

"worthy of faith and obedience" in Latin, Dante concludes that "'authority' is nothing but 'the pronouncement of an author.'" Ugucione may also be the source for Dante's use and definitions of *Protonoè* ("Primal Mind," *Conv.* 2.3.11), *Galassia* ("Galaxy," *Conv.* 2.14.1), *allegoria* ("allegory," *Epist.* 13.7), and *hypocrita* (for the *contrapasso* of the hypocrites in the eighth circle of Hell, *Inf.* 23.61). It is certain that Dante—if he is the author of the *Epistle to Cangrande*—took his definitions of tragedy and comedy (*Epist.* 13.10) from Ugucione's discussion under the entry *oda* ("ode," "song").

Richard Lansing

### Ugucione della Faggiuola

Renowned Ghibelline leader, born in 1250. At various times he was podestà of Arezzo, Gubbio, and Pisa; *capitano del popolo* (Captain-General) of various cities, including Cesena and Pisa; and ruler of Lucca. He achieved his greatest military victory in 1315 at the Battle of Montecatini, where he destroyed the Guelf forces. He was a vigorous supporter of Henry VII of Luxembourg, who made him ruler of Pisa, and late in life he placed himself in the service of Cangrande della Scala. He died in battle in 1320. His possible links to Dante are several, although most appear to be more legendary in nature than real. Boccaccio added his weight to the story that the poet dedicated his *Inferno* to Ugucione, presumably because, it is said, early in his exile he hosted Dante at one of his castles (*Trattatello* 1.193). One critic (Carlo Troya) has even advanced the theory that the *veltro* of *Inf.* 1.101—the prophesied destroyer of the *lupa* ("she-wolf")—is to be identified with him. But historical records (Villani) show that he was not only tyrannical, brutal, and power-hungry but also avaricious, and therefore an unlikely candidate for the solution to the problem of greed represented by the she-wolf.

Richard Lansing

### Ugucione della Gherardesca

Son of Ugolino and Margherita de' Pannochieschi, Ugucione (*Uguccione*, *Inf.* 33.89) was imprisoned by Archbishop Ruggieri in the Gualandi tower at Pisa in 1288—together with his father, brother Gaddo, and Ugolino's grandsons Anselmuccio and Nino—where they were starved

to death. Although Dante portrays Ugucione as a child (*Inf.* 33.48, 87), he was an adult at the time of his imprisonment.

Richard Lansing

### Ulysses

The Greek hero whose adventures while returning home from Troy are sung by Homer in the *Odyssey*, Ulysses figures in canto 26 of Dante's *Inferno*, where he is placed among the fraudulent counselors, engulfed by a flame in the eighth pit of the eighth circle of Hell. Ulysses' story was not known to Dante through Homer, whose poems were not yet available to the Christian West in Dante's time; if Dante knew the various medieval retellings of the story, both Latin and vernacular, which relate Ulysses' return to Ithaca and (in a total departure from Homer) his death at the hands of Telegonus, he shows no signs of it. Rather, Dante's Ulysses is pieced together from a pastiche of classical Latin sources—especially Virgil, Statius, Ovid, Horace, Cicero, and Seneca. From these and other authors the Middle Ages inherited a bifurcated Ulysses, both negative and positive. The negative Ulysses is portrayed in Book 2 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, where he is labeled *dirus* ("dreadful," 2.261) and *scelerum inventor* ("deviser of crimes," 2.164). Virgil's portrayal came to dominate the Latin and later the medieval tradition, producing the conventional stereotype of a treacherous and sacrilegious warrior that leads directly to Dante's fraudulent counselor, who is punished in one flame with his comrade-in-arms Diomedes, since *insieme / a la vendetta vanno come a l'ira* ("together they go to punishment as they went to anger," *Inf.* 26.56–57).

