

## Article

# Dante's Political Eschatology: Resurrecting the Social Body in *Paradiso* 14

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**Abstract:** This article investigates Dante's engagement with one of the key and most controversial academic questions of the late Middle Ages: the beatific vision after the general resurrection. This essay focuses on *Paradiso* 14, where the character of King Solomon explains that the souls' vision of God will increase after reuniting with their resurrected bodies. After briefly reconstructing the theological debate engaged by Dante's treatment of the general resurrection, and discussing the prevailing tendencies in the scholarship on *Paradiso* 14 and the body–soul relationship in the *Commedia*, this essay provides a new interpretation of this canto from a social and political perspective. It argues that in Dante's eschatological vision, the resurrected body appears to be essential for the ultimate fulfillment of humanity's social nature.

**Keywords:** *Paradiso*; Heaven of the Sun; resurrection; beatific vision; Thomas; Bonaventure; King Solomon; body; soul

You cannot have God for your Father if you do not have the Church for your mother. . . . God is one and Christ is one, and his Church is one; one is the faith, and one is the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body. . . . If we are the heirs of Christ, let us abide in the peace of Christ; if we are the sons of God, let us be lovers of peace.

—Saint Cyprian



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Any discussion of *Paradiso*'s ideological stance toward medieval academic culture implies a study of *Paradiso* 10–16, the Heaven of the Sun. It is here that Dante-the-pilgrim meets some of the most enlightened “academic” minds of his time.<sup>1</sup> After the protagonist moves beyond the earth's shadow, the focus of his contemplation shifts from saintly imperfection to a celebration of different virtues, which unfolds throughout the Heavens of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn and culminates with the vision of the Church Triumphant in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars. First to be considered in this celestial–moral scheme is the cardinal virtue of prudence, understood as both an intellectual and political attitude. Its lengthy treatment—nearly four whole cantos—points to its key significance in the cultural and ideological project of the *Paradiso*, if not of the whole poem. A celebration of intellectual virtue also constitutes the culmination of the pilgrim's ascent through the planetary spheres. In the Heaven of Saturn, Dante encounters the souls of those who, in life, sought the highest happiness through contemplation, by practicing temperance to the point of renouncing entirely to the active life.<sup>2</sup>

Among the wise spirits Dante meets in the Sun, the two responsible for doing most of the talking are Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventure, both of whom had been mendicant friars and university lecturers. But there is another soul, the most beautiful light among these bright spirits (*Paradiso* 10.109–114), who also gets a chance to make a display of his wisdom. Unlike Thomas and Bonaventure, this soul was no scholar from the medieval university milieu. Instead, he had been the wisest political ruler in biblical history. His name, moreover, was associated with several of medieval culture's most popular books of

the Bible—Proverbs, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. King Solomon is the last soul to speak in the Heaven of the Sun, but he is called to tackle one of the most debated and crucial theological questions of the Middle Ages: whether and how the general resurrection of the flesh will affect the blessed souls' vision of God—the so-called beatific vision.

Several elements of Dante's encounter with the wise souls of the Sun already disclose his peculiar positioning in relation to the medieval academic world. To begin with, the protagonist never speaks. As his questions are voiced by either Beatrice or Thomas, Dante's silence in these cantos is the longest of the whole poem. Hence, the protagonist does not participate as a peer in this heavenly academic conference—a fact that reflects the way medieval laypeople accessed public disputations, either ordinary or *quodlibetal*.<sup>3</sup> A second notable feature of these cantos is that their main protagonists, Thomas and Bonaventure, each talk about the story of the founder of the other's religious order and denounce the present corruption of both Franciscans and Dominicans. Only minimally do they engage in purely intellectual or doctrinal discussions. Thomas does so only in *Paradiso* 13 and only to prepare the stage for King Solomon's theological lecture in the following canto. The most remarkable oddity in Dante's treatment of the world of medieval universities in these cantos is that a king, rather than a philosopher or a theologian, should tackle an academic and doctrinal question. Furthermore, many readers have found Solomon's celebration of the resurrected body in *Paradiso* 14 striking, both within the context of the poem—as the *Commedia* allows for the fulfillment of the separated soul's eternal destiny before the general resurrection—and in relation to the medieval scholastic debate on the beatific vision.<sup>4</sup> Thus, within the Heaven of the Sun, it is to this specific disquisition that we should turn our attention.

A wide array of critical readings of *Paradiso* 14 highlights Dante's engagement with and contributions to doctrinal developments concerning some of the central tenets of the Christian faith. As I show in the following pages, the polarization of the critical debate concerning Dante's theological allegiances in this canto has affected our perception of the his syncretism and original approach to this delicate issue. In this essay, I argue that Dante's intervention in the contemporary debate about the beatific vision after the general resurrection is informed by ethical and political rather than speculative preoccupations.<sup>5</sup> Rather than a canto in which "history, every name and earthly event remain silent" while the poet zooms in on "the visible reality of heaven beyond the end of time", as Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi has it, *Paradiso* 14 lays out Dante's political eschatology.<sup>6</sup>

## 1. *Paradiso* 14

*Paradiso* 14 is a transitional canto. It recounts Dante's passage from the Heaven of the Sun to the Heaven of Mars. The narrative turn is noteworthy, as the crucial theological discussion of the general resurrection takes up only the first half of the canto. Thus, Dante quickly deals with one of the most debated intellectual questions of the time in the peripheral space at the intersection of two cantos. The canto opens with a simile evoking the relationship between the circumference and the center of a circle. This geometric figure features largely in all cantos of the Sun. Here, it symbolizes unity and harmony between the three persons of the Trinity and among the wise spirits, who manifest themselves as two concentric wheels of lights that spin around Dante and Beatrice. Divine and communitarian loves mirror each other through the symbolic geometry of circles and are repeatedly celebrated.

As is often the case in *Paradiso*, the canto's central topic is introduced in the form of scholastic *quaestio*. This, however, does not come directly from Dante. Rather, Beatrice reads the pilgrim's mind and gives voice to it:

"A costui fa mestieri, e nol vi dice  
né con la voce né pensando ancora,  
d'un altro vero andare a la radice.  
Diteli se la luce onde s'infiora

vostra sustanza, rimarrà con voi  
 eternalmente sì com' ell' è ora;  
 e se rimane, dite come, poi  
 che sarete visibili rifatti,  
 esser porà ch'al veder non vi nòi".  
 (*Paradiso* 14.10–18)<sup>7</sup>

[‘This man has need, but does not tell of it / either by word or yet in thought, / because he seeks the root of still another truth. / ‘Tell him if the light that blooms / and makes your substance radiant shall remain / with you eternally the way it shines today, / ‘and, if it remains, tell him how, / when all of you are visible once more, / this would not prove distressing to your sight.’]

Beatrice's two inquiries could be rephrased as follows: Will the light currently shining from the souls in Heaven, making them invisible, remain as bright and intense even after the soul-body reunion at the general resurrection? And, if so, how will their bodily eyes be able to bear such brightness?

The answer is postponed for several lines, as the poet describes the joyous welcoming of these questions by the spinning wheels of spirits. The beauty of the blessed life, as this is expressed in the dance of the souls, dispels the existential dread of our mortal condition: “Qual si lamenta perché qui si moia / per viver colà sù, non vide quive / lo refrigerio de l'eterna ploia” [Whoever here on earth laments that we must die / to find our life above knows not the fresh relief / found there in these eternal showers.] (*Paradiso* 14.25–27). For one last time in the Heaven of the Sun, the reciprocal love and joy shared by the wise spirits are mirrored by the love and joy flowing among the three persons of the Trinity. The souls praise the Trinity in what appears like a final recapitulation of these cantos' central theme—the harmonious interweaving of multiplicity and unity that gives life to the universe, as well as to the individual person and the human community:

Quell' uno e due e tre che sempre vive  
 e regna sempre in tre e 'n due e 'n uno,  
 non circunscritto, e tutto circunscribe,  
 tre volte era cantato da ciascuno  
 di quelli spirti con tal melodia,  
 ch'ad ogne merto saria giusto muno.  
 (*Paradiso* 14.28–33)

[That ever-living One and Two and Three / who reigns forever in Three and Two and One, / uncircumscribed and circumscribing all, / was sung three times by each and every one / of these spirits, and with such melody / as would be fit reward for any merit.]

It is only after this ritual dance of praise that one of the souls answers Beatrice's questions. The speaker is not named. There can be little doubt, however, that this is King Solomon, as he has just been introduced by Saint Thomas's lengthy disquisition in the previous canto and appears to be the brightest of the spirits in the inner circle (34).<sup>8</sup> Solomon explains that the souls' light will increase after the general resurrection. Their brightness is proportional to their love for God, which in turn is increased by their enjoyment of the divine vision. The measure of this contemplation depends on God's grace and is proportioned to the soul's merits. The blessed person's perfection in body-soul unity after the general resurrection will please God even more. Thus, the blessed will become the object of a greater gift of grace. With more abundant grace comes a larger gift of divine light, on which these souls' vision depends. As their vision increases, so does their love for God and, thus, their light, in a perfect circular motion:

“Quanto fia lunga la festa

di paradiso, tanto il nostro amore  
si raggerà dintorno cotal vesta.

La sua chiarezza séguita l'ardore;  
L'ardor la visione, e quella è tanta,  
quant' ha di grazia sovra suo valore.

Come la carne gloriosa e santa  
fia rivestita, la nostra persona  
più grata fia per esser tutta quanta;  
per che s'accrescerà ciò che ne dona  
di gratuito lume il sommo bene,  
lume ch'a lui veder ne condiziona;  
onde la vision crescer convene,  
crescer l'ardor che di quella s'accende,  
crescer lo raggio che da esso vene.

Ma sì come carbon che fiamma rende,  
e per vivo candor quella soverchia,  
sì che la sua parvenza si difende;  
così questo folgór che già ne cerchia  
fia vinto in apparenza da la carne  
che tutto di la terra ricoperchia;  
né potrà tanta luce affaticarne:  
ché li organi del corpo saran forti  
a tutto ciò che potrà dilettarne".

(*Paradiso* 14.37–60)

[... 'Just as long as the festival of Paradise / shall last, that is how long our love / shall dress us in this radiance. / 'Its brightness answers to our ardor, / the ardor to our vision, and that is given / in greater measure of grace than we deserve. / 'When we put on again our flesh, / glorified and holy, then our persons / will be more pleasing for being all complete, / 'so that the light, granted to us freely / by the Highest Good, shall increase, / the light that makes us fit to see Him. / 'From that light, vision must increase, / and love increase what vision kindles, / and radiance increase, which comes from love. / 'But like a coal that shoots out flame / and in its glowing center still outshines it / so that it does not lose its own appearance, / 'just so this splendor that enfolds us now / will be surpassed in brightness by the flesh / that earth as yet still covers. / 'Nor will such shining have the power to harm us, / for our body's organs shall be strengthened / to deal with all that can delight us.']

After the general resurrection, the human body, now hidden in the darkness of the tomb, will shine even more brightly than the light currently radiating from the separated soul. Thus, the person's bodily features will become visible again within the spiritual flame that surrounds the body. These "glorious" bodies will also be endowed with greater powers. A more robust sense of sight will be one of the 'dowries' received by the body on its 'marriage' with the soul, to use a metaphor dear to medieval theologians. These powerful eyes will make it possible for the spirits to see one another, notwithstanding the brightness of their bodies.

Solomon's annunciation of the final beatific enjoyment in the flesh is welcomed by the wise spirits' joyous exclamation "Amen" (*Amme*) (*Paradiso* 14.62). From such joy, the pilgrim surmises the souls' desire for their dead bodies. Although they already enjoy the vision of

God, these souls do not seem to be completely fulfilled. They long for something that is still missing in their beatific experience. Readers would not be surprised to find that souls may wish to be their entire selves before being completely at peace. Yet, Dante-the-author advances a different, daring hypothesis to explain the souls' longing for their dead bodies:

Tanto mi parver sùbiti e accorti  
 E l'uno e l'altro coro a dicer "Ammel!",  
 che ben mostrar disio d'i corpi morti:  
 forse non pur per lor, ma per le mamme,  
 per li padri e per li altri che fuor cari  
 anzi che fosser sempiterne fiamme.  
 (*Paradiso* 14.61–66)

[So quick and eager seemed to me both choirs / to say their *Amen* that they clearly showed / their desire for their dead bodies, / not perhaps for themselves alone, but for their mothers, / for their fathers, and for others whom they loved / before they all became eternal flames.]

The hypothetical "perhaps" at once softens and foregrounds Dante's most original suggestion about the role of the resurrected body in completing the feast of Heaven. The blessed souls do not simply long to be united with their bodies; they also wish for that moment to be enjoyed by, and together with, their fathers, mothers, and loved ones. The author's guess closes the discussion of the general resurrection and the beatific vision, while Dante-the-pilgrim is welcomed in the Heaven of Mars.

