

Paradiso X:
"l'Amore che l'uno e l'altro etternalmente spira"

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Thanks to Professor Thomas Seiler

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Paradiso X:
"l'Amore che l'uno e l'altro eternalmente spira"

by David Cope

Paradiso X presents the first truly ecstatic vision of Dante's third canticle, involving sapientes dancing about Beatrice as a figure of sapienza as the pilgrim watches. It is also Dante's first major turning point since being crowned and mitred over himself in *Purgatorio XXX*; there, he had achieved a platonic righting of the self by subordinating his passions and appetites to the rule of reason and faith, while here he has been given the grace beyond reason to envision the truths that proceed from God. Beatrice has been preparing him for this new state in the preceding cantos by explaining the order of the universe (I.103-41, II.112-23), the nature of free will (V.19-22, VII.79), the inadequacy of reason to grasp what he will experience (I.7-9, II.55-57, IV.40-63), and the summary quality of paradise—acceptance of one's place in the divine scheme (III.79-84, IV.34-35). Dante must assimilate these truths if he is to attain knowledge of the Trinity and experience divine grace, but in this canto he will also be exposed to authorities whose use of that wisdom varies from the mystical theology and angelic hierarchies of Pseudo-Dionysius to the consolation of Boethius, the Aristotelian struggles of Albert, Thomas and Siger, the wisdom of Solomon and Richard of St. Victor, the differing historical lessons of Bede and Orosius and the more pedestrian wisdoms of Gratian, Peter Lombard and Isidore of Seville.

As an exposition and gloss on the Trinity, the canto specifically develops the Roman "filioque" interpretation of the three-in-one, in which the Holy Spirit "proceeds from both the Father and the Son" (Strayer 12.190). It also presents a ring of twelve "stars" as visible speech—the dancing souls of twelve of Paradise's intellectual elite, led by Thomas Aquinas. Commentators have long noted that this group involves not only a diversity of positions, but that Dante has deliberately placed in harmony authors who in life were intellectual opponents, focusing on Thomas himself and on Siger of Brabant, the Averroist philosopher Thomas once rebuked on the church's behalf. More importantly, the canto names *authorities* that both the pilgrim and the reader must know in order to fully grasp what follows in the rest of the *Paradiso*. In a sense, the entire poem is arranged as a scheme of education much like Bonaventure's, in which "all our knowledge should end in the knowledge of Sacred Scripture," especially the "anagogical knowledge through which the illumination is reflected back to God whence it came" (*De Reductione* 29). As pilgrims travelling with the pilgrim Dante, we need to understand the various contributions of these authorities if we too are to fully pass into the heavens beyond the sun.

Paradiso X is also an intertextual key in relation to the other cantos in this sphere and to those preceding and following it in the larger canticle. As the initial solar canto, it introduces St. Thomas, who as a Dominican will tell the story of St. Francis and use the Franciscan example to excoriate his own order. We meet the Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure, with his ring of authorities in canto twelve; there, the Franciscan Bonaventure tells the story of St. Dominic, like Thomas using the example to rebuke his order. Dante is thus utilizing these cantos not only to imply the needs pilgrim and reader will have for

the rest of the journey, but also presents two hagiographs as models of saintly behavior, from them developing two rebukes—an extended structural chiasmus that functions as a political comment on the intellectual and turf warfare characteristic of the two orders during his lifetime.

The intellectual network of the tenth canto also functions in other ways, summarizing lessons and motifs from early cantos and developing the plateau from which to rise into the higher heavens. In the reading that follows, I will emphasize not only these intertextual elements, but also closely examine the themes of Trinity and Grace and their relationship to the ideas represented in the ring of souls whose ecstatic dance and song turns "with such sweetness and such accord" that they "cannot be known except where joy is everlasting" (X.147-48). To do this adequately, the essay will examine each of its six sections: the theological declaration of trinitarian order and harmony (lines 1-6), the apostrophe to the reader, which glosses the concept of divine order and its manifestation in the known universe (7-51), Beatrice's admonition to "give thanks" (*ringrazia*) because Dante has been given the grace to reach this sphere, as well as Dante's compliance with that admonition (52-63), the *descriptio* with metaphors (a crown, the moon's ring, gems, suns, dancing women) describing the lights as they surround Beatrice and Dante (64-81), Thomas's dialogue with Dante and the introduction of the souls that accompany him (83-138), and the ecstatic dance and song of the spirits as they wheel about Beatrice and her charge.

Trinity

As noted, the opening lines of the tenth canto present the Western church's understanding of the Trinity, the *filioque*—in which Father and Son as coequals "breathe" forth

the Love that is the Holy Spirit in order to make "everything that wheels through mind and space" (X.2-4). The dantescan lines condense the doctrine most clearly articulated in Dante's time by Bonaventure: "there are three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The First does not originate from any of the others; the Second originates from the First alone through generation; and the Third, from both the First and the Second through spiration" (*Breviloquium* 35). Aquinas also wrote on the subject, explaining that "the Holy Ghost is distinguished personally from the Son, since the origin of one is distinguished from the origin of the other; but the difference of origin comes from the fact that the Son is only from the Father, while the Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son" (I.q.36.art. 2).

This concept of Trinity has its earliest Biblical roots in the apostolic benediction of 2 *Corinthians* 13:14 and in *Matthew* 28:19, which admonishes the faithful to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." *Acts* 2:33 and *Galatians* 4:6 also name the three-in-one, and Augustine later describes one of the paradoxes of the Trinity—its simplicity and plurality, asking "who can readily conceive this" or in "any way express it" (*Confessions* XIII.xi); in *The City of God* he presents what Strayer calls "the psychological approach" to the concept, elaborating what would later be known as the filioque interpretation: "the Father begat the Word, that is, Wisdom, by which all things were made, [while] the only-begotten Son, one as the Father is one, [is] eternal as the Father is eternal, and, equally with the Father, supremely good; . . . the Holy Spirit is the Spirit alike of Father and of Son, and is Himself consubstantial and co-eternal with both" (XI.24).

The filioque interpretation of the trinity was controversial during the sixth century, when Fulgentius of Ruspe defended it against both Arian and Sabellian heretics; the concept was also one of the doctrines that divided the Eastern from the Western church (Strayer 12.189- 90). Among the authorities presented in *Paradiso X*, Pseudo-Dionysius, Boethius, Peter Lombard, Richard of St. Victor and Albertus Magnus join Aquinas as contributors to the trinitarian debate. Dionysius insists that the relationship of the three is a procession of God in which the Father is distinguished as "unity above being" (60), while the Son functions as both human incarnation and transcendent word (61) in a relationship that "cannot be enclosed in words nor grasped by any mind" (65); the Holy Spirit is named (60), but its function is not clarified. Boethius, whose work dates from roughly the same period as that of Dionysius, was the first to define the divine "person" ("the individual subsistence of a rational nature") and "presented the position that the three 'persons' in God are to be understood in terms of Aristotle's category of relation" (Strayer 12.192). Lombard's *Sentences* also present the doctrine, connecting *relation* to *property*, retreating "from the psychological approach of Augustine" (Strayer 12.193). Richard of St. Victor expanded Boethius's definition of *person* by insisting that the "love unity is inconceivable except in and through plurality" (Strayer 12.192), while Aquinas's teacher, Albertus Magnus, followed Augustine in his approach to the concept.

Dante's statement opening the tenth canto thus represents a major tenet of medieval Christian faith, and one that must be thoroughly understood if the pilgrim and reader are to know the ground upon which we stand. Dante's choice of words is also remarkable: by claiming that Father and Son "breathe" (*spira*) the spirit of Love eternally, he

follows the idea of spiration—"the action of breathing as a creative or life-giving function of the Deity; the special action to which the origin of the Holy Ghost is assigned"(OED)—named in Bonaventure. This again has Biblical roots, as in *Genesis* 2:7, where God "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"; in the valley of dry bones, Ezekial follows God's command to speak to the bones: "surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live" (37:5). *Breath* also figures in John 20:21-22, where the resurrected Jesus commissions the apostles: "He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" Dante may also echo Macrobius's reference to Anchises' explanation of the creation of the world, in which "He says that the sky, the lands, the seas, and the stars 'are sustained by an inward breath'" (145; *Aeneid* VI.724-26). Breathing in the tenth canto thus implicitly echoes the concept of divine procession, but also presents a physical metaphor that makes the idea concrete.

A second remarkable idea, that of the orderliness of creation ("con 'tant ordine") infuses lines 5-6 of the canto; these lines also form a transition to Dante's address to the reader (7-51) in which he expands on the concept. In his discussion on the divine breath, Macrobius stated the common belief that all of creation forms a great chain of being "from the Supreme God even to the bottommost dregs of the universe . . . binding at every link and never broken" (145). Boethius had also sung of created order in book three of the *Consolation* (metra 6 and 9), but Dante's most immediate authority for this line may be Thomas Aquinas himself, whose fifth argument proving the existence of God states that all things "achieve their end not by chance, but by design," finding in this fact evidence that "some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are ordered to

their end; and this being we call God" (I. q.2 art. 3).

Dante's lines also rest on scriptural authority; castigating those who have fallen, *Romans* 1:20 states that God's "invisible attributes are clearly seen" in the ordering of creation, giving those who sin no excuse for their behavior. The Lystran and Athenian sermons in *Acts* also imply the relation of created order to the creator as "witness" of God's presence (*Acts* 14:17). The Athenian sermon (*Acts* 17: 22-34) is particularly interesting because it presents the idea of God as artificer—a concept echoed in line 11 of our canto—and because this sermon introduces Dionysius the Areopagite as one who "joined him [Paul] and believed" (34)¹, as we shall see later, Dionysius was supremely concerned with the universal order of things, in *The Celestial Hierarchy* defending the ordering of creation as "a certain perfect arrangement, an image of the beauty of God which sacredly works out the mysteries of its own enlightenment in the orders and levels of understanding" of all those in the hierarchy (154).

Thus, the opening statement of Canto X traces the creation of the universe from the filioque concept of the trinity, following the procession of the divine breath out through the holy spirit to the created stars, planets and living beings, turning in contemplation to admire this astounding event that gives in space and time evidence of that which transcends them both. Dante's address to the reader follows this initial claim; it expands on this theme, presents the idea of a spiritual banquet, and introduces the lights who will become the canto's central image and challenge. This vision shows the state the pilgrim has now attained, and Beatrice immediately admonishes him to give thanks for the *grace* he has been given. In the scheme of the great journey both pilgrim and reader

are making, the introduction of grace is an important passage; we will have for the first time reached that knowledge that is beyond reason.

Apostrophe to the Reader

The heady intellectual opening of this canto could have the effect of distancing the reader from the narrative itself—and from Dante, Beatrice, and the purpose of their journey. Dante remedies this by presenting an apostrophe to the reader, one of his favorite devices to bring us into the narrative, turning to us as though we are a step behind him to ask that we raise our eyes to see "the high wheels" (*l'alte rote*). This at once reminds us of the physical scene we are now a part of while simultaneously introducing the theme of this second section: the correspondence of the natural universe to the divine purpose. The passage is complicated for the modern reader by the fact that it presents a ptolemaic understanding of astronomy, in which the earth is seen as the center of the universe and "all the observed order of the increases of day and night would be thrown into utter confusion if the earth were not in the middle" (Ptolemy 10). The heavens involve a series of planets (which include the sun and moon) passing around the earth, with the fixed stars above. It is through these that Dante and Beatrice are passing in order to make their way toward God, and here, in the heaven of the sun, Dante asks us to consider the sun's diurnal and annual movements, "represented by the celestial equator and the celestial ecliptic . . . [which] 'strike,' or cross, each other in Aries, in which constellation the sun is at the time of Dante's journey" (Singleton 177). This is "a carefully chosen point where *order* is especially manifest" in thirteenth century scientific thought (Foster 124). The point of Dante's discourse is that if the universe were arranged other than the way it

is, "much of the heavens' virtue would be wasted and almost every power on earth be dead" (molta virtu nel ciel sarebbe en vano, e quasi ogni potenza qua giu morta) (17-18).

We are thus treated to a brief demonstration of that order named in line four, and with the fact that the carefulness of ordering displays the harmony of creation. Dante had discussed the movements of the sun earlier in *Il Convivio*: "we may . . . see that by divine provision the world is so ordered that when the sphere of the Sun has revolved and returned to its starting place this globe on which we dwell receives in every place an equal time of light and darkness" (3.5, page 102). Among the authors represented later in the canto, Boethius presents the most interesting analogues for Dante's illustration of universal order; in book four, metrum six of *The Consolation*, Boethius advises the reader to direct one's mind to the heavens:

If you desire to see and understand
 In purity of mind the laws of God,
 Your sight must on the highest point of heaven rest
 Where through the lawful covenant of things
 The wandering stars preserve their ancient peace:
 The sun forth driven by his glittering flames
 Stays not the orbit of the gelid moon.
 (1-7)

Later in the same poem, Boethius expands on how the "flower-bearing year will breathe sweet scent" and "the torrid days will dry the corn" (26-27), expanding on how "the Lord of things" keeps stars, planets, and all the particular manifestations of the living world on "their true path" (50); further, "those things which stable order now protects, divorced from their true source would fall apart" (52-53). Dante follows a similar line of thought in lines 7-21, like Boethius noting that if the ordained order were not kept, "earth's harmony would be defective" (sarebbe manco e giu e su de l'ordine mondano) (20-21).

Having demonstrated the proof of harmonious order writ large in the sun itself, Dante once again turns to the reader, inviting each of us first to consider the delight inherent in this knowledge and to eat this *fare* he has prepared for us (*nesso t'ho innanzi*) (25)²; this metaphor of illuminating wisdom as food resonates with an earlier address to the reader, where he speaks of our hunger for "the bread of angels" (*pan de li angeli*; *Para.* II.11). Here, a full meal has been delivered, and as we rest and eat, Dante turns to the high responsibility he has assumed as *scribe* of the narrative, viewing himself as recorder—not creator—of what he reports. As poet, it is important that he distance himself from any comparisons with God; thus he employs a topos of modesty once he has explored creation in light of the true "Master's art" (*l'arte de quel Maestro*) and the love that art represents (11).

In lines 28-33, the pilgrim directs our vision back to the sun itself and his position in relation to it, narrating in the following lines that he was hardly aware of the fact of his continual ascent (34-36). Dante points out the fact that the sun "provides the measurements for time" (*il tempo ne misura*) (29), yet Beatrice's acts guiding Dante upward "span no time" (*per tempo non si sporge*) (39); though Dante may be able to make out the signs of divine order in the known cosmos, he reminds us here that what is happening to him is beyond rational explanation. He again resorts to the topos of modesty, saying that all his "talent, craft, and practice" (*'ngegno e l'arte e l'uso*) (43) as well as "our fantasies" (*le fantasie nostre*) (46) cannot clarify what he is about to show us; we must trust him to show us as best as he can. The apostrophe ends in the reminder that in this sphere of the sun we may observe "how He engenders and breathes forth" (*come spira e come figlia*) (51):

the observable proof of harmony and order is also the breathing of the Holy Spirit, its procession from transcendence into the limited world we inhabit.

Grace and the Pilgrim's Final Major Hurdle

In lines 52-63, Dante returns to the main narrative involving the pilgrim's interaction with Beatrice. This is the only time when she speaks in the entire canto, and as always she is quick to advise him, insisting twice that he give thanks (*ringrazia*) to God for the signs of *grace* embodied in Dante's having been privileged to understand the processions and see the splendors that will follow. Grace—"a gift bestowed and infused directly by God"—is that which "cleanses, enlightens, and perfects the soul; that vivifies, reforms, and strengthens it; that lifts it up, makes it like to God, and unites it with Him" (Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* 181). Though the pilgrim may have righted his soul by giving reason its rightful place of directing the will and the appetites to the "good," none can attain grace with his own power; grace can only come when the soul is worthy and prepared through the performance of "good moral acts" done with "a right intention" (187). Further, the soul must freely choose this path, which is chosen not to glorify oneself, but God alone (192).

Aquinas also insists that none can attain knowledge of the trinity by natural reason (I q.32 art.1), later quoting *The Divine Names* to point out that "intelligible things cannot be understood through sensible things, nor composite things through simple, nor incorporeal through corporeal" (I q.88 art.2; Dionysius 49): our limitations make such unaided understanding impossible. Boethius also discusses the limitations of the human intellect (*Cons.* 5.5): only by rising to the level of that "supreme intelligence" will our

reason see and understand "that which it cannot see by itself" (page 162). Once our reason bows "before divine wisdom" (162), submitting itself to God himself, we have begun the preparation for the infusion of grace and the return to that state humans knew in Eden:

The very rectitude of the primitive state, with which man was endowed by God, seems to require that, as others say, he was created in grace, according to Eccles. 7.30, God made man right. For this rectitude consisted in his reason being subject to God, the lower powers to reason, and the body to the soul. (Aquinas I q.95 art. 2)

From Beatrice's admonition, then, it appears that Dante has reached the first major turning point in his ascent through the heavens. Virgil had crowned and mitred him over himself as his last verbal gesture with the pilgrim (*Purg.* XXVII.142), and in the last cantos of *Purgatorio* he is subjected to the rebukes of Beatrice, who prepares him for further ascent by tuning his mind to assuming its proper penitential and reverent role, attentive and humble. Once in heaven, she explains all of the preliminary points he must master as they pass through the heavens of the moon, Mercury and Venus; Dante is as always a precocious student, full of questions; and having risen to the Sun, he now receives the grace necessary for any further ascent in understanding. Beatrice's recognition of this grace bestowed on Dante is the *sign* that he has passed the first tests; he is now ready to understand theology, which, as noted earlier, is the highest form of knowledge in Bonaventure's scheme—after the trivium, quadrivium and the three branches of philosophy, the student is at last prepared for the "lumen superius" of *sacra scriptura* (*De Reductione* 42). Further, we the readers accompanying Dante on this journey *must*, if we are to com-

prehend the cantos that follow the tenth, know the authors presented in the crown of lights that forms this first ecstatic vision in *Paradiso*. The names of these authors are utilized here not simply as ikons of Dantescan sensibility; the belief systems they represent are the very ground of the higher wisdom to follow.

