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The Utility of Peace in Dante's Monarchia

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The idea of peace is often treated as a rather transparent term in Dante's thought. When modern commentators have tried to pin it down with a little more conceptual rigour, they tend to point to its close association with the idea of mutual ordering, that is, 'concord' or harmony. Dante's own clearest and most succinct definition of the meaning of peace occurs, after all, in book I of *Monarchia* in the course of examining the significance of *concordia* as a concept which, at first sight and according to appears to serve as its synonym. Concord, Dante argues, is defined as the unity of wills amongst human beings, a unity which is ensured by being organised under a single ruler. "All concord", he writes, "depends on the unity which is in wills; humankind in its ideal state represents a kind of concord; for just as one man in his ideal state spiritually and physically is a kind of concord (the same holds true of a household, a city and a kingdom), so is the whole of humankind; thus the whole of humankind in its ideal state depends on the unity which is in human wills. But this cannot be unless there is one will which controls and directs all the others towards one goal".¹ Harmony or *concordia*, in other words, comprises two elements: on the one hand, unity between human beings and, on the other, unity of these people under a ruler. This is a twofold characterisation which Dante draws, in turn, from the analogy which Aristotle had used in his *Metaphysics* in order to explain the way in which goodness is expressed in the totality of the universe: like an army, the universe reveals a twofold ordering, of individuals (soldiers/beings/goods) towards one another and of those same individuals towards their ruler (the commander/Prime Mover). Dante himself provides a summary of this principle, once again in book I of *Monarchia*. "There are two kinds of order observable in things", he writes, "namely the order which relates part to part and the order which relates the parts to some other entity which is not a part. Thus the component parts of an army are interrelated to one another and they are related to their commander".²

Dante's elision of the idea of peace with the idea of concord, and his definition of concord as a *duplex ordo*, goes a long way towards explaining some distinctive qualities of his more general conception of peace in *Monarchia*, not least its close association with his understanding of the terms unity and goodness, as well as the account of concord and human will which he gives to Piccarda and Justinian in Paradiso.³ Aristotle himself had put forward this metaphysical model in response to a fundamental question about the nature of the universe. "We must also inquire", he asks, "how the

¹*Monarchia* I.15 (ed. and trans.P.Shaw, Cambridge 1995) p.

²*Monarchia* I.6.2.

³Paradiso III.70-87; VI.124-6.

nature of the whole [universe] contains the good and the highest good, whether as something separate and self-subsisting or as the order of its parts. Or is it in both ways, as an army does? For the good of an army consists both in its order and in its commander, but mainly in the latter; for he does not exist for the sake of the order, but the order exists for him. And all things, both plants and animals..., are ordered together in some way, but not alike; and things are not such that there is no relation between one thing and another, but there is a connection. For all things are ordered together to one end”.⁴ This particular passage subsequently came to exercise a significant influence on scholastic metaphysics once it had been translated into Latin in the thirteenth century. Thomas Aquinas’ commentary, for example, drew out the teleological implications of the mutual ordering or disposition of individuals within the universe for the relationship between the universe and God. “Good”, he writes, “in as much as it is the end or goal of a thing, is twofold. For an end is extrinsic to the thing ordered to it, as when we say that a place is the end of something that is moved locally. Or it is intrinsic, as a form is the end of the process of generation or alteration; and a form already acquired is a kind of intrinsic good of the thing whose form it is. Now the form of any whole which is one through the arrangement of its parts is the order of that whole. Hence it follows that it is a good of that whole. Therefore the Philosopher asks whether the nature of the whole universe has its good and highest good, that is, its proper end, as something separate from itself, or whether this consists in the ordering of its parts in the way in which the good of any natural being is its own form.... Then he answers the question raised (“Or is it...”); and in regard to this he does two things. First he shows that the universe has both a separate good and a good of order. Second, he shows the ways in which the parts of the universe contribute to its order (“And all things...”). He accordingly says, first, that the universe has its good and end in both ways. For there is a separate good, which is the first mover, on which the heavens and the whole of nature depend as their end or desirable good, as has been shown. And since all things having one end must agree in their ordination to that end, some order must be found in the parts of the universe; and so the universe has both a separate good and a good of order. We see this, for example, in the case of an army; for the good of the army is found both in the order itself of the army and in the commander who has charge of the army. But the good of the army is found in a higher degree in its commander than in its order, because the goodness of an end takes precedence over that of things which exist for the sake of the end. Now the order of an army exists for the purpose of achieving the good of its commander, namely his will to attain victory. But the opposite of this is not true, that is, that the good of the commander exists for the sake of the good of order. And since the formal character of things which