In this canto, Dante creatively engages with one of the key debates in the history of Western theology, namely the controversy on the beatific vision. The question at the heart of this controversy was whether the separated soul could enjoy the vision of God before the general resurrection. Different anthropological views on the body–soul relationship informed different opinions on this matter. In the *De Genesi ad litteram* (12.35.68), Augustine argued that even though the separated soul can already enjoy the state of beatitude ensuing from the beatific vision, the soul's imperfect condition delays (*retardatio*) the beatific vision. Having a natural desire to govern the body, the soul will not be able to see God's substance as the angels see it until this natural inclination finds its ultimate realization at the resurrection.<sup>9</sup> Whereas the mortal body, with its moral and material corruption, hampers the soul, the resurrected body will aid the fulfillment of the soul's natural desire. Augustine's notion of flesh as essential to the resurrected personhood helped place the body squarely at the center of medieval eschatological discussions. What Augustine had not fully explained, however, is the body's specific contribution to the beatific vision. Whereas the body does not seem to add anything to the knowledge of God, it perfects the subject of the cognitive act. In this sense, the vision is said to be perfected *extensively*, as the beatitude will be enjoyed, no longer only by the soul but by the body as well, and because the soul will rejoice not only in its own good but also in the good of the body. Among the medieval followers of Augustine on the beatific vision, however, some also argued for an increase in the intensity of the vision. The twelfth-century mystic and theologian Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, for instance, endorsed the Augustinian idea that the separated soul experiences two conflicting desires: the desire for God and the desire to govern the body. Only with the general resurrection, Bernard argued, will the latter desire be absorbed in the former, thus enhancing the experience of the vision.<sup>10</sup>

Philosophical and theological discussions about the resurrected body and the beatific vision intensified during the thirteenth century, often intertwining with the debate on the nature of the soul. At the two poles of this dispute were the opposing doctrines of the plurality and unicity of form. Among the supporters of the first doctrine was Saint Bonaventure, who, following the principle of universal hylomorphism, argued that soul and body each possess their own forms.<sup>11</sup> Supporters of the unicity of form instead claimed that the rational soul was the only form of the human person. For Aquinas, whose

contribution to this doctrine was especially impactful, the rational soul is also responsible for the vegetative and sensitive powers, thus constituting the only substantial form of the person (*Summ. Theol.* I<sup>a</sup>, q.76, a.4, resp). Hence, the perfect beatitude lies “in the perfect union of the soul with God, insofar as it perfectly enjoys Him, so that it sees and loves perfectly” (*In IV Sent.*, dist.49, q.5, a.1, sol.).<sup>12</sup>

Aquinas’s thought on the role of the resurrected body in the beatific vision, however, followed an interesting trajectory over the course of his career. In his earlier commentary on the fourth book of Lombard’s *Sentences*, Aquinas maintained that the body will bring both an intensive increment (“*augebitur intensive*”) and an extensive increment (“*augebitur extensive*”) to the beatific vision (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 49, q.1, art.4, resp. q.1a 1). On the other hand, when commenting on distinction 50, Aquinas tackled Pseudo-Dionysius’s objections about the obstacle of sensual knowledge for the *visio* by arguing that the separated soul will be especially fit to be informed by the knowledge of the spiritual substances, as the senses will no longer mediate this process (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 50, q.1, a.1, resp.). When he later returned to this question, in the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas maintained that the soul can see God as soon as it separates from the body and thus reach the ultimate beatitude even without the body: “*unde sine corpore potest anima esse beata*” (*Summ. Theol.* I<sup>a</sup>II<sup>ae</sup>, q.4, a.5). How, then, would the reunion with the resurrected body be at all desirable? To answer this question, Aquinas argued that the body is ontologically necessary for the person and that “the soul, since it is a part of human nature, does not have natural perfection except insofar as it is united to the body” (*Summ. Theol.* I<sup>a</sup>, q.90, a.4, resp.)—similarly to what Solomon maintains in *Paradiso* 14.<sup>13</sup> The advent of the body after the general resurrection will bring an extensive increase to the beatific vision, as this will extend to the body: “*corpore resumpto, beatitudo crescit non intensive, sed extensive*” (*Summ. Theol.*, I<sup>a</sup>II<sup>ae</sup>, q.4, a.5, ad 5).

Aquinas’s articulation of the principle of the unicity of form had some problematic implications. It seemed to diminish the importance of the body for defining personhood and for the fulfillment of the beatific vision. It also jeopardized the soul’s survival after death, as, according to Aristotle, form cannot exist separately from matter. Thomas’s theory of the soul, moreover, was at odds with late medieval Christian spirituality and its growing tendency to promote the veneration of saints’ relics and the dignified burying of corpses, as precious parts of the departed.<sup>14</sup> Fourteenth-century mystics and theologians also consistently referred to the body as a beloved bride for which the soul longs. Not surprisingly, Aquinas’s propositions found strong opposition, even condemnation, among several contemporary scholastic theologians.<sup>15</sup> Aquinas’s view on the unicity of form was officially rehabilitated only four years after Dante’s death, in 1325. Yet this principle was already well established and circulating in Dante’s Italy. We find evidence of its diffusion, for instance, in the vernacular sermons of the Dominican Giordano da Pisa. In the third of the sermons on Genesis 2, delivered in Pisa during the first decade of the fourteenth century, Giordano stated that “*l’anima si è forma del corpo, ché ’l corpo per sé è nulla quasi*” [the soul is the form of the body, because by itself the body is nothing or almost nothing] (*Prediche sul secondo capitolo del Genesi* III, da Pisa 1999, p. 47).

Contrary to Thomas’s view, Saint Bonaventure considered soul and body as two different entities. While the rational soul is responsible for making the body alive and sensitive, it does not act as the body’s form. Thus, if body and soul both possess independent form and matter, then the body can exist autonomously, while the soul’s immortality would not be jeopardized by death. For Bonaventure, moreover, the end of our desire is both its object and its formative principle. God is the object, and His influence on the human soul is the formative principle (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 49, p.1, a. un. q. 1 resp). Hence, Bonaventure distinguished between a beatitude that is destined to the soul and the accidental bliss that is realized in the body–soul reunion, “*in anima et corpore et toto coniuncto*”. The beatitude experienced by the body overflows from the soul *per redundantiam*.<sup>16</sup> If the soul’s conjunction with the resurrected body does not “substantially” increase the *visio* of God, it



nonetheless enhances it both “extensively” and “intensively”, because the soul’s desire to govern the body can finally be fulfilled.<sup>17</sup>

Dante’s *Commedia* seems to reflect a Thomistic view of the soul as the substance of a person. The soul expresses itself in the body but can carry on the whole life and experience of the individual when apart from its body. Yet the poem also celebrates the body’s essential role in making humans human.<sup>18</sup> In *Paradiso* 14, Dante claims that the blessed souls in Heaven long for their dead bodies. His poetic journey, therefore, reflects a tension that ran at the heart of contemporary theological efforts to define humanity’s experience in Heaven and after the general resurrection. The Church settled the theoretical disagreements that arose from this theological debate only after Dante’s death. In 1336, Pope Benedict XII issued a papal bull endorsing as orthodox the opinion that even before reuniting with their bodies, the blessed souls in Heaven can already experience the final beatitude and enjoy the full vision of God. This solution came after a long theological dispute on the beatific vision that took place at the request of Benedict’s predecessor and involved the whole of Western Christianity. When Dante began the *Paradiso*, therefore, he knew he was meddling with thorny philosophical and theological controversies.

## 2. Resurrection and Beatific Vision in *Paradiso* 14: The Critical Debate

To reconstruct Dante’s stance toward contemporary scholastic debates on the beatific vision, scholars have focused on his theory of the soul. In *Purgatorio* 25, the character of the ancient poet Statius gives a comprehensive lecture on human embryology and the aerial body that, by divine power, forms around the separated soul after death. Thus, the souls in the *Commedia* can suffer bodily pain (*Purgatorio* 3.31–39). Dante endorsed contemporary theological arguments that supported the material reality of the fire tormenting the souls in Hell and Purgatory and opposed the exegetical tradition—dating back to Origen of Alexandria—that interpreted this torture metaphorically instead.<sup>19</sup>

The development of the critical debate about this canto shows a significant change in the scholarly perception of Dante’s dependence on Thomistic theories of the soul. Throughout the twentieth century, scholars oscillated between two opposing theses: one claimed Dante’s complete adherence to Aquinas’s doctrine of the unicity of form, and the other highlighted the poet’s original synthesis of different theological views on the soul.<sup>20</sup> More recently, Manuele Gragnolati has presented further evidence in support of the thesis that Dante’s embryology in *Purgatorio* 25 is not fully Thomistic. Whereas the poet starts by following the traditional principle of the plurality of forms, the solution he proposes reflects newer views of the soul as the single form of the body. Unlike Aquinas, when discussing the formation of the sensitive soul, Dante asserts that the rational soul does not contain the formative virtue and does not have vegetative and sensitive powers. As Statius’s lecture on embryology explains, the rational soul absorbs the formative virtue as well as the vegetative and sensitive faculties from the embryo with which it unites. Through this process of absorption, the soul’s powers are made immortal and can continue even after death.<sup>21</sup> This key difference points to Dante’s uneasiness about the negative impact of Aquinas’s principle of the unicity of form on the view that the body is a fundamental component of the human person. The *Commedia*, Gragnolati points out, “often expresses a sense of the body (whether earthly or resurrected) similar to that presented by the doctrine of plurality of forms—that is, as a material and tangible entity with an existence independent of the soul”.<sup>22</sup> *Paradiso* 14 provides crucial evidence to test this claim.

As in the case of *Purgatorio* 25, interpretations of *Paradiso* 14 have also progressively moved away from the view of Dante’s straightforward assumption of Thomistic doctrines of the beatific vision. Scholars have teased out points of contact between Dante’s poetic eschatology and Bonaventure’s commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, the theology of Saint Bernard, and the mystical readings of the Song of Songs. As Christian Trottman points out, the very questions voiced by Beatrice on Dante’s behalf, in *Paradiso* 14.10–18, would have made little sense for Aquinas, who believed that spiritual rather than material eyes enjoy the beatific vision.<sup>23</sup> Dante’s aim instead was to return to the issue of the

separated soul's desire for its body, which had been raised by Augustine and his twelfth- and thirteenth-century heirs, Bernard and Bonaventure. While Aquinas held that the body's *claritas* will result from an overflowing of the soul's light (*Contra Gent.* IV 86), Dante's Solomon reveals that the body will radiate its own light, and this will be brighter than the luminosity emanating from the soul. This view appears to recall Bonaventure's position in his commentary on the fourth book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (d. 49), where he maintains the autonomy of the light that will shine forth from the resurrected body. Like Dante in *Paradiso* 14.51–57, moreover, Bonaventure compares the resurrected body to burning charcoal.<sup>24</sup> As Chiavacci Leonardi notes, however, Dante repurposes this analogy to different effects. His Solomon explains that the light emanating from the resurrected body will be brighter than the one coming from the soul. It thus will become visible within the light that surrounds it, just as the color of the burning charcoal shines forth within the flame that engulfs it. Hence, Chiavacci Leonardi suggests, Dante seems to assign even greater glory to the resurrected flesh than most theologians before him.<sup>25</sup>

Notwithstanding its theological intricacy, *Paradiso* 14 features intense affective tones atypical of scholastic questions and disputations and, as it has been argued, closer instead to the language of mystical and Franciscan theology.<sup>26</sup> The first and most obvious example of such affective language is Dante's recurrent use of bridal and nuptial similes and metaphors throughout all four cantos of the Sun.<sup>27</sup> As Robin Kirkpatrick notes, moreover, at the climax of the canto's theological discourse about the resurrection, Dante deploys expressions drawn from the vocabulary of everyday life, such as the rhyme "amme"—"mamme" (62, 64), to explain the soul's desire for the resurrection of loved ones.<sup>28</sup> In the final part of the canto, Dante also makes a substantial use of love language typical of lyric poetry and dwells on Beatrice's beauty to a remarkable degree.<sup>29</sup> For Gragnolati, Dante's peculiar approach to the *quaestio* of the beatific vision after the resurrection is informed by a focus on the importance of the body as a place of personal memory and affective ties. Gragnolati also argues that while Dante's vision of Heaven is informed by the pilgrim's constant desire for God, it is also shaped by a "desire of opposite sign, linked to the body, memory, and affections of the individual in their singularity and personality—as if in Paradise the desire to lose oneself and be annihilated in divinity coexisted with the desire to find oneself again in one's own history and bodily past".<sup>30</sup>