However, Dante's Ulysses is a complex creation that goes far beyond the negative stereotype. Dante borrowed also from the positive rendering of Ulysses that was preserved mainly among the Stoics, for whom the Greek hero exemplified heroic fortitude in the face of adversity. Horace praises Ulysses in the *Epistle to Lollius* for his discernment and endurance and especially for his ability to withstand the temptations—*Sirenum voces et Circae pocula* ("Sirens' songs and Circe's cups," *Epistles* 1.2.23)—that proved the undoing of his companions. From the *Ars Poetica*, where Horace cites the opening verses of the *Odyssey*, Dante learned that Ulysses *mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes* ("saw the wide world, its ways

and cities all," 142). And, most suggestively, Cicero celebrates the mind's innate love of learning and of knowledge, the *discendi cupiditas*, in *De finibus* 5.18.49, using as his exemplary lover of wisdom none other than Ulysses. Cicero reads Homer's Sirens as givers of knowledge and Ulysses' response to their invitation as praiseworthy, for "It is knowledge that the Sirens offer, and it was no marvel if a lover of wisdom held this dearer than his home."

Dante's reconfiguring of Ulysses is a remarkable blend of the two traditional characterizations that also succeeds in charting an entirely new and extremely influential direction for this most versatile of mythic heroes. For Dante invents a new story, never heard before; his Ulysses departs from Circe straight on his new quest, pulled not by the desire for home and family but by the lure of adventure, by the *ardore / ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto / e de li vizi umani e del valore* ("the ardor that I had to gain experience of the world and of human vices and worth," *Inf.* 26.97–99). As Stanford points out, "In place of [Homer's] centripetal, homeward-bound figure Dante substituted a personification of centrifugal force" (181), claiming further that "Next to Homer's conception of Ulysses, Dante's, despite its brevity, is the most influential in the whole evolution of the wandering hero" (178).

On the one hand, Dante's placement of Ulysses among the sinners of fraud, and specifically among the fraudulent counselors, depends heavily on the anti-Greek pro-Trojan propaganda of imperial Rome: the sentiment Dante found in the *Aeneid*. Aeneas, Virgil's choice as mythic founder of Rome, is a Trojan, and Virgil's Ulysses reflects the tone of the second book of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas recounts the bitter fall of Troy to its Greek conquerors: a fall that occurred, after ten long years of war, not because of military superiority but because of the stratagem—the Ulyssean stratagem—of the Trojan horse. The Virgil who guides Dante through Hell recites a list of Ulyssean "crimes" in *Inf.* 26 that are fully consonant with the *scelera* of which Ulysses is the *inventor* in *Aen.* 2. He is guilty first and foremost of the Trojan horse, *l'agguato del caval che fè la porta / onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme* ("the deceit of the horse that made the gate to send forth the Romans' noble seed," 59–60), but also of the trick by which Achilles was lured to war and the theft of the Palladium, *l'arte per che, morta, / Deidamia*



*Dante and Virgil before the flame of Ulysses.* Opere di Dante Alighieri, edited by Cristoforo Zapate de Cisneros, Venice, 1757–1758. Giamatti Collection: Courtesy of the Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections.

*ancor si duol d'Achille, / e del Palladio pena vi si porta* ("the art that makes Deidamia, though dead, still grieve for Achilles; and there they bear the punishment for the Palladium," 61–63).

On the other hand, despite this damning recital, countless readers have felt compelled to admire Ulysses' stirring account of his journey beyond the Pillars of Hercules, in other words—like the European explorations of the Atlantic that were just beginning in Dante's day—beyond the markers of the known world. In order to persuade his old and tired companions to undertake such a *folle volo* ("mad flight," 125), Ulysses deploys his forceful eloquence in an *orazion picciola* ("little oration," 122) that has, rightly or wrongly, moved generations of readers and (quite divorced of its infernal context) achieved proverbial status in Italy: "*O frati, dissì, 'che per cento milia / perigli siete giunti a l'occidente, / a questa tanto picciola vigilia / d'i nostri sensi ch' del rimanente / non vogliate negar l'esperienza, / di retro al sol, del*

U *mondo senza gente. / Considerate la vostra semenza: / fatti non foste a viver come bruti, / ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza,*” (“O brothers,” I said, “who through a hundred thousand perils have reached the West, to this so brief vigil of our senses that remains, do not deny the experience, following the Sun, of the world without people. Consider your sowing: you were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge,” *Inf.* 26.112–120). While this oration exemplifies fraudulent counsel, since through it Ulysses leads his companions to their destruction, it also powerfully evokes the authentic spirit of the Ciceronian *discendi cupiditas*.

