.

Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e Dante, ovvero il panno e la gonna, in A. BOUREAU - S. PIRON (ed.), *Pierre de Jean Olivi (1248-1298). Pensée scolastique, dissidence spirituelle et société*. Actes du Colloque de Narbonne (mars 1998), Paris, Vrin, 1999 (Études de philosophie médiévale, LXXIX), pp. 341-372; ID., *Dialogo tra Dante e il suo maestro. La metamorfosi della Lectura super Apocalipsim di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi nella Divina Commedia*, in «Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo», 108 (2006), pp. 83-122; ID., *L'aquila fissa nel sole. Un confronto tra Riccardo di San Vittore, Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e Dante*, in *Scritti per Isa. Raccolta di scritti offerti a Isa Lori Sanfilippo*, a cura di A. Mazzon, Roma 2008 (Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo. Nuovi Studi Storici, 76), pp. 431-473.

³⁶ As demonstrated by the countless notes written in the margins and between the spacing, Par. lat. 713 was certainly in the hands of the censors who, ordered by Pope John XXII, examined the «pestifera postilla» in 1317-1319 and collated the sixty articles considered to be heretic or erroneous: cf. A. FORNI - P. VIAN, *Un codice curiale nella storia della condanna della Lectura super Apocalipsim di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi: il Parigino latino 713 (I)*, in «Collectanea franciscana», 81 (2011), pp. 479-558.

³⁷ The chapter and the verses of the Apocalypse are shown at the beginning of the text of the *Lectura* (Ap) in [], as likewise the *notabilia* of the Prologue; the passages of the Holy Bible to which the exegesis refers are in Roman type in “ ”. Any alterations in the transcription of the text such as conjectures are in [], the explanations of which may be found in the full text of the *Lectura*, as likewise any reference to the authors. Any explanatory words added to the text are in (). During his investigation the author has referred to DANTE ALIGHIERI, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, a cura di G. PETROCCHI, Firenze, Le Lettere, 1994.

[LSA, cap. III, Ap 3, 18/20; Par. lat. 713, ff. 54va, 55rb]³⁸ [...] cum se et *totum* cor suum *offert* et dedicat *servituti* et *obedientie* Dei pro ipso et eius caritate habenda. [...] Deinde incitat et allicit eum fortius, exhibendo se ei ut *paratissimum* et *desideratissimum* associatissime et intime convivendum et convivandum cum eo [...] vehementer excito ut michi corda vestra *aperiatis*.

Purg. XXVI, 104:

tutto m'offersi pronto al suo *servigio*

Inf. X, 43-44:

Io ch'era d'*ubidir desideroso*,
non gliel celai, ma *tutto* gliel' *apersi*

[LSA, cap. VI, Ap 6, 2; Par. lat. 713, f. 73ra-b]³⁹ In prima autem apertione apparet Christus resuscitatus sedens in equo albo, id est in suo corpore glorioso et in primitiva ecclesia per regenerationis gratiam dealbata et per lucem resurrectionis Christi irradiata, in qua Christus sedens *exivit in campum* totius orbis *non* quasi pavidus aut infirmus, sed cum summa magnanimitate et insuperabili *virtute*. [...] “Et exivit *vincens* ut vinceret”, id est, secundum Ricardum⁴⁰, vincens quos de Iudeis elegit ipsos convertendo ut per eosdem vinceret, id est converteret gentiles quos predestinaverat. Vel per hoc designatur quod, quando *exivit* ut mundum vinceret, *apparuit* in ipso exitu totus *victoriosus* et ac si iam totus *vicisset*.

Inf. XV, 121-124:

Poi si rivolse, e *parve* di coloro
che corrono a Verona il drappo verde
per la campagna; e *parve* di costoro
quelli che *vince*, *non* colui che perde.

Par. XII, 106-108:

Se tal fu l'una rota de la biga
in che la Santa Chiesa si difese
e *vinse in campo* la sua civil briga

Par. XXV, 82-84:

Indi spirò: “L'amore ond' io avvampo
ancor ver' *la virtù* che mi seguette
infin la palma e a *l'uscir del campo*”

[LSA, cap. X, Ap 10, 1; Par. lat. 713, f. 114va]⁴¹ Et subdit: « Ego autem angelum istum secundum litteram aut Enoch fore puto aut Heliam. Verum, prout hoc Deus melius novit, unum dico pro certo, quod hic angelus significat personaliter magnum aliquem predicatorem, quamvis spiritaliter ad multos viros spirituales tunc temporis futuros competenter valeat intorqueri. Sane facies angeli similis est soli, quia *in hoc sexto tempore oportet Dei contemplationem in modum solis splendescere et perducere ad notitiam eorum qui designantur in Petro et Iacobo et Iohanne, id est Latinorum et Grecorum et Hebreorum*, primo quidem Latinorum, deinde Grecorum, tertio Hebreorum, ut fiant novissimi qui erant primi et e contrario ». Hec Ioachim⁴².

Purg. XXXII, 70-78:

Però trascorro a quando mi svegliai,
e dico ch'un *splendor* mi squarciò 'l velo
del sonno, e un chiamar: “Surgi: che fai?”.
Quali a veder de' fioretti del melo
che del suo pome li angeli fa ghiotti
e perpetüe nozze fa nel cielo,
Pietro e Giovanni e Iacopo condotti
e vinti, ritornaro a la parola
da la qual furon maggior sonni rotti

³⁸ Christ and the seventh church (Laodicea) open reciprocally; Dante relates with Guinizzelli (*Purg.* XXVI, 104) and Farinata (*Inf.* X, 43-44). Cf. III, 3.

³⁹ Christ triumphantly enters the field when the first seal is opened; Brunetto Latini (*Inf.* XV, 121-124), the Church (*Par.* XII, 106-108), Saint James (*Par.* XXV, 82-84). Cf. III, Appendix.

⁴⁰ RICHARD OF SAINT VICTOR, *In Apocalypsim libri septem* (= *In Ap*), II, iv (PL 196, col. 762 B-C).

⁴¹ Il *magnus predicator* di Gioacchino da Fiore; Dante awakes in the Garden of Eden (*Purg.* XXXII, 70-78). Cf. III, 7d.

⁴² JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Expositio in Apocalypsim (Expositio magni prophete)*, ed. Venetiis 1527, in edibus Francisci Bindoni ac Maphei Pasini, anastatic reprint Frankfurt a. M. 1964, f. 137vb-ra.

[LSA, cap. XVI, Ap 16, 17; Par. lat. 713, f. 166rb-va]⁴³ Secundum autem Ioachim⁴⁴, septima phiala effunditur super “**aerem**”, id est super electos, ut si que eis **macule** adhererunt de communione Babilonis, **purgentur** et dealbentur super nivem, et in percussione septima cessat plaga Domini a populo Dei. [...] Et quidem congrue per “aerem” intelligitur contemplativus status in hac vita, quia sic stat in medio inter vitam beatam et terrenam sicut aer inter celum et terram. Et **sicut aer purgatus** a grossis et fumosis vaporibus et nubibus et tranquillatus a ventorum tempestatibus est pervius radiis solis et **stellarum** et **visui** hominum, **sic** septimus status ecclesie, **post** plenam sui purgationem in effusione septime phiale consumandam, erit **serenus** et tranquillus et pervius seu perspicuus ad contemplativos radios solis **eterni** et totius **celestis** et subcelestis hierarchie, ita quod tunc totus cultus templi Dei et tota sedes et maiestas Dei clamabit magnifice et evidenter Dei opera esse consumata. Et hoc quidem in hac vita, sumendo statum septimum prout erit in hac vita.

Par. XXVIII, 79-87:

Come rimane **splendido** e **sereno**
l'emisperio de l'**aere**, quando soffia
Borea da quella guancia ond' è più leno,
per che **si purga** e risolve **la roffia**
che pria turbava, sì che 'l ciel **ne ride**
con le bellezze d'ogne sua paroffia;
così fec'io, **poi che** mi provide
la donna mia del **suo** risponder **chiaro**,
e come **stella** in **cielo** il ver **si vide**.

Par. XXIII, 25-27:

Quale ne' plenilunii **sereni**
Trivïa **ride** tra le ninfe **etterne**
che dipingon lo ciel per tutti i seni

[LSA, cap. I, Ap 1, 16; f. 30rb-va] Decima (perfectio summo pastori condecens) est **sue claritatis** et virtutis incomprehensibilis gloria, unde subdit: “et facies eius sicut sol lucet in virtute sua”. Sol in tota virtute sua lucet in meridie, et precipue quando **aer** est **serenus** expulsa omni nube et grosso vapore, et quidem corporalis facies Christi plus incomparabiliter lucet et viget. Per hoc tamen designatur ineffabilis claritas et virtus sue divinitatis et etiam sue mentis. **Splendor** etiam iste sue **faciei** designat apertam et superfulgidam notitiam scripture sacre et faciei, ita quod in sexta etate et precipue in eius sexto statu debet preclarior radiare. In cuius signum Christus post sex dies transfiguratus est in monte in faciem solis (cf. Mt 17, 1-8), et sub sexto angelo tuba canente videtur angelus habens faciem solis et tenens librum apertum (cf. Ap 10, 1-2).

Whilst these examples, as such, prove a linguistic relationship which is well known to academics⁴⁵, the issue discussed in this research concerns the similarities between the two texts since they are found in hundreds rather than tens⁴⁶. This is no coincidence, the codes that regulate such an intense intertextuality must be traced since they exist and may be verified.

a) Word clusters in the *Lectura* are found, again close to one another though freely placed, in the *Commedia* as if they were threads taken from one warp and twisted with others in order to weave a new cloth. The use of identical words in Latin and in the vernacular within a small amount of text is too frequent to be a mere coincidence. These are not isolated words as they are placed in groups in a way that is neither commonplace nor expected. There is no calquing or rewriting. No phrases have

⁴³ The air cleansed when the seventh vial was poured (Rev. 16, 17), collated with the face of Christ shining like the sun in the sixth period of the Church (Rev. 1, 16); Beatrice (Par. XXVIII, 79-87), Trivia (Par. XXIII, 25-27). «Splendor faciei» corresponds to laughing. Cf. III, 2c; Appendix.

⁴⁴ JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Expositio magni prophete*, f. 191va.

⁴⁵ C. DELCORNO, *Dante e il linguaggio dei predicatori*, in *Lecture Classensi*, 25 (*Intertestualità dantesca*), a cura di E. Pasquini, Ravenna, Longo, 1996, pp. 51-74, insists on the preachers precocious studies on Dante (pp. 52-53). Z. G. BARAŃSKI, *Dante e i segni. Saggi per una storia intellettuale di Dante Alighieri*, Napoli, Liguori, 2000, p. 64, emphasises that the poet was closer to the symbolic-exegetic tradition which was more free and flexible than the rational philosophical tradition which was obsessively dividing.

⁴⁶ I, Appendix I (*A comparison between the Lectura super Apocalipsim and the Commedia: a casual correspondence?*).

been transferred – as they could not be from prose to poetry - only semantic elements which are highly rhetoric signs of the theological meaning.

An investigation of approximately three hundred *hapax legomena* found in the *Commedia* (the most rare or studied words) has highlighted this phenomenon in a systematic way⁴⁷. For example, «*volgare*» is a *hapax* in *Inf.* II, 105 where it is placed next to «*schiera*» and closely connected to «*amico*» in verse 61. All three words are present in the brief exegesis of Rev. 7, 3-4, which contains a series of semantic elements relating to the «*signatio*» of the friends of God enrolled in the elect tribe, though not in the vulgar tribe; the army which is given the everlasting and magnanimous freedom to defend the faith when the sixth seal is opened:

Inf. II, 61-63, 103-105:

l'amico mio, e non de la ventura,
ne la diserta piaggia è impedito
sì nel cammin, che vòlt' è per paura

Disse: - Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
ché non soccorri quei che t'amò tanto,
ch'uscì per te de la **volgare schiera**?

[LSA, cap. VII, Ap 7, 4; Par. lat. 713, f. 88rb-va] Igitur per hunc numerum, prout est certus et diffinitus, designatur singularis dignitas signatorum. Hii enim, qui sub certo nomine et numero et scriptura a regibus ad suam militiam vel curiam aut ad sua grandia vel dona ascribuntur, sunt digniores ceteris, qui absque scriptura et numero **ad vulgarem** et pedestrem **militiam** vel familiam eliguntur. Sicut etiam Deus, in signum familiarissime notitie et amicitie, Exodi XXXIII^o (Ex 33, 17) dicit Moysi: “Novi te ex nomine”, cum tamen omnes electos suos communiter noverit ut **amicos** et hoc modo solos reprobos dicatur nescire, sic per hanc specialem et prefixam numerationem et consignationem designatur familiarior signatio et notitia et amicitia apud Deum.

b) An identical passage in the *Lectura* leads to several passages in the *Commedia* through the presence of the same group of words. This means that the same exegesis of a passage in this scriptural commentary was used at different stages during the composition of the poem. For example, the numerous semantic elements found in Rev. 7, 3-4 are spread in various ways throughout the poem and, where they are found, maintain the original meaning adapted to the new form:

⁴⁷ IV. 1 (A journey around the hapax legomena in the 'Sacred Poem'). Cf. R. HOLLANDER, *An Index of Hapax Legomena in Dante's Commedia*, in «Dante Studies», CVI (1988), pp. 81-110.

[LSA, cap. VII, Ap 7, 2-3; Par. lat. 713, f. 86va-b] Clamat ergo: “Nolite”, id est non audeatis; vel si ad bonos angelos loquitur, dicit “nolite” quia, ex quo ipse prohibuit, non debuerunt velle; “nocere”, scilicet per effrenatam temptationem vel per predicationis et gratie **impeditionem**, “terre et mari neque arboribus, quoadusque signemus servos Dei nostri in frontibus eorum”.

Signatio hec fit per administrationem fidei et caritatis et per assumptionem ac professionem sacramentorum Christi distinctivam fidelium ab infidelibus. In hac etiam signatione includitur fides et devotio ad Christi passionem adorandam et imitandam et exaltandam. Fit autem “*in frontibus*”, quando signatis datur constans et **magnanimis** libertas ad Christi **fidem** publice confitentem et observandam et predicandam et defendendam. In fronte enim apparet signum audacie et strenuitatis vel **formidositatis** et inertie, et signum gloriationis vel **erubescencie**.

Item prout in eodem exercitu eiusdem **regis** distinguuntur equites a peditibus et **barones** seu duces vel centuriones et decuriones a simplicibus militibus, sic videntur hic distingui signati ex duodecim tribubus a turba innumerabili fidelium post ipsos subiuncta. Designatur enim per hanc signationem specialis assumptio ipsorum ad professionem perfectionis evangelice et altioris **militie** christiane et ad maiorem configurationem et transformationem ipsorum in Christum crucifixum et, secundum Ioachim, ad passionem martiriorum in eis complendam. Sicut enim post transmigrationem Babilonis, quod deerat in constructione templi, in quadraginta sex annis facta, completum est *in sex ultimis annis*, ita nunc *sub sexta apertione* ordo sanctorum martirum consumationem accipiet. Unde in die illo qui [erit] medius inter utramque tribulationem, scilicet Babilonis et Antichristi, signabuntur multi Iudeorum et gentium signaculo sancte Trinitatis, ad complendum numerum sanctorum martirum infra scriptum et illam gloriosam multitudinem cuius est numerus infinitus. Hec Ioachim⁴⁸.

[LSA, cap. VII, Ap 7, 4; Par. lat. 713, f. 88rb-va] Igitur per hunc numerum, prout est certus et diffinitus, designatur singularis dignitas signatorum. Hii enim, qui sub certo nomine et numero et **scriptura** a **regibus** ad suam militiam vel curiam aut ad sua grandia vel dona ascribuntur, sunt digniores ceteris, qui absque scriptura et numero **ad vulgarem** et pedestrem **militiam** vel familiam **eliguntur**. Sicut etiam **Deus**, in signum familiarissime notitie et amicitie, Exodi XXXIII^o (Ex 33, 17) dicit Moysi: “Novi te ex **nomine**”, cum tamen omnes electos suos communiter **noverit** ut **amicos** et hoc modo solos reprobos dicatur nescire, sic per hanc specialem et prefixam numerationem et consignationem designatur familiarior signatio et notitia et amicitia apud Deum.

Inf. I, 81, 129:

rispuos' io lui con **vergognosa fronte**.
oh felice colui cu' ivi **elegge!**

Inf. II, 43-45, 61-63, 103-105:

“S'i' ho ben la parola tua intesa”,
rispuose del **magnanimo** quell' ombra,
“l'anima tua è da **viltade** offesa”

L'amico mio, e non de la ventura,
ne la diserta piaggia è **impedito**
si nel cammin, che vòlt' è per paura

Disse: - Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
ché non soccorri quei che t'amò tanto,
ch'uscì per te de la **volgare schiera?**

Inf. IV, 100-102:

e più d'onore ancora assai mi fenno,
ch'e' sì mi fecer de la loro **schiera**,
sì ch'io fui **sesto** tra cotanto senno.

Inf. V, 85-87, 91-93:

cotali **uscir** de la **schiera** ov' è Dido,
a noi venendo per l'aere maligno,
sì forte fu l'affettüoso grido.

se fosse **amico il re** de l'universo,
noi pregheremmo lui de la tua pace,
poi c'hai pietà del nostro mal perverso.

Par. XVI, 127-132:

Ciascun che de la bella **insegna** porta
del gran **barone** il cui **nome** e 'l cui pregio
la festa di Tommaso riconforta,
da esso ebbe **milizia** e privilegio;
avvegna che **con popol** si rauni
oggi colui che la fascia col fregio.

Par. XXV, 10-18, 88-90:

però che ne **la fede**, che fa **conte**
l'anime **a Dio**, quivi intra' io, e poi
Pietro per lei sì mi girò **la fronte**.
Indi si mosse un lume verso noi
di quella spera ond' uscì la primizia
che lasciò Cristo d'i vicari suoi;
e la mia donna, piena di letizia,
mi disse: “Mira, mira: ecco il **barone**
per cui là giù si vicita Galizia”.

E io: “Le nove e le **scritture** antiche
pongon **lo segno**, ed esso lo mi addita,
de l'anime che **Dio** s'ha fatte **amiche**”.

⁴⁸ JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Expositio magni prophete*, f. 121ra.

