



WALKING RAVENNA

with the *Divine Comedy*



Dantesque itinerary

*discover the city by looking for important landmarks
based on the Divine Comedy*



I Club Lions
di Ravenna

con il patrocinio del Comune di Ravenna



Comune di **Ravenna**



VIVA DANTE
RAVENNA 1321-2021



Ravenna Host
Ravenna Bisanzio
Ravenna Dante Alighieri
Ravenna Romagna Padusa

Under the patronage of



Comune di **Ravenna**



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*discover the city by looking for important landmarks
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*a project
by
Ravenna Lions Clubs*

*made by
Giuseppe Ranieri and Paolo Santelmo*

www.camminarecondante.it

A dutiful thanks to

**Comune di Ravenna
Istituzione Biblioteca Classense di Ravenna
Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna-Cervia
Direzione Regionale Musei Emilia Romagna
Liceo Scientifico “A. Oriani” di Ravenna
Giampiero Corelli Fotoreporter**

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Dantesque itinerary

1. Museo Dante - Via Dante Alighieri, 2/a
2. Casa Dante - Via G. da Polenta, 4
3. Giardino Rinaldo da Concorezzo - Piazza San Francesco
4. Basilica di San Francesco - Piazza San Francesco
5. Palazzo della Provincia - Piazza San Francesco, 7
6. Battistero Neoniano - Piazza Duomo, 12
7. Cappella di Sant'Andrea - Pal. Arcivescovile - Piazza Arcivescovado, 1
8. Biblioteca Classense - Via Baccarini, 3
9. San Romualdo - Via Baccarini angolo via Rondinelli
10. Casa detta dei Polentani - Via Zagarelli alle Mura 2/a
11. Planetario - Viale Santi Baldini 4/a
12. Sant'Apollinare in Classe - Via Romea Sud, 224 - Classe
13. Santa Maria in Porto - Via di Roma, 19
14. Santa Chiara (Teatro Rasi) - Via di Roma, 39
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16. Basilica di San Giovanni Evangelista - Viale Farini
17. Santo Stefano degli Ulivi - Piazza Mameli, 8
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19. Santa Maria Maggiore - Via Galla Placidia, 7
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Introduction

The journey stands for the deepest meaning of the Comedy – nothing more than the very journey of life, of the mind, that can be “alto e silvestro” (tall and wild), corto (short) even santo (saint). The actual words of Dante encourage us to do the most human and eternal movement, a foot before the other to experience the world and ourselves. Walking in Ravenna means “walking with Dante”, getting lost in the stunning evidences of a past that still glows with the colours of the mosaics and the old architectures and finding oneself in 7-centuries-old verses that are still very modern. As “last shelter” of the poet and thanks to projects like this one, Ravenna is a place of memory that combines tradition and everyday life, being part of a community and being involved in culture, knowledge and will of making everyone part of a story of deep humanity.

The common good also depends on actions that aim to valorise local heritage through meticulous care, involvement of people, the creation of new ways of interpretation and the need of knowledge. The landmarks of the itinerary all have a common denominator – Dante. Along the itinerary, you will see the buildings that hosted the poet, the places mentioned in the Comedy and that gave inspiration to his great mind. The plaques are also present in each school of the city, so that Dante can be a leading character for all the students that represent our future from their very first steps. As reminded by Borges “we should all read the Comedy. If we do not do that, we deprive ourselves of the greatest gift made by literature.”

The project is sustained by many private individuals, associations and places of business – an outstanding example of participation of the community to the universal story of Dante.

Fabio Sbaraglia
Councillor for culture
Comune di Ravenna

Dantesque itinerary

The plaques of the Dantesque itinerary represent the Cantos of the Divine Comedy and mark buildings and places related to them; the people they are dedicated to; the artworks they host; the connection they have with the characters of the Comedy; and the charming appeal of the cantos they are linked to.

The itinerary will take you to the 27 most significant landmarks among the 100 places of the project **“Walk in Ravenna with the Divine Comedy”** realised by Lions Club Ravenna Host, Ravenna Bisanzio, Ravenna Dante Alighieri and Ravenna Romagna Padusa. The project is meant to pay a long-lasting homage to the memory of the poet and his most important work – the Comedy described by Boccaccio as Divine. The Dantesque itinerary is an essential element of the project and will guide you to discover the city by looking for the 27 most important landmarks based on the Divine Comedy.

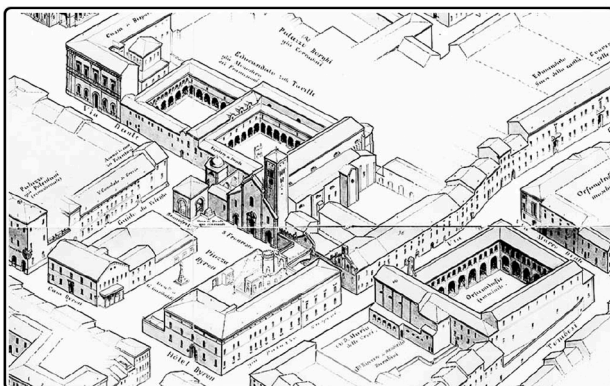
The plaques are equipped with a QR code that will allow you to access a series of contents as a video reading of the canto, the text, a summary accessible to all and many other materials. Furthermore, they are discreet and respectful of the places, and offer an enriching, educational and appealing experience that adds value to the stunning artistic heritage of the city. The goal of the event is to celebrate the supreme guest of the city of Ravenna and to foster the knowledge of his enormous work, so that it keeps having an influence not only on the cultural life, but also on the everyday life of people living in the city or coming to visit it. As essential, central and foundational element of the project, **“Walk in Ravenna with the Divine Comedy”** aims to give concrete form to what Benedetto Croce said a hundred years ago in Ravenna on the inauguration of the 600th-anniversary event of Dante’s death: “The most sublime and authentic way of celebrating Dante is also the easiest one: we have to read his work, read it again, sing it, sing it again (...) if we want to follow virtue and knowledge as he wrote, if we want to live as humans and not beasts”. And maybe meet him thanks to the itinerary. Hoping that he will be a good and prestigious partner for our journey.

Giuseppe Ranieri
Lions Club Ravenna Host

1 - Museo Dante



Midway in the journey of our life
I came to myself in a dark wood,
for the straight way was lost.
Inferno I vv. 1-3



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Dante Zone - Perspective view by Gaetano Savini

The path "Walking Ravenna with the Divine Comedy" starts from the Dante Zone, an area of silence, meditation and respect for the sacredness of the Poet's last shelter. This area, which has been preserving the Poet's memory for centuries – Dante Museum is located here too – is the best starting point for a journey of discovery of the city that hosted him during his last years and which is still devoted to his Person, his thoughts and the ethical sublimation of his work. Enjoy your journey.



