

THE HARROWING OF HELL

HEC LAUS SABBATI SANCTI

This, the best known of the Perugian *laude drammatiche*, is found in three manuscripts: Perugia, Biblioteca Augusta 955, ff. 47v-49r [mod. num., with the rest of f. 49 and both sides of f. 50 blank] (P), copied for the Confraternity of Sant'Andrea of Perugia, around the middle of the fourteenth century; Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, A.22, ff. 94r-98v [mod. num.] (V), copied at the beginning of the fifteenth century, perhaps for the Confraternity of San Fiorenzo in Perugia, a palimpsest worn from use and marked by occasional drops of wax; and Assisi, Archivio Capitolare di San Rufino, ex Archivio di Santo Stefano, MS 36, ff. 97v-100v (R), transcribed by the Luca Ercolani, a priest in Assisi between 1380 and 1400. P contains only lines 1-168; V contains the texts edited here; and R contains no reference to Christ's appearance to his Mother before he appears to the Women in the Garden.

The text must have been substantially contaminated before the great *laudari* P and V were compiled around the middle of the fourteenth century, because the *lauda* as we have it now is clearly the result of an amalgamation from two originally independent *laude*, and an imperfect amalgamation at that. The scene in which Christ sends the Good Thief to Heaven is given both in the first part (which consists of six-line stanzas, "a modo passionale") and in the second part (which consists of eight-line stanzas "a modo pasquale"). The source of the first part, to line 264, is the Gospel of Nicodemus, an apocryphal work dating to about the fourth century. The dramatist has done little more than versify the very dramatic narrative of the Latin A version of that work, Chapters XVIII-XXVII. The second part is a much freer treatment of the same subject.

HEC LAUS SABBATI SANCTI

SANCTI *existentes in Limbo. Fiat lux:*

Quiste lume mo' venute
procedon da quilla fontana
che ne promise la salute
de tutta quanta gente umana.
Però ciascuno aggia buon cuore
ché questo è l'alto suo splendore.

ISAIAS:

Quisto è 'l lume del giocondo
Figliuol del Pate ch'è nel cielo,
del quale io disse, essendo al mondo,
che ne lustrava con gran zelo.
Or ecco mo' che n'ha lustrate,
essendo ell'ombra dei peccate.

THE PLAY FOR EASTER SATURDAY

The RIGHTEOUS *in Limbo. Let there be light.*

These lights¹ which have just appeared
originate from that fount
that promised us the salvation
of all Humankind.
So let each of us be of good heart
for this is his great splendour.

ISAIAH:

This is the light of the joyful
Son of the Father in Heaven
of whom I spoke, when I was on earth,
that he would cleanse us with great zeal.
Now behold that he has cleansed us
from the shadow of our sins.²

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SIMEON:

Io, l'antico Simeone,
al tempio el tolse en glie mieie braccia,
e quando apresentato fone,
resguardando ella sua faccia,
disse: "Gli occhie mieie hon vedute
de tutto el mondo la salute!" 18

Iterum:

Chi se' tu con faccia lieta
che mostre a noie tanta onestade?

IOHANNES BAPTISTA:

Io so' la luce, anco 'l profeta
de quilla alta maëstade,
ch'al monde venne ' aparecchiare
la sua via per l'uom salvare. 24

IOHANNES:

Ma quando el vidde a me venire
per batizzare ell'alto fiume,
con alerezza el prese a dire:
"Quisto è quillo eternal lume,
agnol de Dio, qua giù mandato,
per trare el mondo dal peccato." 30

Iterum:

E batizzato con afetto,
udie gridar lo Spirtu Santo:
"Quisto è 'l mio Figliuol delecto
en cuie m'è compiaciuto tanto."
Però io vengo a darve segno
che tosto ve darà 'l suo regno. 36

OMNES SANCTI:

Senza dubio ciascun sia
che vesiterà noie, suoie amice,
sì co' el disse Moisie
e Giovagne ancora el dice,
e ciascun ne sia sceguro
che ne trarà de quisto scuro. 42

SIMEON:

I, ancient Simeon,
took him in my arms in the temple,
and when he was presented there,
looking into his face
I said: "Mine eyes have seen
the salvation of the whole world."³

SIMEON *continues:*

Who are you with the cheerful face
that does us such honour?