⁴Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII.10 1075a11-15 (ed.G.Vuillemin-Diem, *Aristoteles Latinus* XXV.3.2) p.266.

exist for the sake of an end is derived from the end, it is therefore necessary not only that the good of the army exist for the sake of the commander but also that the order of the army depend on the commander, since its order exists for the sake of the commander. In this way too, the separate good of the universe, which is the first mover, is a greater good than the good of the order which is found in the universe. For the whole order of the universe exists for the sake of the first mover inasmuch as the things contained in the mind and will of the first mover are realised in the ordered universe. Hence the whole order of the universe must depend on the first mover. (“And all things...”) Here he shows the ways in which the parts of the universe contribute to its order. He says that all things in the universe are ordered together in some way, but not all are ordered alike, for example, sea animals, birds, and plants. Yet even though they are not ordered in the same way, they are still not disposed in such a way that one of them has no connection with another; but there is some affinity and relationship of one with another. For plants exist for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men. That all things are related to each other is evident from the fact that all are connected together to one end”.⁵ Aquinas made the same point, more succinctly, in the opening words to his commentary on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*: “as the Philosopher says in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, it is the business of the wise man to order... Now a twofold order is found in things. One kind is that of parts of a totality, that is, a group, among themselves, as the parts of a house are mutually ordered to each other. The second order is that of things to an end. This order is of greater importance than the first. For as the Philosopher says in the eleventh book of the *Metaphysics*, the order of the parts of an army among themselves exists because of the order of the whole army to the commander”.⁶

Dante’s familiarity with the basic scholastic conjunction of peace with harmony, *pax et Concordia*, brought with it a familiarity with some of the fundamental metaphysical questions which this equivalence carried as its natural corollary. In particular, it invited speculation on how individual goods were ordered both towards one another and towards an ultimate goal. Where Dante’s reading and application of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* becomes at once more problematic and more revealing is in answer to the question ‘what is this ordered peace *for*, what is its goal, its end’? In Aristotelian terms, after all, the ordering of soldiers towards one another and under their commander may account for the material, efficient and formal causes of human organisation, but it does not explain how this concord relates to the final cause, namely victory, the good for which the army fights and to which their organisation under a commander is directed. Book I of *Monarchia* gives what appears to be a

⁵Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics* XII.10 (trans.J.P.Rowan, Notre Dame 1995) p.

⁶Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* (Leonine edn., Rome 1969) I.1 pp.3-4; *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics* I.1 (trans.C.I.Litzinger, Notre Dame 1993) p.

straightforward answer to this question. “Universal peace”, Dante writes, “is the best of those things which are directed, or ordered, towards our happiness”.⁷ Peace, he continues (and this time the term used is *pax* rather than *concordia*), is a *medium per quod*, it is a *via*, the means or route by which human beings are enabled to secure their *terminus*, the goal of happiness.⁸ In other words, peace ministers to happiness - in Dante’s phrase, it is the *ministerium felicitatis*.⁹ When it comes to defining that goal of happiness, however, Dante famously states that there are two. On the one hand, there is earthly happiness, the perfection of moral and intellectual virtues in this life, what Dante calls ‘the actualisation of the potentiality of the human intellect’. On the other hand, there is eternal happiness, the perfection of the theological virtues, of faith, hope and charity in the next life. Each of these goals has its respective ruler whose task it is to guide human beings towards it. With regards to eternal happiness, this ruler is the spiritual power, that is, the Church and, in particular, the pope. With regards to earthly happiness, however, Dante identifies, not one guide, but two – in *Convivio* IV and *Monarchia* III.15, the authority of the temporal ruler is conjoined to the teachings of the philosopher.¹⁰

Taken at face value, Dante’s teleology of a twofold happiness looks as if it should produce a clear account of the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual power, between the authority of a universal monarch and the authority of a catholic pope. There are two goals for humankind which correspond to the two natures of humanity, corruptible and incorruptible, body and soul, and these goals are the responsibility of, respectively, the temporal ruler and the pope. What rapidly emerges from the actual argument of *Monarchia*, however, is that Dante has, characteristically, integrated this twofold division, this ‘dualism’, within a tripartite scheme, and has ended up combining a pattern of two with a pattern of three.¹¹ An analysis of emperor and pope becomes an analysis of emperor, pope and philosopher; political and ecclesiastical becomes political, ecclesiastical and human; body and soul becomes body, soul and intellect; an analysis of moral virtue and theological virtue becomes an analysis of earthly happiness and eternal beatitude but also peace, the means, the *medium*, by which both are attained. The view of human organisation which Dante’s *Monarchia* actually yields is therefore rather more complex than Dante’s initial invocation of a twofold order and a twofold happiness might lead us to believe and the political ideas which he engineers are accordingly quite specific. Both the exercise of moral and intellectual virtues and the cultivation of the theological virtues, he argues, have as their precondition the existence of peace between individual human beings,

⁷ *Monarchia* I.4.2.

