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Rhetoric, and Metapoetics at the End of the *Commedia*

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RONALD L. MARTINEZ

Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor . . .

(James Joyce, *Ulysses*)

Inventas . . . qui vitam iuvat excoluisse per artes.

(Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.663)

Dante’s Empyrean is represented as a garden, a rose, and an amphitheater for the blessed, with vertical steps and seats in horizontal rows, gathered in an inverted hemispheric cupola.¹ As Luca Azzetta underscores in a recent reading of Canto 32 and its adjoining cantos, the distribution of the saved within the Empyrean exhibits a “precisione geometrica.”² The souls are distributed according to whether they lived before or after Christ, so dividing salvation history into two temporal phases, which correspond in turn to equivalent numbers for those eventually to be saved.³ In harmony with this fierce geometry, students of the poem have noted that the last six cantos of *Paradiso* inscribe numerous recapitulations of moments in the poem already traversed by the reader. To give an example, parts of the first verses of the cantica, “*La gloria di colui che tutto move / per l’universo*

penetra, e risplende,” return with a different metrical distribution in Canto 31: in the canto’s fifth verse we find again “*la gloria di colui*” but must wait until 32.22–23 to find the rest, its word order now reversed: “ché la luce divina è *penetrante / per l’universo.*” These two “parts” of *Par.* 1.1–2 establish a parenthesis (32.7–21) within which the poet compares the ministrations of the angels among the blest to a swarm of bees in a hive: the angels descend into the rose and return to the godhead (“nel gran fior discendeva . . . e quindi risaliva”), modeling the procession and return of the divine emanation that shapes and unifies the cosmos.⁴ The image in a sense encapsulates all of creation and heralds the poem’s conclusion as a return to the origin of everything in God. In both theological and formal senses, the end of the poem is its beginning.⁵

In this same vein, the last thirty verses of Canto 32, completing St. Bernard’s enumeration of the blessed in the rose, display an increase in the frequency of recapitulatory moments as Dante prepares to finish his work.⁶ Not only do these verses gather historical figures with which the poet reiterates the two periods of salvation history, they remind the reader of the entire narrative arc of the *Commedia* and of its allegoresis, as declared in the Letter to Cangrande.⁷ Bernard identifies as the “two roots” of the rose two patriarchs who, flanking the Virgin Mary, represent the two epochs of sacred history. To the left of Mary is Adam, the father through whose “ardito gusto” humankind knew the bitterness of exile from Eden (“amaro gusta”); to the right of the Virgin is seated Peter, a *padre* as well, and as head of the Church custodian of the remedy, acquired by Christ’s death, for Adam’s sin. John the Evangelist and Moses follow, they too as examples of the divide between the Old and New Testaments, “le nuove e le scritture antiche” (*Par.* 25.88). Moses, sitting next to Adam, led the Jews, who fed on manna in the desert,⁸ out of Egypt; John, alongside Peter, witnessed the trials of the Church that was acquired with Christ’s atonement on the Cross (131–32).⁹ Moses’s presence further recalls that the *exitus filiorum Israel de Aegypto* as it is reported in the Letter to Cangrande furnishes the *historical* sense on which the allegorical dimensions of the poem are based; John, placed in relation to the crucifixion, recalls that the “redemption wrought by Christ” is the properly *allegorical* meaning of the historical Exodus.¹⁰ Bernard then pairs Lucy, who is facing Adam across the amphitheater, with Anna, the mother of Mary, who is opposite St. Peter, and immediately thereafter informs us how the pilgrim, lost in the dark

wood, evaded disaster thanks to the interventions of Lucy, Beatrice, and Mary.¹¹ By evoking the crisis and subsequent embarkation on pilgrimage that weaves the pilgrim into the moral sense of the Exodus allegoresis, Bernard recalls the events that generate the action of the poem.¹²

The poet's drive for synthesizing expression affects the verbal texture at the level of individual words, indeed even letters. The proximity of verses 135 ("non move gli occhi per cantare *osanna*") and 139 ("il tempo che *t'assonna*"), separated by a single tercet, means we cannot fail to note that *osanna* and *assonna* are nearly perfect anagrams of each other. Along with their rhyming companions, the two words further condense reference to preceding contents of the poem, including its allegorical significations. The rhyming series *manna* : *Anna* : *osanna* already exemplifies the two epochs of sacred history, since *manna* evokes the Exodus from Egypt;¹³ *Osanna* echoes the acclamation of Christ when entering Jerusalem; and Anna, born a Jew but mother to the Virgin Mary, is a mediating figure, a kind of selvedge or hem between the "due discrezioni," emphasized by her name appearing in full within the associated rhyming terms.

Assonna, in turn, refers to the entire duration of the pilgrim's journey, (*Par.* 32.139: "il tempo . . . che *t'assonna*") and anchors another retrospective series suggested by its rhyming words. Bernard mentions Beatrice's name as the *donna* who intervened to save the pilgrim when in the first canto he "*rovinava in basso loco*"; *assonna* echoes the same passage when referring to the pilgrim "full of sleep" (*Inf.* 1.11: "*pien di sonno*") in the dark wood.¹⁴ Finally and most significantly, the third rhyming term, denoting the *gonna* fashioned by the "good tailor," is a self-reflexive image of the poem itself:

Ma perché 'l tempo fugge che *t'assonna*
qui farem punto, come buon sartore
che com'elli ha del panno fa la gonna (*Par.* 32.139–41)

Thus a single ternary of rhymes embraces three key aspects of Dante's poem: its literary genre, the allegorical narrative underlying its action, and its figurative description as a garment measured and sewn. The "precisione geometrica" of *Par.* 32.114–51 includes a microcosm of the *Commedia*, and the tailor's *gonna*—as we shall see, the correct translation

for this term must be “tunic”—suggests a visual image of this drive to completeness.

This *gonna*, or tunic, considered from the standpoint of the poem's conclusion, will be the focus of this study. The multitude of references packed into the terms discussed in the previous pages testifies to an astonishing degree of verbal craft, and I will argue in this essay that the identification of the poet's nearly completed work as the product of the tailor's skill is Dante's way of registering metapoetically this culmination of his achievement. Within an empyrean structure where, as Bernard affirms, “casual *punto* non può aver sito” (*Par.* 32.53), where no instance—or perhaps I should say not even a *stitch*—of chance may be found, the poet deploys the image of a tailored garment that calls our attention to the principles organizing his work insofar as it is fashioned, or *woven*, out of words. Dante's inclusion of the *gonna* signals that the orderly distribution of the episodes and indeed the words and syllables of the *poema sacro* adhere to rhetorical laws prescribing the planning, measurement in advance, and disciplined execution of written works. The sartorial and weaving analogies may be pushed quite far: as Guglielmo Gorni observed, *terza rima*, the distinctive rhyme scheme of the *Commedia*, may be conceived as a weave of lines.¹⁵ In this respect, Dante, as we will see, picks up a well-established classical tradition for thinking about the fabric of verse, although the first to have stated this concept explicitly in relation to *terza rima* appears to have been Fazio degli Uberti, Dante's late trecento imitator.¹⁶

***Writers and Artificers:
Hugh of St. Victor and Boncompagno da Signa***

As Stefano Selenu asserts, Dante thinks of himself as an *artifex*, an “operator” of “diverse practical arts”: he is a “poet of praxis,” who makes, produces, and acts.¹⁷ As will be apparent in my discussion, Dante's sewing and weaving metaphors trace their origins to accounts of what the Middle Ages knew as the mechanical arts, where without significant exception *lanificium*, or textile-work, holds first place on the list, followed by the arts of building and smithing (*architectonica et fabrilis*) and five more.¹⁸ Hugh of St. Victor, who probably inaugurated the ascent in

prestige of mechanical arts by placing them alongside the liberal arts,¹⁹ follows Genesis in acknowledging that human labor is driven by the necessity of survival after the Fall,²⁰ but also dignifies human creativity by ranking mechanical arts as third of the three “works,” the *tria opera*: of God; of Nature, God’s minister; and of human artifice, that imitates nature.²¹ As Vincent of Beauvais, following Hugh, underscores in the prologue to his *Speculum doctrinale*, human artifice, however subordinate, is allied to ethics, economics, politics, and law in advancing the restoration, through doctrine, of human dignity after the Fall.²² More specifically, as we will see at the end of this essay, Dante, in conceiving of his task as the completion of the *gonna* of the poem, signals, through metaphor, his own role in the larger effort of restoring the torn fabric of human government in the midst of the divisions within the human city evoked so often throughout the poem.

The forceful synthetic drive we saw in *Paradiso* 32, gathering in a prospect at once panoramic and intensive both the history of salvation and the material extension of the poem, is interrupted by St. Bernard, who announces a pause: “qui farem *punto*.” The plural verb indicates more than the companionship of the pilgrim and his final mentor and father-figure in the poem: it marks Bernard as a surrogate of the narrating poet himself, whose adoption of the *persona* of Cistercian reformer in the approach to the Virgin Mary may be taken as a gesture of humility consistent with the rhetorical *tapinosis* of the image of the tailor.²³ Most significantly, Bernard uses the word *punto* equivocally: given that the time set aside for the dream-vision is hastening to its end, *punto* suggests an instant of time; but because Bernard adopts the metaphor of a tailor who measures cloth, we must also recognize the sense of *punto* as punctuation that articulates the flow of the poem’s verse. For Dante’s rhetorical art, punctuation was no small thing: in the *Palma*, a brief didactic text that will prove pertinent to the episode under scrutiny in this study, Boncompagno da Signa, professor of rhetoric at Bologna in the early thirteenth century, defined the *punctus*, the full stop or period, as

a certain tittle, by which a written work is known and is concluded; or a dividing terminus, through which distinctions are universally rendered clear. For just as clauses are divided by stops, so are fields by the placement of their borders.²⁴

Bernard's announced full stop near the end of Canto 32 corresponds therefore to a bold articulation of the text. Dante writes that Bernard begins a holy prayer ("cominciò questa santa orazione"), but the prayer is spoken only in the following canto. In a circumstance nearly unique in the poem, the announcement and performance of the prayer are explicitly divided by the canto division, the formal unit itself.²⁵ The point (*punto*) announced by Bernard is thus a self-referential or metapoetic emphasis on the formal articulation of Dante's text, that is, of the *forma tractatus* of the *Commedia*, divided into *cantiche*, *canti*, and *terzine*.²⁶ Significant for my purposes as well, Bernard's *punto* works as both an end, a conclusion to his description of the Empyrean, and a beginning, as the exordium to the prayer.²⁷

It is in a further self-referential sense that *punto* has here an even more concrete third signification. In the sartorial context evoked by Bernard, "fare punto" can indicate the work of a tailor's needle in making a stitch, whether to sew seams in a garment or embroider it.²⁸ With this meaning, an image of the poem emerges as an ensemble of formal units sewn tightly together, and may be seen to anticipate the image in Canto 33.85–87, scarcely a hundred lines later, of the divine mind as a manuscript codex with bound gatherings, "legato con amor in un volume": as we know was the case for medieval books, with their fascicles sewn together. In this connection we can deduce that the "thread" joining the quires can be no other than Love, which Dante implied in the *Inferno* was also the human bond, or, in more concrete terms, the connecting osier or willow withes shorn when fraud is used on fellow human beings.²⁹ What is most important, mention of sewing a garment with fabric cut to the right size, and of the comprehensive *volume* in *Par.* 33.82–88, emphasize artifacts either moving toward completion (the tunic) or completed (the sewn gatherings of the book): emphases that place the sewing and tailoring arts at the summit of Paradise.³⁰ In Hugh of St. Victor's list of "mechanical" arts, these skills are classified under cloth-making, or *lanificium*. Despite naming this art with a term that refers to wool (*lana*), Hugh, relying in part on Isidore's *Etymologies*, includes a breathtaking variety of techniques for fashioning clothing and other useful goods that we should keep in mind in studying Dante's references to the textile arts. For Hugh, *lanificium* includes:

all the kinds of weaving, sewing, and twisting, which are accomplished by hand, needle, spindle, awl, skein winder, comb, loom, crisper, iron, or any other instruments whatever, out of any material made of flax or fleece, or any sort of hide, whether scraped or hairy, out of cane as well, cork, or rushes, or hair, or tufts, or any material of this sort which can be used for the making of clothes, coverings, drapery, blankets, saddles, carpets, curtains, napkins, felts, strings, nets, ropes; out of straw too, from which men usually make their hats and baskets.³¹

In the case of the episode that concerns us here, we know that the comparison of the text to a gown or tunic echoes both a precise intertext—or as I will argue later, several intertexts—and a specific overarching or “architectonic” art, the art of rhetoric.³² Because Hugh, in his account, is thinking of the seven mechanical arts as part of the dowry *Philologia* brings to her wedding with Mercurius, he thinks of them as inseparable from eloquence, thus allied to the Ciceronian idea of oratory as an instrument for fostering civil cohesion and protection—the close cousin, in other words, of the mechanical arts as providing for the necessities of human life and fostering the safety and comfort of the body.³³

It is then significant that the image of the tailor, now widely praised for its concreteness and even homeliness,³⁴ is, as Gian Carlo Alessio observed, in fact a citation of the *Palma* by Boncompagno, already drawn upon in my discussion of Bernard’s *punto*.³⁵ In a passage that—like Dante’s image of the tailor—comes at the end of the work, the rhetorician, wittily testifying to the fact that he has but scarcely followed his own counsel, offers the following advice:

Truly it behooves the writer in setting down his clauses to be provident and astute and always to restrain his treatise with lawful moderation. For I often wrote something just to the measure of the available paper, either because more paper was lacking or because that was my intention. But he who attempts to do this, let him consider the quantity of sheets, as the provident tailor does regarding the cloth, with which he proposes to make a shirt or a tunic [*gunnellam*]. For at first he imagines from what he can make the sleeves and the inserts and everything else. Subsequently, then, according to how he sees fit, he begins to cut the cloth.³⁶

The same passage informs the narrator’s assertions in some of the last verses of *Purgatorio* that the “bridle of art” prevents him from further writing, because he has filled the sheets prepared for the second part of the poem:

ma perché piene son tutte le carte
ordite a questa cantica seconda,
non mi lascia più ir lo fren de l'arte. (*Purg.* 33.145–48).

Like the protasis and apodosis in a complex sentence, the two passages are causally related: the *Purgatorio* passage emphasizes obedience to the laws that restrain writers and refers to reckoning the amount of paper prepared in advance, while the *Paradiso* passage picks up on the foresight of the tailor (*providens sartor*) and the ability to imagine the whole task in the abstract (*ymaginatour*) before beginning to cut and sew.³⁷ Both passages attest to moments of metapoetic self-consciousness that foreground the substance of the written text, and the norms that govern its elaboration, articulation, and indeed material preservation.³⁸ Boncompagno's association of the humble art of sewing with rhetorical beginnings (*exordia*) and the planning of a written work was highly suggestive to Dante's poetic imagination. Nor should it surprise us that we find topics of exordium, of beginning, as the poem is about to end: for as we saw, the endpoint of the poem, the *punto* that is the origin of all things, is necessarily also the beginning.

As far as the final passage in *Purgatorio* goes, with the term *ordire* Dante invokes the labor of weaving:³⁹ after warp threads are fixed on the loom (*orditi*), woof threads are inserted. The poet's implicit comparison is to the preparations necessary for composition, requiring the ruling of both vertical and horizontal lines on the paper or parchment (the "warp"), followed by the insertion of lines of writing with a quill pen (the "woof"). The fact that Boncompagno's text is precisely appropriate to the liminal final cantos of the last two cantiche seems to confirm Dante's consultation of Boncompagno's treatise—although as we will see, not only that passage, and not that treatise alone.⁴⁰ With Bernard set to begin his "holy prayer" at the end of Canto 32, as we saw, the last verses of the canto serve as an *exordium* to the poem's last canto.⁴¹ From this perspective a passage earlier in the *Palma* may also have caught Dante's eye:

An exordium is a certain annunciatory preamble, order or preparation for the rest of what is said. It is called an exordium from *exordior*, *exordiris*. Or it is called *exordium*, as if to mean order or arrangement. . . . Women, in fact, when they want to make a cloth, first stretch out straight threads, which they call in the vernacular the *ordinamento*, saying, 'we want to organize [*ordiri*] our cloth,' and subsequently

they weave on that a multitude of threads with the shuttle. Thus with the *exordium* or with a wide-ranging saying [*generali sententia*] we organize our treatise and place upon it [*collocamus*] the meanings of innumerable things to be discussed.