JOHN THE BAPTIST:

I am the light⁴ and also the prophet
of that great majesty.
I came into the world to prepare
his way to save mankind.

JOHN *continues:*

But when I saw him come to me
to be baptized in the deep river,
I began to say joyfully,
"This is the eternal light,
the Lamb of God, sent down to us
to lead the world away from sin."⁵

JOHN *continues:*

And when I had lovingly baptized him,
I heard the Holy Spirit shout:
"This is my beloved Son
in whom I am well pleased."⁶
Therefore I come to give you proof
that soon he will give you his kingdom.

ALL THE RIGHTEOUS:

Let no man remain in doubt
that he will visit us, his friends,
just as Moses said
and as John says now,
and every man now be sure
that he will lead us out of this darkness.⁷

SATAN *ad Infernum veniens ab extra:*

Tosto t'aparecchia, Inferno,
per quillo che s'è già gloriato
ch'è Figliuol de Dio Eterno
ed hamme 'l popol mio turbato,
e fesse tristo molto forte
vedendo apressar la morte. 48

Iterum:

Esso è stato sempre averso
de la mia somma potenza,
ed alcun ch'io avea converso
a luie ha fatto reverenza,
e molte de quiglie che n'avate
per suo mal fare glie n'ha furate. 54

INFERNUS *ad eum:*

Chi è quisto uom de tal fortezza
che teme morte e te contrasta?
Saem ch'onu' uom, per tua prodezza,
non può fuggire la tua dura asta,
ché quanto è stato al mondo forte
a noi l'hai dato per la morte. 60

Iterum:

Adonqua, si se' sì potente,
biene è forte chi t'ofende!
E veramente è onnipotente
che te per suoie parole prende,
dicendo ch'eglie aggia paura
d'una morte tanto dura. 66

SATAN *ad Infernum:*

De luie già non dubitare,
ch'io el tentaie ello deserto,
e mo' gli ho fatto aparecchiare
la croce, dua ei sarà uferto,
e menerollo a te legato
per la virtù mia conculcato. 72

SATAN *to Infernus,*⁸ *coming in from outside:*

Get ready quickly, Infernus
for him who has already boasted
that he is the Son of Eternal God
and has disrupted my people,
and he became very wretched
at the sight of death approaching.

SATAN *continues:*

He has always been opposed
to my supreme power,
and some whom I had converted
have bowed down to him,
and many of those whom you held
he has wickedly stolen from us.

INFERNUS *to him:*

Who is this man of such strength
that he fears death and yet defies you?
We know that by your prowess no man
can flee your sharp lance,
and however mighty he was on earth
you have delivered him to us to die.

INFERNUS *continues:*

Well, if you are so mighty, anyone
who opposes you must be very strong!
And truly he is omnipotent
if he conquers you with his words,
saying that he is afraid
of such a harsh death.

SATAN *to Infernus:*

Do not be afraid of him,
for I tempted him in the desert
and just now I have prepared
the cross where he will be offered up
and I shall bring him to you bound,
and trampled by my virtue.

INFERNUS:

Tu ne dice che n'ha tolte
de quieie che tu qua giù renchiude?

Respondet SATAN:

Biene alcun! N'ha tolte molte,
ma non che sia per sua vertude,
ma per lo suo orare espresso
l'Alto Edio glie l'ha commesso.

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INFERNUS:

Ma egli colla sua parola
senza prece gli ha refatte,
e come aquila che vola
glie lor legame ha già desfatte,
e colla lor molta alegrezza
hon rotta tutta mia fortezza.

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Iterum:

Seria quisto quil che trasse
Lazzaro morto de quattro dine,
e come ucello che via volasse,
tra tutte noie de fuore uscine?
Essendo el corpo già fetente
rendèlo vivo ai suoie parente.

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SATAN:

Veramente è quisto esso,
e tisto non è el primo male.

INFERNUS *ei:*

Noie te scongiuramo espresso
per la tua sedia principale,
per la virtù qual è en tene,
ch'a me coluie nonne viene,

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INFERNUS:

You say that he's taken from us
some of those whom you keep imprisoned
down here?