⁸ *Monarchia* I.4.5, I.12.8.

⁹ *Monarchia* I.12.2, I.16.2.

¹⁰ *Convivio* IV; *Monarchia* III.15.

¹¹ cf. E. Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher* pp.146, 188, 190, 195-6, 200; Took, *Dante, Lyric Poet and Philosopher* p.90; id., ‘Justice and the Just Ruler in Dante’ pp.141, 144.

the unity of their wills. Peace provides the material framework within which human beings are freed from the corrupting effects of greed and cupidity in order to will the good, to perfect or complete their human nature. The way in which Dante describes this being achieved, however, is through a very particular combination of terms. In the first instance, peace is the result of a reciprocal relationship with justice (Psalm 85:10).¹² Dante also quotes Isaiah 32.17: ‘the function of justice is peace’ (*opus iustitiae est pax*).¹³ However, in letters V and VII, he also heralds peace as a *cause* of justice – it is Hyperion, the sun which enables heliotropic justice to flourish.¹⁴ Justice, however, according to Dante’s reading of Aristotle’s *Ethics*, comes in two forms: in its fullest and most inclusive sense, there is general justice, the justice which is, in a sense, all virtue; in a more limited sense, there is also particular justice, the justice which governs the external ordering of relations between individual human beings.¹⁵

I have argued elsewhere just how important this dual sense of justice was, both to the structure and argument of *Monarchia* and to the structure and argument of Paradiso.¹⁶ Whilst general justice, perfect or complete virtue, was indeed the goal of life on this earth, the primary function of the exercise of political authority was to secure that more limited, particular justice, of equity between individuals, to serve as protection (*patrocinium*) of the *ius gentium*, those general principles of natural law which apply to all human beings in the areas of marriage, slavery, military service and inheritance. In Paradiso, this is what lies behind Dante’s separation of the Roman Empire in the circle of Jupiter in canto VI from the righteous rulers in the circle of the sun in cantos XVIII-XIX. Each of these conceptions of justice has its corollary in a corresponding conception of peace – righteousness is the peace of complete virtue, equity is the tranquillity which stems from the absence of conflict and war. In *Monarchia*, therefore, it is the more limited of these two conceptions of justice which lies behind Dante’s consistent association of peace, not just with justice, but also with liberty, with freedom. The jurisdiction exercised by the universal temporal ruler produces peace and it is this that enables individuals freely to act upon the teachings both of philosophers and of the Church. Such peace serves, in the first instance, as a remedy against the worst effects of human sin; it acts, as in *Convivio* IV, as a check to the lust for power; it is in this sense that the primary goal of the universal monarch is, in Dante’s eyes, to calm the tempestuous seas of this life. More positively, such peace provides the material conditions in which individuals become free to pursue their goal of temporal happiness, the

¹²*Monarchia*

¹³*Monarchia* III.16.11.

¹⁴*Epistolae* V.1; VII

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¹⁶M.S.Kempshall, ‘Accidental Perfection: Ecclesiology and Political Thought in *Monarchia*’ (eds.P.Acquaviva and J.Petrie, *Dante and the Church – Literary and Historical Essays*, Dublin 2007, pp.127-71).

perfection of their moral and intellectual virtues, that is, justice in its other sense, the fullest sense, of righteousness. The degree to which the exercise of political authority impinges upon an individual's liberty depends upon the degree to which an individual's will needs constraining in order to align itself with the true apprehension of the good by their intellect and thereby be freed from the false allurements to which it is otherwise chained by cupidity, that is, by its inordinate, disordered love of a temporal good. Such complete or perfect moral freedom is personified by Cato in *Convivio* and the *Commedia*, and indeed by Dante when he is crowned and mitred over himself in Purgatorio XXVII; otherwise, the material peace and particular justice which are the primary responsibility of the temporal ruler serve the purpose of freeing individuals to will for themselves the teachings of philosophy and the Church.