After Beatrice's admonition, Dante quickly gives thanks to the point that "all my love was so intent on Him that Beatrice was then eclipsed in forgetfulness" (*si tutto 'l mio amore in lui si mise, che Beatrice eclisso ne l'oblio*) (59-60). Throughout the poem, as I showed in my earlier essay, "Virgil and Beatrice," the pilgrim's fascination with the promise of again meeting her is one of the means by which Virgil draws him upward, and once he does meet her, his fascination with her—which paradoxically leads to his salvation but which at last is an impediment to that end—is a continuous theme: he is fascinated with her to the point where the handmaids of the earthly paradise atop Purgatory warn him not to stare too fixedly (*Purgatorio XXXII.8-9*). In Paradise, that fascination resurfaces in the first two cantos (I.64-72; II.22-28), in canto ten (62-63), and even in the higher heavens he is still moved by her eyes and her smile (XV.34-36 and 131-39, XVII.114, XVIII.8-18) to the point where she must remind him that "not only in my eyes is Paradise" (*che non pur ne' miei occhi e paradiso*) (XVIII.21). Later, he finds himself unable to describe her eyes (XXIII.23), though he eventually feels he is strong enough to bear the power of her smile without being deflected from his duty to God (XXIII (47-48); yet even here she must again admonish him to pay attention to Christ, not her face (XXIII.70-75). The pilgrim's inability to focus solely on God continues right up to the thirty-first canto (XXVII.88-102, XXVIII.12, XXX.14, XXXI.91-93).

That physical attraction is one of the endearing qualities of the pilgrim's humanness, but in order to ascend to that last and highest vision with Bernard, he will have to conquer it. Thus, the fact that she is eclipsed in the pilgrim's thankfulness for having attained grace is a source of fulfillment for her as his spiritual guide; he is beginning to divest himself of even the distractions involved with his attraction to her, which intimates his continuing ascent. When he perceives her smile (61-63), however, he finds his mind "divided . . . between two objects" (*in piu cose divise*) (63)—and this division implies that he has not yet completely purified himself, that at least one more spiritual hurdle must be leapt before his final ascent to see God in the face. Other tests will also come later, but no other dilemma persists with so much force through every stage of his ascent. His interaction with Beatrice in this canto ends on that note; having given thanks, the pilgrim is now prepared to receive the ecstatic vision that changes the entire tenor of this canto.

Descriptio: Representing the Unrepresentable

Having received grace, Dante is next presented with the "many lights" that become a crown of splendor with singing voices surrounding them. This crown is almost immediately compared to the ring around the moon—"Latona's daughter" (*la figlia di Latona*)—that occurs on nights when the air is saturated (67-68), a lovely image evocative of the ethereal and mysterious qualities of such nights. We are in the realm of heightened *vision*, yet Dante turns immediately to remind us that this vision is past and he has returned from heaven, breaking the illusion momentarily to point out that such "gems" (*gioie*) are "not to be taken from that kingdom" (*che non si posson trar del regno*) (72).

The implication is that the metaphors he has just utilized—lights, crowns, the ring about the moon—cannot communicate the essence of his experience, that language itself is "inadequate for rendering the vision in its fullness" (Mazzeo 38). This theme echoes throughout *Paradiso*, beginning with the opening disclaimer that when one descends from such visions one "forgets or cannot speak" because "our intellect sinks into an abyss so deep that memory fails to follow it" (I.6-9) and ending with the vision of light in which "force failed my high fantasy" (XXXIII.145).

This problem of representing the unrepresentable, of attempting to make language convey experiences that cannot be "taken from that kingdom," is the central technical problem of the third canticle. John Freccero long ago noted that the images of the *Paradiso* are a kind of "command performance" for Dante's sake, pointing to Beatrice's explanation that "such signs are suited to your mind, since from the senses only can it apprehend what then becomes fit for the intellect" (IV.40-42). Freccero goes on to claim that the entire canticle "can claim no more than a purely *ad hoc* reality" because "the structure . . . depends not upon a principle of mimesis, but rather upon metaphor: the creation of a totally new reality out of elements so disparate as to seem contradictory by any logic other than that of poetry" (222); he notes, for example, the peculiarity of stars in the sphere of the sun (226-27), and the use of multiple metaphors from a variety of categories to convey the force of a single visionary experience would seem to fit this description as well.

The problem of representation (and Dante's solution to it) has a theological underpinning. Bonaventure found in the sensory vestiges—"things in themselves" with

"weight, number and measure" (*Journey* 1.11)—the means for the beginner to ascend to an understanding of God; thus, in representing things beyond sensory limitations with sensory images, Dante gives the reader a means to comprehend something of the experience despite the fact that language cannot fully convey it. Mazzeo, reviewing the imagery of the entire canticle, notes that "the souls are visually rendered as lights, at first with a shadow of the human semblance visible, and later, after the brightness of the souls increases so that it hides their features, as pure lights" (150). Further, "by continually arranging and rearranging soul lights and changing light synonyms, Dante lends variety and concreteness to what might easily have been a rather monotonous and abstract landscape" (151). He has thus utilized metaphors to suggest the vision that transcends the canto's rhetorical opening and apostrophe while at the same time decentering the illusion he has created by stepping back from the narrative. That stepping back has another function besides alerting us to the limitations of language, however. After inscribing the paradox—presenting the vision that may not be brought back to this life—the poet admonishes the soul who doesn't *act* to find heaven that he might "wait for tidings of it from the mute" (*dal muto aspetti quindi le novelle*) (74-75), a sardonic warning to the complacent.

After this pause, Dante resumes the metaphoric display: the lights that became a crown compared to the ring around the moon have now become "ardent suns" (*ardenti soli*) who sing and wheel three times—the number of the trinity—about Beatrice and Dante, pausing like women dancers who stop to listen "until new notes invite to new dancing" (*fin che le nove note hanno ricolte*) (81). Dante has combined "visual and aural impressions" to "gradually build up a total complex image of this group of blessed souls"

(Foster 127) as a *spectacle* more impressive than any since the procession at the end of *Purgatorio*, the last rite of passage comparable to this. Thomas Aquinas, the leading light of this group of twelve intellectual luminaries, has only to speak in order to initiate the pilgrim into a broader understanding of the vision itself, whose import is contained in the identity of these ecstatic dancers and in the kinds of spiritual genius they represent.

Thomas's Greeting

Before introducing his fellow souls in the circle, Thomas opens his colloquy with Dante with an extended sentence that at once congratulates the pilgrim for having obtained the grace Beatrice had named earlier and prophesies that, having ascended, he will reascend "that stair" (*quella scala*) again (86), then agreeing to share what he knows in a sentence notable for its negative formulation to develop a positive compliment. Aquinas says that whoever would refuse to quench Dante's thirst for wisdom "would be no more free than water that does not flow toward the sea" (*in liberta non fora se non com' acqua ch'al mar no si cala*) (88-89), meaning that as one who *does* "flow"—moves in understanding—he will be glad to share what he knows. The metaphor does much to characterize Thomas himself as one whose understanding never stood still in life, but continuously reinvented his own spiritual role (and who by implication continues to do so in paradise). Beyond this, *flowing to the sea* is a metaphor for the spiritual journey utilized in texts as varied as the *Prajna Paramita Sutra* to Williams's *Paterson* or Walt Whitman's late lyric, "Old Salt Kossabone." Dante's own progress is also reified in the metaphor: attaining grace, understanding divine order and the trinity itself can only be had through a journey and self-interrogation such as the pilgrim has made

Once this elaborate opening is complete, Thomas identifies Dante's mental state to him: "You want to know what plants bloom in this garland" (Tu vuo' saper di quai piante s'infora questa ghirlanda) (91-92). Once again, the discourse metaphor for the circle of lights has changed: the lights became a crown, were compared to the ring around the moon, and later became "ardent suns" (76) who were compared to women dancing; now, as a garland they contemplate Beatrice—Sapienza herself, surrounded by the devotees to that wisdom and mercy she represents, both in herself as a figure and as one doing God's will in extending grace to one who has made the effort to divest himself of error.

At this point, Thomas begins his introductions of the dancing intellects in the circle, starting with himself. Thomas's self-introduction is both humble and pregnant with a sly bit of dantescan humor: he does not name himself except as a lamb in Dominic's flock, a form of the modesty formula Dante utilizes so often to denote courtesy and gracefulness in human interactions. At the same time, the reference to those on the right path *growing fat* is an example of Dante's humor—Thomas was reputedly quite corpulent. Once this brief self-introduction is complete, Thomas turns to introduce his companions, developing the specific character of the entire group. The presentation of such a group is one of Dante's most common devices for expanding the complexity and interrelationships of the parts of individual cantos, to intimate the ambience of a given spiritual state, or to display the varieties of souls characteristic of each place—and the circle of lights in the tenth canto serves all of these functions.

Dante's groups serve yet another purpose in that if we are to fully grasp the levels or thought represented as a foundation for either an entire canticle or for an individual canto, we must know the work or lives of those named. A few examples suffice: the crowd of classical poets, philosophers and those who led a life of virtuous action in *Inferno* II both indicate the limitations of reason unaided by grace and—especially in the cases of Ovid, Virgil and Aristotle—the "master of those who know"—inform that canticle in much the same way that the group here does, showing a variety of stances and elaborating a foundation for what follows. Such groups also work to inform an individual canto, as in the crowd of fallen souls from which Francesca and Paolo appear in *Inferno* V or in *Purgatorio* VII's crowd of negligent rulers .

There is much more rigor in the presentation of the group in *Paradiso* X than earlier, however: here the perfect circle of twelve--the number of the original disciples—resonates in many ways, often depending in the individual critic's assessment on his or her frame of reference. Dante develops tensions between the exposition of the trinity, the assertion of harmonious order and the pronouncement of grace that opened the canto with the harmony and levels of thought represented in the names of these figures, with a further tension between what each character did in life and how they are represented here.

Dancing Intellectuals

Modern commentary on the circle of twelve intellects varies from noting the structural chiasmus of the four solar cantos, which develops a rebuke of two fallen orders while at the same time affirming the roles of Francis and Dominic (Kirkpatrick 33), to focusing on the reconciliation of men who opposed each other in life (Aquinas and Siger)

and the view that Dante is presenting the diversity of thought representing the wisdom of grace (Gilson, Foster 135), but I suggest that Dante has created a much more complex artifact than these and other views have explored. I believe that how we conceive of the interrelationships of these souls and their contributions will determine our understanding of what they represent. One may with Freccero view them in relation to the circle of souls in canto twelve, finding the first group to represent "cherubic"—intellectual—wisdom, while the second presents the "seraphic" direct experience of God. This view develops from a comparison of the two spokesmen, Aquinas and Bonaventure (243), yet it oversimplifies the complexity of interrelationships in the two cantos and at times is just plain wrong. The weakness of the scheme may be noted in the fact that Dionysius and Richard of St. Victor, both important "seraphic" thinkers found in the tenth canto, do not fit into the cherubic category.

Further, Freccero and others have all missed the fact that cantos ten and twelve develop a series of binary relationships, focusing on several oppositions besides the noted relationship of Aquinas and Bonaventure. For example, besides the two theological giants, each canto contains one biblical character (Solomon; Nathan), one character publicly criticized by Aquinas and Bonaventure (Siger; Joachim of Fiore), one of the two major mystical theologians from the abbey of St. Victor (Richard; Hugh), and one public figure punished for honesty (Boethius; Chrysostom). One might conclude from such representations that in the pairing of eight of the twenty-four singers Dante was concerned to show how the lights of God may reflect each other and that the categories represented (ancient, mystical, public, scholastic, national, etc.) reflect the variety of activities asso-

ciated with the intellect imbued with divine grace. Further, the various perceptions of order and harmony (political, educational, visionary, etc.) are all affirmed both for their own contribution to understanding and for their interrelationship in a visionary whole—the circle itself.

The relationship of the two cantos or the representation of each canto individually might also be interrogated on the basis of the eras represented. In the tenth canto, six figures are from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while five are from the first¹ through sixth, with one ancient figure; the twelfth canto, on the other hand, features eight figures from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, one from the ninth, two from the fourth, and one ancient figure (see Appendix A). With this perspective, one might trace the growth of theological and educational thought in the church, noting how, for example, the debates over the trinity, celestial and ecclesiastical order and grace present an evolution in understanding.

One might further note how Dante has roughly grouped contemporaries and interrogate each canto in terms of these groups. For example, in canto ten, Aquinas is positioned with Albert on his right, with Siger and Richard of St. Victor on his left; the four of them represent four strands of the theological debate of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Gratian and Peter Lombard form a nearby pair, both of them twelfth century thinkers, both compilers—the first a great *Magister* who reconciled the contradictions in canon law and delineated the limits of canon and secular law, theoretically establishing harmony in ecclesia and polis, while the second compiled *The Sentences*, the standard theological textbook. Solomon follows Lombard, a solitary figure who represents wis-

dom and political involvement in spiritual issues, resonating both with the others of his circle and as a mirror of Nathan in the twelfth canto. Dionysius, Orosius, Boethius and Isidore are grouped as early figures whose concerns mirror and prefigure those of the later characters. Dionysius and Boethius contribute to the trinitarian debate whose outcome is signalled in all four of the later figures; Isidore orders earthly knowledge in a Christian framework, while Bede and Orosius display the difficulty of imitating divine order in earthly affairs.

In some ways, the two groups of the tenth canto reflect the differing preoccupations of the two ages: Orosius' defenses of the faith, his and Bede's concern with history, Boethius's martyrdom, and Isidore's encyclopedic writings all display concerns somewhat different from the legal ordering of Gratian or the compilations of Lombard, and certainly from Albert's and Aquinas's attempts to reconcile Christian theology with Aristotelian thought or Siger's Averroist belief in the eternity of the world and denial of individual salvation. Such a contemplation of these figures, then, would give one pause to consider how the intellectual concerns of the church's great masters presents an evolution of understanding—a *movement*, as noted in Aquinas's opening remarks—connected to differing historical conditions and the refining of scholastic thinking through centuries of review, presenting that evolution in light of Solomon, who as the canto's touchstone presents a wisdom that contains them all such that "no other ever rose with so much vision" (a veder tanto non surse il secondo) (114).

Canto twelve presents a somewhat different group of contemporary interrelationships; it is more heavily weighted with later figures, many of whom are more obscure to

the modern reader, and it presents the only author representative of the Eastern church—Chrysostom. The eight figures from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries present a variety of concerns. Bonaventure and Hugh of St. Victor were among the leading "seraphic" thinkers of their time, while Illuminati da Rieti and Augustine of Assisi are nearly anonymous early followers of Francis. Joachim of Fiore stands as a "true contemplative . . . indifferent to the things of the earth" (Jordan, quoted in Cayre II.696), his ideas criticized by Bonaventure in much the same way as Siger was rebuked by Thomas. The other near contemporaries of this group present other kinds of concerns: Peter of Spain is the only pope represented and was famous for his treatise on logic, which with rhetoric and *grammatica* made up the trivium, or foundation for the education necessary to ascend through the quadrivium and philosophical study to an understanding of *sacra scriptura*. Peter Book-Devourer was important primarily for his *Historia scholastica*, a history of the ancient world relying heavily on the Bible. Anselm, now most famous for his ontological argument for the existence of God, mirrors Thomas's concern that reason may demonstrate God's existence; he saw the Trinity reflected in the rational mind (Reese 17) and through his *Cur Deus homo?* contributed to doctrinal understanding of the necessity of Christ's incarnation (Mandelbaum, n.XII. 136, page 356).

The earlier figures of the twelfth canto present an even wider variation than those of the tenth. Nathan is the only true prophet in both groups, and resonates as the one who named Solomon for accession to David's throne, thus connecting spiritual to worldly authority. Chrysostom, like Boethius, endured worldly suffering because of his honesty, while Aelius Donatus, famous for his *Ars grammatica*, represents the learning of gram-

matical usage (*ratio scribendi et loquendi*) and interpretation (*scientia interpretandi*) found, like the logic text written by Peter of Spain, in the trivium (Irvine 1). Finally, Rabanus Maurus, the only light from the ninth century, stands as a kind of median figure representing many writings on "biblical exegesis and theology" (Mandelbaum, n. XII. 139, page 357).

Of the twelve seen here, at least four (Peter of Spain, Peter Book-Devourer, Anselm and Donatus) may be said to represent cherubic rather than seraphic wisdom; like Boethius, Chrysostom represents a commitment to truth in the face of political oppression, and two others are notable mainly as disciples (Illuminati and Augustine). Further, many of this group appear to resonate differently than those of the tenth canto; there, one may historically trace the evolution of specific theological doctrines through the authors represented, whereas many of the authors in the twelfth resonate as much or more with those of the tenth canto as they do with each other.

Though there is not space here to examine them, there are several other methods by which to interrogate the figures of the tenth canto and those of its mirror in the twelfth. One such method would note the distribution of abbots and holders of church office (four in canto ten, six in canto twelve), teachers (four in canto ten, two in canto twelve), or statesmen and political figures (two in canto ten, none in twelve), developing an understanding of how the represented careers inform the intellectual bases of the two cantos (see appendix B). One might also note the distribution of orders (three Augustinians, four Benedictines / Cistercians, three Franciscans, two Dominicans; see appendix C), connecting this to their interrelation in the earthly realm and how that resonates with their

harmony here. All of these distinctions and groupings are important ways to dig out the mystery represented in the turning circle, yet they all neglect the major premise established early in this essay: that knowledge of their work individually as well as in relation to each other is essential if we are to progress further in Paradise. Accordingly, I shall next examine the intellectual and spiritual contributions of each of the twelve, connecting each to the themes of the trinity, grace, and harmonious order as necessary, while at the same time delimiting the relationship of each individual to his contemporaries and the relation of each group to the other groups in the circle. Those who appear in binary opposition to souls in Canto 12 will receive attention in terms of those relationships as well.

Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas has already spoken several times in this paper: once on the Trinity, once in his proof of God's existence, argued from the design—the order and harmony—in the hierarchies of the created world, and once on grace, quoting Dionysius to show that none can know the three-in-one by natural reason alone. As an epistemologist, Thomas follows Dionysius and others in his grappling with the ways in which language fails when speaking of universals and, by extension, God himself. Thomas is thus present as one of the foundations throughout the canto; as a character in the solar circle, he is to some extent the product of all the minds accompanying him, whether it be his adaptation of the legal and scholarly dispute formulas used by Gratian and Albertus Magnus, his completion of the reconciliation of faith and Aristotelian thought begun by Albert, and the use of others as authorities in his arguments. Further, the circle presents him as its premier intellectual theorist in contrast to Solomon, who as a figure represents the working out of

that intelligence in the practical administration of the kingdom on earth; this connection is so important that Thomas, after giving Solomon a full six lines in his description of the circle, also discourses on Solomon's wisdom at greater length in Canto XIII.

Aquinas also contrasts sharply with Bonaventure, his seraphic opposite in Canto XII, and yet each of the two presents an elaborate compliment to his opposite in the descriptions of the founders of their orders, at the same time rebuking one's own order for its faults. In these two speeches, Dante as author is questioning the two orders themselves regarding their current spiritual condition—a comment that itself returns to the question of how God's order and harmony should be worked out in this world: Solomon, Francis, and Dominic thus appear here as measures of worldly activity in accordance with faith, a measure that will reverberate in Cacciaguida's discussions in the sphere of Mars and in the various invectives against evil princes—both secular kings and those of the church. In the reading that follows, then, I shall concentrate on three aspects of Aquinas's presence in the poem: his relations to Solomon and Bonaventure with regard to virtuous activity in the world, his reliance on other figures in his circle as authorities—and consequently his intercircular relationships with them, and his understanding of the epistemology of the divine.

As characters, Thomas Aquinas and Solomon define the characteristics of all those contained in the circle of dancing intellects. All twelve are primarily concerned with two premises basic to obtaining grace and knowing the trinity and the harmonious ordering of the cosmos: the progress of the soul in goodness until each individual attains some understanding of our place in the divine scheme and consequently in the world

where we find ourselves, and the problem of imitating that order and harmony in the political and social structures humans develop in the world. Thomas prizes Solomon as one whose wisdom *breathes* (*spira*) so much love that "all the world below hungers for tidings of it" (*tutto 'l mondo la giu ne gola di saper novella*); Solomon thus repeats the motif of the procession of the Holy Spirit as breath and contrasts the hunger below with the spiritual fare Dante has just served us as readers; the love Dante refers to is further reified in Solomon's *Song of Songs*, the Christian interpretation of which conventionally saw the two lovers as Christ and his bride, the church itself.

Yet Solomon represents much more than authorial authority for Aquinas; in Canto XIII, after contrasting the fall of man with the redemption represented by the crucifixion of Jesus, Thomas gives voice to Dante's silent questioning of his claim that no one ever vied with Solomon for wisdom. The great Dominican then answers, first reviewing the way God's love enters the world, descending through the celestial hierarchy to the limited world where "nature always works defectively" (*la natura la da sempre scema*) (XI.76).

In this context, Aquinas points out that

it was as a king that he [Solomon] had asked
for wisdom that would serve his royal task—
and not to know the number of the angels
on high. (XIII. 95-98)

[qu'el fu re, che chiese senno
accio che re sufficiente fosse;
non per sapere il numero in che enno
li motor di qua su.]

Solomon's wisdom is thus the prudence of not reaching beyond what one needs, of ordering one's kingdom in imitation of divine order and not being trapped or limited by the

niceties of intellectual debate; application of that understanding is all. Thus Aquinas claims that what one *does* with one's spiritual gifts is the ultimate point of knowing, while simultaneously showing that wisdom is knowledge and love connected to that action. Solomon is the exemplar for kings and secular princes as well; Francis and Dominic, reified in Thomas's and Bonaventure's narratives, present exemplars for the church as it attempts to awaken the world to grace.

The famous structural chiasmus involving Thomas and Bonaventure has its roots in disagreements among the faculty at the University of Paris, as well as in the conduct of friars, a concern to which Gratian and others had also addressed themselves. On the Dominican side, both Albert and Thomas were concerned to defend a Christianized reinterpretation of Aristotle against both the Averroists³, represented by Siger of Brabant and the secular faculty of the University of Paris, and the Augustinians and Franciscan spiritualists of the theological faculty. Their champion, St. Bonaventure, had inveighed against Siger's Averroism, but also against becoming "too involved in the human sciences, for if he strays too far from Scripture, he may not return, becoming vain and supercilious by seeking to know and not to love" (Strayer 2.318). Augustinians tended to discount Aristotle altogether (Aquinas vi), and Thomas eventually returned to Paris from Cologne to combat these and the Averroist views, defending his combination of Aristotelian materialism with inspired grace against more secularized philosophical speculations and the Augustinian insistence on the absolute primacy of inspired faith against all philosophy.

Dante's complementary placing of Aquinas and Bonaventure thus harmonizes two apparently opposing approaches to doctrine, presenting the seraphic Francis as the model

to measure the scholastic order of preachers, while challenging the inspired Franciscans with Dominic's spiritual balance and castigating them for either too much stringency or laxness in practice (XII.126). The hagiographs of the founders of their orders also serve as models of the fearless and measured lives that pilgrims, readers and members of orders alike may take as models of proper spiritual princes. Further, as princes Francis and Dominic contrast with, among others, Pope John XXII (XVIII.115-36), Boniface VIII and Clement V (XXX. 129-148), who abused their spiritual power.

A second aspect of Thomas's appearance here is his intertextual relationship with his companions in the circle; if he is the great light of his circle, the others present us with models of his intellectual lineage and with the long history of the church's attempts to clarify, order, and defend its belief systems. While all twelve reflect the life of virtue and the many ways of locating divine order and harmony, many of them are also direct sources for the development of Thomas's thought. Dionysius, for example, figures in Thomas's discussions of the celestial hierarchy (I.q.108 art. 1-8) and the unity and incomprehensibility of God (I.q.11 art.2); Aquinas also cites the Areopagite (*Div. Nom.* 4) to show that in the original state, man's love is directed to God (II.I. q.109. art.3) and that "God turns all to himself" via the dispensation of grace (II.I.q.109 art. 6). Quite predictably, Boethius is central to his discussion on providence (I.q.22 art.2), especially in his defense of the fact of divine providence not imposing necessity on the free will of human choices (I.q.22 art. 4; *Cons.* 4.6). The great Roman philosopher also figures in Thomas's discussion of the first principles of natural law—that "certain axioms or propositions are universally self-evident to all" (*De Hebdom.*; II.I.q.94 art.2).

Aquinas relies much more heavily on Isidore of Seville and Gratian as authorities for his discussions of natural law, however. For example, he cites Isidore (*Etym.* V.4) to prove that "natural law is common to all" and Gratian (*Decretals*, Dist. 1) to show that "whatever belongs to the natural law is fully contained" in the Law and the gospels (II.I. q.94 art. 4); both figure, too, in his proof that natural law is not subject to change or revision in its basic principles (*Etym.* V.4; Dist. 5). Later, Thomas defends Isidore's description of "the quality of positive law" and his division of human law—which is derived from natural law—into the law of nations and civil law (II.I.q.95 art.3). Both Isidore and Albertus Magnus are sources for Thomas's belief that the cosmos is rationally comprehensible; both wrote extensively not only on the human relationship to God, on the trinity, free will, angels and grace, but also on the order of creation, giving Aquinas a sound underpinning for his own spiritual and mental development.

Albert serves yet another purpose in Aquinas's development. As his teacher and mentor, Albert instructed Thomas in theology and introduced him to the major theological problem of the era: how to integrate the newly recovered work of Aristotle into the belief systems of the church without unsettling its various intellectual and political citadels or radically revising orthodox doctrine. Albert had become "the champion of Aristotle" (Aquinas v), and took Thomas with him when he established a new Dominican house in Cologne in 1248. When Thomas returned to Paris in 1252 to begin teaching theology, he used Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*, the standard theological textbook of the day, as his text; thus, Albert's and Peter Lombard's presence in the circle of dancing intellects functions in one way to display Thomas's own intellectual development as a teacher. As

sources of meditation on the philosophical issues of the day, both provided him with a sound foundation upon which to base his own discourse.

In the course of developing his own thought, Thomas also developed a complete epistemology in which, like Dionysius and Dante, he confronts the problem of the inability of language to express that which is beyond expression. He begins with the problem of universals—language that may be predicated of many and the problem of the extent to which that shared quality exists independent of the individual, concluding that nature, for example, does not "exist apart from individuals"; at the same time, he disputes the nominalist idea that "there is no basis in individuals for the formation" of universals (Strayer 1.358). Later, he argues that there are three ways in which things may share a name: the univocal, or predicates shared by several individuals (for example, that two people are both persons), the equivocal, or words that have two or more radically distinct meanings (such as *liber*, which means "both 'book' and 'free'"; Strayer 1.360). A third predicate may be found in analogy, in which the predicated term is "partly the same and partly different" and in which "one account takes precedence over the others, is prior to them, is the primary analogate" (1.360).

From this, Thomas develops an Aristotelian theory of concept formation in which "the agent intellect . . . abstracts a form from sense data, and it is this form that actuates the passive intellect and permits the activity of knowing" to occur (1.361). The connection of *knowing* to the senses gives Aquinas the basis for his answer to why we cannot know God, though we may observe the divine in part through the order and harmony of knowledge derived from the senses. As with Dionysius, Thomas sees God's essence as

being above the material, thus making him "not an appropriate object of human cognition" (1.362); to speak of him at all, we must then fashion a language built on analogy "to express, however inadequately, what God is" (1.362). That language—and the understanding it embodies—is the language of the *Paradiso* itself, stretching to create a locus for the wisdom beyond reason, in Canto X giving divine harmony and order an exemplary focal point in the interrelationships of the twelve intellectual and spiritual companions led by Aquinas himself.

Albertus Magnus

Albertus Magnus, Gratian and Peter Lombard fill the quadrant to Thomas's right, taking the space between Aquinas and Solomon. Lombard's *Sententiarum libri quatuor* was the standard theological textbook of the time, required lecture material for bachelors as part of their preparation for mastery in theology; Albert and Thomas both lectured and wrote commentaries on Peter's *Sentences*. Little is known of Gratian except that this nearly anonymous monk prepared the first generally accepted collection of canon law. Albert of course was Aquinas's "frate e maestro"—brother and teacher (X.98). These three, then, form the "right-handed" wisdom that leads to Thomas's *Summa* just as Siger of Brabant and Richard of St. Victor influence him from the left, these latter two presenting secular and spiritualist divergences from Thomas's center.

Dante spends little time in his description of Albert, noting only that he was Thomas's Dominican brother and teacher, yet at least one commentator has found greater connections between Albert and Dante:

Meno rigoroso e coerente del suo grande discepolo Tommaso, Alberto di

Colonia possiede una piu ampia larghezza di vedute e uno spirito di tolleranza e di conciliazione appena concepibile in un teologo: e in questo nessuno gli somiglia piu di Dante. (Nardi 63-64)

[Less rigorous and coherent than his great disciple Thomas, Albert of Cologne possessed a more ample largess of vision and a spirit of tolerance⁴ and of conciliation scarcely conceivable in a theologian: and in that none resembled him more than Dante.]

Nardi goes on to point out that Dante cited four of Albert's works in *Il Convivio*; he is concerned to show how Dante's opinions of various philosophers' discussions on the nature of the soul agrees with and perhaps derives from Albert's. Perhaps more important, however, is the connection between Albert and Thomas—and how that intersects with the Dantescan vision of *Paradiso X*.

As noted earlier, Albert was the first to fully grasp the need to address the relationship between the newly recovered works of Aristotle (and the Averroist challenge that derived from it) and Christian doctrine. As a theologian, he is neither distinctive nor original, though he does refute current objections to doctrine. For example, he restates the orthodox doctrine of the trinity—"quod tres personae coeternae sibi sunt et coequal-
es" [that the three persons are themselves coeternal and coequal] (*Summa* Tr. 11. q.47 cap.1). He next presents the objections that "in divinis null est quantitas, sed omnimoda simplicitas; ergo in divinis nulla est aequalitas" [that if in God there is no quantity but only simplicity, in God there can be no equality] and the seeming contradiction that if Christ is part of the trinity, "unus non est aequalis omnibus tribus" [one can't be equal to three].

Albert sidesteps the problem by claiming that one cannot understand the three-in-one in terms of parts of a whole, but that God is "tota et simplex in singulis et tota et simplex in omnibus simul" [complete and simple in the the singular, and complete and simple in all (three) simultaneously].

This assertion of one of the central mysteries of faith is in keeping with Albert's views of Aristotelian materialism, for while the saint is touted for his paraphrases attempting to reconcile the Philosopher with Augustinian theology, his insistence that philosophy could not explain or reach the divine wisdom beyond reason reformulates the Boethian argument on God's foreknowing in a way that gives a place to rational and empirical inquiry while delineating its limitations: "theology remained Albert's principal academic interest. Sciences of nature were seen from his perspective as so many examinations of the effects wrought in and with space and time by what metaphysicians call the 'First Cause' and what theologians call God" (Synan 12). Copleston notes that in Albert's view the philosopher is not to be scorned (as he often was among orthodox theologians, particularly those programmatic Augustinians and Franciscan spiritualists threatened by the new learning), but "works under the general light of reason given to all men, by which light he sees the first principles, while the theologian works by the supernatural light of faith" (295). This view is essentially the middle way that Thomas would later steer between the secular philosophers and the spiritualists in the controversies of their time.

Albert also paved the way for Thomas's later arguments with the Averroists. In *Libellus de unitate intellectus contra Averroem*, Thomas's master presents the thirty argu-

ments used by Averroists to show that the individuality of souls cannot be demonstrated, then develops thirty-six arguments for the individuality of the soul (and for the doctrine of personal immortality), later answering their arguments with the claim that "the rational soul is the form of man, so that it must be multiplied in individual men"; further, "what is multiplied numerically must also be multiplied substantially" and if "the rational soul is immortal, it follows that the multiplicity of rational souls survive death" (Copleston 299).

Finally, just as Albert's charting of the middle way accepted philosophy without bowing to it in theological matters, so too he incorporated spiritualist and mystical tenets in his theology without bowing to anti-Aristotelian claims. Albert is dependent on Pseudo-Dionysius for his understanding that "God transcends all our concepts and all the names we predicate of him" (Copleston 297), while also separating knowledge derived from reason from that obtained by grace. The saint believes that reasoning derived from natural cognition is necessary to persuade the unfaithful, confuting Richard of St. Victor's claim that reliance on reason alone is contrary to faith. At the same time, "in omni cognitione dei necessarium sit medium per gratiam" [all knowledge of God is necessarily mediated through grace] (*Summa* tr.3 q.31 cap. 2). Further, because Albert accepted the relationship of knowledge derived from the created world to that derived from grace, he not only "directly opened the way for St. Thomas" to develop a more thoroughly cohesive philosophical and theological system (Cayre II. 491), but also presents a secondary echo of the themes of created order and harmony explored in *Paradiso X*.

Gratian

Dante's citation of Gratian as "one who served one and the other court of law so well that his work pleases Paradise" (che l'uno e l'altro foro aiuto si che piace in paradiso) (X. 104-05) is traditionally understood as referring to the role of the *Corcordia discordantium canonum* in settling disputes between regnum and sacerdotium. The thesis is complicated in three ways: first, one must clarify the relationship of *ius* to that divine order and grace embodied in the sphere of the sun; secondly, one must trace the lineage of ecclesiastical law to show the enormity of the task Gratian faced, and thirdly, one must establish the political context in which Gratian worked in order to understand the applications and remedies his work proposed. Gratian also resonates with others in the circle of *Paradise X*—as source for Aquinas's position on natural law, while working from Isidore of Seville and the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*, among others; more indirectly, Gratian's work reflects one aspect of Solomon's spiritual activity of ordering the political world, as well as Pseudo-Dionysius's ordering of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, Dionysius describes how the earliest leaders of the Church attempted to imitate the order that flows from the Trinity, understanding that "the being of goodness, the one cause of everything . . . bestows being and well-being on everything" (I.373 C-D, page 198); attempting to imitate that harmony, early Church leaders "made human what was divine" and "brought the transcendent down to our level" (I.376 D, page 199). In practical terms, disputes within the Church were handled by appeals to the apostolic writings and through "deliberative or quasilegislatve or judicial bodies such as the Council of Jerusalem" (Strayer VII.396). Eventually, these decisions

were passed on as collections of early canon law varying from the first or second century *Doctrina duodecim apostolorum*, or *Didache*, to the *Codex canonum ecclesiae Africanae* (419), the Gallic *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua* (c. 470-75), the Spanish *Collectio Isidoriana* and St. Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, as well as later collections derived from these and others (Strayer VII.400). The most important of the later collections included the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*, a ninth century collection largely made up of forged decretals which nevertheless influenced every major collection after it (Strayer VII.405), the *Collection in 74 Titles* (c. 1067-1085), and Anselm of Lucca's *Collectio canonum* (c. 1083) (Strayer VII.409).

These and numerous other collections were in use at the time of Gratian, whose task was to "resolve into harmony all the contradictions and inconsistencies of . . . nearly 4000 patristic texts, conciliar decrees, and papal pronouncements" to provide a single standard for church law (Cross 589). Gratian was also beset by two further problems: defining the precise limits and relationship of ecclesiastical to secular law, a problem that found its center in the Investiture Contest, and reconciling power disputes between the reform party and the Gregorian old guard within the Church. Challenging the old guard, the reform party had insisted that "political independence [from secular rulers was] . . . a necessary precondition for moral reform" within the Church (Chodorow 27); this was complicated by the fact that the reform party itself was split by Pierleoni and Frangipani factions. The disagreements were also over turf: "disputes between canons regular and monks who sometimes replaced them, and between bishops and canons regular, who in establishing new parishes threatened the authority of the bishops" (Chodorow 44).