Paola Nasti, however, persuasively shows that Dante's sensualism in this canto draws on the mystical language of Solomon's Song of Songs and that Saint Bernard and Saint Bonaventure provided a suitable precedent for the poet's use of the semantics of desire to speak of the resurrected body. Both harnessed the Song of Songs' symbolic and poetic language to lay out their eschatological and ecclesiological views centered on charity.<sup>31</sup> From Augustine on, the virtue of charity had been seen as the heart of the "true" Church, which lives within the larger and sinful Church. The character of the Bride of God in the Song of Songs, moreover, had traditionally been interpreted as an allegory of the Church Militant. Given that wedding metaphors have their highest concentration in these cantos, Nasti maintains that "it would not be misleading to label this the ecclesiological section of the poem". Here, Dante represents the Church as unworthy and in need of God's grace.<sup>32</sup> Dante also uses the nuptial metaphor as a metaphor of wisdom, both here and in the *Convivio*, and celebrates Heaven's intellectual life as a "communal pursuit".<sup>33</sup> The cantos of the Heaven of the Sun, therefore, represent the beatific vision as an intellectual experience but also as the fulfillment of love, charity, and desire. It is on account of the mystical and ecclesiological mysteries represented in the Song of Songs that Dante depicts Solomon as the most beautiful soul among the wise spirits of the Sun and entrusts him with the delicate task of unveiling the mystery of the resurrection of the flesh.<sup>34</sup> By drawing on the symbolic language of the Song of Songs, Bernard's and Bonaventure's eschatological visions described the soul's desire for the body in erotic terms. This symbolism and the celebration of the human body as essential to the resurrected person also inform Dante's view of the resurrection in *Paradiso* 14. Thus, the distance, both theoretical and rhetorical,



separating Dante's treatment of the resurrection of the flesh from the markedly rationalistic modes of most scholastic discourses on the beatific vision would seem rather significant.<sup>35</sup>

The critical tendency to interpret Dante's use of symbolic and affective language, as well as his adherence to Bernard's and Bonaventure's views on the body and the beatific visions as forms of anti-scholasticism—particularly Albert's and Thomas's brands—has recently been countered or at least toned down.<sup>36</sup> Costante Marabelli, for instance, shows that Dante's explanation of the souls' light as the progression "clarity-ardor-vision" (*Paradiso* 40–42) is in line with the view put forth by most scholastic theologians with regard to the dowries the soul receives from God as a result of the beatific vision.<sup>37</sup> Giorgio Inglese, moreover, notes that the causal progression through which Dante describes the *visio Dei* reflects Aquinas's precedent in the *Summa* (*ST* I–II 3, 4).<sup>38</sup> Perhaps even more relevant, however, is the fact that, in talking about the "dowries" with which both body and soul will be endowed, scholastic philosophers consistently deployed bridal imagery and nuptial similes or metaphors. This evidence should invite us to revise the almost exclusive monopoly that critics have often assigned to the Song of Songs as the authoritative model for Dante's nuptial imagery in the cantos of the Sun.<sup>39</sup>

Pasquale Porro has also called for Dante scholars not to downplay the influence that Dominican theologians exerted on the theological framework of the *Paradiso*, even though, at times, Dante does appear to distance his views from Thomas's. Porro also points out that, as we have already noted, throughout his career, Aquinas entertained different opinions about the nature of the increment brought to the beatific vision by the general resurrection. Even some of Thomas's followers—such as Geoffrey of Fontaines, one of the most influential theologians of the turn of the fourteenth century—argued in favor of the intensive increment of the vision that Dante seems to suggest. Hence, to state that Dante's view in matters of general resurrection and beatific vision was Franciscan rather than Thomistic does not accurately reflect the poet's stance toward the contemporary theological debate. His ideas were in contradiction neither with Thomas's earlier views in his commentary on Peter Lombard nor with those of some "Thomistic" theologians. Hence, in relation to Dante's eschatological vision, attributes such as "scholastic", "Thomistic", "mystical", and "Franciscan" should be seen less as monolithic, mutually exclusive alternatives, than as a series of overlapping currents. The excessive focus on isolating Dante's theological allegiances, moreover, risks overshadowing the poet's approach to this key intellectual and spiritual debate of his time. As I will show now, he developed his solution to this *quaestio* from a different perspective than the ones generally adopted by the theologians so far discussed.

### 3. Solomon's Political Eschatology

Two aspects of Dante's discussion of the general resurrection in *Paradiso* 14 have intrigued all manner of readers over the centuries: the social dimension of the souls' enjoyment at reuniting with their bodies and the poet's choice to have King Solomon speak of the general resurrection. Rather than assigning the resolution of this delicate theological issue to either one of the two contemporary top experts on this matter—Aquinas and Bonaventure, who conveniently feature as the two main speakers in the first three cantos of the Sun—Dante has Thomas hand the baton to King Solomon. When considered together, these two idiosyncrasies of Dante's approach provide the key to his eschatological vision.

The two questions Beatrice asks on behalf of the pilgrim, in *Paradiso* 14.10–18—whether the spirits' brightness will grow with the resurrection and whether their bodily eyes will be able to bear seeing one another's luminous persons—are really directed at probing the place of social enjoyment in the beatific vision. As Chiavacci Leonardi thoughtfully asks: "What should the souls see, if not each other, in a place that is entirely spiritual?"<sup>40</sup> The social core of Dante's eschatology is confirmed in his concluding words on the matter of the general resurrection: "forse non pur per lor, ma per le mamme, / per li padri e per li altri che fuor cari / anzi che fosser sempiterne fiamme" [not perhaps for themselves alone, but for their mothers, / for their fathers, and for others whom they loved / before they all became

eternal flames.] (*Paradiso* 14.63–66). The souls' joyful anticipation is for the corporeal as well as the "social enjoyment of one another's bodies", as Alison Cornish observes.<sup>41</sup> Dante shifts the focus of his discussion of the beatific vision, from the more traditional concern with the separated souls' natural desire to govern the body, to the less explored question of their desire to reunite with their beloved ones in the flesh. In so doing, he disentangles his eschatological vision from the impasse between the two opposing arguments concerning the intensification of beatific enjoyment. He also emphasizes the importance of the body as the locus of personhood, defined, not only as a soul-body complex but also as naturally social and relational. In his vision of the eschatological community, Dante does not give up the corporeality that mediates human relationships. Instead, he points to its decisive role in molding the individual's identity.

As the late medieval scholastic debate tended to focus on the individual experience of the *visio Dei*, Dante's social emphasis stands out. His view was nonetheless in line with the ecclesiological and social perspectives found in some patristic and medieval theological texts on the general resurrection. Some commentaries on *Paradiso* 14.61–66, for instance, mention a passage from Saint Cyprian's *De mortalitate*—also quoted in the *Breviarium Romanum* for November 8—in which the saint postulates the very human concern of the blessed souls for their living relatives and dear ones, whom they long to see saved in Heaven and embrace again in the flesh: "A great number of dear ones await us there, a numerous crowd of parents, brothers, children, eager for our presence. They are now secure in their immortality and still concerned about our well-being. How great is the joy, shared by both for them and for us, in coming into their sight and embrace!"<sup>42</sup> Similarly, in his *Dialogues*, Gregory the Great envisions a social dimension in the saints' final happiness in Heaven: "Such recognition of one another [among the blessed souls] increases their reward so that the good ones rejoice even more in seeing that those they have loved are blessed together with them".<sup>43</sup> Both examples witness a shared perception that earthly affections, familial bonds, and friendship will still matter in the afterlife. Albeit not essential to beatific enjoyment, such affective bonds will add to the joy of the blessed souls. Cyprian even alludes to the physicality of that enjoyment, picturing relatives hugging one another in Heaven.<sup>44</sup>

Saint Bernard brings forth an ecclesiological dimension of beatific enjoyment after the general resurrection. In his sermons for the Feast of All Saints, Bernard explains that the beatific vision will intensify after the general resurrection, not only in response to the soul's natural desire to rule the body but also because the mystical body of the Church will be united again among its members and with Christ, its Head. Reading Revelation 6:9–11, where the souls of the martyrs are said to be waiting "under the altar" for "their fellow servants, and their brethren, who are to be slain", Bernard expresses a profoundly collective sense of the perfect unity of the church that the blessed souls long for:

many of us are already standing in the vestibules, waiting to receive their bodies, waiting for the number of brethren to be complete. For they will not enter that most blessed house without us, and not without their bodies, that is, neither the saints without the people, nor the spirits without the flesh. For it is not fitting to bestow complete beatitude until there is a complete man to receive it, nor to endow an imperfect Church with perfection.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, for Saint Bonaventure, the bond of charity between the members of the mystical body is key to beatific enjoyment. One will rejoice "as much in the good of his neighbor as in his own. . . . Therefore, Peter rejoices more in the good of Linus than Linus himself".<sup>46</sup>

In Nasti's view, as already mentioned, Dante's discussion of the general resurrection is informed by the ecclesiology of Saint Bernard and Saint Bonaventure and celebrates divine charity as the fundamental virtue uniting the Triumphant Church together. The praises of the Trinity, recurring across the four cantos of the Sun, point to Bonaventure's belief in the resurrected Church as an expansion of the Triune God. As the plurality of persons within God allows for the flowing of charity, the Church Triumphant, too, needs the multitude of the general resurrection for perfect charity to flow among its members—that is, to fully

love God as He loves Himself: “the resurrected soul could not come to fruition in isolation: mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters are necessary for that joy to be complete. . . . The *iusti* cannot exist outside the community”.<sup>47</sup> Since the nature of charity is communicative and social, the resurrection is a “union of charity that will become perfect at the end of time, when the Church Triumphant will expand the order of charity found in the Trinity”.<sup>48</sup> Dante presents the relationship between body and soul, as well as between the members of the Church Triumphant, as like the relationship between two lovers. To this end, he relies on the authority of Solomon’s Song of Songs for epistemological as well as aesthetic reasons. For Bonaventure, the bond holding the Church together is not like any other imperfect social order. Instead, it reflects and exudes from the bond of charity within the Trinity.

I believe, however, that unlike Bonaventure, Dante in *Paradiso* 14 deliberately blurs the contours of the two societies.<sup>49</sup> His mention of the blessed souls’ lasting affection “for their mothers, / for their fathers, and for others whom they loved / before they all became eternal flames” (*Paradiso* 14.64–66) is striking for its earthly and everyday tone. In it, one can appreciate the same recognition of familial bonds and friendly affection that is found in Cyprian’s and Gregory’s social eschatology. This tone, however, differs from Bernard’s or Bonaventure’s ecclesiological emphasis on the necessity of reuniting the Church’s mystical body for beatific enjoyment to be complete. Dante here does not stress the bond of spiritual charity that unites the members of the Church. Rather, he sets his attention on the souls’ earthly relationships (“before they all became eternal flames”), and more specifically, on the bonds of love, established by either blood or friendship, that bind natural societies together.

In Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, family features as the primary form of socialization and assistance to the individual’s survival.<sup>50</sup> Dante follows Aristotle’s theory in *Convivio* 4, where he states that “un uomo a sua sufficienza richiede compagnia domestica di famiglia” [for his well-being an individual requires the domestic companionship provided by family] (4.2) and also in *Monarchia* 1, where the family features as the social unit that first directs the citizen toward society’s end of living the virtuous life, “cuius finis est domesticos ad bene vivere praeparare” [whose purpose is to prepare its members to live the good life] (5.5). Several times throughout the *Commedia*, Dante discusses family and familial bonds from the perspective of their contributions to the common good—often to criticize their shortcomings.<sup>51</sup> He also uses the term “famiglia” to identify the group of the wise spirits of the Sun, in *Paradiso* 10.49, and then again to indicate the civic community, in *Paradiso* 16.11. In between these two poles, the spiritual and the civic, the metonymic “mamme” and “padri” of *Paradiso* 14 evoke the family as the natural, affective, and social bonds that mold human persons.

Natural friendship also features in these lines, with the same rich nuances. According to Aristotle’s *Ethics*, a person has friends out of necessity, for pleasure, or—in the case of the virtuous man—to support others and promote virtuous operations beyond oneself. In the first book of *De regimine principum* (1.10), Aquinas explains that friendship is what unites good men and preserves and promotes virtue. Dante’s basic definition of friendship is inspired by Aristotle and appears in the pages of *Convivio* 3: “[N]ella ‘ntenzione d’Aristotile nell’ottavo dell’Etica, quelli si dice amico la cui amistà non è celata a la persona amata e a cui la persona amata è anche amica, sì che la benivolenza sia da ogni parte: e questo conviene essere o per utilidade, o per diletto, o per onestate” [According to Aristotle’s definition in the eighth book of the *Ethics*, one is called a friend whose friendship is not hidden from the person loved, and to whom the person loved is also a friend, so that good will is present on both sides; and this must spring from utility, pleasure, or worthiness.] (11.8). The *Commedia* discusses human friendship from many different perspectives, both natural and spiritual, and according to the term’s various meanings.<sup>52</sup> In *Paradiso* 14.65, the substantive adjective *cari* covers a wide spectrum of human relationships. The word certainly qualifies those relationships in life that are dear to us for “diletto” and “onestate”, to use the categories that Dante subsumes from Aristotle. It could also, however, include the kind of relationships that are initially entertained for “utilidade” and then evolve into the other two types of friendship—as is sometimes the case, for instance, with relatives,

teachers, and neighbors more generally, who provide for one's basic needs, especially in childhood.

