

CATHERINE KEEN

(University College London)

«A LOCAL HABITATION AND A NAME»:
ORIGINS AND IDENTITY IN *PURGATORIO XIV**

ABSTRACT

This *lectura* of *Purgatorio XIV* investigates the socio-political aspects of the canto, reviewing the way that it engages with historically and geographically specific details, yet draws from them universal conclusions. It explores Dante's strategic use of proper names – personal, dynastic, topographical – to scrutinize the political morality of the two regions he knew so well. The essay moves on to investigate the juncture between matters of individual and collective identity using the prism of speech and language, and turns to Dante's regional surveys within *De vulgari eloquentia* as well as in *Purgatorio XIV*, to show how the canto's proliferation of local minutiae is purposefully deployed to build sustained reflection on matters of personal, community, and ethical identity.

Nella presente *lectura* si esplorano gli elementi socio-politici di *Purgatorio XIV*, intendendo rivisitare le modalità con cui Dante fa uso di specifici dettagli storici e geografici, sebbene da essi si ricavino conclusioni universali. In particolare, viene preso in esame l'utilizzo strategico di nomi propri - personali, dinastici, topografici - con lo scopo di vagliare la condizione politica e morale delle due regioni che Dante conosceva così bene. Successivamente, l'analisi si concentra su problematiche legate alla congiunzione fra identità individuale e identità collettiva, esplorate specialmente da una specola linguistica, per poi rivolgersi alle mappe regionali che Dante traccia sia nel *De vulgari eloquentia* che nel canto purgatoriale qui esaminato. Difatti, la proliferazione di minuzie locali in *Purgatorio XIV* è deliberatamente impiegata da Dante per avanzare e supportare una riflessione su questioni di identità etica personale e comunitaria.

* This essay derives from a *Lectura dantis* originally delivered at the University of St Andrews, on 12 April, 2013. I would like to thank the participants in the *Lectura* day, the editorial board of «L'Alighieri», and the anonymous reviewers for the insights and comments that have proved invaluable for this article's development.

There is an abundant literature on the fourteenth canto of the *Purgatorio*, even though it is not one of the “showpieces” of the *Commedia*. The diversity of approaches to *Purgatorio* XIV however reflects the multiplicity of suggestions that it offers to Dante’s readers.¹ Theologically, the canto forms part of the quite lengthy sequence dedicated to the sin of envy, beginning in canto XIII and ending several *terzine* into canto XV. Consequently, many studies discuss the significance that this sin held for Dante himself (despite the disclaimer of the pilgrim in XIII, 133-35); or investigate the canto’s presentation of the humility needed to bring humanity to its true heavenly goal (notably at XIII, 94-96, and XIV, 142-51). Others have explored its stylistic complexity, noting the concentrated tenor of its metaphorical sequences, often sustained by overt or covert classical allusion. Others again have explored the political implications of the two lengthy speeches on Tuscany and Romagna that form the backbone of the canto. The present essay focuses predominantly on this latter theme, investigating the socio-political aspects of the canto and reviewing the way that it engages with historically and geographically specific details, yet draws from them universal conclusions. In its final part, the essay investigates the juncture between matters of individual and collective identity using the prism of speech and language, and turns to Dante’s regional surveys within *De vulgari eloquentia* as well as in *Purgatorio*, to show how the canto’s

¹ Among the many *lecturae* dedicated to this canto, I have consulted especially: F. BIONDOLILLO, *Il canto XIV del «Purgatorio»*. *Lectura dantis siciliana*, Trapani, Accademia di Studi Cielo d’Alcamo, 1955; D. BOMMARITO, *Boezio e la valle dell’Arno in «Purg.» XIV (29-54): la fonte Boeziana delle «metensomatosi» («Cons. Phil.» IV. 3) come tema unitario della seconda cornice*, in «Aevum» LXIII/2 (1979), pp. 338-52; G. A. CAMERINO, «*Purgatorio» XIV: corrispondenze simbologiche, strutturali e stilistiche*, in «L’Alighieri» XVI (2000), pp. 99-121; T. CASINI, *Il canto XIV del «Purgatorio»*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1902; E. N. GIRARDI, *Il canto XIV del «Purgatorio»*, in «Aevum» XLIV (1970), pp. 242-61; G. GRANA, *Il canto XIV del «Purgatorio»*, in *Lectura Dantis Scaligera II. «Purgatorio»*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1968, pp. 481-532; B. GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV*, in *Lectura Dantis Turicensis. «Purgatorio»*, ed. by G. Güntert and M. Picone, Firenze, Cesati, 2001, pp. 211-24; R. KIRKPATRICK, *Courtesy and Imagination: A Study of «Purgatorio» Canto XIV*, in «The Modern Language Review» LXXVI/1 (1981), pp. 67-80; E. PISTELLI, *Il canto XIV del «Purgatorio»*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1909; M. VERDICCHIO, *The Rhetoric of Envy*, in *Lectura Dantis: «Purgatorio»*, ed. by A. Mandelbaum, A. Oldcorn, and C. Ross, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2008, pp. 141-50. I have also made use of early and modern commentaries to the poem: references throughout are to the editions available via the *Dartmouth Dante Project*, <https://dante.dartmouth.edu/>.

proliferation of local minutiae is purposefully deployed to build sustained reflection on matters of personal, community, and ethical identity.

Purgatorio XIV begins with a question:

«Chi è costui che 'l nostro monte cerchia
prima che morte li abbia dato il volo,
e apre li occhi a sua voglia e coverchia?»
(*Purg.* XIV, 1-3)

The canto has no narrative introduction, instead making both the reader and Dante-protagonist eavesdroppers on an exchange between two shades. Canto XIII already explained how the envious suffer in purgatory through the sewing up of their eyes, enforcing blindness on the gaze through which, in life, they made their jealous evaluations of others. This blindness prevents the shades' recognizing the figure passing by, and equivalently raises their curiosity about his identity. The soul asks him bluntly to give his name: «per carità ne consola e ne ditta / onde vieni e chi se'» (12-13).

Dante-character's reply is unusually indirect, reducing identifying detail to the barest minimum:

E io: «Per mezza Toscana si spazia
un fiumicel che nasce in Falterona,
e cento miglia di corso nol sazia.
Di sovr'esso rech'io questa persona:
dirvi ch'i' sia, saria parlare indarno,
ché 'l nome mio ancor molto non suona».
(*Purg.* XIV 16-21)

The souls immediately ask one another why he has framed his answer in such oblique terms. He supplied only the name of his region and one of its geographical features, leaving his interlocutors to puzzle their way to a conclusion from these coordinates. Even the name of his city of origin, so essential to the establishment of identity for medieval Italians, has been suppressed; although, given the aural acuity of the blinded spirits of this terrace, the pilgrim's speech pattern may have given much away, if one recalls how swiftly in *Inferno* X Farinata recognized his Tuscan and Florentine diction by ear alone from within his tomb.²

² Farinata identifies not only the region – «O Tosco!» (*Inf.* X, 22) – but also the city of Dante-character's origin («La tua loquela ti fa manifesto / di quella nobil patria natio, / a la qual forse fui troppo molesto», 25-27); though as a fellow-Florentine he may be better

Indeed, the puzzle is none too challenging, and the reply comes promptly: «tu parli d'Arno» (24). It seems that the elaborate indirection of the opening exchanges was not really intended to suppress identity after all. At any rate, it has not done so with any great success. Rather, it provides an intriguing prelude to the canto; a prelude that provides already some anticipation of what will emerge as Dante-poet's main preoccupations throughout the following lines. The remainder of the canto is closely concerned with investigating more closely how personal, ethical, and political identities can be established and assessed in their most extensive and significant ramifications.

The cautious, deliberate use of proper names proves to be an important feature in such investigations.³ The speakers themselves are not named until midway through the canto; the pilgrim, as always, remains unnamed to the purgatorial souls. This encourages the audience to listen or to read attentively, seeking what clues may be provided by the canto's topics, images, or allusions that could shed light on why such anonymity is preserved. Then at last, in line 81, the first speaker finally identifies himself: he is Guido del Duca, and his companion is Rinieri da Calboli (88-89). Like many others in the *Commedia*, these are two figures whose fame in the twenty-first century is largely dependent on their appearance in Dante's poem. In the early 1300s however they would have been recognizable by patronymic, if not also individually, as members of the local nobility of the Romagna region. As so often, Dante has made an unexpected pairing: aside from their shared Romagnol identity, their families represented different traditions, with Guido del Duca a prominent Ghibelline, and Rinieri instead a Guelf.⁴ Political divergence in life, however, is compensated here by the

qualified to make such precise distinctions than the Romagnol spirits of *Purg.* XIV. On the compensation of blindness by increased acuity of hearing, G. LEDDA, *Per un bestiario dantesco della cecità e della visione: vedere «non altrimenti che per pelle talpe» («Purg.» XVII, 1-3)*, in *Da Dante a Montale. Studi di filologia e di critica letteraria in onore di Emilio Pasquini*, ed. by G. M. Anselmi, B. Bentivogli, A. Cottignoli, F. Marri, V. Roda, G. Ruoizzi and P. Vecchi Galli, Firenze, Gedit edizioni, 2005, pp. 77-98 (p. 87 and n. 35).