The conflict between regnum and sacerdotium came to a head with the Investiture Contest; Pope Gregory VII attempted to establish control over the investiture of clergy by removing "control of patronage within the church as a customary right" of lay rulers (Morris 202). Gregory's idea was to ensure that clerical candidates would be selected on the basis of their worthiness rather than on the whims of secular rulers, who often chose their favorites as a way of minimizing the church's interference in their affairs, but the effect of his decision was that in 1076 the Milanese bishops withdrew their obedience to him. Gregory retaliated by excommunicating Henry IV; by 1080 "Gregory recognized Rudolph of Suabia . . . as anti-king" while Henry appointed Wilbert of Ravenna as Clement III. The issue appeared to be resolved in the 1122 Concordat at Worms, where the emperor renounced the right to invest bishops while retaining other imperial rights over the German church (Morris 203). A year later, the reading of the Concordat of Worms at the First Lateran Council angered the Pierleoni faction of reformers within the Church, who disapproved of the compromise with the emperor; this led to the schism of 1130, in which the older cardinals backed Anaclet II, while a younger faction led by Haimeric elected Innocent (Chodorow 34). Haimeric's faction eventually won this contest, largely because he had allied himself with Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter the Venerable and "the burgeoning orders of canons regular" (37). With both Anaclet and the Pierleoni factions eliminated, the Church moved toward reconciliation with secular princes, a gradual dissociation with the Norman king (who had backed the papacy against the German emperor) and "emphasis on the moral regeneration of the clergy" (41). This last involved ac-

tively uprooting heresy and settling the power disputes between monks, canons regular, and bishops (43-44).

This, then, is the context in which Gratian, a nearly anonymous professor and monk from Bologna, attempted to reconcile the tangled canons of the church. His *Concordia discordantium canonum*, also known as the *Decretum*, set the standard which allowed churchmen to know the limits of their power, both with regard to their relationships with each other and with the regnum. The book was written "after 1139, the date of the second Lateran Council, whose acts are quoted [and] before 1151, the date of Lombard's *Sentences*, which make use of the Decree" (Cayre 468.n.7), and quickly found general acceptance across Europe.

Gratian's method of composition is to cite authorities and present a solution (*dicta Gratiani*) to each problem in church order; the book is divided into two parts, the first of which states the general principles of the law (I-XX) and law regarding the clergy (XXI-CI). The second part has three sections: the seven distinctions on penance, five distinctions on church rites, and thirty-six "causes"—questions dealing with judgment (Cayre II.468). Of all of these, the tenth through twelfth distinctions of Book One, the "Treatise on Laws," show most clearly the premise of Dante's praise for Gratian. In those decretals, "Gratian confronts the potential for conflict between ecclesiastical and secular law," insisting that ecclesiastical precedes secular law while maintaining that "secular authorities are to be obeyed within their own sphere" (Christiansen xxiii).

More specifically, Distinction 10 establishes that imperial ordinances are not to be followed in any ecclesiastical dispute (C.1.1) and ecclesiastical laws may not be abro-

gated by an imperial judgment (C.1.2). In C.1.3, Gratian qualifies the above, asserting that imperial ordinances should not be rejected if "they may not be applied to the prejudice of evangelical, apostolic, or canonical decrees" (Gratian 33). C.2 reiterates that the emperor cannot do anything opposed to "evangelical, prophetic, or apostolic norms" (Gratian 34); C. 3., C.4., C.5, and C.6 further clarify the precedence of ecclesiastical over secular law, and C.7 explains that whenever secular law is not opposed to ecclesiastical law, it is to be followed. C.8 points out that "Kings need pontiffs in eternal matters, and pontiffs need kings in temporal ones" (Gratian 35), while C.9-13 uphold the proper laws of Kings. These general principles are among those that guide the rest of the *Decretals* and illustrate how Gratian served "one and the other court of law," delineating the limits of power between regnum and sacerdotium as a framework for future disputes. Of course, as with all laws, much would in the future depend on the compliance of popes and kings and the ways in which the canons would be interpreted.

Peter Lombard

Charles Singleton notes that Dante's praise for Peter Lombard as one who "like the poor widow, offered his treasure to the Holy Church" (che con la poverella offerse a Sante Chiesa suo tesoro) (X.107-08) refers to the opening sentence of the preface to the *Sententiarum libri quatuor*, where Peter offers his book, like the widow's mites of Luke 21: 2, to increase the treasury of the church (Singleton 187). Dante's phrase thus echoes Lombard's own trope of humilitas in the reference to the widow's mites. There, after Jesus is questioned by the Pharisees and Sadducees, he warns them against the scribes and tells the story of the mites, in which a widow giving two mites to the treasury gives

more than the rich, whose gifts seem opulent by comparison, because "out of her poverty [she] put in all the livelihood she had" (Luke 21: 4).

The *Sentences* was written within twenty years of Gratian's *Decretum*, and like Gratian's work, the book was quickly adopted as a standard text; yet like Aquinas's later *Summa*, The *Sentences* was challenged, first by Walter of St. Victor, on the grounds of its so-called "Abelardian Christological Nihilianism"—the doctrine that Christ viewed as human is nothing. Later, adherents to the beliefs of Joachim di Fiore made "efforts . . . to have the work censured at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, with the result that Joachim's doctrine was rejected and the 'Sentences' pronounced orthodox" (Cross 1073). After the *Sentences* passed these trials, it became the standard theological textbook of the age, the subject of lecture for baccalaureates such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas during their pursuit of the mastery of theology at the University of Paris; both Albert and Thomas, as well as countless others, also wrote commentaries on Lombard's work.

Despite this fact, Peter Lombard's work is not "profoundly original" (Strayer 193) and its virtue is mainly in its "lucid arrangement, its comprehensiveness, and its absence of individuality," yet the *Sentences* "shaped the minds of some of the greatest theologians of the Church" (Cayre II.459). The work is arranged in four books, each of which is subdivided, like Gratian, into distinctions. In Book One, distinctions I-XXXIV discuss the nature of the Trinity and the persons, while distinctions XXXV-XLVIII delve into providence, foreknowledge, omnipotence, God's will and other philosophical arguments associated with the doctrine of the Trinity. Book Two discusses the creation, the belief that angels and humans are rational creatures, angels, the work of the seven days—including

the nature of man, the creation of woman and the status of humans before the fall (dist. I-XX), afterwards exploring the ramifications of the fall of man, grace and free will, virtues and heresies, how original sin devolves on later generations, and the nature of sin (dist. XXI-LIV). Book Three is also divided into two parts: Distinctions I-XXII explain the incarnation of Christ and its relation to the Trinity, the problem of Christ's human and divine nature (which so incited Walter of St. Victor) and other christological questions, while distinctions XXIV-XL discourse on faith, hope, and charity and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Finally, Book Four explains the sacraments (dist. I-XLII) and the last judgment (XLIII-L).

This pattern of presentation—beginning with the Trinity and the angels before discussing human activities and such remedies as grace or faith, hope, and charity—is fairly standard, as in Isidore's seventh book of the *Etymologiae*, which however is neither as systematic nor as thorough as Lombard's. In Dante's time, Bonaventure follows *The Sentences* exactly in *The Breviloquium*, introducing the tenets of Christian belief in precisely the same order, though in seven, rather than four subdivisions: Trinity (I), Creation (II), Sin (III), the Incarnation (IV), Grace (V), the Sacraments (VI) and the Last Judgment (VII). Peter's method, after subdividing each of his major topics into capitula, is to further subdivide each capitulum into short paragraphs or sentences, each of which demands more more than a casual reading; the book is thus a series of meditations. He generally begins each discussion in a manner similar to Gratian, first citing authorities and then developing dialectical arguments to support his orthodox understanding of doctrine. While Lombard's aim is to be "moderate . . . traditional and orthodox" (de Ghel-

linck, quoted in Cayre II.458), the *Sentences* is the first work to set the number of sacraments at seven (Cayre II.459; Cross 1073), distinguishing them from "mere symbols" (Cayre II.459) and clarifying the conception of each sacrament "by asserting the efficacy and causality of the sign" it presents (Cross 1073). The book is also distinguished by its "reticence on the question of the relation of faith and reason" (de Ghellinck, quoted in Cayre II. 458), a task that would be left to Albert and Thomas later.

On matters related to *Paradiso* X, Peter is entirely orthodox. On the procession of the Trinity, he presents the Augustinian concept of unity while accepting the filioque interpretation of the procession (I dis.iii. cap 4). On free will and grace, Peter makes a distinction reminiscent of Boethius's argument that we possess free will to the extent that we are freed from the distractions of the material world (*Cons.* 5.2); Lombard claims that we are not truly free if we choose poorly, but that good choices are a result of grace: *corrupta est ergo libertas arbitrii per peccatum* [the freedom of judgment or will is corrupt through sin] (II dist. XXV cap. vii. 2), and while the will is free to choose what is evil, it is not free to find the good "*sine gratia*" [without grace] (II dist. XXV cap. viii). In cap. ix.1, Peter makes perhaps his most interesting distinction—that the giving of grace is beyond our choice and that we cannot attain the perfect good without it. One must live properly to find grace, but that grace is not something one may choose; rather, it is a gift earned and bestowed beyond rational explanation.

Regarding the divine order and harmony reflected in the world, Lombard sees, like Bonaventure after him (see *Journey* 2.11), that "*in creaturis praelucet vestigium*

Trinitatis" [vestiges of the Trinity shine in the created world] (I.dist. iii, cap. 1.7). Quoting Augustine (*De Trinitate* X. C.11. 17), the text of the *Sentences* sees the trinity reflected in the memory, intelligence and love found in the human soul (I. dist. iii. cap. 2.2). While these distinctions support the idea that divine order is reflected in God's creation and in the human soul itself, it should be noted that nowhere does Peter advance beyond the notion of "vestiges" to approach the Aristotelian integration that is so much the concern of Albert and Thomas, though it may be said that such an identification of divine order and harmony with the created world provided the two Dominicans with a foundation for their integration of Aristotelian materialism with neoplatonic and Augustinian Christian doctrine. As Dante has noted, the gift is a humble one—not pretending to be original, but rather presenting meditations that provide the foundations of the Thomist lineage seen from its righthand perspective; we must investigate the lefthand interests, represented by Siger of Brabant and Richard of St. Victor, before proceeding through the earlier sages of the circle to find our way at last to Solomon.

Siger of Brabant

Dante devotes six lines to Siger of Brabant, a philosopher who has been variously characterized as a "secular Aristotelian" (Hyman 492) and a Latin Averroist (Gilson 259), placing him to Thomas's left in the circle. As a member of the secular faculty at the University of Paris, Siger's belief in the eternity of the world, in monopsychism (the unity of the intellect and the consequent denial of individual salvation), and his apparent adherence to the "doctrine of double truth"—that the truths of natural reason can conflict with the truths of faith—led to the famous Condemnations of 1270 and 1277, the latter of

which threatened to excommunicate those who had taught or listened to these ideas if they did not admit their guilt "within seven days; in addition to which we shall proceed against them by inflicting such other penalties as the law requires according to the nature of the offense" (Hyman 584). Eventually, Siger was summoned before the grand inquisitor of France, Simon du Val, but fled to Rome where he "was acquitted of heresy by Pope Nicholas III" (Hyman 492). Siger was also attacked for his heterodox philosophies, first by Albertus Magnus in his *Libellus de unitate intellectus contra Averroem*, and later by Bonaventure and Thomas himself. Why, then, one asks, does Dante place him in paradise, and even more puzzlingly, next to Thomas Aquinas?

Modern scholars have proposed four solutions to this dilemma. Mandonnet believes that Dante did not know Siger's teachings and thus naively placed him with Thomas. Van Steenberghen holds that despite the condemnations and Thomas's defense against his beliefs, Siger "inclined towards Thomas's teachings" (Hyman 492), a conclusion that necessitates showing the similarities in their thought while explaining away the doctrine of double truth. Gilson claims that Siger symbolizes "not the substance of Averroism, but the . . . mutual independence of philosophy and theology" (275) and thus that the harmony Dante presents is "*not* of doctrinal agreement, but of . . . the various ways in which mankind may participate in one divine wisdom" (Foster 135; see also Freccero 312, n.24). Finally, Nardi contends that Dante accepted many Averroist beliefs—that Siger represents that tenet of Dante's belief system that may question certain orthodox assumptions (Copleston 200, Hyman 492).

The weakness of Mandonnet's position is apparent in three ways. First, "what Dante tells us about Siger is historically accurate" (Gilson 265); he lectured in the Street of Straw in the Latin Quarter (Singleton 192) and "syllogized invidious truths"⁵ (*silogizzo invidiosi veri*) (X.138) which caused him to "see death as coming much too slowly" (*amorir li parve venir tardo*) (X.135). Second, Dante's awareness of contemporary philosophical issues is repeated reified throughout the *Commedia*; his knowledge of the Averroist controversies is apparent through Beatrice's two arguments against Averroist doctrine explaining the irregularities of light and darkness in the moon (*Para.* II.61-72 and 73-105; Nardi 9-14), and through the rejection of the Averroist belief in the collective unity of soul implicit in Statius's explanation of how the body and soul are joined (*Purg.* XXV.61-75). Third, as Gilson has pointed out, Dante has paired Thomas with Siger in much the same way he pairs Bonaventure with Joachim di Fiore; both Siger and Joachim were rebuked by the two saints in life, but dance here in harmony with their former harriers.

These juxtapositions may serve one of two purposes: Siger and Joachim may represent "the various ways in which mankind may participate in one divine wisdom," as Foster and Gilson would have it, or the two may serve as measures of the limitations of their great opponents—even in paradise implying the concept of opposition as "true friendship" and the means by which understanding grows. Such juxtapositions echo in a small way the larger chiasmus involving Aquinas and Bonaventure in mutual compliments and criticism of one's own order. Siger's presence could also, as Nardi has suggested, represent Dante's own debt to Averroism and the fact that he accepted and utilized

"the light doctrine of God, the theory of the Intelligences, the influence of the celestial spheres, the idea that only the intellectual part of the soul is directly and properly created, the need of illumination for intellection" (Copleston 200). In all these cases, the placement of Siger and Joachim is deliberate: Mandonnet's thesis neither accounts for Dante's philosophical sophistication nor for the use of juxtaposition as a way of re-reading the arguments these men had debated on earth, of measuring the limitations of orthodoxy, or of presenting an homage to doctrines that inform the poem despite their heterodoxy.

Van Steenberghen's claim that Siger was won over to Thomas's teachings sometime between 1275 and 1277 is difficult to substantiate, especially given the facts that his ideas were condemned a second time in 1277 and that he fled Paris to seek asylum with the Pope (Gilson 266, n.1). Siger *did* compliment Thomas and Albertus Magnus as "two leading men in philosophy" in *De anima* (quoted in Hyman 492), but this does not substantiate a connection between them. Copleston's argument that Siger's placement next to Thomas "is explicable if we remember that the Thomist system presupposes a philosophy which is built up by natural reason alone . . . and that was what Siger of Brabant professed to do" (200) ignores the fact that Thomas insisted that the highest truths cannot be reached through reason, but only through faith and God's grace. On the other hand, Thomas and Albert both recognized the value of Aristotelian thought in discovering the evidence of God's presence in the order and harmony of the created world, and Thomas would have recognized that Siger was grappling with much the same problems as he himself was.

Even if Thomas recognized that Siger's opposition stimulated his own awareness, the opposition he represented threatened the system of faith in its denial of temporal creation and individual salvation; on the first of these, Thomas admits that the eternity of the world "has not been proved impossible, though it certainly has not been proved true" (Copleston 435-36). Siger had argued the following premises: creation involves the potential existence of the created being before its actual creation and "every being in potentiality goes to actuality through some being of its own species in act" (Siger 500). Because of this, potency is also preceded by act, by potency, etc., ad infinitum; thus, just as God is eternal, so is the created being. Siger escapes the charge of heresy by claiming that "we say these things as the opinion of the Philosopher, although not asserting them as true" (500), an apparent use of the doctrine of double truth which allows him to present a heterodox argument while at the same time forswearing its application.

Thomas begins his response by asserting that "no heresy is involved in the contention that God is able to bring it about that something created by Him should always have existed" but that "if the concepts were to be found incompatible, this position would be false" (*De Aeternitate* 20). He then argues that "no cause producing its effect instantaneously need precede its effect in duration," citing "illumination" and the fact that the instant fire exists it produces heat, to show that potency need not precede act (21). He also points out that the divine procession of cause proceeding through will need not "precede its effect in duration" (21). Thomas next points out that "since . . . a thing is said to have been made from nothing, non-existence must seemingly precede its existence in the order of duration" (22), citing Anselm (*Monologium* 8) to support his contention; there is, he

says, a logical inconsistency in "the position of those who held that the world has always existed" and yet who "teach that it was made by God" (24), citing Damascene, Hugh of St. Victor, Boethius and finally Augustine to support his position: "Since the flight of time involves change, it cannot be co-eternal with changeless eternity" (25; *De civitate Dei* XII.15). While following the arguments for creation *ex nihilo* involving a beginning in time and mutability, Thomas nevertheless does allow that the opposing viewpoint, though weak from his point of view, is not heretical.

The fact that Siger never publicly repudiated his views, that nothing in his writings "inclines" toward Thomas's position, and that he was pursued almost to the end of his life thus puts Van Steenberghen's position in doubt. Regarding Siger's belief that the intellectual soul is one in all men, Copleston finds a way out for the Latin Averroist in an interpretation of the doctrine of double truth: "in the natural order, with which the philosopher deals, the intellectual soul would have been one in all men, but . . . God has miraculously multiplied . . . what by nature could not be multiplied" (436).

While Van Steenberghen's claim is largely unsubstantiated, Gilson's belief that the Thomas and Siger of Canto X are not the historical figures but rather symbols of speculative theology and pure philosophy whose distinctions were truths that "Dante held dear" (Gilson 272) seems a rather pat solution to the questions raised by Siger's presence. On the other hand, Nardi's belief that Dante's acceptance of certain tenets of Islamic philosophy is reified in Siger's appearance here is inviting, especially when one considers Dante's description of his ideas as truths which happened to be invidious to those in power (see end note 5); nevertheless, one should also keep in mind that Dante needs to be

strictly orthodox in his theology if his poem is to escape the charges his political enemies might level against him. I suggest that the most likely reason for Siger's presence is that Dante has deliberately built tensions among the characters of the two circles to show that the arguments they had on earth have here been inexplicably resolved and to suggest that pilgrim and reader need to weigh these arguments to fully grasp the complexities of the vision we are being presented. Just as Siger rereads Thomas, so too does Richard of St. Victor present a spiritualist vision that calls some of the assumptions of both Thomas and Siger into question; these tensions within the celestial harmony display Dante's negative capability, evoking at once the mystery at the heart of speech and thought and the need to expand our frames of reference if we are to grasp what is before our eyes.