By celebrating natural, social bonds in his treatment of the general resurrection in *Paradiso* 14, I believe, Dante engages with Aquinas's apparent downplaying of society's role in fulfilling humanity's ultimate happiness. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas distinguishes between the necessity for human society in this life and its accessorial function in beatific enjoyment. Drawing on the ninth book of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aquinas acknowledges that friends are essential to happiness in the present life. Even the perfectly virtuous individual needs friends. He needs them neither to make use of them, as he lacks nothing, nor for personal pleasure, as he delights "in the operation of virtue". Rather, the virtuous individual needs friends to do good to them, to delight in their goodness, and to support and be supported by them in carrying out virtuous operations. "But", Aquinas points out,

if we speak of perfect Happiness which will be in our heavenly Fatherland, the fellowship of friends is not essential to Happiness, since man has the entire fullness of his perfection in God. But the fellowship of friends conduces to the well-being of Happiness. Hence Augustine says (*Gen. ad lit.* viii, 25) that "the spiritual creatures receive no other interior aid to happiness than the eternity, truth, and charity of the Creator. But if they can be said to be helped from without, perhaps it is only by this that they see one another and rejoice in God, at their fellowship".

He then concludes that

perfection of charity is essential to happiness, as to the love of God, but not as to the love of our neighbor. Wherefore if there were but one soul enjoying God, it would be happy, though having no neighbor to love. But supposing one neighbor to be there, love of him results from perfect love of God. Consequently, friendship is, as it were, concomitant with perfect happiness.<sup>53</sup>

Dante, I suggest, revisits Aquinas's statement about eschatological friendship through the same Augustinian authority. In the passage from *De Genesi ad litteram* that Aquinas quotes in his answer, Augustine makes a tentative hypothesis: "*fortasse hoc solo adjuvatur quod se invicem vident, et de sua societate gaudeant in Deo*" (*perhaps it is only by this that they see one another and rejoice in God, at their fellowship; emphasis added*). The same tentativeness is echoed by Dante's own "*forse non pur per lor, ma per le mamme*" in *Paradiso* 14.63 (*emphasis added*). This similarity is notable because the adverbs *fortasse* and *forsitan* are the marks of an entirely hypothetical type of reasoning that seems at odds with the typical demonstrative unfolding of scholastic *questiones*. But the connection between the two suppositions runs deeper. Beatrice's questions to Solomon go to the heart of Saint Augustine's suggestion, as they probe whether the blessed will be physically able to see one another after recovering their bodies: "*e se rimane, dite come, poi / che sarete visibili rifatti, / esser porà ch'al veder non vi nò*" [*and, if it remains, tell him how, / when all of you are visible once more, / this would not prove distressing to your sight.*] (*Paradiso* 14.16–18; *emphasis added*). As we have already seen, Solomon answers that the resurrected body becomes the necessary condition for seeing and rejoicing in one's neighbors: like a burning piece of charcoal, the body will shine brighter than the light that surrounds it and is generated by the beatific vision. Dante, therefore, implies that the body is essential for the blessed to enjoy both "the entire fullness of his perfection in God"—as the body–soul union increases the vision—as well as the vision of one's neighbors that makes friendship "concomitant with perfect happiness", to use Aquinas's words. Dante, therefore, can be seen to recall Augustine's guess almost verbatim, while also substantiating it through Solomon's answers.

I would take this consideration even further and argue that Dante presents the soul–body reunion at the general resurrection as a necessary precondition for fulfilling humanity's social nature. In *Paradiso* 8, Dante maintains that humans are natural citizens. He entrusts the soul of another king, Charles Martel, with restating this point within a broader lecture about the metaphysical and political need for diversity within human multitudes.

Among the axioms through which Charles articulates his syllogistic reasoning is the principle that humans need to be citizens on earth: “. . . ‘Or di: sarebbe il peggio / per l’omo in terra, se non fosse cive?’” [‘Now tell me, would it be worse / or man on earth if he were not a social being?’] (*Paradiso* 8.115–116). Charles illustrates one side of Aristotle’s thesis about natural citizenship—namely, that humans naturally need others because they alone cannot provide for all their needs. In *Convivio* 4, however, Dante had also explored the other, rather altruistic, side of this truism: that as much as they need others, humans also naturally desire to *provide for* others: “sì come Aristotile dice, l’uomo è animale civile, per che a lui si richiede non pur a sé ma altrui essere utile” [as Aristotle says, man is a social animal, and thus it is required of him that he be useful not merely to himself but to others.] (4.27.3).

Dante could have accessed Aristotle’s theory in the Latin translation of the *Politics* (I 2, 1253 a.3) or in some *florilegia*. In Gianfranco Fioravanti’s view, however, the poet most likely read a similar statement about human natural sociality in Aquinas’s commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>54</sup> In the eighth book of the *Ethics*, Aristotle qualifies happiness as the “ultimate end” of all human operations. The two conditions of this end are perfection and self-sufficiency. There are many perfect ends, but the most perfect is the one that is desired only for and by itself. Happiness is a perfect end, as it is always pursued exclusively for its own sake. But happiness is also self-sufficient, Aquinas explains in his commentary, “not because it suffices merely for one man living a solitary life but also for his *parents, children, wife, friends, and fellow citizens* as well, so that it will adequately provide the necessities in temporal matters for them too. Such extension is required because man is a social animal, and his desire is not satisfied in providing for himself, but he wants to be in a position *to take care of others*” (literally: “to provide for others”; emphasis added).<sup>55</sup> Aquinas, therefore, interprets Aristotle’s view about humanity’s social nature also as a natural desire to provide for others. This interpretation, which Dante recalls in his own rewording of the same principle in *Convivio* 4.27.3, reframes humanity’s civil desire as a form of natural charity. Moreover, the way that Thomas (but note that this is also in Aristotle’s text) defines and orders the social ties through which this natural charity is fulfilled—“*parents, children, wife, friends, and fellow citizens*”—corresponds to the way that Dante imagines the eternal social enjoyment experienced by the blessed after the resurrection: “per le mamme, / per li padri e per li altri che fuor cari”.

The connection between Dante’s reflection on natural citizenship in *Convivio* 4 and his eschatological vision in *Paradiso* 14 is foregrounded by Thomas’s definition of Solomon’s wisdom as kingly prudence in the previous *canto*:

Non ho parlato sì, che tu non posse  
ben veder ch’el fu re, che chiese senno  
acciò che re sufficiente fosse;  
non per sapere il numero in che enno  
li motor di qua sù, o se necesse  
con contingente mai *necesse* fenno;  
non *si est dare primum motum esse*,  
o se del mezzo cerchio far si puote  
triangol sì ch’un retto non avesse.  
Onde, se ciò ch’io dissi e questo note,  
regal prudenza è quel vedere impari  
in che lo stral di mia intenzion percuote;  
e se al “surse” drizzi li occhi chiari,  
vedrai aver solamente rispetto  
ai regi, che son molti, e ’ buon son rari.  
(*Paradiso* 13.94–108)



[‘I did not speak so darkly that you cannot see / he was a king and asked for wisdom / that he might become a worthy king. / ‘He did not ask to know the number of the angels / here above, nor if necesse / with a contingent ever made necesse, / ‘nor si est dare primum motum esse, / nor if in a semicircle a triangle can be formed / without its having one right angle. / ‘Therefore, if you reflect on this and what I said, / kingly prudence is that peerless vision / on which the arrow of my purpose strikes. / ‘And if you examine my use of “rose” with open eyes, / you will see that it referred alone to kings -- / of whom there are so many, but the good ones rare.]

Dante had already praised Solomon’s kingly prudence precisely in *Convivio* 4. In this book, Solomon features as the ultimate example of the most fitting virtue for a man to exercise in his old age: “Se bene si mira, dalla prudenza vengono li buoni consigli, li quali conducono sé e gli altri a buono fine nelle umane cose e operazioni; e questo è quello dono che Salomone, veggendosi al governo del populo essere posto, chiese a Dio, sì come nel terzo libro delli Regi è scritto” [If we look more closely, from prudence comes good counsel, which guides a man himself and others to a good end in human affairs and actions. This is the gift that Solomon asked of God upon finding himself placed at the helm of the government of the people, as is written in the third book of Kings.] (27.6). In a long digression about the ethical virtues that are appropriate to each of the four ages of man, Dante concludes that the operation that is most fitting to the culmination of a person’s life—*senettute*—is to assist others. Upon perfecting the individual’s virtuous life, in old age “conviene venire quella che allumina non pur sé ma li altri; e conveniesi aprire l’uomo quasi come una rosa che più chiusa stare non puote, e l’odore che dentro generato è spande” [should come that perfection which illuminates not only ourselves but others; one should open out like a rose that can no longer remain closed, and disperse the fragrance which is produced within] (4.27.4). This is so, the author explains, as a consequence of Aristotle’s social axiom that “l’uomo è animale civile, per che a lui si richiede non pur a sé ma altrui essere utile” [man is a social animal, and thus it is required of him that he be useful not merely to himself but to others] (27.3). The virtue of prudence, of which Solomon is the champion, therefore, emerges in these chapters of *Convivio* 4 as the fulfillment of humans’ natural predisposition to be citizens and provide for the wellbeing of their neighbors. Dante’s return to Solomon’s prudence in *Paradiso* 13, I argue, implies the transferability, *mutatis mutandis*, of these civic qualifications of prudence to the eschatological context of humanity’s ultimate end.<sup>56</sup>

Another shared element that unites Dante’s civic reflection between the two works into a coherent political discourse is the association of Solomon with Cato and the praise of their self-sacrifice for the common good. In *Convivio* 4, right after echoing Aristotle’s principle of natural citizenship, Dante cites Cato’s example as the embodiment of civil virtue: “Onde si legge di Catone che non a sé, ma alla patria e a tutto ‘l mondo nato essere credea” [Hence we read of Cato that he thought of himself as born not for himself, but for his country and for the whole world.] (27.3). Solomon and Cato represent two of the most recurrent authorities and examples in the fourth book of the *Convivio*, which in many ways overlaps with the genre of Solomon’s *Proverbs* and Pseudo-Cato’s *Disticha Catonis*. These two authorities combine within themselves exemplarity and useful precepts of practical wisdom for directing humans to become virtuous citizens.<sup>57</sup> As many readers have noted, the words Dante’s Solomon uses to describe the resurrected body, in *Paradiso* 14, echo Virgil’s celebration of Cato Uticensis’s resurrection in *Purgatorio* 1:



... 'Quanto fia lunga la festa  
di paradiso, tanto il nostro amore  
si raggerà dintorno cotal *vesta*.  
La sua *chiarezza* séguita l'ardore;  
(*Paradiso* 14.37–40)

[‘Just as long as the festival of  
Paradise / shall last, that is how  
long our love / shall dress us in  
this radiance.]

Tu 'l sai, ché non ti fu per lei amara  
in Utica la morte, ove lasciasti  
la *vesta* ch'al gran dì sarà sì *chiara*.  
(*Purgatorio* 1.73–75)

[‘You know this well, since death in Utica /  
did not seem bitter, there where you left /  
the garment that will shine on that  
great day.]

The use of the term *vesta* and the emphasis on its *chiarezza* in relation to the resurrected body create a bridge between the two passages and the two characters. The brightness of Cato's resurrected body, Virgil implies, will be especially intense as a reward for his self-sacrifice, when he committed suicide in Utica out of love for freedom. When we put these two related passages next to each other, we can appreciate Dante's conflating of civil and spiritual virtues, as he suggests that Cato and Solomon are and will be endowed with special spiritual rewards for their civil virtues. Their self-sacrifice to advance the common good—the former with his suicide and the latter by asking God for the kingly prudence he needed to serve his people—will make Cato's body shine more brightly on the last day and causes Solomon's soul to be already the most beautiful and the brightest among the wise spirits of the Sun: “ch'è tra noi più bella”, [the most beautiful among us,] as Thomas points out (*Paradiso* 10.109), and “la luce più dia” [the most resplendent light] (14.34). As mentioned above, in line 42, Dante even seems to imply that the grace that allows the vision will be proportioned to the soul's value.<sup>58</sup>

As Thomas clarifies in *Paradiso* 13, Solomon asked for “regal prudenza” [kingly prudence] (104) from God “acciò che re sufficiente fosse” [that he might become a worthy king.] (96). He, therefore, asked for wisdom in order best to provide others with “buoni consigli, li quali conducono sé e altri a buono fine nelle umane cose e operazioni” [good counsel, which guides a man himself and others to a good end in human affairs and actions.] (*Convivio* 4.27.6).<sup>59</sup> Solomon, I argue, unfolds Dante's vision of the resurrected body and beatific enjoyment not *despite* but *because of* his being the most prudent of all kings. Dante chooses Solomon for the same reason the poet represents the king as the wisest and most beautiful of the wise spirits. As clearly stated in *Paradiso* 13, Solomon asked for political virtue to provide for others in the fulfillment of the kind of natural charity theorized by Aquinas in his commentary on the *Ethics*. After all, in the *Monarchia*, Dante states that the characteristic virtue of the just monarch is “karitas, seu recta dilectio” [charity or rightly ordered love] (I.11.13).<sup>60</sup> This choice of terminology furthers the ambiguity between natural and theological charity and, by extension, also between natural and supernatural ends.