SATAN *replies:*

Not just some! He's taken many,
but not by virtue of his own powers,
but by virtue of his express prayer
Almighty God granted it to him.

INFERNUS

But by his own word
without prayer he restored them,
and as swift as an eagle
he broke their bonds
and with their great rejoicing
they totally destroyed my power.

INFERNUS *continues:*

Could this be the man who raised
Lazarus, dead four days before,
and swift as a bird in flight
he appeared among us?
Although his corpse was already rotting,
he returned him alive to his family.

SATAN:

Indeed it is he,
and that's not the worst of the matter.

INFERNUS *says to him:*

We beseech you now expressly,
by virtue of your princely throne,
by virtue of the powers within you,
that he should not come before me,

Iterum:

ché quando udie el comandamento
che Lazzar tosto luie ubedisse,
sentie alora un gran pavento
che tutte nostre ufizi aflisse;
e quando ello tra noie se mosse,
tutte ruppe nostre posse. 102

Iterum:

S'ei fa adonqua cotai segne,
che con suo dir ciascun fa sano,
s'ei descendesse a' nostre regne
faria ciascun legame vano,
e quieie che noi tenem legate
serian da luie deliberate. 108

VOX ANGELI *ad Infernum:*

O voie, princepe renchiuse,
quiste vostre porte uprite!
E voie, eternal porte chiuse,
de vostro luoco tosto uscite!
Ch'el Re de Gloria verrà tosto,
enterrà en luoco sì nascosto. 114

INFERNUS *ad Satan:*

Or Satàn, or te departe
tosto da la sedia mia,
e combatte con tuoie arte
ch'el Re de Gloria qui non sia,
ed alcun chiude quille porte
quanto se può far più forte. 120

SATAN *ad Demones:*

O delette mie legione,
contrastate a quisto passo.
Ciascun piglie el suo cantone,
chi più alto e chi più basso.

Respondent OMNES SANCTI de Limbo:

'Priete tosto e non chiudete
chè mo' venir lo vederete.

INFERNUS *continues:*

for when I heard his command
that Lazarus should obey him at once,
I felt then a great fear
that touched all our ministries,
and when he moved among us
he destroyed all my power.

INFERNUS *continues:*

Well, if he performs such miracles that he
can restore men to health with his words,
if he came down to our realms
he would render all our fetters useless,
and those whom we have kept
in bondage would be freed by him.

THE VOICE OF THE ANGEL *to Infernus:*

O imprisoned prince,
open your gates.⁹
And you, eternal gates now closed,
open forth.
For the King of Glory will come soon,
he will enter this hidden place.

INFERNUS *to Satan:*

Now Satan, begone
from my throne at once
and use your wiles to fight
lest the King of Glory appear here,
and someone lock those gates
as strongly as possible.

SATAN *to the Devils:*

O my beloved legions,
do not let this man pass.
Each take up his position,
some above and some below.

ALL THE RIGHTEOUS

Open at once and do not close them,
for now you will see him come.

DAVID:

Già io, David, al mondo disse
che onne uomo el confessasse.
Ei gran legame forte e spesse
seron per luie e rotte e casse,
e noie trarà de scuritade
e de la via d'eniuitade.

ISAIAS:

Ed io, vivendo anco, Isàia,
disse ch'ei morte suscitava,
e molte monementa apria,
e 'n terra onn'uom s'alegrava
che venia per l'uom salvare,
e tutto el mondo consolare. 138

OMNES SANCTI *ad Infernum*:

Apre, Inferno, ché se' vento!
Da Gesù se' conculcato,
serà el tuo nome al mondo espento
da cuie onn'uomo era legato,
che non podea niun passare
che nol menasse a te scaldare. 144

VOX ANGELI *ad Infernum*:

O voie, princepe de male,
aprite quiste vostre porte!
Comando a voie, porte eternale,
che de levare siate acorte,
che quill'alto Gloria Rene
per entrare qua entro viene. 150

INFERNUS:

Chi è l'uom cusì fervente,
qual è Re de Gloria ditto?

DAVID:

È signor forte e potente
che 'n bataglia v'ha sconfitto,
però conosce esto gridare
che me l'odiste mentovare. 156

DAVID:

I, David, in my lifetime said
that all men should believe in him.
Our fetters, great and strong and heavy,
will be shattered and broken by him,
and he will lead us forth from darkness
and from the path of iniquity.