This is a necessarily brief summary of the argument in *Monarchia* but its account of the interrelation of peace, justice and liberty is important because of what it reveals about Dante's understanding, and use, of Aristotle. The *Ethics* and the *Politics* explicitly told Dante that the goal of life in the political community is not just to live but to live well, not just to provide a life of material security and self-sufficiency but also a life of activity in accordance with perfect or complete virtue. This is the definition which Dante echoes in *Convivio*.¹⁷ According to Aristotle, it is therefore the responsibility of those who exercise authority over the political community to make its people good, to train them in the disposition to perform virtuous actions by means of education and the law. When Dante writes *Monarchia*, however, he chooses to make a significant modification to this framework, accepting the first half of Aristotle's equation but not the second. Thus, whilst the goal of life in the human community, *humana civilitas*, remains the perfection of the moral and intellectual virtues, the goal of the exercise of political authority *within* that community is to provide peace and material security, to use laws as a remedy against sin, stopping human beings from becoming any worse rather than as a means of making them good - this is the well-being or good ordering (*bene esse, optima dispositio*) to which temporal rule is directed.¹⁸ This is more than just a difference in emphasis and it might therefore be worth asking the simple question why? Why should Dante have adapted Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* in this way? Why should he have made peace, rather than virtue, the primary responsibility of political authority?

In order to answer that question, it is necessary to examine how Dante arrived at the particular conception of peace and concord on which the argument of *Monarchia* rests, that is, as a corollary of reading Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the three relations on which it depends – the ordering of individuals towards one another, the ordering of individuals towards their ruler, and the ordering of the

¹⁷ *Convivio* III.15.12; IV.4.1; IV.4.4; IV.17.8.

¹⁸ *Monarchia* I.2.3, I.5.2, I.5.10, I.11.1-2, I.11.20, I.12.13. cf. *Convivio* IV.5.4 ('ottima disposizione della terra').

whole community towards its ultimate end or goal. The way in which I want to explore this, however, is by going back to the main authorities on which Dante appears to have relied for this conception and assess why he might have read, and applied, these sources in such a distinctive manner. The authorities I would like to look at are two pairs of ancient and modern authors: on the one hand, Augustine of Hippo and Remigio dei Girolami; on the other, Orosius and Engelbert of Admont.¹⁹

Let me start with Augustine and, in particular, with the *City of God*. Augustine's *City of God* was a work devoted to proving, amongst other things, that there was no necessary providential significance either to the history of pagan Rome in the past or to the history of Christian Rome in the present and the future. This is the claim to which Dante devotes book II of *Monarchia* to overturning and this is the role that the *City of God* tends to be given as a result – as a foil. This does not mean, however, that Dante failed to appreciate other aspects of Augustine's argument and in particular what he says about the function of human association in general. The *City of God* posits two paradigmatic forms of such association, two 'cities' or political communities, each of them defined by a different order of love: Jerusalem, the heavenly city, etymologically the city of peace, which was characterised by love of God to the exclusion of self; Babylon, the earthly city, etymologically the city of disorder and confusion, was characterised by love of self to the exclusion of God. Augustine's central contention is that these two communities are only eschatologically separable – until the Day of Judgment, for the duration of this present life on earth, human beings are faced with a mixture of the two, in effect a third type of community produced by what he calls a certain agreement of wills, *quaedam compositio voluntatum*.²⁰ It is the nature and quality of this 'mixed community' which goes to the heart of Augustine's political thinking but which has also, ever since, proved highly problematic to interpret. In essence, the debate turns on what he does in books II and XIX of the *City of God* when dissecting the definition of political community or *res publica* which had been put forward by Cicero and then replacing it with a definition all of his own. According to Cicero, a *res publica* is what pertains to the people, where 'people' is defined, not as every grouping of human beings, irrespective of the way in which they have been gathered together, but as a multitude whose association has been produced by a common sense of what is just (*iuris consensu*) and by shared utility (*utilitatis*

¹⁹Engelbert of Admont, *De Ortu, progressu et fine regnorum et praecipue regni seu imperii Romani*, ed.M.Goldast, *Politica Imperialia sive Discursus Politici* (Frankfurt 1614) pp.754-73; trans.T.Izbicki and C.Nederman, *Three Tracts on Empire* (Bristol 2000) pp.37-93. cf.K.Ubl, *Engelbert von Admont – ein Gelehrter im Spannungsfeld von Aristotelismus und christlicher Überlieferung* (Munich 2000) pp.140-73, esp. pp.150-62.