Readers of *Paradiso* 14 have tended either to minimize or disregard the importance of Thomas's celebration of Solomon's kingly prudence in *Paradiso* 13 for understanding Dante's discussion of the general resurrection in the following canto. Nasti also shows that Thomas's lecture is concerned with the correct way of interpreting the Bible to reconcile its truth with the rational methods of scholastic inquiry. Thomas demonstrates that, by making due distinctions, it is possible to reconcile the text of 3 Kings 3:12, about the unparalleled wisdom of Solomon, with the theological objection that Adam and Christ possessed wisdom superior to any other human.<sup>61</sup> Such methodological cautioning about

probing the sacred Scriptures with the logical and dialectical means of scholastic reasoning is especially relevant and fitting in the cantos of the theologians. As Pamela Williams argues, however, Thomas's emphatic distinction about Solomon's wisdom, marked by three consecutive negations ("Non ho . . . non per . . . non sì"), holds key relevance in and by itself. Dante's Thomas limits the field of Solomon's authority to political prudence, as the biblical king did not wish for any other form of wisdom. Thus, Dante highlights the distinctiveness of Solomon's kingly prudence among the other forms of wisdom celebrated in the Heaven of the Sun. While for Saint Bonaventure, in his *Conferences on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, Solomon was well versed in all branches of philosophy, for Dante, the prudent king did not wish for knowledge in any of these disciplines (Williams 2005, esp. 171).

The fact, moreover, that Thomas first introduces Solomon as the wisest of all men and then waits for nearly three cantos before qualifying his wisdom as specifically kingly is significant. As Joan Ferrante points out, the delay of this specification "has tricked us into thinking of Solomon as the wisest of all". When Thomas's clarification finally enlightens readers on this matter, they are invited to appreciate that for Dante, "there can be no greater wisdom" than the one that the king puts to the service of society. It is not coincidental, Ferrante argues, that the two theologians who spoke in the cantos of the wise scholars also had important administrative positions within their orders and the Church (Ferrante 1984, p. 279). Apart from Thomas's lecture on creation and Solomon's wisdom in *Paradiso* 13, both Thomas and Bonaventure appear to be mostly concerned with practical issues in the Church's governance and the present corruption of the mendicant orders. Thomas's qualification of Solomon's prudence, moreover, evolves into the praise of practical over speculative wisdom and ends with a general warning to be more cautious in judging other people's value (*Paradiso* 13.130–142).<sup>62</sup> Thomas's reproach foreruns the Eagle of Jupiter's cautioning of Christians who wish to condemn others while relying on their limited view of God's justice. The obvious parallel between the two sets of cantos calls attention to Dante's extended, multi-canto treatment of the two kingly virtues of prudence and justice, which are necessary for a healthy human community to thrive.<sup>63</sup> The metaphor of the boat that Thomas uses in *Paradiso* 13.136–138 ("e legno vidi già dritto e veloce / correr lo mar per tutto suo cammino, / perire al fine a l'intrar de la foce" [and once I saw a ship, which had sailed straight / and swift upon the sea through all its voyage, / sinking at the end as it made its way to port.]), moreover, gestures back to Charles Martel's similar use of the same metaphor to represent the king's stirring of the state in *Paradiso* 8.79–81. In the first book of *De Regimine Principum* (1.1), Aquinas also deploys this image specifically to talk about kings as society's directive principle. Furthermore, between the two ideal ends of kingly prudence and justice, celebrated in *Paradiso* 13 and 20, respectively, in the cantos of Mars, Dante lodges the negative example of Florence's corruption. Given the fact that a substantial part of Thomas's last speech in *Paradiso* 13—just before leaving the stage to Solomon—belongs to a broader political reflection on the need for wise rulers, it seems unlikely that this should have no effect on this character's discussion of the general resurrection in the following canto. Why should Solomon, with his specifically kingly prudence, be the best authority to discuss such a key doctrinal matter for the Christian faith?<sup>64</sup>

Dante's decision to make Solomon the harbinger of the general resurrection appears rather peculiar. Some of the earliest readers of the poem, who could not find a suitable explanation for this choice, even doubted that the unnamed soul speaking in *Paradiso* 14 should be identified with Solomon.<sup>65</sup> Increasingly, however, scholars have turned to the Song of Songs to explain Dante's decision. Carlo Steiner maintains that, for Dante, Solomon was the prophet of Christ's hypostatic nature, which the Song of Songs allegorically represents as God's nuptial union with human nature.<sup>66</sup> For Nasti, as already mentioned, the Song of Songs represents the key source for Dante's engagement with ecclesiological charity in this canto. But, Nasti argues, Dante also celebrates Solomon as the model of the love poet and intellectual. His poetic and erotic metaphor of spiritual love legitimized Dante's ambitions to write a theological poem capable of enlightening key doctrinal issues more ef-

fectively, and with greater power to mobilize readers' affections, than scholastic discourses. In *Paradiso* 14, in other words, Solomon becomes an image of the poet-theologian, Dante, who replaces Thomas's authority in settling one of the crucial doctrinal issues of the time.<sup>67</sup>

Little consideration has been given to the influence that the reception and reworking of the Song of Songs in medieval political discourses had on *Paradiso* 14. Dante features several instances of this reuse in his *Epistles*, *Convivio*, *Monarchia*, and *Purgatorio*.<sup>68</sup> In *Monarchia* (3.10.8), moreover, Dante quotes the Song of Songs to set the source of the Church's authority against that of the Empire. As Giuseppe Toffanin points out, in this instance, Dante unwillingly creates an imbalance between the authority of the Church, loved by Christ as his spouse, and the Empire, which does not share the same spousal vocation. For Toffanin, the return of Solomon in *Paradiso* 13 gives Dante an opportunity to correct his former misstep (Toffanin 1968, esp. 456–457).

The political strand of the Song of Songs' medieval afterlife seems especially relevant for interpreting *Paradiso* 13, where Dante's Thomas defines Solomon's prudence as a political type of wisdom. One instance of this late medieval political interpretation, found in Remigio de' Gerolami's *De bono comuni*, is especially relevant for the present discussion. Remigio was a Dominican lector of Santa Maria Novella in Florence at the end of the thirteenth century and had allegedly been a student of Aquinas in Paris. Scholars have long discussed Remigio's political theology in relation to Dante's works. Like Dante, Remigio was very involved with the political life of the city and strove to promote peace within the climate of factional violence that divided it. He, too, believed citizenship to be an essential component of the human and relied on Aristotle's authority to make this point: "If one is not a citizen, one is not a human, for a human is by nature a political animal, as stated by the Philosopher in *Ethics* VIII and in *Politics* I".<sup>69</sup> Remigio openly conflates humanity's social duties and the Christian mandate to pursue the virtue of charity. In *De bono comuni*, he demonstrates the superiority of the common good over the individual one and quotes the Song of Songs as an authority to prove that charity should be the basis of all human relations: "According to the order of charity, as it is written in the Song of Songs 2:4, 'He has set charity in order within me', the common good is unquestionably to be preferred to the good of an individual, and the good of the multitude to the good of a single person".<sup>70</sup> The example of Remigio's *De bono comuni* is instructive in two ways: first, it points to the political implications of Dante's drawing on the Song of Songs in the cantos of the Sun; second, it shows how Solomon's kingly prudence was invoked in contemporary political discourses to promote the common good as a form of natural charity. I should also point out that, in the same chapter, Remigio mentions Cato's (or rather the *Disticha Catonis*'s) exhortation to fight for the *patria* and the common good.<sup>71</sup> When we look at Dante's joint discussion of Solomon's political prudence in *Convivio* 4 and *Paradiso* 13 from this cultural perspective, there can be little doubt, I believe, that by choosing Solomon as his mouthpiece, Dante wished to infuse his eschatological vision of the general resurrection with political significance.

As Dante's eschatological vision is unfolded by King Solomon and culminates in the celebration of the natural bonds of social love, it turns the fulfillment of a community bound by charity, which Bernard's and Bonaventure's ecclesiology assigned to the Triumphant Church, into the goal of natural society as well. Thus, in Dante's final guess, "forse non pur per lor" [not perhaps for themselves alone], the definition of society's end flows from that of humanity's eternal happiness. The resurrection of the flesh and the beatific vision become, in a sense, collective as well as individual goals, and by the same token, the forming of good and just societies on earth acquires eschatological implications. Rather than in tension or contradiction with each other, ecclesiological and sociological dimensions are complementary sides of Dante's eschatological vision in *Paradiso* 14. Here, Dante explores the metaphysical ground of humans' natural desire to be citizens and serve the common good.<sup>72</sup> A similar proposition had already been advanced by Remigio in his *De bono comuni*, where he extends the growth of ecclesiological charity to natural society:

He who participates more in divinity grows in the love for the community; and therefore, the Philosopher, in the first book of the *Ethics*, wisely connected greater divinity with greater love for the community when he said, ‘That good is lovable which is for one alone, but even better and more divine is the good that is for a nation and cities.’ Likewise, Augustine said, ‘The more you care for the things in common rather than your own, the more you shall progress’, namely, in the love of God and becoming like him.<sup>73</sup>

Notably, next to Augustine’s authority, Remigio draws on the first book of Aristotle’s *Ethics*. From the same ethical perspective, I believe, Dante comes to re-envision the role of the resurrected body in beatific enjoyment.

One may reasonably object to the conflating of life’s temporal and spiritual ends implied by this reading. Aquinas indeed is very careful in pointing out that in the *Ethics*, “the Philosopher speaks of happiness as it is attainable in this life, for happiness in a future life is entirely beyond the investigation of reason”.<sup>74</sup> Dante, too, repropose a similar distinction in his *Monarchia* 3.16.7–8, where he states:

Duos igitur fines providentia illa inenarrabilis homini proposuit intendendos: beatitudinem scilicet huius vite, que, in operatione proprie virtutis consistit et per terrestrem paradysum figuratur; et beatitudinem vite eterne, que consistit in fruitione divini aspectus ad quam propria virtus ascendere non potest, nisi lumine divino adiuta, que per paradysum celestem intelligi datur. Ad has quidem beatitudines, velut ad diversas conclusiones, per diversa media venire oportet. Nam ad primam per philosophica documenta venimus, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes morales et intellectuales operando; ad secundam vero per documenta spiritualia que humanam rationem transcendunt, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes theologicas operando, fidem spem scilicet et karitatem.

[Ineffable providence has thus set before us two goals to aim at: i.e., happiness in this life, which consists in the exercise of our own powers and is figured in the earthly paradise; and happiness in the eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of the vision of God (to which our own powers cannot raise us except with the help of God’s light) and which is signified by the heavenly paradise. Now these two kinds of happiness must be reached by different means, as representing different ends. For we attain the first through the teachings of philosophy, provided that we follow them putting into practice the moral and intellectual virtues; whereas we attain the second through spiritual teachings which transcend human reason, provided that we follow them putting into practice the theological virtues, i.e., faith, hope and charity.]

Humanity’s intermediate existence, between the body’s corruptibility and the soul’s incorruptibility, requires two distinct ends:

“Et cum omnis natura ad ultimum quendam finem ordinetur, consequitur ut hominis duplex finis existat: ut, sicut inter omnia entia solus incorruptibilitatem et corruptibilitatem participat, sic solus inter omnia entia in duo ultima ordinetur, quorum alterum sit finis eius prout corruptibilis est, alterum vero prout incorruptibilis”

[And since every nature is ordered towards its own ultimate goal, it follows that man’s goal is twofold: so that, just as he alone among all created beings shares in incorruptibility and corruptibility, so he alone among all created beings is ordered to two ultimate goals, one of them being his goal as a corruptible being, the other his goal as an incorruptible being.].