The entrance to the Dante Museum

2 - Casa Dante

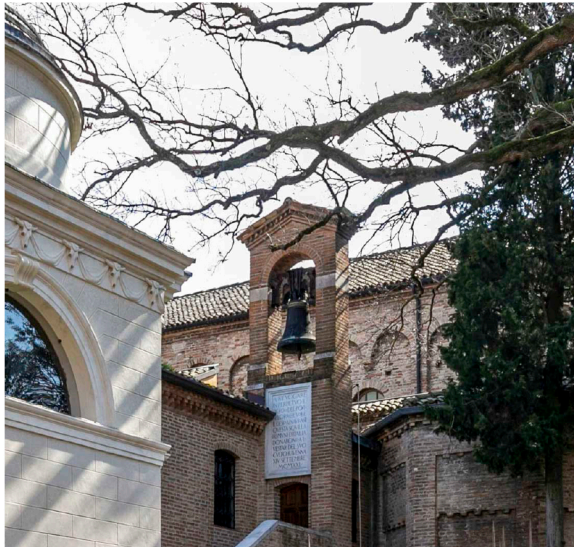


It was now the hour that melts a sailor's heart
and saddens him with longing on the day
he's said farewell to his beloved friends,
Purgatorio VIII vv. 1-3

Casa Dante is inside Casa Fabbri-Farini, a 13th-century dwelling with a garden and courtyard spaces, facing the Quadrarco di Braccioforte and next to Dante's Tomb, the Franciscan Cloisters and the Dante Museum. This prestigious location extends the so-called "Zona del Silenzio" (Area of Silence), which encompasses and preserves Dante's memory.

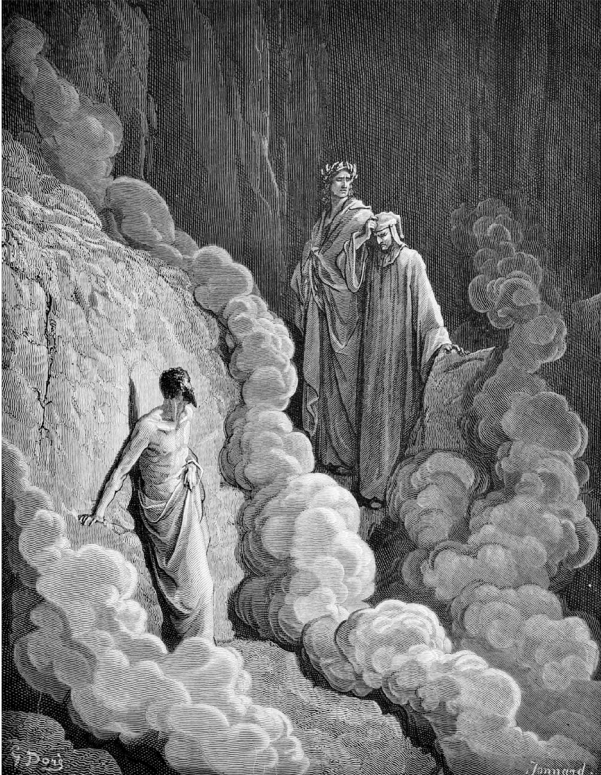
The Canto starts with a famous tercet that is linked to this very place and which describes both the twilight and the sadness he feels when he remembers sweet friends. These lines make us think of the Poet's mood as an exile. But they also remind us of two things: first, the inscription on the commemorative plaque at the bottom of the bell donated by several towns of Italy, which tolls thirteen times every day at sunset in memory of 13th September, the day Dante died. Secondly, the "Perpetual Reading" which takes place every evening in front of Dante's Tomb and which bears this tercet as a caption.

Casa Dante comprises an exhibition, which is complementary to the Dante Museum, a bookshop, a visitor's centre and an area where people can rest, read, and meditate on Dante's work and its role in guiding us towards a new Humanism.

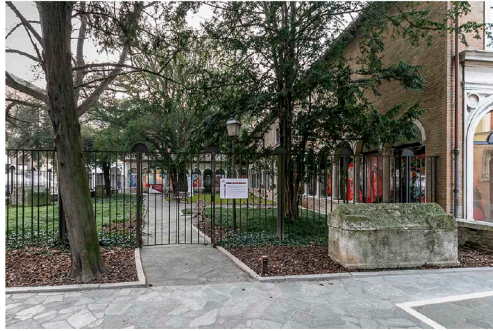


The bell donated by various municipalities of Italy

3 - Giardino Rinaldo da Concoreggio



'The one has snuffed the other out, the sword
is fastened to the crook, and these two,
forced to be together, must perforce go ill,
Purgatorio XVI vv. 109-111



The Rinaldo da Concorezzo garden

The garden is named after and dedicated to Rinaldo di Concoreggio, who was the Archbishop of Ravenna and an important figure at a time when the Popes held both the crosier and the sword – indeed Dante believed the contrasts with the emperor had caused the political problems of the country and the moral chaos his poem denounces. Instead, Rinaldo stood out for being wise, forward-looking and attentive to the needs of his diocese: in 1311 the Archbishop acquitted the Templars of the province of Romagna by rejecting the confessions obtained through torture and condemning this investigation procedure. This action attracted the hostility of the Avignonese Pope Clement V, whom Dante condemns to Hell. There is no known relationship between Dante and the Archbishop, who lived permanently in Argenta, where he died, a month before Dante.



The memorial stone dedicated to Rinaldo da Concorezzo
by the Ravenna Bisanzio Lions Club

4 - Basilica di San Francesco



Drawing by Giuliano Giuliani

'Their happy countenances and their harmony,
their love and wonder and sweet contemplation
made them a cause for holy thoughts,
Paradiso XI vv. 76-78



The Basilica San Francesco

The cathedral where Dante's funeral was held and next to which his remains are still resting is dedicated to Saint Francis. Besides comparing him to a Sun, the famous tercet glorifies his passion for his woman, Poverty, who generates love, wonder and holy thoughts. Being still run by the Franciscan Friars, who have been looking after Dante's remains for centuries, protecting and preserving them, it is regarded as Dante's Church and is a must-see for any tourist.



The box in which the Franciscan Friars hid Dante's bones

5 - Palazzo della Provincia



'Ravenna remains as it has been for years.

