AISTĖ KILTINAVIČIŪTĖ

RAPTURE AND VISIONARY VIOLENCE IN DANTE'S *PURGATORIO* 9[*]

Abstract: This article argues that the representation of Dante's dream in *Purgatorio* 9 is indebted to the depiction of rapture in Virgil's and Ovid's stories of Ganymede, but also outdoes them by registering the inwardness and sensory reactions of the raptured. In rewriting his classical models, Dante implicitly invokes Saint Paul as an authority on what it feels like to be raptured, allowing the poet to valorise the vulnerability of the visionary body and the cognitive uncertainty when confronted with mystical experiences. Finally, the article outlines the implications of rapture represented in *Purgatorio* 9 for the *Commedia* as a whole: the dream leads the pilgrim towards a more profound appreciation of how an individual can participate in the universal bonds of desire that, in Dante's understanding, order and regulate the world.
Keywords: Dante, dream, *raptus*, rapture, *Purgatorio*, Saint Paul, Ganymede, Ovid, Virgil.

Introduction

Dedicated entirely to the pilgrim's transition from the Ante-Purgatory to Purgatory proper ("Tu se' omai al purgatorio giunto," *Purg*. 9.49), *Purgatorio* 9 begins with a reminder that Dante, like Aeneas and Saint Paul, is present in the "immortale secolo" with his senses ("sensibilmente," *Inf*. 2.14-15).[1] By the opening of *Purgatorio* 9, the pilgrim's physical body has tired ("vinto dal sonno," 9.11).[2] So he reclines wearily on the grass of the so-called Valley of the Princes and falls asleep. After suggesting that his experience should be seen in the context of the expanded powers of the mind during prophetic early morning visions ("la

[*] My thanks go to the editors of the 2021 issue of *Annali d'Italianistica*, especially Heather Webb and Giuseppe Ledda, who were exposed to many iterations of this article in its less articulate forms. I am grateful to my hosts and academic grandfathers at Stanford University, Robert P. Harrison and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, who created the conditions for me to write the majority of this article under the celestial light illuminating the Green Library in between equally enlightening visits to Sultana. I also want to thank Anna Gabriella Chisena, Juan Varela-Portas de Orduña, Paola Tricomi, and other participants of the Alma Dante 2020 seminar at the Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di Filologia Classica e Italianistica (23-25 June 2020), whose insightful comments helped to improve this article.

[1] The word *sensibilmente* "[q]ualifica un verbo che denoti un'azione dei sensi, o rientrante comunque nell'ambito della sensibilità" ("sensibilmente," *Enciclopedia Dantesca*). While the notion of Saint Paul as Dante's model will be explored in detail in this article, for the parallel with Aeneas, see Kevin Brownlee, "Dante, Beatrice, and the Two Departures from Dido"; Carolynn Lund-Mead; and Kay.

[2] The Italian text of Dante's *Commedia* quoted in this work is the Giorgio Petrocchi edition.

mente nostra […] a le sue visïon quasi è divina," 9.16-18), Dante proceeds to the description of the first purgatorial dream.[3] As Dante pictures being carried by an eagle "terribil come folgor" (9.29) and lifted up "infino al foco" (9.30), the dream seems to set him afire: the imagined burning of the eagle and of the pilgrim's body ("parea che ella e io ardesse," 9.31) is so relentless that Dante awakes ("convenne che 'l sonno si rompesse," 9.33). Virgil then explains that Dante's ascent has in fact been physical and that the golden-plumed eagle was a manifestation of Saint Lucy, whose intervention eased his transition into Purgatory.[4]

What is remarkable about this episode is that it takes no less than 36 lines, or a quarter of the canto (9.32-69), for Dante to fully come back from dreaming to the narrative which is again pressing onward towards the encounter with the angelic "portier" (9.78) and the imprinting of the seven Ps on Dante's body. While the dream might at first appear as a narrative pause, it is a moment of immersive absorption no less important than the "main" narrative line, allowing Dante to analyze precisely how transitions happen in the afterlife and how poetry can perform these transitions.[5]

In representing Dante's divinely authorized crossing, perhaps the most radical demand that *Purgatorio* 9 makes on the poem's readers is to ask them to conceptualize it in the framework of rapture. The description of Dante's dream contains the poem's only use of the participial form *ratto*, analogous to the Latin *raptus*: "esser mi parea là dove fuoro / abbandonati i suoi da Ganimede, / quando *fu ratto* al sommo consistoro" (9.22-24).[6] While there are other terms to denote the trance-like states of abstraction induced by proximity to God in medieval contexts, such as *extasis* or *excessus mentis*, rapture conveys the idea of being overpowered by the divine presence.[7] In his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas makes a distinction between ecstasy and the even more intense experience of rapture: "Rapture adds something to ecstasy. For ecstasy means simply 'to be outside oneself.' […] But rapture adds a certain violence to this" (2a2ae, 175.2). In the legal Latin of both classical and medieval times, *raptus*, from *rapere*, "to snatch or seize," denotes a range of crimes, including robbery, seizure,

[3] As a study of a single Dantean dream, this article cannot address the importance of Dante's framework of dreams and visions in *Purgatorio* and *Vita nova* in full. For a more extended discussion, see Cervigni; and Barucci. For medieval contexts for understanding dreaming and dream books that might have informed Dante's writing, see Cappozzo; and Kruger.

[4] For an extensive discussion of Saint Lucy's role in the *Commedia*, see Anthony K. Cassell.

[5] For the analysis of the aspects of the canto not explicitly addressed in the article, see Glyn P. Norton, "Retrospection and Prefiguration in the Dreams of *Purgatorio*"; Scott; Picone, "Le metamorfosi dell'amore"; Schibanoff; Clarke; Barucci; Zygmunt G. Barański; and Ciabattoni.

[6] Here and hereafter, added emphasis in quotations is mine, unless indicated otherwise.

[7] See Faes de Mottoni, "*Excessus mentis*, *alienatio mentis*, estasi, *raptus* nel Medioevo."

kidnapping, abduction, and most frequently rape.[8] The violence implied in the classical Latin word carries forward into the later Middle Ages, when *raptus* also comes to designate a mystical condition, allowing Dante to explore the degree of compulsion involved in the process of coming closer to the divine.[9]

The long intellectual, theological, and literary history of rapture exercises its influence on Dante's depiction of being "ratto al sommo consistoro" (9.24). The canto explores the same set of concerns we find in medieval theories of rapture: the visionary violence outlined by Aquinas is manifest in the overwhelming of Dante's senses, the uncertainty about the degree of the pilgrim's conscious agency, and a sense of an external force acting upon the unprepared visionary. Brevity and speed commonly attributed to rapture highlight how the dream, in contrast to the more continuous transformation we see throughout *Purgatorio*, enacts drastic and abrupt change in compressed time.[10] However, in discussing the involvement of the body and the transportation of the mind in mystical experience, Dante also significantly rewrites the two main models of rapture available to him: Ganymede and Saint Paul. As I shall explain in this article, the classical *raptus* is not clearly superseded by the Pauline *raptus* in the canto, but rather overlaps with it at numerous points.

To explore this claim more fully, in what follows, I will look at how the poet borrows the emphasis on desire in *raptus* from Virgil's and Ovid's stories of Ganymede, but also outdoes them by registering the inwardness and sensory reactions of the raptured, absent from his classical models. The article will then look at how Dante invokes Saint Paul as an authority on what it *feels like* to be raptured, allowing the poet to valorise the sensory uncertainty in the face of rapture.[11] Finally, I will outline the implications of the representation of rapture in *Purgatorio* 9 for the *Commedia* as a whole, suggesting that rapture leads the dreamer towards a more profound appreciation of how an individual can

---

[8] See Dunn, "The Language of Ravishment in Medieval England" and *Stolen Women in Medieval England*; Walker, "Sexual Violence and Rape in Europe, 1500-1750."

[9] For a detailed discussion of this terminology, see Elliott, "The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality" and "*Raptus*/Rapture"; Newman; Faes de Mottoni, "Interpretazioni tardo-antiche e medievali del sopore di Adamo"; Mandeville Caciola; and Davis.

[10] "per indicare la sensazione di D. di essere trasportato *velocemente* verso la sfera del fuoco… […] Detto del movimento *veloce e trascinante* del Primo Mobile" (Lucia Onder, "rapire," *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, added emph.).

[11] Rapture-like moments also occur in *Inferno*, where they involve a sudden suspension of the senses, for example, when the pilgrim faints after listening to Francesca in *Inferno* 5: "io venni men così com' io morisse. / E caddi come corpo morto cade" (*Inf*. 5.141-42). Describing the pilgrim's state in *Inferno* 1, Dante references the terminology of sleep, which has been interpreted as more or less allegorical: "Io non so ben ridir com' i' v'intrai, / tant' era pien di sonno a quel punto / che la verace via abbandonai" (*Inf*. 1.10-12). However, none of these episodes engage with *raptus* as explicitly as *Purgatorio* 9, as they do not use the terminology of rapture.

participate in the universal bonds of desire that, in Dante's understanding, order and regulate the world.