Richard of St. Victor

The last of the twelfth and thirteenth century thinkers in the circle, Richard of St. Victor serves two obvious purposes. As heir to the seraphic thought of Pseudo-Dionysius, he represents the Augustinian spiritualist critique of Aristotelians and their Averroist interpreters; Richard rails against "pseudo-philosophers, fabricators of untruth . . . who earlier were making things in the workshop of Aristotle [and] learn at last with wiser counsel to forge things in the workshop of the Saviour" (*Mystical Ark* 2.2, pages 176-77). In Dante's poem, Siger is most obviously the target of this kind of critique, but Thomas and Albertus Magnus were both Aristotelians as far as the natural world was concerned, and employed Aristotelian thought in their theologies as well. Nevertheless, Richard also "pointed forward to the position of St. Thomas" in his rationalist proofs of God's existence (Cross 1185); his insistence on "demonstration and argument in matters of theo-

logy" provided later thinkers such as Thomas with rigorous examples of discursive thought applied to theology, though couched in an Augustinian base.

Further, Cayre points out that both Thomas and St. Bonaventure preserved Richard's ideas "almost without change" in their own discourses on matters touching contemplation (II. 453). This is most apparent in Bonaventure's *Journey of the Mind to God*, which follows Richard's four stages of awakening on the mountain of the transfiguration; Richard in turn follows Boethius, who also traced the growth of human insight through four predominant faculties: senses, imagination, reason and insight (*Cons.* 5 pr.5). Yet to see the great Victorine as merely a critic or conduit is to misunderstand his place in the circle; while Peter Lombard, Albert, and Aquinas present full views of Christian doctrine, Richard approaches the prime mystery of faith alone, asking us to undergo a long and arduous journey to know ourselves before approaching the divine. His focus is on the psychological processes of awakening through a variety of mental states, each of which prepares one for a further stage while at the same time presenting the dangers of excess and deficiency. Such an approach to enlightenment is unique in the circle of Cantor X, for while Richard's ideas criticize Aristotelianism and reify reason, grace and the trinity as psychological process, they also point toward Solomon in their glosses of *The Song of Songs* and in the trope of the ark itself.

In *The Twelve Patriarchs* (also known as *Benjamin Minor*), Richard glosses two Biblical narratives. The first, *Genesis* 28- 35, is the story of Rachel, Leah, their handmaids Bala and Zelpha, and their thirteen children—the sons who would become the patriarchs of the twelve tribes and Dina, the daughter raped by Sichem and avenged by

Simeon and Levi. In Richard's scheme, Rachael represents reason and the desire for wisdom, beautiful but seldom attainable, while Leah, nearly blind, stands for affection which leads to virtue. These two mothers present all the stresses of the life of seeking; their children represent the various stages of the search (see Appendix D). The second gloss concerns the transfiguration of Jesus (*Matthew* 17: 1-9; *Mark* 9: 2-8; *Luke* 9: 28-36; 2 *Peter* 1: 16-18) as a trope for the four stages of awakening to the divine presence; this gloss is connected to the birth of Benjamin, who represents the first stage of contemplative ecstasy.

Richard's method is to explore the characteristics of each stage of ascent while also warning against pitfalls. In his discussion of the relationship of Rachel to Bala—reason to the imagination—for example, he claims that "reason never rises up to cognition of the invisible unless her handmaid, imagination, represents to her the form of visible things" (*The Twelve Patriarchs* I.5, page 57), a claim reminiscent of Beatrice's claim that "such signs are suited for your mind" (*così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno*) (*Para.* IV.40) Richard appreciates the imagination's role in awakening the mind, but also warns against the insatiable quality of the imagination and the senses: "she calls to memory everything whether seen or heard," filling the mind with an endless parade of thoughts that distract one from contemplative focus (I.6, page 59).

Perhaps the most interesting stage is that corresponding to the last two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, who represent "discretion or full self-knowledge" and "contemplation in ecstasy" (Zinn 19). Here the *divina revelatio* or "divine showings" of interior visions of light are given by grace—a situation analogous to that of the pilgrim observing

the twelve lights of *Paradiso X*. This stage is also characterized by Joseph's cleaning of the soul's mirror and by climbing the mountain of transfiguration, experiencing with Peter, James and John four stages of ascent. First one goes "a steep way, a secret way, unknown to many" involving "a long period of discipline"; the three disciples next achieve inner peace and later experience the transfiguration of Jesus as "a being clothed in light," after which they faint when they hear God's voice (Zinn 21). In this context, the birth of Benjamin and Rachel's death in childbirth signify that failure:

the hearer falls down at the thunder of the divine voice because the capacity of human sense succumbs to that which is divinely inspired, and unless it abandons the limitations of human reasoning it does not expand the bosom of understanding in order to hold the secret of divine inspiration. And so there the hearer falls, where human reason fails. There Rachel dies, that Benjamin may be born. And so, unless I am mistaken, by the death of Rachel and by the fall of the disciples the same thing is indicated figuratively.

(The Twelve Patriarchs c.80, pages 139-40)

Even at this stage of ascent, Richard is careful to warn us that sublime visions should be, as in the Biblical accounts, confirmed by scriptural authorities such as Moses and Elijah; illusions on this level can be deadly to the spirit. It should also be noted that the journey Richard describes is similar to Dante's own awakening in paradise; just as the *divina revelatio* of *Paradiso X* precedes the ascent to experience God's presence, so when Dante

finally arrives at that state, he is struck and like the three disciples is unable to fully grasp the vision:

But then my mind was struck by light that flashed
and, with this light, received what it had asked.

Here force failed my high fantasy; but my desire
and will were moved already—like
a wheel revolving uniformly—by
the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.

[se non che la mia mente fu percossa
da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne.

A l'alta fantasia qui manco possa;
ma gia volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle,
si come rota ch'igualmente e mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.]

Paradiso XXXIII.140-45

The Mystical Ark concerns the same process of awakening, but understands even the lowest levels on the journey as contemplative; here, Richard develops the building of the ark of the covenant as attaining the "grace of contemplation" (I.1, page 153). This trope and Richard's gloss of *The Song of Songs* as "three anagogic modes of ecstasy" (5.5; page 317) connect the great Victorine to the figure of Solomon, implying that the wisdom of Solomon involves not only the ordering of one's kingdom, but also provides focal points for three stages of contemplative ecstasy. In the first, Richard glosses *Song of Songs* 3.6, in which the beloved soul comes "out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke." This stage is seen as "the longing of a devoted mind" which like the smoke rises toward heaven; such longing should be "anxious and unified, arising from right intention" (V.6; page 318). The second gloss presents the simile comparing the beloved to the dawn and the sun rising (6:9; KJV 6:10), connecting that to the wonder of experienc-

ing what the mind is "scarcely able to believe"; this wonder leads to greater attentiveness in which the mind is enlarged and "brightened" (V.9, pages 322-23). The third mode of ecstasy is joy; glossing *Song of Songs* 8.5, Richard sees the lover as "flowing with delights" and abounding "with the fullness of spiritual joys" (V.14, page 332). She is driven to go above herself by an "alienation of the mind" (334) in which she learns to see not by the mirror of speculation, but through direct contemplation of "truth in its purity without any covering or any veil" (335).

In the building of one's own ark, Richard presents a definition of contemplation as different from discursive thought and meditation, which are distinguished respectively as "the careless looking about of a soul inclined to wandering" and "the careful gaze of a soul employed ardently in the search for truth"; by contrast, contemplation is "the free, more penetrating gaze of a mind, suspended with wonder concerning manifestations of wisdom" (I.4, page 157). The process of attaining that gaze is an ascent in being from the sensual to the rational and finally to the transcendent, the point at which one is prepared to approach the trinity. The stages are sixfold. First the mind is employed "in imagination and according to imagination only," caught up in exterior images, sensory data and the apparent reality of the world. Eventually, one pauses to consider the meanings and interconnectedness of these images, entering the stage of "imagination . . . according to reason"; one begins to explore the interior vision, but it can be known only through "similitudes," that is, using images to conceptualize what otherwise could not be known. This process of awakening continues in the third stage, where for the first time reason takes charge of the imagination in a process of "incipient interiorization"; this leads to the

fourth stage, in which discursive thought turns inward, reasoning of things beyond conception as in Thomas's or Richard's proofs of the existence of God. The last two stages, analogous to fashioning the two cherubim that flank the ark, are achieved only after long and difficult mental and spiritual discipline and develop understanding of the divine, first learning those things "above reason" but not beyond it and later knowing divine mysteries that are "seemingly beyond reason" (Zinn 24-32).

Central among these mysteries is that of the trinity, of which "no corporeal sense teaches, nor does any human reason convince us," an understanding which can only be attained through *divina revelatio* or through an incontestable authority (*Mystical Ark* IV. 2). In V.7, Richard warns that one strives in vain to attain these last stages unless one is aided by the divine showings obtainable only through transforming grace: "so we are commanded to make the cherubim and to form images not of human beings nor even any angels whatsoever but of superexcellent spirits so that the worth of these last speculations might shine forth better out of such a figurative adumbration" (V.7, page 268).

In this scheme, Richard may criticize those whose reasoning has erred through too much attention to either the senses or to Aristotelian reasoning primarily because they have not continued their progress. Albert's paraphrases of Aristotle and the numerous discursive arguments of Thomas would be seen ultimately as needless attentiveness to things which should be acknowledged and passed over in pursuit of higher wisdom; indeed, Thomas himself attained a revelation on December 6, 1273, ending his work on the *Summa* with the claim that "such things have been revealed to me that all I have written seems as straw" (Aquinas I. vi). Richard is also one of the principal connecting links to

Solomon, whose wisdom builds the temple for the ark and in the glosses on *The Song of Solomon* inscribes three higher stages of contemplative wisdom. Perhaps most importantly, the spiritual journey Richard describes is clearly reified in the pilgrim's growing awareness as he passes through paradise.

The Venerable Bede

Just as the twelfth and thirteenth century figures in the circle were concerned with systematizing theology, debating the place of Aristotle and codifying law, so the fifth and sixth century authors and the biblical predecessor, Solomon, have their predominant concerns. Boethius was the greatest mind of his day: government administrator, author of the most influential work from the period—*The Consolation of Philosophy*—and finally, martyr. Pseudo-Dionysius was similarly influential in theology, and Solomon, as noted, was the wisest of all these in the circle, applying divine wisdom to earthly rule. Isidore of Seville was an encyclopedist and historian, and Paulus Orosius and the Venerable Bede are both remembered for their histories as well, Orosius for his apologetic *Historia adversos paganos* and Bede for his *History of The English Church and People*. Bede is fittingly placed next to his fellow Briton, Richard of St. Victor, and what at first appear to be sharply differing habits of mind seem after reflection to trace similar journeys. Despite differing approaches to psychology, language and kinds of evidence, the Augustinian contemplative describing the individual journey to God, defining stages of ascent and pitfalls along the way, dances with the Benedictine ascetic who traced a nation's journey to God, also defining stages of ascent and pitfalls along the way. Bede resonates most clearly, however, with Solomon, and to a lesser extent, with Gratian. Bede's concern is Solomon's—finding a way to imitate divine

harmony in ecclesia and polis—but like Gratian he is also concerned that neither overstep its bounds.

Bede's *History of The English Church and People* traces the history of British attempts to establish Christian belief and practice against the native religions of three of its peoples—the English, the Irish (whom Bede calls Scots), and the Picts, the painted natives of Scotland who had terrified the Romans to the extent that Hadrian built a wall to keep them out. The Benedictine's text is written in the tradition of Eusebius and Orosius, but differs from them in two important ways. Whereas Eusebius had traced the growth of the Church as a whole up to the time of Constantine, Bede's concern is with Britain's destiny as a nation "no longer a part of the Roman empire" (Markus 4) and with its gradual adoption of Christianity. Secondly, Orosius's history is an apologetic touting the rightness of Christian governance; Bede, however, is uncertain about his nation's and church's future. Other important influences may include Cassiodorus and Isidore, who wrote national histories of the Goths and Visigoths before Bede. Markus believes that the history of France written by Gregory of Tours may have been his most important influence, yet he points out that, unlike Gregory's work, Bede's *History* is an integrated work with a single purpose. Bede was the period's "greatest master of integrating materials from disparate sources to produce coherent history" (Markus 7), utilizing chronicle forms, legends, visions and dreams, miracles, hagiography and the letters of popes and bishops to develop a history that begins with short chapters on Julius Caesar and Claudius, passing through the conversion of King Lucius to the establishment of bishoprics and abbeys and the struggle to develop a unified church throughout the islands.

The struggle Bede describes is what connects him to Solomon in Dante's circle of souls; if Solomon ordered the polis and rebuilt the temple, the struggles to order both ecclesia and polis in Britain show the difficulties of finding that harmony. Several chapters, for example, are concerned with Pelagius, the Briton who fomented the heresy that denied original sin and claimed that "man had no need of God's grace" to attain perfection (Bede I.10). Other chapters criticize the Britons for turning on each other when Fortune gave them an abundant harvest (I.14) and for fighting among themselves once they were rid of foreign enemies (I.22). Bede also traces the people's fear of abandoning "age-old beliefs" and lapses into "idolatry" (I.25, II.5, III.30) and the Easter controversy (3.25), which divided primitive Christians and Scots from catholic unity..

Much in *The History* is personal instruction, as with the letters of Pope Gregory to his newly appointed archbishop, Augustine of Canterbury. These letters explain the relationship of the bishop to his clergy and to the bishops of Gaul and those in Britain under his charge, and answer questions about proper marital relations among in-laws and whether "a man [may] receive communion after a sexual illusion in a dream" (I.27). The pope later commends the bishop for his successful work while at the same time warning him not to boast of these successes (I.31), a curb reminiscent of Richard of St. Victor's later warnings against spiritual pride.

There are also miracles, conversions through vision and spiritual rebukes in dream; for example, on the eve of his departure from Britain after a revival of idolatry that drove fearful Christians underground, Bishop Laurence is rebuked for spiritual cowardice in a dream:

At dead of night, blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, appeared to him, and set about him for a long time with a heavy scourge, demanding with apostolic sternness why he was abandoning the flock entrusted to his care, and to which of the shepherds he would commit Christ's sheep left among the wolves when he fled. (II.6).

Laurence of course remained in Britain, eventually converting King Eadbald. Later, the exiled King Edwin would receive a vision in which a strange young man exacts a promise that he take "better and wise guidance for your life and salvation" from one who would later give him a sign, placing his right hand on his shoulder. When Edwin recovered his kingdom, he "hesitated to accept the word of God" until Paulinus gave him the sign, after which Edwin and his chief men and priest became Christians (II.12, 13).

The most interesting vision from the dantescan point of view, however, is Drycthelm's dream vision of a journey through a valley beset with flames on one side and "raging hail and bitter snow blowing and driving in all directions" on the other; here men's souls were "hurled from one side to the other" in torment (V.12). The vision continues, showing "tongues of flame . . . filled with the souls of men which, like sparks flying up with the smoke, were sometimes flung high in the air"; Drycthelm later sees a crowd of "wicked spirits" dragging five human souls to the center of a burning chasm, one of them "tonsured like a clerk." Eventually, demons attack Drycthelm himself, but he is rescued by a guide who leads him up into a "broad and pleasant meadow . . . filled with the scent of spring flowers." Drycthelm is led among blessed spirits to a great light that dims even the light of the meadow, after which his guide returns him to his body,

instructing him that the places he has seen represent hell, purgatory and heaven; before departing, the guide admonishes him to "weight your actions with greater care and study to keep your words and ways virtuous and simple."

The vision is a prime example of that medieval penitential literature involving visions of heaven and hell meant to frighten the reader into thinking about his or her eternal lot and the ways in which one has conducted oneself. The chief features of such literature include a guide leading the subject through lurid torments and/or pastoral visions of blessedness to arrive at some lesson, as here. Gardiner believes that Dante's *Commedia* is the culmination of this tradition, claiming that Dante not only was completely familiar with it, but in effecting the most "cohesive, imaginative, literary and brilliant summation of the subject" he destroyed it: "after him, the topic dies" (Gardiner xxvii). Dante's familiarity with the tradition is clear in his reference to Bede and in the fact that the tropes of guide, valley, fire and ice, souls inside flames, damned clerics, attacking demons, pleasant meadow, blessed souls and great light are reified throughout the *Commedia*.

Bede also teaches by hagiography and the biographies of exceptional men, a technique Dante employs in the stories of Francis and Dominic told by Thomas and Bonaventure. Bede remembers Gregory as a great pope whose special concerns for Britain are recounted in the apocryphal story of Gregory's seeing an English boy for sale in the market and, being impressed with the angelic beauty of his face and saddened that he and other Britons were pagans, begged the current pope—"for he was not yet pope himself"—to send preachers to the islands. His desire was not fulfilled, as the story goes, so

he undertook the project himself when he became pope (II.1). Other important hagiographs and biographies in Bede's *History* include those of Aidan (III.5), Fursey (III.19), the poet Caedmon (IV.24) and Cuthbert (IV.27-29). Cuthbert's story also features the miracles surrounding his corpse and relics: the fresh state of his corpse after eleven years in the grave (IV.30), the brother cured of paralysis at his tomb (IV.31), and the healing of another's diseased eye by his relics (IV.32). Though some of these narratives may seem outlandish or naive to modern ears, each of them, told within the context of the history as it develops chronologically, serves as a display of the life of discipline and harmony necessary for the imitation of divine order within the church and in one's own life.

Finally, Bede is concerned with the future of his people; unlike Orosius, whose "apologetic had been designed to show the improvement in human affairs brought about in Christian times" (Markus 13), Bede is uncertain of his own people's progress. He is concerned over the divisions among his people—"the Britons for the most part have a national hatred against the English, and uphold their own bad customs against the true Easter of the Catholic Church," and the fact that the peace among all these people seems tentative at best. His anxiety over the relationship of regnum to sacerdotium may also be connected to "the acquisition of wealth and privileges granted by Kings" (Markus 13), a concern that surfaces openly in *Ezrum et Nehemiam*, two of his commentaries on Biblical texts (Markus 19 n.22). In the end, *The History of The English Church and People* not only describes the struggles to attain a civil and ecclesiastical peace, but presents these problems in a way that turns them back to the English reader, implicitly challenging each

to resolve, like Solomon, disputes involving ancient hatreds, spiritual pride, and divided interests.