Dante’s Ulysses is an adventurer who dies while adventuring—indeed after embarking on his ultimate quest. Sailing into the uncharted waters of the uninhabited Southern Hemisphere, he sees a mountain in the distance, the highest he has ever seen. However, from this *nova terra* (“new land,” *Inf.* 26.137) a whirlwind arises that hits his ship and sinks it, bringing his exploration of the new world he has seen on the horizon to a sudden and tragic end. The shore that Ulysses cannot attain is the shore of Mount Purgatory, a shore that does not yield its secrets lightly to human daring; it is a *lito deserto, / che mai non vide navicar sue acque / omo, che di tornar sia poscia esperto* (“the deserted shore, which never saw any man sail its waters who afterwards experienced return,” *Purg.* 1.130–132). It is a shore that Dante-pilgrim will reach, for Dante’s transgressive journey through the afterworld is willed by God, while Ulysses’ is undertaken alone, a solitary enterprise without divine sanction: *ma misi me per l’alto mare aperto / sol* (“but I put out on the deep, open sea alone,” *Inf.* 26.100–101).

Dante criticism has been divided on the subject of Ulysses essentially since its inception. Among the fourteenth-century commentators, Buti takes a moralizing position critical of the Homeric hero, while Benvenuto sees him as exciting Dante’s admiration. We could sketch the positions of various modern critics around the same polarity. There is a pro-Ulysses group, spearheaded by Fubini, who maintains that Dante feels only admiration for the *folle volo*, the desire for knowledge it represents, and the oration that justifies it (Fubini’s supporters include Sapegno, Pagliaro, Forti). Then there is a less unified group that emphasizes the Greek hero’s sinfulness and seeks to determine the primary cause for his infer-

nal abode (rendered less clear by Dante’s avoidance of the eighth pit’s label until the end of the encounter with Guido da Montefeltro in the next canto). This second group could be divided into those who see the *folle volo* itself as the chief of Ulysses’ sins and those who concentrate instead on the sin of fraudulent counsel as described by Guido and on Ulysses’ rhetorical deceitfulness as manifested in the *orazion picciola* (Padoan, Dolfi). Most influential in the first category has been the position of Nardi, who argues that Dante’s Ulysses is a new Adam, a new Lucifer, and that his sin is precisely Adam’s, namely, *il trapassar del segno* (“the going beyond the mark,” *Par.* 26.117). Ulysses is thus a transgressor, whose pride incites him to seek a knowledge that is beyond the limits set for man by God, in the same way that Adam’s pride drove him to a similar transgression, also in pursuit of a knowledge that would make him Godlike. Ulysses rebels against the limits marked by the Pillars of Hercules, and his rebellion is akin to that of Lucifer and the rebel angels.

To account for Ulysses’ heroic stature within the *Commedia*, Nardi posits a split within Dante himself, whereby the poet is moved by what the theologian condemns. Nardi’s reading has much in common with that of an earlier critic, Valli, who also considered Ulysses deeply embedded within the symbolism of the *Commedia* and representative of the perilous pride that besets mankind. Valli too sees the sin of Dante’s Ulysses as akin to Adam’s eating of the tree of knowledge, as a *trapassar del segno* analogous to the original sin. The key difference between the two is that Valli relates the figure of Ulysses to Dante’s sense of a peril within himself, rather than arguing for an unconsciously divided poet; indeed, Valli goes so far as to invoke Dante’s encyclopedic prose treatise, *Convivio*, as an example of Dante’s own propensities toward intellectual pride, thus anticipating the positions of such critics as Freccero, Thompson, and Corti.

We can consider the positions of Dante scholars within the Ulysses *querelle* along a continuum, with extreme positions at either end: at one extreme are those critics, like Fubini, who maintain that Dante feels only admiration for Ulysses’ voyage and that it has nothing whatever to do with his damnation; at the other are those critics, like Cassell, who deny Ulysses any special importance, telling us that the poet feels nothing but scorn for

his creature and to see anything else at work in the canto is to read it through anachronistic romantic eyes. Both these readings rob the episode of its tension and deflate it of its energy—on the one hand, by making the fact that Ulysses is in Hell irrelevant and, on the other, by denying that this particular sinner means more to the poem than do his companions. Fubini's simple admiration fails to deal with the fact that Dante places Ulysses in Hell; Cassell's simple condemnation fails to take into account the structural and thematic significance that the Greek hero bears for the *Commedia* as a whole.