(*Monarchia* 3.16.5–6)

Yet, at the end of *Monarchia*—seemingly contradicting the work’s main thesis that two equal and distinct authorities, the emperor and the pope, should guide humanity to its two distinct ends—Dante maintains that the emperor should display reverence to the

pope, as a son does to his father, “cum mortalis ista felicitas quodammodo ad inmortalem felicitatem ordinetur” [since this earthly happiness is in some sense ordered towards immortal happiness] (3.16.17). Dante had already stumbled on this theoretical issue in *Convivio* 4.22.18, where he had maintained that moral and intellectual virtues pave the way that leads to eternal beatitude:

nostra beatitudine, [cio]è questa felicitade di cui si parla, prima trovare potemo quasi imprefetta nella vita attiva, cioè nelle operazioni delle morali virtudi, e poi perfetta quasi nella [vita contemplativa, cioè] nelle operazioni delle virtudi intellettuali. *Le quali due operazioni sono vie espedite e direttissime a menare alla somma beatitudine*, la quale qui non si puote avere, come appare per quello che detto è. (emphasis added)

[we are first able to find our blessedness (this happiness of which we are speaking) imperfectly, as it were, in the active life (that is, in the exercise of the moral virtues), and later almost perfectly in the exercise of the intellectual virtues. *These two kinds of activities are the quickest and most direct paths leading to the supreme blessedness*, which cannot be possessed here, as is quite apparent from what has been said.]

The theoretical dilemma about the relationship between humanity’s two ends affected most scholastic political thought as it attempted to read Aristotle’s social doctrine of the common good in light of Christian revelation. If, as Aristotle states, the common good of political society is the life of perfect virtue, and as Dante also seems to maintain in *Convivio* 4, the life of perfect virtue secures the final union with God, then human society in this life is oriented toward and subsumed by humanity’s ultimate end (Kempshall 1999, p. 6). The ambiguity in the separation between society’s natural and supernatural goals in the medieval political theology that informed Dante’s vision becomes more apparent when one considers Aquinas’s treatment of kingship in the second book of *De regimine principum*. In chapter 4, Aquinas explains that

*since the beatitude of heaven is the end of that virtuous life which we live at present*, it pertains to the king’s office to promote the good life of the multitude in such a way as to make it suitable for the attainment of heavenly happiness. That is to say, he should command those things which lead to the happiness of Heaven and, as far as possible, forbid the contrary. What conduces to true beatitude and what hinders it are learned from the law of God, the teaching of which belongs to the office of the priest . . . (emphasis added)<sup>75</sup>

Here, we find a comparable theoretical hesitation to the one displayed by Dante at the end of his *Monarchia*. Aquinas first claims that the king is responsible for promoting the good life, which is the means of attaining the joy of Heaven, and then distinguishes the king’s authority from that of the priest, with the latter being the only one who can teach what helps and what hampers the way to eternal happiness. By distinguishing humanity’s two goals in his *Monarchia*, Dante at least in theory avoids posing the common good of the political community as the necessary precondition for reaching eternal beatitude. In *Paradiso* 14, however, his eschatological vision posits the resurrected body as the necessary condition for fulfilling a person’s enjoyment of both God and natural society. It is not by chance that Dante entrusts such a conflation of temporal and spiritual happiness to Solomon’s voice. In him, tradition had concentrated both kingly and sacerdotal authorities.<sup>76</sup>

Another element in the second book of *De regimine principum* sheds light on the universal scope of Dante’s political discourse in *Paradiso* 10–14. In chapter 1, Aquinas follows the organological metaphor popular in the Middle Ages and argues that the king is in the kingdom as the soul is in the body and God is in the universe.<sup>77</sup> A similar, albeit reversed, macro-to-microcosmic analogy is also at work in Dante’s Heaven of the Sun. This complex of cantos opens with the contemplation of the Trinity as the ordaining principle that informs the whole universe (*Paradiso* 10.1–12). In *Paradiso* 13, Thomas explains how God creates and organizes the creatures’ multiplicity and diversity to fulfill a common goal and praises Solomon’s kingly prudence. Finally, in *Paradiso* 14, Solomon discusses



the soul–body relationship at the resurrection. In Dante’s macro-to-microcosmic analogy, humans’ social nature mirrors God’s social nature, the king’s prudence reflects the cosmos’s ordaining principle, and the soul’s love for the body is introduced by the king’s love for his people and culminates in the unity among the members of the social body after the resurrection. Thus, Dante’s political view on the general resurrection unfolds from a cosmic perspective. His political eschatology is not merely a consequence of the poet’s Ghibellinism, or “visionarietà monarchica”, as famously proposed by Giuseppe Toffanin, whose political reading has ever since been mostly criticized by scholars.<sup>78</sup> Dante’s celebration of Solomon’s kingly prudence in *Paradiso* 13 does not merely defend the unmediated divine source of the Empire’s power. Rather, it belongs to a cosmic vision of the order of charity (*ordo caritatis*) that holds the universe together, spanning from the relational nature of the Trinity to the love that unites soul and body.<sup>79</sup> Between these two poles, the prudent king provides the political pivot. The king’s self-sacrificial love for his people is mirrored in the interpersonal love that unites the resurrected society. In his attitude of radical charity, and in linking Trinitarian and human loves, the prudent King Solomon acquires Christological traits and meaning. The parallel between king and Christ—and between Solomon and Christ—was common in medieval political writings.<sup>80</sup> But Dante associates the king’s rising to power and glory specifically with Christ’s rising from the dead. Thomas’s repetition of the verb *surse* in *Paradiso* 10 and 13, which Dante translates from 3 Kings 3:12 to describe Solomon’s rise to kingship and supreme prudence, foreruns the exaltation of Christ’s final ascent and victory over death at the end of *Paradiso* 14. When the pilgrim ascends to the Heaven of Mars, he hears the words “‘Resurgi’ e ‘Vinci’” [‘Arise’ and ‘Conquer’] (125; emphasis added). As the internal echo between *surse* and *resurgi* suggests, therefore, it is in his Christological function that Solomon appears to be a most suitable candidate to discuss the resurrection of the flesh. Finally, the wordplay implied in “‘re-surgi’” (king rise) is too inviting to pass on, as it shows, once more, the inextricability of politics and eschatology in Dante’s vision of heaven.

#### 4. Conclusions: Dante’s Political Eschatology and Medieval University Culture

Christian Trottman points out that “the reflection on the beatific vision is central to Dante’s political thought”. This is evidenced by the close link that ties *Paradiso* 13–14 to the topics discussed and the authorities quoted in *Convivio* 4 and *Monarchia*. In all three texts, politics is discussed in relation to human anthropology, kingship, and prudence. Solomon’s authority also features prominently in all three texts—even in *Monarchia* 3, which is the only part of the work where Dante quotes the Song of Songs and names Solomon as the author of Proverbs (in 3.3.12, 3.10.8, and 3.1, respectively).

Did the political angle of Dante’s eschatological view give him innovative insight into the function of the resurrected body in completing beatific enjoyment? I would like to follow Augustine’s and Dante’s lead and answer “perhaps”. Some of the evidence discussed suggests that the solution Dante offers to this vexed theological *quaestio*, in *Paradiso* 14.64–66, derives from theoretical principles belonging to the realm of political ethics: If happiness coincides with the ultimate end of all human actions, and if the ultimate end is the perfect and self-sufficient good—as Aquinas explains in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Ethics*—then, to be self-sufficient, the beatific enjoyment must also fulfill men’s social nature. Such extension is necessary because humans’ natural desire is not satisfied merely by providing for themselves: humans must provide for one another. That is why, I suggest, Dante hints at the possibility that the resurrected body’s contribution to beatific enjoyment depends also on our natural desire to provide for others—because it is through our bodies that we do so. Aquinas qualifies the action of providing for others as both material (“provide the necessities in temporal matters”) and spiritual (“instruction and counsel in spiritual matters”).<sup>81</sup> What, one may ask, could we provide to those we love once they have achieved God’s vision? Yet this natural desire should also find everlasting fulfillment, just as the soul’s natural desire to govern the body does. It would be hard, moreover, to disentangle Aquinas’s interpretation of this natural charity from the scope of



the theological virtue of charity, celebrated in *Paradiso* 10–14. When envisioning the general resurrection, Dante blurs the boundaries between the Triumphant Church and natural society, between natural and theological charity, and also between earthly and spiritual happiness. Such a reading is coherent with the perspective provided by the cantos of Mars and Jupiter, where the issue of building healthy and just societies is at the heart of the pilgrim's vision. The fact that Dante uses the hypothetical *forse* three times in *Paradiso* 14 gives us a measure of how daring he deemed his political eschatology.<sup>82</sup> The example of Saint Augustine's use of the adverb *fortasse* in his commentary on Genesis is instructive in this sense: whereas logic would compel him to deny that sociality may add anything to beatific enjoyment of God, who alone is humanity's final happiness, practical prudence compels the saint to guess that sociality will still bring some form of enjoyment to the resurrected person.

The choice to have Thomas leave the stage and let Solomon answer the question about the general resurrection, at the end of *Paradiso* 13, is indicative of Dante's anti-intellectualist attitude toward scholasticism and established university culture. After celebrating Solomon's kingly prudence through Thomas's mouth in *Paradiso* 13, Dante denounces intellectual activity for the sake of satisfying mere curiosity—a temptation already condemned in the Ulysses episode of *Inferno* 26. As John Scott argues, Dante implicitly opposes King Solomon's practical wisdom, geared to the common good, to Ulysses' solipsistic pursuit of intellectual curiosity, which led him to neglect his kingly duties.<sup>83</sup> Scholars have been increasingly pointing out that Dante's approach to the debates about the beatific vision engages with contemporary scholastic views but criticizes their excessive reliance on philosophy. The poet instead points to faith in the revealed truth of Scriptures as the safest approach to such crucial theological questions. Yet, as I hope to have shown, Dante's ethical and political agenda is also steadily at the center of his eschatological discussions and allows him to reach solutions that are independent of contemporary theological debates. Such perspectives informed his eschatological views, which recovered the historical and political dimensions of human experience and gave it, one may say, eternal life.<sup>84</sup>