²⁰Augustine, *City of God* (eds B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 47-8)

communione).²¹ In discussing whether such a definition applied to pagan Rome, Augustine argues that there can be no true justice without Christ because God was not given His due. In pagan Rome, therefore, there was no true justice, no right, no *ius*. As a result, if pagan Rome was to be described as a *res publica*, then the phrase *consensus iuris* would need to be omitted from any definition of the term. Augustine obliged and proceeded to give his own, improved version of Cicero's original which would fit pagan Rome and, indeed, would fit his own understanding of the mixed community which characterises all human political associations up to the Day of Judgment: the *res publica*, he states, is a multitude whose association is produced by a harmonious sharing in the objects of its love (*rerum quas diligit concordi communione sociatus*).²²

There are two ways of interpreting what is going on here. The first holds that Augustine wanted to end up with a definition of the political community which would make it a so-called 'area of indeterminacy', in other words, an association of human beings in which the responsibility of political authority is to serve as a remedy for sin, to prevent things from getting any worse, to act simply as a guarantor of peace, of material self-sufficiency and physical security.²³ These are all morally-neutral goods which can be used well or used badly by individuals within the community in order to further their respective ends; members of the heavenly city, for example, will use them as a means of attaining their end of eternal beatitude; members of the earthly city, meanwhile, will use them as a means of enjoying earthly goods for their own sake and for their own gratification. The role of political authority in all of this was simply to provide a framework of peace on which members of both cities could agree, to which they could all direct their wills, which they could all love. Such peace was not the preserve of Christian rule; on the contrary, as Augustine points out, peace was an achievement shared by pagan and Christian Roman emperors alike; even demon-worshippers aspired to a degree of material security and political order. Christian or pagan, however, peace was the most that could be hoped for in the sixth and final age of the world, a period of exterior decay and interior renewal. The second interpretation picks up on the significance of the second component in Cicero's definition, namely shared utility (*communio utilitatis*).²⁴ After all, it was not only justice which Augustine dropped from his own, preferred definition of *res publica* but also utility, even though *utilitas* would seem to be precisely the term which should be applied to that 'area of indeterminacy', those goods of peace and material self-sufficiency on which everyone can agree. The reason Augustine does not retain the term 'utility' for

²¹Cicero, *On the Republic* I.25.39 (ed.J.E.G.Zetzel, Cambridge 1995) p.53: *est igitur... res publica res populi, populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus*.

²²*City of God* II.20-1 51-5, XIX.21 687-9, XIX.24 695-6.

²³R.A.Markus, *Saeculum - Religion and Society in the Theology of Saint Augustine* (Cambridge 1970).

²⁴O.O'Donovan, 'Augustine's City of God XIX and Western Political Thought' (*Dionysius* 11.1987 pp.89-110).

his own definition of *res publica* is because of his own strict understanding of the distinction between *uti* and *frui*, that is, between using something as a means toward an end and enjoying something as an end in itself. According to a strict application of this distinction, there can be no such thing as any neutral good, since the things of this world are *either* used *or* abused by human beings, ‘used’ if they are correctly ordered towards humankind’s ultimate goal in the enjoyment of God, ‘abused’ if they are ordered towards some other end or simply enjoyed as an end in themselves. This is why, after all, Augustine had maintained that the deeds of famous pagan Romans were not, strictly speaking, ‘virtues’, because these actions had not been ordered towards their correct end in God; they were indeed impressive and admirable achievements but they could not be described as virtues because, according to the strict definition of the term, virtue meant correctly-ordered love. The same should therefore also be true of the term peace – this, too, should be correctly ordered before it could be classified as utility; otherwise, it should be regarded simply as the absence of conflict, namely rest (*quies*) or tranquillity (*tranquillitas*).²⁵

The relative merits of these two interpretations of the *City of God* are open to discussion. The crucial point for an interpretation of Dante is that such an ambivalence over the precise meaning of peace and utility should be present, not just in Augustine, but also amongst twelfth- and thirteenth-century readers of the *City of God*. In the late twelfth century, for example, Rufinus explicitly identified the peace secured by Augustine’s mixed community as the absence of foreign war, civil war and private conflict. This sort of peace, Rufinus argued, could be experienced by good and bad people together and was thus conceptually distinct both from the perfect peace which was enjoyed by the heavenly city of Jerusalem but also from the wicked peace which was secured by the association of evil people conspiring together in their depravity.²⁶ Still more significant, at least from the perspective of Dante, was what Albertus Magnus did in the thirteenth century when examining the meaning of the term *concordia* or harmony in the light of Aristotle’s distinction between three types of good – the morally worthy, the useful, and the pleasurable. Before he read Aristotle’s *Politics*, Albertus had argued that concord was a term which should be restricted to those associations of individuals who are correctly ordered to pursue the life of virtue and happiness, rather than just utility or pleasure.²⁷ After he read the *Politics*, however, and in particular the account of peace and stability, *pax et quies*, which he found in book V, Albertus Magnus became noticeably more flexible. Some associations, he now argued, can be based on utility *without* being ordered towards the life of virtue – these are communities

²⁵cf. *Monarchia* I.4.2 (*quies sive tranquillitas pacis*).

²⁶Rufinus, *De Bono Pacis* (ed. R. Deutinger, Hanover 1997).