"Là dove fuoro / abbandonati i suoi da Ganimede": The Missing Sensation in Ganymedean Rapture

Just as Dante the pilgrim experiences rapture, Dante the poet is a rapturer, in the word's more traditional sense of theft, insofar as he borrows the story of Ganymede from the classical tradition and inflicts a kind of cognitive violence upon it in adapting it for a narrative of Christian salvation.[12] At the beginning of the dream, Dante imagines himself to be where Ganymede was last seen in his earthly life ("fu ratto"), foreshadowing the pilgrim's rapture by the eagle that will soon follow ("me rapisse"):

> ed esser mi parea là dove fuor
> abbandonati i suoi da Ganimede,
> quando *fu ratto* al sommo consistoro.
>
> (9.22-24)

> Poi mi parea che, poi rotata un poco,
> terribil come folgor discendesse,
> e *me rapisse* suso infino al foco.
>
> (9.28-30)

As the myth of Ganymede would have it, the beautiful youth was taken into the heavens by an eagle sent by Jove (or, in some versions of the story, by Jove in the shape of an eagle) to act as the god's cupbearer and lover.[13] Erotic desire was undoubtedly part of the Greek and Latin reception of the story: as Amy Richlin shows, Ganymede, or *Catamitus*, its Latinized form, is often a name given to a young and passive man, or even a boy, in narratives of same-sex desire. Dante's interpretation of the myth is part of a long history of its literary reception: the story is retold by Virgil, Ovid, Statius, and Martial, and later reappears in the *Ovide moralisé* and Pierre Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus*.[14] The sensory emphasis in Dante's version is all the more remarkable considering that the poet is writing in a setting where there is a well-documented critical tradition that attempts to eschew or renegotiate the corporeal aspects of *raptus*. In the Western

---

[12] *OED*, "rapture," 5: "the action or an act of seizing and carrying off as prey or plunder."

[13] For the analysis of Ganymede in Dante, see Anfray; and Teulade. On the different versions of the Ganymede myth, see Kolve; Lingiardi, "Ganymede and Zeus" and "Spiritual Love and Carnal Love"; Orgel; Verstraete and Provencal; Strolonga. On the transmission of the Ganymede myth, see Saslow, "3,000 Years of Homoerotic Pictures"; Marongiu, ed.; Crompton; Chronopoulos; Craig A. Gibson. For further bibliographical references, see "Ganymede Legend," in Timothy Murphy, ed., 237-38.

[14] In the early-fourteenth-century *Ovide moralisé*, Ganymede becomes a figure for Saint John the Evangelist taken into the heavens to witness the Apocalypse. See Salisbury.

tradition, Leonard Barkan explains, "the prevailing exegesis of the Ganymede myth, from Plato's time through the Renaissance, transforms the carnality of the myth as radically as possible" (24). Xenophon's interpretation that Ganymede was loved for the beauty of his mind gains traction with the ascendance of Neoplatonism, and the insistence on Dante's dream as a neo-Platonic rapture is common among his Renaissance commentators.[15] For them, Ganymede serves as an allegorical figure for the divine logos (see Dillon), divine contemplation, or the ascent of the soul after death (see Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance*). In Cristoforo Landino's commentary on the canto,[16] Ganymede "signifies the human mind," whereas his companions ("i suoi," 9.23), interpreted as the vegetal and sensorial souls, are abandoned on the way.[17]

However, "remov[ing] carnality from the story," as Barkan puts it (24), is not Dante's approach. The eroticism implicit in the mythological set-up for the dream, which includes "la rondinella" (9.14) who sings in memory of the rape of Philomela, and Aurora, "[l]a concubina di Titone antico […] / fuor de le braccia del suo dolce amico" (ll. 1-3), introduces an undeniable degree of physicality to *Purgatorio* 9.[18] The language of desire, especially the imagery of fire and burning that dominates the early Italian love and religious lyric,[19] is not only used to describe the interiority of the raptured dreamer ("foco," "ardesse," "cose," ll. 30-32), but is also prefigured on the cosmic level.[20] For *raptus* to make sense in a

---

[15] "And I aver that even in the case of Ganymede, it was not his person but his spiritual character that influenced Zeus to carry him up to Olympus. This is confirmed by his very name. […] So the name given *Gany-mede*, compounded of the two foregoing elements, signifies not physically but mentally attractive; hence his honor among the gods" (*Symposium* 8.28-30). According to H. David Brumble, the most common medieval and Renaissance understanding of the Ganymede story relates to its more favourable—and de-physicalised—interpretations, whose origin may be traced back to the Roman times (133-34).

[16] In this work, Pietro Alighieri, Francesco da Buti, Benvenuto da Imola, Giovanni da Serravalle, Cristoforo Landino, and other early commentators of the *Commedia* are quoted from the *Dartmouth Dante Lab* online (*DDL*). Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi's and Robert Hollander's commentaries are also quoted from the same source.

[17] "…*abbandonati e suoi da Ganimede*: et ben dixe, che Ganimede abbandonò, et non fu abbandonato. Imperochè chi va alla vita solitaria, lascia quegli, che rimangano nella vita activa. […] *lasciatemi piglare chostui*: quasi admonischa Sordello, et Iudice Nino, et Currado marchese, i. l'occupationi che son nella vita activa, che cedino et lascino, che tal gratia innalzi la mente." On neo-Platonist influences in Landino's commentary, see Gilson.

[18] For Dante's treatment on the Philomela myth, see Levenstein.

[19] Some of the most comprehensive studies of the representation of desire in Dante and medieval culture more generally are Lombardi, *The Wings of the Doves* and *The Syntax of Desire*; Lombardi, Gragnolati, Southerden, and Kay, eds, *Desire in Dante and the Middle Ages*; Gragnolati, *Amor che move*. The nexus of burning and desire in *Purgatorio* is explored by Heather Webb in "Ardent Attention."

[20] For a discussion of the cosmic dimension of Dante's references, see also Avery; Ginsberg; Hollander, "'La concubina di Titone antico.'"

narrative of spiritual transportation which happens to a body that is "vera carne" (*Purg*. 5.33), there has to be value in embodied desire that, for Dante, simply cannot be left behind.

In all likelihood, the two main sources for Dante's Ganymede are Book 5 of the *Aeneid* (5.252-55) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10.155-58).[21] The Virgilian reference is the one that Pietro Alighieri, commenting on the canto, recognises: "Et Virgilius: *Invisumque genus, et rapti Ganimedis honores*." It is worthwhile to look at Dante's classical models in detail, as this will prove the considerable extent to which Dante amplifies what interests him the most in the myth, namely, the sensory. Virgil and Ovid would have understood the charge of eroticism present in *raptus*, but in the classical authors, the center of desire seems to be placed in Jove or his agent who is doing the transporting, and not the raptured. The explicit sensory detail regarding how exactly *raptus* is experienced is all Dante's own. Dante describes the sensation of the transported, observing what happens to the raptured body, which is, unlike in classical sources, a dreaming body.

In Virgil's version of the story, the tale of Ganymede is woven on the cloak given by Aeneas as prize to Cloanthus, victor in the funerary boat race in Book 5. The ekphrastic embroidery comments on the artistry of the cloak as well as that of the poem:

> Ipsis praecipuos ductoribus addit honores:
> victori chlamydem auratam, quam plurima circum
> purpura maeandro duplici Meliboea cucurrit,
> intextusque puer frondosa regius Ida
> veloces iaculo cervos cursuque fatigat,
> acer, anhelanti similis, quem *praepes ab Ida*
> *sublimem pedibus rapuit Iovis armiger uncis*;
> longaevi palmas nequiquam ad sidera tendunt
> custodes, saevitque canum latratus in auras.
>
> (*Aen.* 5.252-55)

(To the winner a cloak of braided gold that's fringed with twin ripples of Meliboean crimson running round it, and woven into its weft, Ganymede, prince of woody Ida spins his javelins, wearing out the racing stags—he's breathless, hot on the hunt, so true to life as the eagle that bears Jove's lightning *sweeps him up from Ida into the heavens, pinned in its talons* while old guardsmen reach for the stars in vain and the watchdogs' savage howling fills the air.)

(trans. H.R. Fairclough)

As our mental eye first rests on Ida and then soars heavenward in Virgil's poem, the poet does not describe an explicit apotheosis or erotic fulfilment. The ascent

[21] There are also retellings of the Ganymede myth in Homer's *Iliad* (20.233-35), the Homeric Hymns, Pseudo-Apollodorus, Apollonius of Rhodes's *Argonautica*, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (34.79), and many other classical authors.

from the mountain to the heavens does not lead to a vision of transcendence, but returns to earthbound frustration, with the barking dogs giving vent to their rage ("canum latratus"). By ending on the kidnapping and the helplessness of Ganymede's *custodes*, Virgil is effectively removing the "happy ending" and highlighting the violence, frustration, and unpredictability of the divine desire, as well as the vulnerability of humans before it. Struggling to follow the boy carried aloft ("sublimem") from the mountain of Ida, Virgil's description finally returns to the earth and the longings of its inhabitants.[22] The adjective describing the eagle's claws, stressed through its placement at the end of the line, "uncis" (hooked), shows that in the *Aeneid*, just as in the *Commedia*, the promise of sublimity is mixed with less unambiguously positive emotions. The eagle's crooked talons stand for an amalgamation of desire and destruction that they promise: these are claws that can either wound or grasp tenderly.