The eagle of Polenta broods over it
so that he covers Cervia with his wings.

Inferno XXVII vv. 40-42



The Palace of the Province

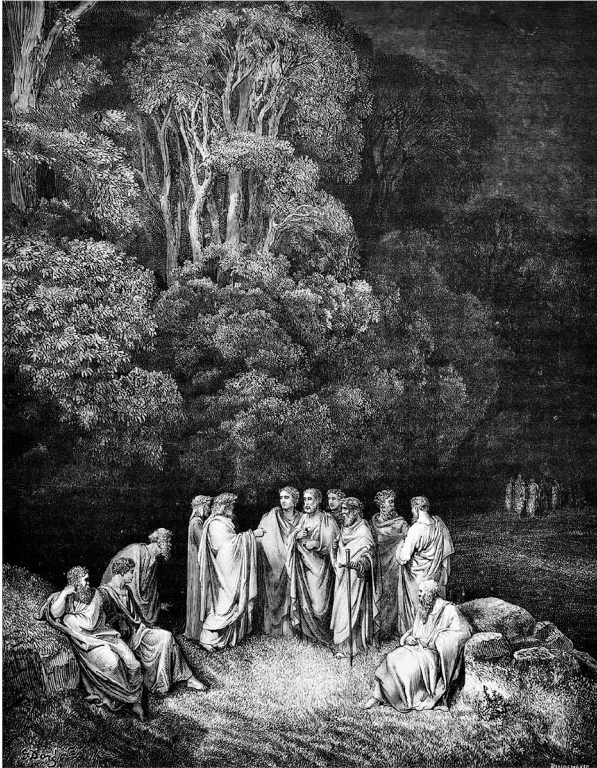
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The Palace is associated with the tercet mentioning the eagle because of its symbol, which the coat of arms of the Polenta family displayed too. Eventually, when the Venetians took control of the city, every reference to the Polentanis was cancelled – as a kind of *damnatio memoriae*. However, the eagle has survived here. The Palace, erected on the 17th century Rasponi Palace, was built in 1926 by architect Giulio Arata. The garden and the crypt are the remains of the ancient building.



The Da Polenta Eagle that appears in the coat of arms of the Province of Ravenna

6 - Battistero Neoniano



before you venture farther,
'they did not sin. Though they have merit,
that is not enough, for they were unbaptised,
denied the gateway to the faith that you profess

Inferno IV v. 33-36



The Neonian Baptistery

© Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna-Cervia

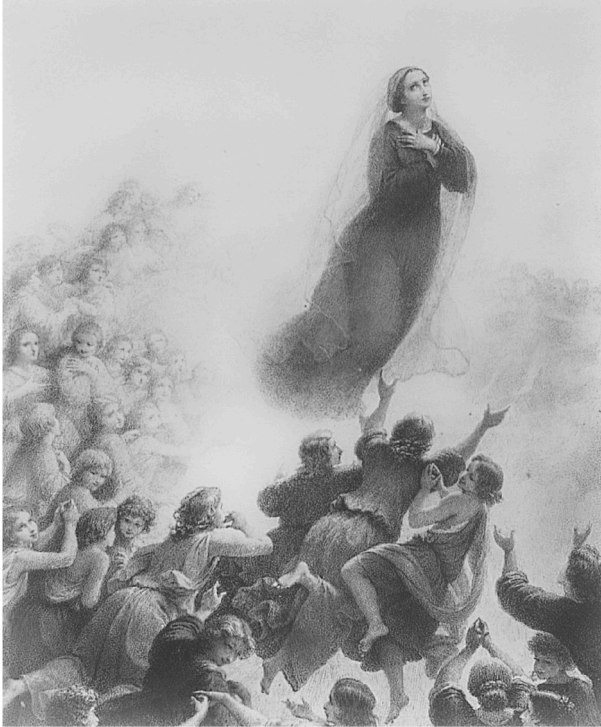
The Cathedral Baptistery, also known as Neonian Baptistery, is the place where the Catholics from Ravenna were baptized. It has been a Unesco World Heritage Monument since 1996 and it well represents Baptism as the gateway to Faith which Dante mentions in the fourth Canto – here he describes the Limbo of the unbaptized, where Virgilio himself is hosted.



© Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna - Per gentile concessione

The mosaic of the dome of the Neonian Baptistery

7 - Cappella di Sant'Andrea



I saw, above the many thousand lamps,
a Sun that kindled each and every one
as ours lights up the sights we see above us
Paradiso XXIII vv. 28-30



The Archbishop's Palace,
inside which is the Chapel of Sant'Andrea

The Sun Dante sees illuminate thousands of other lights is Christ, represented by the Cross “signum glorie”. This Cross shines in the middle of the apse of the Archiepiscopal Chapel, with the starry sky that seems to rotate around it. It is located in the Cathedral of Ravenna, the most important religious site in the city.



The apsidal basin of the Chapel of Sant'Andrea

8 - Biblioteca Classense



as builds from branch to branch
throughout the pine wood at the shore of Classe
when Aeolus unleashes his Sirocco.
Purgatorio XXVIII vv. 19-21



The Classense Library

The Camaldolese abbey hosts the ancient Classense Library. The latter was built in 1515 when, soon after the “French pillage”, the monks moved from the monastery next to the Basilica of Sant’Apollinare in Classe to town. The memory of the large and thick pine forest Dante mentions is associated with this place, which was run and taken care of by the friars and which has grown to be an important cultural centre both locally and nationally.

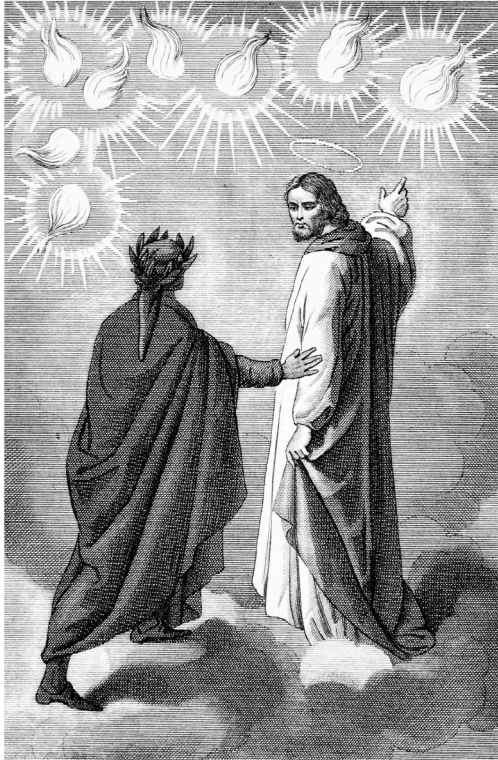
The monastery was built on the site of the former Ospedale Santa Maria della Misericordia, commissioned by Bonifacio Fieschi in 1923. The plaque recalls this famous character too, who was Archbishop of Ravenna from 1275 to 1294 and whom Dante meets in Purgatorio 24, among the gluttonous of the sixth terrace: (I saw for hunger bite the empty air/Ubaldin dalla Pila, and Boniface,/who with his crook had pastured many people.)