Isidore of Seville

With Boethius and Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville is remembered as one of the three great educators of the middle ages (Cayre II.263), yet he was "more a transmitter than an original thinker" (Copleston 105), a "compiler and an erudite" whose *Etymologiae* formed an encyclopedia of medieval knowledge that was found "in every monastic library of note" (Cayre II.262; Copleston 105). Like Gratian and Bede, he was also concerned with the problem of ordering the relations of church and state. As presiding officer at the Fourth Council of Toledo (633 C.E.), he oversaw the making of church policy regarding clerical duties, matters relating to Christians and Jews, matters concerning the church's relationship to the state, and the need for education. The council settled several religious disputes, imposing liturgical uniformity, emphasizing clerical celibacy, and reminding bishops of "their duty of superintending civil judges and denouncing infractions of power" (Cayre II. 258). They censured King Sisebut for forcing Jews to become Christians, but preserved restrictions against their holding office or possessing Christian slaves. They recognized King Sisenand and threatened to excommunicate any who would attack him, affirming "the political views of the clergy" and strengthening "the union of church and state" (Cayre II.258). Finally, just as Isidore had founded a college in Seville, his council founded a college in each diocese: the transmission of knowledge was his greatest concern.

As an author, Isidore wrote in the fields of science, history, biography, hermeneutics and theology (Cayre II.259-62), both in individual works and in his encyclopedias. His scientific and historical works include *De natura rerum* (on physics and cosmography), *The Chronicon* (on the six ages of the world), *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum, et Senvorum* (a history of gothic and visigothic kings), and *De viribus illustribus* (of illustrious men, a theme derived from Plutarch and taken up later by Boccaccio and others). Isidore's exegetical works include *proemia* to the books of the Bible and numerous commentaries on Biblical texts, allegorical interpretations of Biblical characters and Christ's parables and miracles. His theology, though unremarkable, is orthodox; the Spanish doctor's theological writings include *De fide catholica contra Judaeos*, a dogmatic explanation of Christ's incarnation, three books of *Sententiae*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, the *Synonyma*—a Boethian dialogue between man and his reason, which leads him out of his misery and into heaven, and *The Monastic Rule*, a summary of current monastic discipline. He is most important for his encyclopedias: *De ordine creaturarum* (on the hierarchy of creation, from God and the angels to purgatory and hell), *De proprietate sermonum* (a discussion of the meanings of words and of the trinity, Christ, paradise and free will), and his famous *Etymologiae*.

Isidore's contribution to learning has been much maligned by later commentators who have denigrated his work for its lack of originality, but perhaps his genius is more easily located in the fact that he was among the first (and in his time, most influential) authors to attempt to systematize all of human activities and knowledge for later readers. The *Etymologiae* covers a vast array of subjects, beginning with the seven liberal discip-

lines: the trivium (grammatica, rhetorica and dialectic) in Books I and II, followed by mathematics, geometry and astronomy (Book III), and medicine (IV). The arts are followed by divine and human law and "chronicae"—time and its measurement (V), the New and Old Testaments (VI), theology, philosophy, and poetry (VII-VIII). Books IX-XX cover aspects of worldly knowledge—beginning with the elements, places such as Asia, Europe, Libya, and land formations such as promontories, mountains, "inferioribus terrae." After these, Isidore discusses travel, stones, gems, agricultural practices (e.g. shrubs, trees and herbs), war and its instruments, spectacles (athletics, "ludo scenico"—theatre, gladiatorial games, games of chance), and subjects such as sailing, building and spinning, and various foods (IX-XX).

Book VII is most important from the perspective of *Paradiso X*, treating as it does of God, Angels and Saints. Isidore's approach to the matter involves dividing each larger subject into its constituent parts in a common-sense approach to explaining complex ideas; like Peter Lombard and Bonaventure after him, he treats of God and the Trinity before discussing angels, approaching human spiritual activity only after exploring the angelic hierarchy. In each section, he writes a short exposition explaining the given part of a subject briefly and clearly. Isidore's position on the Trinity is orthodox, adding nothing to the philosophical debate in which Augustine, Dionysius and others were engaged; he holds that God is "in natura unem, in personis tria" [in nature one, in persons three] (VII.iv.2) taking the standard filioque approach to divine procession: that "spiritus sanctus solus de Patre et Filio procedit" [that the holy spirit proceeds from Father and Son alone] (VII.iv.4) and that "Trinitas in relativis personarum nominibus est" [the trinity is

understood in the names of its persons] yet "deitas non triplicatur, sed in singularitate est" [God is not triple, but single] because if God were tripartite, he would be plural, not simple (VII.iv.8).

As regards the angels, he follows Gregory against Dionysius in his description of the angelic hierarchy: "angeli, archangeli, throni, dominationes, virtutes, principatus, potestates, cherubim et seraphim" (VII.v.4; Mandelbaum 415 n.133-35). Isidore does not discourse on grace, though he does explain the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity in "de religione et fide": "in fide, quid credendum; in spe, quid sperandum; in caritate, quid sit amandum" [in faith, belief, in hope, hope, in charity, love] (VIII.ii.3). Nor does he directly discuss the order of the cosmos, though that order is understood in his discussions of the stars and especially the sun and its movements, which as in Dante are predicated to give life to the whole of earth (III.lii).

Thus he reaffirms many of the basic positions reified in *Paradiso X*, though his position in the circle suggests that his importance lies not only in his encyclopedic knowledge, but in his concern for his own people. In his work with the Fourth Council of Toledo, Isidore acted to preserve distinctions between regnum and sacerdotium, pointing forward to the work of Gratian while at the same time presenting yet another approach to the question of ordering the kingdom posed by Solomon. Finally, if Bede represented British wisdom, Isidore is Spain's great contributor, and like Boethius, his encyclopedic knowledge and concern for education inform all his writings.

Boethius

Dante spends a full nine lines on Boethius, the eighth light of the circle. The last of the Romans is he who "saw the Greatest Good" [per vedere ogne ben] and "makes the world's deceit most plain to all who hear him carefully" [che 'l mondo fallace fa manifesto a ch di lei ben ode] (X.124-26), providing in *The Consolation of Philosophy* the journey he made out of the despair of his prison cell to an understanding of free will and divine foreknowing—and a measure of acceptance of the pains of this life while understanding their illusory quality. Thus he came "from martyrdom and exile to this peace" [da martiro e da essilio venne a questa pace] (X.129). As one of the circle of stars, Boethius informs all of the twelfth and thirteenth century souls as the most influential of the earlier thinkers; he is Dante's primary source for every argument on free will, divine providence, the true nature of nobility and the blindness of the world throughout the *Commedia* (see Appendix E) and a consistently utilized reference in all the prose works. He is also a primary source for Dante's ideas on the order of the universe, the Aristotelian notion of God as unmoved mover "who, motionless, moves all the heavens with His love and love for Him" (XXIV.131-32), Dante's Aristotelian/Boethian paraphrase of the opening lines of the Nicene Creed.

Other than those ideas just named, Boethius's connections to *Paradiso* X and XII are fivefold. First, just as Isidore promoted education as a way to God, so Boethius was a key figure in the development of the curriculum. Second, Boethius's theories on music explain the song of the stars in these cantos, while in *De Trinitate* he draws on Augustine and Dionysius regarding the incomprehensibility of God and the connection between

faith and reason in the theory of divine providence and free will. Third, *The Consolation of Philosophy* presents in Lady Philosophy a precursor of the figure of Beatrice, and informs the poetry of the *Commedia* on a variety of subjects and in the generally philosophical bent of its own poetry. Fourth, Boethius is the primary source of that Aristotelian thought that informs and occasionally infuriates the later figures of the circle, and finally, as one who was appointed to high office and was later condemned to death through the machinations of his political enemies, Boethius represents the difficulties of imitating divine order in earthly society even more starkly than the struggles represented in Bede: he is ideologically connected to Aquinas and the other Aristotelian integrationists, but his end displays the problem of achieving the political harmony of Solomon in a Machiavelian age.

Regarding the curriculum, Boethius's particular contribution was in cementing the quadrivium, the point which Richard of St. Victor would later define as the highest stage of discursive thought, when reason turns inward to consider things beyond images to elevate the soul to an understanding of its own nature" (Chadwick 70). He was the first to see the four arts as progressive stages—"gradi"—in that ascent: arithmetic studies the foundation of all number in multitude, whereas music studies multitude "in relation to something else"; similarly, "geometry studies immovable magnitude, Astronomy movable. The first and third sciences are pure, the second and fourth applied" (Chadwick 73); thus, while arithmetic lays "the foundations of all else," the harmonic principles of music govern the stars and present intimations of philosophical and theological understanding in their physical representation of divine order.

In the second chapter of the first book of *De institutione musica*, Boethius distinguishes cosmic from human and instrumental music, cosmic music being "the fitting together of the heavens, the harmonic ratios, and intervals being the principle controlling the distances between the planets" (Chadwick 81). Through Porphyry's *Commentary on the Timaeus* and by extension through Macrobius, Boethius develops the platonic belief that "the physical universe is constructed on the model of musical concords in harmonic ratios which are part of the fabric of the world-soul" (Chadwick 81). Cosmic harmony also means the holding together in consonance and equilibrium of the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, the cycle of the four seasons. "Human music," the second of his kinds of music, means a "blending of incorporeal soul and the physical body" in imitation of the divine harmony of the stars (Chadwick 82); understanding that harmony in the individual is preliminary to grasping theological concepts and the mystery of the trinity.

In *De Trinitate*, Boethius follows the pattern of education leading to *sacra scriptura* later elaborated by Bonaventure and traced as spiritual ascent in Richard of St. Victor's *The Mystical Ark*. He defines speculative philosophy thus: physical sciences involve "motion . . . [and] the forms of bodies and their constituent matter," while mathematics involves objects that do not move and are "apart from matter" (*De Trinitate* II, page 9). Finally, theology involves "pure form and no image, which is very Being and the source of Being" (*De Trinitate* II, page 9), beyond both images and reason.

On the question of the trinity itself, Boethius follows the Aristotelian definition of relation regarding the plurality of persons, claiming that "the Unity [of God] is maintained through the fact that there is no difference in substance, or operation, or generally

of any substantial predicate" (*De Trinitate* VI, page 29). He is careful to explore the implications of the language of "persons" and "relations" regarding the Trinity; for if the divine persons "have no other difference but that of relation, and if relation is not asserted of its subject as though it were the subject itself and its substantial quality, it will effect no real difference in its subject, but . . . [only] a difference of persons" (*De Trinitate* V, page 27). He underscores this claim by reminding the reader that "predicates of relativity do not always involve relation to something other than the subject" and that as in *Parmenides*, "identicals are identical" with each other, and "the relation of Father to Son, and of both to Holy Spirit is a relation of identicals" (*De Trinitate* VI, page 29). Further, "a relation of this kind is not to be found in created things," nor should we let "imagination lead us astray" by confusing divine unity with images of its persons (*De Trinitate* VI, page 31); the intellect cannot conceive such unity and must gradually be emancipated from corporeal imaging to reach the "Faculty of Pure Knowledge" that can conceive of a thing that can at once be three and one.

His concern is that he not use language that would give Arians and others grounds to separate the simplicity of God into a multiplicity of deities, yet he is also clearly conscious of his own limitations as a human attempting to grasp a concept beyond human conceptualization. Dionysius, Augustine and others had noted the incomprehensibility of God, but Boethius is even more tentative. In the *Consolation*, he had concluded his argument regarding free will and divine providence with the claim that God may foresee choices made freely by humans without imposing any necessity on those choices, and that we cannot grasp this totally because of our limited understanding of things that are

eternal. In a letter to John the Deacon, he discusses the mystery of the three-in-one, ending with a request: "If I am right and speak in accordance with the Faith, I pray you confirm me"; unsure that he has produced a convincing argument, he also asks that John "examine carefully what I have said, and if possible, reconcile faith and reason" (*Ad Iohannem* 37). Chadwick sees this as Boethius's "awareness . . . that faith and reason operate in different spheres and from divergent premisses" (212).

Though Boethius, Richard and others conceive of God as Pure Form, the corporeal image has its place; as Richard would later point out, the image produced by the imagination is the means to draw the mind into contemplation before it may be freed. Dante's poem works, for example, with the use of spiritual guides who draw the pilgrim toward God, a motif that in the case of Beatrice finds a precursor in Lady Philosophy of *The Consolation*. Dante had utilized this figure in his early *Vita Nuova* as she who mediated his grief after the loss of Beatrice (*VN* XV-XXXVIII) and whom he rejected for a renewed and transfigured vision of Beatrice (*VN* XXXIX-XLII). Dante only identifies her as Lady Philosophy in *Il Convivio*, where he turns to Boethius and to Cicero's *Laelius sive de amicitia* in his grief: "I imagined her fashioned as a gentle lady, and I could not imagine her in any attitude except one of compassion, so that the part of my mind that perceives truth gazed on her so willingly that I could barely turn it away from her" (*Conv.* 2.12).

Both she and the Beatrice of *Vita Nuova* are mute, each a presence objectified in Dante's appreciation, whereas the Lady Philosophy of *The Consolation* and Beatrice in the *Commedia* are discursive presences who instruct, admonish, curb and reason with the

prisoner and the pilgrim respectively. As a female spiritual guide whose presence as subject challenges each author's narrative character, Lady Philosophy thus is the likely model for the Beatrice of the *Commedia*. Further, Dante's rejection of her in *Vita Nuova* for the divine insight represented by Beatrice is an important step in the metamorphosis of Dante's thought, for while Philosophy can bring us to intellectually understand that God orders all things and that the apparent contradictions in this world would be resolved if we could comprehend being outside of time and sensory limitations, she can only describe the insight of eternity—she cannot bring us to it. That must come from grace, for "it is impossible for any created intellect to see the essence of God by its own natural power" and only the grace of God allows the intellect to be "raised up above its own nature" (Aquinas, *Summa* I.q.12 art.4)—and that grace can only be conferred with the aid of Beatrice.

The Consolation also philosophically informs the poetry of the *Commedia* on subjects as varied as the concept of gentilezza (*Cons.* 3 pr.6; *Purg.* VII.121-23), free will and divine providence, but its poetry is also an indirect influence on the various philosophical and theological discussions that pepper the latter half of *Purgatorio* and the entire *Paradiso*. All of the *metra* of Boethius develop philosophical themes; he often utilizes pastoral imagery, stories such as that of Orpheus or Ulysses and Circe, references to poetry (Homer in 5 m.2) and philosophy ("the stoics of the painted porch" in 5 m.4), as well as illustrations drawn from nature (the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in 5 m.1) to clarify his themes. Sometimes an entire poem narrates a story, as in the cases of Orpheus or Odysseus and Circe; in any case, Boethius's method is generally to state a philosophical theme

and illustrate it with images or narrative: he rarely presents his poem as stages of argument. Other than in the example of *metrum* six of Book four and *Paradiso* X.7-21, Dante's philosophical poems develop somewhat differently, though he utilizes the same kinds of imagery and direct statement of themes found in Boethius; he often follows a more rhetorical pattern, hanging the images as needed throughout a discursive progression.

In Beatrice's explanations of the signs "suited to your mind" in *Paradiso* IV, for example, Dante first presents the enigma of timeless presence, connecting it to Raphael, Moses, Samuel, John and Mary; he then uses the figure of these souls to announce the theme, that "such signs are suited to your mind" [*così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno*] (IV.40). Dante then extends the message by summarizing Pseudo-Dionysius on the assigning of hands and feet to God, returning to Gabriel and Michael and Raphael as "portrayed by Holy Church with human visages" [*Santa Chiesa con aspetto umano Gabriel e Michel vi rappresenta, a l'altro che Tobia rifece sano*] (49-51). After this, he turns to Plato's *Timaeus*, finding yet another example to illustrate the fact that the senses cannot quite grasp what is beyond form. Here, Dante bolsters his intellectual claims with images of spirits and appeals to contemplative wisdom and philosophy--a pattern derived from, but differently applied than in Boethius.

Finally, after all his other contributions to medieval thought, Boethius is the primary source of Aristotelian philosophy among the earlier figures found in the stars of Canto X. He transmits the concept of God as the "unmoved mover" in the *Consolation*, but more importantly, translated the *Prior Analytics and Posterior Analytics* and pro-

duced commentaries on *Categories* and *Interpretation*, and on both Aristotle's and Cicero's *Topics*. Further, in *Interpretation* 2.2, "Boethius announces his purpose of translating and commenting on the whole of Aristotle, 'so far as accessible' to him" (Chadwick 135). That task was never to be completed; first raised to *magister officorum* by Theodoric (Strayer 2.291), he found himself too busy to return to translation. Later, when he found himself in prison, the greater task of the *Consolation of Philosophy* became his final labor and testament along with his martyrdom, which displays more effectively than in any of the other eleven figures the difficulties of attaining the wisdom of Solomon.

Paulus Orosius

Dante describes that light between Boethius and Dionysius as the "champion of the Christian centuries whose narrative was used by Augustine" [avvocato de' tempi cristiani del cui latino Augustin se provide] (X.119-20). Singleton points out that commentators have disagreed about the identity of this light (188), though most agree that Dante's lines form an apparent reference to the *Historiarum adversus paganos libri septem* of Paulus Orosius, a text commissioned by Augustine to "speak out in opposition to the empty perversity of those who, aliens to the City of God, are called 'pagans . . . or 'heathen' because of their knowledge of earthly things" (Orosius 4). Orosius is thus important in the circle of *Paradiso* X as a "defender of the faith" as well as a precursor to Bede in writing Christian history; yet his presence here is more even more problematic than that of Siger, as I shall show.