Both in Virgil's and Ovid's stories of Ganymede, the focus of the poetic imagination is not so much the act of rapture as the very medium of its depiction: it is the material of the cloak and of poetry that is rapturous. Art both reveals and displaces the violence of *raptus* through its sensory appeal:

> Tale nemus vates attraxerat inque ferarum
> concilio, medius turbae, volucrumque sedebat.
> Ut satis impulsas temptavit pollice chordas
> et *sensit varios, quamvis diversa sonarent,*
> *concordare modos*, hoc vocem carmine movit:
> […] Iovis est mihi saepe potestas
> dicta prius: cecini plectro graviore Gigantas
> sparsaque Phlegraeis victricia fulmina campis:
> *nunc opus est leviore lyra, puerosque canamus*
> *dilectos superis, inconcessisque puellas*
> *ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam*.
> Rex superum Phrygii quondam Ganymedis amore
> arsit, *et inventum est aliquid, quod Iuppiter esse,*
> *quam quod erat, mallet*. Nulla tamen alite verti
> dignatur, nisi quae posset sua fulmina ferre.
> Nec mora, *percusso mendacibus aere pennis*
> *abripit Iliaden*; qui nunc quoque pocula miscet
> invitaque Iovi nectar Iunone ministrat.
>
> (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 10.143-219)

(Such was the grove of trees the poet gathered round him, and he sat in the midst of a crowd, of animals and birds. When he *had tried a few chords, stroking the lyre with his thumb, and felt that the various notes were in tune, regardless of their pitch*, he raised his voice to sing: "[…] I have often sung the power of Jove before: I have sung of the Giants, in an epic strain, and the victorious lightning bolts, hurled at the Phlegraean field. *Now*

[22] This analysis is indebted to Michael C. J. Putnam's, "Ganymede and Virgilian Ekphrasis."

there is gentler work for the lyre, and I sing of boys loved by the gods, and girls stricken with forbidden fires, deserving punishment for their lust. The king of the gods *once burned with love* for Phrygian Ganymede, and to win him Jupiter *chose to be something other than he was*. Yet he did not deign to transform himself into any other bird, than that eagle, that could carry his lightning bolts. Straightaway, he *beat the air with deceitful wings, and stole the Trojan boy*, who still handles the mixing cups, and against Juno's will pours out Jove's nectar.")

(trans. Anthony S. Kline)

Interpolating the story of Orpheus in books 10 and 11 of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid has Orpheus initiate his list of *pueri dilecti* with Ganymede. Less reticent than Virgil, Ovid explicitly mentions the sexual ardor of Jove: "puerosque canamus dilectos superis" ("I sing about boys desired by those above"), Orpheus proclaims.[23] The "lighter melody" (l. 152) of the song is represented as at least as titillating as the semantic content of the story of Ganymede, insofar as it constitutes an example of the archpoet's famous eloquence that so ravishes animals, woods, and stones that they stop in their tracks to listen to him. For Ovid, this story of cosmic lust is so powerful because it channels, second-hand, some of the original divine desire and captivates the passions of the natural world.[24]

In Virgil's ekphrastic description, the luxurious gold-embroidered mantle with its undulant purple outweighs the figure of flushed and panting Ganymede in its sensory effect; in Ovid, the tuning of the lyre is evoked with at least as much vividness as the song itself. The discourse of images which are both clearly fictional and seemingly alive has parallels with images in dreams and, by extension, dream images in poetry. As a story within a story that meditates on the possibilities of the literary medium, the episode of Ganymede in its Latin versions paves the way for the intense focus on the sensory possibilities of the poetic line in Dante's purgatorial dreams, which too act as a broader reflection on how poetry can communicate in ways that go beyond the purely cognitive and semantic.

Nevertheless, there is one striking difference between how rapture is narrated in *Purgatorio* and the two classical texts. In the *Aeneid*, the density of the description of Ganymede breathless on the hunt renders the materiality of his body depicted on the cloak almost palpable ("intextusque puer frondosa regius Ida veloces iaculo cervos cursuque fatigat, acer, anhelanti similis"), but as soon as he is swept up, the body disappears out of sight both for the old guardians and for the readers. It is still a corporeal scene, but the focus shifts, as we are left with another set of bodies. Now the remaining model of sensation for the readers is the guardians with their palms outstretched towards unresponsive heavens

[23] In Statius' ekphrasis in the *Thebaid*, Ganymede is referred to as "Phrygius […] venator" (1. 548); the narrator only refers to the eagle's presence metonymically, explaining that the boy is being carried away by tawny wings ("fulvis […] alis," 1. 548). See the analysis of this episode in Tang 133-34.

[24] For the analysis of this episode in Ovid, see Carter; Liz Norton 137-41; and Stanivukovic.

("longaevi palmas nequiquam ad sidera tendunt custodes"); their frustration at the vanishing of their charge mirrors the readers' disappointment at the disappearance of the character whose presence has just been so convincingly created. For Virgil, Ganymede's experience cannot be narrated; only his presence in the human world and then the reactions to his disappearance are expressible in language. Dante instead goes on to narrate the sensations involved in his rapture itself: "Ivi parea che ella e io ardesse" (*Purg*. 9.31).

Dante clearly goes beyond his classical masters in this canto, which makes Robert Hollander exclaim: "Rarely in the *Commedia* is the contrast between classical and Christian views, between tragedy and comedy, more present than in [the] classicising passages that open this canto" (commentary to *Purg*. 9.34-42, in *DDL*). I would suggest that, as we see from Dante's depiction of rapture, the outdoing of the classical text is evident not just in the opening description of "[l]a concubina di Titone antico" (9.1), but throughout the canto.[25] While the experience of ascent is never truly part of the scope of the Ganymede episode in Virgil's poem, it is an essential element of *Purgatorio* 9 and the last two canticles of the *Commedia* more generally.[26]

If the realm of the uncertain in the classical *raptus* gives Dante the imaginative space to insert himself into the narrative and to alter it, this creative liberty also carries with it the responsibility to represent *raptus* as accurately as possible for the Christian era, which for Dante means treating desire in a manner more expansive than the Ganymede story alone can provide. As we shall see in the next section, Dante achieves this by referring to the example of Saint Paul, which allows the Virgilian and Ovidian eroticism to become transformed into the eroticism of visionary sensation.

From Ganymede to Saint Paul: Re-examining Pauline Rapture in *Purg.* 9

While the myth of Ganymede highlights the component of desire that lies behind the violence of *raptus*, Saint Paul is Dante's authority on the element missing from Ganymede's story, namely, what it *feels like* to be raptured. While Dante's "ratto" is only directly compared with Ganymede's and not Saint Paul's, it is highly likely

[25] It is beyond the scope of this article to address the classical references in the canto in an exhaustive manner, although it must be noted that they introduce considerable interpretative complexity when multiple bestiary, cosmic, symbolic, and encyclopedic contexts are taken into consideration. For a detailed treatment of classical references in the canto, see Picone, "Canto IX"; and Ledda, "Sulla soglia del Purgatorio: peccato, penitenza, resurrezione."

[26] Virgil's explanation of what happened while Dante was dreaming (9.46-63) masks the happier nature of the event: the pilgrim is not snatched by a rapacious eagle, but carried aloft gently by Lucy. Hermeneutic recuperation of antiquity for Dante means seeing better and deeper into the nature of the event than his classical precedents, reviving the feeling only implicitly present in the classical story, and understanding it in a new, Christian light. For Virgil's limitations as Dante's guide, see Howard.

that the word itself might have evoked Pauline connotations. As Csaba Németh explains, the state of rapture and its terminology were associated primarily and almost exclusively with Saint Paul in the later Middle Ages ("*Paulus Raptus* to *Raptus Pauli*"). This is recognized by Dante's commentators, who employ the vocabulary of rapture when analyzing Dante's remark that both introduces and questions the parallel between himself and the Apostle in *Inferno* 2: "Io non Enëa, io non Paulo sono" (2.32). As Pietro Alighieri puts it, "Paulus Apostolus *raptus corporaliter fuit* usque ad tertium coelum." In the words of Benvenuto da Imola, Paul was "*raptus* ex gratia." Saint Paul's authority as a visionary writer is based on his description of the "visiones et revelationes Domini" (12.1) in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which inspired a later apocryphal tradition, including the *Visio sancti Pauli*.[27] While Giorgio Petrocchi argues that it is unlikely that the *Visio Pauli* exercised direct influence on Dante apart from a possible allusion to Paul's visit to Hell in *Inferno* 2.28,[28] it certainly had a significant impact on the medieval visionary writing more generally.[29]

What is it about Saint Paul's rapture that alows it to supplement the story of Ganymede's *raptus* in *Purgatorio* 9? I would argue that the saintly model allows Dante to explore the degree of necessary violence involved in *raptus* without attaching a moral judgement to it. In *Otherworld Journeys*, Carol Zaleski analyses various medieval narratives of spiritual travel in which the tie of the soul to the body is loosened through illness, ecstasy, or dreaming. Many of these narratives involve a description of the departure of the soul that involves some degree of pain, which functions as a sign of moral failure or flaw. As Theodore Silverstein notes, the *Vision of Saint Paul*, especially in its Syriac version, details "the alluring manner in which the psychopomps remove the soul of the good […], and the violence with which the wicked soul is seized" (24). The moralistic dichotomy does not translate to Dante's representation of *raptus* straightforwardly: in *Purgatorio* 9, the violence of *raptus* operates in a dream that is an integral part of the purgatorial process and is therefore beneficial and spiritually enriching for the pilgrim. Therefore, the violent overwhelming of *raptus* might be connected with vulnerability and proneness to sin, but it operates not as punishment, as in the *Vision of Saint Paul*, but rather has a restorative function, allowing Dante to

[27] The *Visio sancti Pauli* is a third-century non-canonical apocalypse which first appeared in ancient Greek, then in Latin and many European vernaculars. For its influence on Dante, see d'Ovidio; see also Petrocchi.

[28] Petrocchi, "San Paolo in Dante." Commentators of the verse "andovvi poi lo Vas d'elezïone" suggest that it alludes to Paul's visit to Hell described in the *Visio Pauli*. Jacopo della Lana: "andò san Paulo in inferno, e fu fino al terzo cielo in Paradiso."

