

## Circle 8 Lecture Notes

### ***Bolgia 1 (Canto 18)***

**Seducers and panderers:** Whipped by horned demons in the first ditch or bolgia of Circle 8.

**Jason:** A seducer of Hypsipyle of Lemnos, Medea of Colchis, and Creusa of Corinth.

### ***Bolgia 2 (Canto 18)***

**Flatterers :** Sunken in excrement

**Thais,** a prostitute from the classical tradition who falsely praises her lover. She is an image of degraded sexuality.

### ***Bolgia 2 (Canto 19)***

**Simoniacs** Abused their power within the church. Dante sees this as a form of spiritual prostitution, fornication and rape, a perversion of the holy matrimony conventionally posited between Christ and the Church.

**Pope Nicholas III,** who talks to Dante as if to his confessor, mistaking him for Boniface VIII, whom he expects to see in hell in Canto 19. He also foresees the damnation of Pope Clement V, , formerly the French archbishop Bertrand de Got, who was elected to the papacy in 1305. He moved the Papal See from Rome to Avignon in southern France as part of the Great Schism within Catholicism.

**Simon Magus,** for whom simony was named, was a magician or sorcerer who offered St. Peter money for spiritual power.

### ***Bolgia 4 (Canto 20)***

#### **Fortune Tellers and Diviners**

They must go backward for all eternity, with their heads turned around on their bodies and as their sin is a distortion of God's law, so are their bodies distorted in Hell.

**Manto,** daughter of **Tieresias,** is a prophetess in the pit of sorcerers and astrologers. The city of Mantua was named after her (it was Virgil's native city).

### ***Bolgia 5 (Cantos 21-22)***

#### **Grafters or corrupt politicians**

They are sunk in boiling pitch and guarded by demons, who tear them to pieces with claws and grappling hooks if they catch them above the surface of the sticky pitch, symbolic of their sticky fingers.

Demons names like Curlybeard and Malacoda (evil tail) come from the nicknames of civic leaders in Florence.

### ***Bolgia 6 (Canto 23)***

**Hypocrites** They are weighted down by leaden robes and walk eternally around a narrow track. The robes look beautiful but are very heavy.

**Caiaphas:** high priest of Jerusalem who advises the council of high priests and Pharisees to let Christ suffer for the whole nation (John: 11:50). This alleged public interest, false and self-serving, makes Caiaphas a particularly scorned sinner. He and his father-in-law

Annas were crucified on the floor of the pit in Canto 23 while all of the heretics with their heavy lead/golden robes walk over and onto him.

### ***Borgia 7***

#### **Thieves (Cantos 24-25)**

As their hands are the agents of their crimes, their hands are bound forever, and as their crimes are reptilian in their secrecy, they are punished by reptiles.

### ***Borgia 8***

#### **Evil Counselors (Canto 26-27)**

Hidden inside great tongues of flame which are their guilty consciences for misusing their gifts of rhetoric.

#### **Ulysses and Diomedes**

**Guido da Montefeltro**—Misuse of rhetoric, necessary for civilized life but without wisdom, eloquence becomes fraudulent and corrupting

### ***Borgia 9***

#### **Sowers of Discord (Canto 27-28)**

They are hacked and torn through all eternity by a great demon with a bloody sword because, in life, they tore apart what God intended to be united.

Schismatics, Sowers of Religious Discord: **Mahomet, Ali** (his son-in-law), **Fra Dolcino**

Sowers of Political Discord: **Pier da Medicina, Curio, Mosca dei Lamberti,**

Sowers of Discord between Kinsmen: **Bertrand de Born**

### ***Borgia 10 (Cantos 29-30)***

**Falsifiers** They are punished by afflictions of every sense: by darkness, stench, thirst, filth, loathsome diseases, and a shrieking din. Some of them run raving through the pit, tearing others to pieces. Thus, their senses are an affliction, rather than a guide.

Class 1, Alchemists, Falsifiers of Things:

**Griffolino D'arezzo** /An alchemist who promised to teach Alberto da Siena to fly. Was burned for alchemy.

**Capocchio** Burned at the stake in Siena for alchemy in 1293. School friend of Dante.

Class 2: Evil Impersonators, Counterfeiters and False Witnesses.

### **Giants**

These sons of earth, embodiments of elemental forces, are placed in Hell less for their particular sins than for their general natures

**Treacherous against their Masters** They are eternally ripped and chomped in the mouth of Satan, each in one of the three heads of Lucifer.