The positions of the two major critical schools—the one that posits Ulysses' sinfulness primarily in the *folle volo* and the other that defends the voyage and sees his sinfulness primarily in his fraudulent counsel—can reflect the complex integrity of Dante's creation only when they are themselves integrated. It is not possible to divorce the idea of fraudulent counsel from this hero's later behavior, since the speech with which Ulysses persuades his companions to undertake their last voyage exemplifies it. At the same time, Dante's great addition to the story of Ulysses—precisely the mad journey beyond the Pillars of Hercules—cannot be overlooked in a balanced assessment of Ulysses' role in the poem. There is much to be said for Nardi's linking of Ulyssean trespass to Adamic trespass. Dante himself uses Ulyssean language in describing Adam's sin: in *Par. 7* he calls it *folia* ("madness," 93), and in *Par. 26*, as we saw, he describes it as *trapassar* ("trespass" or "transgression"). Contemporary readers of the *Commedia* responded to the linguistic and thematic correspondences Dante drew between Ulysses and Adam: Boccaccio conflates the *Paradiso's* Adamic *trapassar del segno* with the description of the purgatorial shore from *Purg. 1* to characterize Ulysses as one who *per voler veder trapassò il segno / dal qual nessun poté mai in qua reddire* ("in his desire to see trespassed the boundary from which no one has ever been able to return," *Amorosa visione*, redaction A, 27.86–87). For Petrarch, too, Ulysses *desiò del mondo veder troppo* ("desired to see too much of the world," *Triumphus fame* 2.18). Far from being anachronistic, as charged by his critics, Nardi is reviving a contemporary insight when he associates Dante's Ulysses with Adam: with primal trespass, with a mad assumption of limitless and unchecked further adventure—further knowledge.

The least convincing aspect of Nardi's reading is his formulation of an unconsciously divided poet. It seems far more likely that Ulysses reflects instead Dante's conscious concern for himself. The perception of a profound autobiographical alignment between the poet and his creation seems also to have had early roots: Bosco shows that Dante's intransigence in not accepting Florentine terms for repatriation despite the suffering of his family elicited contrasting reactions from Boccaccio, who defended him, and Petrarch, whose criticism implicitly brands him a Ulysses. Moreover, the Dante who is implicated in the figure of Ulysses is not solely the Dante of the *Convivio*, a Dante of the past, but also the Dante of the *Commedia*. And, within the *Commedia*, Ulysses is reflected not only by Dante-pilgrim, who, as Scott and others have shown, is related to Ulysses as an inverse type, his negative double, but also, as Barolini demonstrates, by Dante-poet, who has embarked on a poetic voyage that transgresses the boundary between life and death, between God and man. Asking "To what do we owe the tragic weight of [the Ulysses] episode?" Borges replies: "I think there is one explanation, the only valid one, and that is that Dante felt, in some way, that he was Ulysses. I don't know if he felt it in a conscious way—it doesn't matter. In some tercet of the *Commedia* he says that no one is permitted to know the judgments of Providence. We cannot anticipate them; no one can know who will be saved and who condemned. But Dante has dared, through poetry, to do precisely that. He shows us the condemned and the chosen. He must have known that doing so courted danger. He could not ignore that he was anticipating the indecipherable providence of God. For this reason the character of Ulysses has such force, because Ulysses is a mirror of Dante, because Dante felt that perhaps he too deserved this punishment. Writing the poem, whether for good or ill, he was infringing on the mysterious laws of the night, of God, of Divinity" (24).

A further textual sign of Ulysses' irreducibility, of the fact that he is not just any sinner, is his sustained presence in the poem: he is named in each canticle, not only in *Inf. 26* but also in *Purg. 19*, where the siren of Dante's dream claims to have turned Ulysses aside from his path with her song, and in *Par. 27*, where the pilgrim, looking down at Earth, sees the trace of *il varco / folle d'Ulisse* ("the mad leap of Ulysses," 82–83), in a stunning reminiscence of the original episode's