For Boncompagno, the word *exordium* (*esordio*) derives from the activity of female weavers, who first set out (*ordiscono*, that is *ex-ordiscono*) the threads of the warp, with the purpose of then weaving in the woof and finishing the cloth.⁴² Notably, however, Dante adds to his probable source in Boncompagno the idea of the *punto*, the stitch, the work of the needle, an instrument used in tailoring, for embroidery, and in shoemaking.⁴³ The addition is significant in that it draws the term *punto*, “stitch,” into the semantic field of the metaphor of the text, the *testo*, of the work as made with warp and woof.⁴⁴ The close, indeed materially determined association of sewing, embroidering, spinning, and weaving—and dyeing as well—is hardly unusual,⁴⁵ as these are the skills traditionally assigned to women and families in Western (and other) societies from before the Homeric era to at least the Renaissance and beyond.⁴⁶ For his part, Dante assembles many of these skills in his canto on the diviners, where Virgilio laments that Asdente the cobbler forsook his leather and cord (“il cuoio e lo spago”), and a group of anonymous women their useful skills of needle, shuttle, and spindle, in order to engage in fraudulent acts of divination.⁴⁷

The latitude of Hugh’s definition allows many more passages in the poem to come under the rubric of textile art, and by further implication, to appear as metaphors for the devices of rhetoric, and for the making of poetry.

Final and First Images of the Point

The implications of Bernard’s “farem punto” is a case in point. The word *punto*, in senses consistent with the effect of wielding the needle, is frequent in the last cantos of *Paradiso*.⁴⁸ As we know, the blest in the rose are classified according to the strength of their vision, that is to say, their penetration with the intellect into divine truth, “differing only in their first acumen” (“nel primiero *acume*,” *Par.* 32.75), and the language Dante uses to describe how divine light strikes the pilgrim’s eyes repeatedly draws on the etymological force of “acumen,” from Latin *acus*,

“needle”: thus because “of the fiery love that pierces it” (28.45: “ond’elli è punto”), an angel swiftly turns the heaven, to which it is “tied” (28.100: “seguono i suoi vimi”), precisely in order to resemble that point (28.101, “per somigliarsi al punto”). Similarly, at the pilgrim’s first sight of the *punto* “from which hang the heavens and all of nature” (28.41–42), he recounts that it was so sharp he had to close his eyes.⁴⁹ In the presence of links between the term *punto* and the point (*punta*) of a needle—or the sharpened nib of a pen⁵⁰—it might also be concluded that the knot of the final canto (“*nodo*,” *Par.* 33.91), in close proximity to the “one single point” (“un punto solo”) of verse 94, is also a submerged textile metaphor, as suggested by Peter Dronke.⁵¹

Given the retrospective slant of the final cantos, it is both pertinent and predictable that the term *punto* should within the last cantos of *Paradiso* recall the episode of Francesca da Rimini in *Inferno*, the first installment of the “war of pity” (*Inf.* 2.4–5, “la guerra / sì del cammin, e sì della pietate”) that the narrator claims confronted him on his journey, and where the term in question plays a decisive role. Francesca’s canto in fact initiates Dante’s use in the poem of a broadly textile vocabulary, for Francesca’s allusion to the bloodletting precipitated by her liaison with Paolo (*Inf.* 5.90: “noi che *tignemmo* il mondo di sanguigno”) is a metaphor taken from dyeing stuffs dark crimson,⁵² combined with an allusion to the staining of the mulberry fruit in Ovid’s tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, itself a tale told by women who are spinning.⁵³

But the pertinent metapoetic detail for my argument arises from Francesca’s focus on the turning point in her destiny (5.132, “ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse”), evoking another form of citation regarding the text of the Old French *Lancelot* romance fatally scanned by the lovers of Gradara: as Mary Carruthers has indicated, theirs was probably a prose text articulated in phrases marked out by *punctus*,⁵⁴ thus identifying the place in the text “pricked out” with points where Lancelot reportedly kisses Guinevere as the place in the text that “defeated” the lovers. From the perspective of the Empyrean, Dante recalls the staging of “il punto che ci vinse” in the drama of Francesca’s undoing by weaving that stitch, that *punto*, into the text of *Paradiso* Cantos 28 to 30,⁵⁵ systematically bringing substantive *punto* ever closer to a form of the verb *vincere*. On the first occasion, in a description of how the seraphim whirl swiftly around the divine *punto*, the two terms, though syntactically independent and separated by the length of a verse, are phonetically associated

(*Par.* 28.25–27): “distante intorno al *punto* un cerchio d’igne / si girava sì ratto, ch’avria vinto / quel moto che più tosto il mondo cigne.” In the following canto, the verse that places Beatrice “fiso nel *punto* che m’avea vinto” (*Par.* 29.9) locates the terms within the same hendecasyllable and in the same metrical positions as Francesca’s phrasing (“ma solo un *punto* fu quel che ci *vinse*”). The third time, the words are nearly contiguous (30.10–11): “il triunfo che lude / sempre dintorno al *punto* che mi *vinse*,” and the verb has the identical form used in Francesca’s avowal. The approximation to the decisive verse that focuses Francesca’s fall progressively approaches identity, or rather punctuality.

To be sure, *punto* and *vincere* are brought together a fourth time in these cantos, when Dante confesses himself incapable of depicting Beatrice’s beauty, and in this case too the Francesca episode remains in play: the portion of text, the *punto* that defeats (*vinse*) Francesca, recurs in *Par.* 30.22–33 as the topic or theme (“*punto* di suo tema”) that now defeats the narrating poet. The poet’s very recall of Beatrice’s face (*viso*) and her *dolce riso*—which echoes the “longed-for smile” of Francesca (*Inf.* 5.133, *disiato riso*, also rhyming with *viso*)—leaves him overcome, as the sun overwhelms a frail power of sight (“*viso* che più trema”), while his lapse of consciousness (“da me medesimo scema”) recalls the pilgrim’s dead faint at the end of the infernal episode (*Inf.* 5.141: “venni men”). Indeed, the whole sequence replicates how the fatal “interruption” of Francesca’s reading (“più non vi leggemmo avante”) was echoed in the pilgrim’s loss of consciousness at the end of the canto.⁵⁶ Echoing this sudden stop, but for a far different reason, the poet’s praise of Beatrice’s beauty, unbroken since his first sight of her (*Par.* 30.30: “non m’è il seguire al mio cantar preciso”), must now cease. The *praecisio* leads to the characterization of the poet as an *artista* who yields to a voice greater than his own *tuba*, which now “draws off its difficult matter as it concludes” (*Par.* 30.35–36: “che deduce / l’ardüa sua matera terminando”). Having recalled classical genres of poetic composition with the reference to the *comico* and *tragedo* (*Par.* 30.24), the “song [. . .] cut off” (“cantar *preciso*”) now invokes, with the expression “deduce [. . .] sua matera,”⁵⁷ how Latin *deduco* is used by Virgil, Horace, and Ovid⁵⁸ to compare spinning out of verse to drawing thread off a spindle.⁵⁹ Dante’s reminiscences of *Inferno* 5 are thus metapoetic both in linking the first episode of the *Inferno* and its erotic content with the final instance of the *stile della loda* in honor of Beatrice, and in illustrating how the poet

gathers the poem's threads as he approaches the final *nodo* of *Inferno* 33, the *volume* that includes all substances, accidents, and their relational modes (*costume*). As I will show in the balance of this essay, in addition to the "return" of the Francesca episode, the tailor and the tunic (the translation for Bernard's *gonna*, and Boncompagno's *gunnella*) are the end point of a series of episodes from the poem that explicitly refer to, or apply, the textile arts in the context of ordering the poem, including the central episode of the *Paradiso*, Cacciaguida's prediction of the poet's exile and the explicit statement of the purpose of the *Commedia*.⁶⁰ Finally, the image of the tailor (*Par.* 32.140) and of the *gonna* will require a return to the episode of Brunetto Latini, Dante's teacher of vernacular rhetoric, which contains the only other use of *sartore* in the poem.

Textile Metaphor in Paradiso: The Beginning and the Middle

That Dante's works enlist multiple parallels between rhetorical expedients and figurative uses of the language of textiles is well known.⁶¹ However, rather than pursuing all possible vestimentary threads, I will follow, and expand on, examples of the "metaphor of the text" in Dante as studied by Guglielmo Gorni. He especially notes the frequent instances of the metaphor in the second book of *De vulgari eloquentia*,⁶² where Dante "throws open the workshop" of poetry.⁶³ The treatise offers some dozen examples of *contexere*, *intextu*, *intexere*, and *insere* in relation to lyric canzoni,⁶⁴ all uses that take for granted that the composition and joining together of the formal units of poetry—the sentence, verses, the stanza, and the whole *cantio* or canzone⁶⁵—are the province of a textile poetic art.⁶⁶

In his catalog of instances of "la metafora del testo," Gorni omits the first instance of an explicit weaving metaphor in *Paradiso*.⁶⁷ When the pilgrim speaks with Piccarda Donati in the first heaven, Dante compares her broken vow to a cloth on which the weaver has neglected to draw the shuttle to the limit set by the warp:

Ma sì com'elli avvien, s'un cibo sazia
 e d'un altro rimane ancor la gola,
 che quel si chere e di quel si ringrazia,
 così fec'io con *atto* e con *parola*,

per apprendere da lei qual fu *la tela*
onde non *trasse* infino a co *la spuola*. (*Par.* 3.91–96).

In one sense, the metaphor adapts to Piccarda the skill typical of feminine domestic activity in Florence during Dante's lifetime, and possibly contributes to a gendered portrait of Piccarda's existence as a nun. But more specifically the metaphor expresses how the unfulfilled pact with God diminished Piccarda's deepest relationship, her soul's marriage to Christ, a relationship repeatedly signified in the episode with a vestimentary term, the monastic veil.⁶⁸ The metaphor does double duty, however, as its juxtaposition with the pilgrim's unslaked appetite for information (lines 91–92) pairs the unfinished weft with the pilgrim's pause in his questioning of Piccarda: as references to the pilgrim's *atto* and *parola* suggest, the weaving metaphor refers reflexively to the texture of the narrative itself, periodically interspersed with dialogue. Dante's treatment of the metaphor in this context suggests that in constructing his verbal exchanges he is cognizant of Isidore's translation of Greek *dialogos* as *sermo*, and of *sermo* itself as derived from "weave in" (*serere*).⁶⁹ Since—conversation with Beatrice aside—the interview with Piccarda is the first in the *Paradiso*, it provides the pattern of "woven" dialogue for subsequent conversations between the pilgrim and the blest. Indeed, the unfinished cloth of Piccarda's spiritual life provides the starting point for a system of three symmetrically distributed scenes with textile import near the beginning (first heaven, *Par.* 2–5), middle (fifth heaven, *Par.* 14–18) and end of *Paradiso* (Empyrean, the tenth heaven, *Par.* 30–33). The series continues with the pilgrim's dialogue with his great-great-grandfather in *Paradiso* 17, to conclude with the measurement and articulation of the stuff for the tunic in *Par.* 32.139–42, or, metapoetically, for the incipient completion of the poem; in this light the bound book of *Par.* 33.82–87 appears as an image of the completed poem's eventual material presentation fully as much as it is a vision of the divine mind.⁷⁰

The interview with Cacciaguida is at the center of this pattern.⁷¹ The pilgrim's ancestor explains the series of prophecies in the first two cantiche regarding the poet's hard fate as an exile, and entrusts him with the mission to fearlessly speak truth to the powerful.⁷² Readers have noted the conspicuously dialogic, hence "woven," aspect of the interview.⁷³ Aptly, then, some two-thirds of the way through Cacciaguida's

first responses, Dante inserts the most far-reaching textile metaphor of the *Commedia* to describe the pilgrim's resumption of his colloquy with his forefather:⁷⁴

Poi che tacendo si mostrò spedita
l'anima santa di metter la trama
in quella tela ch'io le porsi ordita,
io cominciai . . . (*Par.* 17.100–103).

To decode the metaphor: Cacciaguida's answers thus far, his "glosses" ("le chiose," 17.94), are the wefts (17.101) that correspond to the pilgrim's proffered warps ("Ch'io le porsi ordita," 17.103), which are the questions the pilgrim poses about his prophesied exile (17.19–99). Cacciaguida concludes his first set of answers by assuring the pilgrim that he will outlive the comeuppance of his enemies (17.98–99: "s'infutura la tua vita / vie più là che 'l punir di lor perfidie"). The textile metaphor once set out (17.103–42), Cacciaguida's second set of answers respond to the pilgrim's question about whether he should publish his poem, which will seem bitter to some (17.117); here too his ancestor encourages him, "tutta la tua vision fa manifesta." Given that Cacciaguida's answers add up to the design of the pilgrim's destiny, both as historical actor and as poet, his pronouncements may be compared to the action of the Fates,⁷⁵ who draw out the thread coextensive with the length of life,⁷⁶ a connection that justifies the coinage (a hapax legomenon) "s'infutura" at 17.94 to predict the continuation of the pilgrim's life.⁷⁷

The reading of the weaving metaphor offered here is consistent with the strong presence of book-related imagery across Canto 17. The insistent use of terms denotative of writing, poetry, and the book (*stampa, quaderno, impresso, scritto, chiose, carmi*)⁷⁸ are of a piece with the parallel we saw established at 17.100–103 between the pilgrim's offered *trama* and the woven text that is completed with Cacciaguida's "glosses" or *chiose*. As we learned earlier in the central cantos, in order to anticipate the pilgrim's arrival and foretell his future Cacciaguida accesses the book in which the future is spelled out (*Par.* 15.50–51: "del magno volume / du' non si muta mai bianco né bruno"). Once the interview with Cacciaguida is concluded, this same book acquires an inevitable conformity, if not identity, with the text of the *Commedia*.⁷⁹

Cacciaguida's use of *chiose*, the term that closely links the textile metaphor to the terminology of the book, echoes Dante's only other use of the term, during an encounter with another father figure, Brunetto Latini, that anticipates in many respects the meeting with Cacciaguida.⁸⁰ In that instance, too, Dante uses for the first time in the poem the proper term for a written text understood as a weave (*testo*), a detail to which I will return.