³ CAMERINO, «*Purgatorio*» XIV cit., notes a tendency to periphrasis throughout the terrace of envy. Midway through the canto, there is a transition from paucity to abundance of family and city names forms: I believe this to be a calculated asymmetry that invites readers to assess the new information attentively (see below).

⁴ A. MONTEFUSCO, *Guido del Duca*, and G. FRANCESCHINI, *Ranieri da' Calboli*, in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, ed. by R. Romanelli et al., Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 85 vols, 1961- , consulted online, <http://www.treccani.it/biografico/>.

fellowship cultivated through purgatorial disciplines and rituals.⁵ As the canto unfolds, it will become evident that one of Dante-poet's primary concerns is with exploring how much regional, political, and family origins – that is, the facts of an individual's membership of larger social entities – bear on his or her personal identity and sense of moral values.

Up to the point when Guido del Duca finally names himself, the only identifiers that have been admitted to the canto, after Dante-character's circumlocution over his own name, are a bare few toponyms, most notably the names of Tuscany, of the Arno, and of Mount Falterona. This is the peak in the Casentino where the source of the Arno lies, in the Apennine range that acts as watershed and regional boundary between Tuscany and Romagna. There is an equivalent watershed in the canto too, falling about the same mid-point where Guido finally reveals his name: his first long speech sketches a political and ethical overview of contemporary Tuscany; his second gives a portrait of his own region of Romagna.⁶ In the Tuscan section, all proper names are omitted, leaving the region's inhabitants as nameless as Dante-character has chosen to make himself. In the Romagna section, by contrast, more than twenty proper names of people and places are given in the space of forty-five lines (81-126), as Guido unfolds an intimate review of his region and his compatriots. From an almost complete suppression of names, we pass rapidly to a superabundance of them; yet in both halves of the canto, with or without the use of proper names, Dante-poet marshals a symmetrical concern with exploring how his protagonists shape information about personal identity, and about how they have attained a position within the larger public sphere as members of their regional communities. From the opening comment of Dante-character that «l nome mio ancor molto non suona» (21), to Guido's praise of his

⁵ CAMERINO, «*Purgatorio*» XIV cit., pp. 110-15; CASINI, *Il canto XIV* cit., pp. 20, 22-30; J. A. SCOTT, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, p. 147.

⁶ CARPI notes Dante's almost literally "bird's-eye view" of the two regions, and provides valuable insights into the role of the Apennine zone, and its courts and cities, in dividing but also linking Tuscany and Romagna at the turn of the thirteenth century: U. CARPI, *La nobiltà di Dante*, 2 vols, Firenze, Edizioni Polistampa, 2004 (pp. 465-79). CACHEY also highlights Dante's interest in "bird's-eye" surveys of the peninsula's mountains and shores: T. J. CACHEY, *Cartographic Dante*, in «*Italica*» LXXXVII/3 (2010), pp. 325-54; IDEM, *Cartographic Dante: A Note on Dante and the Greek Mediterranean*, in *Dante and the Greeks*, ed. by J. M. Ziolkowski (Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2014), pp. 197-226.

companion's outstanding fame as «l' pregio e l'onore / de la casa da Calboli» (88-89), the canto focuses on the question of reputation, and of the membership of the wider family, regional, and cultural communities within which that fame is tested. In both cases, the mention of the individual leads immediately into the survey of these communities: the question to Dante-character flows into the overview of the malign character of the communities that live along the Arno valley, each characterized as an animal with odious traits; the naming of Guido and Rinieri produces a survey of the dynastic families of Romagna and their courts, and denunciation of a degeneration amongst them that matches the Tuscan case.

For Dante as a Tuscan, and as a political exile who spent many years of his banishment in the cities and courts of the Romagna region, the canto thus offers a way to assess the recent and current history of localities that he knew intimately. In the case of Tuscany, the poet's detailed knowledge of the different city-states finds expression in anonymized, large-scale generalizations about what he felt to be typical trends in the behaviour and morality of their inhabitants, encapsulated in the animal imagery. For Romagna, he passes instead to an accumulation of specific detail, an agglomeration of names and allusions that uses different, almost opposite, means to reach the same goal of searching social and ethical analysis.⁷ As always in the *Commedia*, these political intricacies are directed towards larger moral ends, serving the narrative of Dante-character's individual progression towards the comprehension of human vice and virtue, and towards Christian redemption. Opening with physical blindness and ignorance of identity, the exchanges between Dante-character and Guido del Duca proceed attentively towards a point where both have not only gained insight into the question of earthly identity, but have an understanding of the nature of envy, and of its counterweight virtues of generosity and charity. The canto closes with a moral *sententia* from Virgil, in which the theme of sight emphatically underlines the significance of the souls' visual deprivation in purgatory, when he solemnly reminds the pilgrim of the

⁷ PISTELLI argues that the details in the Romagna passage are not significant («sono nomi, non sono figure»): *Il canto XIV* cit., p. 21; similarly GIRARDI, *Il canto XIV* cit. I believe, with CAMERINO, «*Purgatorio*» XIV cit., CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit., and KIRKPATRICK, *Courtesy and Imagination* cit., that the names provide an additional, significant layer of meaning, though the passage still conveys a strong sense of incremental political and ethical decline even when its referents are not fully investigated.

need for human beings to train their moral vision on earth, so as to avoid the horrific penance of enforced blindness imposed on the souls of the jealous in the afterlife:⁸

«Chiamavi 'l cielo e 'ntorno vi si gira,
mostrandovi le sue bellezze etterne,
e l'occhio vostro pur a terra mira:
onde vi batte chi tutto discerne.»
(*Purg.* XIV, 148-51)

1. Questions of identity: jealousy and charity

Commentary on the exchanges between the canto's three main agents often focuses on exploring whether Guido and Rinieri's question about Dante-character's identity, and his elusive answer, demonstrate more of a propensity towards displaying the characteristics of jealousy, or of charity. Are the souls – and to some extent, Dante-character as well – still displaying their implication in the vice that has confined them to a given place in purgatory, or are they striving to overcome it? Some commentators see jealousy as the hallmark of Guido del Duca's highly negative portraits of Tuscany and Romagna, and even more so of his account of how political devastation in Florence will be overseen by his companion's nephew, Fulcieri da Calboli: a fact that will deeply pain both his interlocutors.⁹ Others argue that the political commentary expresses a deep appreciation of the values that should in an ideal world bind communities together. They show how attentive Guido del Duca is to the privilege of Dante's journey and to the extraordinary grace that has made their encounter possible.¹⁰ Opinions are equally divided over how to judge Dante's answer: is it self-concealment, indicating some kind of failing in generosity and compassion towards the blinded souls; or does it show modest awareness of his relative obscurity in 1300?¹¹ Whether the protagonists'

⁸ BOMMARITO, *Boezio e la valle dell'Arno* cit., and LEDDA, *Per un bestiario dantesco* cit., give ample consideration to the theme of sight, physical and also moral and rational, in this canto and in *Purg.* more generally. The Boethian elements underlined by BOMMARITO are also discussed by L. LOMBARDO, *Boezio in Dante. La «Consolatio philosophiae» nello scrittoio del poeta*, Venezia, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2013, pp. 320-23.

⁹ BIONDOLILLO, *Il canto XIV* cit.; VERDICCHIO, *Rhetoric of Envy* cit.

¹⁰ CASINI, *Il canto XIV* cit.; GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV* cit.; KIRKPATRICK, *Courtesy and Imagination* cit.; PISTELLI, *Il canto XIV* cit.

¹¹ BIONDOLILLO attributes the avoidance of identification to desire for dissociation from the Arno region's vices (*Il canto XIV* cit., p. 7); for VERDICCHIO, it is suppressed because of the envy displayed in Guido's reference to his mortal state and freedom from punishment (*Rhetoric of Envy* cit., pp. 142-43); while CAMERINO links it to the lesson on humility gained on the previous Terrace of Pride («*Purgatorio*» XIV cit., p. 103).

conduct is seen more as envious or as charitable, though, there is general agreement that the canto's preoccupation with questions of political reputation chimes well with the definition of envy that Virgil will outline a few canti later:

«è chi podere, grazia, onore e fama
teme di perder perch'altri sormonti,
onde s'attrista sì che 'l contrario ama.»
(*Purg.* xvii, 118-20)

Guido's description of his own earthly conduct perfectly fits this pattern:

«Fu il sangue mio d'invidia si riarso
che, se veduto avesse uom farsi lieto,
visto m'avresti di livore sparso:
di mia semente cotal paglia mieto.»¹²
(*Purg.* xiv, 82-85)

Guido's speeches about Tuscany and Romagna do indeed reveal a penetrating attention to matters of *podere, grazia, onore e fama*, both of individuals and of whole communities. In my view, Guido thus displays not his love for the lack of these virtues in contemporary Italy – the uncorrected envy of *amare il contrario* – but rather offers a painful lamentation over their absence from every family and community scrutinized in his regional survey.¹³ At the end of the canto, he dismisses Dante-character with the plea that this political review has left him desiring to weep, not to speak: «Ma va via, Tosco, omai, ch'or mi diletta / troppo di pianger più che di parlare» (124-25). The phrase anticipates a more explicit statement about the pleasure of purgatorial pain that will occur in canto xxiii, with Forese Donati's famous assertion that: «io dico pena, e dovia dir solazzo» (*Purg.* xxiii, 72). For Guido, *piangere* gives *diletto*: grief becomes the expression of charity and compassion, all the generous instincts that he denied both to himself and to those around him in his envious lifetime. We recall that in canto xiii,

¹² BIONDOLILLO notes the strictly Biblical imagery of reaping and sowing that Guido correctly applies to his own sinfulness here, following *Prov.* 22, 8 and *Gal.* 6, 8 (*Il canto xiv* cit., p. 12). The *terzina* introduces the longer sequence where Romagna's collective corruption is also represented with plant metaphors, discussed below.