As we ponder *Paradiso*'s relations with the medieval academic world, therefore, we must consider the cultural and social position from which Dante came to tackle the crucial intellectual, moral, and existential issues that defined his world. Dante was not officially a theologian. Neither had he become a scholar on such matters by following any of the institutional pathways that were sanctioned by medieval society and education. He was neither a cleric nor an academic. As a matter of fact, no independent surviving evidence enlightens us on the matter of his education, and there is little to suggest that he ever attended a university. Dante was a layperson, a poet, who chose to write in the vernacular, when the language of learning and culture was still very much the Latin of Church, political institutions, and education. He was an intellectual engaged in the political struggles of his world. He had been a soldier, a politician, and an exile for life. Dante, in other words, came to reimagine the Heavens of the theologians from the institutional margins of his society and culture. Undeterred by the constraints imposed on him, he impressed on his readers' imagination a new and lasting vision of Heaven—a vision that was as orthodox as it was markedly original and his own.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The use of terms such as “academic” and “academia” in the context of Dante’s society requires clarification. During the late Middle Ages, they are not commonly found with the same meaning we assign to them today. Illustrative of this fact is that the two terms are mentioned neither in (Teeuwen 2003) nor in (Weijers 1987). Hence, although I use the term “academic” throughout this essay, I do not mean to suggest that the organization of either disciplines or institutions of higher education in late medieval Italy and Europe resembled those of modern universities in the West. For a sample of recent discussions of Dante’s critique of scholastic culture in *Paradiso*, see (Barański 2021). Barański’s detailed analysis shows that although Dante deploys scholastic terminologies and imitates contemporary academic practices, he also introduces discrepancies with those practices, thus criticizing some aspects of that intellectual culture. As Barański points out, moreover, this criticism crops up in several other places in *Paradiso*.
- <sup>2</sup> In *Convivio* 4.17.9, Dante had already followed Aristotle in singling out intellectual activities as the highest human good (*eudaimonia*). George Corbett helps encapsulate the moral structure of *Paradiso* in the following terms: “For his vision of Paradise, the poet overlaps the scheme of the cardinal and theological virtues with the idea of astral influence on personality”. (Corbett 2019, at p. 75).
- <sup>3</sup> Laypeople could audit disputations, sermons, and theological lectures. Normally, they were not allowed to ask questions or interfere. In favor of this possibility, however, see (Piron 2000). For the most recent findings on the Florentine conventual milieu where Dante likely formed his philosophical culture and experienced scholastic debates, see (Dell’Oso 2022a; Dell’Oso 2022b; Panella 2008; Pegoretti 2015; Pegoretti 2017).
- <sup>4</sup> On the treatment and the symbolism of the human body in the *Commedia*, see, among others, (Barnes and Petrie 2007; Bynum 1995a, 1995b, pp. 294–309; Gragnolati 2005; Gragnolati 2013; Gragnolati 2021); (Moudarres 2016; Wei 2003).
- <sup>5</sup> I use the terms *ethical* and *political* to refer to the discipline of “political ethics”, which defines the “principles of moral right and wrong in the actions of both rulers and subjects insofar as they are members of the state”, according to (Wuellner 2012, p. 92). For a recent discussion of Dante’s broad and multifaceted engagement with politics, see (Kay 2021).
- <sup>6</sup> Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi, “Introduzione al canto”, *Paradiso* 14 (trans. mine). Unless otherwise noted, all commentaries on the *Commedia* are quoted from the Dartmouth Dante Project, <https://dante.dartmouth.edu/>. In contradiction with this introductory statement, her glosses show Dante’s rather earth-bound perspective on the significance of the resurrected body and his original departures from more established theological thinking on this matter. Hence, while I criticize this introductory remark, I find her glosses to be most helpful for a correct interpretation of this canto in light of its theological context. In developing my own reading of the canto, I have relied substantially on her works, including (Chiavacci Leonardi 1977, 2010). Scholarly efforts to show Dante’s syncretism in the fact of doctrinal and theological matters have a long history. With regard to the topics discussed in this essay, see, for instance, Zygmunt Barański’s foundational study, (Barański 2000, esp. pp. 65–76).
- <sup>7</sup> All of Dante’s texts and their translations are quoted from the editions available on the Princeton Dante Project website, <https://dante.princeton.edu/>. All other translations are mine unless otherwise noted. References to the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Rome: Enciclopedia Treccani, 1970) (“ED”) are to the online edition, <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia> (Enciclopedia Dantesca). All were accessed on 29 March 2024.
- <sup>8</sup> Jacopo della Lana is the first commentator to identify this speaker as Solomon. Yet some readers of this canto—especially the earliest commentators—have nonetheless raised doubts about whether this soul should be identified as Solomon. Francesco da Buti was the first to doubt this identification. Conversely, there are very few modern readers for whom Solomon’s identity is questionable. For a useful summary of these different views, see Robert Hollander, comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 14.34–36.
- <sup>9</sup> For a discussion of Augustine’s understanding of the soul’s desire for God, see (McGinn 1991, pp. 310, 329–33). For the purpose of my discussion of Dante’s view on the beatific vision in this essay, Augustine represents a fitting point of departure. The debate on the beatific vision, however, predates Saint Augustine and is rooted in the exegesis of several and apparently contradictory biblical passages. The literature on the history of the beatific vision controversy is very substantial. In writing this concise summary, I have benefited from the following studies: (C. Brown 2021; Bynum 1991; Kitanov 2014; Krause 2020; Trottmann 1995). For historical overviews specifically tailored to Dante’s treatment of the beatific vision, see (Azzetta 2022), particularly “Parte Prima” and “Parte Seconda”; and (Gragnolati 2005, chaps. 1–2).
- <sup>10</sup> (Trottmann 2022, at p. 153). Hermann Oelsner, in 1899, was one of the first commentators of this canto to associate Dante’s representation of the souls’ desire for their bodies, in *Paradiso* 14, with Saint Bernard’s view on the beatific vision (comm. ad loc., *Paradiso* 14.64–66).
- <sup>11</sup> (E. Gilson 1949). Bonaventure does not use the term “plurality of forms” but follows this doctrine.
- <sup>12</sup> “In perfecta coniunctione animae ad Deum, in quantum eo perfecte fruitur, ut viso et amato perfecte”. The Latin text of Aquinas’s *Summa* is from the Leonine Edition, transcribed and revised by the Aquinas Institute. The English translation is by Fr. Laurence Shapcote, O.P., and has been edited and revised by the Aquinas Institute. Both are quoted from the online edition, <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.I>, accessed in November 2023.
- <sup>13</sup> “Anima autem, cum sit pars humanae naturae, non habet naturalem perfectionem nisi secundum quod est corpori unita”. See also *Summ. Theol.* Suppl. 93,1, ad 1um: “anima coniuncta corpori glorioso est magis Deo similis quam ab eo separata, in quantum coniuncta habet esse perfectius: quanto enim est aliquod perfectius, tanto est Deo similis”.

- 14 For a useful overview of key religious and legal debates on the practice of unearthing and dismembering bodies to distribute as  
 15 relics in the late Middle Ages, see (E. A. R. Brown 1981).
- 16 As Gragnolati (Gragnolati 2005, p. 73) notes, for instance, the Dominican Robert Kilwardby rejected Aquinas's view that  
 17 vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls are just one simple form, as the former two pass away when the rational soul is introduced  
 18 into the creation of the individual. For the relevant portion of Kilwardby's discussion, see (Denifle and Chatelain 1889, I: p. 559).
- 19 Augustine already postulated an overflowing of glory from soul to body, and Aquinas maintained this as well (see *Summ. Theol*  
 20 *III*<sup>a</sup>, q.54, a.2, ad 1).
- 21 For a helpful discussion of Bonaventure's view on the beatific vision in relation to Dante, see (Marabelli 2022).
- 22 (Bynum 1995a, p. 84).
- 23 Among the Latin fathers, Gregory the Great insists on the material reality of the fire tormenting the souls. See *Dialogues* 4.30.
- 24 Influential supporters of the first position were Giovanni Busnelli and Etienne Gilson. Instead, Bruno Nardi and Kenelm Foster  
 25 authoritatively called for discerning nuances in Dante's Thomism and singled out evidence of his theological syncretism. In the  
 26 1990s, John Bruce-Jones and Francesco Santi returned to endorse the thesis of Dante's adherence to the Thomistic theory of the  
 27 unicity of form and of the soul as the form and substance of the body before the Last Judgment. For a detailed overview of this  
 28 debate and its related bibliographical information, see (Gragnolati 2005, chap. 2 and 200n9). Departing from this critical trend,  
 29 Sonia Gentili has identified Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (14.3 and 5) as one of the primary models for Dante's discussion of the  
 30 somatomorphic soul in *Purgatorio* 25. (Gentili 2005, esp. pp. 112–117).
- 31 (Gragnolati 2005, esp. pp. 72–73).
- 32 (Gragnolati 2005, p. 140).
- 33 (Trottmann 2022, p. 152).
- 34 *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, p.2, a.2: "Corpus resurgens per naturam suam habebit colorem, et claritas luminis superinduet ipsum sicut  
 35 ignis carbonem". Quoted from (Bonaventura a Bagnorea 1889, p. 1029).
- 36 Chiavacci Leonardi, comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 14.52.
- 37 Paola Nasti, for instance, argues that in the *canti* of the Sun, Dante displays a preference for "i modi dell'esegesi simbolica, del  
 38 misticismo bonaventuriano e del pauperismo francescano". (Nasti 2007, p. 161). Among those who have emphasized the affective  
 39 tone of this *canto*, see also (Gragnolati 2013).
- 40 For a comprehensive discussion of this recurrent theme, see (Nasti 2010).
- 41 Robin Kirkpatrick, comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 14.62–66, in (Alighieri 2007, p. 389).
- (Gragnolati 2013, esp. 304–309). Marguerite Chiarenza provides a similar explanation for Dante's choice of Solomon as a speaker  
 in this canto. See (Chiarenza 2000, pp. 200–8). Giorgio Inglese, comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 14.133–139, shows that the canto's last four  
 terzine mimic a Provençal lyric form known as *escondig*. (Alighieri 2016, p. 198). As Kirkpatrick (comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 12.46–54  
 [Alighieri 2007, p. 379]) notes, moreover, even in the previous cantos, Dante represents Saint Francis as a courtly lover and Saint  
 Dominic as a chivalric warrior.
- (Gragnolati 2013, p. 304; Gragnolati 2013).
- (Nasti 2013, esp. p. 238). For her discussion of Dante's ecclesiology beyond the cantos of the Sun, see also (Nasti 2013).
- Nasti, "Caritas and Ecclesiology", esp. p. 217 and pp. 223–225.
- Kirkpatrick, comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 10.91–93 (p. 368). See also (Nasti 2007, p. 177).
- Some have sought to substantiate this thesis by pointing to Saint Thomas's words in praise of Solomon—"La quinta luce, ch'è tra  
 noi più bella, / spira di tale amor, che tutto 'l mondo / là giù ne gola di saper novella" (*Paradiso* 10.109–111)—as a reference to the  
 Song of Songs. The most recent to write in support of this view is (Hösle 2022, esp. p. 88). But it is also clear that in these lines  
 Dante refers to Solomon's fame as a lover, because of the lust and idolatry that befell him in his old age and that made many  
 question his eternal salvation.
- (Nasti 2007, p. 198). See also (Chiavacci Leonardi 2010).
- Luigi Blasucci has argued in favor of Dante's anti-scholastic language in this canto. See (Blasucci 1991).
- (Marabelli 2022).
- Giorgio Inglese, comm. ad loc. *Paradiso* 14.40–42 (Alighieri 2016, pp. 191–192). He also aptly refers to Thomas's Qq. de ver. 24, a.2:  
 "Appetitus cognitionem sequitur, cum appetitus non sit nisi boni, quod sibi per vim cognitivam proponitur".
- See note 37 above.
- Chiavacci Leonardi, "Nota introduttiva", *Paradiso* 14. But Beatrice's questions also provide an opportunity for Dante to deal with  
 scientific and theological issues concerning medieval theories of optics, light, and vision. As Simon Gilson has shown, Albert's  
 and Thomas's commentaries on the fourth book of Lombard's *Sententiae* were especially influential on Dante's discussions of  
 optics and light in the cantos of the Sun. See (S. Gilson 2000, esp. chap. 4–5).
- Alison Cornish, comm. ad loc., *Paradiso* 14.63–66, in (Alighieri 2017, p. 419).

“Magnus illic nos carorum numerus exspectat, parentum, fratrum, filiorum frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat, jam de sua immortalitate secura, et adhuc de nostra salute sollicita. Ad horum conspectum et complexum venire, quanta et illis et nobis in commune laetitia est!” Quoted from Giacomo Poletto, comm. ad loc., *Paradiso* 14.61.

“In qua videlicet cognitione utriusque partis cumulus retributionis excrescit, ut et boni amplius gaudeant, qui secum eos laetari conspiciunt quos amauerunt” (4.34.35). (Gregorio Magno 2006, p. 266).

The eleventh-century work by Honorius Augustodunensis known as *Elucidarium* should also be mentioned here, as it was very popular in the Middle Ages, and three vernacular Italian translations, one of them in Bolognese vernacular, were produced during that time. The work emphasizes that the saints’ joy in heaven will be fulfilled only when souls are reunited with both their bodies and their friends.

“Quod si quaeritis, unde id tam fiducialiter praesumam: inde sine dubio, quod jam multi ex nobis in atriis stent, expectantes donec recipiant corpora sua, donec impleatur numerus fratrum. In illam enim beatissimam domum nec sine nobis intrabunt, nec sine corporibus suis, id est nec sancti sine plebe, nec spiritus sine carne. Neque enim praestari decet integram beatitudinem, donec sit homo integer cui detur; nec perfectione donari Ecclesiam imperfectam”. (Bernardo, *In festivitate omnium sanctorum* Bernardo di Chiaravalle 1957–1977).

“Quod tantum gaudet de bono proximi, quantum de suo, dicendum quod verum est: unde Petrus plus gaudet de bono Lini, quam ipse Linus” (*In IV Sent.*, d. 49, art. 1, q. 6.)

(Nasti 2013, p. 234).

(Nasti 2013, p. 228). See also (Fehlner 1965, esp. p. 147, and p. 160).

(Fehlner 1965, pp. 17–24).

See, for instance, *Politics* I 2.

Needless to say, families and blood ties were key to the political life of city-states such as Florence. Thus, their political weight in Dante’s contemporary society cannot be overemphasized. Yet, as George Corbett notes, not only does Dante not assert that the Kingdom of Heaven requires a renunciation of family ties but throughout the whole poem he maintains a steady focus on the role of families in the fulfillment of the individual’s eternal destiny. (Corbett 2020, p. 174). See also Domenico Consoli’s entry “Famiglia” in *ED*.

Beatrice refers to Dante as “l’amico mio” when talking to Virgil in *Inferno* 2.61. This example epitomizes the semantic richness with which the poem engages with this concept. For an extensive discussion of Dante’s social and political discussion of familial and friendly bonds, see (Gaimari 2022, esp. chap. 5).

“Si loquamur de perfecta beatitudine, quae erit in patria, non requiritur societas amicorum de necessitate ad beatitudinem; quia homo habet totam plenitudinem suae perfectionis in Deo. Sed ad bene esse beatitudinis facit societas amicorum. S. Aug. sup. Gen. VIII, 25: Creatura spiritualis ad hoc quod sit beata, non nisi intrinsecus adjuvatur aeternitate, veritate, charitate Creatoris; extrinsecus vero si adjuvari dicenda est, fortasse hoc solo adjuvatur quod se invicem vident, et de sua societate gaudent in Deo” (I<sup>a</sup> II<sup>ae</sup> q. 4, art. 8, resp.). “Ad tertium dicendum quod perfectio caritatis est essentialis beatitudini quantum ad dilectionem Dei, non autem quantum ad dilectionem proximi. Unde si esset una sola anima fruens Deo, beata esset, non habens proximum quem diligeret. Sed supposito proximo, sequitur dilectio eius ex perfecta dilectione Dei. Unde quasi concomitanter se habet amicitia ad beatitudinem perfectam. (I<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup> q. 4, art. 8, resp., *ad tertium*).