The *testo/chiosa* relation is all the more significant in light of the fact that in Canto 17 the whole trajectory of the pilgrim's itinerary from the dead world of Hell to the heaven of light is recapitulated three,⁸¹ indeed four, times—a gathering together of *mises en abîme* or analepses of the journey unequaled, as we have seen, until the final cantos of the poem and its salvo of recapitulations. The last of these analeptic insertions includes Cacciaguida's observation that the pilgrim has met only those souls whose example will serve to strengthen the persuasiveness of the poet's often harsh message (17.138, "pur l'anime che son di fama note"): so making explicit, with a metapoetic admission, the rhetorical principle governing the selection of individuals and arrangement of episodes in the poem.⁸² But the most far-reaching of these recapitulations, logically enough, is the central one (17.60), for it testifies to the conversion of the pilgrim's grim destiny into the salvific journey the poem narrates: the terms for the pilgrim's exile as climbing and descending others' stairs ("l'altrui scale," 17.60) can hardly fail to evoke the various metaphorical "stairs" ascended and descended during the journey.⁸³ The poet's exilic future and the narrated fictional exodus of the pilgrim, though logically distinct, here become inextricable from one another. Thus the weaving metaphor, by braiding together Cacciaguida's answers to the pilgrim's two sets of questions, ultimately interconnects the pilgrim-poet's whole biography, past and future, including the process by which the exile of the poet will be transmuted into a return to the *patria*, the true homeland, and his poem into a nourishing, if often harsh, message for posterity. As Pamela McFie puts it, together Dante and Cacciaguida "weave the cloth that is the poem."⁸⁴

This might seem to overstate the importance of a metaphor that occupies all of three lines. But *lanificium* in all its phases permeates the central cantos of *Paradiso*. Brief as the simile appears, it is the climax of a context both textile and vestimentary extending over all the cantos

in Mars: Dante refers to the *production* of thread in the virtuous Florentine household (*Par.* 15.117: “al fuso e al pennacchio”); to the *art* of weaving threads (17.100–102: *ordito, trama*); and to the figurative cutting back by time of the finished mantle signifying “nobility”⁸⁵—a sartorial image that includes the scissors emblematic of the medieval trade. The reference to Florence as “l’ovil di San Giovanni” (16.25) hints at the ultimate source of wool,⁸⁶ but also enumerated are finished products of *lanificium* broadly understood, as in Hugh of St. Victor’s list: from leather garments made by depilation of animal skins (15.112–13, 116: “cinto / di cuoio . . . contenti a la pelle scoperta”), to luxury garments and accessories adorning the body (15.100–102: “gonne contigiate”), and from head (*corona, catenella*) to waist (*cintura*).⁸⁷ Given that the wool-working matron in her household is central to Cacciaguida’s entire concept of an archaic, virtuous Florence, “sobria e pudica,” Dante’s weaving imagery and sartorial prescriptions accordingly model the ancient sobriety and chastity that the poet’s ancestor extols.⁸⁸

This concentration does not take us far from the association of the weaving metaphor with the relation of *testo* and *chiosa*, reiterated again in Cacciaguida’s introduction of Florentine nurses spinning thread as they tell stories to the infants in their care. Just as Cacciaguida in Canto 15 details with his birth, life, and death in Florence and the Holy Land the story of how the Fates, or rather Providence, wove the cloth of his life, the tales spun by the nurses set out—*ordiscono*, we might say—the foundations for the poet’s vocation and destiny. The nurses’ spinning, “traendo a la rocca la chioma,” unlocked for the infant Dante the narrative treasury regarding Troy, Fiesole, and Rome, an experience that coincided with nothing less than the origin of his vernacular.⁸⁹ In this context *chioma*, normally “lock of hair,” refers to the *pensum*, the unspun globe of wool massed on the distaff that must be drawn down into usable thread, an image that might also stand as a figure for raw materials given form, and for drawing words into the orderly patterns of verse.⁹⁰ Dante may here be recalling, with *trarre*, the exchange with Bonagiunta da Lucca that results in the pilgrim’s declaration of a poetics dictated by Love (*Purg.* 24.49–63), where Bonagiunta’s question whether the pilgrim “drew out the new rhymes” of his breakout canzone *Donne ch’avete* might be taken as a reference to spinning out thread before weaving: “fore / trasse le nuove rime” = *deducit versus*.⁹¹

Boncompagno's "Good Tailor" and Brunetto's "Good Draper"

If I may return here to the end of *Paradiso* 32, Luca Azzetta observes that Boncompagno's reference to the *sartor* is a clue to the acknowledgment in Bernard's speech that a well-written composition, whether an epistle or the *Comedy*, is always elaborated rhetorically. This is especially true, to use the classical terminology, of the relation between the choice of argument, the result of the writer's invention (*inventio*), and the *dispositio*, the development of the argument in a sequence of themes and topics. Benvenuto da Imola rightly incorporates his knowledge of celebrated Bolognese schools of rhetoric when explaining Dante's simile: "just as . . . the tailor makes his garments from various pieces of cloth arranged in order by his skill, so the poet composes his work of various materials and with subtle art makes it orderly and coherent."⁹² As we've seen, Boncompagno bases the comparison of the writer with the tailor on the premise that the *dictator*, the composer of the letter, must always adhere to the laws of rhetoric, just as Dante's narrator submits to "lo fren dell'arte" at the end of *Purgatorio*;⁹³ he concludes by saying that the far-seeing tailor (*providus sartor*)—Boncompagno's expression anticipates Dante's *buon sartore*—must first imagine (*ymaginatur*) how to make the gown, and only afterwards set to work measuring and cutting the cloth, setting out the various parts of the garment, and finally sewing them together. With this kind of metaphorical language Boncompagno alludes to the rhetorical norm that before beginning to write the *dictator* or author should plan out the entire work in his mind, from beginning to end. Boncompagno's tailor is *providus*, prudent, in that he judges what he must do in the future based on what he has done in the past.⁹⁴ To characterize Dante as someone who plans his work in advance might seem to belabor the obvious, but it is scarcely trivial that Dante implies, as he finishes his poem, that he had conceived of and planned out his work in its entirety in the recesses (*arcantum*) of his mind,⁹⁵ and to have put in place at an early stage of planning structures such as the "parallel" cantos that have been recognized as consistent over the three cantiche.⁹⁶

From this perspective, much remains to be said regarding the "good tailor," who as we saw can be recognized as a figure of the poet-artificer, something Benvenuto da Imola takes for granted.⁹⁷ The intertextual genealogy of Bernard's sartorial metaphor is more extensive than hitherto realized. It has not to my knowledge been observed that a text

probably deriving from Boncompagno's, but springing from a source much closer to Dante chronologically, culturally, and personally, makes more explicit and detailed the rhetorical norms followed by both the Tuscan rhetorician and the Florentine poet. In his *Rettorica*, the free translation and commentary of Cicero's *De inventione*, Brunetto Latini argues that given a well-conceived exordium, the balance of an oration will follow in an orderly way. For illustration, Brunetto turns not to the figure of a tailor, but to that of a "good draper," one who considers not only the wool, the raw material, but the eventual final shaping of his cloth.⁹⁸ Fundamental to the draper's craft is the mental surveillance of the whole work in advance, which in rhetorical terms means the correct ordering of the arguments in order to win the case.⁹⁹

Ma chi accorda bene le sue parole colla natura della causa et innanzi pensa che ssi convenga dire davanti e che poi, certo la comincianza fie tale che nne nascerà ordinatamente il mezzo e la fine. Tutto altresì fae il buono drappiere, che non pensa prima pur della lana, ma considera tutto il drappo insieme anzi che llo cominci. E de' veder la lana e 'l colore e la grandezza del drappo, e provedesi di tutte cose che sono mistieri, e poi comincia a fare il drappo.¹⁰⁰

Brunetto, though substituting Boncompagno's *providus sartor* with a "buon drappiere" (akin to Dante's "buon sartor") thinks of his draper as employing foresight (*provedesi*) to make sure he obtains the right amount of wool and the colors for dyeing; finally, he estimates the size of the cloth in mind before proceeding to elaborate his product. For the writer, this means finding suitable topics and language (*inventio, elocutio*) in order to make the case, and careful study regarding what is to be said first and what next (*dispositio*). Given the many textual echoes we have seen in the last several cantos of *Paradiso*, it is evident that Dante too programs an orderly continuity between beginning, middle, and end, between the Alpha and O[mega] of his work.¹⁰¹

Brunetto the "Old Tailor"

Brunetto's account of the draper, as an intertext for Bernard's image of the good tailor, develops a semantic field that Dante exploits with corresponding intensity elsewhere in the poem only in relation to the appearance of Brunetto Latini in the fifteenth canto of *Inferno*. For

along with the re-evocation of the Francesca episode discussed earlier, materials from Brunetto's canto in the text of Canto 32 offer the most elaborate recuperation of an infernal episode to be found in the final cantos of the poem.

Dante refers at *Inf.* 15.24 to the hem (*lembo*) of the pilgrim's garment that is seized in wondrous recognition by Brunetto, and shortly thereafter (*Inf.* 15.40) Brunetto proposes to follow closely behind the pilgrim ("i' ti verrò ai *panni*"), adopting the term that subsequently recurs in the words of Dante's St. Bernard for the tailor's provision ("com'egli ha del *panno*").¹⁰² Further, the term used by Brunetto author of the *Rettorica* for the drapier's goods, *drappo*, names the "green cloth" (*Inf.* 15.122, "drappo verde") that furnishes the prize in the Verona *palio* for which Brunetto, in Dante's memorable simile, appears to be a winning contestant.¹⁰³ Mention of the pilgrim's dress (*abito*) through which he is identified as Florentine in the next canto (*Inf.* 16.8–9) concludes the series.¹⁰⁴ Most compelling of course is the anticipation of the "buon sartor" invoked by Bernard in the appearance of the "old tailor" who sharpens his gaze on the needle's eye ("come 'l vecchio sartor fa nella cruna") as a term of comparison for how "cotal famiglia," including Brunetto, gazes on the newly arrived pilgrim and Virgil at *Inf.* 15.18–20. As the only other *sartor* in the poem, the tailor gazing on his needle's eye foreshadows and confirms for the *punto* announced by Bernard the pertinence of the needle and its related semantic field for *Paradiso* 32 and surrounding cantos. With the contrast of *buon* and *vecchio*, Dante may be intimating that Brunetto (and/or his instruction) is superannuated and therefore obsolete, although such a conclusion is probably reductive.¹⁰⁵

For it comes as something of a surprise to find an unmistakable, even if inexplicit, recall of the damned Brunetto Latini and his texts in the penultimate canto of the *poema sacro*. The exact interpretation of Dante's gesture here is not easily parsed.¹⁰⁶ At the very least, it can be said that the pilgrim/poet maintains his earlier promise to reveal in his own discourse the effects of Brunetto's teaching (*Inf.* 15.87: "convien che ne la mia lingua si scerna"), and it may also mean that Brunetto's parting words to the pilgrim, commending to him the *Tesoro* (*Inf.* 15.119–20), in which he "still lives," do not go unfulfilled.¹⁰⁷ In the very next canto, while still among the sodomites (*Inf.* 16.73–76), the pilgrim, taking up the formal pose of apostrophe ("così gridai con la faccia levata"), directly reproaches Florence in the first test of the rhetorical posture, and

prophetic voice, that matures into the *grido* (*Par.* 17.133) that Cacciaguida announces the poet will direct against the mighty ones of the world. In this trajectory, Brunetto's role as Dante's teacher of rhetoric and oratory appears to be subtly enacted within a section of the poem that self-consciously foregrounds the rhetorical preparation of the poem.¹⁰⁸

It is all the more significant, then, that in the presence of the well-nourished textile lexicon detected in Canto 15, Dante's pilgrim, having heard prophetic words regarding his future from Brunetto, answers: "Ciò che narrate di mio corso scrivo, / e serbolo a chiosar con altro testo" (*Inf.* 15.88–90). With this answer the noun *testo*, used but three times in the *Commedia*—once per cantica¹⁰⁹—comes into relief as the first explicit instance in the poem of the textile metaphor. And in what must be a related development, for the first time in the poem, the image of this same written text, this *testo* along with the *chiosar* the pilgrim expects to perform with other texts, is presented as the model for the eventual account of the pilgrim's journey, like that furnished in the immutable "bianco e bruno" of the book of divine foreknowledge that Cacciaguida mentions.¹¹⁰ Given the metapoetic thrust of the conclusion to *Paradiso* 32, it is notable as well that during the meeting with Brunetto in *Inferno* Dante for the first time in the poem re-evokes the crisis of the opening canto, the intervention of Virgil, and the beginning of the journey (*Inf.* 15.49–54):¹¹¹ in other words, the Brunetto episode makes explicit the beginning of that journey of return from exile to the *patria*, to the house of the father and to the homeland, that functions as the allegorical substrate to Dante's itinerary in the afterlife—anticipating the four placements of the journey *en abîme* during the pilgrim's meeting with Cacciaguida, as well as the summary final cantos of *Paradiso*.¹¹²

Builders of the Exordium

Brunetto's draper, along with Boncompagno's tailor, both compared to writers and speakers, bring into relation the figures of the poet-artisan and his archetype, the Creator: the two extreme actors of Hugh's *tria opera*. As we have seen, the works of Boncompagno and Brunetto transmit rhetorical norms in regard to the preparation, inception, and elaboration of written works, which can also be found in manuals of rhetorics and poetics such as Horace's *Ars poetica* and the *Poetria nova* of

Geoffrey of Vinsauf. Indeed, Brunetto's text in the *Rettorica* cited above only partially consists in a reproduction of Cicero's text in *De inventione*. In teaching how the forensic oration begins, Brunetto draws as well on phrases and concepts from the *Ars poetica*, where Horace recommends a preliminary choice of subject matter in order to guarantee the efficacious ordering of the material (its *dispositio*), as well as an abundance of language, *elocutio* and *copia verborum* (*Ars* 38–41): "Take up a subject suited to your strength; who has wisely chosen his subject will lack neither eloquence nor a clear narrative order."¹¹³ Brunetto, who knew Horace's versified poetic manual well, read it, as did his contemporaries, in a glossed manuscript, possibly in the late twelfth-century "*Materia*" commentary,¹¹⁴ which interprets Horace's celebrated dictum as advice regarding what is to be said first, what next, and what last.¹¹⁵

As in the case for Brunetto's *Rettorica*, the laws enunciated by Geoffrey de Vinsauf in his *Poetria nova* regarding the crucial selection of the matter or subject (*res*) of the work derive at least in part from the *Ars poetica*. Although Geoffrey adopts the idea of balancing a subject with the author's capacities, he applies it to different functions.¹¹⁶ But Geoffrey, too, advises that measurement be done in advance so that orderly development of the narrative might ensue.¹¹⁷ And although we do find a textile metaphor for composition in Geoffrey's prologue,¹¹⁸ for the *Poetria nova* the principal metaphor for discussing the arrangement of the written word is not weaving, but rather architecture and building, which in enumerations of the mechanical arts are always classified directly after *lanificium*.¹¹⁹ Geoffrey begins his exposition with "Si quis habet fundare domum . . ." [If someone wished to build a house], and in this he is followed by Brunetto in the third book of the *Tresor* (III.17), who when describing the exordium [*prologue*] to the work (corresponding to the *cominciamento* in the *Tesoretto* and to *exordio, prologo, and cominciamento* in the *Rettorica*),¹²⁰ sets out a paraphrase of Geoffrey's opening lines, using as the typical artisan not the tailor or the draper but the builder, "celui ki vuet maisoner" [he who wants to build].¹²¹

This emphasis on building does not mean that Geoffrey is any less relevant for Dante's poetic activity in the Empyrean, a place that in the *Convivio* Dante refers to as the all-inclusive "supremo edificio del mondo" and which, as we saw, the poet compares not only to a rose, but to a hemispheric structure fitted with steps (*gradini*), thresholds (*soglie*) and a metaphorical wall (*muro*) dividing "la gente antica e la novella,"

and which is envisioned as a sublimated imperial Rome.¹²² Especially important for Dante is Geoffrey's advice to prudently survey in advance everything about the poetic work in its ideal and abstract form,¹²³ which the pilgrim's survey of the Empyrean might be seen to imitate: "la forma general di paradiso / già tutto mio sguardo avea compresa" (*Par.* 31.52). Still further along, as underlined in Ledda's reading, Bernard's invitation to the pilgrim that he "fly with his eyes around our garden" ("volare con li occhi intorno al nostro giardino") recalls other flights of the pilgrim, which emulate the "artificial" flight of Daedalus, remembered in *Inferno* 29,¹²⁴ and which are broadly implicated both in the pilgrim's downward flight in Hell on Geryon and his upward flight in *Paradiso*.¹²⁵ We recall too that Bernard, beginning the list of the blest that occupies the last verses of Canto 32, invites the pilgrim to follow an itinerary at once ocular and discursive: "Ma vieni omai con li occhi sì com'io / andrò parlando." The pilgrim's gaze not only turns but also moves vertically, "quasi da valle a monti andando con gli occhi" (31.121–22), so that in addition to reusing terms (*valle*, *monte*) already seen in the analepses of the Cacciaguida cantos, the flight of the eye in the Empyrean may be taken as a metapoetic retrospection over the entire poem, as can be intuited from the pilgrim's panoramic tracking shot at *Par.* 31.46–44:

E quasi peregrin che si ricrea
 nel tempio del suo voto *riguardando*
 e spera già ridir com'ello stea
 su per la viva luce *passeggiando*
 menava io li occhi per li gradi,
 mo sù, mo giù e mo *ricirculando*.