At this point an actual metamorphosis of the *Lectura* may well be considered. By unshamefully and magnanimously signing their foreheads, the angel of the sixth seal removes an impediment for the elect friends of God⁴⁹, the faith in whom they shall defend to the point of martyrdom. They, who He knew by name, are enrolled in the highest army of barons, decurions and knights which is distinguished from the vulgar infantry. This exegesis, in which the sixth period corresponds to the last six years of the building of the Temple following captivity in Babylon, is a sacred military symphony the themes of which flow through several passages (a few of the countless examples are shown above)⁵⁰: from the poetic «signatio» of Dante - friend of Beatrice - who is «*sesto tra cotanto senno*» in the group of the great poets in Limbo, to the apostolic «signatio» during the examination on the three theological virtues in the presence of Saints Peter, James and John; from Francesca and Paolo's impossible friendship with God (who were both in a *schiera*) to the Florentine families mentioned by Cacciaguیدا, who bear «*la bella insegna*» of Ugo marquis of Tuscany, and were enrolled in a higher ranking army than Giano della Bella, the author of the famous Ordinances of Justice (1293) who too is decorated («*colui che la fascia col fregio*»), though now takes sides with the populace, which corresponds to the vulgar infantry below the signed. Those who were elected 'sixth' and loved by God are the sacred evolution of those (*De vulgari eloquentia*, II, iv, 10-11) who, in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil calls «*Dei dilectos*», the tragic poets whose ardent virtues are raised to the heavens (*Aen.*, VI, 129-131: «*Pauci, quos aequus amavit / Iuppiter*»), designated by the «*astripeta aquila*». Perhaps reading the exegesis of the angel of the sixth seal (which goes well beyond the part concerning the «signatio») influenced Dante's decision to make the journey, attributing all the styles of poetry to a heavenly army?

In order to maintain consistency in the *Commedia*, Dante referred to another text in which the spiritual meanings could be found, adapted and changed by means of semantic elements. The passage concerning the «signatio» (second vision, sixth seal) is certainly not isolated. In Rev. 12, 17 (fourth vision), the fifth war of the Church is led by a dragon that made war against a woman and the rest of her seed, the remains of a very pure wine mixed with impurities in a vase, as such is the Church of Rome⁵¹. Even the 'small remains of pure seed' is concealed in many passages and the topic twisted in the verses, based on the verb '*rimanere*', from Brunetto Latini's comment on

⁴⁹ Cf. A. ROBIGLIO, *Appunti sulla nobiltà in Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*, in *Pierre de Jean Olivi -Philosophe et théologien*. Actes du colloque de Philosophie médiévale. 24-25 octobre 2008, Université de Fribourg, édité par C. König-Pralong, O. Ribordy, T. Suarez-Nani (Scrinium Friburgense, 29), Berlin-New York 2010, pp. 113-134: «Il tema dell'amicizia con Dio è tradizionale, ma viene declinato dall'Olivi con piglio personale: dall'ineguaglianza, dalla povertà, dall'estrema *longitudo a Deo*, l'*electio divina*, per mezzo di Cristo, apre all'uomo l'*aequalitas amicitiae*» (p. 133). Sulla questione della nobiltà in Olivi e in Dante cf., sul sito web, I, 3 («*Curiam habemus*»).

⁵⁰ III, 1c (*Consequences of the opening of the sixth seal. The « signatio » in the Jubilee Year of 1300 [Rev. 7, 3-4]*).

⁵¹ LSA, cap. XII, Ap 12, 17; Par. lat. 713, f. 141ra-va. Cf., sul sito web, III, 2d.3 («*Mary remained below*»).

Dante «sementa santa / di que' Roman che vi *rimaser* quando / fu fatto il nido di malizia tanta» (which transfers the meaning Olivi assigns to the Roman Church to the Romans; *Inf.* XV, 76-78), to the expression «dove Maria *rimase* giusto» in Thomas of Aquinas eulogy to St Francis (*Par.* XI, 71, this verb is not to be found either in the *Sacrum commercium* nor in the *Arbor vitae*), and to the phrase of Pier Damiani (who associates short '*rimanere*' with his life on earth): «Poca vita mortal m'era *rimasa*, / quando fui chiesto e tratto a quel cappello, / che pur di male in peggio si travasa» (*Par.* XXI, 124-126). The semantic clusters arising from limited exegetic passages are not always transferred into the verses together. Though they are used in different ways, the reader may still trace them in the original cloth using intricate threads.

c) In order to make the meaning of the text more intelligible, as suggested by Olivi, several passages of the *Lectura* may be collated. However, the choice is not casual and is actually induced by the Apocalypse since it contains expressions, such as *Leitmotive*, which are repeated several times. Consequently, key-words link the passages to be collated. A *mutua collatio* of parts of the *Lectura* enhances the meaning associated with the words and makes thematic development possible.

In Rev. 3, 3 the oblivious and bewildered bishop of Sardis (the fifth Church in Asia in the first vision), is asked to remember the first state of grace that was lost or a divine judgment will befall upon him as a thief. The entire exegesis of the fifth Church, which was initially *pulchra* due to its stars though it subsequently became corrupt, is involved in the collation. Hence, amongst many passages, this one refers to the yearning for a «*primavera*» of innocence and lost beauty when Dante meets Matelda. A sign of this exegetic passage is to be found in the rhyme *bella/e* | *stella/e*. It is also useful for recognition, though in this case 'remembering' may be collated with Rev. 20, 12 (opening of the book of life memories)⁵² and with Rev. 1, 10-12 (Saint John turns when he hears a great voice)⁵³.

⁵² LSA, cap. XX, Ap 20, 12; Par. lat. 713, ff. 192va-193rb. Cf. *The seventh vision*, III (*The book of life* [Rev. 20, 12]).

⁵³ LSA, cap. I, Ap 1, 10-12; Par. lat. 713, ff. 27vb-28rb. Cf. I, 2.12 (*Sweet and bitter rhymes*).

[LSA, cap. III, Ap 3, 3; Par. lat. 713, f. 46vb]⁵⁴ “**In mente ergo habe**”, id est **attente recogita**, “qualiter acceperis”, scilicet a Deo **priorem** gratiam, “et audieris”, ab homine scilicet per predicationem evangelicam, “et serva”, scilicet illa que per predicationem audisti et per influxum gratie a Deo **primitus** accepisti. Vel recogita **qualiter** per proprium consensum accepisti fidem et gratiam et statum eius, prout a me et a ceteris tibi predicantibus audivisti. “Et serva” ea “et penitentiam age”, scilicet de tuis malis, quasi dicat: **si** digne **recogitaveris** gratiam tibi **prius** impensam et qualiter prius accepisti eandem, servabis eam et penitentiam ages.

[Ap 3, 1; f. 46ra-b] Respectu vero quinti status ecclesiastici, talem se proponit quia quintus status est respectu quattuor statuum precedentium generalis, et ideo universitatem spirituum seu donorum et **stellarum** seu rectorum et officiorum se habere testatur, ut qualis debeat esse ipsius ordinis institutio tacite innotescat. Diciturque hec ei non quia dignus erat muneribus ipsis, sed quia ipsi et semini eius erant, si dignus esset, divinitus preparata. Unde et Ricardus⁵⁵ dat aliam rationem quare hec ecclesia dicta est “Sardis”, id est principium **pulchritudinis**, quia scilicet sola initia boni non autem consumationem habuit, et solum nomen sanctitatis potius quam rem.

Purg. I, 22-24:

I’ mi volsi a man destra, e **puosi mente**
a l’altro polo, e vidi quattro **stelle**
non viste mai fuor ch’a **la prima** gente.

Purg. XXVIII, 49-51:

Tu mi fai **rimembrar** dove e **qual era**
Proserpina nel tempo che perdette
la madre lei, ed ella **primavera**.

Par. II, 28-30:

volta ver’ me, si lieta come **bella**,
“Drizza **la mente** in Dio grata”, mi disse,
“che n’ha congiunti con **la prima stella**”.

Par. III, 47-48, 58-61:

e **se la mente tua ben sé riguarda**,
non mi ti celerà l’esser più **bella**
Ond’ io a lei: “Ne’ mirabili aspetti
vostri risplende non so che divino
che vi trasmuta da’ **primi** concetti:
però non fui a **rimembrar** festino”

Due to the scriptural symmetry, the warning in Rev. 3, 3 focused on the resemblance of a thief (the theme contains: delay, not know, watchful, children of light and of day; or to steal, occur, sleep) must be compared with the passage in Rev. 16, 15 (fifth vision, sixth vial), which repeats the theme adding specific themes (clothed with virtues, be seen naked) which involve various points in the poem including classical reminiscences⁵⁶:

⁵⁴ III, 2b (*The angel that ascends from the East [Rev. 7, 2]. The perfection of the ‘first’ grace is like that of the seven stars [Rev. 3, 3]*).

⁵⁵ *In Ap I, xi (PL 196, col. 742 C)*.

⁵⁶ III, 1d (*The appearance of the thief [Rev. 3, 3; 16, 15]*).

Inf. III, 113-114; XIII, 103-104; XXVII, 127-129; *Purg.* VII, 34-35; *Par.* XII, 47-48:

.....fin che 'l ramo
vede a la terra tutte *le sue spoglie*

Come l'altre verrem per nostre *spoglie*,
ma *non* però ch'alcuna *sen rivesta*

disse: "Questi è d'i rei del foco *furo*";
per ch'io là dove *vedi* son perduto,
e sì *vestito, andando*, mi rancuro.

quivi sto io con quei che le tre sante
virtù non si vestiro

.....le novelle fronde
di che *si vede* Europa *rivestire*

[LSA, cap. XVI, Ap 16, 14-15; Par. lat. 713, f. 165va-b] Dicuntur autem reges congregari "*ad diem magnum* Dei" (Ap 16, 14), tum quia Deus faciet tunc per eos magnum iudicium de meretrice magna (cf. Ap 17, 12/16), tum quia ipsorum regum congregatio divino iudicio redundabit finaliter in exterminium ipsorum. Quia vero Deus tunc ex improvviso et subito faciet hec iudicia, ideo subdit: "Ecce venio sicut *fur*" (Ap 16, 15). Fur enim venit latenter ad furandum, ne advertat hoc dominus cuius sunt res quas furatur. Non autem dicit 'veniam' sed "venio", et hoc cum adverbio demonstrandi, ut per hoc estimationem de sua mora nobis tollat et ad adventum suum nos attentiores et vigilantiores et timoratiores reddat. Ad quod etiam ultra hoc inducit per promissionem premii et comminationem sui oppositi, unde subdit: "Beatus qui vigilat et custodit *vestimenta sua*", scilicet *virtutes* et bona opera, "*ne nudus ambulet*", id est *virtutibus spoliatus*; "et *videant*", scilicet omnes tam boni quam mali, "turpitudinem eius", id est sua turpissima peccata et suam confusibilem penam in die iudicii sibi infligendam.

Purg. I, 73-75:

Tu 'l sai, ché non ti fu per lei amara
in Utica la morte, ove lasciasti
la *vesta* ch'*al gran di* sarà sì chiara.

The «mutua collatio» becomes even more complex. Rearranging the subjects contained in the *Lectura* according to the principles stated in the Prologue, each passage is placed in a period of the history of the Church. Rev. 3, 3 concerns the fifth Church of Asia (the fifth part of the first vision), though when necessary (as determined by the poet) may be collated with other passages related to the fifth period. Since each period also contains the history of the former and vaguely anticipates the next periods, the collation may be made with other clusters.

In Rev. 14, 2 (fourth vision, sixth war), the fourth of the seven qualities of the followers who were with the Lamb on mount Sion consists in the excellence of the canticle of joy which, in turn, is glorified in seven ways. The fourth property of the singing voice should be melodious, jocose, modulated and suitable, like that of the harpers playing their instruments⁵⁷. This extensive topic concerning the Divine artist, in which playing the cord of *rigor iustitie* would be consistent with *dulcor misericordie* and *mititatis lenitas*, may be collated with other symmetrical passages (having different themes) related to 'voice', as if it were a keyword that links various part of the exegesis (Rev. 1, 10-11; 9, 9; 18, 22-23), yet not neglecting the frequency of themes arising from the other six qualities described in the first five verses of chapter XIV. The result is a composite cloth, ready to be constantly weaved, according to need, into the plot of the entire poem.

A comparison between the exegesis of Rev. 22, 1-2, the river of the water of life, clear as crystal (the Holy Spirit) that springs from the Holy Trinity to the saints and the blessed souls, crossing heavenly Jerusalem between two banks (the humanity and the divinity of Christ) both shaded by the leaves of «*lignum vitae*» (the sacraments which shade and hide the truth), and the

⁵⁷ LSA, cap. XIV, Ap 14, 2; Par. lat. 713, ff. 151vb-152rb. Cf. I, 2.12 (*Sweet and bitter rhymes*).

passages in the poem which literally contain the exegesis' *signacula*, reveals an extraordinary series of adaptations⁵⁸.

An extensive comparison between the texts reveals that the facts which are briefly illustrated above (a mere example which may be proved elsewhere), recur, more or less frequently, throughout the poem. Further investigation of the two *auctoritates* who resemble the two pillars of Olivi's commentary, Richard of Saint Victor and Joachim of Fiore, is the mirror-like counter evidence, seen against the light, of the *Commedia*'s intertextuality from the *Lectura*. Such investigation shows how the texts of the mystic of Saint Victor and the abbot from Calabria are passed down to Olivi, who added his own thoughts, and hence to Dante⁵⁹.

All of this closely resembles the *distinctiones* used by preachers in the XIII century⁶⁰, a technique repeatedly adopted by Olivi in his exegesis⁶¹. Zeal may be chastising since it is aimed for the good of the other (Rev. 3, 19), it may come from holy prayers said in the temple that is in heaven (Rev. 14, 17-18), or even to indicate the eternal heat that comes down from heaven, meaning the saints' firmness, and could be punitive or purgatory (Rev. 20, 9). A collation of the three passages (though more could be added) suggests the doctrine to which the individual semantic elements refer, changed when necessary in rebuking the hardihood of Eve (*Purg.* XXIX, 23-24), when holy zeal 'utters so loud' in heaven prayers against «li moderni pastori» who are insulted by Pier Damiani, like the scream of little flames that descend and then stand still (*Par.* XXI, 136-142; XXII, 7-15); or again in the «eternale ardore» that fell on the sand like «fiamme ... salde» which Alexander saw falling on his troops in India (*Inf.* XIV, 31-37) and even in the verse against Farinata degli Uberti «tal orazion fa far nel nostro tempio» (*Inf.* X, 87)⁶².

This research intends to improve the criteria on which these kinds of *distinctiones* were based, as an intermediary text between the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* (insofar as they actually coincide) and the *Commedia*. Correlations have already been found in many cases, for example by linking the exegeses related to the sequence *fulgura, voces, tonitrua, terremotus* which recurrently appear in the Apocalypse⁶³; or those that refer to the equally frequent expressions introduced by *in*

⁵⁸ LSA, cap. XXII, Ap 22, 1-2; Par. lat. 713, f. 203ra-b. Cf. *The seventh vision*, Introduction, 2.2 (*The two shores of the heavenly river* [Rev. 22, 1-2]).

⁵⁹ III, 7 (*The influence of Joachim of Fiore on Dante is indirect and discreet*); IV, 2 (*Fall and rise by degrees: directions to the bishop of Ephesus* [Rev. 2, 2-7] according to Richard of Saint Victor and Petrus Iohannis Olivi).

⁶⁰ Cf. L.-J. BATAILLON, *Les images dans les sermons du XIII^e siècle*, in «Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie», 37/3 (1990), pp. 327-395; *The Tradition of Nicholas of Biard's Distinctiones*, in «Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies», 25 (1994), pp. 245-288; DELCORNO, *Dante e il linguaggio dei predicatori, passim*.

⁶¹ For Olivi's technique of using numeric categories within the «distinctio», cf. G. DAHAN, *Interpréter la Bible au Moyen Âge. Cinq écrits du XIII^e siècle sur l'exégèse de la Bible traduits en français*, Paris, Parole et Silence, 2009, pp. 84-86. The author emphasises how readers of the exegesis must collaborate with this principle.

⁶² III, 7a (*Neutral angels* [Inf. III, 37-42], Tab. XLIV septies²).

⁶³ III, Appendix (*The opening of the first seal; Rev. 6, 1-2: White triumphs*).

medio (with surprising implications right from the first verse of the poem)⁶⁴, to *Amen*⁶⁵ and so forth.

Applied in the *Lectura*, this technique not only distinguishes words and associates the meaning but, above all, it also links the exegetic themes related to the individual periods of the history of the Church. For example, the term *valor*, appears once only in the *Lectura* (in the introduction to the fifth chapter, second vision) and refers to the opening of the third seal. By associating this part of the exegesis with other passages concerning the third period, many semantics widely used in the verses are individually modified when the word *valore* appears⁶⁶.

The use of analogies between the different meanings of a term, by placing words together which are not usually associated in common language, occurs both in the Holy Bible as in its exegesis and was introduced by *scilicet, id est*. Rev. 19, 10 is associated with Pope Hadrian V who does not allow Dante to kneel before him in adoration. However the word «teco» is not found in the sacred text but in its exegesis⁶⁷.

[LSA, cap. XIX, Ap 19, 10; Par. lat. 713, f. 182va-b] “Et dixit michi: Vide *ne feceris*”, scilicet talem reverentiam michi. Cuius causam subdit dicens: “*Conservus tuus sum*”, id est *tecum* et sicut tu sum servus eiusdem Dei et Domini. Ne autem credatur quod respectu solius Iohannis, propter eius singularem precellentiam, hoc diceret, et non *de omnibus hominibus servis Christi*, ideo subdit: “et *fratrum* tuorum habentium testimonium Ihesu” [...]

Purg. XIX, 133-135; XXI, 130-132:

“Drizza le gambe, lèvati sù, *frate!*”,
rispuose; “non errar: *conservo sono*
teco e con li altri ad una podestate.”

Già s’inchinava ad abbracciar li piedi
al mio dottor, ma el li disse: “*Frate,*
non far, ché tu se’ ombra e ombra vedi”.

d) The considerable amount of words/themes that have been transferred from the *Lectura* to the *Commedia* is accompanied by a structural aspect. The *Commedia* is actually structured in a different way than appears to readers. Dante’s journey is made in cyclical septenaries which are equivalent to Olivi’s seven periods of the Church. The poem is organised according to progressive parts in which the themes of each period prevail and go beyond the literal boundaries established by the cantos and the circles, terraces and heavens. Like the mesh of suit of armour, each period is linked both to the previous and to the subsequent one and, according to Olivi, the beginning or the end of each period is moveable. Moreover, each period is very rich in themes and includes the themes of all the others which may be intertwined and changed. Like the Apocalypse, the *Commedia* seems to be a book that was written «inside and outside» (Rev. 5, 1) and has a twofold

⁶⁴ III, 4 («*In the middle*»)

⁶⁵ I, 2.4 («*Amen, id est vere sic sit et fiat*»: the prayer of the «*fair land there where the Si doth sound*»).