The Hospital was close to an ancient Church, S. Bartolomeo in Turricula, which stood near a city tower.



The Aula Magna built between the seventeenth /
eighteenth century by Abbot Pietro Canneti
© Biblioteca Classense - Per gentile concessione

9 - San Romualdo



'Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus,
here are my brothers whose feet never strayed
beyond their cloisters and whose hearts were firm.'

Paradiso XXII vv. 49-51



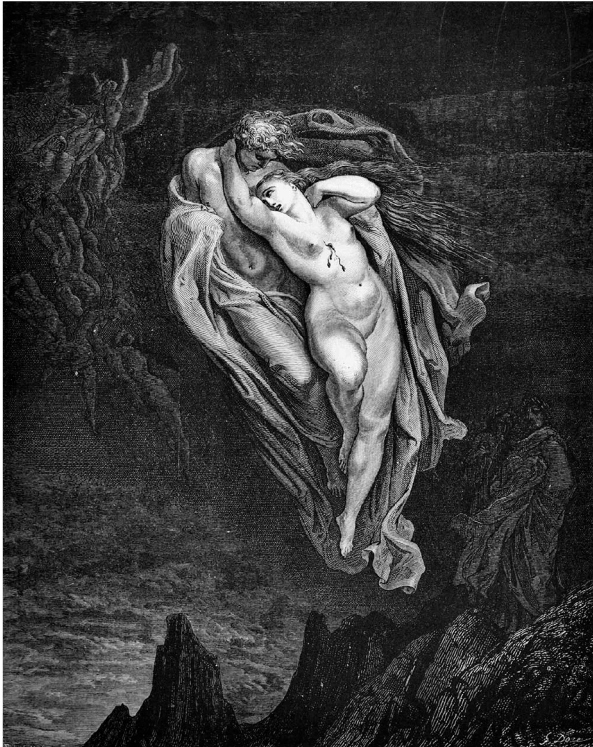
The church of San Romualdo was built for the monks coming from the abbey of Sant'Apollinare in Classe between 1629 and 1637. In the 1930s, it became a Monument to the Fallen Soldiers and, in 2004 it was designated as the seat of the Museum of the Risorgimento. Romualdo was born in Ravenna to the aristocratic Onesti and Traversari Families. He promoted the Camaldolese Congregation, a reformed branch of the

Benedictine Order. Well-known for the rigor of his faith and life, he built several monasteries and hermitages, including that of Pereo in the north of Ravenna, near Sant'Alberto, and that of Camaldoli in the Casentinesi mountains.



Ribbed vault of the cruise at the intersection of the nave with the transept

10 - Casa detta dei Polentani



'Love, which absolves no one beloved from loving,
seized me so strongly with his charm that,
as you see, it has not left me yet.

Inferno V vv. 103-105



House known as the Polentani

© Giampiero Corelli Fotoreporter – Per gentile concessione

Known as the Polentanis' house, it is a building whose origins date back to 1300 and it is the last surviving example in the area where that noble family's Great Houses were. It is also known as "Francesca's house" in memory of the famous Canto, which movingly tells us the story of Francesca da Polenta.

11 - Planetario



we climbed up, he first and I behind him,
far enough to see, through a round opening,
a few of those fair things the heavens bear.
Then we came forth, to see again the stars.

Inferno XXXIV vv. 136-139



The Ravenna Planetarium

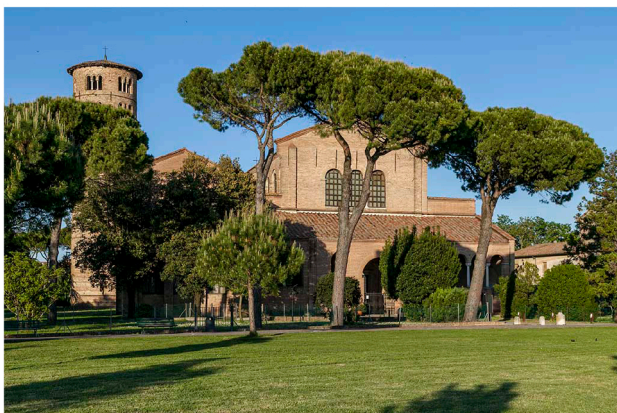
The dome of the Planetarium of Ravenna is 8 meters in diameter. Over 3.000 stars of the two hemispheres can be observed through it. This is the greatest and most scientific possibility in the city to "see the Stars". It is therefore appropriate to relate the last lines of Dante's *Inferno* to this important installation.

12 - Sant'Apollinare in Classe



Here my memory outstrips my skill,
for that cross so flamed forth Christ
that I can find no fit comparison.

Paradiso XIV vv. 103-105



The Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe

The apse of Sant'Apollinare in Classe features the mosaic of the large jewelled cross depicting Christ's face. When light shines, it flashes. Dante drew inspiration from it and most certainly followed the suggestions of the transcending beauties of the City's mosaics while writing his "Paradiso".



By permission of the Ministry of Culture,
Regional Directorate of Museums of Emilia-Romagna

The jeweled cross of the apsidal basin of the Basilica

13 - Santa Maria in Porto



'In that place I was known as Peter Damian,
but Peter the Sinner in the House
of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore.
Paradiso XXI vv. 121-123



The Basilica of Santa Maria in Porto

The Basilica of Santa Maria in Porto was built from 1554 to 1557 by the Canons Regular. It inherited the function and privileges of the church of Santa Maria in Porto Fuori, which was the House of our Lady on the Adriatic shore mentioned by Dante. The latter was destroyed on 5th November 1944 by aerial bombing, together with its fourteenth-century frescoes from the “Rimini school”, and it was rebuilt after the war. In this church in Porto Fuori, we can still see the sarcophagus of Pietro Degli Onesti, who defined himself “Pietro Peccatore” (= Peter the Sinner). Since the tercet mentions San Pier Damiano (= Saint Peter Damian), who signed himself as “Pietro Peccatore too”, most scholars believe Dante mixed up the two characters. However, others think the tercet distinguishes between the two characters and suggest a different interpretation of the text. The Canons brought the bas-relief of the Greek Madonna, the protector of the city, to the Basilica of Santa Maria in Porto. It is believed to be one of the three Marian images of the saint that inspired the splendid oration to the Virgin that Saint Bernard utters in the last canto of *Paradiso*. One of the other two was housed in the Metropolitan Basilica but is now preserved in the Archiepiscopal Museum, while the other was in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore but has since disappeared.