¹³ GIRARDI indeed argues that Guido displays *both* «una carità riflessa, consapevolmente esercitata come espiazione ed asceti ed ammonimento», but *also* «una invidia irriflessa» revealed in harshness of speech and his alertness to the faults of others (*Il canto xiv* cit., pp. 246-47). CAMERINO suggests that paradoxically Guido's envy in life arose from a competitive commitment to liberality and courtliness, fearful that his fellow Romagnol leaders would outdo his own generous practices («*Purgatorio*» *xiv* cit., pp. 115-18).

when the penance of the envious was first described, the sewing up of their eyes was compared to a phase in the training of a wild sparrowhawk to become a disciplined hunting bird. By this means, purgatorial discipline is aiding Guido and the other souls to leave their sin behind them, and to re-learn appreciation for *podere, grazia, onore e fama*.¹⁴ At the end of the canto, Virgil's visual metaphor for the workings of envy, and of all human sins, brings all this together in his lyrical evocation of the *bellezze etterne* displayed in the heavens, and his pejorative comment on humankind's wilful myopia, turning *l'occhio vostro pur a terra*. In purgatory, blinded though they are, Guido del Duca and Rinieri da Calboli are learning to turn their inward eye upwards to the heavens, and to deplore, rather than to embrace, the absence of charity in their former regional homelands. Indeed, the image of the beauty of the rotating heavens which blind humanity wilfully chooses to ignore, encapsulated in Virgil's closing *sententia*, aptly anticipates the encounter at the end of the terrace of envy with the dazzlingly bright angel of the «famiglia del cielo» (*Purg. xv, 29*), who points the way forward and upward (25-36). As they enter the next terrace, the same motifs of human moral blindness and divine light will recur again, at greater length, as Virgil replies to the pilgrim's questions about the doleful commentary of Guido del Duca on human envy and avarice, and their effects in the world (*Purg. xv, 44-81*).¹⁵

2. The rivers of *Purgatorio* XIV: moralized topography

Guido's own two speeches show that there is, indeed, much to lament. Canto XIV is memorable above all for its political content, in the two central speeches on Tuscany and Romagna. The speeches themselves are long: the first runs to thirteen *terzine* in total (28-66), the second to seventeen (76-126), or thirty-nine and fifty-one lines respectively. A single metaphorical figure is dominant in each: in the first, the images of Tuscans changed into beasts; in the second, the Romagnol nobility's family trees are represented, literally, as weeds or dead wood. Equally, there is a marked shift in tone between the two speeches. Tuscany is described with a tone of invective and vituperation, influenced from the start by the quasi-Biblical malediction that «degno / ben è che 'l nome di tal valle pèra» (29-30), which echoes the denunciation of the

¹⁴ LEDDA underlines the educative aspect of the hawk's temporary blindness (*Per un bestiario dantesco* cit., pp. 78-80, 95-96).

¹⁵ LOMBARDO discusses the markedly Boethian emphases in both of these speeches (*Boezio in Dante* cit., pp. 320-26).

wicked in *Job*: «memoria illius pereat de terra» (*Iob* 18, 17).¹⁶ The sequence of animal images that represents different communities as pigs, dogs, wolves, and foxes has the emphatic quality of a sermon or moral treatise.¹⁷ Pietro Alighieri suggested a source for the imagery in a passage from Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, discussing the spiritual metamorphoses of humans into beasts through indulgence of sinful inclinations.¹⁸ The Boethian text reworks the legend of Circe, referenced directly in the canto (42), presenting the outcome of deserting moral *probitas* as the bestial transformation of humans into swine, wolves, lions, and bears;¹⁹ medieval moralizations of the Circe legend in Ovid and Virgil taught similar lessons. The closing drama of Fulcieri da Calboli's bloody slaughter of Florentine faction rivals fits into the same moralizing literary-scriptural vein. The vignette has all the violence of a battle scene from classical or medieval epic; and it also carries a distinctly scriptural note. Opening with a prophetic «Io veggio» (58), the prediction of Florence's impending, thousand-year desolation carries an apocalyptic tone that echoes the «Vidi» of St John's account of the last things in *Revelation*.²⁰

This violence and the tone of invective are largely absent in Guido's speech on Romagna, which instead employs a tone of elegy in its nostalgic listing of the noble houses whose past glory has fallen into decline. The rhetorical catchphrase here is «Ov'è?» (97), a vernacular rendition of *ubi est?* or *ubi sunt?*, the mournful trope of life's

¹⁶ The scriptural echo was seemingly first noted by TOMMASEO, *ad loc.*

¹⁷ Critical literature on the canto also presents more specifically partisan, political interpretations of the animal imagery, connecting Arezzo's *cani* and Pisa's *volpi* to aspects of civic heraldry, and linking the *lupi* of Florence to the politicized denunciation of the «lupi che li danno guerra» in *Par.* xxv, 6: BIONDOLILLO, *Il canto XIV* cit., pp. 9-10; CAMERINO, «*Purgatorio*» XIV cit., pp. 104-05; CASINI, *Il canto XIV* cit., pp. 9-14. There are also echoes of the bestial imagery applied to Florence in particular in *Inf.* xv: E. FENZI, *Dante ghibellino. Note per una discussione*, in «Per leggere» xxiv/2 (2013), pp. 171-98 (p. 187); C. VILLA, *Canto xv: retorica (e cecità) di ser Brunetto*, in **Lectura dantis romana. Cento canti per cento anni. I 1: Inferno canti I-XVII*, Roma, Salerno, 2013, pp. 459-83 (pp. 473-74, 477).

¹⁸ PIETRO ALIGHIERI, *ad loc.*; repeated in several other commentaries.

¹⁹ BOETHIUS, *Cons. Phil.* iv, pr. iii, 16-25 and m. iii, 7-28; the same passage is briefly referenced also in *Conv.* ii. vii, 4. BOMMARITO, *Boezio e la valle dell'Arno* cit., and LOMBARDO, *Boezio in Dante* cit. (pp. 307-18), both discuss the canto's Boethian elements extensively; see also GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV* cit., pp. 215-16.

²⁰ BIONDOLILLO, *Il canto XIV* cit., p. 10; E. BRILLI, *Firenze e il profeta*, Roma, Carocci, 2012, pp. 302-04; GRANA, *Il canto XIV* cit., p. 515; SCOTT, *Political Purgatory* cit., pp. 146-47.

transience so popular in learned medieval Latin poetry.²¹ Of course, there are hard comments in this speech too, and expressions of moral contempt – notably the comprehensive exclamation on the whole region, «Oh Romagnuoli tornati in bastardi!» (99) – but still the overall emphasis is more elegiac than vituperative. In the Romagna speech, the tone of lament is suitable to its temporal axis, which compares past and present. The region’s good character in the past, in Guido’s and Rinieri’s lifetimes, is compared with its decadent present state in 1300, the year of the fictional journey.²² The harsher rhetoric of invective displayed towards Tuscany matches, instead, a prophetic timescale that looks to the future. The Tuscan survey leaves the past out of account, and instead first examines the present of 1300, and then the future, with the concrete case of Fulcieri da Calboli’s political betrayals of 1303 and, beyond that, the consequences that will reverberate long after, «di qui a mille anni» (65).

The two speeches, the two regions, the two time-scales, the two fields of metaphor, are all joined mid-way through the canto by means of the figure of Fulcieri da Calboli. The regions have also been linked from much earlier on, through Dante-character’s reference to Mount Falterona (17), the peak in the Apennine range dividing Tuscany and Romagna: the mountain is itself in a sense the anchoring point for the investigation of peninsular political geography that runs throughout the canto. The calibrated, structural connections between the topographical and genealogical references of Guido del Duca’s two speeches become obvious only retrospectively. Until the name of Rinieri da Calboli is revealed in lines 88-89, the *nepote* mentioned in line 58 cannot be conclusively identified; and until we have heard Guido’s lament for Romagna’s degenerate nobility, it remains unclear how significant it is that he should finish his denunciation of Tuscan evils with reference to a Romagnol appointed to govern a Tuscan city. Equally, the reference to Mount Falterona, which initially seems merely part of the puzzle constructed by Dante-character in his circuitous allusion to his Tuscan origins, proves its full significance only when we come to the survey of Romagna. Here, Guido’s sketch-map of the regional boundaries includes an allusion to the

²¹ Other interrogatives, such as *quando?* (100) and *chi?* (112), help reinforce the same tone: GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV* cit., p. 219.

²² CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit., pp. 671-705. Guido and Rinieri are themselves of different but overlapping generations: Guido c.1170-c.1250; Rinieri, c.1225-1296; while Rinieri’s nephew Fulcieri and Dante-character in turn constitute the third overlapping generation, both beginning their political careers c.1295.

Apennines, defining Romagna as lying «tra 'l Po e 'l monte e la marina e 'l Reno» (92). The Apennine range, where Mount Falterona lies, provides the dividing yet unifying line at which the two regions physically touch.²³

With Guido's definition of Romagna's boundaries, another symmetry begins to emerge between the two parts of the canto: their geographical focus, and the way that this is defined by mountains and rivers.²⁴ The overview of Tuscany follows the course of the river Arno, flowing down from mountain to sea, widening from hill-stream to delta. Dante-character begins this with his image of the Arno as a tiny *fiumicello*:

E io: «Per mezza Toscana si spazia
un fiumicel che nasce in Falterona,
e cento miglia di corso nol sazia.»
(*Purg.* XIV, 16-18)

Guido in turn traces the stream's gradual expansion, from a «povero calle» (45) in the Casentino, to a «maledetta e sventurata fossa» (51), into the «pelaghi cupi» (52) of the delta beyond Pisa. The epithets he uses are repellent, even infernal: a long tradition of commentary shows the analogies between this canto's portrait of the Arno, and the descriptions of the rivers of *Inferno*; indeed, canto XIV of the previous *cantica* is dedicated symmetrically to an account of the origins of hell's lakes and rivers.²⁵ The bestiality that Guido del Duca describes in the Arno's communities has an infernal quality, too, with the moral degeneration from swinish incontinence, through lupine force, to vulpine fraud seeming to follow the *Inferno*'s own scale of vices. The moral symbolism of the animal imagery, though, should not overshadow the accuracy of Guido's Tuscan hydrography. His speech follows down the course of the Arno very precisely, vividly describing how it bends from flowing roughly south-east as far as

²³ CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit., pp. 465-79.

²⁴ F. BRUNI, *La geografia di Dante nel «De vulgari eloquentia»*, in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by E. Fenzi, Roma, Salerno editrice, 2012 (Nuova edizione commentata delle opere di Dante, t. III), pp. 241-62; T. J. CACHEY, *Cartographic Dante* cit., pp. 327-28.

²⁵ BRILLI, *Firenze* cit., pp. 231-32; A. CAMOZZI, *Il Veglio di Creta alla luce di Matelda: una lettura comparativa di Inferno XIV e Purgatorio XXVIII*, in «The Italianist» XXIX (2009), pp. 3-49 (pp. 8-9, 16-17, 24-25); GIRARDI, *Il canto XIV* cit., p. 253; GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV* cit., pp. 216, 220-21; C. M. KEEN, *The Patterning of History: Poetry, Politics, and Adamic Renewal*, in *Vertical Readings in Dante's Comedy: Volume 2*, ed. G. Corbett and H. Webb, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2016, pp. 55-75 (pp. 56-59); PISTELLI, *Il canto XIV* cit., pp. 27-30.

Arezzo, where «da lor disdegnosa torce il muso» (48) and loops round northwards to follow westerly channels until it reaches the shore where «si rende per ristoro / di quel che 'l ciel de la marina asciuga» (35-36). Only settlements located along the river course are considered for their animal characteristics. Guido lists the Casentinese swine, Aretine dogs, Florentine wolves, and Pisan foxes; but the Siena of canto XIII's Sapia, for instance, is omitted, as are Lucca, Pistoia, and other Tuscan towns not directly on the Arno. The cluster of mountain, river, and seashore remain the region's defining features.

Exactly the same set of geographical features is chosen to define the Romagna region in Guido's second speech, though in this case there are two rivers, the Po and the Reno. Instead of animal symbols, cities lying within the region linked by these features are named directly: Bologna (100), Faenza (101), Bretinoro (112), Bagnacavallo (115), finally Castrocaro and Conio (116); while the names of families and individuals bring to mind even more Romagnol communities, such as the Ravenna of the Traversari and Anastagi (107). Guido del Duca's vision of Romagna is an expansive one. His map seems to follow the region's widest contours under the Byzantine Exarchate, rather than the more subdivided political reality of Guido's own time, or of Dante's.²⁶ This archaicism in Guido del Duca's political geography chimes with the social and cultural nostalgia evident throughout this second speech, with its insistence that great men and noble families have been left without successors in the Romagna region. His speech opens with harsh judgement on the case of the Calboli family, where Rinieri's *pregio e onore* have vanished from the family almost physically; but their case is emblematic of the entire region's leading houses. Outlining how «non pur lo suo sangue è fatto brullo, / [...] del ben richesto al vero e al trastullo» (91, 93), Guido's exclamation on the «Romagnuoli

²⁶ A. VASINA and P. V. MENGALDO, *Romagna*, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, ed. by U. Bosco, 6 vols, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970-78, consulted online, <http://www.treccani.it/scuola/dossier/2008/dante/13.html>. CACHEY discusses Dante's verbal cartographies of the Po valley and the Romagna, especially in *Inf.*, in *Cartographic Dante* cit., pp. 332-33; IDEM, *Cartographic Dante: A Note*, pp. 208-12, 215. For opposing views about Dante's observance or otherwise of contemporary administrative boundaries in his most "geographical" previous work, the *DVE*, see on the anti-contemporary side, BRUNI *La geografia* cit., p. 251; E. Fenzi, *Introduzione*, in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by E. Fenzi, Roma, Salerno editrice, 2012 (Nuova edizione commentata delle opere di Dante, t. III), pp. xix-lxii (pp. xxiii-xxiv); and in support of fourteenth-century boundaries, M. TAVONI, *De vulgari eloquentia. Introduzione*, in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Opere. 1: Rime, Vita Nova, De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by C. Giunta, G. Gorni, and M. Tavoni, Milan, Arnoldo Mondadori editore, 2011, pp. 1066-1116 (pp. 1087-92, 1113-16).

tornati in bastardi» (99) indicates that entire communities have lost their traditions of chivalric virtue. The term *bastardo* invokes moral corruption rather than asserting literally that families have passed to illegitimate heirs.²⁷ A hint, however, of the dynastic implications of these metaphors of bloodline seeps through as Guido also traces a historical pattern of families that are dying out without male successors, in the cases of the Traversari and Anastagi families (107), the Pagani (118), the Fantolini (121), and the lords of Bretinoro (112) and Bagnacavallo (115).²⁸

This elegiac listing of the families fading into extinction, whether literally dying out or declining in morality, fills in the concrete details suggested by his opening metaphor. From the start, Guido stressed that the region watered by the Po and Reno rivers was no fertile landscape, but a wilderness:

«dentro a questi termini è ripieno
di venenosi sterpi, sì che tardi
per coltivare omai verrebber meno.»
(*Purg.* XIV, 94-96)

The image of the poisonous thickets clustering across a once-fertile landscape, at the start of Guido's speech about the moral bastardization of Romagna, provides another instance of the way that the canto's two political speeches are balanced and conjoined. At the very end of the previous speech, when he reached the bridging episode of Fulcieri da Calboli, the Romagnol appointed to govern in Tuscany, Guido's imagery shifted from the bestial and fluvial, to the dynastic and arboreal, melding the two fields of metaphor dominant in the two speeches:

²⁷ The metaphorical use of *bastardi* in this passage offers some thematic and structural parallels with Jacopone da Todi's *Plange la Ecclesia, plange e dolora*, where the personified Church is «circundata de figli bastardi», and a protracted *ubi sunt?* repeats «O' so'?» six times as she searches vainly for political and moral defence by the clergy and faithful.

²⁸ See CARPI's detailed overview of the Romagnol dynasties: *La nobiltà* cit., pp. 698-703. Early commentators were responsive to the legalistic origins of the term *bastardi*: JACOPO DELLA LANA underlines the unnaturalness of the change («Qui esclama contra tutti soggiungendo che sono abastarditi, quasi a dire estranaturati dalli nostri antecessori larghi e curiali. E questa difettuosa natura ha esordio quando [...]»); BENVENUTO turns more directly to the theme of illegitimacy and miscegenation («Ideo iste Guido del Duca, considerans tales viros in Romandiola dignos romana civitate, exclamat cum dolore: O romagnuoli tornati in bastardi! Nimis curialiter loquitur iste: immo debuisset dixisse, in spurios, immo in mulos, specie permutata»).

«lo veggio tuo nepote che diventa
cacciator di quei lupi in su la riva
del fiero fiume, e tutti li sgomenta.

