

**A KEY TO THE TIME
ALLUSIONS IN THE
DIVINE COMEDY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649739165

A Key to the Time Allusions in the Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri & Gustave Pradeau

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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DANTE ALIGHIERI & GUSTAVE PRADEAU

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A KEY
TO THE TIME ALLUSIONS
IN THE
DIVINE COMEDY
OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

BY
GUSTAVE PRADEAU

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET, W.C.
LONDON
1902

TO
MY FRIEND
RAYNER STORR

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED
AS A TOKEN OF
MY HIGH ESTEEM AND DEEP AFFECTION

PREFACE

DESIRING to know the duration of the action of the "Divina Commedia," I took one of the best known editions and there I found that it is ten days. In order to be quite sure I consulted a second edition which informed me that it is six days. A third one did not agree with either of the others. Rather surprised, because I am deeply convinced that a great poem is not a collection of riddles, I made up my mind to work out the question for myself. Thinking that the first condition of success was to form a clear mental picture of the astronomical data constantly referred to by Dante, I did so, and after the necessary simplifications, it finally took the shape of the Dial accompanying this little work. With its help all the time-references seem to me to be clear, perfectly coherent and easily followed. As no diagram can represent things exactly as they are, the reader will see in my note to *Purgatorio*, Canto iv. lines 61-84, how much my Dial conforms to reality and to what extent it departs from it. This small book contains the Italian text of the time-references, Longfellow's English translation of them, their explanation and the Dial.

G. P.

SYNOPSIS OF THE TIME ALLUSIONS IN THE DIVINE COMEDY

INFERNO

CANTI.	LINES.	TIME.
I.	16-18	Dawn.
	37-40	Morning.
II.	1	Evening.
VII.	98-99	Midnight.
XI.	113-114	Morning of Good Friday.
		1 Day.
XX.	124-129	Morning.
		2 Days.
XXI.	112-114	10 a.m.
XXIX.	10	Between 1 and 2 p.m.
XXXIV.	68	Evening.
	96	1½ hours later, Morning where Dante is.
		2½ Days.

PURGATORIO

I.	19-21	Beginning of Dawn.
	107	Dawn.
II.	1-6	Morning.
	56-57	3½ Days.
III.	25-27	8 a.m.
IV.	15-16	9 a.m.
	137-139	9.30 a.m.
VIII.	1-6	Midday.
	49	Twilight.
IX.	1-9	Evening.
	44	Dawn.
		Morning, 8 a.m.
X.	14-15	4½ Days.
XII.	80-81	9.30 a.m.
XV.	1-6	Midday.
		3 p.m.

10 TIME ALLUSIONS IN THE DIVINE COMEDY

CANTI.	LINES.	TIME.
XVII.	9	Twilight.
	70-72	Evening.
XVIII.	76-81	10 p.m.
XIX.	37-38	Morning.
		5½ Days.
XXII.	118-120	10 a.m.
XXV.	2-3	2 p.m.
XXVI.	4-6	Beginning of Sunset.
XXVII.	1-5	Sunset.
	61	Twilight.
	66	"
	68	Evening.
	94	Beginning of Dawn.
	109-112	Dawn.
	133	Morning.
		6½ Days.
XXXIII.	104	Midday.

PARADISO

I.	37-47	Nearly Evening.
XXII.	134	Midnight in Purgatorio.
XXVII.	77-87	Morning in Purgatorio.
		7½ Days since the beginning of the poem, or
		7 Days since the entrance into Hell.

A FEW WORDS AS TO THE USE OF THE DIAL

THE circle at the centre of the Dial represents the earth, which is supposed to be motionless. On it are indicated four points: Jerusalem, Purgatory, Ganges and Morocco. The first two, being antipodal to one another, have a common horizon which would intersect the central circle at the other two points. Dante thought that, with respect to Jerusalem, Ganges was the extreme east and Morocco the extreme west.

Round this circle we have a movable disc which contains the constellations of the Zodiac, and also indicates (1) the position of the sun; (2) the four important divisions of the day: Midday, *Mezzodì*; Evening, *Sera*; Midnight, *Mezzanotte*; and Morning, *Mattino*; (3) the succession of the hours; (4) the successive positions of the moon. The names of the constellations being generally known in Latin, are given in that language, the other indications are in Italian.

The red lines indicate the different positions of the moon, and the references to the canti in which they are to be found are also printed in red. The reader must bear in mind that on the day of the full moon she rises in a line with *Mezzanotte*, or 12 o'clock.

At the beginning of the poem *Gerusalemme* must be placed at the top of the circle, with *Mattino* over it.

Let the reader look southwards, holding the dial straight before him; if he moves the disc from left to right he will see at once that the sun on the dial follows the same course as the real sun.