⁶⁶ *The Third Period*, II (*The second vision: the third seal* [Rev. 6, 5-6]).

⁶⁷ The ample exegesis of Rev. 19, 10 may also be collated with the symmetry of Rev. 22, 8-9 providing material for many other passages: III, 6 (*Speech as dictated from within* [Rev. 2, 7]).

structure, language and literal and spiritual meaning. Both Dante's journey and Saint John's vision pursue the same final cause of reaching a state of bliss. Said state is reached, with different guides, in stages marked by visions that are ever more innovative and difficult than the previous and by very gradually opening the book hidden behind the veils of the seven seals, to the point where, in this life, truth may be seen. In the *Inferno* the journey, which in modern times (the sixth period) rediscovers the ancient, passes through the world's first five eras, that is to say the Old Testament and Joachim's age of the Father: a place of cold and rough hardship, where things that are hard to say are said harshly. The *Purgatorio* then introduces the sixth age, the age of the Son, divided into the seven periods of the Church, the sixth of which is divided into seven further phases that coincide with the seven terraces on the mountain. Joachim's third age, that of the Holy Spirit (or Olivi's sixth and seventh period of the Church), starts when the door of Purgatory is opened. The seventh phase of the sixth period coincides with the seventh period of the Church, which takes place partly in this life (the seventh terrace of the mountain and the Garden of Eden at the top) and partly in the next (the peace found by the blessed souls awaiting resurrection, that is in the *Paradiso* which again has its own spiritual structure based on the seven periods).

All the manners of speech within the poem express a route, a journey from the most undisclosed to the most disclosed, and are placed along this route in a specific 'topographical' position, i.e. the *status* to which they belong⁶⁸. Thus real thematic maps may be drawn that include the spiritual structure of the entire *Commedia* which adheres to a precise theology of history. The cyclic nature of the themes enables unusual links between the various parts of the poem to be established: by taking the divine enlightenment step by step, the obscure or almost hermetically sealed episodes become clear and then reach a more advanced understanding.

This is the part of the research which is most difficult to demonstrate. Indeed the periods of the history of the Church are not theological abstractions to be applied to various parts of the poem. They are, rather, very rich themes that have been used in the poem to merge sacred history with real unrelated events. Therefore, having examined each of the nine groups of topics in the exegesis, a *Spiritual Topography* of the *Commedia* shall indicate, for each verse or group of verses, the equivalent passages in Olivi's theological exegesis and show how the themes have been transformed and cyclically recur. Hyper-textual links directly connect the verses in the poem to the tables where the relative passages are shown⁶⁹.

⁶⁸ A general mapping (temporary) has been suggested in *The third seal. Examples of the Commedia's «topografia spirituale»*.

⁶⁹ Only matter relating to the third period in the history of the Church and the seventh vision is currently available. The sixth is the most important period and together with the seventh has been exhaustively examined in the essay *The sixth seal*.

The *Lectura super Apocalipsim* is the «cloth» from which the «good tailor» made «the gown» to use Saint Bernard's expression (*Par.* XXXII, 140-141). It is the «key of David» in the Apocalypse (3, 7), «that openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth». The *Lectura* is not a new source for Dante nor, compared to other known sources, is it the main one. The *Lectura* is the 'book' of the history of sapiential enlightenments to which everything else must agree. In the poem Virgil, Ovid or Lucan, Boethius, Aristotle, Albertus Magnus or Thomas Aquinas, different types of poetic experience or knowledge of astronomy and even Scripture as such are all sources which, by means of intertextuality, relate to the *Lectura*. However, philosophical aspects such as the moral structure of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, the creation of the universe, heavens, angels and redemption do not derive from Olivi's doctrine even though they are 'armed' with words and meanings taken from the *Lectura*⁷⁰.

IV. *Time of the Church and time of the man*

Dante had his own reasons to take interest in language, Aristotle and the Empire. Olivi wrote in Latin, had no feelings for the Empire, was against Aristotle. These are precisely the extreme points from which the extent of the metamorphosis may be measured. Limbo (*Inf.* IV) corresponds to the heavenly see before Christ opened the book sealed with seven seals (*Rev.* 4, 2-5, 4)⁷¹. The opening of the book was wept for, desired and long-awaited by the ancient Fathers - «Item fletus hic quantus fuit in sanctis patribus ante Christum; cum etiam essent in limbo inferni, quanto desiderio suspirabant ut liber vite aperiretur eis et omnibus cultoribus Dei!»⁷² -, just as it is even now in the second advent: «Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare, / non avea pianto mai che di sospiri». As at the opening of the sixth seal the privileged signed army precedes the multitude, the group of five great poets likewise appoint Dante «sesto tra cotanto senno». Whilst in the sixth period the Gentiles are converted «in spiritu magno et alto» (*Rev.* 19, 1)⁷³, in the *Commedia* the «spiriti magni» dwell in the noble castle - that is to say the ancient (before Christianity) and modern (the Mohammedans Avicenna, Averroës and Saladin) just people - in an ongoing Redemption process that looks at a new age of universal palingenesis and conversion which, in Dante's case, is performed by means of poetry. According to Saint Paul's letter to the Romans (11, 25-26) the conversion of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled in the sixth period, before the conversion of the whole of Israel.

⁷⁰ But on the Statius' explanation of generation see M. LENZI, *Bruno Nardi, Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e l'origine dell'anima umana in Dante* (Pg XXV 37-79), in *Pierre de Jean Olivi - Philosophe et théologien*, pp. 369-405.

⁷¹ I, 2.6 (*Ancients*).

⁷² LSA, cap. V, Ap 5, 4-5; *Par. lat.* 713, f. 67va.

⁷³ LSA, cap. XIX, Ap 19, 1; *Par. lat.* 713, f. 181ra. Cf. III, 7d (*The final conversion of the Gentiles and of Israel*).

The ancient Fathers and Prophets, designated by the four and twenty ancients around the throne on which sits He who holds in his right hand a book sealed with seven seals (Rev.. 4, 4 – 5, 1), were partially enlightened and became part of a providential plan, that is to say, that under the veil of prophesy the book was revealed to them only to the extent to which they were entitled in the times they lived. Dante assigned the task of forerunners in the building of the Church to the «spiriti magni» that live in Limbo «in disio», especially Aristotle «'l maestro di color che sanno». The figure of the master of human reasoning is weaved with the threads of He who sits on the highest throne, with whom Aristotle shares the themes of highest wisdom, to sit, to be surrounded and honoured by the «famuli» (seniors), amongst whom, almost as if close advisors or attendants, sit Socrates and Plato. The divine qualities borne by Aristotle mean that he is the first custodian of «gubernationes et documenta» who then «per magistrorum consilium descendunt ad nos quasi a pastore uno» (cf. *Ecclesiastes*, 12, 11)⁷⁴.

These individuals «di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti», like the seniors who had been crowned for their authority «tamquam magne experientie et prudentie et maturi ac providi iudicii et consilii» (who Olivi believed could be «reges seu pontifices»)⁷⁵, «parlavan rado, con voci soavi». This means they spoke rationally using human arguments: and from the throne (Rev. 4, 5) proceeded lightnings, thunders and more modest earthly voices; «Voces enim in terra fiunt, tonitrua vero in celo seu ethere, vocesque sunt *modice* respectu tonitruorum [...] “*et voces*”, scilicet doctrine rationalis et quasi humane [...] “*et voces*”, id est et *suaves* ac rationabiles persuasiones et predicationes sunt facte»⁷⁶. Such is the «angelica voce» of Beatrice, who spoke «soave e piana» to Virgil (*Inf.* II, 56-57), and also that of the ambiguous figure of king Solomon⁷⁷, who in the sphere of the Sun speaks from the «minor cerchio» with «una voce modesta, / forse qual fu da l'angelo a Maria» (*Par.* XIV, 34-36).

In Limbo, the earthly figure of the Empyrean, the term «suspended» describes both the state of those who hopelessly yearn for God in eternity and of those who by contemplating are capable of soaring above the others like an eagle. Homer's flight above the others was woven on the exegesis of the fourth trumpet (the fourth period of the history of the Church is, par excellence, that of the contemplatives). A quotation by Joachim of Fiore concerning Gregory the Great, who wrote a great deal about the end of the world and knew better than anyone else how fly through the midst of the allegories «ac si arduas celi vias altius pre ceteris prevolavit» (Rev. 8, 13), is applied to the «sire»:

⁷⁴ LSA, cap. IV, Ap 4, 4; Par. lat. 713, f. 57va.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, capp. V, Ap 4, 5; VIII, Ap 8, 5; XI, Ap 11, 19; Par. lat. 713, f. 58rb; ff. 95vb-96ra; f. 127rb.

⁷⁷ Cf. I, 3.6 (*The book written from within and without*).

[LSA, cap. VIII, Ap 8, 13; Par. lat. 713, f. 100rb-va] Per *aquilam* designantur hic alti contemplativi quarti temporis, qui prophético spiritu presenserunt et predixerunt mala que post finem quarti temporis debebant subsequi. Inter quos credit Ioachim per hanc aquilam specialius designari beatum papam Gregorium, qui utique fuit in quarto tempore, prout supra fuit in principio prenotatum. Ipse enim « libere plurima de mundi fine et de pressura seculi scripsisse dinoscitur, *quique allegoriarum semitas ac si arduas celi vias altius pre ceteris prevolavit*, neque enim invenitur alius similis eius, qui ista erumpnosa tempora appropinquasse in suis operibus testaretur ». Hec Ioachim⁷⁸.

Inf. IV, 43-45, 94-96:

Gran duol mi prese al cor quando lo 'ntesi,
però che gente di molto valore
conobbi che 'n quel limbo *eran sospesi*.

Così vid' i' adunar la bella scola
di quel signor de l'altissimo canto
che sovra li altri com' aquila vola.

[LSA, cap. IV, Ap 4, 7-8; f. 60vb] Dividit (Ioachim)⁷⁹ enim viginti quattuor legiones in quattuor partes secundum quattuor animalia, ita ut in leone accipiamus fortes in fide, in vitulo autem robustos in patientia, in homine preditos scientia, in *aquila* contemplatione *suspensos*.

Virgil resumes the rationality of the Ancients, though he is also a man of the sixth period (i.e. of modern times), which he travels through with Dante whilst they ascend the mountain training for the evangelical and spiritual life. The pagan poet resembles Christ's human nature and 'outer voice' in preparation of the Spirit's 'inner voice', expressed by Beatrice who takes Virgil's place in the Garden of Eden⁸⁰. Prophet of the first advent of Christ, Virgil is also a prophet of the second and likewise great *renovatio* that takes place in the sixth period. Here Virgil plays the role of the «calavrese abate Giovacchino / di spirito profetico dotato» (Par. XII, 139-141), who, as Olivi says, saw the sixth period through revelation⁸¹. This new Virgil is reconciled with the former, as demonstrated by comparing the passages in the *Lectura* referring to the *renovatio* of the sixth period:

⁷⁸ JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Expositio magni prophete*, f. 130rb.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 108rb.

⁸⁰ III, 6 (*Speech as dictated from within*; Rev. 2, 7).

⁸¹ III, 7 (*The influence of Joachim of Fiore on Dante*).

<p><i>Purg.</i> XXII, 70-72:</p> <p>quando dicesti: ‘Secol si rinova; torna giustizia e <i>primo</i> tempo umano, e progenie scende da ciel nova’.</p> <p>[LSA, prologus, Notabile VI; Par. lat. 713, f. 9ra] Tertia ratio magis litteralis est quia ut quidam finis sollempnis et quoddam sollempne initium novi seculi monstretur esse in sexto statu et plenius in septimo [...]</p> <p>[LSA, cap. III, Ap 3, 12 (VI^a victoria), ff. 35vb-36ra]⁸² In huius[modi] autem mente tria inscribuntur, scilicet excessiva visio vel contemplatio deitatis trium personarum, et totius civitatis seu collegii sanctorum, quam dicit descendere de celo a Deo tum quia tota a Deo oritur et sic quod est inferior eo et sua immensitate per celum designata, tum quia per humilitatem non solum Deo sed etiam suo proprio ac celesti loco reputat se indignam, tum quia prout Iherusalem sumitur pro militanti ecclesia descendunt eius gratie a Deo et a hierarchia beatorum.</p> <p>Vocat autem eam novam propter novitatem glorie vel gratie, unde et precipue significat hic civitatem beatorum, et post hoc illam que erit in sexto et septimo statu, et post hoc illam que reiecta vetustate legalium fuit in quinque primis statibus Christi, et post hoc totam universaliter ab initio mundi. Vocatur etiam Iherusalem, id est visio pacis, quia vel ipsa fruitur vel ad ipsam suspiratur. [...] Item, secundum quosdam, inscribitur sibi nomen Dei Patris quando sue paternitatis imago sic illi imprimitur ut merito possit dici abba seu pater spiritualis religionis et prolis. Nomen vero Iherusalem nove sibi inscribitur, cum per suavitatem amoris est eius mens digna ut vocetur sponsa Christi et mater pia et nutritiva spiritualis prolis.</p>	<p><i>Egloga</i> IV, 5-7:</p> <p>magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo; iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna; iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.</p> <p>[LSA, prologus, Notabile VII; ff. 9va, 10va-b] [...] sicque tertio, reiecta tota vetustate huius seculi, renovaretur et consumaretur seculum per gloriam et in gloria Christi.</p> <p>[...] Consimiliter autem pontificatus Christi fuit primo stirpi vite evangelice et apostolice in Petro et apostolis datus, ac deinde utiliter et rationabiliter fuit ad statum habentem temporalia commutatus, saltem a tempore Constantini usque ad finem quinti status. Pro quanto autem multi sanctorum pontificum fuerunt regulares et in suis scriptis et in habitu sui cordis preferentes paupertatem Christi et apostolorum omnibus temporalibus ecclesie datis, pro tanto quasi usque ad duplum preeminuit primus ordo sacerdotii apostolici. Congruum est ergo quod in fine omnino redeat et assurgat ad ordinem primum, ad quem spectat iure primogeniture et perfectionis maioris et Christo conformioris. Ad istum autem reditum valde, quamvis per accidens, cooperabitur non solum multiplex imperfectio in possessione et dispensatione temporalium ecclesie in pluribus comprobata, sed etiam multiplex enormitas superbie et luxurie et symoniarum et causidicationum et litigiorum et fraudum et rapinarum ex ipsis occasionaliter accepta, ex quibus circa finem quinti temporis a planta pedis usque ad verticem est fere tota ecclesia infecta et confusa et quasi nova Babilon effecta.</p>
<p>[LSA, cap. XII, Ap 12, 7 (IV^a visio), ff. 136vb-137ra] Tertio ut modus loquendi in hac quarta visione conformetur proprietatibus quarti status virginum et angel[ic]orum et anachoritarum seu contemplativorum, unde et ecclesia descripta est hic sub typo Virginis matris Christi, non carnali indumento sed celesti et solari indute, nec quasi stans in terra cum hominibus et bestiis sed tamquam stans in celo cum angelis, unde et infra describit virgineam prolem eius tamquam agnos incorruptos et citharedos et Agni Dei indivisos socios (cf. Ap 14, 1-5).</p>	

Note that the passage in *notabile* VII of the Prologue concerning the «commutatio» of the papacy from an initial period of poverty during the apostolic and sub-apostolic age to a period with temporal properties, both under and after Constantine, in view of a restoration «ad ordinem primum» in the sixth period of the Church, is extended by Dante to a restoration of the entire «primo tempo umano»⁸³.

The Ancients were not only prophets since they had their own field of knowledge; that of moral intelligence of «color che ragionando andaro al fondo, / s'accorser d'esta innata libertate; / però moralità lasciaro al mondo» (*Purg.* XVIII, 67-69). Olivi's exegesis provides other themes to be transformed, since the moral sense of the Scripture is precisely that of the doctors in the third

⁸² Results concerning Rev. 3, 12 are shown in III, 6.

⁸³ The passage concerning the «commutatio» of the papacy, contained in the *notabile* VII of the Prologue, has been examined in III, 12.1 (*The Greyhound. Elijah, the Restorer*).

period of the Church of which the Ancient were the «figura», as Eric Auerbach intended⁸⁴. Marked by the supremacy of intellect over the senses, the rational man's accomplishment, the third period is the age of laws, of the sword that eradicates vices and heresies and of temporal or imperial power, one of the two wings of the great eagle given to the woman (the Church) in order to overcome the dragon in the third and the fourth war (Rev. 12, 14). The subsequent fourth period, appropriated to the anchorites, is distinguished for the devoted *pastus*, the other wing given to the woman, that is to spiritual power. Both the doctors' and the anchorites' are periods of solar knowledge and, whilst maintaining their independency, help to enlighten the world. These two concurrent periods are the 'two suns', the papal and imperial power of Rome as grieved by Marco Lombardo, «che l'una e l'altra strada / facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo» (*Purg.* XVI, 106-114). This is the dual end designed for man by Providence mentioned in the *Monarchia*: the happiness of this life and the blessedness of life everlasting. The Pope was to lead the human race to life eternal by means of theological virtues and revelation and the Emperor to guide it to temporal felicity by means of philosophic instruction (*Monarchia* III, xv, 7-10). Though the pastoral (attribute of the anchorites) has now eclipsed the sword (attribute of the doctors) and any independence within the *concurrentia* is lost⁸⁵.

Bruno Nardi rightly claimed that the reform announced by Dante was both religious and political, though it may be added that 'political' matters are surrounded by religious themes. It is not by chance that several fundamental characteristics of the evangelical vow, as outlined by Olivi, appear to apply to *Monarchy* too: stability, immutability, indissolubility and any form of transfer is strictly forbidden. Hence the state of *altissima paupertas* of those who have taken the irrevocable vow, produces the same effects as the rule of the Monarch: to need no more, remove greed, charity and peace. In the *Paradiso*, religious vows and the Empire are treated, respectively, in the first two spheres and both, in the «sacre bende» or «sacre penne», show the sacramental «ombra» of superior truth that descends from the luminous Empyrean river, which has two banks, one divine and the other human (cf. *Par.* III, 114; VI, 7)⁸⁶.

The «Sacred poem», with all its hermeneutical difficulties, is arranged as the author freely chose and not according to an *ananke* arising from the fact that Dante was a Christian. The poem reconciles human needs, language, philosophy and monarchy with the concepts found in the exegesis. Poetry is not an «ancilla theologiae» since, more exactly, the «saeculum humanum» adopts the sacred prerogatives in order to ensure a «viver bene» for «omo in terra». As Dante says to Saint John, the philosophic arguments, are «conoscenza viva» equal to that of the Scripture's

⁸⁴ E. AUERBACH's *Figura* appeared in «Archivum romanicum», XXII (1938), pp. 436-489.