[29] On the medieval vision tradition and especially the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, see Silverstein; Kappler; Braet; Gardiner; Carozzi; Silverstein and Hilhorst, eds. James D. Tabor surveys heavenly journeys in antiquity in *Things Unutterable*. See also Mosetti Casaretto.

expand his awareness of both the strengths and limitations of the human condition.[30]

Giuseppe Ledda proposes that Dante creates both his authority and the autonomy of his identity through prophetic models, and nowhere is this more obvious than in relation to Saint Paul, whose visionary model Dante transforms thanks to the association with Ganymede ("Modelli biblici e identità" 18). Numerous critics agree with Ledda that the Pauline model and the paradisiacal version of *raptus* "diventa decisivo soprattutto nella terza cantica, fin dai primi versi" (18), when Dante asks to be "del tuo valor sì fatto vaso" (*Par*. 1.14).[31] The verse refers to *vas electionis*, the epithet attributed to Saint Paul in the Acts of the Apostles (9.15), which, appropriately, is communicated to Ananias in a vision.[32] While the apostle is never heard directly in his own voice in the *Commedia*, the parallels with "il gran vasello / de lo Spirito Santo" (*Par*. 21.127-28) continue.[33] As Kevin Brownlee suggests, "the entire *Paradiso* may be seen as a new Pauline vision articulated by a new kind of authoritative voice: that of the Christian, vernacular *poeta*" ("Pauline Vision" 203). Yet the establishment of Dante as Paul-in-becoming begins much earlier, even if it happens in the form of negation: "non Paolo sono" (*Inf*. 2.32). While the parallel reaches culmination in *Paradiso*, where Pauline references proliferate, in *Purgatorio*, we see Dante who is not yet Paul, but is already "ratto" and on his way to becoming more Pauline. Admittedly, the Pauline subtext remains largely implicit in *Purgatorio* 9, even if Németh has shown that in the Middle Ages, it is impossible to evoke rapture without calling to mind the saintly model. Even so, the dream can be seen as a prefiguration of Dante's ascent to Paradise, where the model of Paul will appear again, this time much more directly (*Par*. 1.73-75) and in parallel with that of Glaucus (1.67-69),

---

[30] See Ledda, "Modelli biblici e identità" and "Dante e la tradizione delle visioni medievali."

[31] Paul is cited as a model at the beginning of the poem, where Dante names those travellers in the afterworld who he fears he is not: "Io non Enëa, io non Paulo sono" (*Inf*. 2.32). In *Paradiso* 26, the pilgrim is compared to Paul, blinded by the vision on the road to Damascus (26.10-12). Most relevant to 2 Cor. 12.1-5 is *Paradiso* 1, where, having returned from the afterlife, Dante talks about having seen "cose che ridire / né sa né può chi di là sù discende" (1.5-6), referencing Paul's "arcana verba, quæ non licet homini loqui." The *Letter to Can Grande*, attributed to Dante, explains these lines in detail (*Ep.* 13.77-79).

[32] "Erat autem quidam discipulus Damasci, nomine Ananias […]. Dixit autem ad eum Dominus: Vade, quoniam vas electionis est mihi iste, ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus, et regibus, et filiis Israel" (Acts 9.10, 15).

[33] On Saint Paul in Dante, see d'Ovidio; Mazzeo; Fallani; Angelo Penna and Fallani, "Paolo, santo," in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*; Di Scipio, "Dante and St. Paul"; Botterill, "'*Quae non licet homini loqui*'"; Petrocchi; Brownlee, "Pauline Vision and Ovidian Speech in *Paradiso* I"; Hollander, "Dante and Paul's Five Words with Understanding"; Di Scipio, *The Presence of Pauline Thought in the Works of Dante*; Ledda, *La guerra della lingua* 243-58; Herzman; Ledda, "Semele e Narciso," "Dante e la tradizione delle visioni medieval," and "Modelli biblici nella *Commedia*."

allowing the poet to explore the myth of *deificatio* in a much more expansive way.[34] If we accept, together with Umberto Cosmo, that the ascent of the poet is nothing but "un progressivo avvicinarsi a Paolo" (374), then, provided that we think about this progression as starting with the infernal "non Paolo sono" and reaching its apex in *Paradiso*, there is every reason to treat *Purgatorio* 9 as part of this ongoing rapture.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Saint Paul's account of his rapture is the degree of uncertainty involved in the experience:

> Si gloriari oportet non expedit quidem veniam autem ad visiones et revelationes Domini. Scio hominem in Christo ante annos quattuordecim sive in corpore nescio sive extra corpus nescio Deus scit raptum eiusmodi usque ad tertium caelum. Et scio huiusmodi hominem sive in corpore sive extra corpus nescio Deus scit quoniam raptus est in paradisum et audivit arcana verba quae non licet homini loqui.
>
> (2 Cor. 12.1-5)

> (It is doubtless not expedient for me to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I knew a man in Christ more than fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth). Such a one was caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth), and how he was caught up [*raptus*] into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.)[35]

Like Paul's description, *Purgatorio* 9 remains deliberately ambiguous about how the various dimensions (physical, spiritual, and symbolical) of the rapture interact, and this ambiguity is reflected in the range of opinions that Dante's early commentators present about the source(s) of the sensation of conjoined burning, "Ivi parea che ella e io ardesse" (9.31). On the literal level, the episode is representative of the sensations involved in the pilgrim's physical ascent ("me rapisse suso infino al foco," 9.30). For Jacopo della Lana and Benvenuto da Imola, the heat that the pilgrim feels represents the subconscious perception of the sublunary sphere of fire that greets him at the gate of Purgatory: "Segue il suo poema mostrando come ella lo portò fino alla porta del Purgatorio, il quale luogo è circondato da fiamma di fuoco" (Jacopo della Lana); "portabat usque ad speram ignis, ubi prae nimio calore ardens cogebatur evigilare" (Benvenuto da Imola). There is also a convincing physiological explanation for the pilgrim's sensations, as his body is heated by the warmth of the sun ("e 'l sole er' alto già più che due ore," 9.44). However, according to many early commentators, these indubitably

---

[34] For a discussion of Saint Paul and Glaucus as models for Dante to conceptualise his arrival in *Paradiso*, see Guthmüller; Botterill, "From *deificari* to *trasumanar*?"; and Rigo 109-33.

[35] The Vulgate quoted in this article is the Clementine text edited by A. Colunga and L. Turrado, with a translation from the 21st-Century King James Version.

physical sensations should acquire additional meanings. For Francesco da Buti, burning represents an externalisation of the internal burning desire:

> *insin al foco*; cioè infine a la spera del fuoco, per la quale vuole significare lo ratto suo in fine a Dio, lo quale è fuoco di carità e d'amore, al quale finse esser asceso ne la tersa cantica; e questo prefigura in questo luogo […]. *Ivi parea ch'ella et io ardesse*; cioè a quella spera giunti, parea a Dante che ardesse l'aquila, et anco elli; e questo significa che lo dono de l'amore de lo Spirito Santo fa ardere colui […] de l'amore di Dio.

The Anonimo Fiorentino articulates the connection between material and spiritual refinement offered in the image more explicitly. Just as gold, from which the eagle's wings are made ("penne d'oro," 9.20), only becomes finer after being subjected to fire, according to the Anonimo Fiorentino ("è il più nobile metallo, et ancora quanto più si mette nel fuoco infino a sua perfezione, più affina"), so the dreamer's sensorium is similarly sharpened in the refining fire of dream desire.[36]

One of the reasons why there is a range of views as to how physically Dante's *raptus* should be understood is that there was no uniform position on the status of Paul's vision either. The degree to which Paul's body was involved in his visionary transportation was a subject of the thirteenth-century theological *quaestiones de raptu*, an exegetical tradition devoted to clarifying how Paul was able to perceive God.[37] The influential Augustinian interpretation of the Pauline *raptus* held that his vision was a *visio intellectualis*, the highest and most disembodied form of experiencing God achievable for humans in their earthly lives.[38] This position was later adopted by Thomas Aquinas in the article "utrum Paulus in raptu fuerit alienatus a sensibus" ("whether Saint Paul in ecstasy was separated from his senses," *ST* 2a2ae.175.4).[39] While there were other, less disembodied, theories of *raptus* outside the scholastic framework, from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, Aquinas's interpretation became one of the dominant

---

[36] Anonimo Fiorentino's commentary echoes the language used to describe the purgation of lust in *Purgatorio* 26: "nel foco che li affina" (*Purg*. 26.148). For Dante's treatment of fire in the canto, see Smith; Burgwinkle; Marchesi; and Lovell.

[37] On this topic see Even-Ezra.

[38] In the twelfth book of *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine introduces three influential types of vision: *visio corporalis*, in which one sees actual, concrete bodies; *visio spiritualis*, in which one sees corporeal images, although the actual objects are absent; and *visio intellectualis*, in which one sees "intelligibles," that is, the meanings of the above images, or things that have no image at all, such as love or the soul. Augustine admits that *visio intellectualis* is the most difficult to define; since God cannot be perceived by corporeal eyes, but only by the intellect which apprehends things that lack visible form, "an object not in an image but in itself" (*De genesis* 12.6), the Apostle Paul must have seen Him intellectually. See Jesse Keskiaho.