Marble bas-relief of the Greek Madonna



DANTESQUE ITINERARY

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6. Battistero Neoniano
7. Cappella di Sant'Andrea
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19. Santa Maria Maggiore
20. Galla Placidia
21. San Vitale
22. Guaita di Santa Maria Maggiore
23. Casa dei Traversari
24. San Domenico
25. Casa Matha
26. Palazzo Corradini
27. Tomba di Dante



14 - Santa Chiara (now Teatro Rasi)



so that till death they wake and sleep
in union with that Bridegroom who accepts each vow
that love makes fitting for His pleasure.
Paradiso III vv. 100-102



The Church of Santa Chiara, today the Rasi Theater

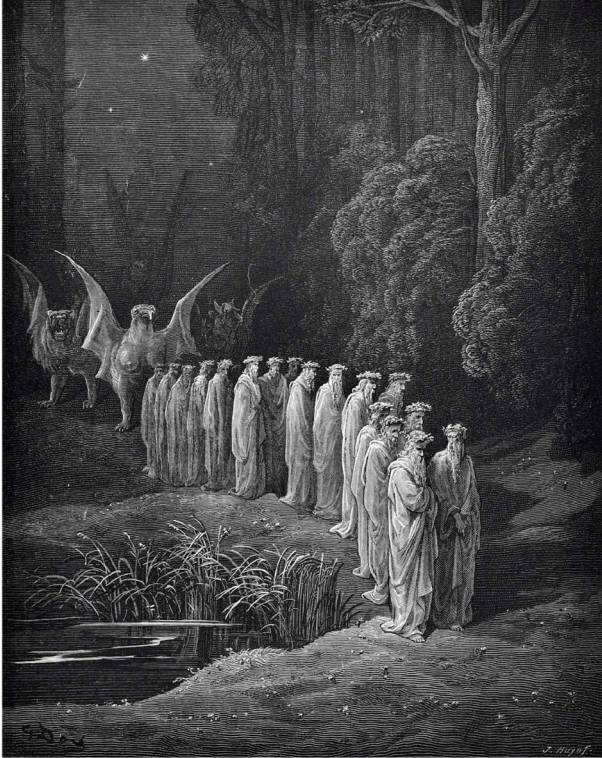
Teatro Rasi, which is where Teatro delle Albe brought the Divine Comedy on stage thanks to collective and immersive theatrical events, used to be the Monastic Church of Santa Chiara. Piccarda Donati tells Dante that a higher heaven hosts Saint Clare of Assisi, who founded the order of the Poor Clares. They will watch and sleep beside Christ until they die. The church and the adjacent Franciscan monastery of Santo Stefano in Fundamento were commissioned by Chiara da Polenta. Its fourteenth-century Riminese school frescoes, detached and restored, are now visible at the National Museum of Ravenna.



By permission of the Ministry of Culture,
Regional Directorate of Museums of Emilia-Romagna

The church's fourteenth-century frescoes, now in the National Museum

15 - Sant'Apollinare Nuovo

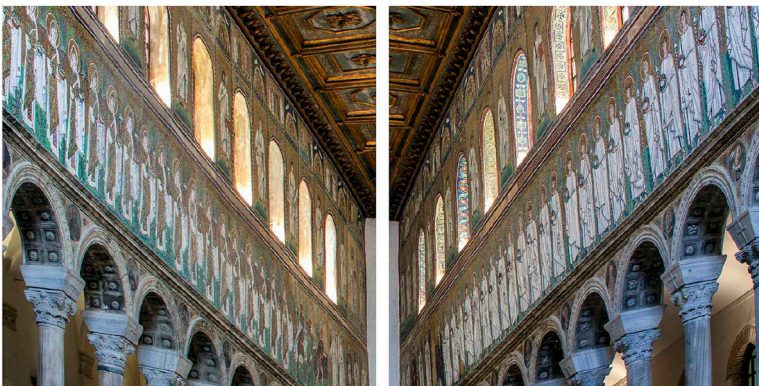


Beneath so fair a sky as I describe
twenty-four elders, two by two,
came crowned with lilies.
Purgatorio XXIX vv. 82-84



The Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo

The mosaics of two processions face each other on the walls of the Basilica of S. Apollinare Nuovo: that of the Martyrs and that of the Virgins. This beautiful and powerful iconography seems to have inspired the procession of the twenty-four elders, all dressed in white and wearing wreaths of lilies on their heads, who proceed solemnly two by two in the griffin parade, where Dante meets Beatrice (who scolds him).



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The processions of the Martyrs and the Virgins

16 - San Giovanni Evangelista



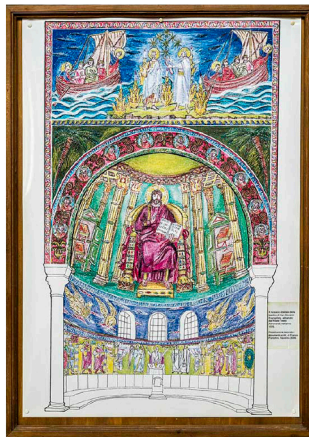
'This is he who lay upon the breast
of our Pelican, who from the cross
elected him to bear the heavy charge.'

Paradiso XXV vv. 112-114



The Basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista

This wonderful Church is named after Saint John the Evangelist. The tercet recalls the moment when, during the last supper, he leaned his head against Jesus' bosom and asked who was going to betray him. Christ, who is about to establish the Eucharist, is metaphorically represented by the pelican. In ancient times it was believed it would cut its breast open with its beak and feed its young with its own blood – in fact, it is taking out small fishes from a pouch.