⁸⁵ Cf. *The Third Period*, IV (*The fourth vision: the third and the fourth war [Rev. 12, 13-16]*).

⁸⁶ Cf. I, 3.4 (*The «sacrosanto segno»*); *La settima visione*, Introduction, 2.2 (*The two banks of the Empyrean river [Rev. 22, 1-2]*), I.6 (*A sombre city*).

authority (*Par.* XXVI, 25, 61). The paradox posed by the controversial expression at the end of *Monarchia* (III, xv, 17) - «ut romanus Princeps in aliquo romano Pontifici non subiaceat» - which is not a mitigation of the radicalism of the previous thought⁸⁷, is resolved when the Empire becomes the consort in heaven of the Church, a descendent of the same source, and is fully entitled to share both the same gifts and prerogatives held by the Holy Spirit and the mysteries surrounding the Holy Trinity and Incarnation, that is to say the eternal generation of the Word made flesh. The Son who must reverence his Father is no ordinary son; he is the Son to whom the Roman Prince is assimilated. Even Christ, who was made a little less than the angels (cf. Heb 2, 7; Ps 8, 6), was subject to his Father due to his humanity, though this did not make him less consubstantial and equal⁸⁸.

In *Scienza nuova prima* [III, 27], Vico said that «if Dante knew nothing neither of scholasticism nor Latin, he would have been a greater poet». However, Latin is the language used in the exegesis that shares the humble style of the Bible, it may be understood by both the learned and the untaught and, without revealing the deepest mysteries, show the truth to all. Latin is incorporated into the vernacular, helping it to form new words and in which, to quote Machiavelli in his *Discorso intorno alla nostra lingua*, even clumsy, piggish and obscene words found a place. The result is a gentle and soft form of speech («soave e piana»), the angelic yet human voice with which Beatrice speaks to Virgil, where it is the *sermo humilis* of the Holy Scripture that actually speaks to the high tragedy to make it do something to save Dante⁸⁹.

Written in the new, universal language, as such was Latin using Virgil's 'rules', the «Sacred poem» freely adapts the apocalyptic characters and related exegesis to different times, places and individuals, as even Saint John did by «applicando figuras vel sententias eius ad alia facta et tempora quam in prophetis videantur applicari»⁹⁰. Just as Saint John had a single vision, consisting of further increasingly elevated visions, Cacciaguida attests Dante's findings during his journey, that was likewise pursued in a constant transition to new and more arduous visions: «tutta tua vision fa manifesta» (*Par.* XVII, 128). The Evangelist's vision was not purely intellectual (which would make it undescrivable) and was told using similarities that were mainly based on natural events with which the readers were familiar, just like the majority of the similarities in the «Sacred poem». At the height of his spiritual vision even Saint John used physical characters: the

⁸⁷ Cf. G. SASSO, *Dante. L'Imperatore e Aristotele*, Roma 2002 (Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo. Nuovi Studi storici, 62), pp. 294-295.

⁸⁸ Cf. A. FORNI, *Aristotele e l'Ecclesia spiritualis. La nuova cittadinanza «di quella Roma onde Cristo è romano»*, speech held during the International Conference on Dantesque studies on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy (*Il mondo errante. Dante fra letteratura, eresia e storia*. Centro universitario di Bertinoro, 13-16 September 2010); about to be published and partly anticipated on our website.

⁸⁹ Cf. E. AUERBACH, *Sacrae Scripturae sermo humilis*, in «Neuphilologische Mitteilungen» 42 (1941), pp. 57-67.

⁹⁰ LSA, prologus, *notabile XIII*; *Par. lat.* 713, f. 21va.

blessed, clothed in resurrected flesh, will not see bodily things in a lesser way than now without a physical vision.

Spiritual concepts are represented in metaphors in the verses where theology «condescende» unto human faculties and, acting as historical or mythological characters «e piedi e mano» to the work of God attributes whilst it «altro intende» (*Par.* IV, 28-48). According the principles of the celestial hierarchy, established by Pseudo-Dionysius, similarity is fundamental in order to emphasize and describe the differences. In the building of the Church, divine providence shines in different ways in the various places, the angels are divided into different hierarchies as such is the glory of the blessed. So the ascent to the Empyrean heaven, «nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende», to the glory that «per l'universo penetra, e risplende / in una parte più e meno altrove», is differentiated in the «dolce vita» in order to enable a poetic representation. The field of poetic «fiction» seems to narrow, just like Saint John restricted himself to writing about the images he had seen at the same time. Saint John listened to angelic voices and the words could have had a simple meaning or even a second sense: per se water does not indicate baptism, though it could do. The second interpretation, to be considered «quedam ratiocinatio seu argumentatio», must be endorsed by a revelation: «Quid tamen significarent res figurales de quibus sibi loquebatur, vel quas sibi quasi visibiles presentabat, non potuit infallibiliter et indubitabiliter scire nisi per revelationem, quamvis ipse essent de se apte ad illa significanda»⁹¹.

When placed in the context of providential history, similarities such as those expressed in Saint John's text (and its modern exegesis) lose any ornamental function and become necessary⁹². As at the opening of the third seal in the Apocalypse (Rev. 6, 6) wheat, barley, wine and oil indicate the four senses of the Scripture (allegoric, historic, moral and anagogic) which, according to their use the prudent preacher exchanges as goods, the *Commedia* likewise uses all four meanings. The three mystical meanings are based on the literal or historic sense⁹³. Allegorical representations are no longer poets' fiction; they are equivalent to the theological way of seeing episodes in the life of Christ and the Church, as historically prefigured in the deeds and the words of the Prophets in the Old Testament and are not the hidden truth behind a good lie (cf. *Convivio* II, i, 4), but rather the relationship between historical facts. The wrapping that hides the nucleus gradually opens in the course of history where, as indicated by Auerbach, life on earth is the figure of life beyond.

Two allegories par excellence are to be found in *Inf.* IX, 61-63: «mirate la dottrina che s'asconde / sotto 'l velame de li versi strani», and *Purg.* VIII, 19-21: «ché 'l velo è ora ben tanto

⁹¹ LSA, cap. I, Ap 1, 1; *Par.* lat. 713, f. 23va-b. Cf. *The seventh vision*, Appendix (The differentiated «sweet life»).

⁹² Cf. I. BALDELLI, *Lingua e stile delle opere in volgare di Dante*. VII: *Lingua e stile della Commedia*, in *ED*, Appendice, p. 96.

⁹³ Cf. I, 2.9 (*The four senses according to theologians*).

sottile, / certo che 'l trapassar dentro è leggero». These are apparently two veils of truth of poets' allegories, though the former hides and the latter much less since they refer to two different historical periods that befall in the modern time of the journey, the former being the ancient time during which enlightenment was secretive (Daniel the prophet was not allowed to speak) and the latter (the threshold of Olivi's sixth period of the Church, which is equivalent to Joachim of Fiore's third age, that of the Holy Spirit) when it is thinner and more uncovered. The 'veil' is actually the mystery of Grace, that is to say God's future judgement, announced to the elect⁹⁴:

<p>[LSA, cap. X, Ap 10, 7; Par. lat. 713, f. 116vb] [...] est simpliciter verum quod tempus huius seculi tunc omnino cessabit et plene implebitur quicquid Deus per suos prophetas prenuntiavit fiendum, quod vocat "<i>misterium</i>", id est secretum, quia nichil mundanis occultius quam spiritalis gratia et gloria in electis consumanda, futura etiam Dei iudicia sunt eis occulta et quasi incredibilia. Dicitur etiam "<i>misterium</i>", quia <i>sub misticis velaminibus sunt prenuntiata</i>.</p>	<p>[cap. XIII, Ap 13, 9; f. 146rb] "Si quis habet aures", id est sanam intelligentiam dictorum et dicendorum, "audiat", id est attente et prudenter consideret id quod est premissum et etiam id quod mox subditur, quia hoc quod subditur multum ei conferet ad servandam fidem et patientiam in tanta tribulatione.</p> <p><i>Inf.</i> IX, 61-63:</p> <p>O voi ch' avete li 'ntelletti sani, mirate la dottrina che s'asconde sotto 'l velame de li versi strani.</p>	<p>[prologus; f. 1rb] Hec enim septem sunt velut septem dies solaris doctrine Christi, que sub velamine scripta et absconsa fuerunt in lege et prophetis.</p> <p>[cap. XII, Ap 12, 6; ff. 132vb-133ra] Item (Ioachim) de hoc ultimo dicit libro V^o (Concordie) circa finem prime partis: «Unum dico, quod <i>misteria tertii status subtiliora sunt misteriis secundi status et misteriis primi</i>. [...]»⁹⁵.</p> <p><i>Purg.</i> VIII, 19-21:</p> <p>Aguzza qui, lettor, ben li occhi al vero, ché 'l velo è ora ben tanto sottile, certo che 'l trapassar dentro è leggero.</p>
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Moreover, the qualities of a prophetic spirit become important since they are capable of giving universal meanings to specific or personal facts and vice versa. Whilst discussing his king, Isaias also speaks against Babylon and all similar nations, and Lucifer the prince of devils and pride as if he were king of great Babylon (Is 14, 12-21). Ezechiel, speaking against Tyre, also discusses the nations and the supreme cherub in the midst of the stones of fire (Ez 28, 14-19). Likewise Christ attributes all the evil coming from every generation of reprobates to the especially evil generation of Jewish reprobates in His times, upon which shall fall all the blood shed from Abel the just (Mt 23, 35-36). The author of the Apocalypse who, speaking about the beast that arises from the sea (the Saracen beast) and has seven heads (that correspond to the seven ages) equally went on to discuss the mass of reprobates who, from the creation to the end of the world, fight against the Church of elects. Dante also discusses his Florence which he believes is a model of universal evil⁹⁶:

⁹⁴ Cf. III, 8 (*The new Saint John* [Rev. 10, 4-11]).

⁹⁵ JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*, per Simonem de Luere, Venetiis 1519, anastatic reprint Minerva, Frankfurt a. M. 1964, lib. V, cap. 22, f. 71ra.

⁹⁶ I, 2.10 (*The prophetic spirit and the extension of Scripture beyond the literal meaning*). As in the beginning of the poem, the possessive adjective 'our' («Nel mezzo del cammin di *nostra* vita») drops to 'I' Dante («mi ritrova»), the

[LSA, cap. XIII, Ap 13, 1; Par. lat. 713, f. 142rb-va] Tertio nota quod mos est scripture prophetice, dum de uno speciali agit sub quo spiritus propheticus invenit locum idoneum ad exeundum et dilatandum se, a specialibus ad generalia ascendere et *expandi* ad illa, iuxta quod Isaias, loquendo de Babilone et eius rege, dilatatur se ad loquendum contra totum orbem Babiloni similem et *contra Luciferum* regem omnium superborum et malorum quasi regem magne Babilonis (cf. Is 14, 12-21). Sic etiam Ezechiel, loquendo contra Tirum, diffundit se ad totum orbem et ad supremum Cherub de “medio lapidum ignitorum”, id est sanctorum angelorum, deiectum (Ez 28, 14-19). Sic etiam Christus Matthei XXIII^o (Mt 23, 35-36) ascribit omnia mala totius generationis omnium reproborum generationi male Iudeorum sui temporis, *tamquam a particulari ascendens ad generale et tamquam universale reducens ad suum particulare*, cum ait quod “omnis sanguis” iustorum impie “effusus a sanguine Abel iusti usque ad sanguinem Zacharie” veniet “super generationem istam”. Sic ergo in proposito, occasione bestie sarracenicæ, dilatatur spiritus propheticus ad totam bestialem catervam omnium reproborum, que ab initio mundi usque ad finem pugnat contra corpus seu ecclesiam electorum et per septem etates seculi habet capita septem; specialiter tamen a Christo usque ad finem mundi per septem ecclesiastica tempora habet septem principalia capita contra septem ecclesie spiritalis status et exercitus.

Inf. XXVI, 1-3:

Godi *Fiorenza*, poi che se' sì grande,
che per mare e per terra batti l'ali,
e per *lo 'nferno* tuo nome *si spande!*

Par. IX, 127-132:

La tua città, che di *colui* è pianta
che pria volse le spalle al suo fattore
e di cui è la 'nvidia tanto pianta,
produce e *spande* il maladetto fiore
c'ha disviate le pecore e li agni,
però che fatto ha lupo del pastore.

Dante impersonates the *ordo evangelicus et contemplativus* of those who have been sent by the Holy Spirit to re-establish and govern the new Church (including the *singulares persone*, who are not formal members of the Franciscan Order)⁹⁷. Thus Dante is «*sesto tra cotanto senno*», that is to say he is accepted as sixth in the group of the great poets in Limbo (*Inf.* IV, 100-102). On the *sixth* terrace in the *Purgatorio*, during the conversation with Bonagiunta of Lucca, an interpretation is given for the *nove rime* and the *dolce stil novo* that transposes the Christ-like life into poetic canons, to become like Christ who ‘within me dictates’ and to follow him faithfully as the bishop of the sixth Church (*Purg.* XXIV, 49-63). Just as the angel orders Saint John to eat the book that was both bitter and sweet and to fearlessly prophesy again after the apostles (Rev. 10, 9-11), Dante, having learnt from his forefather Cacciaguida about his destiny and the painful events that would take place during his exile, tastes both the bitterness of his future suffering and the sweetness of his future fame (*Par.* XVII). Yet this being both sweet and bitter is part of the effects of the poem; molest when first tasted though subsequently beneficial. First from his forefather and then from Saint Peter (*Par.* XXVII, 64-66), Dante receives, almost *alter Iohannes*, the order to reveal all that was shown to him during the journey and that he wrote in his sacred poem, a new *Apocalypse*, through which he travelled for the grace of God, fulfilling all the temporal stages⁹⁸. The voyage which, forcing divine foresight, started prematurely on the short wings of the

opposite occurs in Beatrice’s rebuke in the Garden of Eden and soars from «quella scuola c’hai seguitata (the school that you have followed)» to ‘your road’ (the «vostra via») that is far away from the divine path (*Purg.* XXXIII, 85-90).

⁹⁷ LSA, cap. X, Ap 10, 11; Par. lat. 713, f. 118ra: «Sed quod per istum hoc esset implendum non poterat sciri nisi per spiritualem revelationem, et hoc dico prout per Iohannem designantur hic singulares persone quia, prout per ipsum designatur in communi ordo evangelicus et contemplativus, scitur ex ipsa intelligentia libri quod per illum ordinem debet hoc impleri».

⁹⁸ III, 8 (*The new Saint John [Rev. 10, 4-11]*).

reasoning that arose from the senses, lead Ulysses to ruin. In his last voyage, the Greek hero travelled to the sixth period of the Church, towards a shore which was then known only to God, a flight that only a *vir evangelicus* could have ever made.

Whilst climbing the mountain, the marks described by the angel guarding the gate are on Dante's forehead⁹⁹. These marks are wounds like those borne, in his last two years, by Francesco, angel of the sixth seal who rises from the East (*Par.* XI, 106-108): «Et precipue gloriosissimis stigmatibus sibi a Christo impressis patet ipsum fore *angelum* apertionis sexti signaculi “habentem *signum* Dei vivi”, *signum* scilicet *plagarum* Christi crucifixi, et etiam *signum* totalis transformationis et configurationis ipsius ad Christum et in Christum» (Rev. 6, 12) | «[...] e: “Fa che lavi, / quando se' dentro, queste *piaghe*” disse» (*Purg.* IX, 113-114).

[LSA, cap. VI, Ap 6, 12 (II^a visio, apertio VIⁱ sigilli); Par. lat. 713, f. 80va-b] Ad evidentiam autem huius sexte apertionis est primo ad memoriam reducendum quod supra in principio est in tredecim notabilibus prenotatum, et specialiter illa in quibus est monstratum quia *vita Christi* erat in sexto et septimo statu ecclesie singulariter glorificanda et in finali consumatione ecclesie et in omnis Israelis ac totius orbis conversione magnificanda.

Ex quo igitur, per romane ecclesie autenticam testificationem et confirmationem, *constat regulam Minorum, per beatum Franciscum editam, esse vere et proprie illam evangelicam quam Christus in se ipso servavit et apostolis imposuit et in evangeliis suis conscribi fecit*, et nichilominus constat hoc per irrefragabilia testimonia librorum evangelicorum et ceterarum scripturarum sanctarum et per sanctos expositores earum, prout alibi est superhabunde monstratum, constat etiam hoc per indubitabile testimonium sanctissimi Francisci ineffabili sanctitate et innumeris Dei miraculis confirmatum. *Et precipue gloriosissimis stigmatibus sibi a Christo impressis patet ipsum fore angelum apertionis sexti signaculi “habentem signum Dei vivi”, signum scilicet plagarum Christi crucifixi, et etiam signum totalis transformationis et configurationis ipsius ad Christum et in Christum.* Et hoc ipsum per claram et fide dignam revelationem est habitum, prout a fratre Bonaventura, sollempnissimo sacre theologie magistro ac nostri ordinis quondam generali ministro, fuit Parisius in fratrum minorum capitulo me audiente sollempniter predicatum.

[LSA, cap. VII, Ap 7, 2; f. 85vb] *Ascendit* etiam “ab ortu solis”, id est circa initium solaris diei sexte et septime apertionis seu tertii generalis status mundi.

Item *per ipsum intelligitur cetus discipulorum eius in tertio et quarto initio sexte apertionis futurus et consimiliter ab ortu solis ascensurus*, quibus eius exemplar et meritum et virtuale de celo regimen singulariter coassistet, ita ut quicquid boni per eos fiet sit sibi potius ascribendum quam eis.

[LSA, prologus, Notabile VII; f. 9rb] Secunda (ratio) est *eius singularis et exemplaris vita, quam apostolis imposuit* et in se ipso exemplavit et in libris evangelicis sollempniter scribi fecit. *Huius autem vite perfecta imitatio et participatio est et debet esse finis totius nostre actionis et vite.*

Purg. IX, 112-114:

Sette P ne la fronte mi descrisse
col puntón de la spada, e “Fa che lavi,
quando se' dentro, queste *piaghe*” disse.

Purg. XXI, 22-30:

E 'l dottor mio: “Se tu riguardi a' *segni*
che questi *porta* e che *l'angel* profila,
ben vedrai che coi buon convien ch'è ' regni.
Ma perché lei che dì e notte fila
non li avea tratta ancora la conocchia
che Cloto *impone* a ciascuno e compila,
l'anima sua, ch'è tua e mia serocchia,
venendo sù, non potea venir sola,
però ch'al nostro modo non adocchia”.