The pilgrim's attempt to fix in his mind what he sees, like a votary imagining how he will relate what he saw "in the temple of his vow," heralding the pilgrim's imminent transformation into the author of the sacred poem, who will narrate to the world what he has experienced.¹²⁶ In this connection, the facile rhyme on three gerunds, the only such instance in the *Paradiso*,¹²⁷ presents the listed actions as epitomes of the pilgrim's characteristic behavior in the poem: that is, to see, move, walk, climb, descend, and turn (*vedere*, *muovere*, *camminare*, *salire*, *scendere*, *girare*), and does so intensively, compressing all the actions into a single rhyme and a single grammatical form.

Given that the Empyrean contains the whole universe, panoramic looks within it are in effect comprehensive of the creation. From a metapoetic perspective they illustrate the counsel that Geoffrey gives to virtually circumscribe the work before composing it: “let the mind’s inner compass encircle in advance all the space of the subject proposed.”¹²⁸ Geoffrey advances for the writer the model of the *deus artifex* who measures his creation with a compass, fixing its limits: a likely source for Dante’s “precisione geometrica” in the Empyrean, especially as Dante adopts the topic in *Paradiso* 19.40–42, where God is “colui che volse il sesto / a lo stremo del mondo.” This is one instance of human creativity taking its cue directly from the divine model in the scheme of Hugh’s *tria opera*.¹²⁹ Such ocular flights—or rather, such intellectual flights—around the universe correspond to the retrospective glance with which the author verifies the coherence of the beginning, middle, and end of his work. With the series of verses on the “ruin” of the pilgrim (*Par.* 32.138), the event that sets into motion the celestial agents who organize his voyage of his return, the poem returns to its origin, its *exordium*, and closes in on itself to become a circular text: Omega curves back to Alpha, and the reader, too, may contemplate the totality of the poem with a single glance.

Sartor Resartus: From Creation to Restoration

The divine creator and geometer is much in evidence in the final cantos, but so is the poet-artisan. As readers have observed, when Dante presents the cosmogony of Canto 29.31–32, “concreato fu ordine e costruito / a le sustanze,” he enlists terms from the vocabulary of rhetorical discourse.¹³⁰ Chiavacci-Leonardi points out that *ordine e costruito* correspond transparently to *dispositio* and *elocutio*; *costrutto*, she observes, “properly speaking, refers to the syntactic construction of a phrase.”¹³¹ In theological terms, the unity of the cosmos is guaranteed because it begins as a single instantaneous and coherent enunciation of the creating Word, the *Verbum*.¹³² But Dante’s vocabulary for the creation of the world also adopts metaphors adapted from textile work, from the *testo* in its material sense. When Dante conceives the creation of a triform cosmos, from the angelic summit (*cima*) to the low point (*ima*) of prime matter, he sets out that the creator gives birth to the cosmos “sanza

distinzione in *essordire*,” adopting the term *Boncompagno* specifies for the moment when the women weaving began their work (*volumus . . . exordiri*) by fixing the warps (*ordinamentum*). What is more, the system of celestial spheres, the “middle” (*mezzo*) portion of the universe in which potency and act are tightly bound “by such withes that they are never unwoven” (“da vime, che mai non si divima”), echoes a series of references to poetic composition in Dante’s work: to the account of the poet’s vatic act in the *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia* as the “weaving” together of words with “rima e ritmo e numero regolato,” making a “figura di legame”;¹³³ to the technique of “binding” lyric verses to which Guinizelli alludes in his mischievous proposal to Guittone d’Arezzo (“è congiunta certo a debel’ vimi”);¹³⁴ and to another illustrious source of textile metaphor, the verses of Vergil’s fourth *Georgic* specifying that beehives may be sewn together with strips of tree bark, or woven out of pliable withes or rushes: “Ipsa autem, seu *corticibus* tibi *suta* cavatis / seu *lento* fuerint *alvaria vimine texta*.”¹³⁵ The similes in *Par.* 30.61–69 and 31.7–9 establish the beehive as an image of the Empyrean, which as we saw at the outset of this essay compares the to-and-fro activity of the angels, as they minister to the blest, to the fervent *laboro* of Virgilian bees storing honey in the combs.¹³⁶ Both passages attest to a reflorescence of Virgil’s text in the high reaches of *Paradiso*,¹³⁷ just as mention of the “good tailor” and his *gonna* at the end of Canto 32 attests to a concerted application of the rhetorical lessons of Brunetto Latini. As if reverse-engineering Hugh’s *tria opera*, when describing the divine creation Dante does so with metaphors of natural apian creativity and of human artifice both sartorial and rhetorical.

The crafting of the *gonna* is not, however, solely a sign of the formal perfection of the poem. In the context of Dante’s late medieval Christian culture, the breadth of reference implicit in the poem’s final sartorial image can scarcely be overstated. With the translation of *gonna* into Latin *tunica* the archetypal status of the garment, and the resonance of both vestimentary terms in Dante’s work as a whole, come into view.¹³⁸ In the book of Genesis, the fig-leaf aprons sewn by Adam and Eve, and the leather tunics they are dressed in by God, mark their lapse into mortality, but in accounts of the mechanical arts the sewing of aprons also marks the inception of their creativity and the first step in recovering their dignity.¹³⁹ By contrast, the “coat [*tunica*] . . . without seam, woven from the top throughout” (John 19.23) left undivided during

the crucifixion Christ suffered in atonement for original sin¹⁴⁰ is glossed in Dante's *Monarchia* as the Roman Empire tragically sundered by the Donation of Constantine.¹⁴¹ The divided Empire evokes in turn the *rotta gonna*, the torn tunic of *Drittura* in Dante's canzone *Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute*,¹⁴² which attests both to the poet's experience of the rupture of exile and to the abrogation of Justice on earth.

By way, then, of stitching up the *rotta gonna* of Justice and patching the rent *tunica* of the formerly unified Empire¹⁴³—and while piecing out his destiny after his exile—Dante the artificer measures, cuts, and sews the *gonna* that models his nearly completed poem. In a more general sense, the poem itself may be seen as denouncing, and seeking to heal, the lacerations cupidity has wrought on the body politic.¹⁴⁴ In this task Dante allies himself with the work of restoration begun with Adam and Eve as well as the *opus restorationis*, the task underway since the Atonement. The first verses of *Paradiso* 32, using a rhyme employed only here in the *Commedia*, summarize—in what must be the briefest possible account of human sin and redemption—how the puncture of Eve's sin (“la piaga . . . punse”) is reversed by Mary (“richiuse ed unse”).¹⁴⁵ How Mary goes about “closing up” the breach of original sin we know; to characterize Dante's contribution we might adapt the last line of *Purg.* 25 (139), where Dante describes sewing up with fire, but also with song, with poetry (“al cantar tornarono,” 25.133), the last of the vices corrected in Purgatory: “con tal cura convien [. . .] / che la piaga da sezzo si ricuscia.”

NOTES

1. A hemisphere is confirmed by terms like “semicirculi” at 32.26: the perfect shape since all points on its surface are equidistant from the center. See Maria Luisa Doglio, “L'Ufficio di dottore: *Institutio* ed *Exempla* nel Canto XXXII del *Paradiso*,” *GSLI* 146 (1989): 321–29, at 326–27; Richard Kay, “Dante's Empyrean and the Eye of God,” *Speculum* 78 (2003): 37–65 (esp. 46–47); also Peter Hawkins, “Are you here, Surprise in the *Commedia*,” in *Sparks and Seeds: Medieval Literature and its Afterlife. Essays in Honor of John Freccero*, ed. D. E. Stewart and A. Cornish (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 175–97 (esp. notes 6–8, at pp. 192–93).

2. See Luca Azzetta, “Canti XXXII–XXXIII. La geometria e il volto,” in *Esperimenti danteschi*, ed. Tommaso Montorfano (Turin: Marietti, 1820, 2011), 311–50 (313). The emphasis on geometrical precision is longstanding: cf. Vincenzo Pernicone, “Il canto XXXII del *Paradiso*,” *Studi danteschi e altri saggi* (Genoa: University of Genoa, 1984), 205–21; Giuseppe Carlo Di Scipio, *The Symbolic Rose in Dante's Paradiso* (Ravenna: Longo, 1984), 44–55; Hawkins, “Are you here,” 175–77; Michelangelo Picone, “*Paradiso* XXXII,” in *Lectura dantis Turicensis: Paradiso* (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2002), 491–504, at 494–96; Chiavacci-Leonardi (*Inferno*, p. 539), recalls that Malebolge is “fredda e geometrica.”

3. For Dante's Empyrean generally, see at least Bruno Nardi, "La dottrina dell'Empireo nella sua genesi storica e nel pensiero dantesco," *Saggi di filosofia dantesca* (Florence: La Nuova Italia 1967), 167–214; Bortolo Martinelli, "La dottrina dell'Empireo nell'Epistola a Cangrande," *Studi danteschi* 57 (1985): 49–143, and Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 15–35.

4. See *Par.* 31.7–21, in Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, ed. and trans. R. M. Durling, with notes by R. M. Durling and R. L. Martinez (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); this is also the edition of the poem used throughout this essay. See also Albert Rossi, "The Poetics of Resurrection: Virgil's Bees (*Paradiso* XXXI, 1–12)," *Romanic Review* 80 (1989): 305–324. The angelic cloud that "discendeva . . . e risaliva" models the procession (*processio, emanatio*) and return (*remeatio*) within creation. See the Notes to *Paradiso* 31.4–24, at 628–29.

5. For the teleological structure of Dante's poem, see Robert M. Durling, "The *Paradiso* as Alpha and Omega of the *Comedy*," Additional Note 14, in Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 757–61.

6. For the force of textual retrospection in the *Commedia*, see Charles S. Singleton's "The Vistas in Retrospect," in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi danteschi 20–27 aprile 1965* (Florence: Sansoni, 1965), 279–303.

7. Debate on the authenticity of the letter, or parts of it, continues apace, and will not be joined here: the *Epistle* is taken here as a guide to Dante's intentions regarding the poem's allegory, if not necessarily authentic in its entirety.

8. *Par.* 32.131–32: "sotto cui visse di manna / la gente ingrata, mobile e ritrosa," recalling the "cotidiana manna" of Dante's *Paternoster* in *Purg.* 11.13 and the "verace manna" that drives Dominic in *Paradiso* 12.84.

9. "[V]ide tutti i tempi gravi della bella sposa / che si acquistò con la lancia e coi clavi": reference to the suggestion that John would not die before the return of the Messiah (John 21.22), and to the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse in the Vulgate Bible, in the Middle Ages attributed to John the Evangelist.

10. See *Epist.* 13.7: "Si ad litteram solam inspiciamus, significatur nobis exitus filiorum Israel de Egipto, tempore Moysis; si ad allegoriam, significatur nobis nostra redemptio facta per Christum; si ad moralem sensum, significatur nobis conversio anime de luctu et miseria peccati ad statum gratie; si ad anagogicum, significatur exitus anime sancte ab huius corruptionis servitute ad eternam glorie libertatem."

11. 32.136–38; Carlo Steiner (Dartmouth Dante Project [DDP]; <https://dante.dartmouth.edu/>) notes the echo of *Inf.* 1; see also Picone, "Canto XXXII," 500; neither refers to the exodus.

12. There are further reminiscences: for example, *penetri*, [143] here paroxytone, recalls the first verb used in *Paradiso*, *penetra* (*Par.* 1.2). *Primo amore* [verso 142] repeats part of the first instance of the poem where the Trinity appears, on the inscription over the gate of Hell: "fecemi la divina potestate, / la somma sapienza, e 'l primo amore" *Inf.* 3.5–6, and three other instances: *Par.* 6.11; *Par.* 12.74; and *Par.* 26.38. Ledda, "Vergine Madre," 105–106, and *Paradiso*, ed. Chiavacci-Leonardi, 897, suggest reminiscence of Ulysses's "facemmo *ali* al folle volo" in the line "ne forse tu *t'arrettri* / *movendo l'ali tue*," and a Dante who is "winged," an *Aliger*, punning on the family name Alighieri (see Hugh Shankland, "Dante 'Aliger' and Ulysses," *Italian Studies* 32 [1977]: 21–40).

13. Recalled in the previous canto, where the pilgrim is said to have come "di Fiorenza in popol giusto e santo," 31.39, and more explicitly at *Par.* 25.55, when he is spoken of as having come "dall'Egitto in Gerusalemme."

14. Bernard's use points to the convention of the "vision in a dream" (*visio in somniis*); see Steiner (DDP): "san Bernardo rievoca il sogno di Dante dal momento in cui 'tant' era pien di sonno' (*Inf.* 1.10) che non sa dire come entrò nella selva, fino al risveglio imminente. . ." For the moment as reference to the conclusion of the dream-vision, see Durling's Introduction to *Paradiso*, eds. Durling and Martinez, 15–19. For the conclusion of the dream-vision, see Benvenuto's comment to *Par.* 33.58–63 (DDP): "Et hic nota quomodo haec artificiosa comparatio somniantis propriissime declarat intentionem auctoris in isto finali capitulo, quia auctor totam suam visionem habuit in somnio, sicut ipse testatus est in primo capitulo totius operis {v. 37}, ubi dixit: tempo

era dal principio del mattino etc.” A recent discussion is Mirko Tavoni, “Dante ‘Imagining’ his Journey through the Afterlife,” *Dante Studies* 133 (2015): 70–92.

15. See Guglielmo Gorni, “La metafora del testo,” in *Metrica e analisi letteraria* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), 137–52. Gorni’s understanding of *terza rima* in textile terms emphasizes continuity within the limits of a canto: “filato che si snoda senza soluzione di continuità almeno nella misura di capitolo” (“Metafora del testo,” 146). As an anonymous evaluator of this essay observed, in the *sonetto rinterzato* sometimes attributed to Dante, “Quando il consiglio degli uccelli si tenne,” the crow’s idea of changing his plumage with borrowed finery from other birds (i.e., poets) is described as “mutar gonella.” See Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, ed. G. Contini (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), 279.

16. Fazio presents himself as the weaver (*testore*) of his own rhymes in the very first lines of the *Dittamondo*, composed in *terza rima* and in language of unmistakably Dantean stamp: “Non per trattar gli affanni, ch’io sofferarsi / nel mio lungo cammin, né le paure, / di rima in rima tesso questi versi.” “[D]i rima in rima” makes the link to *terza rima* explicit; for “lungo cammin” and “non per trattar,” cf. *Inf.* 1.1, 1.8. See also *Ditt.* 3.13.1–3 (*tesso*), and 5.61 (“nei mei versi tessere”). See Fazio degli Uberti, *Il dittamondo e le rime*, ed. G. Corsi (Bari: Laterza, 1952): 4, 220.

17. See Stefano Selenu, “Nella caccia della lingua: la gioia di Dante e lo spettro di Babele tra volgare, vita e arti meccaniche,” *Dante Studies* 132 (2014): 59–85, esp. 59–60, one of the few studies to address mechanical arts, which Dante refers to at *Convivio* IV.v.vi.6 and ix.5–13. See also the 2014 Yale dissertation by Carol Chiodo, *Dante’s Poetry: Between Technology and Transcendence*. Studies of the medieval mechanical arts include: Franco Alessio, “La filosofia e le *artes mechanicae* nel XII secolo,” *Studi medievali* ser. III, 6 (1965): 71–161; Peter Sternagel, *Die artes mechanicae im Mittelalter: Begriffs- und Bedeutungsgeschichte bis zum Ende des 13 Jahrhunderts* (Kallmunz: Verlag Michael Lassleben, 1966); Guy Allard, “Les arts mécaniques aux yeux de l’idéologie médiévale,” in *Les arts au moyen âge, Cahiers d’études médiévales* 7 (Montreal: Bellarmin; Paris: J. Vrin, 1982), 13–32; George Ovitt, *The Restoration of Perfection. Labor and Technology in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 107–36; Elspeth Whitney, “Paradise Restored. The Mechanical Arts from Antiquity through the Thirteenth Century,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 80 (1990): 1–169. Emma Simi Varanelli, *Artisti e dottori nel medioevo* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1995), 15–87.