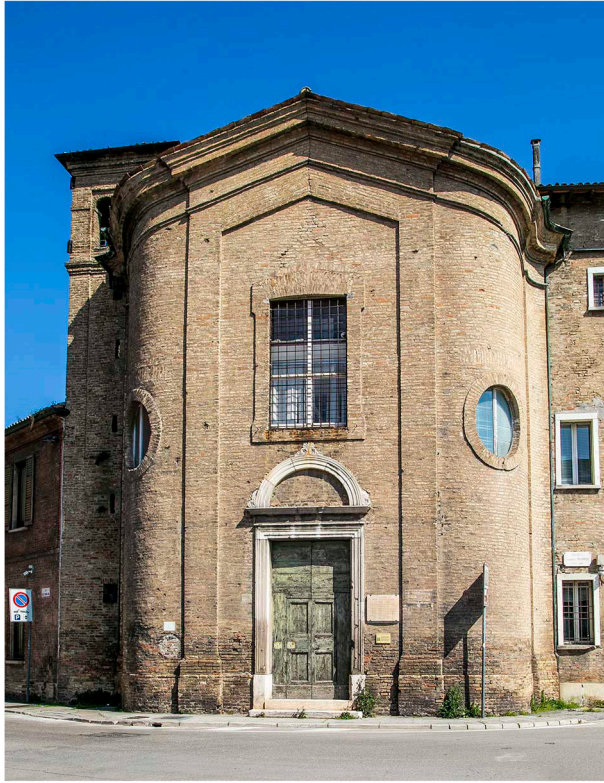


Reconstruction of the apse mosaic demolished in 1576

17 - Santo Stefano degli Ulivi



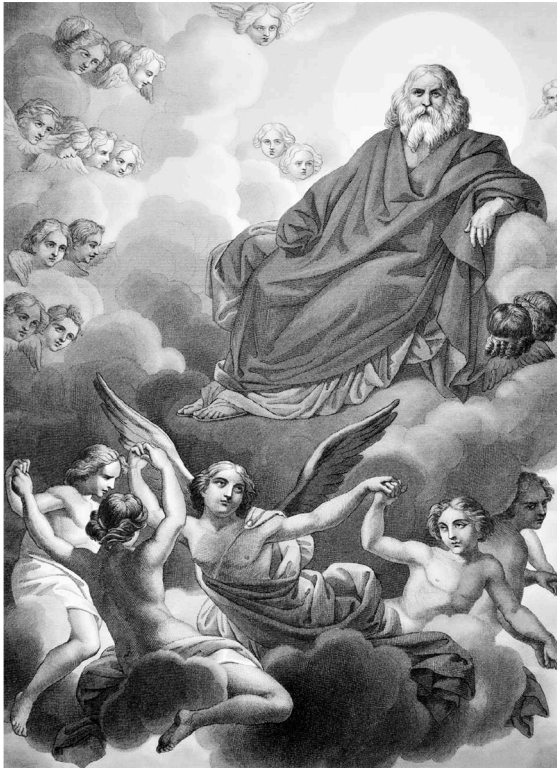
'I who bid you go am Beatrice.
I come from where I most desire to return.
The love that moved me makes me speak
Inferno II vv. 70-72



The Church of Santo Stefano degli Ulivi,
now a deposit of the Municipal Police

Dante's daughter, probably Antonia, entered the Dominican Nuns Monastery of Santo Stefano degli Ulivi taking the name of sister Beatrice. She lived and died there before 1371. Beatrice's first appearance in the Divine Comedy has been associated with the name of Dante's nun daughter.

18 - Monastero delle Clarisse Cappuccine



‘See now the height and breadth of the Eternal Worth,
one light, which shines dispersed among
so many mirrors yet remains
in Itself one, just as It was before.’

Paradiso XXIX vv. 142-145



The Monastery of the Capuchin Poor Clares

Dante deals with the theology of Angels in Canto XXIX. He uses a wonderful metaphor according to which God's eternal power is reflected in the Angels as light is in a multitude of mirrors: still one, albeit perceived differently by each of these angelic beings. It is thus easy to associate this image with the Capuchin Poor Clares and their Convent, which is close to the Church of St Apollinaris in Veclo. In fact, God's love pervades the order and the contemplative life the nuns have embraced.



© Giampiero Corelli Fotoreporter
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The Church of Sant'Apollinare in Veclo, annexed to the Monastery

19 - Santa Maria Maggiore



'Look now on the face that most resembles Christ,
for nothing but its brightness
can make you fit to look on Christ.'
Paradiso XXXII vv. 85-87



The Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore

In this Canto St. Bernard shows Mary's Face to Dante, highlighting her likeness to her Son. This part of the Comedy honours Christ's Mother and will reach its peak with the famous Oration to the Virgin at the beginning of Canto XXXIII. Dante was inspired by the three splendid images of the Virgin Mary in Ravenna: the bas-relief of Santa Maria in Porto (the Greek Madonna, the protector of the city), the Mosaic Madonna which was housed in the apse of the Metropolitan Basilica – the Ursian Basilica – which is now preserved in the Archiepiscopal Museum and the Madonna placed in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, which has since disappeared. The latter was similar to that in the Archiepiscopal Museum, but probably bigger. Popular devotion to Our Lady of Tumours is practised in this Church.



The image of the Madonna of tumors

20 - Mausoleo di Galla Placidia



From those most holy waters
I came away remade, as are new plants
renewed with new-sprung leaves,
pure and prepared to rise up to the stars.

Purgatorio XXXIII vv. 142-145



The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

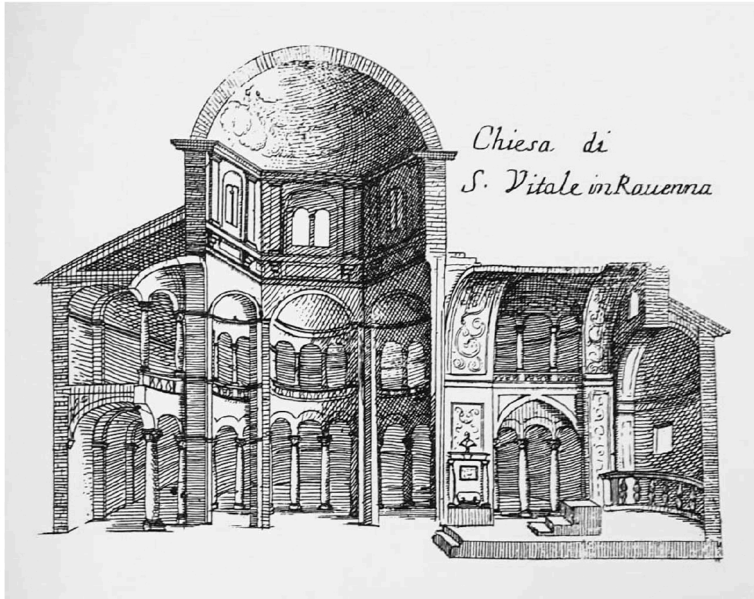
The starry sky in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (Oratory of Saint Lawrence) is a wonderful representation of the starry heaven of the Divine Comedy, the place the Poet and the reader can aspire to once they are pure and willing to go up. Looking at this starry sky above us, one cannot help thinking of Kant's words – “the starry sky above me and the moral law within me”. Staring at these stars something strange happens. Some sort of optical illusion makes them seem not only concentric, but also whirling from the very centre, thus anticipating the arms of a Galaxy – which is amazing for the 5th century.