ISAIAH:

And I, Isaiah, when I was alive
said that he would raise men from the dead,
and would open many tombs
and on earth all men would rejoice
for he would come to save mankind
and console all the world.¹⁰

ALL THE RIGHTEOUS *to Infernus*:

Open up, Hell, for you are vanquished!
You have been trampled down by Jesus.
Your name will be expunged on earth,
the name which kept men in bondage,
for no man could avoid
being brought to your fires.

THE VOICE OF THE ANGEL *to Infernum*:

O you, prince of evil,
open these gates of yours.
I command you, eternal gates,
to be raised up,
for the great King of Glory
is coming to enter here.

INFERNUS:

Who is this man so fired up
that he is called the King of Glory?

DAVID:

He is a strong and mighty lord
who has defeated you in battle,
wherefore recognize this shout,
for you heard me prophesy it.¹¹

DAVID:

Ma esso re ci ha resguardato
ed èccie en terra per odire
el pianto de ciascun piagato,
e rompere tutte lor martire.
Ed eglie lor legame forte
descioglierà el Figliuol da morte. 162

GESTAS:

Oimè, dolente, io so' dannato
per lo troppo mio mal fare!
De robare sempre era usato,
e d'ucidere e de furare.
Essendo en croce, a Gesù disse
che, sé scampando, ne sciogliesse. 168

Iterum:

S'io avesse ditto co' Dimasse,
co' seri' andato a godere!

Respondet ei UNUS DEMON capiens eum:

Vien denante a Satanasse,
c'ha gran desio de te vedere,
perché se' stato buon servente
a lui e a tutta la sua gente. 174

DEMON representans eum ad Satan:

Ecco el vostro servedore,
che sempre è stato a voie ubidire.
Menàllo a voie con grande onore
che ve piaccia lui e mertire;
che, se altre è stato a voie ribelle,
costuie restette a voie en novelle. 180

SATAN:

Bien venga, Gestas, el mio delecto!
Voie che tu gode del mio regno.
Tosto aparechiate un letto
de fuoco e ghiaccio, ché n'è degno,
ed alcun sia che l'acompagne
ch'imprima lo scalde e puoie el bagne. 186

DAVID:

But this king has looked upon us
and has come to earth to heed
the lament of all those wounded by sin,
and put an end to their suffering.
And for them the Son will break
the great bonds of death.¹²

GESTAS:¹³

Alas, woe, I am damned
for my excessive wrong doing!
It has always been my custom
to kill and to rob.
When I was on the cross, I said to Jesus
that he should save himself and free us.¹⁴

GESTAS continues:

If I had gone along with Dismas,
what joy I would have found now!

A DEVIL seizing him replies to Gestas:

Come before Satan
who greatly desires to see you,
because you have been a good servant
to him and all his people.

THE DEVIL presents him to Satan:

Here is your servant
who has always been obedient to you.
I bring him before you with great honour
if it please you to reward him;
for where others have rebelled against you
he has always remained true to you.

SATAN:

Welcome, Gestas, my beloved!
I want you to enjoy my kingdom.
Prepare him a bed at once,
of fire and ice, for he deserves it,
and let someone go with him
to heat him up and then douse him.

IESUS *ad Dimas*:

Al paradiso va', Dimasse,
e porta en collo quisto legno,
e s'el guardian non te lasse
entrare, glie mostra quisto segno,
e di' che Cristo t'ha mandato,
e 'n segno de ciò quisto t'ha dato. 192

DIMAS *ad Angelum Gabrielem*:

O Gabriello, io so' mandato
da Cristo, che fo mo' crucifisso,
ed ecco el segno che m'ha dato
ch'io sia da voie qua entro messo.

GABRIEL *ad eum*:

Volontier t'apro e sta' en buon cuore
ch'ei mena Adam coie successore. 198

DAVID:

Poie te dico, Inferno sozzo,
che tu apre a cotal rege.
Apre quisto tuo gran pozzo,
che non te gioverà tua grege.