Par. XI, 106-108:

nel crudo sasso intra Tevere e Arno
da Cristo prese l'ultimo sigillo,
che le sue membra due anni *portarno*.

⁹⁹ III, 5 (*Intellect guided by virtue* [Rev. 10, 8-9]).

About these marks tells Virgil to Statius: «E 'l dottor mio: “Se tu riguardi a' *segni* / che questi porta e che l'*angel* profila, / ben vedrai che coi buon convien ch'e' regni”» (*Purg.* XXI, 22-24). Marks that configure man's life - «la conocchia / che Cloto *impone* a ciascuno e compila» (*ibid.*, 26-27) - in that of Christ, to whom Parca is maid: «[...] eius singularis et exemplaris vita, quam apostolis *imposuit* et in se ipso exemplavit et in libris evangelicis sollempniter scribi fecit». The marks that indicate the dignity of reigning with the good, as Virgil asks Statius to note, are the Franciscan version, soaked with theology of pain, of Guido Cavalcanti's answer to the sonnet «*Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io* («S'io fosse quelli che d'amor fu degno [...] E tu, che se' de l'amoroso regno [...] riguarda se 'l mi' spirito ha pesanza: / ch'un prest' arcier di lui ha fatto segno»): the desire to escape is once more in the three, but Virgil, Statius and Dante, climbing Mount Purgatory. Though the cloth is Franciscan, whatever Olivi theologically means in an absolute sense and concentrates in his Order, is reconstructed and divided into several streams by Dante who, discussing both heaven and earth, lets themes on the whole universe chime in turn¹⁰⁰.

Rime, 9 [LII]

Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io
fossimo presi per incantamento,
e messi in un vassel ch'ad ogni vento
per mare *andasse al voler* vostro e mio,
sí che fortuna od altro tempo rio
non ci potesse dare impedimento,
anzi, vivendo sempre in un talento,
di stare insieme crescesse 'l disio.

E monna Vanna e monna Lagia poi
con quella ch'è sul numer de le trenta
con noi ponesse il buono incantatore:
e quivi ragionar sempre d'amore,
e ciascuna di lor fosse contenta,
sí come i' credo che saremmo noi.

[DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Rime*, a cura di G. Contini, Torino 1995², pp. 34-36.]

Purg. VII, 49-51:

“Com' è ciò?”, fu risposto. “Chi volesse
salir di notte, fora elli *impedito*
d'altrui, o non sarria ché non potesse?”.

Guido Cavalcanti, XXXVIII [xxxix]

S'io fosse quelli che d'amor *fu degno*,
del qual non trovo sol che rimembranza,
e la donna tenesse altra sembianza,
assai mi piaceria siffatto legno.

E tu, che se' de l'amoroso *regno*
là onde di merzé nasce speranza,
riguarda se 'l mi' spirito ha pesanza:
ch'un prest' arcier di lui ha fatto *segno*

e tragge l'arco, che li tese Amore,
sì lietamente, che la sua persona
par che di gioco porti signoria.

Or odi meraviglia ch'el disia:
lo spirito fedito li perdona,
vedendo che li strugge il suo valore.

[*Poeti del Duecento*, II/2, a cura di G. Contini, Milano-Napoli 1995², p. 545.]

Purg. XXI, 16-33, 58-69:

Poi cominciò: “Nel beato concilio
ti ponga in pace la verace corte
che me rilega ne l'eterno essilio”.
“Come!” diss' elli, e parte *andavam* forte:
“*se voi siete* ombre che Dio sù *non degni*,
chi v'ha per la sua scala tanto scorte?”.

E 'l dottor mio: “*Se tu riguardi a' segni*
che questi porta e che l'*angel* profila,
ben vedrai che coi buon convien ch'e' *regni*.”

Ma perché lei che dì e notte fila
non li avea tratta ancora la conocchia
che Cloto impone a ciascuno e compila,
l'anima sua, ch'è tua e mia serocchia,
venendo sù, non potea venir sola,
però ch'al nostro modo non adocchia.
Ond' io fui tratto fuor de l'ampia gola
d'inferno per mostrarli, e mosterrolli
oltre, quanto 'l potrà menar mia scola.”

Tremaci quando alcuna anima monda
sentesi, sì che surga o che si mova
per salir sù; e tal grido seconda.
De la mondzia sol *voler* fa prova,
che, tutto libero a mutar convento,
l'anima sorprende, e di voler le giova.
Prima *vuol* ben, ma non lascia il talento
che divina giustizia, contra voglia,
come fu al peccar, pone al tormento.
E io, che son giaciuto a questa doglia
cinquecent' anni e più, pur mo sentii
libera *volontà* di miglior soglia

¹⁰⁰ Cf. G. CONTINI, *Filologia ed esegesi dantesca* (1965) in *Un'idea di Dante. Saggi danteschi*, Torino, Einaudi, 1970 and 1976, p. 135.

Reference is made to the Apocalypse only in the passages of the poem where it is obviously mentioned, such as in the bolgia of the followers of Simon Magus (*Inf.* XIX) or the visions and vicissitudes of the Church Militant-chariot at the end of *Purg.* XXXII. However the book «written from within and without» has been opened everywhere: along the banks of the Emyrean river, evoking the one that flows in the midst of heavenly Jerusalem (*Rev.* 22, 1-2)¹⁰¹; the ascent to heaven when looking into the eyes of Beatrice staring at the sun repeats *Rev.* 19, 17-18 («Et vidi unum angelum stantem in sole»)¹⁰²; Lucifer's three faces have the same colours (red, black and pale) as the three horses that respectively represent the enemies of Christ, at the opening of the second, third and fourth seal (*Rev.* 6, 3-8)¹⁰³; the stinging locusts that came forth from the bottomless pit when the fifth trumpet was sounded (*Rev.* 9, 1-12) are found in the bolgia of the barrators or in the Capetian's wrongdoings described by their progenitor¹⁰⁴. The word Apocalypse (*revelatio*) is actually turned into poetry when Beatrice is revealed in the Garden of Eden. Her name coincides with the purpose of the last canonical book (*Rev.* 1, 3: «Beatus qui legit et audit verba prophetie huius et servat ea»)¹⁰⁵.

Beatrice is not an abstract allegory and, strictly speaking, she is neither the Theology against rational Virgil, the emblem of ancient wisdom, as usually alleged. The new Rachel (who sits beside the ancient Rachel in the Emyrean Heaven) indicates contemplative life in Heaven. In the Garden of Eden on the earth at the summit of Mount Purgatory, Beatrice used the manner of a governor like an «admiral» visiting the ships. When rebuking Dante, Beatrice uses both ways of God, justice and mercy, as so did the Emperor Trajan when the widow implored him. Descending into Limbo to save her friend, Beatrice bestirs Virgil «sì ch'i' ne sia consolata» and the ancient representative of the high tragedy moves to have Dante brought to her as if inspired by Paraclete dictated from inside, preparing him to enjoy inner feelings with his outer «parola ornata». She offers her tears to Virgil not just as a woman, as Boccaccio claims, but because the Holy Scripture, to which they refer, is also tearful and cleansing¹⁰⁶. Virgil, the outer voice of Christ the man, yields to the inner voice of the Spirit of Christ, as in the Church of the seventh period the «lux simplicis intelligentie» is replaced by the «gustativa et palpativa experientia» of truth¹⁰⁷. Beatrice is also a real woman: when he saw her again the poet's soul «d'antico amor senti la gran potenza». However, this Beatrice is found and lost again, since humanity is merely the bait («the ancient

¹⁰¹ See *supra*, note 58.

¹⁰² LSA, cap. XIX, Ap 19, 17-18; Par. lat. 713, f. 185ra-vb. Cf., on the website, III, 6.

¹⁰³ Cf. I, 3.3 (*The «fiutana ove 'l mar non ha vanto [The flood that the sea is unable to absorb and overcome]»*); III, 7f («*Tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis*» [*Rev.* 12, 14]).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. III, 3 (*Free will, free ascent, free speech [Rev. 3, 7-8]*).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. III 2c (*Beatrice appears in the Garden of Eden: a modern Apocalypse*).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. I, 2.7 (*The tearful Scripture*).

¹⁰⁷ LSA, cap. II, Ap 2, 7; Par. lat. 713, f. 40rb. Cf. III, 6 (*Speech as dictated from within [Rev. 2, 7]*).

net») which conceals the aculeus of the divinity of a woman who has risen from flesh to spirit, increasing her beauty and virtues¹⁰⁸. Dante's realism takes human passions to the next world and by placing them in a sacred context they become emblematic and universal.

As emphasised by Burckhardt, Dante was the first modern man to have observed and enjoyed again the aesthetical side of landscapes¹⁰⁹. Though how much of a sacred aspect does this enjoyment retain? «Rib (*costa*)» and «descent» are themes in the fifth period of the Church, the time of the pious condescension that breaks the steep height of the previous period of the anchorites. In *notabile* VII of the prologue there are examples of Christ who condescends to the infirm and of Adam from whom a strong «rib» had been taken (the symbol of the anchorites rigid solitude in the fourth period of the Church) that God filled with *pietas* when he created Eve¹¹⁰. In the poem the «*costa*» of the infernal steep or Mount Purgatory, which either lays, is short, drops or slopes, is coupled several times with «descending» in order to lead (indicating that the solitary audaciousness is broken) to the «mountainous» place and yield to a pious condescension. Therefore, the verse «fertile *costa* d'alto monte pende», refers to Mount Subasio where a sun, Saint Francis, rose and points to his *pietas* (*Par.* XI, 45)¹¹¹. «Oriente» is almost the new Rome, the «city of the sun» from which Francis, angel of the sixth seal, ascended, according to *Isaias* 19, 18¹¹².

The cavern amongst the white marbles where Aruns had his abode «ne' monti di Luni, dove ronca / lo Carrarese che di sotto alberga ... onde a guardar le stelle / e 'l mar non li era la veduta tronca» (*Inf.* XX, 46-51), in a part devoted to the fourth period of the Church (the anchorites who had tried to see too much, like the fortune-tellers in the fourth bolgia), alludes to the monastic hierarchy amongst those who were more contemplative, like the stars high above and the most active monks below them, indicated by the moon¹¹³.

The qualities of the apocalyptic figures, like the angel of the sixth seal, become real in individuals such as Saint Francis, Virgil, Beatrice and even Dante¹¹⁴. Unpredictable and devastating events, such as the great earthquake when the sixth seal had been opened (*Rev.* 6, 12-17; 16, 19-20), that consequently moved islands and mountains (believed to be stable and safe),

¹⁰⁸ Cf. II, 8 (*Beatrice is found and then soon lost again*).

¹⁰⁹ J. BURCKHARDT, *La civiltà del Rinascimento in Italia*, trad. it., Firenze, Sansoni, 1968 [1860], p. 272 and note 1: «[...] he also climbs to the top of the mountains for the sole purpose of enjoying the impressive views, he was possibly one of the first, after the Ancients, to undertake such an enterprise [...] Otherwise, it would be hard to guess why he went to the peak of Bismantova in the district of Reggio [...]» (personal translation).

¹¹⁰ LSA, prologus, *notabile* VII; *Par.* lat. 713, f. 10ra.

¹¹¹ Cf. III, 2d (*The angel that ascends from the East [Rev. 7, 2]. Saint Francis [Par. XI]*).

¹¹² LSA, cap. VII, Ap 7, 2; *Par.* lat. 713, f. 85va-b. Cf. III, 2d; *The seventh vision*, V (*Rome, the city of the sun*). The Francesco-Sole relation has been emphasised by E. PASQUINI, *S. Francesco e i frati Minori in Dante, in Francescanesimo in volgare (secoli XIII-XIV)*. Atti del XXIV Convegno internazionale. Assisi, 17-19 ottobre 1996, Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1997 (Società internazionale di studi francescani. Centro interuniversitario di studi francescani), pp. 143-158: pp. 154-155.

¹¹³ Cf. III, Appendix.

¹¹⁴ III, 2 (*The angel that ascends from the East [Rev. 7, 2]*).

which Olivi interpreted as a subversion of the ecclesiastic regime, and the flight to the ‘rocks’ find confirmation both in the unforeseen Sicilian Vespers revolt against the rule of the House of Anjou in 1282 and the captivity of the Avignon Papacy¹¹⁵:

[LSA, cap. VI, Ap 6, 12; Par. lat. 713, f. 81vb] Unde “sol” fidei et *ecclesiastici regiminis* “factus est niger” et quasi “saccus” de pilis porcorum et ferarum contextus. Ex hoc etiam “luna”, id est *plebs illis subdita*, “facta est” velut “sanguis”, id est sanguine luxurie et homicidiorum turpiter fedata.

[LSA, cap. XVI, Ap 16, 20; Par. lat. 713, f. 168ra-b] Deinde effectum huius iudicii insinuat quoad duas partes pene eterne. Quarum prima est pena dampni, scilicet privatio omnis boni iocundi, et hanc tangit cum subdit: “Et omnis insula fugit, et omnes montes non sunt inventi” (Ap 16, 20). *Sicut in terra nichil firmitus et eminentius aut tutius quam montes*, sic in mari nichil stabilius et humane quieti aptius quam insule, et ideo per consumptionem seu non inventibilem subversionem vel per *translationem omnium montium* et insularum, tam hic quam supra sub apertione sexti sigilli (cf. Ap 6, 14), *designatur consumptio vel subversio solidiorum et eminentiorum et immobiliorum statuum et urbium et ecclesiarum et regnorum totius carnalis ecclesie*.

Par. VIII, 67-78:

E la bella *Trinacria*, che caliga tra Pachino e Peloro, sopra 'l golfo che riceve da Euro maggior briga, non per Tifeo ma per nascente solfo, attesi avrebbe li suoi regi ancora, nati per me di Carlo e di Ridolfo, se *mala signoria*, che sempre accora *li popoli suggeriti*, non *avesse mosso* Palermo a gridar: ‘*Mora*, mora!’. E se mio frate *questo antivedesse*, l’*avara povertà* di Catalogna già *fuggeria*, perché non li offendesse

Purg. XXXII, 148-150, 157-160:

Sicura, quasi rocca in *alto monte* seder sovresso una puttana sciolta m’*apparve* con le ciglia intorno pronte

poi, di sospetto pieno e d’ira crudo, disciolse il mostro, e *trassel* per la selva, tanto che sol di lei mi fece scudo a la puttana e a la nova belva.

[LSA, cap. VI, Ap 6, 14-17; Par. lat. 713, f. 84vb-ra] Tunc etiam montes, id est regna ecclesie, et “*insule*”, id est monasteria et magne ecclesie in hoc mundo quasi in solo seu mari site, *movebuntur “de locis suis”* (Ap 6, 14), *id est subvertentur* et eorum *populi in mortem* vel in captivitatem ducentur. Tunc etiam, tam *propter illud temporale exterminium quod sibi a Dei iudicio velint nolint sentient supervenisse*, quam propter desperationem timorem iudicii eterni eis post mortem superventuri, sic erunt omnes, tam maiores quam medii et minores, horribiliter atoniti et perterriti quod preeligerent montes et saxa repente cadere super eos. Ex ipso etiam timore *fugient* et abscondent “se in speluncis” et inter saxa montium (cf. Ap 6, 15-17).

Carlo Martello, who talked about the Sicilian Vespers, was a King on earth for a short period like Christ’s time in the world («Il mondo m’ebbe / giù poco tempo», *Par.* VIII, 49-50; «Christus parvo tempore debuit inter nos vivere et pauciori predicare», *Rev.* 6, 12)¹¹⁶. Italy that is not prepared to be redressed by the «alto Arrigo», made to look like the «fantolino / che muor per fame e caccia via la balia» (*Par.* XXX, 133-141), is assimilated to the Franciscan Order which, in its youth, was not immediately prepared to endure trials and struggles¹¹⁷.

The themes related to the third period of the Church, that of the doctors, prevail in the third bolgia of the Simonists. Here Dante is almost a doctor of the Church and uses harsh words against Pope Nicholas III (intending Simony as a form of heresy, a distorted interpretation of the Holy

¹¹⁵ The flight to the «rocks» and the «mountains», that is to say to the sublime saints, firm in their faith, (cf. the «monti» in *Par.* XXV, 38), is memorably mentioned in *Inf.* XVIII, 28-33: cf. III, 1c (*The «signatio» in the Jubilee Year of 1300 [Rev. 7, 3-4]*).

¹¹⁶ LSA, cap. VI, Ap 6, 12; Par. lat. 713, f. 83ra.

¹¹⁷ Cf. III, 10.4 (*Matelda. The «religio» of the Mountain*).

Gospel)¹¹⁸. Pope *Boniface VIII* is covered in themes relating to the fifth period of the Church during the more lax and ruinous end when the Church is almost Babylon. His name is unusually consonant with allusions to the Bishop of Sardis, the fifth Church in Asia (Rev. 3, 1-5) «habebat nomen *boni cum esset malus*»¹¹⁹; his works are likewise ‘vacuous’, that is to say vacant of a name that lives by divine judgement, even if the judgement of man is different. This is the vacancy which Saint Peter personally witnesses in *Par. XXVII*, 22-24 and is represented by the river Phlegethon falling into the Malebolge, like the Acquacheta is vacant in Forlì, «giù nel basso letto», of a name when falling from the higher bed¹²⁰. However, the Church, spouse of the Holy Spirit, endured another calvary in Anagni, which Olivi believes must be borne by the Franciscan Order.

The stinging, tormenting and insidious locusts, the clerics «leves et volatiles et cupidi» mentioned in the Apocalypse (Rev. 9, 3)¹²¹, are actually the last generation of the Capets, of whom, in his second Epistle to Timothy, (2 Tm 3, 6), Saint Paul wrote «sunt qui penetrant domos et captivas ducunt mulierculas»¹²² - «veggio in Alagna intrar lo fiordaliso, / e nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto». Whereas Ugo Capeto’s statement (*Purg. XX*, 85-93) appears to challenge the poet’s hatred for Boniface VIII, this does not mean that Saint Peter’s keys may be placed, reconciled, on the *Divina Commedia* as advocated by the neo-guelph Luigi Tosti, a Benedictine from Monte Cassino, in view of «a return of the civil Papacy»¹²³. Olivi’s great commentary on the Apocalypse contains material such as to condemn the Pope reigning at the time whilst defending the Church.