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The dome of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

21 - San Vitale



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The beauty that I saw transcends
all thought of beauty, and I must believe
only its maker may savor it all.
Paradiso XXX vv. 19-21



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The Basilica of San Vitale

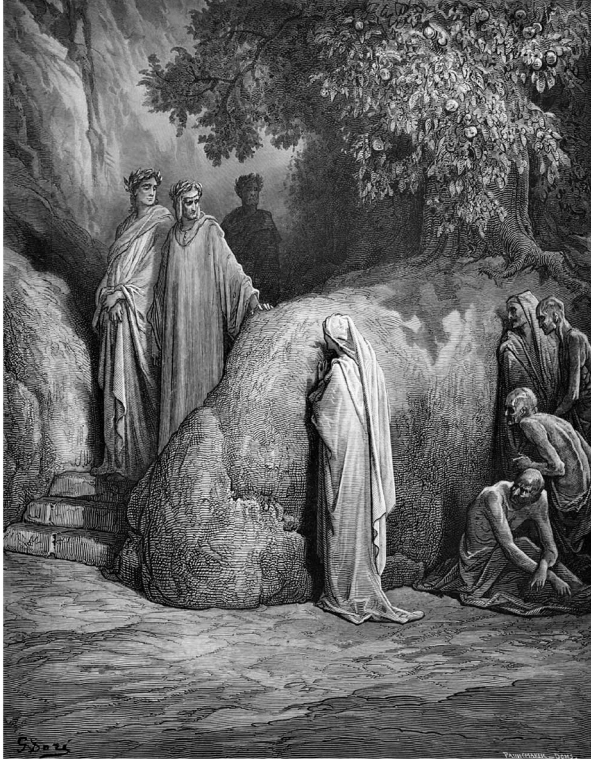
The Church of S. Vitale best represents the Beauty Dante evokes. It is one of the most beautiful churches in the world. The splendour of its mosaics, columns, marble hues, architecture, frescoes, perspectives and volumes, all of this makes this Church an extraordinary example of the immanent manifestation of Beauty, which is evocative of the Heavenly Beauty everyone must aspire to.



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The apsidal basin of the Basilica of San Vitale

22 - Guaita di Santa Maria Maggiore



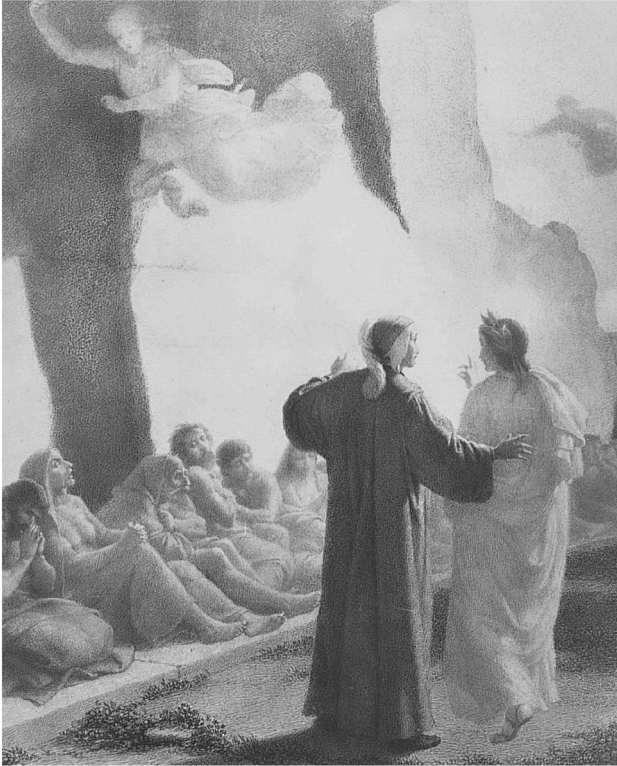
'What grace is granted to me now!
I never would have known him by his features,
but the sound of his voice made plain to me
what from his looks had been erased.

Purgatorio XXIII vv. 42-45



The Poet meets his friend Forese Donati among the gluttonous of the sixth terrace. He's so emaciated that the Poet doesn't recognize him. Dante had some devoted friends in Ravenna, two of which belonged to the local circle of poets: Menghino Mezzani, a notary, and Fiduccio de' Milotti, a physician and philosopher. While the former wrote the epitaph for Dante's Tomb "Inclita fama ...", the latter was transfigured into Alfesibeo, the shepherd, in Dante's second Eclogue. Ravenna celebrated them in the exhibition "L'ultimo Dante e il Cenacolo Ravennate", which took place at the Biblioteca Classense in 2018.

23 - Casa dei Traversari



'Where is good Lizio, where Arrigo Mainardi,
Pier Traversaro and Guido di Carpigna?
O people of Romagna, how you've turned to bastards!
Purgatorio XIV vv. 97-99



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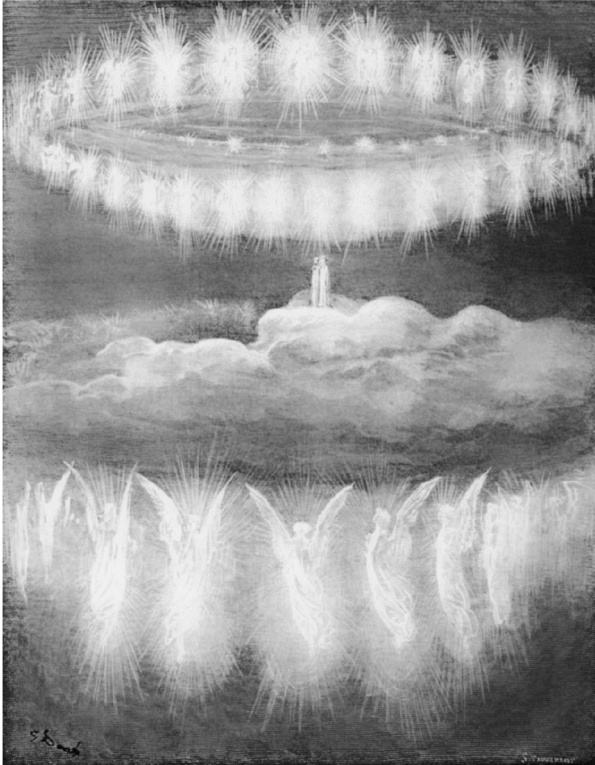
The facade of the Casa dei Traversari in via San Vitale

The House, attributed to the Traversari, is one of the two still surviving 13-century dwellings in town – the other is Francesca's house. The Traversari's houses were torn down when the Polentanis took over. Dante remembers Pier Traversari as an example of past nobility and his memory is associated to this house. This noble and famous fellow citizen's sarcophagus is still preserved in the so-called Quadrarco di Braccioforte.