Vende la carne loro essendo viva;
poscia li ancide come antica belva;
molti di vita e sé di pregio priva.

Sanguinoso esce de la trista selva;
lasciala tal, che di qui a mille anni
ne lo stato primaio non si rinselva».

(*Purg.* XIV, 58-66)

The prophetic accusation opens with the terms of the established patterns of metaphor in the section on Tuscany and the Arno, with Fulcieri reaching the *fiero fiume*, and chasing the Florentine wolves along its banks. The nobility latent in the image of an aristocratic hunter of threatening beasts then shifts to a more quotidian and distinctly ignoble figuration of Fulcieri as a cattle-merchant and butcher.²⁹ He acts like a crude, basely born tradesman rather than a relative to Rinieri's *pregio e onore*. Finally, summed up with the single epithet *sanguinoso*, Fulcieri himself is almost metamorphosed into a beast, as early commentators noted – the *Ottimo Commento*, for instance, glosses:

Cioè come antica fiera crudele, vaga di sangue umano, molti n'uccideràe, e sè priveràe di fama onorabile; sanguinoso usciràe della selva di quelli lupi, cioè de' Fiorentini, con le mani piene di sangue loro.

and for Francesco da Buti, the bestial metamorphosis is still more complete:

Sanguinoso esce: lo ditto messere Fulcieri, in quanto spargerà lo sangue di molti, de la trista selva; cioè di Fiorenza la quale lasserà trista, come fa lo leone o lo lupo, quando àe uciso le bestie de la selva.³⁰

The very final image in the speech on Tuscany is of Florence as a wild woodland, so broken and destroyed by the depredation of its own citizens and their extra-regional

²⁹ BRILLI, *Firenze* cit., pp. 302-03; GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV* cit., p. 213.

³⁰ BUTI's image of Fulcieri as a predatory wolf or lion suggests an extension of the Boethian sensibility discussed earlier (like PIETRO ALIGHIERI, he noted the Boethian inspiration for the Arno bestiary), since the *Cons. Phil.*'s list of human-animal metamorphoses included the lion as well as the wolf: «irae intemperans fremit: leonis animum gestare credatur» (*Cons. Phil.* IV, pr. iii, 20). BUTI's sense of Fulcieri's bestiality appears also at line 62: «come antica belva: cioè come fa l'antica bestia, che intra ne la mandra, strossa or l'uno, or l'altro dei castroni, così fece questo messere Fulcieri dei Fiorentini, essendo già antico.»

allies that it can never return to its *stato primaio*. There are inevitable echoes of the *selva oscura* of *Inferno* I, that desolate allegorical forest that figures the Florence of 1300 as much as it does Dante-protagonist's psychic condition.³¹ Guido's words however look back to a time when Florence in its *stato primaio* once enjoyed a state that was better than wolfish, as did the cities of Romagna. (In *Paradiso* xv-xvi, Dante will famously devote two entire *canti* to a description of Florence's past golden age, filling out what Guido del Duca only hints at here.) In addition, by closing the Tuscan section of the canto with an image of trees and plants broken apparently beyond hope of revival, Guido del Duca has already begun to introduce the theme of choked and dying plants that he will return to in his speech on Romagna.³²

3. Weeds in the Italian garden: nobility and poetry

In *Purgatorio* XIV, the two proper names of Fulcieri da Calboli and Mount Falterona draw the regions of Tuscany and Romagna into contact. The way that Dante-poet presents the regions and their contact-points in the canto recalls – and at the same time significantly extends – elements of another work in which he speaks about the regions of Italy with the same intimate familiarity: that is, the *De vulgari eloquentia*.³³ In the linguistic treatise, his geographical division of the languages of Italy region by region follows boundaries set by mountains and rivers. The Apennines form the principal dividing line between the east and west of the peninsula. Just as the range forms a physical

³¹ Early commentators noted the possibility of reading the «selva oscura» as Florence. FILIPPO VILLANI, after offering his interpretation that «Hanc infelicem vitam, in qua vivendo continuo morimur et moriendo vexamur, silve poeta noster assimilate», adds that «Alii pro silva civitatem poete recipiunt, que tempore poete repleta erat errore, divisione et civili discordia propter divisionem Alborum et Nigrorum; in qua confusione poeta pulsus est et exulare coactus». In the commentary of PIER FRANCESCO GIAMBULLARI an explicit link is made between *Inf.* I and *Purg.* XIV: «Quale et dove sia questa selva, si vedrà più apertamente di sotto nel quarto canto di questa cantica, et apertissimo nel XIV del *Purgatorio*, dove parlando della crudel beccheria che in Firenze farebbe messer Fulcieri da Calboli, podestà di quella, dice: “Sanguinoso esce della trista selva; Lasciala tal che quivi a mille anni Nello stato primaio non si rinselva”; dove fuori d’ogni dubbio per la selva intende Firenze».

³² The descriptions of both regions are intensely pessimistic about the possibilities of revival of their *buoni tempi antichi*. Nonetheless, as GUTHMÜLLER notes (*Canto XIV* cit., pp. 221, 224), the *Comm.*'s prophetic rhetoric always assumes the potential for redemption in human communities – the canto ends, indeed, with an appeal for renewal.

³³ BRUNI, *La geografia* cit., p. 249; CACHEY, *Cartographic Dante: A Note* cit., p. 208; TAVONI, *DVE: Introduzione* cit., p. 1087-89.

watershed between the rivers of eastern and western Italy, so Dante argues that it forms a linguistic watershed between eastern and western dialects.³⁴ He stresses the comparison by comparing the Apennines to guttering on a roof-ridge, with branch pipes (the rivers) marking further lateral divisions from south to north:

Dicimus ergo primo Latium bipartitum esse in dextrum et sinistrum. Si quis autem querat de linea dividente, breviter respondemus esse iugum Apennini, quod, ceu fictile culmen hinc inde ad diversa stillicidia grundat, aquas ad alterna hinc inde litora per imbricia longa distillat, ut Lucanus in secundo describit. Dextrum quoque latus Tirrenum mare grundatorium habet; levum vero in Adriaticum cadit. Et dextri regiones sunt Apulia, sed non tota, Roma, Ducatus, Tuscia, et Ianuensis Marchia; sinistri autem pars Apulie, Marchia Anconitana, Romandiola, Lombardia, Marchia Trivisiana cum Venetiis. Forum Iulii vero et Istria non nisi leve Ytalie esse possunt; nec insule Tirreni maris, videlicet Sicilia et Sardinia, non nisi dextre Ytalie sunt, vel ad dextram Ytaliæ sociande. In utroque quidem duorum laterum, et hiis que secuntur ad ea, lingue hominum variantur.

(*DVE* I. x, 6-8)

In *Purgatorio* XIV, likewise, the Apennines and the rivers clearly define the extent of the larger regions of Tuscany and Romagna, with the Arno flowing down what in *De vulgari* would be a right-hand drain-pipe, the Po and Reno to the left.³⁵ Moreover, in another section of his first speech, Guido del Duca gives an overview of the full extent of the Apennine range which marks it as a principal geographic and political boundary for the whole of the peninsula, and not only for the two regions that primarily concern him. Answering Rinieri's query why Dante-character suppressed the name of the Arno, Guido replies:

[...] «Non so; ma degno
ben è che 'l nome di tal valle pèra;
ché dal principio suo, ov'è sì pregno
l'alpestro monte ond'è tronco Peloro,
che 'n pochi luoghi passa oltra quel segno,
infin là [...]

(*Purg.* XIV, 29-34)

The reference to Peloro takes us to the cape at the north-eastern tip of Sicily, lying beneath mountains running southwards and westwards from this vertex of the island's triangle. In classical poetry, including in the Lucanian passage cited in *De vulgari*

³⁴ BRUNI emphasizes the novelty of Dante's Apenninic division (*La geografia* cit., p. 251).

³⁵ CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit., pp. 466, 478-79.

eloquentia I. x, 6, these Sicilian ranges were once continuous with the mainland's mountains, before a surge of water created the Straits of Messina and separated the island, with its mountains, from the mainland and the southern tip of the Apennine ridge.³⁶ That Guido del Duca's speech about the Apennines as river source for the Arno should include a passing reference to a landmark in Sicily, strengthens the sense that Dante-poet is returning, in this canto, to concerns that he had previously explored in *De vulgari eloquentia*, and expanding their political and moral scope.³⁷ The passage from Lucan cited in the *De vulgari* points moreover to a physical rupture in Italian geography that mirrors the Latin poet's concerns with the Civil War's political fragmentation of the Roman state: another theme that chimes with Dante's purgatorial scrutiny of the fragmentation and degeneracy of Romagna and Tuscany in his own day.³⁸

A second point of contact between the language treatise and *Purgatorio* XIV lies in the lists of cities that make up the regions of Tuscany and Romagna.³⁹ The *De vulgari*'s survey of Tuscan languages includes the locations sketched by Guido del Duca in his account of the Arno's course: the Casentino (I. xi, 6), Arezzo, Florence, and Pisa (I. xiii, 1-2); it also includes Siena and Lucca, centres omitted from Guido's survey because not lying along the Arno. (Siena is however represented on the terrace of envy through the figure of Sapia in canto XIII, who also refers to the larger «terra di Toscana», and traces a line from deep inland down to the sea with her allusion to Talamone (*Purg.* XIII, 148-54).) The Tuscan languages are assessed in the treatise through three different tests of expressive quality: through sample everyday phrases from the cities just mentioned;

³⁶ LUCAN, *Phars.* II. 428-38; VIRGIL, *Aen.* III. 414-19. See CACHEY, *Cartographic Dante: A Note* cit., pp. 202-08; E. FENZI, *Il mondo come patria: da Seneca a Dante*, «*De vulgari eloquentia*» I 6, 3, in «Lecture classensi» XLIV (2015), pp. 85-95 (pp. 90, 94-95); S. SPENCE, *The Geography of the Vernacular in Italy*, in «Tenso» XXVIII/1-2 (2013), pp. 33-45.