Fioravanti, comm. ad loc. *Convivio* 4.27.3, (Alighieri 2014, p. 777). For a more extensive discussion on Aquinas’s commentary on the *Ethics* as a key source for Dante’s knowledge of Aristotle, see also (Fioravanti 2019). Lorenzo Dell’Oso supports this thesis through a discussion of documentary sources. (Dell’Oso 2024). The other sources that could have mediated Dante’s knowledge of Aristotle’s *Ethics* were the *Summa Alexandrinorum*, its vernacular translation by Taddeo Alderotti, and the second book of Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor*. For a detailed discussion of these texts and their contribution to the circulation of Aristotle’s *Ethics* in vernacular in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy, see (Gentili 2005) and (Gentili 2014).

“Dicitur autem esse per se sufficiens bonum non quia sit sufficiens soli uni homini viventi vitam solitariam, sed parentibus et filiis et uxori et amicis et civibus, ut scilicet sufficiat eis et in temporalibus providere, necessaria auxilia ministrando, et etiam in spiritualibus, instruendo vel consiliando; et hoc ideo quia homo naturaliter est animal civile, et ideo non sufficit suo desiderio quod sibi provideat, sed etiam quod possit aliis providere” (Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, Bk. 1, Lecture 9.112). The Latin text is from the Leonine Edition (1969), transcribed and revised by the Aquinas Institute, and the English translation is based on the translation prepared by C. I. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964). Both have been consulted at <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Eth>, accessed in November 2023.

In *Convivio* 4, moreover, we find several of the themes that also link together *Paradiso* 13–14 and *Monarchia* 3. A central theme of the book, for instance, is Dante’s providential view of the role of Rome’s universal Empire, which he states here for the first time. But Dante also discusses how the soul is generated and the miraculous union of body and soul (4.21.6) in a way that is original, albeit heavily dependent on Albert the Great. Hence, these three texts are connected on multiple levels.

I discuss the celebrated couple of Solomon and Cato, more extensively in (Gianferrari 2017) and in chapter 4 of (Gianferrari 2024).

This idea would have been to some extent contrary to Aquinas’s negative view on the possibility for the blessed to receive an increment of the vision that will proportionate to their merits at the resurrection (*ST* I<sup>a</sup>, q. 62, art. 9, ad 3<sup>um</sup>). It resembles, instead,



Aquinas's opinion that angels will receive such a proportionate reward for guiding humans to the good (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 47, q. 1, art. 3, q. la 4).

Prudent rulers, according to Aquinas's *Commentary on Ethics*, are those who, like Pericles, can consider what is good not only for themselves but also for others (Bk. 6, Lecture 4, 1168).

As John Scott notes, in Dante's political and theological reading of contemporary history, "the catastrofe universale del 1300 è dovuta alla *cupiditas*, che è il peccato direttamente opposto alla giustizia". Instead, the political justice brought by the emperor is a direct consequence of his charity. See (Scott 1977, p. 187).

This discussion also addressed a question, widely debated by scholastic theologians, concerning the nature of Christ's wisdom. I cannot give just due to Nasti's rich and insightful argument here, but see Nasti, *Favole d'amore*, 168–174.

"Non sien le genti, ancor, troppo sicure / a giudicar, sì come quei che stima / le biade in campo pria che sien mature; / ch'ì' ho veduto tutto 'l verno prima / lo prun mostrarsi rigido e feroce, / poscia portar la rosa in su la cima; / e legno vidi già dritto e veloce / correr lo mar per tutto suo cammino, / perire al fine a l'intrar de la foce. / Non creda donna Berta e ser Martino, / per vedere un furare, altro offerere, / vederli dentro al consiglio divino; / ché quel può surgere, e quel può cadere". *Paradiso* 13.130–142.

Also noted by (Nasti 2007, pp. 164–68).

Thomas's praise of kingly prudence in *Paradiso* 13 also provided a fitting reply to those who questioned Solomon's eternal salvation on account of the vices of lust and idolatry. Although conflicting versions of Solomon's life existed, some of which argued that the king repented in his old age and wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, doubts persisted as to his eternal destiny. See (Bose 1996). Dante's Thomas mentions this controversy right at the moment of Solomon's first introduction in *Paradiso* 10.110–11 ("che tutto 'l mondo / là giù ne gola di saper novella"). John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* 8.20 shows that some of those who rallied for Solomon's salvation did so precisely because of the good he accomplished as a king. Aquinas, too, celebrates Solomon as the king "who was made glorious above other kings", in the first book (ch. 8) of *De regime principum*, and alludes to his salvation through his good kingship. He quotes Solomon's *Proverbs* 29:14 to explain that "the king who judges the poor in truth shall have his throne established forever". This translation is quoted from (Nederman and Forhan 1993).

It should also be noted, as some among the commentators of the *Commedia* did, that a passage from Ecclesiastes (3:19), which was traditionally attributed to Solomon, seems to deny the immortality of the soul: "Unus interitus est hominis ut iumentorum". Gregory the Great feels compelled to comment on this passage in his *Dialogues* (4.4) to prove that Solomon's authority does not deny the immortality of the soul.

Steiner's reading finds support in Dante's comparison of Solomon's voice with that of the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation (*Paradiso* 14.36) and fits well the possible celebration of Christ's double nature within the Trinitarian hymn of *Paradiso* 14.28–33. Steiner, "Canto 14", in (Getto 1964). Although enlightening, however, Steiner's opinion is not supported by references to the medieval commentators of the Song of Songs who advanced the reading singled out by the scholar.

(Nasti 2007, esp. pp. 202–227). Instead, Antonio Rossini has more recently argued that the influence of Solomon's wisdom books on Dante's oeuvre yields the key to his decision to feature the biblical king in *Paradiso* 13–14. In Rossini's view, closer continuity links Dante's use of Solomon's authority in *Convivio* 4, where Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom provide fundamental models and authorities, to Dante's treatment of the resurrection in *Paradiso* 14 and the virtue of Justice in *Paradiso* 18–20. (Rossini 2009, pp. 17–26).

The reference book on this subject remains (Pertile 1998). (Nasti 2007) chap. 4) provides an extensive treatment of Dante's "political" use of the Song of Songs in the *Epistles*.

"Si non est civis non est homo, quia homo est naturaliter animal civile, secundum Philosophum in VIII *Ethicorum* et in I *Politice*" (*De Bono Comuni* C. 9). The text is quoted from (Girolami 2014). For a helpful discussion of Remigio's political theology in relation to Dante, see (Carron 2017) and (Gaimari 2022, esp. pp. 44–45). One of the classic studies on the subject, however, remains (Davis 1960).

"Secundum namque ordinem caritatis, de quo scriptum est *Cant.* 2 [4] 'Ordinavit in me caritatem', bonum commune indubitanter preferendum est bono particulari et bonum multitudinis bono unius singularis persone" (*De Bono Comuni* C. 1). (Girolami 2014, p. 149).

*De Bono Comuni* C. 2. (Girolami 2014, p. 152).

Thus, I support Elisa Brilli's recent argument against the thesis that Dante would have developed an anti-*civitas* stance toward the end of his life. See (Brilli 2021); For a similar view and a stimulating discussion of Dante's political theology and how to study it, see (Steinberg 2022). On Dante's theory of citizenship in *Paradiso*, see (Honess 2006, esp. Chap. 3).

"Tanto quis plus habet de participatione divinitatis quanto plus habet de amore comunitatis; et ideo Philosophus in 1 *Ethicorum* bene coniunxit maiorem divinitatem cum maiori amore comunitatis quando dixit 'Amabile quidem est uni soli, melius vero et divinius genti et civitatibus': et similiter Augustinus quando dixit 'Quanto magis comunia quam propria vestra curaveritis, tanto magis vos proficere noveritis [noveritas *cod*]', scilicet in dilectione Dei et assimilatione ad ipsum" (*De bono comuni* C. 9), (Girolami 2014, p. 172).

- 74 “Loquitur enim in hoc libro Philosophus de felicitate qualis in hac vita potest haberi, nam felicitas alterius vitae omnem investigationem rationis excedit” (*Sententia libri ethicorum* Bk. 1, L. 9, 113).
- 75 “Quia igitur vitae qua in praesenti bene vivimus finis est beatitudo caelestis, ad regis officium pertinet ea ratione bonam vitam multitudinis procurare secundum quod congruit ad caelestem beatitudinem consequendam, ut scilicet ea praecipiat quae ad caelestem beatitudinem ducunt, et eorum contraria secundum quod fuerit possibile interdicat. Quae autem sit ad veram beatitudinem via et quae sint impedimenta ipsius, ex lege divina cognoscitur, cuius doctrina pertinet ad sacerdotum officium . . .”. The Latin text is quoted from the Leonine Edition (1979), edited by The Aquinas Institute. The orthography has been adapted to standard ecclesiastical Latin. The English translation is by Gerald B. Phelan, revised by Ignatius T. Eschmann, O.P. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), and also edited by The Aquinas Institute. Both have been consulted at <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Eth>, accessed in November 2023.
- 76 (Toffanin 1968, p. 453).
- 77 “Since things which are in accordance with art are an imitation of the things which are in accordance with nature (from which we accept the rules to act according to reason), it seems best that we learn about the kingly office from the pattern of nature’s regime. In things of nature there is both a universal and a particular government. The former is God’s government, whose rule embraces all things and whose providence governs them all. The latter is found in man and it is much like the divine government. Hence man is called a ‘microcosm.’ Indeed, there is a similitude between both governments in regard to their form: for just as the universe of corporeal creatures and all spiritual powers come under the divine government, in like manner the members of the human body and all the powers of the soul are governed by reason. Thus, in a proportionate manner, reason is to man what God is to the world”. Note that in *Paradiso* 2, 133–38, Dante compares the virtue informing the celestial spheres to the soul that gives life to the different members.
- 78 (Toffanin 1968, at p. 472). Vittorio Hösle is the latest in a chain of critics who oppose Toffanin’s thesis. For Hösle, Solomon is evoked in these cantos as the author of the Song of Songs and thus the poet of the soul–body and Church–Christ love. (Hösle 2022, p. 88). Among earlier opponents of Toffanin’s thesis (Nasti 2007, p. 172), who sought to break what she perceived as a “political cage” imposed by this reading over Dante’s complex and multifaceted understanding and representation of Solomon. More recently, however, Giulia Gaimari called for renewed attention to the evidence that Thomas’s discussion of Solomon’s prudence in *Paradiso* 13 is ethical, rather than political. I find Gaimari’s position about this canto to be the most balanced and accurate. See (Gaimari 2022, p. 82).
- 79 The *ordo caritatis* is expressed by Augustine in the *De doctrina christiana* I, 23 and is reproduced in Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* 3.29.1–2. It is often repeated by scholastic commentaries on the *Sentences* and on the Song of Songs 2.4 “Ordinavit in me caritatem”. The order of charity is God (*quod supra nos*), ourselves (*quod nos sumus*), our neighbor (*quod iuxta nos*), and our body (*quod infra nos*). This system will only minimally be altered in scholastic texts and mostly in the hierarchy and order of neighbors. Notably, however, Remigio dei Girolami applies the order of charity to mercy and inserts the city-state (*comune*) into the order of the objects of the action oriented toward mercy. In Remigio’s order of mercy God is first, then there is the city state, then ourselves, our neighbors, and finally our bodies (*De misericordia*, chap. 18–20). In the Heaven of the Sun, Dante does something very similar but adds the prudent king instead of the city-state. Dante’s and Remigio’s ways of thinking about politics within the order of charity also reflect the Aristotelian principle that the part is ordained to the whole, and in its limited functions, mirrors the whole. For a discussion of Remigio’s original reworking of the *ordo caritatis*, see (Girolami 2014, pp. 116–118). Notably, in the above-quoted sermon for the feast of All Saints, Saint Bernard also deploys the analogy with the body–soul relationship to describe the necessary reunion of the martyr saints in Heaven with the Militant Church on Earth at the end of time.
- 80 The classic study on Christ-centered kingship in the Middle Ages is (Kantorowicz 1997, esp. chap. 3). In two sermons studied by (Depold 2020)—one from the fourth century and the other from the fifth—Christ’s kingship is discussed precisely in order to demonstrate his love for humanity.
- 81 “Et in temporalibus providere, necessaria auxilia ministrando, et etiam in spiritualibus, instruendo vel consiliando” (*Sententia libri ethicorum* Bk. 1, L. 9, 113).
- 82 On the significance of Dante’s use of *forse* in this canto, see (Boitani 2013, pp. 185–203, esp. pp. 195–201).
- 83 (Scott 1977, p. 183).
- 84 As Catherine Keen shows, Dante’s political reflection continues to intertwine with his celestial ascent. (Keen 2003).

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