Pier Traversari's sarcophagus in the Quadrarco di Braccioforte

24 - San Domenico



'He was called Dominic, and I shall speak of him
as that laborer chosen by Christ
to help Him dress and keep His garden.
Paradiso XII vv. 70-72



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The facade of the former Church of San Domenico

In this tercet St. Bonaventure sings the praises of St. Dominic. The Church of San Domenico was built in 1269 on a site previously occupied by other buildings: a tower and the small church of S. Maria in Gallopes. Tradition has it that the Capitol temple of the Roman city was located in the same place.

25 - Casa Matha



'He who casts off from shore to fish for truth
without the necessary skill does not return the same
as he sets out, but worse, and all in vain.

Paradiso XIII vv. 121-123



The facade
of the Casa Matha

The fishermen corporation, which would eventually develop into the Order of Casa Matha, had been operating here since the 10th century. The building was the

continuation of the 11th century “*Scola piscatorum de civitate Ravennae*” and the older “*Scola piscatorum Patoreno*” (the ancient Badareno), which was first mentioned in a fishing licence dating back to 943 and known as “*Carta Piscatoria*”.

Petrus de Zardinis Notarius was one of its members – as the list of names of 1304 shows. His life was linked to Dante’s. In fact, the great Italian writer and poet Giovanni Boccaccio mentioned Pietro or Pier Gardini in two different tales. He first spoke about Dante asking the notary to trace his date of birth. He then mentioned Pietro Gardini in the 26th chapter of his “*Trattarello in laude di Dante*”, when he told the story of Jacopo, Dante’s son, who had dreamt about his father showing him where the last 13 cantos of the *Divine Comedy* had been hidden. In the latter text Boccaccio quickly but effectively portrayed our Pietro Gardini as the eyewitness of this extraordinary recovery. Briefly, he spoke about “Piero Gardino”’s tale and his being both a worthy man from Ravenna and a long-time disciple of Dante. Deemed as imaginary for many years, these two stories were said to have been created by Boccaccio himself. That’s why some scholars went as far as to doubt and deny the existence of Pietro Gardini.

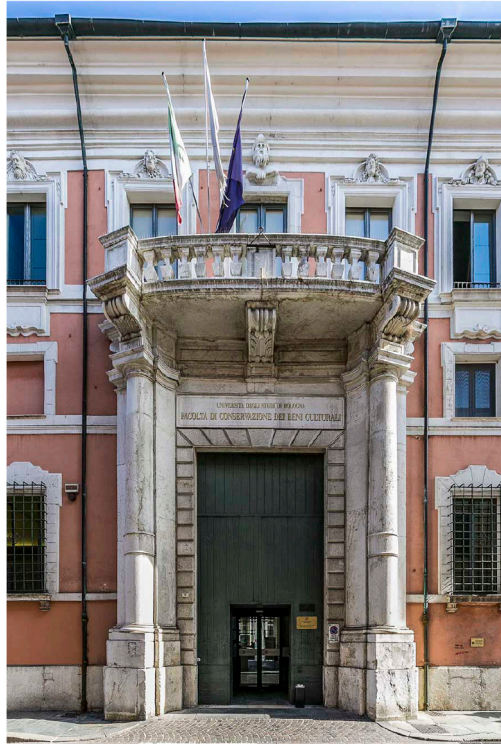
In 1342 Pietro Gardini was the Cimeliarch (a kind of churchwarden) of the Church of San Francesco – formerly San Pietro Maggiore. Within that role he may have tended to Dante’s Tomb, still faithful to his friend and maestro. He was last mentioned in 1348, the year the plague broke out.

26 - Palazzo Corradini



'It is the eternal light of Siger,
who, instructing in the Street of Straw,
demonstrated enviable truths.'

Paradiso X vv. 136-138



The portal of Palazzo Corradini

Palazzo Corradini is the facility serving students, teachers and researchers at the Department of the Cultural Heritage (DBC) and on degree programmes at the schools operating in Ravenna: Law; Engineering and Architecture; Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage; Medicine and Surgery; Science (Technologies and Diagnostics for conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, Science for the conservation & restoration of the cultural heritage) and Political Science. Siger de Brabant was a philosopher and Professor at a Faculty of the Sorbonne in Paris – the latter is mentioned as “Vico de li Strami” from the straw students sat on. Dante sees him among the wise spirits of Paradiso, although he has been accused of heresy as a follower of Averroes. His dualism of faith and reason, the theory of which is extremely modern, must have appealed to the Poet who, as we all know, exhorted people to follow virtue and knowledge.

27 - Tomba di Dante



Here my exalted vision lost its power.
But now my will and my desire, like wheels revolving
with an even motion, were turning with
the Love that moves the sun and all the other stars.

Paradiso XXXIII vv. 142-145



Dante's tomb

The love of God, which causes the everlasting harmonic motion of the Stars, directs the Poet's will and desire, by now completely satisfied. This is what Dante recalls at the end of his journey.

May it anticipate the meaning his last earthly abode had, which is where he started his celestial journey and ended his life on earth – the alpha of eternity following the omega of his life, the resting place of his mortal body. This place, which Ravenna has cherished as sacred for centuries, seals his journey. We hope that those who have come this far will remember the Supreme Poet forever, as well as the city that, piously, has been preserving and honouring both his spiritual and physical memory.



The Bas-relief of Pietro Lombardo

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“The most sublime and authentic way of celebrating Dante is also the easiest one: we have to read his work, read it again, sing it, sing it again (...) if we want to follow virtue and knowledge as he wrote, if we want to live as humans and not beasts”.

(Benedetto Croce)