³⁷ CACHEY persuasively argues that, whilst both *DVE* and *Comm.* share a significant engagement with Italian geographies, the treatise's conventional cartographic projections take on deeper hermeneutic significance in the poem. His essays also refer specifically to the representation of Tuscany, Romagna, and southern Italy/Sicily: *Cartographic Dante* cit., pp. 329-30, 334-35; IDEM, *Cartographic Dante: A Note* cit., pp. 215-17.

³⁸ BRUNI, *La geografia* cit., p. 251; SPENCE, *Geography of the Vernacular* cit., p. 36. The nod towards a larger vision of the peninsula also recalls the «Ahi serva Italia!» invective of *Purg.* VI, where the landmass is figured both as an untended garden (105) and as an untamed beast (94, 98), requiring imperial guidance to recover its lost political wellbeing.

³⁹ CACHEY shows that a very similar list of cities and regional toponyms also occurs in the Tuscan and Romagnol sequences of Malebolge: *Cartographic Dante* cit., pp. 341-42.

through the dismissively assessed verse of a previous generation of poets, again drawn from the same centres, «quorum dicta, si rimari vacaverit, non curialia, sed municipalia tantum invenientur» (I. xiii, 1); and finally, through the verse of a few outstanding poets who have attained «vulgaris excellentiam» (I. xiii, 3). This third group shrinks dramatically from the cluster of cities representing everyday Tuscan idioms: Florence is represented by three worthwhile poets (including Dante himself), and Pistoia provides another one; conversely, Pisa, Lucca, Siena, and Arezzo vanish from view as far as courtly poetry is concerned, while the Casentino zone in the Tuscan Apennines also mentioned by Guido del Duca has previously been dismissed linguistically as providing only «montaninas [...] et rusticanas loquelas» (I. xi, 6).⁴⁰ Florence alone, therefore, manages to supply all the categories for the language survey: everyday expressions; mediocre poetry; but also excellent poetry. The exiled Dante, who locates himself by implication in the *curia* (I. xviii, 5) of peninsular and not merely municipal eloquence, recognizes the Tuscan vernaculars as *turpiloquia* (I. xiii, 4) unsuited to poetry or to high political endeavour, regardless of any sentimental attachment to his place of origin (I. vi, 3).⁴¹ In *Purgatorio* XIV, the poet's mapping of the Tuscan municipal centres outlines a more complex and deeply meditated moral perspective, but still follows a three-part pattern. Florence here is represented in a multi-layered set of images: first as the homeland (however unacknowledged) of Dante-character, with all his privileges as well as his imperfections; next, as the lair of wolves mid-way down the course of the Arno; finally, as the *trista selva* of Fulcieri da Calboli's diabolic hunt.

⁴⁰ The dismissal of mountain dialects recurs at the start of the second book, where the *volgare illustre* is specifically precluded from discussion of rural affairs: «nemo enim montaninis rusticana tractantibus hoc dicet esse conveniens» (*DVE* II. i, 6). One recalls also how, in *Amor da che convien*, Dante locates his lyric self in the Casentino, on the banks of the Arno source («in mezzo l'alpi, / ne la valle del fiume», 61-62), and laments the lack in this locale of an educated, courtly audience for the poem: «non donne qui, non genti accorte / veggio, a cui mi lamenti del mio male» (67-68). On Dante's east-west Apennine overview of the languages (and the political allegiances) of both Tuscany and Romagna, see CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit., pp. 465-79.

⁴¹ The importance of Dante's exile in shaping the *DVE*'s negative assessment of the Tuscan vernaculars is stressed (albeit with different emphases) by both its recent editors: FENZI, *Introduzione* cit., pp. xlvi-lxii (see also IDEM, *Il mondo come patria* cit.); TAVONI, *DVE. Introduzione* cit., pp. 1089-96, 1114.

For Romagna, *De vulgari* again illustrates the broad characteristics of the regional dialects through citation of some everyday words.⁴² Forlì is designated the region's linguistic centre («meditullium [...] videtur totius provincie», I. xiv, 3), with Faenza another prominent centre: two of the latter city's poets are briefly praised, though without citation, for avoiding the local tongue (I. xiv, 3). Dante's familiarity with Romagnol linguistic traits appears also in the two regional examples employed early in the treatise when discussing linguistic variety, noting the differences between the tongues of close regional and ethnic neighbours Ravenna and Faenza, and even between central and suburban neighbourhoods, in the famous example of the Bolognese of Strada Maggiore and of Borgo San Felice (I. ix, 4). Bologna indeed is discussed at some length, dominating the whole of chapter xv, and its «laudabilem suavitatem» (I. xv, 5) makes it a potential candidate for linguistic excellence. But Dante concludes that the best poets in Bologna have not reproduced the local language: the «vulgare bononiense» does not carry the aulic and illustrious features found in the verse of the city's best poets, Guido Guinizzelli, Guido Ghislieri, Fabruzzo de' Lambertazzi, and Onesto da Bologna, all of whom are quoted in corroboration (I. xv, 6). Dante reveals himself an attentive observer of linguistic variety both in the city's daily life and amongst its poetic elite, but despite his praise for Bologna's vernacular it remains only a passing, if pleasant, segment of the linguistic landscape through which his hunt proceeds on this side of the Apennines.

A second point that seems to link *De vulgari's* approach to linguistic analysis and the political and cultural concerns of *Purgatorio* XIV, is the dominant presence of metaphors of plant growth, and the use of opposing images of fertile cultivation and of choking weeds. We have noted how the passage concerning Romagna begins with the snapshot of a region where «venenosi sterpi» (95) no longer merit the attempt to «coltivare» (96). Two great cities of Romagna illustrate this generalization, as Guido del Duca asks:

⁴² The discussion initially treats Romagna, the Marca Trevigiana and Venetan territories together: «Romandiolum igitur ingredientibus, dicimus nos duo in Latio invenisse vulgaria, quibusdam convenientibus contrariis alternate» (I. xiv, 2). Next, Dante distinguishes the tongues of Romagna (I. xiv, 3 and xv, 2-5) from those of the Marca Trevigiana (I. xiv, 4-5) and Venice (I. xiv, 6), commenting on their opposing pronunciation patterns, polarized between exaggeratedly feminine dialects in Romagna, and the hyper-masculine Venetan ones (I. xiv, 2, 4). See TAVONI, *DVE. Introduzione* cit., pp. 1091-96, 1115-16.

«Quando in Bologna un Fabbro si raligna?
quando in Faenza un Bernardin di Fosco,
verga gentil di picciola gramigna?»
(*Purg.* XIV, 100-02)

The melancholy questions use the imagery of plant cultivation for the family trees, a stock metaphor that Dante here reinvigorates creatively with the expansive botanical imagery of this cluster of *terzine*. With his usual emphasis on nobility *di anima* rather than *di sangue*, he turns to the past for his examples of strong plant growth in both aristocratic and humble families, compared to the weeds and thorns of the contemporary ruling cadre. Thus as examples of past virtue the aristocratic Fabbro de' Lambertazzi is paired with the humbly-born Bernardino, respectively examples of an established family now failing to flourish (*ralignare* suggesting the need to re-plant a now failing root-stock),⁴³ and of a virtuous newcomer, figured as a vigorous sprout (*verga*) branching from insignificant weed-stock (*picciola gramigna*). The effects of Romagnol Fulcieri da Calboli's present-day activities in Florence, we recall, will be equally to destroy the already *trista selva* (64) and prevent its *rinselzare* (66); while at the opening of the Tuscany speech, the whole of the Arno valley is represented as the pasture of the enchantress Circe (42), whose distillations of herbs metamorphosed men into beasts, just as the Arno seems to bear poison or black magic along between the banks that link the bestial communities and the places where they graze.