18. See Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon de studio legendi: A Critical Text*, ed. Charles H. Buttimer (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939): II. 20–22, including *lanificium, armatura, navigatio, agricultura, venatio, medicina, and spectacula*, and followed (with one exception) by Vincentius Bellovacensis, *Speculum doctrinale* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1965), Book XI. See also Robert Kilwardby, *De ortu scientiarum*, ed. Albert G. Judy (Oxford: The British Academy; Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1976): xxxvi–xl1, 123–31, and Remigio de’ Girolami, *De falsis ecclesiae professores*, ed. Filippo Tamburini (Rome: Libreria editrice della pontificia università lateranense, 1981), chapters 46–98, 121–288.

19. Hugh took his cue from John the Scot’s commentary on Martianus Capella’s *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, where the mechanical arts are *ancillae* to the liberal arts that Philologia brings as a dowry to her nuptials with Mercury (*Didasc.* II.20). Hugh—one of Dante’s *sapienti* (*Par.* 12.133)—draws from Augustine, *De civitate dei* XXII.24 and Isidore, *Etym.* Book XIX in composing accounts of seven mechanical arts.

20. See Genesis 3.19 “in sudore vultus tui vesceris pane.” At *Inferno* 11.111, Virgilio defines usury as disdaining (*dispregia*) productive labor, precisely the mechanical arts.

21. See *Didascalicon* I.9: “Sunt enim tria opera: id est, opus dei, opus naturae, opus artificis imitantis naturam.” Hugh’s scheme of the “three works,” adapted from Calcidius’s commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus* (as noted in the edition of *Didascalicon* translated by Jerome Taylor [New York: Columbia University Press, 1961], 190–91) is frequently invoked by Dante, both wholly and in part: cf. *Inferno* 7.73–90; 11.97–111; *Paradiso* 2.112–48; 8.97–136; 13.49–87, and especially *Monarchia* II.ii.1–3. On borrowings from Hugh in Dante’s works, see Zygmunt G. Barański, *Dante e i segni: Saggi per una storia intellettuale di Dante Alighieri* (Naples: Liguori, 2000), 92–97, and

Francesco Bausi, *Dante fra i sapienti*, in *Dante fra scienza e sapienza: esegesi dal canto XII del Paradiso* (Florence: Olschki, 2009), 192–97.

22. *Speculum doctrinale*, XI, prologue (with the title “de lapsu generis humani et eius restaurationis per doctrinam”): “[. . .] Et quoniam ipsa restitutio sive restauratio per doctrinam efficitur, atque perficitur; ista quoque pars, *Speculum Doctrinale*, non immerito vocatur: doctrine namque cuncta proculdubio subiacent, quae vel ad tuenda, vel ad recuperanda spirituales vel temporales salutem homines pertinet [. . .]. Postea quoque de mechanicis; quoniam ipsae cum in operatione confinant, veluti affinitate quadam, practicis coniungitur.”

23. That Dante the poet speaks through Bernard is hardly unusual: throughout the poem, Dante’s “guides” and interlocutors (Virgil, Sordello, Statius, Guinizelli, Charles Martel, and Thomas Aquinas, among others) voice Dante’s concerns as much as, and often more than, their own, while retaining a measure of historical verisimilitude. Guinizelli’s recommendation of Arnaut as “miglior fabbro” is a case in point. For Bernard’s use of the image of the tailor here, not attested in his texts, see Note 97; and for the close parallel with *Purg.* 33.136–41, where the narrating poet’s art limits his verse, see below in the text.

24. Boncompagno, *Palma*, 40: “Punctus est quidam titulus, per quem tota scriptura cognoscitur et terminatur. Vel est punctus terminus divisivus, per quem distinctiones univere clarescunt. Nam ita dividuntur distinctiones per puncta, sicut campi per positionem terminorum.” See “El tratado la Palma de la Victoria de Boncompagno da Signa,” ed. Antonio Cortijo Ocaña, *Revista de poética medieval* 9 (2002): 87–159. Unless otherwise specified, translations from Latin are mine.

25. The only other comparable division is between the fifth and sixth cantos of *Paradiso*, where the pause at the end of the canto sets up the canto-filling discourse in the voice of Emperor Justinian alone. See *Par.* 5.139 (“nel modo che ’l seguente canto canta”) and *Par.* 6.1, spoken by Justinian: “Pocchia che Costantin . . .” Elsewhere the division between cantos articulates a dialogue, discourse, or apparition, with no explicit marking of the formal division: cf. *Inf.* 16–17; 32–33; *Purg.* 13–14; 28–29, 29–30.

26. Dante, *Epistola XIII.9*. In the *Rettorica*, Brunetto Latini uses *punto* to mark the beginning of the commentary (“le parole dello sponitore”), separating it from the translation, the “testo di Tullio” (*Prologo, argomento* 1): “E in questo punto si parte elli da questa materia e ritorna al proprio intendimento del testo.” See Brunetto Latini, *Rettorica*, ed. Francesco Maggini (Florence: Galletti e Cocci, 1915), 7.

27. Discussion of the prayer must be omitted here, but as Azzetta notes (“La geometria,” 338), early commentators such as Jacopo della Lana viewed Bernard’s petition that the pilgrim’s *affetti* be kept *sani* (33.35) as referring to his future composition of the poem: that is, as a metapoetic or metadiegetic statement.

28. Azzetta, “La geometria,” 330, cites Fazio degli Uberti, *Dittamondo* IV.4.7–12 in regard to the tailor’s hurrying his stitch, his *punto*: “Perocché si mi stringe a questo punto / il lungo tema, ch’io fo come il sarto / che quando ha fretta spesso passa il punto.”

29. See *Inf.* 11.55–56: “par che incida / lo vinco d’amor che fa natura.” [*I*]ncida, the reading of the Urbinate manuscript, is preferred to the former vulgate reading here, *uccida*, as more precisely describing the cutting of a material bond.

30. Sewing imagery is found throughout the poem, of course: *rimendo*, at *Purg.* 13.107, is preferred by Petrocchi, Chiavacci-Leonardi, and Inglese to *rimondo*, “cleanse.” The canto’s poetic text furnishes more: Pier *Pettinaio*, seller of either carding combs (for smoothing raw wool), or reeds for separating loom warps, prayed for Sapia; her envious brethren have their eyes sewn shut (cf. 13.70–71, “fil di ferro il ciglio fora, / e cusce sì” and 83, “l’orribile costura”); the “vil ciliccio” (13.58), hairshirts or sackcloth draping the envious, were of woven goat or horsehair: part of *lanificium* in Hugh’s definition (see next note). See also Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, ed. Antonio Lanza (Anzio: de Rubéis, 1995), 122, defending Guido Mazzoni’s emendation *pe(c)ttatrici* for *peccatrici* at *Inf.* 14.80, to reflect the work of combing knots and burrs out of flax and hemp fibers.

31. *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor*, trans. Taylor. See *Hugonis de Sancto Victoris Didascalicon de studio legendi*, ed. C. H. Buttner (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939), II.21: “*Lanificium* continet omnia texendi, consuendi, retorquendi genera, quae

fiunt manu, acu, fuso, subula, girgillo, pectine, alibro, calamistro, chilindro, sive aliis quibuslibet instrumentis, ex quacumque lini vel lanae materia et omni genere pellium erasarum vel pilos habentium, cannabis quoque, vel suberis, iuncorum, pilorum, floccorum, aut alia qualibet re huiusmodi, quae in usum vestimentorum, operimentorum, linteorum, sagorum, sagmatum, substratoriorum, cortinarum, matularum, filtrorum, chordarum, cassium, funium, redigi potest. stramina quoque ex quibus galeros et sportulas texere solent homines.”

32. In Aquinas’s definition, an “architectonic” art subordinates other arts that contribute to it as an end; see Emma Simi Varanelli, *Artisti e dottori nel medioevo*, 38–39, citing Aquinas, *In libr. pol.* l.ix.10; and cf. *Convivio*, IV.v.vi.6–9.

33. See *Didascalicon* II.20: this nexus of political, mechanical, and verbal arts is closely aligned, in a manner influential for Dante, with Brunetto Latini’s idea in the *Tresor* of politics as the supreme practical science, which, in concert with the verbal, but also with the mechanical arts, presides over the administration of the thirteenth-century commune. See the *Tresor*, I.ii–iv, ed. F. J. Carmody (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948): 18–21. For Brunetto’s *politique* as the “highest art” see John M. Najemy, “Brunetto Latini’s ‘Politica,’” *Dante Studies* 112 (1994): 33–51 (37–42).

34. Earlier criticism saw it as derogatory of its sublime surroundings, e.g. Scartazzini (1872–82 [2nd ed. 1900]), quoting Lionello Venturi: “Similitudine viva, ma . . . poco convenevole” (DDP). See now Maria Chiavacci-Leonardi, praising “la concretezza e la veridicità delle cose reali” (in *Paradiso* [Milan: Zanichelli, 2001]: 585).

35. Gian Carlo Alessio, “Un appunto su *Paradiso* XXII.139–141,” *Nozze Cociglio-Magnino* (Verona: Valdonega, 1989), cited by Robert Hollander, ed., *Paradiso* (New York: Doubleday), 816; also by Azzetta, “Canto XXXII,” 312, and *Paradiso*, ed. Giorgio Inglese (Rome: Carrocci, 2016), 393. One of the few instances of “buon sartore” in verse before Dante occurs in the composition “Umile sono e orgoglioso,” by the minstrel Ruggieri Apugliese, where tailoring is one of the dozens of skills the author vaunts he knows. The poem is in the fourth fascicle of the Vatican 3793 anthology (c. 18^{rv}, with the rubric *Rugieri apugliese*). See *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. G. Contini (Milan–Naples: Ricciardi, 1960): vol. 1, 891.

36. *Palma*, 50.1: “Verumtamen oportet dictatorem imponendo clausulas providum esse atque sagacem et suum tractatum semper mediocritatis legibus cohibere. Nam ego sepe numero ad mensuram carte dictavi, aut quia carta deficiebat aut quia ita in animo agere proponebam. Sed qui hoc facere temptat, inspiciat cartule quantitatem, sicut providus sartor pannum, de quo camisiam disposuit facere vel gunnellam. Nam primo ymaginatur, unde posset facere manicas et girones et cetera queque. Postmodum vero, secundum quod videt, incidere consuevit.”

37. If the image of the *gonna* all but concludes *Paradiso*, and that of prepared *carte* the *Purgatorio*, the penultimate canto of *Inferno* opens with Dante’s exordial appeal to the Muses who helped the singer Amphion to enclose Thebes (*Inf.* 32.10–12). Dante drew the topic from Horace’s *Ars poetica* (392–94) and Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor* III.i.8.

38. Dante may have been stimulated by Boncompagno’s puns: the Latin verb for the act of cutting, *incidere*, nods to Latin terms for “beginning” a text (*incipio*, *-ere*, *incipit*), while the imperfect *consuevit*, from *consuesco*, meaning “to do habitually,” puns on *consuo*, *consuere*, meaning “to sew together.” The third-person singular imperfect form of *consuo* (= sew together) is *consuebat*.

39. Ruling margins and lines, for example, as in *Purg.* 26.64: “carta ne vergo,” comes from the “striping” of cloth; see *ED*, *vergare*: “il ‘vergato’ è un panno d’un determinato colore con righe trasversali d’un altro colore: le righe s’ottenevano nella tessitura impiegando trama diversa a intervalli regolari.” Such ruling of lines, preparing the page, has cosmological implications; see Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez, *Time and the Crystal: Studies in Dante’s Rime petrose* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 26–28. Vertical lines separated text from lateral margins; horizontal lines established lines for writing and separated the text from top and bottom margins (all margins were sometimes covered with glosses). In *Purg.* 24.127, the edges of the terrace of the gluttons are compared to the margins of a manuscript page (*vivagni*): this also permits taking the images of *Purg.* 12.25–63 as a textual weave, with the acrostic as a selvaqe, or *vivagno*. The image recurs in *Paradiso* 9.135 to describe the *Decretals*,

erroneously preferred to patristic texts, with margins that because often read were soiled or encumbered with notes. Until recently the metaphor was more often taken to refer to the ample and luxurious mantles used by clerics (also, however, a vestimentary image).

40. For Boncompagno, see at least Ronald G. Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), 386–90; and Luca Marcozzi, “La *Rhetorica novissima* di Boncompagno da Signa e l’interpretazione di quattro passi della *Commedia*,” *Rivista di Studi danteschi* 9 (2009): 1–20 (but not the *Palma*). It may be significant that Boncompagno was an advocate of the *stilus humilis* in rhetorical practice (Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, 387).

41. Dante’s borrowings in the passage from *Consolatio philosophiae* 3 pr 9, where an exordium precedes the hymn “O qui perpetua,” seem to confirm this point; see Luca Lombardi, *Boezio in Dante: La Consolatio philosophiae nello scrittoio del poeta* (Venice: Edizioni Ca’ Foscari, 2013), 409–12, and *Cons.* 3 pr.9.33: “Inuocandum, inquam, rerum omnium patrem, quo praetermisso nullum rite fundatur exordium.”

42. *Palma* 24.1: “Exordium est quidam preambulus nuntius, ordo et preparamentum ad reliqua dicenda. Dicitur autem exordium ab ‘exordior exordiris.’ Vel dicitur exordium quasi ordinamentum [. . .]. Mulieres vero, cum telam facere volunt, primo quosdam filis tendunt per lineam rectam, quos ‘ordinamentum’ vulgo appellant dicentes: ‘Volumus nostram telam ordiri’ et postea super ipsam filorum multitudinem cum pectine textunt. Sic autem exordio sive generali sententia nostros ordimur tractatus et innumerabilium tractatum significata super ipsis collocamus.” Cf. Dante, *Epist.* XIII.18, on the differences between *exordium*, *prologum*, and *preludium*.

43. Shoemaking, *sutoria*, is listed in Michael Scot’s fragmentary discussion of the mechanical arts preserved in the *Speculum doctrinale* (I.xvi), where the mechanical arts are deemed suitable to the “vulgus, et viles homines.”

44. For example of Forese and Bonagiunta in *Purgatorio*, whose emaciated, puckered faces resemble the pleats of embroidered cloth, as observed by commentators (*Purg.* 24.20–21): “quella faccia / di là da lui più che l’altre trapunta.” Scartazzini (DDP) cites Tommaseo: “Le inugualgiance dell’arida pelle rendono imagine di trapunto.”

45. Along with weaving, Minerva was held to have invented dyeing: “hanc [Minerva] primam telam ordinasse, lanas colorasse,” in Hugh, *Didascalicon* III.2. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.8–9, where Arachne’s father is a dyer and she masters both needle and loom: “pater . . . Idmon / Phocaico bibulas tinguebat murice lanas”; 22: “[Arachne] versabat pollice fusum”; 23: “seu pingebat acu”; 69: “in tela deducitur argumentum.” The Philomela of the *Ovide moralisé* masters both embroidery and writing (*Ovide moralisé. Poème du commencement du XIV^{ème} siècle*, ed. C. de Boer [Amsterdam: Johannes Muller, 1915]): 6.2409–11, “Seüst ele en un drap portreire / es autors sot et de gramaire / Et sot bien feire vers et letre.”

46. See Elizabeth W. Barber, *Women’s Work: The First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times* (New York: Norton, 1994), 1–109. For weaving and sewing together, see Cicero, *De natura deorum* II.150, referring to clothing as “tegumenta . . . corporum vel *texta* vel *suta*.” The close association of spinning, weaving, and women’s storytelling is ancient. See at least Anne L. T. Bergren, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought,” *Arethusa* 16 (1983): 69–94, and for the Middle Ages Danielle Régnier-Bohler, in *Histoire de la vie privée, 2. De l’Europe féodale à la Renaissance*, ed. Philippe Ariés and Georges Duby (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 323–48.

47. *Inf.* 20. 121–22: “che lasciarono l’ago, / la spuola e ’l fuso.” A hapax in the poem, with precise textile meaning, refers to the Malebranche (*Inf.* 23.16): “Se l’ira sovra ’l mal voler s’aggueffa” (*aggueffare*, a cognate of “weft,” means to wind or spool thread). See F. da Buti’s gloss (DDP): “Aggueffare è filo a filo aggiungere, come si fa ponendo lo filo dal gomito alla mano, o innaspando con l’aspo.”