CHRISTUS *veniens ad Infernum*:

E io, figliuoglie, io so' venuto
per darve l'alto mio tributo. 204

INFERNUS *ad Christum*:

Chi se' tu che me descio glie
quil che el mortal peccato lega?
Chi se' tu che 'l Limbo spoglie,
e 'nverso te ciascun si priega?
Chi se' tu, tal combatetore
c'haie vento el nostro gran furore? 210

JESUS *to Dysmas*:¹⁵

Go to Heaven, Dysmas,
and take this wood on your shoulder,
and if the guardian does not let you
enter, show him this sign,
and say that Christ sent you
and as proof he gave you this sign.

DYSMAS *to the Angel Gabriel*:

O Gabriel, I have been sent
by Christ, who has just been crucified,
and here is the sign he gave me
so that I should be admitted here by you.

GABRIEL *to Dysmas*:

I am glad to open up for you and be of good
heart,
for he is bringing Adam and his successors.

DAVID:

I tell you, then, filthy Hell,
to open up to such a king.
Open your great pit at once
because your flock will do you no good.

CHRIST *arrives in Hell*:

And I, my children, have come
to pay my great tribute.

INFERNUS *to Christ*:

Who are you who free from me
those whom mortal sin holds bound?
Who are you who plunder Limbo
and to whom all men pray?
Who are you, such a warrior
that you have vanquished our great rage?

Iterum:

Chi se' tu che tanta luce
daie a quiste scure parte?
Chi se' tu che mo' conduce?
Sopra de noie haie tal carte!
E non te basta che n'avete,
ma quil che noie legam scioglete? 216

Iterum:

Chi se' tu, cotanto chiaro?
Chi se' tu, cotanto bello?
Chi se' tu ch'al mondo amaro
daie così mortal flagello?
Chi se' tu, senza peccato?
Chi se' tu in mondo immacolato? 222

Iterum:

Se' tu quil de cuie deceia
el prence nostro, dura testa,
ch'esso tògliar ne deveia
de tutto el mondo la podesta,
e per morir esso nel legno
a ciascun dava l'alto regno? 228

Iesus ad Satan ligans eum:

Satàn, tu haie data molta pena
a l'uom per longo temporale.
Legar te vòie con mia catena
che tu non faccie a lor più male.
Enfin al novissimo dine
per mia virtù staraie cusine. 234

Iesus ad Infernum:

Esto è 'l vostro re legato.
Per signor tenete luie.

Demones reprobantes Satan:

O prence d'onne ben privato,
com'ofendeie tu a custuie?
Tu n'haie fatto mo' spogliare
del nostro ben, per tuo mal fare. 240

INFERNUS continues:

Who are you who now come giving
so much light to these dark parts?
Who are you who now lead?
You have such power over us.
Is not what you have enough, without you
having to free those whom we hold bound?

INFERNUS continues:

Who are you, so very bright?
Who are you, so very fair?
Who are you, who in the harsh world
weild the mortal scourge so hard?
Who are you, without sin?
Who are you, a spotless mortal?¹⁶

INFERNUS continues:

Are you the one of whom
our thick-head prince spoke, saying
that he was going to take away from us
power over the whole world,
and by dying on the tree
he would open his great kindom to all?

Iesus to Satan as he binds him:

Satan, you have caused much suffering
to Mankind for a long time.
I will bind you with my chain¹⁷
so that you do him no further harm.
Until Judgement Day
my might will hold you that way.

Iesus to Infernus:

Here is your King, in chains.
Keep him as your Lord.

Demones reproaching Satan:

O prince devoid of every good,
how could you offend this man?
Now you've made him strip us
of all we had, through your wrong doing.

DEMONES *ad Satan*:

O Satàn, de male attore!
O Satàn, signor de morte!
Resguardiam quanto splendore
ha date a quiste sozze sorte,¹⁸
e tu cusì el deveie pensare
ennante ch'el fesse pigliare. 246

IESUS *ad Infernum*:

In omnia secula seculorum
Satàn sia en vostra podestade.
Vadin el luoco anco costoro
già per vostra redetade.