V. *Memories of Santa Croce*

In his book *Sulla vita giovanile di Dante*, published in 1906¹²⁴, Giulio Salvadori, claimed that «Dante did not adopt any of Olivi’s personal views» except for a general ideal of holy life that was also shared by the Sienese layman Pier Pettinaio. Conversely, Ernesto Buonaiuti maintained that rather than the Thomist vision of the universe which he had learnt from the Dominican Remigio de’ Girolami, at Santa Maria Novella, on his way to exile Dante remembered the Joachimite and Olivian image of «Ecclesia spiritualis» which he believed could be recognised in Beatrice¹²⁵.

¹¹⁸ *The Third Period, II (The second vision: the third seal [Rev. 6, 5-6])*.

¹¹⁹ LSA, cap. III, Ap 3, 1; Par. lat. 713, f. 46ra.

¹²⁰ III, 9 (*Scripture does not err [Rev. 6, 5]*).

¹²¹ LSA, cap. IX, Ap 9, 3; Par. lat. 713, f. 105vb.

¹²² LSA, cap. IX, Ap 9, 5-6; Par. lat. 713, f. 106ra-b.

¹²³ L. TOSTI, *Storia di Bonifazio VIII e de’ suoi tempi*, Monte Cassino 1846.

¹²⁴ G. SALVADORI, *Sulla vita giovanile di Dante*, Roma, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1906, p. 124.

¹²⁵ E. BUONAIUTI, *Storia del Cristianesimo*, pp. 543-555.

The fact that in the *Commedia* Dante mentions his «*nove rime*» during his meeting with Bonagiunta Orbicciani (*Purg.* XXIV, 49-63), in a part of the poem where the most excellent Olivian themes on the sixth period of *renovatio* prevail¹²⁶, leads one to believe that the virtual meeting with the Friar on the road to exile (around 1307) was preceded by an actual encounter in Santa Croce, precisely in the years before the death of Beatrice (1290) when Olivi taught (1287-1289)¹²⁷. Olivi's fundamental thesis regarding the sixth period is that exterior or physical miracles are not performed whilst, in compensation, inner and intellectual ones are and that the word of the preacher is dictated from within opening the hearts of the listeners. This thesis is indeed unusually consonant with the 'miracle' Beatrice, who was most welcome by the people within whose souls she admirably performed wonders. An investigation of Olivi's works previous to the *Lectura* is still to be performed, though the preliminary work is encouraging. The results are presented in the essay *The fight against doubt: a modern martyrdom (Francesca and the «Donna Gentile»)*, published on the website.

Whether Dante deals with doubt arising from deception (as in the cases of Francesca and Paolo, Guido da Montefeltro and Count Ugolino) or the kind of doubt that leads man to the truth, doubt is certainly one of the main drivers of his journey. In fact, the Franciscan maintains (in the *X notabile* of the prologue) that in the sixth period of the Church (i.e. in modern times) a new form of martyrdom had been inflicted upon spiritual men which, unlike the physical form of martyrdom endured by the ancient witnesses to faith, is psychological. These modern martyrs suffer since, when faced with their persecutors who perform miracles, claim authority and have false Scriptures, they begin to doubt the revealed truth. A «*certamen dubitationis*» in which even the most wary followers are defeated. Doubt arising from deception, which Olivi believes serves modern martyrdom, is reflected in many of the tragic episodes in the «*Sacred Poem*»¹²⁸.

Since this idea of modern martyrdom marked by the Antichrist's deceptions is also discussed, using the same quotation found in the *Moralia in Iob* by Gregory the Great, in Olivi's commentary on the Canticle of Canticles (which he wrote prior to the *Lectura super Apocalipsim*)¹²⁹, a comparison between the latter and the *Vita Nova* appears appropriate. Though this is still a preliminary investigation, it has brought two characters together, who may now be seen in a new light. The *Donna Gentile* (or the *Donna Pietosa*) in the *Vita Nova* and Francesca in

¹²⁶ Cf. III, 3 (*Free will, free ascent, free speech [Rev. 3, 7-8]*).

¹²⁷ Cf. S. PIRON, *Le poète et le théologien: une rencontre dans le Studium de Santa Croce*, in «*Picenum Seraphicum. Rivista di studi storici e francescani*», n. s., 19 (2000), pp. 87-134.

¹²⁸ LSA, prologus, *notabile* X; Par. lat. 713, f. 14rb-vb.

¹²⁹ PETRI IOHANNIS OLIVI *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*. Kritische Edition von Olivis Hoheliedkommentar mit Einführung und Übersetzung von J. Schlageter OFM (Collectio Oliviana, II), Ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata 1999, p. 302, § 326; S. GREGORII MAGNI *Moralia in Iob*, libri XXIII-XXXV, cura et studio M. Adriaen (Corpus Christianorum. Series latina, CXLIII B), Turnholti 1975, p. 1648 (lib. XXXII, cap. XV, 67-72, n. 24 = PL 76, col. 650 C).

the *Commedia* both tempt Dante with pity and cause him to doubt. In both cases Dante wins his fight. However, the fight against «i dubbiosi disiri» was lost by Francesca and Paolo forever.

The term *gentile* as used in the *Commedia* is different to the meaning it takes in *Vita Nova*¹³⁰. As well as meaning ‘noble’, ‘courtly’ or ‘generous’ it increasingly became to mean gentile/heathen, like the old riotous pagans who soul’s, billowing as the sea in a storm, were troubled by brutal passions and eternal civil wars. Both the «bufera infernal, che mai non resta» that drives the spirits of Francesca and Paolo in eternity and «Amor, ch’al cor gentil ratto s’apprende» that takes them to death, fall under this new negative meaning. Beatrice, the *gentilissima* in the «libello» written by Dante in his youth, does not have the privilege of bearing the same title in the *Commedia*. The change in meaning of *gentilezza* (which together with the meanings that were very dear to Dante assumes a historical value, typical of the irrational and idolizing Gentiles applied to modern times) marks Dante’s ‘shadow line’ compared to the literary culture of the times which was full of «donne antiche e’ cavalieri» who are damned for the eternity as a result of love.

The investigation shall continue in this direction and in parallel with the comparison between the *Lectura* and the *Commedia*. When finished, perhaps we may prove that the angel who appeared to Zachary - described in Luke 1, 11-13 (and Olivi’s exegesis) as a divine force, the virtue of which, like a spirit «qui occulte prout uult cerebrum ac neruos et medullas et totam hominis sensualitatem agit et concutit et opprimit, quantum et prout sibi placet», frightens and makes he who «pro salute sua et totius populi orans petebat *Saluatorem*» tremble and fall silent – likewise appeared «angiola giovanissima» to Dante and whose virtues made his heart tremble almost at the end of his ninth year and, shaking, he said «Ecce Deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur michi!» (*Vita Nova* 1 [5]). Therefore, Zachary who opened his mouth and, blessing God, called his son John (Luke 1, 64) is repeated in «colui che», praising his woman «fore / trasse le nove rime, cominciando / ‘*Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore*’»¹³¹:

¹³⁰ Cf. P. BOYDE, *A courtly value in Dante’s hands*, in *Human Vices and Human Worth in Dante’s Comedy*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 126-146. The author follows the change in meaning of the word «gentilezza», which is not found either in Aristotle nor in the Bible, though it is vital in order to understand Dante’s first attempts in the field of ethics.

¹³¹ Cf. III, 12.3 (*The Greyhound. «Amor terribilis et imperiosus»*).

Lectura super Lucam, 1, 64; ed. F. Iozzelli (Collectio Oliviana, V), Ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata 2010, p. 233.

“Apertum est autem ilico os eius”, ideo statim, tum ut merito et future magnificentie infantis hoc ascriberetur, ac si statim post nomen uocale, a patre per scripturam acceptum, daret sibi uim nomen impositum et **Dei laudem promerendi ore et uoce**; tum ad insinuandum quod sicut propter incredulitatem uim loquendi amiserat, sic propter fidem, quam iam in conscriptione nominis aperte expresserat, loquelam recuperasset; tum ad mystice figurandum quod propheticus intellectus de Christo in sacerdotali lege conceptus, et per Iohannem designatus, debebat in suo partu *aperire ora* plurium Iudeorum primo dubitantium et tandem credentium.

Vita Nova, 10 (ed. a cura di G. Gorni, Torino, Einaudi, 1996, pp. 90-92).

[11] E però propuosi di prendere per materia del mio parlare sempre mai quello che fosse **loda di questa gentilissima**; e pensando molto acciò, pareami avere impresa troppo alta materia quanto a me, sì che non ardia di cominciare. E così dimorai alquanti dì, con desiderio di dire e con paura di cominciare.

[12] Avenne poi che passando per uno camino lungo lo quale sen già uno rivo chiaro molto, a me giunse tanta volontà di dire, che io cominciai a pensare lo modo che io tenessi; e pensai che parlare di lei non si convenia che io facesse, se io io non parlassi a donne in seconda persona, e non a ogni donna, ma solamente a coloro che sono gentili e che non sono pure femine.

[13] Allora dico che *la mia lingua parlò quasi come per sé stessa mossa* e disse: «Donne ch'avete intellecto d'amore».

VI. *The art of memory and preaching reform*

At this point we should ask what caused such an unequalled way of writing poetry. It must be considered that Dante did not act this way for himself alone, nor yet only to maintain the same «cloth» to tailor the «gown» (thus reinforcing the consistency of the poem, to be published in groups of cantos)¹³² or, to quote a good suggestion made by Singleton, the human architect had indeed imitated the Divine, that had wrought for His own contemplation first of all, and then for that of angels and of men¹³³. Faith and technique are certainly not to be excluded, as neither should the titanic task of rendering the Latin used in the exegesis of the Scripture into the vernacular for the purpose of creating, almost as if emulating «high war», a new universal language and a new Sacred book, be underestimated. However, here there is something else which is of great historical value. A group of privileged readers, the Italian Franciscan Spirituals, who owned the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* that circulated in Italy immediately after the death of the author (1298), could read it, paraphrased and updated, in an Aristotelian and Imperial sense, in the verses in the vernacular.

Should the relationship between the *Lectura* and the *Commedia* have been so strong, the historiographical tendencies to minimise or cancel the Spirituals role, reducing them to some sort of rebels destined to fail, must first be reviewed¹³⁴. Spread between Provence and Italy, the

¹³² Cf. G. PADOAN, *Il lungo cammino del «poema sacro»*. *Studi danteschi*, Firenze, Olschki, 1993 (Biblioteca dell'«Archivum Romanicum», Ser. I, vol. 250), Parte prima (*Momenti nella stesura e vicende della pubblicazione del «poema sacro»*).

¹³³ Cf. CH. S. SINGLETON, *La poesia della Divina Commedia*, trad. it., Bologna, Il Mulino, 1978, p. 462.

¹³⁴ Paolo Vian has underlined the evolution of Raoul Manselli's stance: «Then who are the Spirituals and what is Olivi's role amongst them? It would appear that Manselli goes from a simple answer to the first question, the need of which is, at first sight, hard to understand, to the increasingly distinct feeling that a more complex answer was indeed needed. Manselli certainly felt obliged to look in this direction when he read David Flood's article which, in 1971, emphasised the fundamental influence of Bonaventure on Olivi and even denied that the Franciscan friar from Béziers

Spirituals did not have only one point of reference, a Port-Royal for religious reform. Second, we should consider that in those days the reformation of the Church was a strongly felt and true need that could have been fulfilled¹³⁵. Spiritual action should be placed in the context of the new religious literature in Europe written in the vernacular of which, to date, Eckhart has been the principal author, starting from the essay by Herbert Grundmann who (in 1936) parallels him with Dante. During the first decade of the fourteenth century the Spiritual Franciscans fought for reformation and had not been defeated, to the point that Dante believed they were so essential to his project as to cease drafting the *Convivio*. In the next twenty years, they were persecuted by the well-known adversities and their flagship book was almost lost. Third, the role played by a work such as the *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, which more than any other had interpreted the expectations of the time, should be evaluated more exhaustively than ever before.

Reformation penetrates into laics such as Pier Pettinaio or Angela of Foligno, Olivi's works are translated into the vernacular¹³⁶, and is even advocated in the Curia as demonstrated by the deeds of Napoleone Orsini, legate cardinal and 'peacemaker' in Tuscany during 1307 who was

was a member of the Spirituals and, then, by the general feeling that a historical account postponed the establishment of the spiritual movement to late thirteenth century or early fourteenth century, thus making it coincide with the Fraticelli groups, that is to say the time when they rebelled and broke away. Manselli refused this "new image" which he thought actually suggested past condemnations and age-old misunderstandings. He therefore felt the need for a definition that involved an interpretation of the entire Franciscan history in the thirteenth century, starting from the very nature of the spiritual movement and the date of inception. [...] However the relationship between the Spirituals and the time they adopted Joachimism do not mark the establishment of a movement which was deeply rooted in the origins of Franciscanism. [...] Hence, this is not a political party or a faction, it is rather a vital ferment between the Friars Minor, who having become aware of, firmly claimed the peculiarity of the Order; an "attitude critique", a "mouvement d'espérance". Olivi is the person who understood the value and the religious, historical and human meaning more than anyone else»: P. VIAN, "Se il chicco di grano ...". Raoul Manselli, *Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e il francescanesimo spirituale. Nuovi appunti di lettura*, in "Nisi granum frumenti...". Raoul Manselli e gli studi francescani, a cura di F. Accrocca, Roma, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2011 (Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina, 93), pp. 30-33 (personal translation).

¹³⁵ Cf. E. BUONAIUTI, *Pellegrino di Roma. La generazione dell'esodo*, a cura di M. Niccoli, introduzione di A. C. Jemolo, Bari, Laterza, 1964 (Biblioteca di cultura moderna, 604), p. 262: «With his soul stricken by the fever of hope, Joachim had anxiously consulted the symbols of the former economies of Grace and wrung their secret out. A new age was dawning. The Church of spiritual truths was replacing the Church of symbols. The Franciscan's spirituality endeavoured to incorporate and realise the prophesy of the mystic from Celico. However the historical circumstances condemned the attempt to failure and since then the great Christian values worldwide started to decline»; MANSELLI, *La «Lectura super Apocalipsim»*, p. 236: «However Olivi had many silent followers: the Friars in the convents who copied his works, including the *Lectura*, the common people who, for his sake, faced the Inquisition and some were even sent to the stake. His ideas did not die and they spread underground throughout the XIV and XV century, until, by difficult means, they were made manifest in a Wycliff amongst heretics or more directly in Saint Bernardino. Hence, Olivi had nurtured two centuries: plenty of luck and faith mean that his torment and meditation had not been in vain».

¹³⁶ This is the statement made by the Inquisitor Bernard Gui: «[...] errores suos et opiniones huiusmodi pestiferas ipsi [Bequini] habuerunt et collegerunt partim quidem ex libris seu opusculis f. Petri Johannis Olivi, qui fuit oriundus de Serinhano prope Bitterim, videlicet ex postilla eiusdem super Apocalipsim quam habent tam in latino quam etiam transpositam in vulgari [...]»: cf. J. KOCH, *Der Prozess gegen die Postille Olivis zur Apokalypse*, in *Kleine Schriften*, II, Roma 1973 [1933] (Storia e letteratura. Raccolta di studi e testi, 128), p. 260 and note 7.

followed by Ubertino of Casale as chaplain¹³⁷. The reformers are mainly preachers. The *Commedia* is a journey by *exempla*¹³⁸. Had Dante returned to Florence for the *Commedia* «con altra voce omai, con altro vello» how many preachers would have failed to mention it in the town pulpits? Therefore, the *signacula* that refer to Olivi's *Lectura*, locked into the literal meaning, were also a mnemonic device for those who, like the prophets in the Old Testament, should order the faithful to be converted in time by quoting contemporary and close examples. As in the poem, the microcosm of Tuscany would have been elevated to preach universal history.

Over a century later, Bernardino of Siena's sermons held in the vernacular enlighten the inner language of the *Commedia*. He spoke to the Sienese in the vernacular in 1427, adapting the verset in Rev. 8, 8 (third vision, second trumpet) to the geographical area: «Dice che “quando l'angiolo sicondo si pose la tromba a bocca (tpu, tpu, tpu!) una montagna di fuoco ardente, grande più che la Montamiata, cadde in mare, e fatta fu la terza parte del mare sangue, ed è morta la terza parte delle creature che avevano anima nel mare, e la terza parte delle navi pericolarono”»¹³⁹. Whereas Bernardino thought that the «mons magnus» in the sea was Mount Amiata, Dante applied the same verset to Guido of Montefeltro and Guido del Duca's Romagna. The former was a damned soul amongst the Latin counsellors of fraud in the eighth bolgia and the latter was a soul in purgatory amongst the envious in the second terrace on the mountain¹⁴⁰. Romagna is part of the Apennines: the «monti là intra Orbino / e 'l giogo di che Tever si diserra» where Montefeltrano is from (*Inf.* XXVII, 29-30); «l'alpestro monte ond' è tronco Peloro», of which Guido del Duca speaks (*Purg.* XIV, 32); the «gran giogo» that the devil covered with «pregno aere» in the episode referring to Buonconte in *Purg.* V, 115ss.

By reading into the depth of the verses, a spiritual preacher would have discerned (also by making the appropriate comparison with the exegesis of Rev. 16, 3 [fifth vision, second vial], symmetrical in the periods of the Church and subject) both geographical adaptations and social implications: hearts as stormy as the seas due to wars and rebellion; to '*farsi sangue*', meaning the death of 'any living soul', that is, of any good seed for a life of faith or a life in the world. The Biblical exegesis of the high mountain swollen with pride attributes all of this to the Gentiles, meant as pagans: hence Romagna, elected land of *gentilezza*, and all its families (including the

¹³⁷ Cf. MARTÍNEZ RUIZ, *De la dramatización*, p. 240. The importance of Napoleone Orsini, who during his relationship with the Spirituales saw a possibility to reform the Church to stem the totalitarian temptations of the papacy is emphasised by J. DALARUN, in *Santa e ribelle. Vita di Chiara da Rimini*, trad. it., Bari, Laterza, 2000, pp. 105-110.

¹³⁸ Cf. F. A. YATES, *L'arte della memoria*, trad. it., Torino, Einaudi, 1972 (London 1966), pp. 87-88; C. DELCORNO, *Dante e l' 'exemplum' medievale*, in *Lecture Classensi*, 12, Ravenna, Longo, 1983, pp. 113-138.

¹³⁹ BERNARDINO DA SIENA, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena 1427*, a cura di C. Delcorno, Milano, Rusconi, 1989 (Classici italiani per l'uomo del nostro tempo), serm. XV (Saturday 30th August), vol. I, pp. 442-443; cf. L. BOLZONI, *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002 e 2009, p. 153.

¹⁴⁰ LSA, capp. VIII, Ap 8, 8-9; XVI, Ap 16, 3; Par. lat. 713, ff. 97va-98rb, f. 162va-b. Cf., on the website, II, 7 (*Kindness, Gentile, labors, courtesy*).