48. Beginning from Canto 28.16, there are twelve uses (of 22 in *Paradiso*, and 47 in whole poem): eight refer to God as *punto* (and cf. *Par.* 17.17), of which five, all referring to God, are in Canto 28; one more is in 29, one in 30, and one in 33. *Punto* is used for an instant of time at 29.4; for a point in a discourse at 30.23, and to a point in a grid (or stitch) at 32.53. Gioia Paradisi,

“Icone della parola: il ‘volume’ ‘legato con amore,’” *Critica del testo* 14, no. 2 (2011): 349–86, especially 372–73, sees the *punto* at *Par.* 33.94 as unifying the one and the many.

49. “[U]n punto vidi che raggiava lume / acuto sì, ch’el viso ch’elli affoca / chiuder conviensi per lo forte acume.” When approaching the universal knot of the final canto (33.76–78) the pilgrim fears he will be “lost” if he averts his gaze into the point that pierces him (“per l’acume ch’io soffersi”).

50. At *Palma* 40.1, the pen seems to actually puncture the paper: “Punctus dicitur a ‘puncto –tas’ vel dicitur punctus a ‘pungo –gis.’ Quia quando scriptor vult faceré punctum, ita erigit pennam, quod cartam pungere videtur.”

51. See Peter Dronke, “The Conclusion of Dante’s *Commedia*,” now in *Sources of Inspiration: Studies in Literary Transformations, 400–1500* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1997), 131–55, 145; “all things made firm in an harmonious knot.” See Alanus *De planctu naturae* VII, 9–12: “Que tuis mundum moderas habenis, / Cuncta concordi stabilita nodo / Nectis et pacis glutino maritas / Coelica terris”; 1–4: “O dei proles genitrixque rerum / Vinculum mundi stabilisque nexus, / gemma terrenis, speculum caducis, / Lucifer orbis”; and 153, referring to Boethius, *Cons.* III m. 9.10 and II m 8.13.

52. Recalled in Gianfranco Contini, *Varianti e altra linguistica* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972), 422, Torraca cites contemporary Siena statutes that prohibit dyeing with dark purple or crimson hues (*perso, sanguigno*) due to sumptuary regulations. Although dyeing is not found in Hugh’s account of *lanificium*, it is in that of Vincent of Beauvais (*Speculum doctrinale* XI.ix): “Tinctura vocata est, quia tingitur.”

53. It is the first story told by one of the weaving daughters of Minyas (Ovid, *Met.* 4.54: “talibus orsa modis lana sua fila sequenti”; it is thus a *chanson de toile*); for the staining with blood, see *Met.* 4.126–27, “madefactaque sanguine radix / purpureo tinguit pendentia mora colore.” A principal meaning of Latin *tingere* is dyeing; mulberry leaves were essential to sericulture.

54. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 185–87; see also Malcolm Parkes, *Pause and Effect, punctus* (pl *punctūs*): 76–77, 193–95. Taking the *punto* as purely a *punctum temporis* is in fact reductive; see Franco Masciandaro, “Notes on the Image of the Point in the *Divine Comedy*,” *Italica* 54 (1977): 215–26, esp. 222–23. Luca Carlo Rossi, in “Il nome di Francesca,” *L’Alighieri* 56 (2015): 29–40, gives a metapoetic reading of the episode via a different path.

55. This instance observed by Contini, “Il Canto XXVIII del *Paradiso*,” in *Un’idea di Dante*, 205–6.

56. On the topic of “interrupted reading” in *Inferno* 5 and the *Lancelot*, see Donald Maddox, “The Arthurian Intertexts of *Inferno*,” in *Dante Studies* 114 (1996): 113–27. For Virgil’s thread of discourse “interrupted” and his meaning “drawn out” (*Inf.* 9.14–15: “perch’io traeva la parola tronca / forse a peggior sentenza che non tenne”), and the risk of interrupting the journey (and thus the poem), see *Inf.* 9.14; as suggested by an audience member at the AlmaDante conference in Ravenna in May of 2017, when an earlier version of this paper was read.

57. For *praecidere* in a pertinent context, see Isaiah 38.11, part of the *Canticum Hezekiae* lamenting the announced death of the king: “praecisa est velut a texente vita mea dum adhuc ordiner succidit me” (also Job 7.6).

58. Vergil, *Ecl.* 6.5–6: “pastorem, Tityre, pinguis / pascere oportet oves, deductum dicere carmen.” Servius comments: “deductum dicere carmen tenue: translatio a lana, quae deducitur in tenuitatem.” See the exordium to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, I.6: “deducere . . . carmen”; the daughters of Minyas spin as they relate tales, IV.36: “deducens pollice filum,” and IV. 221, “ducentem stamina fuso.” *Met.* VI (1–145) narrates the contest between Pallas and Arachne (cf. VI.69: “vetus in tela deducitur argumentum”). See also Horace, *Ars poetica*, 129: “rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus.” See Note 91.

59. Pairing the *tuba* with a verb suited to spinning may reflect the ancient household economy, with music-making coded as masculine and spinning coded as feminine. See Aristotle, *Politics* I.2 (1253b–1254a), “looms would operate by themselves, and lyres play by themselves, as they say that the statue made by Daedalus moved itself”; see also Aquinas’s commentary, I.2 (7). For material and kinetic similarities between weaving and playing the lyre see Jane McIntosh Snyder,

"The Web of Song," *Classical Journal* 76 (1991): 193–96; and cf. *Aen.* 6.647, of Orpheus's playing: "iamque eadem digitis, iam pectine pulsat eburno" (a *pecten* is also a carding comb or loom reed for guiding the shuttle). In *Paradiso* 18–20, weaving terms (the eagle is made up of "anime *conserte*" [19.3] and "di laude / . . . *contesto*" [19.38–39] and musical instruments (the stringed *cetra*, and woodwind *sampogna*, at 20.22–24) combine in the image and voice of the eagle.

60. The textile metaphors in *Par.* 17 and 32 are noted, but not discussed, in Gorni, "Metafora del testo," 146.

61. Cf. the early double sonnet to "Lippo amico" introducing a "naked" canzone stanza that requires "clothing" by, most likely, musical accompaniment ("vuole esser *vestita*"), to the admonition at *Vita nuova* 25.7 that any clothing of discourse with figurative language or rhetorical "color" could be, if inspected, denuded of such trappings ("denudato da cotal *vesta*,"), to the first congado of the canzone "Tre donne intorno al cor," discouraging the novice from handling its stuffs, its *panni*—that is, its allegorical significance—and the extension of such imagery to the *Commedia*, where the "*velame dei versi strani*" of *Inf.* 9.63 and the "*velo . . . tanto sottile*" of *Purg.* 8.20 stimulate the interpretive acuity of the reader.

62. Gorni, "La metafora del testo," 144–45. A principal source for the idea of the poet as plaiting or braiding verses is Isidore, *Etym.* VIII.7.3: "Varro is the originator of the idea that 'seers' (*vates*) are so called . . . from binding (*viere*) songs, that is, from 'turning' [better, *bending*] or modulating them [*vel a viendis carminibus, id est flectendis, hoc est modulandis*]; accordingly the poets in Latin were once called *vates* . . . because they 'link' words in rhythms, with the ancients using the term *viere* instead of *vincire* ("bind") [*vel quod modis verba conecterent, viere antiquis pro vincire ponentibus*]. For artisanal language for poetic diction and composition, see also *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. E. Fenzi (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2012–13), 137–38, 156, 179; see also *Convivio* 4.6.3–4, and 1.10.12, 1.13.6.

63. II.iv.1, "artis *ergasterium* reseremus": the term is in Vincent's *Speculum doctrinale* XI.xxiii; and see *Codex Justinianus* I.iii.2.

64. In *Dve* II.v.vi–xiii words in syntax, lines of varying length, lines with varying rhyming patterns, unrhymed lines, and several structural features of the stanza are said to be wreathed (*insertae, consertae*), woven (*contextae*), or linked in a chain (*concatenatio*). *Insero, inserere* also apply to weaving; see Ovid, *Met.* VI.56: "*inseritur . . . radiis*" [the shuttle is inserted]. Canzoni are made up of themes or topics contained or hemmed in (iii.1, "ea quae sunt digna vulgari *coartare*"), or tied together (iii.2, "quo *ligari* hec digna"); the more technical weaving of lines is suggested by *avientibus, avietum, viere* (i.1, v.8: respectively "weavers of withes," "plaited," "to tie together"); the canzone is also a "yoking" of stanzas (ix.1, "*cantio est coniugatio stantiarum*"), or a *compages*, a "junction," a term Isidore connects with *pagina* (*Etym.* VI.xiv.6). Dante also uses *torquibus* to bind bundles of parts (II. viii.1, *fascies*), for which see Hugh's account of *lanificium*, where *retorquere* describes "twisting together." Gorni suggests that *fascies* are the words, and the *torques* syntactic constructions (Gorni, "La metafora," 145).

65. Dante's sifting of poetic diction in *Dve* II.vii.4, calling the noblest words either smooth and "combed" (*pexa*) or rough and "hairy" (*reburra*), also adopts terms from finishing wool. Using carding combs, *carminare*, describes treating an arduous topic at *Dve* II.i.1 and is a pun for composing songs, *carmina facere*. Cf. Cecco Angiolieri's "s'io cimo il panno, e tu vi freggi il cardo," addressed to Dante, using metaphors from wool-working to identify vituperative speech; or, in the light of the textile metaphor, for versifying. For further mechanical arts in the *Dve*, see Selenu, "Nella caccia della lingua."

66. Among the troubadours the phrase "entrebescar los motz" refers to braiding or plaiting of strands (cf. Galician-Portuguese *entrevincar*), more than to weaving on a loom; see Marianne Shapiro, "Entrebescar los motz: Word-Weaving and Divine Rhetoric in Medieval Romance Lyric," *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* 100 (19): 355–83; Amelia Van Vleck, *Memory and Re-creation in Troubadour Lyric* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), esp. 164–87; and Linda M. Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 91–98; see also Guido Guinizzelli, *Rime*, ed. Luciano Rossi (Turin: Einaudi, 2002), 71–72, citing *enseint ab un vim* ("bound by a withy") in Guillem Rainol d'At (*entrescar* and *entrebescar* appear in Terramagnino

da Pisa's *Doctrina d'Acort*; cf., *The Razos de Trobar of Raimon Vidal and Associated Texts*, ed. J. H. Marshall [London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972], 743–44). See also Eugène Vinaver, *Rise of Romance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 34–37.

67. It is noted by Pamela McFie, “Ovid, Arachne, and the Poetics of Paradise” in *The Poetry of Allusion*, ed. R. Jacoff and J. Schnapp (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991): 169.

68. To the wimples and veils of the habit—repeatedly referred to in the canto (*Par.* 3.99, 104, 114)—corresponds the veil over the heart, possession of which Piccarda attributes to the sound will of “great Costanza”: “dal vel del cor già mai disciolta” (117). Dante’s “vesting” of the blessed is not taken up here; but see Marco Ariani, “*Abyssus luminis*: Dante e la veste di luce,” *Rivista di letteratura italiana* 11 (1993): 9–71.

69. See Isidore, *Etym.* VI.viii.7: “A discussion (*sermo*) is so called because it is interwoven (*sertus*) between each of the two participants. Whence in Vergil (*Aen.* 6.160), referring to a dialogue between Aeneas and Achates: ‘multa inter sese vario sermone serebant’ [They interwove many things in varied discussion between themselves].”

70. See John Ahern, “Binding the Book,” *PMLA* 97 (1982): 800–9 (805): “‘volume’ refers to both the Book of Heaven and the text of the poem.” Paradisi, “Icône,” 371, cites Bonaventura, *Breviloquium* II.11.2: “duplex est liber . . . unus scriptus intus, qui est Dei aeterna ars et sapientia, et alius scriptus foris, sc. mundus sensibilis.”

71. For these cantos, see Jeffrey Schnapp, *The Transfiguration of History at the Center of Dante’s Paradise* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); and, for recent discussions, *Il trittico di Cacciaguida, Lectura Dantis Scaligera 2008–2009*, ed. Ennio Sandal (Rome–Padua: Antenore, 2011), especially Giuseppe Ledda, “*Paradiso XVII*,” 107–46; for the weaving metaphor, see McFie, “Ovid, Arachne,” 170–1.

72. They are *Inf.* 6.64–72; 10.79–81; 15.55–78 (to be discussed later); and 24.142–51; *Purg.* 8.133–39; 11.133–42 (“tu potrai chiosarlo”) and 24.37–48 (a positive take); in a sense, also 26.127–32, though it relates to the end of the immediate journey, not the pilgrim’s mortal life.

73. On the canto’s prominent dialogue, see Ledda, “*Paradiso XVII*,” 122–23.

74. The other important instance is of course the Arachnean textile on Geryon, in a same-numbered canto (*Inf.* 17.16–18), discussion of which is omitted here. See Gorni, “La metafora”; McFie, “Ovid, Arachne,” 168–69; and Teodolinda Barolini, “Re-presenting what God Presented: The Arachnean Art of Dante’s Terrace of Pride,” *Dante Studies* 105 (1987): 43–62.

75. Hardly improbable, given that Cangrande controls human fortunes, altering the lot of rich and poor (*Par.* 17.89–90, “per lui fia trasmutata molta gente / cambiando condizion ricchi e mendicci”), a close echo of Boethius, *Cons.* 2.2.9 (Fortuna speaking): “rotam uolubili orbe uersamus, infima summis, summa infimis mutare gaudemus.” Though Cangrande rearranges fortunes, only Fate, or rather Providence, composes the weave of a life.

76. Petrarch explicitly links his years of his life to the Fates’ spinning (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 210.6, 230.7) and to weaving on a loom (264.130–1: “ò volto al subbio / . . . la mia breve tela”), marking his life as more than half over: since a few lines from the end of the canzone (the finished weave), the phrase is metapoetic—the more so as the canzone begins the principal manuscript articulation of *Vat. lat.* 3196. At *Rvf* 349, 11 the poet’s weary body is a “frate e mortal gonna.” For the textile metaphor in Petrarch, see Gorni, “La metafora,” 147–48 and Marco Santagata, *Petrarca e i Colonna* (Pisa: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1988), 58–69.

77. Echoing Virgil’s clarification to Statius in the *Purgatorio* (21.25–27) that the Fates are still spinning the pilgrim’s vital strand: “ma perché lei che dì e notte fila / non gli avea tratta ancora la conocchia, / che Clotò impone a ciascuno e compila. . . .” *Compilatio* is also used of assembling texts by selecting and arranging extracts, one of the four forms of authorship, according to Bonaventura (scribe, compiler, commentator, author). Cf. *Convivio*, II.xiii.12, where the term is used for the logical works of Aristotle, and in the *Dve* for works of Roman history in Old French (I.x.2: “Troianorum Romanorumque gestibus compilata”), and the vocabulary of “Apulian” (Sicilian) poets, “curialoria in suis cantionibus compilantes” (I.xii.8). See Malcolm Parkes, ‘The influence of the concepts of *ordinatio* and *compilatio* on the development of the book,’ in *Medieval*

Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to R. W. Hunt, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 115–41.

78. Lines 9, 37, 76, 91, 94, 111, respectively; despite the fact that printing would not be invented for well over a century, *stampa* and *impresso* had by Dante's day the sense of a signifying inscription; *carne*, *chiose*, and *scritto* are self-explanatory as references to writing and textual practice (*carne* is used only here and of Vergil's eclogues, *Purg.* 22.57; see Note 65 for Dante's use of *carminare* in *Dve* 2.1.1). *Quaderno*, for quire, a four-fold gathering of paper destined to be sewn into a book, is used for formerly accurate florentine ledgers in *Purg.* 12.105, and for the four-elemented human body and world (*Par.* 17.37–38), and is embedded in *Par.* 33.100 (*squaterna*), where the scattered leaves of the Sybil's oracles (*Par.* 33.65) contrast with the book of God's mind in 33.85–90.

79. See Schnapp, *Transfiguration*, 146; *Paradiso*, ed. Hollander, 372, compares the line to Dante's description in his first *Eclogue* of Giovanni del Virgilio's written pages (*Ecl.* 1, "vidimus in nigris albo patiente lituris").