In *De vulgari*, Dante begins his search for linguistic excellence with strikingly similar metaphors:

Quam multis varietatibus latio dissonante vulgari, decentiorem atque illustrem
Ytalie venemur loquelam; et ut nostre venationi pervium callem habere
possimus, perplexos frutices atque sentes prius eiciamus de silva.
(*DVE* I. xi, 1)⁴⁴

The same imagery of cultivation persists in the following sections of the linguistic review, as Dante prunes⁴⁵ and uproots⁴⁶ the false reputations of the languages of Rome,

⁴³ It is worth noting that the Fabbro de' Lambertazzi praised in *Purg.* was the uncle of the Fabruzzo praised in *Dve* I. xv, 6 as rising above municipal particularism by writing poetry in the illustrious vernacular rather than in Bolognese.

⁴⁴ The metaphor of hunting might, in relation to *Purgatorio* XIV, uneasily recall the Arno animals or Fulcieri da Calboli; in the treatise, however, Dante is metaphorically hunting the virtuous language that he represents as a noble and exotic panther, making him more resemble a knight from oriental romance than the violent, quasi-demonic Fulcieri.

the March of Ancona, and Lombardy. The treatise moves from west to east by crossing the «*humeros Apennini frondiferos*» (I. xiv, 1), and concludes with the judgement that the hunt throughout the «*saltus et pascua [...] Ytalie*» (I. xvi, 1) has failed to find excellence in any of the local vernaculars. Finally, Dante proclaims that the shared, illustrious language of all Italy, the language used in fine poetry, is also something between a plant, to be nurtured by poets as gardeners, and a gardener itself. It promises to bring new fertility to the peninsula's various scrub-infested *saltus et pascua*:

Nonne cotidie exstirpat sentosos frutices de ytala silva? Nonne cotidie vel plantas inserit vel plantaria plantat? Quid aliud agricole sui satagunt, nisi ut amoveant et admoveant, ut dictum est?
(*Dve* I. xviii, 1)

In the *De vulgari's* linguistic survey of the Italian peninsula, the cases that give Dante greatest pause in his deliberation over whether any single local idiom is genuinely excellent and unifying, are those of Sicily and Bologna. Bologna, an important city in *Purgatorio* XIV's survey of Romagna, is also in *De vulgari* the Italian city with the most attractive local language – but it still fails the test of use in fine poetry:⁴⁷

Itaque, si preponentes eos in vulgari sermone sola municipalia Latinorum vulgaria comparando considerant, allubescentes concordamus cum illis; si vero simpliciter vulgare bononiense preferendum extimant, dissentientes discordamus ab eis. Non etenim est quod aulicum et illustre vocamus; quoniam, si fuisset, maximus Guido Guinizelli, Guido Ghisilerius, Fabrutius et Honestus et alii poetantes Bononie, nunquam a proprio divertissent: qui doctores fuerunt illustres et vulgarium discretione repleti. Maximus Guido: *Madonna, lo fino amor c'a vui porto*; Guido Ghisilerius: *Donna, lo fermo core*; Fabrutius: *Lo meo lontano gire*; Honestus: *Più non attendo il tuo soccorso, Amore*: que quidem verba prorsus a mediastinis Bononie sunt diversa.
(*DVE* I. xv, 6)

In the Sicilian case, instead, Dante begins with the poetic test, and admits that it seems to prove the island's linguistic supremacy:

⁴⁵ *DVE* I. xi, 2: «in hac eradicatione sive discernatione».

⁴⁶ *Ivi*, I. xi, 3: «decerpamus»; I. xi, 5: «eruncemus».

⁴⁷ There is not space here for further discussion of Bologna and the Bolognese poets in *DVE*, but see the important apparatus notes as well as the introductory essays in FENZI's and TAVONI's recent editions. Both scholars bring a magisterial command of chronology and contemporary politics to the debate: see especially FENZI, *Introduzione* cit., pp. xxiii-xxiv; TAVONI, *DVE. Introduzione* cit., pp. 1092, 1113-16.

videtur sicilianum vulgare sibi famam pre aliis asciscere, eo quod quicquid poetantur Ytali sicilianum vocatur, et eo quod perplures doctores indigenas invenimus graviter cecinisse: puta in cantionibus illis, *Anchor che l'aigua per lo focho lassi*, et *Amor, che lungiamente m'ài menato*.
(*DVE* I. xii, 2)⁴⁸

Dante argues that this is a false conclusion. What lies behind Sicilian poetic fame is not geography or local language, but the political and cultural chance that made the island home to great patrons and political leaders, the Hohenstaufen rulers Frederick II and his son Manfred.⁴⁹ Dante praises them extravagantly, and moves swiftly into a denunciation of the failure of subsequent Italian princes to make other regions great, either linguistically or in other terms:

Sed hec fama trinacrie terre, si recte signum ad quod tendit inspicimus, videtur tantum in obprobrium ytalorum principum remansisse, qui, non heroico more, sed plebeo secuntur superbiam. Siquidem illustres heroes Federicus Cesar et benegenitus eius Manfredus, nobilitatem ac rectitudinem sue forme pandentes, donec fortuna permansit, humana secuti sunt, brutalia dedignant; propter quod corde nobiles atque gratiarum dotati inherere tantorum principum maiestati conati sunt; ita quod eorum tempore quicquid excellentes Latinorum enitebantur, primitus in tantorum coronatorum aula prodibat; et quia regale solium erat Sicilia, factum est ut quicquid nostri predecessores vulgariter protulerunt, sicilianum vocaretur: quod quidem retinemus et nos, nec posteris nostri permutare valebunt. Rachà, rachà! Quid nunc personat tuba novissimi Federici? quid tintinabulum secundi Karoli? quid cornua Iohannis et Azzonis marchionum potentum? quid aliorum magnatum tibie? Nisi, Venite, carnifices; Venite, altriplices; Venite, avaritie sectatores!
(*DVE* I. xii, 3-5)

Dante's comments in this important section of the *De vulgari* imbue his linguistic survey with an emphatic cultural, political, and moral agenda. Poetry and politics are twined together, with the test of linguistic excellence turning out to be a test of the excellence of aristocratic patronage, court culture, and virtuous deeds.⁵⁰ The treatise

⁴⁸ Both poems are by Guido delle Colonne, and both cited again in the treatise's second book, respectively at II. vi, 6 and v, 4.

⁴⁹ FENZI, *Dante ghibellino* cit., pp. 172-74, 180; IDEM, *Il mondo come patria* cit., p. 90. See also the commentary on this passage in FENZI's and TAVONI's editions of the *DVE*, *ad loc.*

⁵⁰ In the penultimate chapter of *DVE* I, the failure to sustain a unified court culture on the peninsula is shown to have put the language of poetry into exile, as the illustrious vernacular «velut acola peregrinatur et in humilibus hospitatur asilis, cum aula vacemus» (I. xviii, 3). The relevance of this metaphor for the exiled Dante, noted above, is underlined by FENZI, *Dante ghibellino* cit., pp. 177-78. One also recalls how Pier della Vigna, the famously eloquent Protonotary of Frederick's court, ascribes his presence

breaks into a tone of pure invective as it denounces the failings of the Hohenstaufen's successors in Sicily and Naples, Frederick of Aragon and Charles II of Anjou, and of the Angevins' allies in Lombardy and Emilia, Giovanni da Monferrato and Azzo d'Este.⁵¹ The harsh terms move beyond the normal tone of *ubi sunt?*, present in the nostalgic praise for Frederick II and Manfred in I. xii, 4. The contrast drawn between the heroic previous rulers and the ignobility of present leaders intersects again with *Purgatorio* XIV through the metaphors of dynastic descent: Manfred, Frederick II's illegitimate son, is acclaimed in *De vulgari* as culturally and politically *benegenitus*, while the opprobrium cast on modern leaders in the treatise anticipates the purgatorial denunciation of the «Romagnoli tornati in bastardi» (99).⁵² The *De vulgari*'s antithesis between the two kinds of rulers' dedication to the *humana* and the *brutalia* also matches the bestial metamorphoses of the Tuscan section of Guido del Duca's speech.⁵³ In *Purgatorio* XIV, the local degeneration of the Romagna region has followed the same pattern of decline from previous good leadership that *De vulgari* outlined for the whole of the post-Hohenstaufen peninsula.⁵⁴ Bridging the two regions of Romagna and Tuscany, the passage on Fulcieri da Calboli as an individual includes a *terzina* representing him as a butcher slaughtering cattle (61-63); the *De vulgari* likewise makes all contemporary Italian leaders *carnefices*.

among the «aspri sterpi» of *Inf.* XIII, 7, both to envy (64-69), and to failures of justice in the court and kingdom as a whole as well as on Piero's own part («ingiusto fece me contra me giusto», 72), presenting a cluster of the same elements that recur in *Purg.* XIV (poisonous weeds; envy; reputation; linguistic bravura).

⁵¹ Azzo d'Este married Charles II's daughter Beatrice, an alliance denounced in *Purg.* XX's attack on Charles («vender sua figlia e patteggiarne / come fanno i corsar de l'altre schiave», 81-82). Giovanni da Monferrato enjoyed Angevin protection during his minority and was betrothed for a period to Charles's daughter Bianca (she was eventually married to James II of Aragon, brother of Dante's *novissimus Federicus*), though the alliance cooled after he assumed full control of the Marquisate.