Pagani family, lords of Faenza lead by «demonio lor» Maghinardo, *Purg.* XIV, 118-120), made «sanguè ... brullo» and filled «di venenosi sterpi». In the area «tra 'l Po e 'l monte e la marina e 'l Reno» in the cities governed by bellicose tyrants, Ravenna, Forlì, Rimini, Faenza, Imola and Cesena, how many examples could this spiritual have preached to the local 'gentili'? And not just to common people. The «uom d'arme» Guido of Montefeltro, regretted his sly actions and became «cordigliero», though by advising Pope Boniface VIII how to take Palestrina from the Colonna family he had been damned in eternity, to the point that even Saint Francis could not save him when claiming his soul at the deathbed. A modern form of spiritual, not physical, martyrdom had been inflicted upon the Montefeltrano as was typical in the times of the Antichrist. He had seen a false truth, in this case, from a false pontifical authority and, tempted by doubt arising from deception, he surrendered to it. When reading the verses, it became quite clear to our preacher that Guido, who had won many a battle by being deceptive, had lost his last one that he entered into with fraud.

Francesca and Paolo were defeated by the same form of martyrdom, by means of a false Scripture («Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse»). Here again we are amongst the 'gentili' of Romagna; Francesca is the name of a real woman and also a name of meaning for a Spiritual Franciscan. To be defeated by «Amor, ch'al cor gentil ratto s'apprende», or the passionate love of a heart that flutters like the sea, must not have given an impression of romantic and delicate poetry concerning sin neither to the seculars nor the religious, though rather that of a warning against the dangers reserved for the elect in modern times.

Florence was at the forefront during the conversion. The largest city for «malizia tanta», yet the closest on earth to heavenly Jerusalem. «Nobil patria» (*Inf.* X, 26), like the noble city crossed by a very noble river (*Rev.* 22, 1), whose citizens were disciplined when entering and leaving by the ring of the bell of Badia, that reaches above the «cerchia antica» in the way the angel in Saint John's vision measured the city and the gates and equal walls thereof with a reed of gold (*Par.* XV, 97-98; *Rev.* 21, 15); «bello viver di cittadini» aims at an Edenic and childish 'prima', as proved by the consolatory language used by the woman who «vegghiava a studio de la culla» as if reflecting on the first grace (*ibid.*, 121-123), Florence in the times of Cacciaguida, poor and peaceful, anticipated the pleasure of a sweet life in the heaven of the «vera città». In the bitterness of exile, between rebukes and invectives against the city, the poet always loved the idea of his Florence, the home of worthy citizens «ch'a ben far puoser li 'ngegni» (*Inf.* VI, 81), such as Savonarola's elected and beloved town, new Jerusalem, saintly and peaceful¹⁴¹.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *The seventh vision*, I.4 (*The gates of the city are measured [Rev. 21, 15]*); I.6 (*A sombre city*).

The history literally expressed by the verses is sacred, placed in Divine plans and exemplary since it applies to all those who should have been converted. The mystical senses (allegorical, moral and anagogical) are contained in the literal meaning, which the prudent preacher used in various circumstances. The answer to any objection that a preacher was not to mention the name of individuals from his pulpit is that by quoting the verses in *Inf.* XXVII, 118-120 without naming the protagonists, Bernardino of Siena indeed sent «a casa del diavolo» Guido of Montefeltro, who had not repented, and Pope Boniface VIII, who had already absolved him¹⁴². After all, the listeners would hear about the life and people in times they called «antico».

Dante turns the deeds argumentatively attributed to the Hebrews or to Islam in the exegesis, onto the Christians. The harshness of Judea that persecutes Christ, which has turned a garden into a «selva», represents Italy, former garden of the Empire and now a desert which, like Judea, shall be the last to be humbly converted¹⁴³. The she-wolf (universal greed, though mainly Christian) has all the characteristics of the fourth beast in Daniel (Dan 7, 7), interpreted as the Saracen beast or the pale horse macerated by the hypocrisy shown upon the opening of the fourth seal (Rev. 6, 8). The beast is given power «over the four parts of the earth», which it exercises with a sword, famine, death and other beasts. These four instruments literally mean four ways of defeating the enemies who are killed in battle or starved during sieges of the towns that were subsequently deserted and devastated by wild beasts. A sword also means the terror that this beast, which has occupied many lands, strikes in the heart and body with its military power. Famine denotes the absence of Christ's restorative verb. Death indicates Mohammed's law that leads to death. The 'beasts' keep company with beastly people. The sight of the skinny she-wolf (which, unlike the other wild animals, is called «bestia» *Inf.* I, 58, 88, 94), that «molte genti fé già viver grame», strikes fear and «fa tremar le vene e i polsi» (*ibid.* 49-54, 88-90); when she has fed is hungrier than before (*ibid.* 97-99); she could even kill anyone that tries to cross her path (*ibid.* 94-96). When Beatrice descends into Limbo to meet Virgil, she affirms that Dante «ne la diserta spiaggia è impedito / sì nel cammin, che vòlt' è per paura» (*Inf.* II, 61-63); Lucia had said to her: «non vedi tu la morte che 'l combatte / su la fiumana ove 'l mar non ha vanto?» (*ibid.* 107-108). The river that may not be defeated by the sea corresponds to the Saracen beast in Olivi's exegesis of Rev. 6, 3/8 that would not accept the Scripture nor listen to rational arguments and lasts until the Antichrist, unlike the Jewish, the pagans and heretics who fought against Christianity for some time and subsequently disappeared¹⁴⁴:

¹⁴² *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena 1427*, serm. XXIII (7th September), I, pp. 676-677.

¹⁴³ III, 12.6 («*The humble Italy*»).

¹⁴⁴ Jews, pagans and heretics disappeared, like the lion replaces the snow leopard, then the she-wolf, the Saracene beast, replaces the lion when it disappears: cf. I, 3.3.

Inf. I, 49-54, 88-90, 94-99; II, 61-63, 107-108:

Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
sembiava carca ne la sua **magrezza**,
e molte genti fé già viver **grame**,
questa mi porse tanto di gravezza
con la **paura** ch'uscìa di sua vista,
ch'io perdei la speranza de l'altezza.
Vedi la **bestia** per cu' io mi volsi;
aiutami da lei, famoso saggio,
ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polsi.
ché questa **bestia**, per la qual tu gride,
non lascia altrui passar per la sua via,
ma tanto lo 'mpedisce che l'**uccide**;
e ha natura sì malvagia e ria,
che mai non empie la bramosa voglia,
e dopo 'l pasto ha più **fame** che pria.

l'amico mio, e non de la ventura,
ne la **diserta** spiaggia è impedito
sì nel cammin, che vòlt' è **per paura**
non vedi tu la **morte** che 'l combatte
su la fiumana ove 'l mar non ha vanto?

[LSA, cap. VI, Ap 6, 8; Par. lat. 713, f. 76va, 78ra-b] “Et ecce equus pallidus”, id est, secundum Ricardum, ypocritarum cetus per nimiam carnis **macerationem pallidus** et moribundus. “Et qui sedebat super eum”, scilicet diabolus, qui per pravam intentionem ypocritarum sedet in eis et per eos malitiam suam exercet, “nomen illi mors”. Hoc enim nomen bene diabolo convenit, quia per eum mors inceptit et alios ad mortem trahere non cessat. “Et infernus”, id est omnes in inferno dampnandi, “sequeb[atur] eum”, quia omnes tales eum imitantur. [...] Deinde de eius potestate et sevitia subdit: “Et data est ei potestas in quattuor partes terre”, non quidem quod usque adhuc totum orbem possederit, sed quia versus orientem et occidentem et meridiem et aquilonem *multas terras occupavit et in reliquos bellicum terrorem sue potestatis immisit et sepe exercuit*, et secundum abbatem circa suum finem et circa introductionem Antichristi hoc plenius complebitur.

Quod autem dicit “gladio et fame et morte et bestiis”, significat ad litteram varios modos penarum et varios modos debellandi hostes. Et ad litteram videtur sic loqui, quia gentes solent primo in campali bello per gladium aut in propriis urbibus per obsidionem et famem occidi, *et sic ibi [terra] gentibus deserta solent insurgere silvestres bestie omnia vastantes*. Spiritualiter vero designat quattuor mala que immittit hiis quos ad suam sectam trahit, scilicet ‘gladium’ carnalis **timoris** et amoris *penetrantis intima cordis et carnis*; et ‘**famem**’, id est *egestatem* reffective gratie et sapientie Christi; et ‘**mortem**’, id est mortiferam legem et sectam; et ‘**bestias**’, id est societatem gentium bestialium¹⁴⁵.

In addition, the «Sacred Poem» could have been intended as a *speculum* for that group of reformers who could have preached it and used it as a guide when leading their flocks. A devoted shepherd close to the Christians who lets «seder Cesare in la sella», recognises Aristotle as the «maestro di color che sanno», though with a clause, by no means secondary, to reconcile him with Olivi’s apocalyptic vision (that summarises the entire Bible) and is ready to admit that poets and classical authors were the ancient characters that prefigured the new, great «sixth» poet. This clergy is not afraid of classicality and is open to the *novum saeculum* during which the Gentiles and the Jews will be united and finally converted when, almost like the sound of an angelic trumpet, the word ‘Come’ is heard, meaning come to speak as you have been told to do so from within and state your reasons.

The kind of «gentilezza» that means ‘noble’, ‘courtly’ or ‘generous’ is also mentioned in the *Lectura*. It is the Spirit’s invitation to ‘come’, «*per desiderium et voluntarium consensum*», to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 22, 17)¹⁴⁶. This is the same way Francesca and Paolo ‘come’ with *disio* and *velle* when Dante, during a lull in «*bufera infernal, che mai non resta*», calls them with an «affettuoso grido» in the name of the Love that troubles them in eternity:

¹⁴⁵ RICHARD OF SAINT VICTOR, *In Ap II*, vii (PL 196, col. 767 C-D); JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Expositio magni prophete*, f. 116ra-vb.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. II, 7; *The seventh vision*, IV.1 (*The invitation by the Spirit of Christ*).

[LSA, cap. XXII, Ap 22, 17 (finalis conclusio totius libri); Par. lat. 713, f. 206va-b] Septimo loquitur ut invitator omnium ad prefatam gloriam, et hoc tam per se quam per ecclesiam et eius doctores, unde subdit: “Et sponsus”, id est, secundum Ricardum¹⁴⁷, Christus (quidam tamen habent “Spiritus”, et quidam correctores dicunt quod sic habent antiqui et Greci, ut sic Christus tam per se quam per Spiritum suum et eius internam inspirationem ostendat se invitare), “et sponsa”, id est generalis ecclesia tam beata quam peregrinans vel contemplativa ecclesia, “dicunt: **veni**”, scilicet ad nuptias. Ideo enim dixit “sponsa”, ut innueret nos invitari ad gloriosam cenam nuptiarum Agni. “Et qui audit”, scilicet hanc nostram invitationem, id est qui est de hiis sufficienter doctus; vel “qui audit”, id est recte et obedienter credit et opere perficit, “dicat”, scilicet unicuique vocandorum: “**veni**”, scilicet ad cenam et civitatem beatam. Deinde ipse Christus per se liberaliter invitatur et offert, dicens: “Et qui sitit veniat, et qui vult accipiat aquam vite gratis”. Quia nullus cogitur nec potest **venire** nisi per **desiderium** et **voluntarium** consensum, ideo dicit “qui sitit et qui vult”. Idem autem est venire quod accipere “aquam vite”, id est gratiam vite reactivam et vivificam et perducentem in vitam eternam.

[LSA, cap. XI (II^a tuba moraliter exposita); Par. lat. 713, f. 126rb] Quia vero **amor sui parit anxios fluctus curarum et sollicitudinum**, ideo contra earum excessum, quasi **contra mare tempestuosum**, fit secundum tubicinium, et [tertia] pars ei rebellis maiori pondere sollicitudinum aggravatur et maiori ardore ignescit.

The twelve perfect qualities of Christ the supreme shepherd (Rev. 1, 13-17, which Olivi believes could be adapted to any imitator) are themes that could apply to both Beatrice and Cato, who, whilst having committed suicide in Utica, is placed on guard of the mountain, indicating the time of the conversion of the Gentiles. However, «a l'altra riva / ne le tenebre etterne, in caldo e 'n gelo», Charon and Master Adam are also decorated for the opposite reasons¹⁴⁸. The twelve perfect qualities were proposed again almost a century later by Observance of Bernardino of Siena and Giovanni of Capestrano, though detached from the typically ‘medieval’ grandiose historical vision, due to the ages of the world and periods of the Church, that is to say from the history of collective salvation¹⁴⁹.

Chapter XVII of the *Lectura*, in which the damnation of Babylon is considered at length, contains a famous quote of Joachim of da Fiore¹⁵⁰: the «patres catholici» equated the harlots with Rome and, more precisely, with the multitudes of reprobates who, by their unjust deeds, oppose and blaspheme the Church of the righteous pilgrims on earth. Therefore, this harlot should not be sought in one place only, since the grain of the elect is diffused throughout the entire area of the Roman Empire and the reprobates' straw is spread along the entire latitude. Olivi adds that the

Inf. V, 76-87:

Ed elli a me: “Vedrai quando saranno più presso a noi; e tu allor li piega per quello **amor** che i mena, **ed ei verranno**”. Sì tosto come il vento a noi li piega, mossi la voce: “O anime **affannate, venite** a noi parlar, s'altri nol niega!”. Quali colombe dal **disio** chiamate con l'ali alzate e ferme al dolce nido **vegnon** per l'aere, dal **voler** portate; cotali uscir de la schiera ov' è Dido, a noi **venendo** per l'aere maligno, sì forte fu l'affettuoso grido.

Inf. V, 28-30:

Io venni in loco d'ogne luce muto, che mugghia come fa **mar per tempesta**, se da contrari venti è combattuto.

¹⁴⁷ RICHARD OF SAINT VICTOR, *In Ap VII*, viii (PL 196, col. 882 D).

¹⁴⁸ Cf. III, 2c (*Beatrice appears in the Garden of Eden: a modern Apocalypse*).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. P. VIAN, “*Signum ad sagittam*”. *Il modello sacerdotale nello “Speculum clericorum” di Giovanni da Capestrano*, in *S. Giovanni da Capestrano nella Chiesa e nella società del suo tempo*, Atti del Convegno storico internazionale. Capestrano - L'Aquila, 8-12 ottobre 1986, a cura di E. e L. Pásztor, L'Aquila, 1989 (Comitato per il VI centenario della nascita di San Giovanni da Capestrano), pp. 165-220: p. 210.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. I, 3.5 (*The wandering Rome of the just*), quotation drawn from JOACHIM OF FIORE, *Expositio magni prophete*, f. 194rb. On the Joachimite exegesis of the fall of Babylon see G. L. POTESTÀ, *Il tempo dell'Apocalisse. Vita di Gioacchino da Fiore*, Bari, Laterza, 2004, pp. 318-322: p. 320.

harlot represents the people and the Roman Empire both during the pagan period and the Christian age, during which she abundantly fornicated with the world (Rev. 17, 1).

This passage, which Olivi drew from the Calabrian abbot and on the basis of which we may say the friar believed that «the whole Church is certainly not ‘Babylon’ although she is guilty of serious misdeeds and the hierarchy of which she is formed may not be condemned and set aside without qualms»¹⁵¹, is suggestively and unsuspectedly transformed by Dante. At the end of *Par. VI* (vv. 127-142), wandering Rome of the just challenged by the reprobates, is impersonated by Romeo of Villeneuve: «*Romeo, persona umile e peregrina*», was the «*giusto*» minister of the count of Provence, Raymond Berenger, and «*di cui / fu l’ovra grande e bella mal gradita*». To keep to the subject, this is a eulogy paid by «*Giustiniano*» after he had observed all the work performed in governing the world by virtue of the «*sacrosanto segno*» of the Eagle. The Provençals, who with «*parole bieche*», meaning envious and calumny, forced the just man to leave the court are «*Babylon*». They represent Rome challenged by reprobates and wicked pilgrims: «*e però mal cammina / qual si fa danno del ben fare altrui*». They have been punished, as so shall be the new Babylon, under the harsh Angevin yoke, after Beatrice, one of the four daughters of Raymond who Romeo gave in marriage to Kings, brought «*la gran dota provenzale*» to Charles I. When reading the verses, a Spiritual Franciscan would have also noticed the theme of the «*margarita*» as Justinian defines the second sphere of Mercury. The theme derives from the exegesis of the seventh vision describing heavenly Jerusalem. The city wall has twelve gates, and in the gates twelve angles and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (Rev. 21, 12): «*on the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates*» (Rev. 21, 13). The materials of which the gates are made is treated further: «*And the twelve gates are twelve pearls*» («*margarite*», Rev. 21, 21), those for whom Israel shall pass into Christ, candid and pure like the pearls in their heart and body, conceived in the way pearls form in shells by heavenly dew which coagulates therein. Moreover, these pearls are small and thus represent evangelic humbleness and poverty¹⁵². As Justinian says, the sphere of Mercury is a «*picciola stella*» and «*margarita*» (*Par. VI*, 112, 127). Romeo shines in this sphere «*persona umile e peregrina*» who had to leave «*povero e vetusto*» the Provençal court which his

¹⁵¹ Cf. R. MANSELLI, *La terza età, “Babylon” e l’Anticristo mistico (a proposito di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi)* (1970), in ID., *Da Gioacchino da Fiore a Cristoforo Colombo*, p. 171 and note 14: «Therefore “Babilon” is not a concept that affects the charismatic and jurisdictional aspects of the Church or clergy. Conversely it concerns moral and spiritual values: it is all those faithful, including clergymen and prelates, who have forgotten Christ’s example and are guilty of acquiescence with the world, yielding to its temptations. In this and for this they will be punished both by history and divine judgement. (note 14) We might just mention that under various aspects this appears considerably similar to Dante Alighieri’s stance, who talking about the Simonists clearly states, in *Inferno* canto XIX, that God had planned to damn Boniface VIII who is therefore expected in the flaming tomb where he shall dwell in eternity with those who had preceded him «simoneggiando», but nevertheless still considers him the Vicar of Christ, against whom Filippo il Bello had widely acted through his brigands».