[39] Even though Aquinas proposes that seeing God in His essence is a near impossibility for a living man, he makes an exception for Saint Paul: "Augustine says that this is what happened to Moses, the teacher of the Jews, and to Saint Paul, the teacher of the gentiles" (1a.12.11).

meanings of 2 Corinthians 12.1-5: "videt Deum per essentiam, et ad hoc fuit raptus Paulus, ut dictum est" (*De veritate* q. 13, a. 2).[40]

However, Saint Paul's hesitancy regarding the degree of bodily involvement in his *raptus* continued to trouble medieval theologians: how could such a bulwark of faith as Paul be certain that he saw a divine vision, but not know whether he was in or out of body when he was rapt and carried up to heavens ("rapitur et subvehitur visionem," *De Genesi* 12.27-8)? Even if Augustine identifies the nature of Paul's *raptus* as intellectual, it is notable that the Church Father justifies the ambiguous role of the body in Paul's account by suggesting that it must have resembled the experience of falling asleep. According to Augustine, Paul

> could not tell whether he was in the body (as a man's soul is in his body but withdrawn from the bodily senses while he is awake or asleep or in ecstasy (*sive vigilantis, sive dormientis, sive in ecstasi a sensibus corporis alienata*), though his body is said to be alive) or whether he actually went out of the body, so that his body would lie in death until, the vision over, his soul would be reunited with his dead members. In the latter case he would not awaken as if from sleep (*et non quasi dormiens evigilaret*) nor return to his senses as one coming from an ecstasy, but from death he would truly come to life again.
>
> (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 185)[41]

In biblical exegesis, Paul's *raptus* has never been considered a dream (see Boitani 105), nor does Augustine say that Saint Paul's *raptus* was a dream, simply that it must have resembled the experience of sleeping. Dante expands on Augustine's notion of *raptus* as a dream-like state: in *Purgatorio* 9, Augustine's "as if" (*quasi*) becomes a *raptus* that is experienced in and as a dream. Like Augustine, Dante resorts to the language of sleep to make the sensory ambiguity of *raptus* comprehensible to the readers. Yet by creating his own version of *raptus* that is both Pauline *and* a dream, Dante also presents us with a unique interpretation of Paul's vision, traversing visionary categories to which it has been previously attributed.

It must be noted that Saint Paul's ambiguity regarding the corporeality of his *raptus* did not prevent the early Church Fathers from viewing it as a real event. Similarly, for all the uncertainty surrounding Dante's bodily involvement in *Purgatorio* 9, the dream is equally "real" in the framework of the cantica, as it remains an essential part of Dante's purgatorial journey that physically transports him to the gates of Purgatory.

---

[40] For an overview of the debates about the nature of Saint Paul's rapture, see Beattie. In "*Paulus Raptus* to *Raptus Pauli*," Németh explains that Augustine's interpretation was the standard interpretation of the rapture narrative, but not generally accepted as a theory of rapture outside of scholastic contexts. Rupert of Deutz modified it, William of Saint-Thierry partly accepted it, but Bernard of Clairvaux and Richard of Saint-Victor invented their own theories. In the school milieu, Augustine's interpretation was taught in Peter Lombard's Pauline commentary (353).

[41] For the original Latin text, see *Patrologia Latina* 34.458.

The extended meditation on *raptus* in the canto is an implicit acknowledgement of the importance of capturing the sensory-cognitive ambiguity it involves in writing. The established scholarly tradition repeatedly suggests that when classical and Christian exampla come close together in Dante, it is the dynamic of the redemptive Christian knowledge explaining the incomplete pagan understanding.[42] In the case of the stories of Ganymede and Saint Paul, brought together through the shared lexis of *raptus*, Dante's Christian framework does not so much clarify the pagan story as revalorises the mystical obscurity as something to be boasted of: "pro huiusmodi gloriabor; pro me autem nihil gloriabor nisi in infirmitatibus meis" (2 Cor. 12.5). In his own version of *raptus*, Dante embraces the Pauline logic of glory to be achieved through infirmity and doubt. The narrative gaps that the poet finds in the story of Ganymede become an integral part of Dante's Pauline strategy, as his authority paradoxically stems precisely from the willingness to admit that he, like Saint Paul, has lived through an experience he is necessarily unable to fully explain, but simply has to tell.

Dante's interest in how "la verità" can be "discoperta" (*Purg*. 9.66) through the language of dreams recalls the insistent emphasis on knowledge, and particularly on the gap between human and divine knowledge, in 2 Corinthians: what can be said for certain (*scio*) and what remains unknowable (*nescio*). In another Pauline moment in *Paradiso* 1, where Dante finally imagines an uplifting without the element of pain, the poet translates Paul's "Deus scit" from 2 Corinthians with the direct address "tu 'l sai" (1.75). Just like Paul, Dante realizes that he can only convey a taste of the beatific vision, not a complete understanding of it: "S'i' era sol di me quel che creasti / novellamente, amor che'l ciel governi, / tu 'l sai, che col tuo lume mi levasti" (*Par.* 1.73-75).[43] One might argue that one of the purposes of the dream *raptus* in *Purgatorio* 9 is similarly to establish a theologically and morally sound position of the individual in relation to divine knowledge. Insofar as the source of dream images remains impossible to attribute with exactitude, as the analysis of Dante's early commentators' remarks above has shown, the dream allows us to observe a limit of the human cognitive control regarding perceptual experiences and thought.

The expectation that rapture implied some form of sensory excess or deprivation induced by an external force formed part of the broader common sense in medieval culture.[44] The overpowering qualities of *raptus* were certainly familiar to Dante, who uses the word in the contexts where sensory input overwhelms the pilgrim beyond rational understanding: "così da' lumi che li m'apparinno / s'accogliea per la croce una melode / che mi rapiva, sanza intender

---

[42] The bibliography on this topic is too extensive to be included here in full. For some representative studies, see Brownlee, "Dante and the Classical Poets"; Wetherbee; Laird; Steinberg; Burrow.

[43] See Sarolli 114; and Botterill, "'*Quae non Licet Homini Loqui*.'"

[44] See Faes de Mottoni, "*Excessus mentis*" 12.

l'inno" (*Par*. 14.123). In *Paradiso* 14, hearing the sweetness of the melody creates a strong effect of *raptus* that is not primarily about comprehension articulable in words or even about fully taking in an experience ("sanza intender"). In Dante's dreams, the presence of *raptus* is similarly about focusing on sensation when the intellective on its own is shown to be insufficient. The idea of the dreamer as a receptacle that allows external desires, images, and emotions to work upon himself without being able to absorb them in their completeness once again suggests an analogy with Saint Paul, "il gran vasello / de lo Spirito Santo" (*Par*. 21.127-28), as Dante calls him, expanding the famous epithet of Acts 9.15.[45] The dreamer's mind and body imperfectly in control of the dream enable the poet to think about the soul's receptivity to the grace of God in its seemingly most passive state. The canto thus explores the pilgrim's subjectivity as a state of being subjected to divine influences: "erat Spiritus subiectus ei" (Roland of Cremona 337.4-5).

Conclusion: Dante and (Extra)ordinary Rapture in the *Commedia*

Having analyzed the models of rapture that Dante reinterprets in describing his visionary transportation in *Purgatorio* 9, this article proposes that the focus on the sensations involved in *raptus* in the canto allows Dante to reflect on the interconnections between spiritual and physical change, as well as to acquire new appreciation of experiences that challenge his sensory-cognitive habits. Insofar as the canto emphasizes the importance of embracing the vulnerability of the human condition, its implications extend to the *Commedia* as a whole: in particular, to the positive valorization of violent wounding in *Purgatorio*, and Dante's understanding of the cosmic and theological dimension of *raptus* in *Paradiso*.

While in the dream vision of *Purgatorio* 9, there is only a foreboding of danger able to disrupt the integrity of the dreamer's body, at the end of the canto, visionary apparitions give way to a physical inscription of the pilgrim's forehead:

> Sette P ne la fronte mi descrisse
> col punton de la spada, e "Fa che lavi,
> quando se' dentro, queste *piaghe*" disse.
>
> (*Purg*. 9.112-14)

The threat of violence implicit in the dream foreshadows the perceptible marking of Dante's body and is incorporated into the order of the otherworldly realm insofar as the erasure of the wounds becomes the organizing principle of Dante's purgatorial journey. "Sette P" give a visible expression to the commitment to humility encouraged by the dream, and their cancellation becomes a palpable sign of the pilgrim's internal transformation.

---

[45] "…quoniam vas electionis est mihi iste ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus et regibus et filiis Israhel."

When Dante refers to the inscriptions on his forehead as "piaghe," we are introduced to the notion of paradoxical wounds that are a source of healing, or, in Gregory the Great's terms, "percutit ut sanet."[46] Divine desire leaving traces on Dante's body in the canto evokes the trope of *vulnus amoris*, or love wound, which Lino Pertile associates precisely with the images of wounding fire in the *Commedia* ("L'antica fiamma"). Pertile suggests that the lexis of violently striking fire in *Purgatorio* 30 ("percuotere," "trafiggere," "fiamma") has precedents in the Vulgate ("Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa; vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum," Cant. 4.9; "Percusserunt me et vulneraverunt me," Cant. 5.7) and Origen's *Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum* ("vulnus amoris acceperit," 16), while also indebted to the love lyric tradition. The notion of *vulnus amoris* also helps to explain the language of wounding that we find in *Purgatorio* 9. The goal of Dante's purgatorial journey is to return to a wound-free state, and we know that the pilgrim will fare all the better for having been wounded. As Augustine explains in *De natura et gratia*, the human nature suffered a wound, *vulneratio naturae*, when Adam fell; this *vulneratio naturae* darkened man's mind and weakened his will towards God (*PL* 44: 286). In *Purgatorio* 9, Dante receives a counter-wound, thus acknowledging the vulnerability of the fallen body, but also imagining a way out of the fallibility of the flesh precisely through the receptivity of the body to the purgatorial *piaga*. In the canto, the seven Ps introduce the notion of a letter as an open wound that is an essential part of the purgatorial process, providing justification for the poetry that deals in the language of violence, but is ultimately designed to impart comfort.

