

DANTE'S CHRISTIAN ETHICS

This book is a major reappraisal of the *Commedia* as originally envisaged by Dante: as a work of ethics. Privileging the ethical, Corbett increases our appreciation of Dante's eschatological innovations and literary genius. Drawing upon a wider range of moral contexts than in previous studies, this book presents an overarching account of the complex ordering and political programme of Dante's afterlife. Balancing close readings with a lucid overview of Dante's *Commedia* as an ethical and political manifesto, Corbett cogently approaches the poem through its moral structure. The book provides detailed interpretations of three particularly significant vices – pride, sloth, and avarice – and the three terraces of Purgatory devoted to them. While scholars often register Dante's explicit confession of pride, this volume uncovers Dante's implicit confession of sloth and prodigality (the opposing sub-vice of avarice) through Statius, his moral cypher. This title is also available as open access on Cambridge Core.

GEORGE CORBETT is Senior Lecturer in Theology and the Arts at the School of Divinity, University of St Andrews. Prior to this, he was Junior Research Fellow of Trinity College, and Affiliated Lecturer in Italian at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Dante and Epicurus: A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment* (2013), editor of *Annunciations: Sacred Music for the Twenty-First Century* (2019), and co-editor, with Heather Webb, of *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'* (2015–17).

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Founding Editor

Alastair Minnis, *Yale University*

General Editor

Daniel Wakelin, *University of Oxford*

Editorial Board

Anthony Bale, *Birkbeck, University of London*

Zygmunt G. Barański, *University of Cambridge*

Christopher C. Baswell, *Barnard College and Columbia University*

Mary Carruthers, *New York University*

Rita Copeland, *University of Pennsylvania*

Roberta Frank, *Yale University*

Alastair Minnis, *Yale University*

Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Fordham University*

This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages – the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek – during the period c.1100–1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

Recent titles in the series

Irina Dumitrescu *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature*

Jonas Wellendorf *Gods and Humans in Medieval Scandinavia: Retying the Bonds*

Thomas A. Prendergast and Jessica Rosenfeld (eds.) *Chaucer and the Subversion of Form*

Katie L. Walter *Middle English Mouths: Late Medieval Medical, Religious and Literary Traditions*

Lawrence Warner *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384–1432*

Glenn D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker (eds.) *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion*

Robert J. Meyer-Lee *Literary Value and Social Identity in the Canterbury Tales*

Andrew Kraebel *Biblical Commentary and Translation in Later Medieval England: Experiments in Interpretation*

A complete list of titles in the series can be found at the end of the volume.

DANTE'S CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Purgatory and Its Moral Contexts

GEORGE CORBETT

University of St Andrews



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108489416

DOI: [10.1017/9781108776875](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108776875)

© George Corbett 2020

This work is in copyright. It is subject to statutory exceptions and to the provisions
of relevant licensing agreements; with the exception of the Creative Commons version
the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part of this work may
take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

An online version of this work is published at doi.org/10.1017/9781108776875 under a Creative
Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC 4.0 which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in
any medium for non-commercial purposes providing appropriate credit to the original work is given.

To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

All versions of this work may contain content reproduced under license from third
parties. Permission to reproduce this third-party content must be obtained from these
third-parties directly.

When citing this work, please include a reference to the
DOI [10.1017/9781108776875](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108776875)

First published 2020

First paperback edition 2022

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

NAMES: Corbett, George, author.

TITLE: Dante's Christian ethics : Purgatory and its moral contexts / George Corbett.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Series: Cambridge
studies in medieval literature | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019038190 (print) | LCCN 2019038191 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108489416
(hardback) | ISBN 9781108702447 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108776875 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321. Purgatorio. | Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321—Criticism
and interpretation. | Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321—Ethics. | Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321—Religion. |
Christian ethics in literature. | Deadly sins in literature.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PQ4447 .C58 2020 (print) | LCC PQ4447 (ebook) | DDC 851/.1—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019038190>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019038191>

ISBN 978-1-108-48941-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-70244-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.