80. For example, John Freccero, "The Eternal Image of the Father," in *Dante e la Bibbia*, ed. G. Barblan (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 62, 73–75; Ledda, "Paradiso XVII," 130–32.

81. See *Par.* 17.19–21 ("a Virgilio congiunto / su per lo monte . . . / e discendendo nel mondo defunto"); 112–17 ("giù per lo mondo senza fine amaro, / e per lo monte . . ."), and 136–37 ("in queste rote / nel monte e nella valle dolorosa"). Cf. *Par.* 31.121, and 31.85, "di servo tratto a libertate" (alluding to the Exodus) and 33.22–23, "dall'infima lacuna / dell'universo infin qui."

82. The rhetorical force of lyric to praise and blame is the last thing mentioned in the *Dve* (II.xiv.2); the idea may come from Brunetto Latini, *Rettorica*, "a' poeti si conviene di lodare e vituperar altrui" (*Arg.* 23).

83. Cf. *Inf.* 17.82, "così fatte scale" (Geryon); *Inf.* 34.82, "per cotali scale" (Satan, note identical line numbers), as well as those near the poem's absolute center (*Purg.* 17.65: "Volgemmo i nostri passi ad una scala"). For the poet's transformation of the other terms of his exile (the arrow, the salted bread) into metaphors of the journey that compensates for that exile, see Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, ed. Durling and Martinez, 18–21.

84. See McFie, "Ovid, Arachne," 170.

85. *Par.* 16.7–9: "sei tu manto che tosto raccorre [. . .] Lo tempo va dintorno con le force." *Force*, a *hapax* in Dante's works (a syncopation of *forcife*), is in significant rhyme with *torce*, "twist," and *raccorre*, "cut back," which preserves the sartorial context of the shears. *Raccorre* is also used to describe how the pilgrim's journey (his circlings) abbreviates his great-grandfather Alighiero's stay in Purgatory (*Par.* 15.96).

86. The device of the Arte della Lana, the "lamb of God," with gonfalon displaying the cross, associates the lamb with St. John the Baptist, the patron of Florence, who in the Gospel (John 1.29) identifies Christ as *agnus dei*.

87. Why *gonne* is the best reading, and correction of supposed evidence for *donne* at *Par.* 15.101, is now set out by Kristina Olson, "Shoes, Gowns, and Turncoats," *Dante Studies* 134 (2016): 26–47, esp. 27–35; extravagant *gonne* implicitly contrast with the humbler *gonna* that is the poem.

88. Compare the oft-cited epitaph of a dutiful Roman wife: *Domi mansit casta vixit lanam fecit*. Livy's Lucretia, the Roman archetype of the chaste wife, is remembered in *Par.* 6.41, "dal mal delle Sabine / al dolor di Lucrezia in sette regi"; also relevant is Prov. 31.13–25, on the admirable wife; half of the verses concern weaving or clothing (e.g. 31.19: "Manum suam misit ad fortia, et digiti ejus apprehenderunt fusum"). See Patricia Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies: Gaze, Image, and Gender in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 117–20.

89. As Dante makes explicit in the *Dve*, I.i.2, "quod vulgarem locutionem appellamus eam qua infantes assuefiunt ab assistentibus, cum primitius distinguere voces incipiunt; vel, quod brevius dici potest, vulgarem locutionem asserimus, quam sine omni regula nutricem imitantes accipimus." Note the emphasis on both speech and proximity. The vernacular is *nobilior* because it is a closer imitation of Nature, God's minister. On this "primal scene" of the origin

of language, see Gary Cestaro, “. . . quanquam Sarnus biberimus ante dentes . . .,” *Dante Studies* 109 (1991): 119–47 (124–25), and, for the maternal aspect, Sarah Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 9–12. Dante’s Adam and the first speakers also “fabricated” language, as if smiths or carpenters, in *Dve* I.vi.vi.6 (“labia fabricarunt”): mechanical artists.

90. The only other use of *chioma* in the *Paradiso* is for the “locks” (the petals) of the Empyrean rose, in effect the “head” of the Universe, which is “parted” by the vertical ranks of the blessed (“dirimendo del fiore tutte le *chiome*”). Note that *a co* in “trasse a co la spuola” means “a capo,” “to the head.” See Notes 57 and 91.

91. Furio Brugnolo, “Spunti per un nuovo commento,” in *Intorno a Guido Guinizelli*, ed. L. Rossi and S. Boller (Alessandria: Edizioni del Orso, 2002): 37–56 (50–55), argues that the transitive use of *trarre* in Bonagiunta’s sonnet against Guinizelli, “*traire canson per forza di scrittura*,” to which Dante alludes with *Purg.* 24.50, refers to aiming a crossbow. This interpretation will not work for *Purg.* 24.49–50, however, whereas *deducere versus* renders both source and echo without undue strain. See also *trarre* of drawing out and braiding cords at *Purg.* 13.39, “tratte d’amor le corde de la ferza,” and also *Purg.* 21.26, of drawing out the skein, “tratta la conocchia.” In *Par.* 3.96, “non trasse a co la spuola,” the reference is to drawing the shuttle through the wefts. See also Franco Suitner, “Colui che fore trasse le nove rime,” *Lettere italiane* 28 (1976): 339–45. See Note 58.

92. “[S]icut ille componit vestem ex diversis partibus pannis artificialiter ordinatis; ita poeta componit opus ex diversis partibus materiae et coordinat subtili artificio,” cited in Azzetta, “La geometria,” 332. Fra Giordano da Pisa, in the *Quaresimale fiorentino (1305–1306)*, ed. Carlo Delcorno (Florence: Sansoni, 1974): 320, says of *lanificium*: “Overo componendo: il filare arrobe fila, e ’l tessere molte fila, e così si fa il panno compognendo, poi si taglia e rapicca e così si fa la gonnella.”

93. The “fren dell’arte” refers to laws of writing, of rhetoric and poetic art echoing the “bridle” of the laws that according to Marco Lombardo remain unadministered in an Italy without an Emperor (*Purg.* 16.97); see also *Purg.* 6.88–89 (“che val perché ti raccontasse il freno / Giustiniano, se la sella è vota?”), invoking the “art” of *equitatio* (horsemanship), Dante’s metaphor for imperial government (e.g. *Convivio* IV.ix.10), “retrice di tutte le nostre operazioni.”

94. In the *De inventione* Cicero uses *prudencia* nine times and *providentia* twice; and see *Conv.* III.i.10: “La terza ragione fu uno argomento di provedenza; che, sì come dice Boezio, ‘non basta di guardare pur quello che e dinanzi a li occhi,’ cioè lo presente, e però n’è data la provedenza che riguarda oltre, a quello che può avvenire.” (Cf. Boethius *Cons.* 2 pr. 1.15): “Neque enim, quod ante oculos situm est suffecerit intueri”; and as Sarteschi, “Dal *Tesoretto*,” 24, points out, Dante’s four uses of *antivedere* (“foresight”) follow from Brunetto’s use in the *Rettorica* (the first known instance in *volgare*) in a sense relevant to my argument: “Et dice che sapienza è amodenatrice di tutte le cose però che ella sae antivedere e porre a tutte cose certo modo e certo fine” (*Rettorica*, 37).

95. Not of course empirically the case, as every syllable of the *Comedy* could not have mentally preexisted the form in which it was written down (inconsistencies, e.g. the two Mantos, etc., are a case in point). On the other hand, the poem shows a level of coherence attained by few other works of verbal art of comparable scope. Within limits, this coherence suggests that the poet conceived the work as a tripartite structure, in which the second and third parts multifariously recall the first, and the first two prepare the last. See Durling’s Additional Note 14 (*Paradiso*, ed. Durling and Martinez, 757–62).

96. For a preliminary discussion of the interpretive stakes of vertical structure in the poem, see Simon Gilson, “The Wheeling Sevens,” *Cambridge Vertical Readings*, ed. G. Corbett and H. Webb, I, 143–60.

97. Steven Botterill, *Dante, Bernard and the Mystical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 106–7, comments: “the use of a ‘low’ stylistic register and ‘unpoetic’ vocabulary (*sartore, panno, gonna*) reveals Bernard as master of *all* forms and levels of human language, equally capable of expressing himself in homely proverbs and undertaking an incisive scholastic exposition or an ornate petition to the Virgin.” But Botterill’s statement is far more true of Dante than

of the historical Bernard: indeed, as we see, the simile of the tailor springs from the rhetorical instruction of Boncompagno and Brunetto Latini. See Note 23.

98. *Drappo*, normally indicating a stuff of silk, linen, or wool, appears three times in the *Vita nuova*: Beatrice's *drappo sanguigno* (*Vn* 3.4, 3.12), and the *vili drappi* of Love as pilgrim (9.3); it is found also in verse 9 of the sonnet "Un di si venne a me Malinconia," where Love is "vestito di novo d'un drappo nero"; in the *Commedia* for the green Veronese *palio* (*Inf.* 15.122), for the "drappi tartari e turchi" that exemplify Geryon's hide (*Inf.* 17.17), and for the cloth that Virgil tears from the *sirena* (*Purg.* 19.32: "fendendo i drappi").

99. On the *Rettorica* (or *Rectorica*, as Brunetto spells it, emphasizing its function in regulating the commune), see Artifoni, cited below; see also: Roberto Crespo, "Brunetto Latini e la *Poetria nova* di Geoffroy de Vinsauf," *Lettere italiane* 24 (1972): 97–99; Guido Baldassarri, "Prologus e *Accessus ad auctores* nella *Rettorica* di Brunetto Latini, *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 12 (1976): 102–16; Gian Carlo Alessio, "Brunetto Latini e Cicerone (e i dettatori)," *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 22 (1979): 123–70; Ronald G. Witt, "Brunetto Latini and the Italian Tradition of *Ars Dictaminis*," *Stanford Italian Review* 2 (1983): 5–24; and Enrico Artifoni, "I podestà professionali e la fondazione retorica della politica comunale," *Quaderni storici [Conflitti locali e idiomi politici]* n.s. 21 (1986): 687–719. See also Selene Sarteschi, "Dal *Tesoretto* alla *Commedia*: considerazioni su alcune riprese dantesche dal testo di Brunetto Latini," *Rassegna Europea di Letteratura Italiana* 19 (2002): 19–44 and her "Uno scaffale della biblioteca volgare di Dante: Dalla *Rettorica* di Brunetto Latini alla *Vita nuova*," in *Leggere dante*, ed. L. Battaglia Ricci (Ravenna: Longo, 2003), 171–90; Paola Allegretti, "Dante e Brunetto sui duri margini (*Inf.* XV.1). Strategia di risarcimento postumo," in her *Adespoti, prosimetri e filigrane. Ricerche di filologia dantesca* (Ravenna: Longo, 2013), 324–40, and Johannes Bartuschat, "Appunti sulla concezione della Retorica in Brunetto Latini e in Dante," in *Dante e la Rettorica*, ed. Luca Marcozzi (Ravenna: Longo, 2017), 29–42. I have not seen Caroline Keen, "Vernacular Eloquence between Brunetto and Dante," given at the conference "Reconsidering Dante and Brunetto Latini (and Bono Giamboni)," hosted by Notre Dame in Rome, May 18–19, 2017.

100. "But whosoever harmonizes his words well with the nature of the case and thinks in advance of what should be said first, and what afterwards, then surely his beginning will be such that from it the middle and the end of the discourse will arise in an orderly fashion."

101. On A[alpha] and O[mega] (the medieval Vulgate registered only A and ω), Christ as beginning and end, cf. Apoc. 22.13 (ed. Weber): "ego A et ω primus et novissimus principium et finis". Dante uses the phrase from John's Apocalypse in *Paradiso* 26.16–18 to identify God as beginning and end of all that "Love reads to him" ("Alfa e O è di quanta scrittura mi legge Amore"), but the alphabetic formula summarizes numerous aspects of the structure of *Paradiso*: see Durling, Additional Note 14, *Paradiso*, ed. Durling and Martinez, 757–62, and the Notes by Durling in the Appendix to Boethius's "O qui perpetua" (688–94). The similarity of *Par.* 26.16–18 to *Purg.* 24.52–53, "quando / Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo / ch'è ditta dentro, vo significando," is self-evident.

102. Cf. *Par.* 11.132, "le cappe forniscono poco panno." Implicit is the "shearing" of the friars, who, given their irregular lives, yield little in the way of cloth, that is, little spiritual profit ("shearers," *tosatori*, represented the first stage of wool production).

103. Relevant, too, to the textile lexicon is *tigna* (15.111), Brunetto's disdainful term for his fellow sodomites, recalling the biblical *tinea*, used in the Vulgate: five of thirteen instances describe damage to cloth. See Job 15.28: "Qui quasi putredo consumendus sum, et quasi vestimentum quod comeditur a tinea"; Isaiah 51.8: "Sicut enim vestimentum, sic comedet eos vermis; et sicut lanam, sic devorabit eos tinea." Matth. 6.19 is implicit in Brunetto's mention of his *Tesoro* (*Inf.* 15.119): "Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra: ubi aerugo, et tinea demolitur: et ubi fures effodiunt, et furantur."

104. *Inf.* 16.8–9: "a l'abito ne sembri / . . . di nostra terra prava." This is the only use of *abito* in *Inferno*, one of three instances across the poem (the others are at *Purg.* 29.134, the white *abiti* of the books representing Acts and the Pauline epistles; and at *Par.* 3.104, Piccarda's habit as a poor Clare, "nel suo abito mi chiusi.")

105. For the harsh characterization of Brunetto implied in the canto, see Freccero, “Eternal Image,” 66–67.

106. The parallels here adduced are only a part of the full Brunettian intertext in Cantos 32–33; a more complete account will follow in a future version of this essay.

107. Whether the *Tesor* or *Tesoretto* is meant (or both) remains a matter of debate. The lines are often taken ironically, suggesting the paltriness of Brunetto’s wish to survive in a book, while his soul is lost in Hell. But see the essays by Sarteschi and Allegretti for what the latter terms “risarcimento” in the treatment of Brunetto’s texts (and reputation) in the poem. *Risarcire*, one might add, from *sarcire*, which derives from *sarto*, is a tailoring metaphor.

108. As if glossing the *Rettorica*, the Brunetto episode incorporates an account of the medieval epistle, which Brunetto added to his translation of Cicero’s treatise: thus on seeing the pilgrim, Brunetto’s exclamation “qual meraviglia” (*Inf.* 15.24) recalls the epistolary *salutatio* that—when the *causa* is *vile*—announces something marvelous in order to curry approbation (*Rettorica* 89, “sì come fece Virgilio volendo trattare de l’api: ‘Io dicerò cose molto meravigliose e grandi delle piccole api’”; and cf. *Ad Her.* 1.7, “de rebus magnis, novis, inusitatis”). Brunetto’s prediction of the pilgrim’s destiny is a *narratio* (15.88: “ciò che narrate del mio corso scrivo”), and Brunetto adds a *petitio* in favor of his *Tesoro*, which in book III teaches rhetoric (15.119: “sieti raccomandato il mio Tesoro . . . più non chieggo”). On the *salutatio* in the *Rettorica*, see Allegretti, “Dante e Brunetto,” in *Adespoti*, 324–29.

109. But only twice in the sense here employed. Cf. *Purg.* 6.29, “espresso in alcun testo,” indicating *Aen.* 6.365–76, the Sybil’s prohibition of Palinurus’s plea to Aeneas. “[C]otal testo,” *Par.* 27.118, refers to an earthenware pot, produced by a different artisan, the potter (*figulus*). Boncompagno in his *Oliua* [1.2] juxtaposes the writer–potter to the writer–weaver: “Set cum in eo sericam desiderem texere telam, non possum de quolibet uellere facere ordinamentum; nec de testa figuli trahere formam, qua uasa domus Domini fiant,” alluding to the clay vessels of *Rom.* 9.21: “an non habet potestatem figulus lutu ex eadem massa facere aliud quidem vas in honorem, aliud vero in contumeliam?”. Cf. also *Speculum doctrinale* XI.xxviii, on “*vasa* [. . .] *ficilia*.”