²⁷Albertus Magnus, *Super Ethica commentum et quaestiones* IX.7 (ed. W. Kübel, vol. XIV.1-2, Münster 1968, 1987) p. 679.

where laws are instituted to guarantee that there is no injustice rather than to ensure that people act through reason, where concord is defined simply as the absence of discord and contention rather than as agreement on the common good of virtue. Albertus ends up, in fact, by accepting that true concord might not exist, in reality, in *any* human community, either because human beings tend to love one another rather than a single, common goal, or because individuals tend to associate for the sake of a good which is simply pleasurable or useful, or because they tend to agree only on a good which is useful to the political community. This type of concord, the harmony produced by what Albertus terms ‘political friendship’, is the order which unites imperfect human communities. This type of peace is defined simply as the absence, or the opposite, of sedition.²⁸

For Albertus Magnus, therefore, concord is a term which can be used in either a strict or a loose sense: on the one hand, the common good of the perfect human community is the concord of correctly-ordered love between individuals which is directed towards the pursuit of virtue and happiness; on the other hand, the common good of the imperfect human community is the concord of political friendship which is ordered towards the material utility of peace and stability. Like justice, therefore, peace could be given either a full or a limited definition, either it should be regarded as the correctly-ordered love between human beings which directs them ultimately towards God or it should be treated as the lowest common denominator between good and wicked people. This is therefore the first point that needs to be made about the idea of peace: Augustine’s *City of God* made peace the goal of political authority; this was a function of a sombre realism over the extent to which political association was only ever a damage limitation exercise, a providential remedy for the worst effects of human sinfulness. Exactly where such peace fitted into the economy of salvation, however, what should be understood as the ‘use’, the ‘utility’, of peace, was open to debate. Peace when it is defined as tranquillity, as the absence of conflict, is distinct from peace when it is defined as the correct relation of human beings towards one another and towards God. An exterior material framework within which individuals can then pursue their different ends is different from the ordering of human beings towards their true end of the life of virtue and eternal happiness.

Viewed from this perspective, read in the context of an Augustinian tradition which was at best ambivalent, Dante’s decision to make peace, rather than virtue, the primary goal of political authority begins to assume some significance. What this does not do, of course, is to explain *why* Dante should have preferred Augustine to Aristotle in this way, *why* he should have made activity in accordance with perfect virtue the indirect consequence of the rule of law, the responsibility of morally free individuals

²⁸ Albertus Magnus *Ethicorum Libri Decem* VIII.1.1 (ed. A. Borgnet, vol. VII, Paris 1891) pp. 517-18.

implementing the teachings of philosophers, rather than the direct result of obedience to temporal authority. For an answer to that question we need to turn to the immediate historical context in which Dante was writing, and in particular to the polemical debates surrounding the three major controversies in which Dante was personally involved: the dispute over the relationship between the spiritual and the temporal power which was triggered by the conflict between Philip IV and Boniface VIII between 1296 and 1303; the bitter fall-out which followed the exile of the White Guelfs from Florence in 1301 and which culminated in the abortive peace initiative of Cardinal Nicholas of Prato in 1304; and finally the ill-fated expedition of Henry VII into Italy after becoming emperor in 1310.

The two disputes between Philip IV and Boniface VIII, the first concerning taxation of ecclesiastical property, the second concerning the arrest of the bishop of Pamiers, served as catalysts for a bitter exchange on the correct relationship between the spiritual and the temporal power.²⁹ In the course of this exchange, and the literature it generated both in Paris and in Rome, two issues emerged as central to the pope's claims to exercise superior jurisdiction over the temporal sphere. The first of these concerned the implications of accepting that the universe and, by extension, the sublunary world were governed by a Neoplatonic hierarchy of ends, that is, by the notion that whatever, or whoever, occupied a superior rank within the order of creation necessarily had the power to direct whatever, or whoever, was beneath them in order for their subordinate to attain the ultimate goal of securing union with God. Just as the soul should direct the body, the argument ran, so the spiritual power should direct the temporal power. The second issue concerned the respective responsibilities of the temporal power and the spiritual power. Whether the goal of the exercise of authority within the political community was defined in terms of peace, as Augustine had argued, or the life of virtue, as Aristotle had argued, in either case, papal apologists could find a defence for the hierocratic supremacy of the pope. Giles of Rome, for example, argued that the role of temporal authority should be restricted to preserving material peace and security as a physical guarantee against the worst consequences of sinful human behaviour; any action which involved sin, or any action which involved a higher good - any moral consideration of virtue, for example - necessarily required the supervision or approval by the spiritual power of the Church.³⁰ James of Viterbo, meanwhile, argued that the role of temporal authority should comprise *both* peace *and* the life of virtue. The net effect on papal hierocracy, however, was the same. The goal to which political power was directed was, as Aristotle had argued, not just material self-sufficiency but activity in accordance with complete or perfect virtue. Such virtue, however, as Aristotle had also argued, was a good of the soul and, as James pointed out, a good of the soul must, by

²⁹For a summary, see M.S.Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford 1999) ch.10.