Elsewhere in the *Commedia*, Dante suggests that an appropriate response to this *vulnus amoris* is reciprocal violence, understood in biblical terms as an ardent striving toward the divine:

> *Regnum celorum* vïolenza pate
> da caldo amore e da viva speranza,
> che vince la divina volontate:
> non a guisa che l'omo a l'om sobranza,
> ma vince lei perché vuole esser vinta,
> e, vinta, vince con sua beninanza.
>
> (*Par*. 20.94-99)

In the heaven of Justice, Dante is glossing the line "Regnum caelorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt iliud" from Matthew 11.12 ("The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent seize it"). William Peraldus explains that the human rapture described in the Gospel of Matthew stands for the energetic endeavor of Christian martyrs who, for the Dominican writer, represent the opposite of

[46] See Muessig, "Signs of Salvation"; Vloebergs; and Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, especially Chapter 1, "Bearing the Stigmata: The Emergence of a Religious Ideal" (23-59).

slothfulness: they proactively reach out toward God and thus assault the kingdom of Heaven with their virtue.[47] Dante makes clear that this violent striving is affectively charged ("da caldo amore e da viva speranza," 20.95), but the violence in this model of loving reciprocity is explicitly not earthly ("non a guisa che l'omo a l'om sobranza," 20.97). Both willingly overcome and overcoming ("vince lei perché vuole esser vinta"), God appears in His capacity as the heavenly passion ("vïolenza pate," from Latin *patire*) in the canto, and His loving suffering of the ardent assault represents a model for the raptured Christian to imitate and contemplate.

As we see in *Paradiso* 20, *raptus* for Dante assumes existential and cosmological dimensions, and there are medieval precedents for explaining its universal scope. *Raptus* is a technical term used to describe the interaction of the celestial spheres in a mechanical model of the cosmos defended in Johannes de Sacrobosco's *De sphaera mundi* and commonly accepted during the Middle Ages.[48] The enormous speed of the *primum mobile* causes all the lower celestial spheres to move via *raptus*: the *raptus* exerted by the higher sphere on the sphere immediately inferior to it, and thereby on the rest of the spheres successively, account for the transmission of the diurnal motion.[49] In *Paradiso*, *rapire* is similarly a term describing the forceful movement of the largest and swiftest sphere in Dante's cosmology, central to the continuation of life in the universe: "costui che tutto quanto rape / l'altro universo seco" (28.70). *Rapire* thus designates not only a privileged visionary experience, but also the daily life-giving movements of the Dantean cosmos. The combination of the exceptional and the everyday implied in the term can be said to translate into Dante's depiction of the visionary sensorium, best understood as an intensified version of the daily rapture of which we are not even aware. Rapture might be the continual condition of human beings in relation to God, but through the intensification of this condition in dreams, Dante can experience a glimpse of how loving this relationality is. The dream images seem to threaten, disturb, and disrupt, but ultimately, they are absorbed back into and reaffirm the power of divine order.

The experience of *raptus* can also be a portent of the perfectibility of the self. The dream episode prepares the pilgrim and the readers for Dante's relationship with the divine that we shall see in *Paradiso*. As Barbara Faes de Mottoni explains ("Per una storia della dottrina del *raptus*" 430), the violence of *raptus* lies not in its unpredictable or unwilled nature: "dicitur *raptus* non quod fuerit contra voluntatem Pauli" (*Summae Magistri Rolandi Cremonensis* 337.4). In fact, there is an element of conscious preparation involved in *raptus* for Rolando da

---

[47] William Peraldus, *Summa de vitiis*, pa. 1, ch. 1, pp. 171a-b. See further analysis in Corbett 142-43.

[48] See Axworthy. On Dante's knowledge of astronomical texts, including those of Bartholomew of Parma, see Chisena 504.

[49] See Grant; see also Shank.

Cremona, even if the actual process is sudden and not under Paul's control: "[…] dicitur *raptus* quoniam non per virtutem Pauli factum est hoc, sed per virtutem Spiritus Sancti. […] Quando autem [Paulus] *se preparabat* per contemplationem, erat voluntarium quod faciebat; quando autem elevatus fuit, erat per violentiam" (337.4-5). If, according to de Mottoni, the real violence implied in *raptus* consists in the disruption of the established patterns of the mind and the routine modus operandi of the sensorium,[50] the *raptus* of *Purgatorio* introduces Dante to the sensory-cognitive paradoxes that show cognition to be inadequate to the visionary sensation, yet nonetheless enables the pilgrim to learn something about himself that cognition itself cannot tell. Seen in this framework, purgatorial dreams allow for Dante and his readers to acquire a taste for visions and sensory-cognitive uncertainty more generally, so that when the pilgrim approaches the final vision at the end of the *Commedia*, the sensory overwhelming is actively desired ("veder volea," *Par.* 33.137).

Dante's *raptus* is preparatory in more than one way: it may also act as a rehearsal of the final rapture at the end of times, when all types of fallible human vision will be perfected in resurrection (*De genesi* 12.36). Writing on 2 Corinthians 12 in *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas contends: "When he [Saint Paul] is said to be 'rapt up' (*se raptum*), this means that God has shown him the life in which He will be contemplated in eternity" (2a2ae: 175, 5). If the Apostle "did not know whether his ecstasy had taken place in or out of his body," such knowledge will only be gained "when our bodies will be recovered at the resurrection of the dead, when this corruptible will have put on incorruption" (2a2ae, 175.6).[51] For Aquinas, then, visionary rapture is a foreshadowing of the knowledge to come, even if the status of visionary bodies amounts to impossible knowledge in the mortal world. As a prefiguration of the resurrection of the body, the main purpose of an account of rapture such as Dante's may then be not to provide definitive answers as to how it might work, but to kindle a longing for this futurity. Even if at the end of *Purgatorio*, the fundamentally human mode of dreaming must gradually recede into the background, "sì che non parli più com' om che sogna," says Beatrice (*Purg*. 33.33), it has set us up for a different way in which we, as readers, must face the possibilities of the life to come as well as the intellectual and affective challenges of *Paradiso*. There, when Dante is asked to imagine God as a point, or to experience the music and dancing that the blessed enjoy in Paradiso, the poet has to speak not like one who is dreaming, but like one who has dreamed.

University of Cambridge

---

[50] See Faes de Mottoni, "'Et audivit arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui'" and "La violenza nel *raptus* secondo Rolando di Cremona e Tommaso d'Aquino."

[51] The rapture at the end of the world in which the living and dead will be raised for judgment is described in evangelical sources (1 Cor. 15.51). On this, see Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* 4.43.6.4, 2: 515.

Works Cited

Alighieri, Dante. *La Divina Commedia*. Ed. Giorgio Petrocchi. 2nd ed. Firenze: Le Lettere, 1994.

Anfray, Clélia. "Le mythe de Ganymède chez Dante et son illustration par Botticelli, Blake et Doré." *Ganymède, ou, L'échanson: rapt, ravissement et ivresse poétique*. Ed. Véronique Gély. Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2013. 133-44.

Aquinas, Thomas. *De veritate*. Ed. and trans. Christian Brouwer and Marc Peeters. Paris: J. Vrin, 2002.

_____. *Summa theologiae*. Ed. and trans. R. Potter. Vol. 45, *Prophecy and Other Charisms*. London: Blackfriars, 1970.

Augustine, Saint. *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. New York: Newman Press, 1982.

Avery, William T. "*Purgatorio* IX, 1-3: Aurora's 'balco d'orïente.'" *Dante Studies* 97 (1979): 151-55.

Axworthy, Angela. "Oronce Fine and Sacrobosco: From the Edition of the *Tractatus de sphaera* (1516) to the *Cosmographia* (1532)." De sphaera *of Johannes de Sacrobosco in the Early Modern Period*. Ed. Matteo Valleriani. Cham: Springer, 2020. 186-264.

Barański, Zygmunt G. "9. Without Any Violence." *Vertical Readings in Dante's Comedy*. Ed. George Corbett and Heather Webb. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015. 181-202.

Barkan, Leonard. *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.

Barolini, Teodolinda. *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Barucci, Guglielmo. "Un'aguglia nel ciel. Primo sogno." *Simile a quel che talvolta si sogna: i sogni del* Purgatorio *dantesco*. Firenze: Le lettere, 2012. 61-104.

Beattie, Tina. "Angels, Demons, and the Man of God." *Theology after Postmodernity: Divining the Void. A Lacanian Reading of Thomas Aquinas*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. 125-47.

Boitani, Piero. *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.

Botterill, Steven. "From *deificari* to *trasumanar*? Dante's *Paradiso* and Bernard's *De diligendo Deo*." *Dante and the Mystical Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 194-241.

_____. "'*Quae non licet homini loqui*': The Ineffability of Mystical Experience in *Paradiso* I and the *Epistle to Cangrande*." *Modern Language Review* 83 (1988): 332-41.

Braet, H. "La réception medievale de l'Apocalypse paulinienne. Une réécriture de l'Au-delà." *Miscellanea di studi romanzi offerta a Giuliano Gasca Queirazza*. Ed. A. Cornagliotti et al. Vol. 1. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1988. 75-89.