110. Sarteschi notes (“Uno scaffale,” 181) that Brunetto’s *Rettorica* was “un modello di libro” for Dante. Allegretti, “Dante e Brunetto,” in *Adespoti*, 333, makes the point that *scriver* and *chiosar* are precisely the two functions Brunetto deploys in his *Rettorica*. *Testo*, common in the *Rettorica* (31 uses), is absent from the *Tesoretto*.

111. “Là sù di sopra in la vita serena, / rispuos’io a lui, ‘mi smarri’ in una valle,” the pilgrim recounts to Brunetto, and “‘Questi,’”—that is, Virgil—“m’apparve, tornand’io in quella / e reducemmi a ca per questo calle.” This juncture is noted by Sarteschi, “Dal *Tesoretto*,” 23.

112. See Ledda, “Paradiso XVII,” 137–38; the same nexus occurs in the interview with Forese (*Purg.* 23.118–33). For Brunetto’s prediction of the “glorioso porto” awaiting Dante, and its contrast with the pilgrim’s actual destination, see Sarteschi, “Dal *Tesoretto*,” 24; see also Allegretti, “Dante e Brunetto,” in *Adespoti*, 324–29.

113. “Sumite materiam vestris [. . .] aequam / viribus; cui lecta potenter erit res, / nec facundia deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.” In another much-cited passage, Horace touches on the “weaving” of words (*Ars poetica* 46–48: “In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis / dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum / reddiderit iunctura novum” (Horace’s *sero* sometimes translated as “sow,” in context a less likely choice; see Note 69).

114. For the edition of the “*Materia*” commentary, see Karsten Friis-Jensen, “The *Ars poetica* in Twelfth-Century France: The Horace of Matthew of Vendôme, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, and John of Garland,” *Cahiers de l’Institut du Moyen Âge grec et latin* 60 (1990): 319–88 (319–30); Claudia Villa, “Dante lettore di Orazio,” in *Dante e la ‘bella scola,’* ed. A. Iannucci (Ravenna: Longo, 1993), 100–4; see also Zygmunt G. Barański, “‘Valentissimo poeta e correggitore de’ poeti,’ a First Note on Horace and the *Vita nuova*,” in *Letteratura e filologia tra Svizzera e Italia: Studi in onore di Guglielmo Gorni* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2010), 1, 3–17. Dante, who endowed Horace with the title of *magister*, recalls the prescription to “take up a subject” in *De vulgari eloquentia* II.4.4, and in *Paradiso* 23.64–66, when he admits his incapacity to shoulder the burden of rendering Beatrice’s beauty, but his familiarity with the influential Horatian maxim begins

with *Vita Nuova* 19.11–14, the moment of inception of his new poetic style. The passage, which has not received its sufficient rhetorical gloss, will be discussed in a future version of this paper.

115. "The *Ars poetica*," ed. Friis-Jensen, 343: "quid primum quid medium quid posterius sit dicendum."

116. To wit, to set the proper distribution of the work's *sententia*, for adapting *elocutio* to the audience, and for the labor of memorizing a work for oral delivery: see *Poetria nova*, in *Les arts poétiques du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle*, ed. E. Faral (Paris: Champion, 1971): vv. 81–82 ("qua compensare statera / pondera, si juste pendet sententia"); 1090–91 ("da pondera verbis / aequa suis humeris"); and 1993–95 ("quam valeant humerique velint"); also 295–97, 2007. The first mention follows on the question of what goes first, middle, and last (80–81: "quo limite debeat ordo / currere"). For artificial memory as a category of Brunetto's influence on Dante, see Sarteschi, "Dal Tesoretto," 22.

117. *Pn* 44–45: "intrinsicca linea cordis / praemetitur opus, seriemque sub ordine certo / interior praescribit homo." For this passage in relation to the image of the *domus* and the fashioning of labyrinths, see Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 203–4. For a recent discussion of links between Dante and Geoffrey, see Veronica Alba, "Dante e Goffredo di Vinsauf: per un primo bilancio," in *Dante e la Rettorica*: 11–28.

118. *Pn* 60–61 (ed. Faral): "Mentis in arcano cum rem digesserit ordo, / materiam verbis veniat vestire poesis."

119. In Hugh's list of mechanical arts, *armatura*, which includes the building arts, directly follows *lanificium*; also in Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. doctr.* XI.xiii, and others. Cf. also Giordano da Pisa's sermon, *Quaresimale fiorentino*, 320, listing *lanificium* and building (*aedificatio*) in order: "Overo componendo: il filare arroe fila, e 'l tessere molte fila [. . .] Overo ordinando, come il maestro che fa la casa, che ordina calcina e pietre." For the Troubadours the idea of "building" poems (*bastir*) was as common as that of "weaving" words ("entrebescar los motz"); see Van Vleck, *Memory and Re-creation*, 175–77, and Note 66.

120. See *Rettorica*, Arg. 102: "sì vuole Tullio medesimo in questa parte del suo testo insegnare come noi potemo del nostro *exordio*, cioè nel prologo e nel *cominciamento* del nostro dire, fare intenti coloro che noi odono."

121. See *Tresor* III.17.3, where the passage continues: "Et dedens lui pregne l'ordre de sa voie et de sa fin, car a ce que les besoignes du siecle sont diverses, te covient a parler diversement, et a chacune selonc sa matire."

122. The precise geometry of its construction, fostering the implicit resemblance of Dante's Empyrean to an amphitheater, strongly suggests Dante's model is an ideal Rome (see *Paradiso*, ed. Durling and Martinez, Notes to 30.109 and 133–38, 31.31–36 and 32.115–20), inclusive of the place set out for Emperor Henry VII (*Par.* 31.133–36), as well as representing the proper forum for the Italian vernacular as imagined in the *De vulgari eloquentia* ("aulicum et curiale," *Dve* I.19.1; cf. *Par.* 25.42, "aula segreta").

123. *Poetria nova* 59–60 (ed. Faral): "opus totus prudens in pectoris arce / contrahe, sitque prius in pectore quam in ore" [Prudently draw the whole work within the mind's citadel, let it exist in the mind before it is on the lips]. Analogous ideas are of course widespread in Aquinas's work: see especially *Summa Theol.* I, q. 74, a. 3, resp. ("formatio artificiorum est per formam artis quae est in mente artificis") and III, q. 78, a. 2, resp. ("in mente aedificatoris est forma domus aedificatae").

124. See *Inf.* 29.113, "levar per l'aere a volo," rhyming with *solo* and *figliuolo* (spoken by the alchemist Capocchio, who could not make Albero da Siena fly, "nol feci Dedalo"). On Dante's Daedalus, see Doob, *The Idea*, 296–99; Robert Hollander, *Il Virgilio dantesco: tragedia nella Commedia* (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 135n; Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Dethologizing Dante* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 91–92, and Kevin Brownlee, "Dante's Transfigured Ovidian Models, Daedalus and Icarus in the *Commedia*," in *Rethinking the New Medievalism*, ed. R. Howard Bloch et al. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 162–80.

125. *Paradiso*, ed. Hollander, 816, sees the pilgrim's wings in *Par.* 15.54 and 25.50 as daedalian. For authorities on mechanical arts, Daedalus is the master of *ars fabrilis* (smithing and carpentry; Hugh, *Didascalicon* III.2), architecture (Vincent, *Speculum doctrinale*, XI.xvi), and, as the chief disciple of Minerva, even weaving (*Didasc.* III.2); some feathers in the wings Daedalus made were sewn on with thread (Ovid, *Met.* 8.193: "tum lino medias . . . adligat").

126. For this process, see Freccero, "The Significance of *Terza Rima*," in *The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachal Jacoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 258–74: 263. By invoking a pilgrim in the church he has vowed to see, Dante's pilgrim is compared to himself, just as the "tempio" is a figure for the Empyrean itself: the distance between tenor and vehicle is purely notional. Cf. "il velo [. . .] è tanto sottile."

127. There are eight such rhymes in *Purgatorio*, and but one in *Inferno* (30.29–33), which includes "altrui conciano," a tanning metaphor. Cf. Amedeo Quondam in *ED*, *sub voce*: "con diretto e preciso riferimento a quello proprio di macerare le pelli."

128. *Poetria nova*, 55–59: "Circinus interior mentis praecircinet omne / materiae spatium. Certus praelimitet ordo / unde praearripita cursum stylus, aut ubi Gades figat." Cf. Vincent, *Speculum doctrinale*, XI.xxvi, "Circinus dictus, quod vergendo efficiat circulum," listed among the tools of the architect. Dante knew that the mythic inventor of the compasses (or, in Dante's Italian, the *sesto*) was Talus, Daedalus's nephew and rival. See Ovid, *Met.* 8.236–59.

129. Anticipated, in *Inferno*, by the request to Amphion's Muses (*Inf.* 32.7–12) that the poet might "describer fondo all'universo". For God the geometer in terms of *Paradiso* 33.100–102, see Paradisi, "Icône," 359–60, with a useful bibliography. For medieval illustration of God with compasses, see John Block Friedman, "The Architect's Compass in Creation Miniatures in the Later Middle Ages," *Traditio* 30 (1974): 419–29.

130. Barolini, *Undivine Comedy*, 237–38, and Piero Boitani, "Canto XXIX," in *Lectura dantis turicensis*, vol III: *Paradiso*, ed. Georges Güntert and Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2002): 441–55; 443.

131. In *De vulgari eloquentia* II.vi.5–6, Dante proclaims that the "gradum constructionis excellentissimum" characterizes the weave of the most celebrated poems, "illustres cantiones inveniuntur contexte." *Dispositio* is also a term used in architecture, cf. Vincent, *Speculum doctrinale*, XI.xiv, xvii.

132. See Paradisi, "Icône," 379–81.

133. See Note 74. On Dante's gloss of *avieo*, the postulated obsolete verb (and its related forms, *aviere*, *avientes*) see Roger Dragonetti, "Le sens du cercle et le poète," in *Aux frontières du langage poétique, Romanica Gandensia* vol. 9 (1961): 78–92, who proposes the correlation of *a* with Alpha, *o* with O[mega], and the central *i* with Adamo's prelapsarian name for God (*Par.* 26.134); see also Albert R. Ascoli, *Dante, the Making of a Modern Author*, 117–21.

134. "Prendete la canzon, la qual io porgo / al saver vostro, che l'agiunchi e cimi / ch'a voi ciò solo com'a mastr' accorgo, / ch'ell' è congiunta certo a debel' vimi" (first noted by G. Contini, *Un'idea di Dante* [Turin: Einaudi, 1960]: 201). *Agiunchire* would mean binding with rushes or reeds (*giunchi*) like those used to girdle the pilgrim (*Purg.* 1.94–95, "costui ricinghe / d'un giunco schietto"). As Paolo Borsa proposes (*La nuova poesia di Guido Guinizelli* [Florence: Cadmo, 2007]: 13–53), the line in the manuscript of the sonnet can also be read "congiunta certo a de' bel vimi," reversing the meaning, so that the links are beautiful, not weak. See also Ronald L. Martinez, "Guinizellian Protocols: Angelic Hierarchies, Human Government, and Poetic Form in Dante," *Dante Studies* 134 (2017): 48–111, esp. 64–65.

135. "[The hive] whether made from hollow bark sewn together, or woven with pliant osiers" (*Georgics* IV.33–34). Vergil's *lento* [. . .] *vimine* is cited by Gorni ("La metafora," 144) as a source for *vime* in *Par.* 28.100 and 29.36.

136. *Par.* 31.9, "là dove suo lavoro s'insapora," echoes Dante's "ultimo lavoro" in the invocation to Apollo (*Par.* 1.13, part of the *exordium* of the third cantica); the Latinism also echoes Vergil's *Eclogue* X.1, "Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem"; and *Georgics* 4.116: "extremo ni iam sub fine laborum." For Vergil, beehives were products of natural craft: bees engineer "daedala . . . tecta" (*Georgics* 4.179).

137. For the angels' motions, see Note 4. As Albert Rossi observed in "The Poetics of Resurrection: Virgil's Bees (*Paradiso* XXXI, 1–1200)," *Romanic Review* 80 (1989): 307–324 (308–13), the comparison in *Paradiso* 31 of the beehive with *Aeneid* 6.707–9 is the last adaptation of the Vergilian Elysian Fields to Dante's poem, recapitulating earlier versions in the infernal Limbo, the valley of Princes, and the Earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio*.

138. At *Convivio*. 4.9.14 Dante uses the technical *tunica* for the membranes of the eye ("la tunica de la pupilla"), but renders it as *gonna* in *Paradiso* 26.72: "lo spirto visivo che ricorre / a lo splendor che va di *gonna in gonna*" (rhyming with *assonna*, so doubly linked to *Par.* 32.137–41). On the ocular tunics as "represented" in the Empyrean, see Kay, "Dante's Empyrean," 37–65, esp. 50–56.

139. Gen. 3.7: "Conserunt folia ficus et fecerunt sibi perizomata"; and 21: "Fecit quoque Dominus Deus Adae et uxori ejus tunicas pelliceas, et induit eos." Gen. 3.7 is referred to at *Didascalicon* 1.9; Gen. 3.21 at *Speculum doctrinale* XI.iii, part of Vincent's section on *lanificium*, as the first example of a tunic; see also Kilwardby, *De ortu scientiarum*: xxxvii [359].

140. John 19.23: "Milites ergo cum crucifixissent eum, acceperunt vestimenta ejus (et fecerunt quatuor partes, unicuique militi partem) et tunicam. Erat autem tunica inconsutilis, desuper contexta per totum." See also Matth. 27.35, "diviserunt vestimenta ejus, sortem mittentes." The vernacular *testo breve* of the *Meditations on the Life of Christ: The Short Italian Text*, ed. Sarah McNamer (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018: 144), and dated by the editor to 1300–25, renders Christ's Vulgate *tunica* as *gonella*.

141. *Monarchia* I.xvi.3: "Qualiter autem se habuerit orbis ex quo tunica ista inconsutilis cupiditatis ungue scissuram primitius passa est, et legere possumus et utinam non videre" and III.x.6: "Si ergo alique dignitates per Constantinum essent alienate – ut dicunt—ab Imperio, et cessissent in potestatem Ecclesie, scissa esset tunica inconsutilis, quam scindere ausi non sunt etiam qui Cristum verum Deum lancea perforarunt." Dante shifts to the integrity of the Empire an association frequently made of the Church (cf. Innocent III, *PL* 216.1091D: "Haec est enim tunica inconsutilis desuper contexta per totum, quae divisa non fuit etiam tempore passionis."). Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 303, notes that Dante's passage "corrects" Boniface's assertions in *Unam sanctam* regarding the Church.

142. Modeled on Lady Philosophy's "garment woven by her own hands" (*suis manibus texuerat*) and lacerated by disputing sects (*vestes . . . sciderant*), in Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*, as pointed out by Bruno Nardi, *Dal Convivio alla Commedia* (Rome, 1960): 17; see also Lombardi, *Boezio in Dante*, 424–27. John C. Magee sees in Philosophy's torn vestment an allusion to the division by Christ's captors of his garments; see Magee's "Note on Boethius, *Consolatio* I.1,5; 3,7: A New Biblical Parallel," *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988): 79–82. Associations of Philosophy's *vestes*, Dante's *gonna*, and the imagery of the *Consolatio* will be detailed in a future study.

143. A clue that Dante had not only the Vulgate but also Boethius in mind when setting out *Monarchia* 1.16.3 is Dante's use not of biblical *dividere* but Boethius's *scidere*. Dante's Empire, we recall, guides humanity to blessedness in this life through philosophy: "per philosophica documenta venimus, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes morales et intellectuales operando" (*Mon.*, III.xv.8).

144. Divisions in the body politic, and in the spiritual body of the faithful, are deplored throughout the poem: cf. divided Florence (*Inf.* 6.61: "la città *partita*"; *Par.* 16.63: "per *division* fatto vermiglio"). It is striking that three of six uses of *piaghe* in the poem are consequences of schisms (*Inf.* 28.2, 29.1 and *Purg.* 7.97: "le *piaghe* c'hanno Italia morta").

145. *Par.* 32.1–3: "La piaga che Maria richiuse e unse / quella ch'è tanto bella da' suoi piedi, / è colei che l'aperse e che la *punse*." *Pungere* is of course closely related to the *punta* of the needle, and the point, *punto*.