³⁰Giles of Rome, *De Ecclesiastica Potestate*, ed.R.Scholz (Weimar 1929), trans.R.W.Dyson (Woodbridge 1986).

definition, fall within the remit of the spiritual power. Defining the goal of political authority as the life of virtue, in other words, once again subordinated the temporal power to the authority of the Church. Moral virtue, and by extension, temporal power may be legitimate without reference to theological virtue but in order to be perfect, in order to be complete, it required the operation of grace or charity and, by extension, the direction or approval of the spiritual power.³¹

The polemical literature surrounding the conflicts between Philip IV and Boniface VIII made it clear just how readily a Neoplatonic hierarchy of ends and an Aristotelian life of virtue could be tailored to serve as a justification for papal plenitude of power, for the right of the spiritual power to exercise its superior jurisdiction in the temporal sphere. Anyone who wanted to argue otherwise, anyone who wanted to maintain that the exercise of spiritual and temporal power could, and should, be kept separate, faced a difficult task. This challenge was met, however, by the Dominican theologian John of Paris, whose justification for the relative autonomy of temporal authority depended on making two crucial moves. First of all, John of Paris demonstrated that a hierarchy needed to be understood in two different senses, as a hierarchy of dignity and as a hierarchy of causality, which did not operate in the sublunary world in the same way. In particular, John of Paris argued that to occupy, as the pope did, a higher rank in the order of dignity did not necessarily translate into an ability to command or direct a rank of lesser dignity such as an emperor or a king. Second, John of Paris argued that it was, in fact, possible to exercise perfect moral virtue in the absence of grace or charity and thus, by extension, that it was, in fact, possible for temporal power to exercise its moral functions perfectly without the supervision of the church. Political authority could therefore concern itself with moral issues and the life of virtue *without* thereby necessarily falling within the remit of the church.³²

Familiarity with these two moves provides one way of making sense of Dante's ecclesiology, in particular in the final paragraph of *Monarchia* but also with his interpretation of the perfection of moral virtue in Purgatorio and Paradiso. An important part of this case was played by what Dante may, or may not, have adopted from the arguments put forward at Santa Maria Novella by Remigio dei Girolami. It is that connection which needs to be pursued further, since what Remigio demonstrates even more clearly than John of Paris is the way in which the authority of the temporal power can be kept separate from the authority of the spiritual power by identifying its primary goal to be, not the life of virtue, but security and peace.

³¹James of Viterbo, *De Regimine Christiano*, ed.H.-X.Arquillière, *Le Plus Ancien Traité de l'Église - Jacques de Viterbe, De Regimine Christiano* (Paris 1926), trans.R.W.Dyson (Woodbridge 1995).

³²John of Paris, *De Potestate Regia et Papali*, ed.J.Leclercq, *Jean de Paris et l'ecclésiologie du XIIIe siècle* (Paris 1942) pp.173-260; trans.J.Watt (Toronto 1971).

For a writer so steeped in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* it has long been recognised as a peculiarity of Remigio's writings that, when it comes to defining the goal of life in the political community, he consistently appeals to peace rather than the life of virtue. The common good of the multitude is peace, he states, just as health is the common good, indeed the highest good, of the body. This common good of peace, he continues, cannot be equalled by any other good, it is a divine good and the good which all things seek. It is the proper object of the will because peace is the effect of love (*caritas*), and love is the defining activity of the will. Peace is thus the highest good of the political community in the sense that it represents the harmony of people's wills, united in their direction towards the same objective.³³ Charles Davis long ago drew attention to the similarity of these observations with the conception of peace put forward in Dante's *Monarchia*.³⁴ It should therefore be worth asking of Remigio the same question we are asking of Dante – why? Why define the goal of the political community as peace rather than virtue?