IESUS *omnibus Sanctis ibi adstantibus*:

E voie, Sante mieie, venite,
quie a mia 'magene fatte sete! 252

IESUS *ad Sanctos*:

Voie sete mo' recomparate
per lo legno cruciato,
ch'eravate prima dannate
per lo legno già vetato.
O Adam, mo' pace sia
a te colla tua compagnia! 258

Iterum:

E voie, che foste el primo pate,
vien de fuore imprimamente,
e voie, figliuoglie, el seguitate:
Abel, Abethe, buon servente,
David, Aronne e Moïsesse,
Isàia cogli altre qua giù messe. 264

THE DEVILS *to Satan*:

O Satan, doer of evil!
O Satan, Lord of death!
We can see how much light
he brings to these filthy realms,
and you should have thought about it
before you had him taken.

JESUS *to Infernus*:

For ever and ever
let Satan be in your power.
Let them go in there too,
as your inheritance.

JESUS *to all the Righteous standing there*:

And come, my Righteous ones,
who are made in my image.

JESUS *to the Righteous*:

You are now redeemed
by the tree of the cross
just as you were damned before
by the forbidden tree.
O Adam, peace to you now
and to your company.

CHRIST *continues*:

And you who were the first father,
come out now first of all,
and you, his sons, follow him:
Abel, Abeth, good servant,
David, Aaron and Moses,
Isaiah and the others sent down here.

*

* *

CHRISTUS *Adam ad modum pasqualem:*

Adam, primo parente,
fatte ver me e non star più pensoso.

ADAM *ad Christum:*

O Cristo onnepotente,
per mio defetto sceso so' qua giuso!

CHRISTUS *ad Abraam:*

O Abraam gioioso!

Respondet ABRAAM:

Veggio, Signor, che la mia carne porte.

CHRISTUS *dicit David:*

Davit, fedele e forte,
or suona 'l tuo salterio innamorato!

CHRISTUS *Iacob:*

Giacobbe patriarca!
O Isac anche, coie tuoie compagnone!
Noè, che feste l'arca!
Duv'è Isàia, quil che seg'nato fone?¹⁹
O santo Simeone,
suglie tuoie braccia foite uferto.

SIMEON *Christo:*

Segnore, alor foie certo
ch'el popol d'Esrael era salvato.

*

* *

CHRIST *says to Adam in the joyful mode:*

Adam, first parent,
come towards me, without further thought.

ADAM *to Christ:*

O almighty Christ,
for my sin I was down here!

CHRIST *to Abraham:*

O joyful Abraham!

ABRAHAM *replies:*

I see, Lord, that you are of my flesh.

CHRIST *says to David:*

David, faithful and strong,
now play your harp filled with love!

CHRIST *to Jacob:*

O patriarch Jacob!
O Isaac, too, with your companions!
Noah, who made the ark!
Where is Isaiah, who was given a sign?
O holy Simeon,
I was offered into your arms.

SIMEON *to Christ:*

Lord, then I was certain
that the people of Israel were saved.

CHRISTUS:

Daniel e Geremia,
e tu, Abel, cogli altri Padri Sante!
O santo Zacaria,
e voie, Profete sante tutte quante,
a ciel con dolce cante
vòie che veniate a far con meco festa!
O Giovagne Batista,
tu lege vecchia e nuova hai confermato. 288

CHRISTUS *Latroni*:

Morendo en ella croce,
figliuol Dimasse, tu me confessaste.
Col cuore e colla bocie
la santa misericordia ademandaste.
Perché non me negaste,
lo santo Paradiso t'ho promesso.
Venite voie con esso
che tanto tempo m'avete aspettato. 290

OMNES *eundo cum Christo*:

Alleluia cantiamo
che noie andiam co' Cristo Salvatore!
Tutte te confessiamo
che se' 'ncarnato per noie, Redentore.
O benegno Signore,
che per glie peccator sangue haie versato.
Al mondo quisto canto
tu fa' sentir, che tanto t'è costato. 304

Hic CHRISTUS ad Paradisum ubi est Serafin cum spata:

O Enoc ed Elia,
quista mia gente sì ve racomando.

Respondent ENOC et ELIA:

O Figliuol de Maria,
donqua per noie ha' già pagato el bando?

CHRIST:

Daniel and Jeremiah,
and you, Abel, with the other Holy Fathers,
O holy Zachariah,
and you, holy Prophets all,
I want you to come with me to heaven
with sweet song, to rejoice with me.
O John the Baptist,
you have confirmed the old and the new
law.