⁵² The terminology of birth legitimacy appears elsewhere also in relation to Azzo d'Este, probably metaphorically. *Inferno*'s presentation of the murder of Opizzo II d'Este, «il qual per vero / fu spento dal figliastro sù nel mondo» (*Inf.* XII, 111-12), led several early commentators to question Azzo's paternity (BOCCACCIO and the ANONIMO FIORENTINO with some degree of detail), though for the majority *figliastro* indicates moral disnaturing (JACOPO DELLA LANA, PIETRO ALIGHIERI, GUGLIELMO MARAMAURO, BENVENUTO DA IMOLA). Conversely, FENZI highlights the importance of the term *benegenitus* for the illegitimate Manfred: *Dante ghibellino* cit., pp. 181-82.

⁵³ CAMERINO, «*Purgatorio*» XIV cit., pp. 106-07.

⁵⁴ CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit., pp. 695-96.

Finally, a last similarity between the two surveys of regional rise and decline lies in the conviction, shown in both *De vulgari* and our present canto, that poetry provides the measure for cultural and moral standards. In the treatise, the method chosen to set standards by poetry consists of the somewhat dry, academic procedure of mustering supporting quotations from appropriate sources in vernacular lyric, either “illustrious” or “municipal”. In *Purgatorio* XIV, the argument for poetry emerges from a *terzina* composed in language redolent of the treatise’s definitions of illustrious verse, a melodious insertion of lyric and chivalric diction into the more formal rhetoric of *enumeratio* that characterizes Guido’s historical survey of Romagna’s noble families. Guido suggests that in the past, the families, towns, and castles that he has named enjoyed a happy, harmonious coexistence that matched the ideal standards of courtly literature:

«le donne e ’ cavalier, li affanni e li agi
che ’nvogliava amore e cortesia
là dove i cuor son fatti sì malvagi.»
(*Purg.* XIV, 109-11)

The *terzina* is famous for its thumbnail summary of the whole speech’s theme of nostalgic recollection, momentarily abandoning the obsessive listing of names with its simple, timeless image of noble men and women, and of virtuous deeds. It creates a hiatus in the historical survey that enables Dante-poet to suggest that it is historically possible to bring to life the values of *amore e cortesia* that were the keynote of medieval secular poetry. The *donne e cavalier* of chivalric romance or love lyric were, Guido asserts, also real protagonists of thirteenth-century communal life in the Romagna.⁵⁵

Guido’s image of the chivalric past uses the common language of a whole tradition of courtly poetry – terms such as *donna*, *amore*, *cortesia*, and *cuore* are key words in the kind of poetry that Dante celebrated as the best in vernacular tradition, in *De vulgari* (II. vii, 3-6). The same kind of courtly poetry, historically speaking, also made up the major output of Dante’s own writing career up to the year 1300. The *Commedia*’s Dante-character is, in part, that same figure: the youthful poet whose major achievement to date was the composition of the *Vita Nova*, and of lyric poems; a figure

⁵⁵ See CARPI, *La nobiltà* cit.; GIRARDI, *Il canto XIV* cit.; SCOTT, *Political Purgatory* cit. Just two canti later, Marco Lombardo adopts a virtually identical cluster of figures to contrast Lombardy’s past and present: regional definition by rivers (Adige and Po); *ubi sunt?*; loss of «valore e cortesia» (*Purg.* XVI, 116).

who might indeed claim modestly, to Guido del Duca's question at the beginning of the canto, that: «dirvi ch'i' sia, saria parlare indarno, / ché 'l nome mio ancor molto non suona» (20-21).⁵⁶ For this Dante, the picture that Guido encapsulates in the *terzina* on Romagna's chivalric past might awaken familiar feelings of aesthetic response and creative aspiration. The pilgrim has, however, learned that responses to the language and imagery of courtly poetry need to be handled carefully. A key part of this lesson was given in the famous encounter with Francesca da Rimini in *Inferno* v. Francesca is another aristocrat from Romagna (and in *Inferno* v, too, waterways mark out the region's boundaries: «Siede la terra dove nata fui/ su la marina dove 'l Po discende/ per aver pace co' seguaci suoi», 97-99). Her speech is also dominated by courtly vocabulary, her repetition of the key word *amore* succeeding in reducing it almost to an absurdity, besides reifying its meaning into merely the irresistible dazzle of sexual passion. On the purgatorial terrace of envy, however, *amore e cortesia* are values that need to be understood, not as the *eros* and seductive charm that Francesca sought, but as aspects of a larger *caritas* and generous fellowship.⁵⁷ These are the true virtues that can guide individuals constructively in both *gli affanni e gli agi*, that is, both in public actions and in the leisure that is earned through the fulfilment of such social duties.

By the end of the canto, Dante-poet has, through the speeches of Guido del Duca, painted a disturbing picture of the consequences of the failure of this spirit of duty and collaboration among the governing classes of the Italian regions. This marks in some ways a return to themes that he had explored in a more diffuse manner in the *De vulgari eloquentia*. Over the course of *De vulgari's* first book, Dante moved swiftly from his survey of language variety in the Italian regions, to a search for a more elegant and more unifying tongue for the whole peninsula, then onto the conclusion that this tongue is the language of great poetry, and also that fruition of the best language carries social and political consequences. The interaction of poets and patrons in the cultural centres of the courts not only raises aesthetic standards but also fosters the potential for more expansive social and political excellence. Dante's lengthy pause over the opposing

⁵⁶ GUTHMÜLLER notes a second distinction, between the reputation gained by the individual concerns associated with Dante's youthful amorous and moral production, and the politically universalizing, prophetic spirit of his career as the *vir praedicans iustitiam* of the later exile years (*Canto XIV* cit., p. 212); similarly, KIRKPATRICK, *Courtesy and Imagination* cit., p. 69.

⁵⁷ GUTHMÜLLER, *Canto XIV* cit.; KIRKPATRICK, *Courtesy and Imagination* cit.; PISTELLI, *Il canto XIV* cit.

examples of Frederick II's Sicily, and of the disunified centres of later Italian warlords, served far more than simply poetic and linguistic arguments. When Dante reached the treatise's second book and moved into the minutiae of metrics and stylistics, this larger socio-political discourse, so intrinsic to the foregoing language survey, was left behind. When, in the *Commedia*, he returns to his verbal mapping of Romagna, Tuscany, and the other Italian regions, both the form and the content of his new peninsular vision have been refreshed, and his cartographies – political, linguistic, and cultural – are expressed with the new hermeneutics of the *sermo humilis* rather than in the prescriptive, singular language and imagery of the treatise.⁵⁸

In *Purgatorio* XIV one may trace key points from the first part of *De vulgari eloquentia* re-emerging into view: a privilege that Dante's modern readers enjoy over his contemporaries. Proving that he has indeed more than achieved the poetic accomplishment that he claimed for his earlier self in the treatise, Dante-poet is now capable of capitalizing on the previous work, and returning to categories and images that he had already found effective, such as the sense of Italy's territorial unity but also subdivision being marked by mountains and rivers, and the imagery of cultivation and wilderness as metaphors of moral, and more specifically socio-political, excellence and decline. But whereas in *De vulgari* the strictly defined topic of language and poetics curtailed the possibility of developing fully or explicitly some of its most important moral and socio-political insights, the fourteenth canto of *Purgatorio* finds Dante approaching the mid-point of a deliberately expansive, polysemous work. Here, his intimate knowledge of the regions of Tuscany and Romagna is not circumscribed by the purposes of a manual on linguistic excellence and poetic praxis. Instead, the portrait of the regions enables him to explore serious questions about personal and social identity, about political community, and about moral aspiration.

Across the survey of the whole geography and recent history of the two regions, the poet leads his readers through the canto so as to be able to come back with a better answer to its opening questions about how to establish social and individual identity and purpose. The speeches of Guido del Duca, which dominate the canto, set proper names within the context of community, and explore the temporal discontinuity which means that places and families constantly change their cultural and political tenor. By the end of his two speeches, Guido has set aside his concern with identifying Dante-

⁵⁸ CACHEY, *Cartographic Dante* cit., pp. 325-27.

character by name, choosing instead to exercise the painful pleasures of his penance. He turns away again from the world of history and earthly affairs, to the terrace of envy's proper purposes. As for the readers of Dante-poet, for whom the name's suppression never mattered, we have also been brought forward to a point where the specifics of the temporal world are re-configured within the moral order. At the end of the canto, Virgil – whose grave poetic eloquence has been unusually silent in this canto so concerned with vernacular, contemporary matters – reminds us that priority must be given not to earthly careers or mundane ambition, but rather to divinely sanctioned goals. In so doing, he returns once more to the metaphors of moral blindness and of sight that open the canto, offering a balanced closure to Dante's investigation of envy and of its corrosive effects in the contemporary world:

«Chiamavi 'l cielo e 'ntorno vi si gira,
mostrandovi le sue bellezze etterne,
e l'occhio vostro pur a terra mira;
onde vi batte chi tutto discerne.»
(*Purg.* XIV, 148-51)