**U** *folle volo*. As *folle volo* and *varco folle* indicate, Ulysses embodies and dramatizes the poem's most fundamental trope: voyage. Specifically, he is linked to the *Commedia's* metaphorization of desire as flight, a metaphor embedded in the verse in which Ulysses conjures the wild exuberance he had solicited from his aged crew by saying *de' remi facemmo ali al folle volo* ("of our oars we made wings for the mad flight," *Inf.* 26.125). Ulysses and his surrogates, other failed flyers like Phaëton and Icarus, are connected to one of the *Commedia's* most basic metaphorical assumptions: if we desire sufficiently, we fly. In other words, if we desire sufficiently, our quest takes on wings; if we desire sufficiently, we vault all obstacles, we cross all boundaries. Thus we have the passage in *Purgatorio* in which the narrator overtly establishes the metaphorical identity between desire and flight, saying that in order to climb the steep grade of lower Purgatory one needs to fly with the wings of desire: *ma qui convien ch'om voli; / dico con l'ale snelle e con le piume / del gran disio* ("but here one must fly, I mean with the swift wings and the pinions of great desire," *Purg.* 4.27–29).

Dante-pilgrim flies on the *piume del gran disio*, and the saturation of the *Commedia* with flight imagery—with imagery that the poem codes as Ulyssean flight imagery—reflects the importance of desire as the impulse that governs all questing, all voyaging, all coming to know. Desire and the search for understanding are intimately linked, indeed ultimately one, for desire is spiritual motion, as Dante tells us: *disire, / ch' moto spiritale* ("desire, which is spiritual motion," *Purg.* 18.31–32). This equivalence—desire equals spiritual motion—crucially recasts in the metaphorical language of voyage and pilgrimage the Aristotelian precept that stands on the *Convivio's* threshold, where we already find articulated the link between desire and knowledge, *desiderio* and *sapere*: *tutti li uomini naturalmente desiderano di sapere* ("all men by nature desire to know," *Conv.* 1.1.1). The treatise's abstract conceptual pairing returns in the *Commedia's* metaphorical copulae: the winged oars, the plumage of great desire. Desire—Ulyssean *ardore*—is the motor propelling all voyage: both right voyages, conversions, and those that, like Ulysses' own, tend toward the left (the *lato mancino* of *Inf.* 26.126), toward perdition. The complex and polysemous character of Ulysses is conceived and written in

such a way as to tap into the deepest wellsprings of the *Commedia's* energy, for Ulysses holds up a mirror to the poem's principal voyager, Dante himself, whose ambitions were no less grand.

### Bibliography

- Avalle, D'Arco Silvio. "L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse." In *Modelli semiologici nella "Commedia" di Dante*. Milan: Bompiani, 1975.
- Barolini, Teodolinda. *The Undivine "Comedy"*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Amorosa visione*. Edited by Vittore Branca. *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*. Vol. 3. Verona: Mondadori, 1974.
- Boitani, Piero. *The Shadow of Ulysses: Figures of a Myth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Seven Nights*. Translated by Eliot Weinberger. New York: New Directions, 1984.
- Bosco, Umberto. "La 'follia' di Dante." 1958. Reprinted in *Dante vicino*. 2nd ed. Caltanissetta: Sciascia, 1972, pp. 55–75.
- Cassell, Anthony K. *Dante's Fearful Art of Justice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- . "Ulysseana: A Bibliography of Dante's Ulysses to 1981." *Italian Culture* 3 (1981), 23–45.
- Cicero. *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*. Translated by H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1971.
- Corti, Maria. *Dante a un nuovo crocevia*. Florence: Libreria Commissionaria Sansoni, 1981, pp. 85–97.
- Dolfi, Anna. "Il canto di Ulisse: occasione per un discorso di esegesi dantesca." *Forum Italicum* 7–8 (1973–1974), 22–45.
- Forti, Fiorenzo. "'Curiositas' o 'fol hardement'?" In *Magnanimitate: Studi su un tema dantesco*. Bologna: Pàtron, 1977, pp. 161–206.
- Freccero, John. "Dante's Ulysses." 1975. Reprinted in *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. Edited by Rachel Jacoff. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Fubini, Mario. "Il peccato d'Ulisse" and "Il canto XXVI dell'*Inferno*." In *Il peccato d'Ulisse e altri scritti danteschi*. Milan: Ricciardi, 1966, pp. 1–76.
- Horace. *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