CHRIST *to the Good Thief*:

When you died on the cross,
Dysmas, my son, you believed in me.
With your heart and your voice
you asked for holy mercy.
Because you did not deny me,
I promised you holy Paradise.
Come with him, all of you
who have waited for me so long.

ALL THE RIGHTEOUS *as they go with Christ*:

Let us sing alleluia
as we go with Christ our Saviour.
We all believe in you,
for you took flesh for us, O Redeemer.
O dear Lord,
who shed your blood for sinners.
Make this song heard
in the world, for it cost you so dear.

Then CHRIST arrives in Paradise where the Angel waits with a sword:

O Enoch and Elijah,
I commend these my people to you.

ENOCH *and* ELIJAH *reply*:

O Son of Mary,
so you have already paid the ransom for us?

Respondet CHRISTUS:

Col mio sangue versando
ho spoliato el Limbo de lo 'nferno
e 'l mio regno eterno
a tutte voie el luoco ho aparecchiato. 312

CHRISTUS *benedicens Adam et alios Sanctos*:

De sopra a voie si sia
la benezon de l'Altissimo Pate,
e depo ciò la mia
e de lo Spirtu Santo vòie ch'agate
e siate circundate
de tutt'a tre che sonno en una 'senza.

Respondent OMNES SANCTI:

O divina potenza,
che fàite tre persone congregate. 320

OMNES SANCTI:

Cantiam con nuovo canto
puoie ch'el Signor tal meraveglia mustra,
che col suo bianco manto
estende ei braccia e noi salvando ellustra,
e fè onne mente lustra
deie suoie segrete al mondo entenebrato.
Alleluia biato,
puoie che la mente nostra è dechiarata! 328

CHRISTUS *Angelo*:

O Gabriello, or mena
quiste Sante Profete ell'alto regno,
che la vita serena
hol acquistata, morendo en el legno.

CHRIST *replies*:

By shedding my blood
I have harrowed Hell,
and have prepared a place for you all
in my eternal kingdom.

CHRIST *blesses Adam and the other Righteous*:

May the blessing of the Almighty Father
be upon you,
and also my own,
and I want you to have that of the Holy
Ghost,
and may you be surrounded
by all Three that are one Essence.

THE RIGHTEOUS *reply*:

O divine might
that are three persons gathered in one.

ALL THE RIGHTEOUS:

Let us sing a new song
since the Lord reveals such miracles.
In his white robes
he extends his arms and shows us the light
and saves us,
and he cleansed all our hearts
of the secrets of the shadowy world.
Alleluia, blessed one,
for you have shown our hearts the light.

CHRIST *to the Angel*:

O Gabriel, now take
these holy Prophets to the heavenly
kingdom,
for I have bought them the serene life
by dying on the cross.

OMNES SANCTI *dicunt Christo:*

Alto Signor benegno,
gridando mo', alleluia dicemo
puoi che lassato avemo
el luoco de la gente sì ascurata!

SANCTI *ad Enoch et Eliam:*

O voie che qui sedete,
che sete che sì vecchie demonstrate? 336

Respondent ENOCH et ELIA:

Noie se' glie doie profete
Elie ed Enoch per nome chiamate,
che son qui riservate
per quando al mondo verà Nantecristo.
Combatterim con esso
e luie uciderim per suoie peccate. 344

SANCTI *ad Dima:*

E tu che par ladrone,
che se' che tal segnale en collo porte?

Respondet DIMAS:

Ver latro stato sone,
e a lato Cristo en croce ave' la morte.
Essendo ei segne forte,
disse a luie: "Non me dementecare!"
Ed eie m'avé a parlare:
"Oggie tu' alma serà en Ciel biata!" 352

ALL THE RIGHTEOUS *say to Christ:*

Great, kind Lord,
now we cry out saying, Aleluia,
because we have left
the place of the people who live in darkness.

THE RIGHTEOUS *to Enoch and Elijah:*

O you who sit here,
who are you that show such signs of age?