Born in Braga, Orosius travelled to Africa to give Augustine his earlier *Commonitorium de errore Priscilianistarum et Origenistarum*, a defense of doctrine against priscillianism, a heresy that combined Sabellianism (modalist denial of the reality of the divine persons), Manichaeism (belief in two eternal principles of Good and Evil) and "various Origenist theories" (Cayre I.296). According to Cayre, Orosius's defense moved Augustine to write his own refutation of the heresy, *Liber ad Orosium contra priscillianistas et origenistas* (Cayre I.608). The African saint later sent Orosius to persuade Jerome to join them against yet another heresy, Pelagianism (denial of the need for grace, a problem later confronted by Bede; see page 59); later he would return to write his history, whose avowed purpose was to prove that conditions in the world had improved with the rise of Christianity:

We have made manifest, I think, and are showing . . . the countless wars which have been stilled, the many usurpers who have been destroyed, and the very savage peoples who have been checked, confined, incorporated, and annihilated with a minimum loss of blood, no struggle, and almost without any slaughter. It is left now for our detractors to repent of their deeds and to blush at the truth, and to believe, fear, love, and follow the only true God who is all powerful. (Orosius 363)

This optimism—what Cayre calls his "eloquent description of the intervention of providence in history" (I.561)—rings somewhat hollowly in his placement next to Boethius who, though he too learned of divine providence, was nevertheless tortured to death by Theodoric. Even more problematic is the intense hatred for the Jews that fills Orosi-

us's work, an attitude that influenced Dante on at least two occasions. In *Paradiso* VII. 47, Beatrice explains that in the crucifixion "God and the Jews were pleased by one same death" [Dio e a' Guidei piacque una morte], God because the sacrifice of Christ "atoned for man's original sin" and gave humans the means to redeem themselves, while the Jews were supposedly pleased because the crucifixion "appeased their resentment and envy of Jesus" (Mandelbaum 334, n.47). Christ's sacrifice is central to the mystery of the trinity, but the problem is that an entire race of people is made a scapegoat for the actions of a few. Further, via the law of contrapasso, the seige of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by Titus become by the time of Orosius a celebration of divine judgment on a people "completely destitute of the grace of God" (Orosius 301), an attitude that also infects Dante in Statius's reference to Titus:

. . . the worthy Titus, with
 help from the Highest King, avenged the wounds
 from which the blood that Judas sold had flowed.
 (*Purg.* XXI. 82-84)

[. . . 'l buon Tito, con l' aiuto
 del sommo rege, vendico le fora
 ond' usci 'l sangue per Giuda venduto]

The glorification of the destruction of the temple also jars the reader who considers that Solomon, the key figure in the solar circle, had built the first temple in Jerusalem, providing an inner sanctuary for the ark of the tabernacle. Josephus's account of the events contrasts sharply with the version presented by Orosius and echoed by Dante:

Most of the victims were peaceful citizens, weak and unarmed, butchered wherever they were caught. Round the Altar the heap of corpses grew higher and higher, while down the Sanctuary steps poured a river of blood

and the bodies of those killed at the top slithered to the bottom. The soldiers were like men possessed and there was no holding them, nor was there any arguing with the fire. (358)

The Jewish historian blames the slaughter on a group of zealots who "brought the whole Hebrew race into contempt in order to make their own impiety seem less outrageous in foreign eyes" (325), and indeed, Tacitus dismisses the suffering as "due . . . to the character of its mountain citadel and the perverse obstinacy of the national superstition" (*Histories* II.4), while Suetonius concentrates on the prowess of Titus and the fact that "the city was captured on his daughter's birthday" (204). Eusebius follows and liberally quotes Josephus in his description of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, seeing in the burning of the temple the destruction of "the Abomination of Desolation announced by the prophets [which] was set up in the very Temple of God" (112), later citing *Luke* 19: 42-44 and 21: 20-24 as Jesus's warnings that this would occur. Orosius extends this to a celebration of the Jewish downfall; after noting the disputed number of dead (Tacitus and Suetonius claiming 600,000, Josephus saying 1,100,000), he calls Titus's triumph "a fair sight" and "a most glorious victory over those who had offended the Father and the Son" (303).

Apparently, the belief that the zealots had defiled the temple and set up the "abomination of desolation" (see *Daniel* 12: 8-11) provided Christians with a rationale for the destruction, and even Josephus (whose Roman sympathies are apparent) speaks of "an age-old saying of inspired men that the City would be taken and the most Holy Temple burnt to the ground . . . if ever the citizens strove with each other and Jewish hands were

the first to pollute the house of God" (265). Thus some might reconcile the "rightness" of this event with Solomon's work in building the temple, and Dante then might place Orosius in the circle with Solomon, as an expositor of divine providence and justice. Further, such believers might claim that the Jews brought their suffering on themselves, as is claimed in *Thessalonians* 2: 14-16, *Mark* 15: 6-15, *Luke* 23: 13-25. Such a glib and self-righteous justification for the massive suffering of a whole people, regardless of the faults ascribed to zealots or those in the crowd at Pilate's court, is beyond the ken of this author—though if divested of anti-semitism and the claim that the burning of the temple 'involved divine vengeance, the events described do illustrate, as in the cases of Bede and Boethius, the difficulties of bringing wisdom to the world and finding a locus for spiritual order.

Dionysius the Areopagite

In *Paradiso* XXVIII.98-139, Beatrice enumerates the nine orders of angels, arranging them in three triads, explaining that "Dionysius, with much longing, set himself to contemplate these orders: he named and distinguished them just as I do" [Dionisio con tanto disio a contemplar questi ordini si mise, che li nomo e distinse com'io] (130-32). Singleton claims that Dionysius believed he learned this truth from Paul himself, as stated in the sixth chapter of *The Celestial Hierarchy*, but it is likely that the Areopagite refers not to the Apostle, but to his own "sacred-initiator," Hierotheus (pages 160-61). The influence of Dionysius extends far beyond the ordering of the angels; he is the primary source for later discussions on the incomprehensibility of God and the contemplative's need to transcend the divine images, as well as a central figure in the ordering of

both the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies. As noted earlier, Dionysius is also a key figure in the debate about the trinity ("the titles cannot be interchanged, nor are they held in common"; *DN* 2.3). He has been claimed by monophysites and cited by Thomas and Bonaventure, Hugh of St. Victor and Albertus Magnus, among others. Like Richard of St. Victor, Dionysius is also concerned with tracing the path of the individual soul back to God through a process of purification, illumination and union:

when the hierarchic order lays it on some to be purified and on others to do the purifying, on some to receive illumination and on others to cause illumination, on some to be perfected and on others to bring about perfection, each will actually imitate God in the way suitable to whatever role it has.

(*CH* 3.2)

His influence on Dante's conception of how to represent Paradise is considerable. He is one of the earliest Christian authors to confront the problem of representing the unrepresentable and the attendant epistemological questions associated with contemplative vision. The divine for him, as for Richard of St. Victor later, is "at a total remove from every condition, movement, life, imagination, conjecture, name, discourse, thought, conception, being, rest, dwelling, unity, limit, infinity, the totality of existence" while at the same time being "the underpinning of goodness" and "the cause of everything" (*DN* 1.5). Dionysius goes on to consider the variety of names and kinds of metaphors ascribed to or associated with God; derived from scripture, his lists of names and attributes form a trove of the kinds of metaphors Dante employs throughout *Paradiso*. Of the metaphors employed in Canto X, for example, those of lights, crown, gems, suns, and flames are

among the divine attributes listed by Dionysius. Further, Beatrice's explanation that "assigning feet and hands to God" [piedi e mano attribuisce a Dio] means "something else" [altro intende] (*Para.* IV. 44-45) states the motive and thesis of *The Divine Names*—that divine metaphors require explication to show how the One "is dispensed to all without ceasing to be a unity" (*DN* 2.11).

In his discussion of the attribute of goodness, Dionysius sees in the entire created universe the order that manifests God's presence, as in Canto X: "this essential Good, by the very fact of its existence, extends goodness into all things," including the emanation of its rays to all beings, from angels to intelligent souls, to "every sentient being" including flying, walking, swimming, amphibious and burrowing creatures as well as plants and "soulless and lifeless matter" (*DN* 4.2). Derived from Plotinus and Proclus (Reese 144), the theory of emanation suffuses this passage and is echoed in Dante: "the light that kindles us is that same light which spreads through all of heaven" [del lume che per tutto il ciel si spazia noi semi accesi] (*Para.* V.118-19). Dante also employs a metaphor involving seals and wax as used by Dionysius, as well as references to four of the Areopagite's nine orders of angels, in the cantos preceding *Paradiso X*.

In his discussion of the impressions a seal gives to wax, Dionysius explains a metaphor that Dante employs at least five times in the opening cantos of *Paradiso*. In the first of these, the higher beings see the imprint of their Eternal Worth" [l'alte creature l'orma de l'eterno valore] in the order that "makes the universe like God" [l'universo a Dio fa simigliante] (I.105-07). Explaining how the divine unity is found throughout creation, Dionysius says "there are numerous impressions of the seal and these all have a

share in the original prototype; it is the same whole seal in each of the impressions and none participates in only a part" (*DN* 2.5). The same metaphor illuminates *Paradiso* II. 130-32, where "the sphere that many lights adorn receives the stamp of which it then becomes the seal" [e 'l ciel cui tanti lumi fanno bello . . . prende l'immagine e fassene suggello]; as in Dionysius, the copy of the seal becomes itself a seal, bearing the entire prototype.

In the seventh canto, Beatrice explains that "the seal of Goodness impresses an imprint that never alters" [non si move ia sua impronta quand' ella siglia] (68-69), later asserting that the same goodness "that imprints the world" [la divina bonta che 'l mondo impronta] (VII.109) will raise the pilgrim to that height. This use of the seal reflects the emanation of goodness to beings free from corruption, immune "to motion, to flux and to all that goes with change" (*DN* 4.1). Finally, in *Paradiso* VIII, Charles Martel explains that nature as a "seal for mortal wax" [suggello a la cera mortal] (127-28) produces both a Jacob and an Esau, a Solon, a Xerxes, a Melchizedek and a Daedalus—and that only divine provision ensures that these various copies might all rise toward the empyrean. Dionysius explains this use of the metaphor as well: "this is not because of the seal itself, which gives itself completely and identically to each. The substances which receive a share of the seal are different" (*DN* 2.6), explaining that only those that receive only a first impression and are receptive without being either too "hard and resistant" or "excessively soft and melting" will present a "clear, plain, and long-lasting imprint."

Finally, in addition to serving as a major source for the work of Aquinas, Albertus, Richard of St. Victor and others in contemplative matters, as well as informing the

metaphors and epistemological base of the *Paradiso*, Dionysius's concern for the ordering of the known universe in hierarchies leading to God provides a framework for much of the metaphysics of the poem. Dante singles him out for his ordering of the angels, and indeed, in the cantos preceding the tenth, Beatrice, Charles Martel, Cunizza and Dante himself invoke angels (VII. 130), principalities (VIII.34-35), thrones and seraphim (IX. 61, 77-78) in their discourses as signs of the divine presence. The approach toward that presence is Dionysius's primary contribution to the wisdom turning in the solar circle, framing the "hidden divinity which transcends being" in an epistemology that utilizes imagery and metaphor to evoke that which is beyond conception (*DN* 1.1). This is, of course, the central technical problem confronting Dante in the construction of the *Paradiso* as a poem—and Dionysius offers him a trove of metaphors from which to work.

Solomon

As one of the Jewish worthies released to Heaven when Christ harrowed Hell, Solomon recalls the various *ruinas* we passed in *Inferno*. As author of the *Song of Songs*, he foreshadows the appearance of Bernard of Clairvaux at the end of *Paradiso*: building on the commentary of Dionysius, Bernard's 84 sermons on the *Canticles* give the "classical form" to Christian commentary on the relation of Christ and his Bride (Cross 1288). Israel's great king is also the direct ancestor of Christ himself (*Matt.* 1.6), and as noted earlier, he functions within the solar circle as its key figure. All the discursive systems we have examined find their measure in the ability of the church, state, and the individual soul to fully love Christ (as seen in *The Song*), to conduct itself with wisdom in earthly

affairs (as in *The Proverbs*), and to discover the way back to God through discerning the emptiness and vanity of all the things of this world:

Remember your Creator before
 the silver cord is loosed,
 or the golden bowl is broken,
 or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,
 or the wheel broken at the well.
 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,
 and the spirit will return to God who gave it.
 (*Ecclesiastes* 12: 6-7)

Dante praises him because "no other ever rose with so much vision" [a veder tanto non surse il secondo] (*Para.* X. 114), a line that echoes I *Kings* 3: 12, where the Lord claims that he has "given you [Solomon] a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you." Later, Aquinas's discourse on this statement reveals that the perfection of Solomon's light stems from the fact that he did not overreach, asking only for the wisdom to care properly for his people, not "to know the number of the angels on high" [per sapere il numero in che enno li motor di qua su] (*Para.* XIII.97-98). Solomon's request for wisdom when he first assumed the kingship, his covenant with the Lord and prayer of dedication when he built the Temple, and the Lord's second appearance to him are three important passages in light of this claim.

The Lord appears to Solomon twice, first to ask him what He should give the young king, (I *Kings* 3: 5-14), and second, to divinely seal the consecration of the temple and to give the king and his nation warnings to be faithful (I *Kings* 9: 2-9). In the first of these, the Lord asks Solomon to reveal his true nature by disclosing his desires. Solomon's request for wisdom shows that as a king he knows his place in the ordering of the

kingdom and that he is not selfish: "because you have . . . not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words" (I *Kings* 3: 11-12). The Lord's gift is conditional; Solomon must walk in His ways and keep the commandments. This wisdom is demonstrated in the story of the two women who both claimed the same baby as theirs, but more importantly, Solomon's wisdom finds form in the building of the temple, giving the Ark of the Covenant a formal inner sanctuary on this earth.

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon's prayer at the altar and before the assembly begins with a paean to God, followed by a request asking the Lord to keep his covenant to "not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons . . . walk before Me as you have walked before Me" (I *Kings* 8: 25). This is followed by seven conditional requests concerning one who has been forced to take an oath, the defeat of Israel, drought brought on by the people's sin, famine and plague, the foreigner who has come from afar "for your name's sake," the period before a battle, and those who have sinned and returned (I *Kings* 8: 31-53). In each of these, Solomon requests that the Lord grant each supplicant's wish once one has shown proper humility and awareness; the measure of the king's wisdom lies in the fact that correct attitude and a sincere desire to right oneself are necessary to any covenant between the human and the divine.

God's second appearance to Solomon comes after he has dedicated the temple; He once again seals his approval of the work on a condition. If Israel follows the command-

ments and keeps the statutes and judgments of God, the Lord "will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever," but if the nation turns away to "serve other gods and worship them," God will "cut off Israel from the land" and cast the temple itself out of His sight; further, "Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all the peoples" (*I Kings* 9: 5-7). Thus, the ordering of the kingdom by which humans find harmony depends entirely upon our ability to make the right choices; that free will asserted by Boethius and Aquinas must imitate the divine in disciplined action. This passage is also cited as a source for Jesus's warning to Israel in *Luke* 19:42-44 (see NKJV 925, n. 44), providing later Christians with a divine rationale for the eventual destruction of the temple: "my house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves" (*Luke* 19: 46). This presupposes that Israel had indeed turned away to "serve other gods," but there is no literal evidence of that in either the New Testament or in Eusebius; what evidence there is suggests that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the priests were led astray by the gifts of this world—honor, riches, earthly power—and failed to heed the curb that Jesus brought.

Finally, Solomon's position in the solar circle rests on the fact that God's relationship to humans depends upon covenants and upon the necessity of learning the discipline to hear and understand their spirit. All twelve in the circle are concerned, as I noted earlier, with two premises: the progress of the soul in goodness until each understands our place in the divine scheme, and the problem of imitating that order in regnum and sacerdotium, and in the living of one's personal life. Solomon is the rare soul whose grace merited two visions of God; interpreted anagogically, his *Song of Songs* shows the harmonious relationship of God and human as one of love. As a king, Solo-

mon is the model for those who wield power⁶: humbling himself before the divine, building the temple and attending to the careful execution of covenants. In the end, all the discursive wisdom of the solar circle is chaff if one does not live according to that love and those covenants.

Choral Dance

Thomas's introduction of the lights in his circle is now complete, and Dante concludes the canto with a long sentence in which the souls turn in an ecstatic choral dance, producing the music of the spheres. Dante opens with a simile of a clock, reminding the attentive reader that the "greatest minister of nature . . . with his light provides the measurement for time" [lo ministro maggior de la natura . . . col suo lume il tempo ne misura] (*Para. X.29-30*)—and that, as Dante demonstrated in lines 7-21, divine order is reified in the regularity of the cosmos which allows us to measure time. The simile of the clock is connected to an allusion to *The Song of Solomon*, "in which the Bride of God, on waking, sings matins to her Bridegroom, encouraging His love" [che la sposa di Dio surge a matinar lo sposo perche l'ami] (140-41):

Let us get up early to the vineyards;
let us see if the vine has budded,
whether the grape blossoms are open,
and the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
(Song of Solomon 7: 12)

The clock simile continues in lines 142-44, comparing the *tin-tin sonando*—one of Dante's more delightful neologisms—of the Church's call to God to the heavenly harmony of the spherical music that even now the twelve stars are singing: "notes so sweet that those with spirit well-disposed feel their love grow" [si dolce nota, che 'l ben dispos-

to spirito d'amor turge] (143-44). At this point, the "wheel" of stars [la rota] turns in a way that suggests the vestiges of divine order visible in the "high wheels" [l'alte rote] of the created universe discussed early in the canto (X.7) while at the same time pointing forward to the final vision of the *Commedia*. There, Dante's own desire and will are moved "like a wheel revolving uniformly—by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars" [si come rota ch'igualmente e mossa, l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle] (*Para.* XXXIII.143-45). The canto ends with the reminder that these accords, this music, "cannot be known" except in Paradise. This echoes the earlier reminder that these gems cannot be brought back from that kingdom (X.70-71), and as in that passage, the canto's final note reminds us that though we may have seen this vision by leaning over the pilgrim's shoulder, we cannot truly know it unless we ourselves take the dark way and make the perilous journey through self-discipline, discovering the vestiges found in our world, developing the rational mind and purifying the self to prepare for the grace that allows one to find one's way home to our creator.

