**Malebolge**

(circle 8)

**Bolgia One:** Panderers and Seducers

They are forced to march, single file around the circumference of their circle, constantly lashed by horned demons.

**Bolgia Two:** Flatterers

Immersed forever in a river of human excrement, like what their flatteries were.

**Bolgia Three:** Simonists

Sinners guilty of selling church offices for personal gain, are punished here. They are turned upside down in large baptismal fonts cut into the rock, with their feet set ablaze by oily fires. The heat of the flames burns according to the guilt of the sinner.

**Bolgia Four:** Astrologists, seers, sorcerers

Any who attempted to pervert [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God)’s laws to divine the future are punished here. Their heads have been twisted around to face backwards, and thus they are forced to walk backwards around the circumference of their circle for all of time.

**Bolgia Five:** Grafters

The peculators, extortionists, blackmailers and unscrupulous businessmen: sinners who used their positions in life to gain personal wealth or other advantages for themselves. They’re punished by being thrown into a river of boiling pitch and [tar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tar). In addition, should any of the grafters try to escape the pitch, a horde of demons ("Malebranche", meaning "evil claws") armed with grappling hooks and barbs stands guard over them, ready to tear them to pieces.

**Bolgia Six:** Hypocrites

They are forced to wear heavy lead robes as they walk around the circumference of their circle. The robes are golden and resemble a monk’s cowl but are lined with heavy lead, symbolically representing hypocrisy. Also, [Caiphas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caiphas), the [Pharisee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharisee) who insisted on the execution of [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus), is crucified in this circle, staked to the ground so that the ranks of the lead-weighted hypocrites march across him.

**Bolgia Seven:** Thieves.

The bolgia is also filled with [serpents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpent_(symbolism)), [dragons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon) and other vengeful reptiles that torture the thieves endlessly. The bites of some of the snakes cause the thieves to spontaneously combust, only to regenerate their bodies for further torment in a few moments. They are pursued by the monstrous fiery [Cacus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cacus). Other thieves are denied human forms and appear as reptiles themselves, and can only assume their true shape if they steal a human shape from another sinner; this involves a very painful transformation for both [souls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul) involved.

**Bolgia Eight:** Evil Counselors

Deceivers who gave false or corrupted advice to others for personal benefit are punished. They are constantly ablaze, appearing as nothing so much as living, speaking tongues of flame.

**Bolgia Nine:** Sowers of Discord

Sinners who, in life, promoted scandals, schism, and discord, particularly those who caused schism within the church or within politics. They are forced to walk around the circumference of the circle bearing horrible, disfiguring wounds inflicted on them by a great demon with a sword. The nature of the wound mirrors the sins of the particular soul; while some only have gashes, or fingers and toes cut off, others are decapitated, cut in half (as schismatics), or are completely disemboweled. Among those who are tormented here is [Bertran de Born](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertran_de_Born), who carries around his severed head like a lantern.

**Bolgia Ten:** Falsifiers,

Those who attempted to alter things through lies or [alchemy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchemy), or those who tried to pass off false things as real things, such as counterfeiters of coins, are punished here. This bolgia has four subdivisions where specific classes of falsifiers (alchemists, impostors, counterfeiters, and liars) endure different degrees of punishment based on horrible, consumptive diseases such as [rashes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rash), [dropsy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dropsy), [leprosy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leprosy) and [consumption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuberculosis).

The lower edge of Malebolge is guarded by a ring of titans and earth giants, many of whom are chained in place as punishment for their rebellion against God/Zeus.

Beyond and below the giants lies Cocytus, hell's ninth circle.