¹⁵² Cf. *The seventh vision, I.7 (Precious stones and pearls)*.

work had made grand (*ibid.* 135, 139). The first cluster of words, hinged on pilgrim Rome of the just that had spread throughout the Empire, interweaves with the second, in which the themes of Franciscan poverty and humbleness resound, consonant by contrast with the second sphere that «si correda / d'i buoni spirti che son stati attivi / perché onore e fama li succeda» and therefore long less for true love and are blessed with a lesser merit (*ibid.* 112-117):

Par. VI, 10, 112-114, 121-123:

Cesare fui e son **Iustiniano** ...
 Questa **picciola** stella si correda
 d'i buoni spirti che son stati attivi
 perché onore e fama li succeda ...
 Quindi addolcisce la viva giustizia
 in noi l'affetto sì, che non si puote
 torcer già mai ad alcuna **nequizia**.

[LSA, cap. XVII, Ap 17, 1; Par. lat. 713, ff. 168vb-169ra] Et subdit (Ioachim): «Hanc meretricem magnam dixerunt patres catholici **Romam** non quoad ecclesiam **iustorum**, que peregrinata est apud eam, sed quoad multitudinem reproborum, qui eandem apud se **peregrinantem** ecclesiam **iniquis operibus** impugnant et blasphemant. Non igitur in uno loco querendus est locus huius meretricis, sed sicut per totam aream romani imperii diffusum est triticum electorum, sic per latitudinem eius disperse sunt palee reproborum».

Par. VI, 127-142:

E dentro a la presente **margarita**
 luce la luce di **Romeo**, di cui
 fu **Povra** grande e bella mal gradita.
 Ma i Provenzai che fecer contra lui
 non hanno riso; e però mal cammina
 qual si fa danno del ben fare altrui.
 Quattro figlie ebbe, e ciascuna reina,
 Ramondo Beringhiere, e ciò li fece
Romeo, persona **umile** e **peregrina**.
 E poi il mosser le parole bieche
 a dimandar ragione a questo **giusto**,
 che li assegnò sette e cinque per diece,
 indi partissi **povero** e vetusto;
 e se 'l mondo sapesse il cor ch'elli ebbe
 mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,
 assai lo loda, e più lo loderebbe.

[LSA, cap. XXI, Ap 21, 21 (VII^a visio); Par. lat. 713, f. 200ra] Quod autem hic per duodecim portas magis designentur illi per quos duodecim tribus Israel intrabunt ad Christum, patet ex hoc quod dicit nomina duodecim tribuum Israel esse scripta in hiis duodecim portis (Ap 21, 12), sicut nomina duodecim apostolorum et Agni sunt scripta in fundamentis (Ap 21, 14). Unde bene dicuntur esse margarite et ex margaritis, quia singulari cordis et corporis munditia et castimonia candescent tamquam ex rore celico concepti et coagulati. Margarite enim dicuntur in conchilibus formari ex rore celesti eis imbibito. Sicut etiam **margarite** sunt **parvule**, sic ipsi erunt per evangelicam **humilitatem** et **paupertatem** parvuli.

Dante introduces the «meretrice», which in the Joachimite and Olivi's vision is scattered throughout the Church, into Caesar's curia: it is not by chance that the only time this term is used in the poem is in *Inf.* XIII, 64 and refers to the court of Frederick II, reserving the common noun «puttana» to the lustful Church (*Purg.* XXXII, 149, 160). In Rev. 17, 6, Olivi explains that this harlot was initially a pagan and subsequently a christian; her ancient sins overflow into the following, like the running waters of a blood red river, which is however one. This image, according to which the previous historical events are merely a part of the whole that develops, is almost a large synecdoche - «et secundum hoc quod est unius partis attribuitur toti vel alteri parti per sinodochem»¹⁵³ - and justifies the figurative marriage between pagan and christian history. The blame for the sins of the fathers (the factions in the cities for example) falls on their recidivist children, on the waters that ran in 1300¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵³ LSA, cap. XVII, Ap 17, 6; Par. lat. 713, f. 170ra-va.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. I, 2.11 (*The «river of blood», or the great synecdoche of Pagan and Christian history*).

Examining the Greyhound, a spiritual reader would have noticed a reference to Mathew 17, 11 «*Helias venturus est et restituet omnia*» concerning Elijah's coming to restore all thing and pacifying fathers and sons, old and new¹⁵⁵. He would have recognized Psalm 92, 4 in the mysterious name *M atel da* - «*Mirabiles EL ATiones DAntis* (in place of «maris»)), in the sense of the wonderful elevation of the works of He who gives, suggested in the exegesis of high Asia, namely the remote and peaceful island of Patmos, free of turbulent passions, where Saint John wrote the Apocalypse (Rev. 1, 4/9)¹⁵⁶. That perspicacious reader could have penetrated every word the «bella donna» spoke and would have not seen her as an abstract figure, since she may have reminded him of countess Matilda, in the humble Franciscan garment with which Salimbene described Mabilia of Marchesopulo, wife of Azzo of Este¹⁵⁷.

When reading the words of the once proud Oderisi da Gubbio on handing the honour of the art of miniature (*l'alluminar*) to Franco Bolognese, Cimabue tendering the leadership in painting to Giotto, the «glory of the tongue» passing from one Guido (Guinizzelli) to the other (Cavalcanti) and others (such as he who was «sesto tra cotanto senno»), a Spiritual would have remembered the exegesis of the first Church of Asia (Ephesus, Rev. 2, 5) and of the sixth (Philadelphia, Rev. 3, 11), which had both been threatened that their leadership be transferred should they consider themselves irreplaceable where all the churches are in the hands of Christ alone. This occurred in the *translatio* of the first church of Jerusalem to Rome, the former being an honoured teacher and *enlightener*, as it shall when the Church passes from the fifth to the sixth period¹⁵⁸:

¹⁵⁵ Cf. III, 12.1 (*The Greyhound. Elijah, the Restorer*).

¹⁵⁶ LSA, cap. I, Ap 1, 4; Par. lat. 713, f. 24rb-va.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. III, 10.2 (*Matelda. «High» Greece*); 10.4 (*The «religio» of the Mountain*); SALIMBENE DE ADAM, *Cronica*, nuova edizione critica a cura di G. Scalia (Scrittori d'Italia, 232), I, Bari 1966, p. 546 (a. 1250).

¹⁵⁸ III, 7e (*The «mala luce» of the age of the Spirit that draws near and the «disdegno» of Guido Cavalcanti*). As usual the passages mentioned do not provide material on this point alone; moreover it is found in a topographic area based on the first terrace on the mountain that mainly contains the themes of the first period of the history of the Church.

[LSA, cap. II, Ap 2, 5 (I^a visio, I^a ecclesia); Par. lat. 713, f. 39rb-va] Si vero queratur plenior ratio sui casus vel translationis predictae, potest colligi ex tribus. Primum est inanis gloria et *superba presumptio* de suo primatu et primate, quam scilicet habuit non solum ex hoc quod prima in Christum credidit, nec solum ex hoc quod fideles ex gentibus ipsam **honorabant** et sequebantur ut magistram et primam, tamquam per eam **illuminati** in Christo et tracti ad Christum, sed etiam ex gloria suorum patriarcharum et prophetarum et divine legis ac cultus legalis longo tempore in ipsa sola fundati. [...] Ad humiliationem autem sue superbie et manifestationem primatus Christi super legalia et super omnia secula valet quod premititur Christus *tener* in sua dextera “septem stellas” (Ap 2, 1), id est omnes preclaros principes et prelatos omnium ecclesiarum presentialiter precurrere ac visitare omnes ecclesias presentes et futuras. Ex quo patet quod Christus est summus rex et pontifex, et quod multe alie sollempnes ecclesie preter Ierosolimitanam ecclesiam sunt et esse debebant sub Christo, ita quod non oportebat eam superbire de suo **primatu**.

[LSA, cap. III, Ap 3, 11 (VI^a ecclesia); Par. lat. 713, f. 51rb-va] Item sicut soli primo comminatus est translationem sue ecclesie de loco suo, sic soli sexto significat quod, si non perseveraverit, eius corona ad alium transferetur. Cuius mystica ratio est quia sicut primus status habuit primatum respectu totius secundi generalis status mundi, qui ab Apostolo vocatur tempus seu ingressus plenitudinis gentium (Rm 11, 25), sic *sextus* habebit primatum respectu totius tertii generalis status mundi duraturi usque ad finem seculi.

Ne ergo de suo primatu superbiant aut insolescant, quasi non possint ipsum perdere aut quasi **alius** nequeat substitui eis et fieri eque dignus, insinuatur eis predicta translatio. Secunda ratio est quia uterque eorum substitutus est **alteri**. Nam **gloria** que fuerat sinagoge parata et pontificibus suis, si in Christum credidissent, translata fuit ad primitivam ecclesiam et ad pastores eius. Sic etiam gloria parata finali ecclesie quinti status transferetur propter eius adulteria ad electos sexti status, unde et in hoc libro vocatur Babilon meretrix circa initium sexti status dampnanda. Notandum tamen quod per hoc verbum docemur numerum electorum ad complendam fabricam civitatis superne sic esse prefixum quod si unus per suam culpam corruat, alterum oportet substitui ne illa fabrica remaneat incompleta.

Dante is primarily a highly talented man of letters and is not a preacher. However, his «Sacred Poem» had readers of different levels which are distinguished by the same last cause of the book of the *Apocalypse*, the «beatitudo» (Rev. 1, 3): «“*Beatus qui legit*” [...] magis spectat ad litteratos vel ad doctores, qui aliis legunt et exponunt» - meaning that reading concerns clergymen, who as Manfredi states do not put it into practice: «Se ’l pastor di Cosenza, che a la caccia / di me fu messo per Clemente allora, / avesse in Dio *ben letta* questa faccia» (*Purg.* III, 124-126) -; «(et) “*qui audit*” [...] secundum vero ad laicos vel auditores. Quia vero ad salutem non sufficit solum addiscere vel scire, nisi serventur in affectu et opere, ideo subdit: “et *servat* ea”» - as Beatrice says to Dante with words that posthumously supplied *tanto nomini* royal and curial cloths: «ché non fa scienza, / senza *lo ritenere, avere inteso*» (*Par.* V, 41-42)¹⁵⁹.

A comparison of Olivi’s comment on the *Apocalypse* removes the thesis according to which Dante was not inspired by this book, though rather by several passages of the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu* by Ubertino of Casale. It is recognised that the fifth and last book of the *Arbor*,

Purg. XI, 79-84, 94-99, 121-123:

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

Credette Cimabue ne la pittura **tener** lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido, sì che la fama di colui è scura. Così ha tolto **l’uno a l’altro** Guido **la gloria** de la lingua; e forse è nato *chi* l’uno e l’altro cacerà del nido.”

“Quelli è”, rispuose, “Provenzan Salvani; ed è qui perché fu **presuntuoso** a recar Siena tutta *a le sue mani*.”

¹⁵⁹ Cf. III, 2b. These are the words that convinced Machiavelli to take notes during the conversations he held «nelle antiche corti degli antichi uomini» and to write the pamphlet *De principatibus*, as he wrote to Francesco Vettori on the 10th of December 1513.

whilst retaining an original structure and contents (especially concerning Saint Francis and the Order), is actually a transcription of the passages of the *Lectura*, deprived of the more strictly exegetic aspects. Now we know that Dante also elaborated these aspects. This does not rule out that he had seen Ubertino's work and used it as one of his many sources, though to have seen is one affair and to have turned it into poetry is another, a source is one issue and a book with which all knowledge must agree is another.

Consequently, an answer may be given to the fundamental objection concerning the alleged strong relationship between Dante and the Spiritual Franciscans: how did he follow them so much considering Bonaventure's negative judgement of Ubertino of Casale, their main point of reference in *Par.* XII, 124-126? The answer may be found by separating the two extremes that Bonaventure objected to (the strict Ubertino enforces the Rule whilst the lax Matthew of Acquasparta avoids it) from Olivi's correct interpretation. Whilst writing the final part of the poem the author wished to be clearly distinguished from the extremist Ubertino of Casale, who even around 1307, when a reformation of the Church was still possible, was probably the person to have handed the *Lectura super Apocalipsim* to Dante so that he could vernacularize it in his poetic ways. This change took place after the Council of Vienne (1311-1312) and the «magna disceptatio» that tore the Franciscan Order between the followers of each side. What the comparison between the texts claims, that both extremes contrast with the teaching of Friar Petrus Iohannis Olivi, who always treated matters with Solomonic impartiality, may be added to Bonaventure's arguments against the extremists and the lax¹⁶⁰.

VII. *Research prospects: a key to understanding the allusions.*

Luigi Pietrobono wrote: «Should we abstain from trying to penetrate under the veil of his verses, which shall certainly no longer be impenetrable once he has said: “Look”? We shall resemble the children who greedily read the parts they like in their father's testament ignoring the rest»¹⁶¹.

¹⁶⁰ Raoul Manselli had correctly sensed that the words pronounced by Bonaventure in the Heaven of the Sun, suggest a distinction between the extremism of Ubertino of Casale and Olivi. Cf. VIAN, «*Se il chicco di grano ...*». ... , pp. 25-26: «Whilst condemning Ubertino, Dante did not condemn the Spirituals, with whom he shared the ideal of a poor Church though not their schismatic and rebellious branch. Therefore Dante followed Olivi's line remembering his teachings in Santa Croce “in the most authentic way, reserved, silent and averse to any kind of rebellion”». Even Manselli (in the entry *Olivi* in *ED*) states that Dante's silence on the Friar does not surprise him, since even Saint Bernardino of Siena, who widely drew on his works, never mentioned him. On this point cf., on the website, I, 3.6 (*The book written from within and without*).

¹⁶¹ L. PIETROBONO, *Struttura allegoria e poesia nella Divina Commedia*, in ID., *Nuovi saggi danteschi*, Torino, Società editrice internazionale, [1954], p. 246.

There was more than a mutual feeling between the Friar and the Poet. Olivi was not, as Raoul Manselli believed, a «voice» of the «Ecclesia spiritualis». The *Divina Commedia* is the metamorphosis of the *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, meaning that Dante freely converted into poetry a theological text written in prose bending it to his needs. Though other sources do not mention this fact, they neither deny that it could be true and, strictly speaking, their silence proves that there is no proof against it. The evidence is to be found in a comparison between the texts. Since so many points prove the issue, an investigator would start to doubt the results which he finds so disturbing as to prompt him to perform a cross-examination, like the tempter in the Holy Gospel who says: *legio mihi nomen est, quia multi sumus...* A medieval city of infinite ‘holy signs’ appears and is inhabited by new, real, citizens and their ancient figures.

Knowledge of the theological threads with which the verses were (more or less densely) woven throughout the long period it took to make the «gown», provides a clearer idea of the extent to which they contain hermetically sealed meanings and may even bring to life the parts of poetry that De Sanctis thought dead and impossible to revive¹⁶². Moreover, the correspondence throughout the poem «a parte a parte» which Pascoli had sensed may be found, a criticism of the unexpressed of which Gramsci wrote concerning *Inf. X*¹⁶³ achieved and the perception of that which Contini defined as «echoes of Dante within Dante» improved¹⁶⁴. It is no longer necessary to distinguish between true poetry and structure, as Croce did, since even the theological concepts are a guiding principle of the poetry that adheres to them. However, Dante’s poetry changes the concepts considerably, scattering them on the «aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci», so they are almost lost. Investigating all the courses of a specific theology of history in order to see how the creator elaborated it is the best way to ‘detheologise’ Dante, according to Teodolinda Barolini¹⁶⁵.

Any esoteric interpretation ascribed in various ways to the Florentine poet is removed. Both esotericism and exotericism (the opposite concept brought to a height by twentieth century critics) were far from the poet’s mind¹⁶⁶. The Spiritual Franciscans did not replace the *Fedeli d’Amore*, while the highly rhetoric meaning¹⁶⁷, which was certainly not unknown to Dante¹⁶⁸, resurfaces beside its historical addressees. This message to the reformers was not delivered due to their premature disappearance. The message was spread with a great deal of intertextual

¹⁶² F. DE SANCTIS, *Il Farinata di Dante* [May 1869], in *Saggi critici*, a cura di L. Russo, II, Bari, Laterza, 1965, p. 340.

¹⁶³ A. GRAMSCI, *Quaderni del carcere*, I, Torino, Einaudi, 1975 [1930-1932], pp. 517-519.

¹⁶⁴ G. CONTINI, *Un’interpretazione di Dante* (1965-1966), in *Un’idea di Dante*, p. 91.

¹⁶⁵ T. BAROLINI, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante*, Princeton 1992.

¹⁶⁶ G. INGLESE insists on the ‘exoteric’ nature, as the twentieth century critics «irrevocably» claimed against an esoteric nature, in his *Dante Alighieri, Commedia. Inferno. Revisione del testo e commento*, Roma, Carocci, 2007, p. 9.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. G. GORNI, *Dante prima della Commedia*, Fiesole 2001, p. 36.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. U. ECO, *Introduzione to L’idea deforme. Interpretazioni esoteriche di Dante*, a cura di M. P. Pozzato, Milano, Bompiani, 1989, p. 36.

metamorphosis as if it were, to quote Lino Pertile, «the inevitable condition of any reflection on the meaning of human life in past, present and future history»¹⁶⁹.

The main objection to Dante's spiritual interpretation - that is the absence of specific criteria to prevent any arbitrary in the identification of the inner meanings - is also removed. The book containing said criteria exists and may be verified. The 'key', which is not the *ipse dixit* advocated by Croce, allows readers to understand many allusions, as if it were a secret diary, and rebuild a culture around Dante, as Mandel'stam intended, or briefly Dante and his era, according to a formula dear to romantic historians. Even if this is an ephemeral side compared to the posthumous fortune in the way the *Commedia* has been read. As Carducci stated, the «primigenial» *Commedia* was already ancient in the fourteenth century and «had no unabridged successors»¹⁷⁰.

This research, which has just been started as a solitary excavation of the work, has no intention of trying to understand Dante using a single formula since it aims to explore a new side. Future investigators shall decide if they should turn what is now a steep path into a king's highway¹⁷¹. Arousing the new generations with a proverb, Michele Barbi wrote: «God sends the yarn when the web has been warped»¹⁷².

¹⁶⁹ L. PERTILE, *La puttana e il gigante. Dal «Cantico dei Cantici» al Paradiso Terrestre di Dante*, Ravenna, Longo, 1998, p. 9 (personal translation).

¹⁷⁰ G. CARDUCCI, *Dello svolgimento della letteratura nazionale*, Discorso terzo, v, Livorno, Vigo, 1874.

¹⁷¹ It is quite easy to imagine what an investigation of this side entails for those branches that study the drafting of the *Commedia*'s text or the history of the Italian language.

¹⁷² M. BARBI, *La nuova filologia e l'edizione dei nostri scrittori da Dante al Manzoni*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1973 [1938], p. XLI.