



# LATIN FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM, Level 2

## LATIN STORY TO ACCOMPANY REVIEW 3

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) was an important figure in establishing Italian literature. He is best known for his work, *Commedia* (*Divine Comedy*), which describes Dante's journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven. Just as Petrarch wrote letters to the esteemed author Cicero, Dante, in his work, imagines his own literary idol, Vergil, leading him on his journey as he explores morality and the afterlife. As Dante progresses through the underworld, memories of his beloved Beatrice, who fascinated him since their first meeting when he was nine years old and who became his concept of the ideal woman, inspire him to continue on his harrowing journey.



The French artist Paul Gustave Louis Christophe Doré (1832–1883) painted this oil, *Dante and Virgil in the Ninth Circle of Hell*, in 1861. He was well-known not only for his paintings but also for his wood engravings of scenes from classical literature, including not only Dante's *Divine Comedy* but also the Vulgate Bible. Public Domain/Wikimedia Commons.

## DANTE'S CLASSICAL INSPIRATION

- 1 Cum vir, nōmine Dantēs, per silvās errāret, frīgus et glaciēs super arborēs erant.  
Dantēs poēta linguae et Italae et Latīnae *perītus* erat. Subitō trēs *bēstiae* ferōcēs poētam sequēbantur et Dantēs fūgit. Dantēs virō convēnit, quī *valdē* verēbātur. Hic vir per aetātēs praeclārus erat quod poēta perītior quam omnēs erat. Erat celeberrimus poētārum
- 5 Rōmānōrum, Vergilius.  
Dantēs crēdere nōn poterat Vergilium ipsum sēcum loquī velle.

“Ego,” Vergilius inquit, “volō tē dūcere in itinere. *Beāta* Beatrix mē dēmīsīt ut tibi ostenderem *Orcum*.”

10 Vergilius et Dantēs sub terram lāpsī sunt. Sub terrā Orcus in multōs *circulōs* partītus est. Ad portam pervēnērunt et *īnscrīptiōne* ōrnāta est: LASCIĀTE OGNE SPERANZA, VOĪ CH’INTRĀTĒ. Vergilius *īnscrīptiōnem* Latīnam lēgit, Dantēs Italā. Cum Dantēs *īnscrīptiōnem* cōspiceret, prōgredi nōlēbat sed Vergilius Dantem hortātus est ut sub terram intrāret et *circulōs* Orcī *īnspiceret*.

15 Optimī hominēs cum Deō in caelō habitāvērunt. Multī, quī fidēlēs et optimī *peccantum* fuerant, in *Pūrgātōriō* erant. Labōrāvērunt ut meliōrēs essent et caelum intrārent. Plūrimī in *Limbō* erant quod dē *Iēsū* nōn scīvērunt. Dantēs poētārum Italōrum et Graecōrum studiōsus fuerat et tunc in *Limbō* Dantēs Homērum, Ovidium, Horātium, et *Lūcānum* invēnit. Dantēs sē poētīs antīquīs addidit quod scīvit sē carmina similia quālitāte carminibus Homērī et Ovidiī scīptūrum esse.

20 Dantēs remanēre cum poētīs māluit sed Vergilius Dantem *īnferius* sub terram moderātus est. Plūrēs *circulī* Orcī erant in quō terribilēs et miserī hominēs pūnītī sunt. In *quōque* *circulō*, hominēs peiōrēs quam priōrēs pūniēbantur. Fugere volēbant. Fugere cōnābantur sed nōn poterant. Dantēs omnia quae viderat *mīrātus erat*.

25 Vergilius et Dantēs ex *Orcō* discessērunt ut Dantēs carmen suum scriberet et quō sē poētīs praeclārīs adderet.

## VOCABULA NOVA

**beātus**, -a, -um – blessed

**bēstia**, -ae, f. – wild animal

**circulus**, -ī, m. – circle

**Iēsūs**, **Iēsū**, m. – Jesus, for Christians, the son of God

**īnferius** (*adv.*) – deeper, further down

**īnscrīptiō**, **īnscrīptiōnis**, f. – inscription

**īnspiciō**, **īnspicere**, **īnspēxī**, **īnspēctus** – to inspect

**LASCIATE OGNE SPERANZA, VOI CH’INTRATE** – *Italian for*  
Abandon all hope, you who enter.

**Limbūs**, -ī, m. – Limbo, a place where some Christians believe the unbaptized reside after death for eternity

**Lūcānus**, -ī, m. – Lucan, Roman poet, born in Cordoba, Spain, famous for his epic *Pharsalia*

**mīror**, **mīrārī**, **mīrātus sum** – to marvel at, to wonder at

**Orcus**, -ī, m. – god of the underworld, also known as Hades

**peccāns**, **peccantis**, m. – sinner

**perītus**, -a, -um – skilled

**Pūrgātōrius**, -ī, m. – Purgatory, a place where some Christians believe sinners pay for their sins, are cleansed, and then are able to enter heaven

**quisque**, **quaeque**, **quodque** – each

**valdē** (*adv.*) – really, very