Brownlee, Kevin. "Dante, Beatrice, and the Two Departures from Dido." *MLN* 108.1 (1993): 1-14.

_____. "Dante and the Classical Poets." *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*. Ed. Rachel Jacoff. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 141-60.

———. "Pauline Vision and Ovidian Speech in *Paradiso* I." *The Poetry of Allusion: Virgil and Ovid in Dante's* Commedia. Ed. Rachel Jacoff and Jeffrey T. Schnapp. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991. 202-13.

Brumble, H. David. *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings*. London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998.

Burgwinkle, William E. "'The Form of Our Desire': Arnaut Daniel and the Homoerotic Subject in Dante's *Commedia*." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10.4 (2004): 565-97.

Burrow, Colin. "Virgils from Dante to Milton." *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*. Ed. Charles Martindale and Fiachra Mac Góráin. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2019. 128-40.

Cappozzo, Valerio. *Dizionario dei sogni nel Medioevo: il* Somniale Danielis *in manoscritti letterari*. Firenze: Olschki, 2018.

Carozzi, Claude. *Eschatologie et Au-delà. Recherches sur* l'Apocalypse de Paul. Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1994.

Carter, Sarah. "'That Female Wanton Boy': Ganymede, Iphis, and Myths of Same Sex Desire." *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance in Early Modern English Literature*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 81-114.

Cassell, Anthony K. "Santa Lucia as Patroness of Sight: Hagiography, Iconography, and Dante." *Dante Studies* 109 (1991): 71-88.

Cervigni, Dino. *Dante's Poetry of Dreams*. Biblioteca dell'"Archivum Romanicum." Firenze: Olschki, 1986.

Chisena, Anna Gabriella. "L'impurità della 'prima stella': la spinosa questione delle macchie lunari." *Lettere italiane* 67.3 (2015): 500-18.

Chronopoulos, Tina. "Ganymede in the Medieval Classroom: Reading an Ode by the Roman Poet Horace." *Medium aevum* 86.2 (2017): 224-24.

Ciabattoni, Francesco. "Il dolce ruggito del tuono: per un'interpretazione di *Purgatorio* IX, 144 e *Paradiso* XVII, 44." *Dante e l'arte* 2 (2015): 65-86.

Clarke, K. P. "Eagles Mating with Doves: *Troilus and Criseyde*, II, 925-931, *Inferno* V and *Purgatorio* IX." *Notes and Queries* 53.3 (2006): 297-99.

Colunga, A., and L. Turrado. *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*. Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1946.

Corbett, George. *Dante's Christian Ethics: Purgatory and its Moral Contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2020.

Cosmo, Umberto. *L'ultima ascesa: introduzione alla lettura del* Paradiso. Bari: Laterza, 1936.

Crompton, Louis. "The Medieval World: 1050-1321. The Fortunes of Ganymede." *Homosexuality and Civilization*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. 178-82.

Dartmouth Dante Lab. http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu/reader.

Davis, David J. "Rapt in the Spirit: The Ritualizing of Divine Revelation in Early Modern England." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 48.2 (2018): 341-64.

Dillon, John. "Ganymede as the Logos: Traces of a Forgotten Allegorization in *Philo*?" *Classical Quarterly* 31 (1985): 183-85.

Dunn, Caroline. "The Language of Ravishment in Medieval England." *Speculum* 86.1 (2011): 79-116.

_____. *Stolen Women in Medieval England: Rape, Abduction and Adultery, 1100-1500*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013.

Elliott, Dyan. "The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality." *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*. Ed. Peter Biller and Alastair Minnis. Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 1997. 142-44.

_____. "*Raptus*/Rapture." *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*. Ed. Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012. 189-99.

Enciclopedia Dantesca. Ed. Umberto Bosco. 5 vols. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970-78.

Even-Ezra, Ayelet. "Blind Men Speaking of Colours: Paul's Recollection and the Self-Image of Early Thirteenth-Century Theologians." *Harvard Theological Review* 107.4 (2014): 425-46.

Faes de Mottoni, Barbara. "'Et audivit arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui'. Arcani, segreti e misteri nella teologia all'inizio del '200: Roberto Grossatesta, Guglielmo d'Auxerre, Rolando di Cremona." *Figure e motivi della contemplazione nelle teologie medievali*. Firenze: SISMEL, 2007. 83-100.

_____. "*Excessus mentis*, *alienatio mentis*, estasi, *raptus* nel Medioevo." *Per una storia del concetto di mente*. Ed. Eugenio Canone. Vol. 1. Firenze: Olschki, 2005. 167-84.

_____. "Interpretazioni tardo-antiche e medievali del sopore di Adamo." *Adam, le premier homme*. Ed. Agostino Paravicini Bagliani. Firenze: SISMEL, 2012. 21-48.

_____. "Per una storia della dottrina del *raptus* in Tommaso d'Aquino." *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 12 (2006): 411-30.

_____. "La violenza nel *raptus* secondo Rolando di Cremona e Tommaso d'Aquino." *Universalità della Ragione. Pluralità delle Filosofie nel Medioevo. XII Congresso Internazionale di Filosofia Medievale (Palermo, 17-22 settembre 2007).* Ed. Alessandro Musco, Carla Compagno, and Salvatore D'Agostino. 2 vols. Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2012. 1.349-56.

Fallani, Giovanni. "Analogie tra Dante e S. Paolo, come introduzione agli aspetti mistici del *Paradiso*." *Lectura Dantis Mystica: Il poema sacro alla luce delle conquiste psicologiche odierne*. Firenze: Olschki, 1969. 444-60.

Gardiner, Eileen. *Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell. A Sourcebook*. New York: Garland, 1993.

Gibson, Craig A. "Two Rhetorical Exercises on Ganymede in John Doxapatres' *Homiliae in Aphthonium*." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 43.2 (2019): 181-93.

Gilson, Simon. "Plato, the *platonici*, and Marsilio Ficino in Cristoforo Landino's *Comento sopra la Comedia*." *The Italianist* 23 (2003): 5-53.

Ginsberg, Warren. "Dante's Dream of the Eagle and Jacob's Ladder." *Dante Studies* 100 (1982): 41-69.

Gragnolati, Manuele. *Amor che move. Linguaggio del corpo e forma del desiderio in Dante, Pasolini e Morante*. Milano: il Saggiatore, 2013.

Grant, Edward. "Celestial Motions in the Late Middle Ages." *Early Science and Medicine* 2.2 (1997): 129-48.

Guthmüller, Bodo. "'Trasumanar significar per verba / non si poria.' Zu Dantes erstem Gesang des *Paradiso*." *Deutsches Dante-Jahrbuch* 82.1 (2007): 67-86.

Herzman, Ronald B. "'Io non Enëa, io non Paolo sono': Ulysses, Guido da Montefeltro, and Franciscan Traditions in the *Commedia*." *Dante Studies* 123 (2005): 23-69.

Hollander, Robert. "'La concubina di Titone antico': *Purgatorio* IX.1." *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America* (2001). https://www.princeton.edu/~dante/ebdsa/bobh073101.html.

_____. "Dante and Paul's Five Words with Understanding." *Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies*: *Occasional Papers* 1. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992.

The Holy Bible: the 21st Century King James Version. Gary, S.D.: 21st Century King James Bible Publishers, 1994.

Howard, Lloyd H. *Virgil the Blind Guide: Marking the Way through* the Divine Comedy. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2010.

Kappler, C. "L'Apocalypse latine de Paul. Apocalypses et voyages dans l'Au-delà." Ed. C. Kappler et al. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987. 237-65.

Kay, Tristan. "Dido, Aeneas, and the Evolution of Dante's Poetics." *Dante Studies* 129 (2011): 135-60.

Keskiaho, Jesse. "The Epistemology of Visions: the Reception of Augustine on the Three *Visiones*." *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400-900*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015. 137-216.

Kolve, V. A. "Ganymede/Son of Getron: Medieval Monasticism and the Drama of Same-Sex Desire." *Speculum* 73.4 (1998): 1014-67.

Kruger, Steven F. *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Laird, Andrew. "Re-inventing Virgil's Wheel: The Poet and His Work from Dante to Petrarch." *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception*. Ed. Philip Hardie and Helen Moore. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. 138-59.

Ledda, Giuseppe. "Dante e la tradizione delle visioni medievali." *Letture Classensi* 37 (2008): 119-42.

_____. *La guerra della lingua. Ineffabilità, retorica e narrativa nella* Commedia *di Dante*. Ravenna: Longo, 2002.

_____. "Modelli biblici e identità profetica nelle *Epistole* di Dante." *Lettere italiane* 60.1 (2008): 18-42.

_____. "Modelli biblici nella *Commedia*: Dante e San Paolo." *La Bibbia di Dante. Esperienza mistica, profezia e teologia biblica in Dante. Atti del Convegno (Ravenna, 7 novembre 2009)*. Ed. Giuseppe Ledda. Ravenna: Centro Dantesco dei Frati Minori Conventuali, 2011. 179-216.

_____. "Semele e Narciso: miti ovidiani della visione nella *Commedia* di Dante." *Le* Metamorfosi *di Ovidio nella letteratura tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Ed. G. M. Anselmi and M. Guerra. Bologna: Gedit, 2006. 17-40.

_____. "Sulla soglia del Purgatorio: peccato, penitenza, resurrezione. Per una lectura di *Purgatorio* IX." *Lettere italiane* 56 (2014): 3-36.

Levenstein, Jessica. "Philomela, Procne, and the Song of the Penitent in Dante's *Purgatorio*." *Writers Reading Writers: Intertextual Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Literature in Honour of Robert Hollander*. Ed. Janet L. Smarr. Cranbury: U of Delaware P, 2007. 40-57.