ENOCH *and ELIJAH reply:*

We are two prophets
by the names of Enoch and Elijah,
and we are placed here
for when the Antichrist comes to the world.
We shall fight with him
and we shall kill him for his sins.²⁰

THE RIGHTEOUS *to Dysmas:*

And you who look like a thief,
who are you with such a sign on your
shoulder?

DYSMAS *replies:*

I was indeed a thief,
and I met my death next to Christ on the
cross.
Because there were great signs,
I said to him: "Do not forget me!"
And he spoke to me:
"Today your soul will be blessed in
paradise."

DIMAS *ei*:

E poie me disse: "Porta
quisto segno, e fatte el luoco aprire."
Ed io foie a la porta
e vedde el Gabriel de fuor venire.
Ed io glie prese a dire:
"Apreme che Cristo m'ha mandato."
Ed ei non me fo engrato:
aprieme en quista gloria sì biata. 360

CHRISTUS:

Ciascun sì stia gaudente
e de presente vo a la Mate mia.
O Madelena pia,
ch'al monumento ha' tanto lagremato. 364

DYSMAS *to them*:

And then he said to me: "Take
this sign, and have the place opened up."
And I came to the gate
and I saw Gabriel come out.
And I started to say:
Open up for me, because Christ sent me."
And he was not ungracious:
he opened me into this blessed glory.

CHRIST:

Let all men now rejoice
and now I go to my Mother.
O pious Magdalene,
who wept so much at the tomb.

Endnotes

1. The play refers to two lights, presumably John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, in fulfilment of prophecies from the Old and New Testaments: Isaiah 9:2 ("the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined"), 40:3 ("the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"; 42:7 (God promises to "open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in the darkness of the prison house"); Luke 2:30 (see note 3 below), 2:79 (Zacharias' prophecy that John will "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death").

2. Isaiah 60:1: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee."

3. Luke 2:28: "Then the old man took him in his hands"; and 2:30: "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou has prepared before the face of all people."

4. In the Acts of Pilate, John says "I am John, the voice and the prophet." The authors of the play may be working from a source which has *lux* rather than *vox*, or they may be developing the rich interplay of light and shadow that is intrinsic to the play.

5. John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

6. Matthew 3:17; cf. Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22.

7. This stanza replaces Seth's story of the Oil of Mercy (Latin A, XIX). Like the Latin B version, the story crosses straight to Hell and Satan.

8. Infernus is the personification of Hell; Satan is his Chief Minister.

9. In the Gospel of Nicodemus, it is David (drawing on the end of Psalm 24: 7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, he everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the lord mighty in battle. Lift y^e your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory. Selah." The formula *Tollite portas* ('Lift up your gates') is used in various processions, especially Palm Sunday and in the dedication of new churches, in which a person hidden in the church and representing the Devil is driven out.

10. Isaiah 26: 19: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

11. Psalm 47:5: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet."

12. Again, Psalm 102:19-20: "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death."

13. Dysmas and Gestas are the names traditionally given to the Good Thief and the Bad Thief crucified with Christ.

14. Manuscript P ends here.

15. In the pictorial tradition, the Good Thief sometimes accompanies Christ to Limbo, carrying the banner. In the *Laus Sabbati Sancti*, which is the result of the fusion of two originally separate *laude*, Christ sends Dysmas to Heaven before he himself arrives at the gates of Hell (lines 187-92) and Dysmas is admitted to Heaven by Gabriel (197-8), but he is still outside heaven in the second part, where he joins the procession of Righteous.

16. The Latin pun on *mundus*, meaning both 'world' and 'clean', extends into Italian. Here, the manuscripts, which have *imondo*, make the paradox clear: Christ is *in mondo* ('in the world') but not *immondo* ('unclean'). The Gospel of Nicodemus, VI, 1 reads *sine macula e mundus a crimine* ("without stain and guilty of no sin")

17. The pictorial tradition suggests that when the gates of Hell are finally opened — sometimes raised like a portcullis, sometimes lowered like a drawbridge — the chains are broken, and Satan is trapped and bound by Christ.

18. All three MSS read *sorte* ('fates'), but 'porte' would be a more likely reading.

19. MS has Isaiah in both l. 274 and 276. Isaiah sought a sign (7:11; 55:13); but I know of no sawing.

20. See Acts 25.