**Appendix A:
Grouping Figures According to Eras**

Sources of dates: notes in Mandelbaum, pages 346-49 and 356-357; cross-checked in Cayre.

Canto 10:

Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries:

1. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
2. Siger of Brabant (1225-1283)
3. Albertus Magnus (1193-1280)
4. Richard of St. Victor (11??-1174)
5. Gratian (mid-twelfth)
6. Peter Lombard (1095-1164)

First through Sixth Centuries:

1. Dionysius the Areopagite (5th-6th)*
2. Paulus Orosius (late fourth)
3. Boethius (480-524)
4. Isidore of Seville (560-630)
5. Bede (674-735)

Ancient (Old Testament):

1. Solomon

*Though we now know that Dionysius's work dates from the fifth or sixth century, Dante would have thought of him as Pauline, i.e. first century (Mandelbaum 136; see also note 1). Much later, Lorenzo Valla disputed the authenticity of his texts (Froehlich 34), and modern commentators refer to him as Pseudo-Dionysius to reflect the change in his identity.

Canto Twelve

Eleventh through Thirteenth Centuries:

1. Bonaventure (1221-1274)
2. Joachim de Fiore (1145-1201 or 1202)
3. Illuminati da Rieti (early thirteenth)
4. Augustine of Assisi (early thirteenth)
5. Hugh of St. Victor (1097-1141)
6. Peter of Spain (1226-1227)

7. Peter Book-Devourer (11??-1179)
8. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)

Ninth Century:

9. Rabanus Maurus (776-856)

Fourth Century:

1. John Chrysostom (c. 345-407)
2. Aelius Donatus (fourth century)

Ancient (Old Testament):

Nathan the Prophet

**Appendix B:
Distribution of Professions in Cantos 10 and 12**

Abbots and Holders of Church Office

Canto 10:

Albertus Magnus: Bishop of Ratisbon (1260)
Peter Lombard: Bishop of Paris (1159)
Isidore of Seville: Archbishop of Seville
Richard of St. Victor: Prior of monastery of St. Victor

Canto 12:

Hugh of St. Victor: Prior of monastery of St. Victor
Peter of Spain: Archbishop of Braga, Cardinal Bishop of
Frascati, Pope John XXI
Peter Book-Devourer: Chancellor of University of Paris,
Canon at monastery of St. Victor
John Chrysostom: Metropolitan of Constantinople
Rabanus Maurus: Archbishop of Mainz
Joachim of Fiore: Abbot of Corazzo, founded monastery of
San Giovanni in Fiore

Teachers

Canto 10:

Thomas Aquinas: University of Paris, University of Naples
Albertus Magnus: Cologne, Hildesheim, Freiberg, Ratis-
bon, Strasbourg, Paris
Peter Lombard: Paris, School of the Cathedral
Siger of Brabant: University of Paris

Canto 12:

Hugh of St. Victor: theology teacher, St. Victor
Aelius Donatus: teacher of St. Jerome

Statesmen/Political Advisors

Canto 10:

Solomon: King of Israel
Boethius: advisor to Emperor Theodoric

**Appendix C:
Distribution of Orders in the Circles of Cantos 10 and 12**

Augustinians:

Richard of St. Victor (C. 10)
Hugh of St. Victor (C. 12)
Peter Book-Devourer (C. 12)

Benedictines / Cistercians

Gratian (C. 10)
Bede (C. 10)
Rabanus Maurus (C. 12)
Joachim of Fiore (Cistercian; C. 12)

Dominicans

Thomas Aquinas (C. 10)
Albertus Magnus (C. 10)

Franciscans

Bonaventure (C. 12)
Illuminati da Rieti (C. 12)
Augustine of Assisi (C. 12)

**Appendix D:
The Children of Rachel and Leah
in Richard of St. Victor's The Twelve Patriarchs**

LEAH: growing awareness of the transcendent (Genesis 29: 31-35)

Ruben: Fear of God; "recognition of the distance between Creator and creature" (Zinn 13)

Simeon: Grief at the gulf separating human and divine.

Levi: Hope of Forgiveness, penitence.

Judah: Love of God, spiritual friendship with the divine.

BALA, HANDMAID OF RACHEL: the imagination and its role (Genesis 30: 5-8)

Dan: images literally represent material things, appreciation for natural order.

Naphtali: use of visible things to represent the invisible, either by *comparatio* or *translatio*.

ZELPHA, HANDMAID OF LEAH: the discipline of the senses (Genesis 30: 9-13)

Gad: abstinence.

Asher: *patience*.

LEAH: increasing maturity in disciplined awareness of self (Genesis 30: 17-21; Genesis 34)

Issachar: Joy of Interior Sweetness—"fleeting experiences of stability and true joy in contemplation" (Zinn 17).

Zabulon: Hatred of vices—"criticism must have restoration as its final end" (Zinn 18).

Dina: the daughter, personifying Shame. Dina's rape by Sichem (Love of Vain Glory), son of Emor (Love of one's own excellence) and the murder of these two by Simeon and Levi represent to Richard "the dangers of spiritual pride and ego-tism" and the "symbolic representation of inept spiritual 'guides' who impose too harsh a penalty on sin" (Zinn 18).

RACHEL: awakening (Genesis 30: 22-24; Genesis 35: 16-19)

Joseph: discretion of full self-knowledge; between Joseph and Benjamin, one begins to experience "interior visions of light" (*divina revelatio*); Joseph cleanses the "mirror of the soul" which climbs the mountain of transfiguration at which one finally faints in a "failure of sense, memory and reason in this highest contemplation" (Zinn 21)..

Benjamin: contemplation in ecstasy: his birth involves the death of Rachel—the failure of reason to comprehend the vision.

Appendix E: Boethian Echoes in the Commedia

Note: The following references indicate passages where Dante's poem reflects the influence of ideas current in neoplatonic, Aristotelian, Augustinian, Boethian and Thomist thought; I have only chosen those passages where the ideas may specifically be found in *The Consolation*, though none are direct quotations but merely echo thoughts present in the writings of Boethius; further, other than in the correspondence between *Paradiso* X.7-21 and *Consolation* 4 m.6, I do not suggest an exact correspondence between the noted references and the *Consolation*.

Inferno:

VII: 61-96. (*Consolation*, book two, esp. 2 m. 1) Virgil's discourse on fortune.

Purgatorio:

VII: 121-23. (*Consolation* 3 pr. 6) On nobility: how seldom it passes from ancestor to descendent. (Quoted in Chaucer, *Wif of Bathes Tale* 1128-30).

XI: 58-72. (*Consolation* 3 pr. 6) Umberto reflects on the effects of pride in one's heritage (false gentilezza).

XV: 64-72. (*Consolation* 3 m.1) Virgil's admonition to look beyond "earthly things," to see that ardor for the good will have a reward, "a greater measure of eternal worth."

XVI: 64-83. (*Consolation* 1 m.8; 3 pr. 2; Book Five) Marco on the blindness of the world, free will and the fact that one should look to oneself for the causes of going astray.

XVIII: 70-75. (*Consolation*, Book Five, esp. 5 pr. 5) Virgil on free will and necessity, pointing out that Beatrice may speak of free will to Dante later.

XXI: 60-63. (*Consolation* 5 pr. 5) Statius on free will.

XXV: 70-75. (*Consolation* 3 pr. 9; 3 m. 9; 3 pr. 10) Statius on the perfection of reason, which leads the first mover to turn toward the new soul with joy.

Paradiso

I: 103-14. (*Consolation* 3 pr. 10) Beatrice on the order of the universe.

II: 112-14. (*Consolation* 1 m.5; 2 m.8) All things emanate from one.

V: 19-30. (*Consolation*, Book Five) On the gift of free will.

- VII: 79. (*Consolation* 5 pr. 2) "Only man's sin annuls man's liberty."
- VIII: 97-105. (*Consolation* 1 m. 6) On providence.
- X.7-21 (*Consolation* 4 m. 6) On the divine order in the stars.
- XI: 28-36. (*Consolation* 5 pr. 5) On providence and the fact that we cannot understand it.
- XVI: 1-14. (*Consolation* 3 pr. 6) Against pride in noble birth.
- XVII: 36-40. (*Consolation* 5 pr. 5) Cacciaguida states that "contingency, while not extending past the book in which your world of matter is writ, is yet in the Eternal Vision all depicted (but this does not imply necessity)."
- XIX: 58-60. (*Consolation* 5 pr. 6) The Eagle explains the limitations of human intellect: "the vision that your world receives can penetrate into Eternal Justice no more than eye can penetrate the sea."
- XX: 130-38. (*Consolation*, Book Five) On predestination, our will and the will of God.
- XXIV: 130-32. (*Consolation* 3 m.9; 4 m.1) God as the unmoved mover.
- XXVII: 106-20. (*Consolation* 3 m.9; 4 m.1) God as the hub of the created circle—unmoved mover.
- XXVIII: 41-42. (*Consolation* 1 m.5; 2 m.8; 4 m. 1) "On that point depend the heavens and the whole of nature."
- XXXIII: 142-45. (*Consolation* 2 m. 8; 3 m.9; 4 m.1) Dante's parting comments: "my desire and will were moved already—like a wheel revolving uniformly—by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars."

Appendix F: Metra in the Consolation

- 1.1 On the government of grief ("I a worn out bone-bag hung with flesh") and the fickleness of Fortune.
- 1.2 "Now see the mind that searched and made all Nature's secrets clear lie prostrate."
- 1.3 "To my eyes their former strength returned."
- 1.4 "If first you rid yourself of hope and fear you have disarmed the tyrant's wrath."
- 1.5 "Creator of the starry heavens, . . . thy power turns the moving sky [and] . . . all things thou holdest in strict bounds,—to human acts alone denied thy fit control as Lord of all."
- 1.6 "No power is free to disarray the order God has shown."
- 1.7 "The mind is clouded and bound in chains where these [joy and fear, hope and grief] hold sway."
- 2.1 "With domineering hand she [Fortune] moves the turning wheel."
- 2.2 "No man is rich who shakes and groans convinced that he needs more."
- 2.3 "In law eternal it lies decreed that naught from change is ever freed."
- 2.4 "The careful man will wish to build a lasting home."
- 2.5 The golden age and the present: "alas for the man . . . who first dug heaps of buried gold . . . and gave us perils of such price."
- 2.6 On Nero: "too often Fate, by all abhorred, to savage poison adds the sword."
- 2.7 "Where now the bones of staunch Fabricius? Where lies unbending Cato, Brutus where?"
- 2.8 "The world in constant change maintains a harmony. . . Love, too, holds peoples joined by sacred bond of treaty."
- 3.1 "You, too, have seen the face of spurious good from whose ill yoke you start to raise your neck, and true good now shall penetrate your mind."
- 3.2 "How mighty Nature holds the reins of things, and how she frames her laws in providence with which to stabilize the world immense."

- 3.3 "Each day he lives with gnawing care he'll ache, and dead, his fickle fortunes him forsake."
- 3.4 On Nero: "who could think those honours good which wretched men on them bestow."
- 3.5 "If to care and want you're prey, no king are you, but slave."
- 3.6 "From one beginning rises all mankind."
- 3.7 "One quality alike all pleasures have: they drive their devotees with goads."
- 3.8 "Alas, how men by blindness led go from the path astray."
- 3.9 "To see Thee is our end, who art our source and maker, lord and path and goal."
- 3.10 "Whoever once shall see this shining light will say the sun's own rays are not so bright."
- 3.11 Turning to inward gaze: "Man but recalls what once he knew and lost."
- 3.12 Orpheus' descent to hell, losing the way out by looking back.
- 4.1 "Unmoving moves the chariot fast, the lord of all things shining."
- 4.2 On kings: "see within the straitening fetters worn."
- 4.3 Ulysses and Circe: the poisons "which creeping deep within, dethrone a man's true self."
- 4.4 "What pleasure do men find in passions?"
- 4.5 Against ignorance and superstition controlling peoples' lives.
- 4.6 "If you would see and understand . . . your sight must on the highest point of heaven rest."
- 4.7 Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia; Ulysses' putting out the cyclops' eye; eight of the labors of Hercules: "go now, ye strong, where the exalted way of great example leads."
- 5.1 The Tigris and Euphrates: "change which seems to flit with reins all loose endures the bit and heeds the rule of law."

- 5.2 "What is, what was, what is to be, in one swift glance His mind can see."
- 5.3 "So he reflects upon the sum retained and kept in mind, and thinks of what on high he saw."
- 5.4 The awakened mind "mingles images received with forms it hides within."
- 5.5 "You who raise your eyes to heaven . . . raise up as well your thoughts."

End Notes

¹Dante probably believed that Paul's Dionysius was the author of *The Divine Names*, *The Mystical Theology*, *The Celestial Hierarchy* and the other texts received under his name. We now know that these texts were written in the fifth or sixth century by an unknown author who took the name of Dionysius, and most modern commentators refer to him as Dionysius for that reason. Pelikan claims that both the authenticity and orthodoxy of the Dionysian corpus was called into question as early as in a colloquy between orthodox clerics and Severians (Monophysites) (13). The Monophysites raised the objections, which were later answered by the orthodox defense of John of Scythopolis (Pelikan 15-16). If one assumes that Dante was writing a poem in keeping with orthodox doctrine, one would guess that he would discount Monophysite objections. Beyond this, I lack evidence that he would have known the corpus was written in the fifth or sixth centuries, agreeing that he would have known the sage as Dionysius the Areopagite who was moved by Paul's sermon.

²Singleton notes that "mettere sustains the metaphor of eating at table, since it was frequently used in this sense in early Italian" (178). Further, the sense of word as *bread* may ultimately derive from *John 6: 32-33*, where Jesus speaks of the "true bread from heaven" which is "he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world," a metaphor for the incarnation and the procession of the holy spirit which also restates the message of *John 3: 13 and 3: 16*.

³Averroes (1126-1198) was the Muslim philosopher who developed the principle of the unity of the intellect. Alfarabi (c. 870-950) had developed from Aristotle the idea of God's self-contemplation issuing an intellect which is the first emanation; from this emanation "there emanate successively nine further intellects, the last of which is the so-called Agent Intellect" (Hyman 212); each of these intellects is associated with one of the nine spheres of the cosmos—the "all-encompassing sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. The Agent Intellect governs the sublunar sphere, which is the sphere of generation and corruption" (212). Averroes argued that the Agent or material intellect must be "immaterial and universal . . . common to all men. . . and that immortality, therefore, is general, not particular" (295). Further, "no philosophy was more frequently condemned by church leaders and in Christian councils than Averroism. . . . The eternity of matter, the absence of personal immortality, and the presumed doctrine of double truth were in the center of the attack" (Reese 43). Both Albertus Magnus and Aquinas attacked Averroism; Siger of Brabant was its most famous adherent. Dante places Averroes among the great souls of *Inferno IV*, praising him as the author of the great Commentary—Averrois che 'l gran comento feo (144). Perhaps significantly, what separates Averroes's fate from that of his adherent, Siger of Brabant, is not the ideas he expressed so much as his lack of Christianity.

⁴All of the commentators I have read are impressed with Albert's spirit of tolerance, yet it should be noted that he was among the signatories of a document condemning the Jewish *Talmud* to be burned after it was confiscated from the rabbis and examined (Weisheipl 26). Though Albert must be held responsible for his signature and the acts that flowed

from it, popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV bear ultimate responsibility for the orders of condemnation. Gregory's 1239 order to "the Bishop and the Prior of the Dominicans, and the Minister of the Franciscan Friars, in Paris" insisted that they "cause [*The Talmud*] to be burned at the stake" and that they "silence all opponents" (Rubin 55-56). Innocent's letter to the King of France, dated May 9, 1244, reiterates the charges against the *Talmud* as a collection of "blasphemies against God and His Christ, and obviously entangled fables about the Blessed Virgin, and abusive errors, and unheard of follies" which are used to keep Jews from converting to the Christian faith (Rubin 57).

Dante's own attitude toward Jews is ambiguous. Jews are referred to in *Inferno* *XXIII*. 123, where Fra Catalano surmises that Caiaphas's decision to "let one man—and not one nation—suffer" (porre un uom per lo popolo a martiri; line 117) has "seeded so much evil" for Jews (fu per li Giudei mala sementa). This apparently sympathetic attitude toward Jewish suffering is reversed in *Purgatorio* *XXI*.82-84, where Statius views Titus's destruction of Jerusalem as divine vengeance for Christ's wounds "from which the blood that Judas sold had flowed" (ond' usci 'l sangue per Giuda vendutto). Singleton supposes that Dante's adoption of Titus as divinely appointed avenger for Christ's death derives from Orosius (*Hist.* *VII*.iii.8 and ix.9; Singleton, *Purgatorio: Commentary* 512-13). The terrible sufferings of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem are recounted in *The Jewish War* of Josephus, the details of which render Dante's claim of divine vengeance boorishly insensitive and, whether intentionally or not, virulently anti-semitic.

Finally, in *Paradiso* *V*.80-81, Beatrice admonishes Christians to behave righteously "so that the Jew who lives among you not deride you (si che 'l Giudeo di voi tra

voi non rida), a reference that implies that Jewish charges of Christian hypocrisy can only be refuted if Christians live according to the dictates of faith; here the burden is on the Christian, not the Jew.

⁵Mandelbaum has translated this line as "demonstrated truths that earned him envy," a translation I find totally unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, Dante clearly chose "silogizzo"—syllogized—to emphasize the rationalist character of his thought, which is what many of the spiritualists in the orthodox camp were opposed to. Mandelbaum's choice of "demonstrated" blurs this distinction. Secondly, the combination of "invidiosi" and "veri" refers not to envy Siger earned, but specifically clarifies Dante's position regarding Siger's thought; despite the fact that his teachings were hateful to Thomas and others, they nevertheless contained truths.

⁶Dante idealizes Solomon; nothing is implied about the murders that consolidated his power at the opening of his reign, nor about his straying to other gods through the influence of his wives (*I Kings* 11: 33) and the subsequent disorders that infected his kingdom. The Solomon of the *Commedia* has more wisdom than any who lived, taught us all about the nature of divine love, and has kept within the bounds of his proper role on earth.

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