Lingiardi, Vittorio. "Ganymede and Zeus." *Men in Love: Male Homosexualities from Ganymede to Batman*. Trans. By Robert H. Hopcke and Paul A. Schwartz. Chicago: Open Court Publishers, 2002. 25-36.

_____. "Spiritual Love and Carnal Love." *Men in Love: Male Homosexualities from Ganymede to Batman*. Trans. By Robert H. Hopcke and Paul A. Schwartz. Chicago: Open Court Publishers, 2002. 37-45.

Lombardi, Elena. *The Syntax of Desire. Language and Love in Augustine, the Modistae, Dante*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007.

_____. *The Wings of the Doves. Love and Desire in Dante and Medieval Culture*. Montreal: McGill Queens UP, 2012.

Lombardi, Elena, Manuele Gragnolati, Francesca Southerden, and Tristan Kay, eds. *Desire in Dante and the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Legenda, 2012.

Lovell, Alison Baird. "Scève and Dante: 'L'amor che qui raffina.'" *The Shadow of Dante in French Renaissance Lyric.* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020. 165-90.

Lund-Mead, Carolynn. "Dido Alighieri: Gender Inversion in the Francesca Episode." *Dante & the Unorthodox: The Aesthetics of Transgression*. Ed. James Miller. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2005. 121-50.

Mandeville Caciola, Nancy. *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2015.

Marchesi, Simone. “Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio* XXVI.139-148.” *Glossator* 4 (2011): 73-80.

Marongiu, Marcella, ed. *Il mito di Ganimede prima e dopo Michelangelo. Catalogo della mostra Casa Buonarroti, 18 giugno-30 settembre 2002*. Firenze: Mandragora, 2002.

Mazzeo, Joseph Anthony. “Dante and the Pauline Modes of Vision.” *Harvard Theological Review* 5 (1957): 275-306.

Mosetti Casaretto, Francesco. “Dante o del viaggio erotico dell’anima.” *Itineraria* 18 (2019): 73-133.

Muessig, Carolyn. “Signs of Salvation: The Evolution of Stigmatic Spirituality Before Francis of Assisi.” *Church History* 82.1 (2013): 40-68.

_____. *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2020.

Murphy, Timothy, ed. *Reader’s Guide to Lesbian and Gay Studies*. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000.

Németh, Csaba. “*Paulus Raptus* to *Raptus Pauli*: Paul’s Rapture (2 Cor 12: 2-4) in the Pre-Scholastic and Scholastic Theologies.” *A Companion to St Paul in the Middle Ages*. Ed. Steven R. Cartwright. Leiden: Brill, 2013. 349-94.

Newman, Barbara. “What Did It Mean to Say ‘I Saw’? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture.” *Speculum* 80 (2005): 6-41.

Norton, Glyn P. “Retrospection and Prefiguration in the Dreams of *Purgatorio*.” *Italica* 47.4 (1970): 351-65.

Norton, Liz. *Aspects of Ekphrastic Technique in Ovid’s* Metamorphoses. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

Orgel, Stephen. “Ganymede Agonistes.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10.3 (2004): 485-501.

Origen. *Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum*. *Origenes Werke* VIII. Ed. W. Baehrens. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1925. 62-241.

Ovid. *The Metamorphoses*. Trans. Anthony S. Kline. https://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/trans/Ovhome.htm.

d’Ovidio, Francesco. “Dante e San Paolo.” *Studii sulla* Divina Commedia. Milano: Remo Sandron, 1901. 326-55.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED). www.oed.com.

Patrologia Latina. Migne, Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1844-64.

Peraldus, William. *Summa de vitiis et de virtutibus*. Ed. Rodolpus Clutius. 2 vols. Paris, 1629.

Pertile, Lino. “L’antica fiamma: la metamorfosi del fuoco nella *Commedia* di Dante.” *The Italianist* 11.1 (1991): 29-60.

Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*. 2 vols. Ed. Ignatius Brady. Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Acquas, 1971-81.

Petrocchi, Giorgio. “San Paolo in Dante.” *Dante e la Bibbia. Atti del Convegno Internazionale promosso da “Biblia” (Firenze 26-28 settembre 1986)*. Ed. G. Barblan. Firenze: Olschki, 1988. 235-48.

Picone, Michelangelo. “Canto IX.” *Lectura Dantis Turicensis*: Purgatorio. Ed. Georges Güntert and Michelangelo Picone. Firenze: Cesati, 2001. 121-37.

_____. “Le metamorfosi dell’amore: una lettura tipologica di *Purgatorio* IX.” *Italianistica* 29.1 (2000): 9-25.

Putnam, Michael C. J. “Ganymede and Virgilian Ekphrasis.” *The American Journal of Philology* 116.3 (1995): 419-40.

Richlin, Amy. “Reading Boy-Love and Child-Love in the Greco-Roman World.” *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World*. Ed. Mark Masterson,

Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, James Robson, and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones. London: Routledge, 2015. 352-73.

Rigo, Paola. *Memoria classica e memoria biblica*. Firenze: Olschki, 1994.

Roland of Cremona. *Summae Magistri Rolandi Cremonensis 0. P. liber tercius*. Ed. Aloysius Cortesi. *Monumenta Bergomensia* 7. Bergamo: Edizione Monumenta Bergomensia, 1962.

Salisbury, Eve. "Carried Away by the Law: Chaucer and the Poetry of Abduction." *Theorizing Legal Personhood in Late Medieval England*. Ed. Andrea D. Boboc. Leiden: Brill, 2015. 50-70.

Sarolli, Gian Roberto. "La visione dantesca come visione paolina." *Prolegomena alla* Divina Commedia. Firenze: Olschki, 1971.

Saslow, James M. "3,000 Years of Homoerotic Pictures." *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* (2000). https://www.thefreelibrary.com/3%2c000+Years+of+Homoerotic+Pictures.-a077712301.

_____. *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Schibanoff, Susan. "What Dante Meant to Chaucer: The Hermaphrodite Poetics of the *Divine Comedy*." *Chaucer's Queer Poetics: Rereading the Dream Trio*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006. 101-51.

Di Scipio, Giuseppe C. "Dante and St. Paul: The Blinding Light and Water." *Dante Studies* 98 (1980): 151-57.

_____. *The Presence of Pauline Thought in the Works of Dante*. Lewinston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.

Scott, John A. "The Dream and the Entrance to Purgatory (*Purgatorio* IX-X)." *Dante's Political Purgatory*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996. 128-43.

Shank, Michael H. "Setting up Copernicus? Astronomy and Natural Philosophy in Giambattista Capuano da Manfredonia's *Expositio* on the *Sphere*." *Evidence and Interpretation in Studies on Early Science and Medicine: Essays in Honour of John E. Murdoch*. Ed. Edith Dudley Sylla and William R. Newman. Leiden: Brill, 2009. 290-315.

Silverstein, Theodore. Visio Sancti Pauli. *The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts*. London: Christophers, 1935.

Silverstein, Theodore, and Anthony Hilhorst, eds. *Apocalypse of Paul. A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions*. Genève: Cramer, 1997.

Smith, Nathaniel B. "Arnaut Daniel in the *Purgatorio*: Dante's Ambivalence toward Provençal." *Dante Studies* 98 (1980): 99-109.

Stanivukovic, Goran. "Unheroic Masculinity in the Prose Romance of the English Renaissance." *Ovid and Masculinity in English Renaissance Literature*. Ed. John S. Garrison and Goran Stanivukovic. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2021. 129-50.

Steinberg, Glenn A. "Dante, Virgil, and Christianity: Or Statius, Sin, and Clueless Pagans in *Inferno* IV." *Forum italicum* 47.3 (2013): 475-96.

Strolonga, Polyxeni. "Variations on the Myth of the Abduction of Ganymede: Intertextuality and Narratology." *Yearbook of Ancient Greek Epic* 2.1 (2018): 190-217.

Tabor, James D. *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in Its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts*. Lanham, MD: UP of America, 1986.

Tang, Henry Ka Chun. "Heroic Self-Fashioning in Statius' *Thebaid*." PhD Thesis. University of Cambridge (2018).

Teulade, Anne. "Portrait de Ganymède en poète, dans le *Purgatorio* de Dante et les *Soledades* de Góngora." *Ganymède, ou, L'échanson: rapt, ravissement et ivresse poétique*. Ed. Véronique Gély. Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2013. 121-31.

Verstraete, Beerte C., and Vernon L. Provencal, eds. *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Classics, 2006.

———. *Aeneid VII-XII. The Minor Poems*. Trans. H.R. Fairclough. *Loeb Classical Library* 64. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1966.

———. *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-IV*. Trans. H.R. Fairclough. *Loeb Classical Library* 63. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978.

Vloebergs, Sander. "Wounding Love: A Mystical-Theological Exploration of Stigmatization." *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 77.1-2 (2016): 1-29.

Walker, Garthine. "Sexual Violence and Rape in Europe, 1500-1750." *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body, 1500 to the Present*. Ed. Kate Fisher and Sarah Toulalan. London: Routledge, 2013. 429-43.

Webb, Heather. "Ardent Attention." *Dante's Persons*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016. 123-63.

Wetherbee, Winthrop. *The Ancient Flame: Dante and the Poets*. Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 2008.

Xenophon. *Symposium*. *Opera omnia*. Vol. 2: *Oeconomicus, Convivium, Apologia Socratis*. The Perseus Digital Library. http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/.

Zaleski, Carol. *Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.