- Nardi, Bruno. "La tragedia di Ulisse." 1937. Reprinted in *Dante e la cultura medievale*. 2nd ed. rev. Bari: Laterza, 1949, pp. 153–165.
- Padoan, Giorgio. "Ulisse 'fandi factor' e le vie della sapienza." 1960. Reprinted in *Il pio Enea, l'empio Ulisse*. Ravenna: Longo, 1967, pp. 170–199.
- Pagliaro, Antonino. "Ulisse." In *Ulisse: Ricerche semantiche sulla "Divina Commedia"*. 2 vols. Messina: D'Anna, 1967. Vol. 1, pp. 371–432.
- Petrarca, Francesco. *Triumphs*. Edited by Marco Ariani. Milan: Mursia, 1988.
- Sapegno, Natalino. "Ulisse." *Lecture Classensi* 7 (1979), 93–98.
- Scott, John A. "L'Ulisse dantesco." In *Dante magnanimo*. Florence: Olschki, 1977, pp. 117–193.
- Seriacopi, Massimo. *All'estremo della "prudencia": l'Ulisse di Dante*. Rome: Zauli Arti Grafiche, 1994.
- Shankland, Hugh. "Dante Aliger and Ulysses." *Italian Studies* 32 (1977), 21–40.
- Stanford, W. B. *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968.
- Thompson, David. "Dante's Ulysses and the Allegorical Journey." 1967. Reprinted in *Dante's Epic Journeys*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- Valli, Luigi. "Ulisse e la tragedia intellettuale di Dante." *La struttura morale dell'universo dantesco*. Rome: Ausonia, 1935, pp. 26–40.
- Virgil. *Aeneid*. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Loeb Classical Library. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1974.

Teodolinda Barolini

### Urban I, Pope

Pope from 222 to 230 and martyr to the faith, Urban (*Urbano*) is cited, along with Popes Sixtus I, Pius I, and Callistus I, as an example of sacrificial devotion to the Church, in St. Peter's denunciation of the corrupt papacy in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars (*Par.* 27.44).

Richard Lansing

### Usury

Usury becomes the focus of Virgil's description of the moral structure of Hell in *Inf.* 11 when the

pilgrim fails to comprehend how it is a sin of violence, in particular, a sin of violence against *la divina bontade* ("God's goodness," 94–96). Virgil's explanation gives rise to a genealogical account of the three general categories of violence against God: direct offense (blasphemy); violence against nature, God's progeny (sodomy); violence against art or human industry (usury). To explain this last form of violence, twice removed from God, Virgil first calls on the authority of Aristotle's *Physics* to establish the idea that art follows nature (*ars imitatur naturam*, 2.2.194). He then discloses the sinful nature of usury by reminding the pilgrim of God's harsh words to Adam for having disobeyed his command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden: *in laboribus comedes ex ea [terra] cunctis diebus vitae tuae* ("in toil you shall eat of it [earth] all the days of your life," Gen. 3:17).

The notion that fallen man must live "by the sweat of his brow" (Gen. 3:19), combined with Christ's exhortation to his followers to "lend, expecting nothing in return" (Luke 6:35), gave the Christian Middle Ages a firm foundation from which to condemn the lending of money at interest. In his *Summa theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas marshals a variety of sources, from biblical passages and Aristotle's writings to Roman law and contemporary statutes, to prove that usury, defined as "not merely the restoration of some equivalent but also a charge for its use," is indeed a sin (2.2.78.1). According to Aquinas, the biblical passages apparently permitting usury—e.g., Deut. 23:19 and Luke 19:23—are not only countered by biblical injunctions against usury (Exod. 22:25, Ps. 15:5) but are also ineffective on their own terms as arguments in favor of the economic activity of lending at interest. In the first case, God's permission to charge interest to foreigners no longer applies, since all people are exhorted to treat one another as neighbors in the "epoch of the Gospel." And in the Gospel example itself, Aquinas interprets Christ's statement that he has come to collect "with interest" metaphorically to mean that God expects "a natural increase of spiritual goods."

However, in a move that helps to shape Dante's view, Aquinas depends mostly on Aristotle to put forth his argument against usury. Beginning from the premise that money should be used as a "middle term," a way to measure the relative values of goods and services by some single