The first explanation is to see this as a common response to the polemical literature surrounding the relationship between the spiritual and the temporal powers, arguments which Remigio retrospectively inserted into his treatise *Against False Teachers in the Church* after returning from a second period of study in Paris in the late 1290s.³⁵ Still more influential was the impact of a particularly turbulent decade in Florentine politics between 1295 and 1305. The expulsions of 1301 prompted Remigio to write a treatise 'On the Common Good', *De Bono Communi*, urging his fellow citizens to place the good of the community above narrow, partisan self-interest as an expression of an overriding order of love – love of neighbour and love of God. Only this correctly-ordered love would restore the unity and harmony which had been fragmented by dissension and discord.³⁶ The peace initiative of Remigio's fellow Dominican, Cardinal Nicholas of Prato, in the spring and summer of 1304 then prompted him to return to the theme in a second treatise, 'On the Good of Peace'. *De Bono Pacis* was, in effect, an extended discussion of the very practical and topical question of what sacrifices individual Florentines should make, what personal injuries and damages they should overlook, in the interests of restoring peace to a fractured community and whether this could take place without general consent and even against the will of some of those who had suffered loss.³⁷

³³Remigio, *De Bono Pacis* (ed.M.C.de Matteis, *La 'teologia politica comunale' di Remigio de' Girolami*, Bologna 1977, pp.55-71) pp.65-66.

³⁴C.T.Davis, 'Remigio de' Girolami and Dante - a Comparison of their Conceptions of Peace' (*Studi Danteschi* 36.1959 pp.105-36).

³⁵ed.F.Tamburini, *Contra Falsos Ecclesie Professores* (Rome 1981). cf.E.Panella, *Per lo studio di Fra Remigio dei Girolami* (*Memorie Domenicane* 10.1979) pp.107-51.

³⁶ed.M.C.de Matteis, *La 'teologia politica comunale' di Remigio de' Girolami* (Bologna 1977) pp.3-51.

³⁷*De Bono Pacis*

There are three conclusions which might be drawn from these writings by Remigio which can provide valuable insight into the distinctive form which Dante went on to give to his own arguments in *Monarchia*. Firstly, Remigio was clearly very concerned to keep the respective jurisdictions of the spiritual and temporal powers apart. In the first instance, this meant pointing out the damage caused by involvement in the direct exercise of temporal jurisdiction which was precipitated by the Donation of Constantine.³⁸ In the second instance, this meant emphasising the responsibility of individual Christians within the political community to exercise their virtue, their correctly-ordered love. Living in the political community, he writes, enables individuals to become more virtuous than if they were to adopt a life of solitude. This applies to moral and intellectual virtue but also to theological virtue. Individuals can be stimulated to virtue and good deeds by means of the example of those people who are more virtuous than themselves. Individuals can also increase their moral and theological virtue by putting these virtues into practice, in the same way that people will become more generous, prudent and also more loving, if they exercise these virtues towards others rather than towards themselves.³⁹ To argue that such a life of virtue will be the result of correctly-ordered love within the human community, however, is not the same as arguing that this is the direct responsibility of the exercise of temporal power within that community. When he defines the latter, Remigio, like Dante, consistently limits its goal to peace and concord rather than the life of virtue which it then facilitates.⁴⁰ What this approach produces is a threefold, not a twofold division in Remigio's political thinking. Like Dante, this is trichotomy, not dualism. There are *three* goals to human association, not two: peace for the temporal power, spiritual good for the Church, and moral and intellectual virtue for individual citizens. Virtue is present in the political community in the sense that individual humans are enabled by peace to live in accordance with the order of love. Virtue may be the defining feature of the operation of this correctly-ordered love within the human community, it may be what, to use Remigio's phrase, political authority 'rests upon' (*innititur*),⁴¹ but it is not the criterion which defines the exercise of that political authority itself. This is therefore the first conclusion to be drawn from Remigio's political writings – an emphasis on peace as the goal of the political community is designed to reduce those occasions, listed at such great length by canon lawyers, when a conflict of jurisdiction over moral issues should be resolved in favour of papal and ecclesiastical intervention.

The second striking feature of Remigio's argument is what he does with the Neoplatonic hierarchy of ends, that is, with the standard hierocratic premise that something lower in the hierarchy of

³⁸*Contra Falsos* XXV-XXVII pp.56-62.

³⁹*De Bono Communi* pp.25-6.

⁴⁰*De Bono Communi* pp.3-4; *De Bono Pacis* pp.55-6, 61-2, 66-7.

⁴¹*Contra Falsos* XVIII p.41.

creation must, by definition, be ordered towards, and be directed by, its immediate superior. Like John of Paris, Remigio goes to great lengths to insist that this does not always have to be the case. In *De Bono Pacis*, therefore, Remigio argues that the Church has a particular responsibility to contribute its own material property in the interests of the peace of the temporal community but that, in doing so, this does not amount to claiming it should subordinate itself to a lesser good, that it should always direct its higher spiritual good towards the lower-ranking temporal good of peace and security. When it does so, this is simply an expression of the order of love (because peace is the effect of love, and because love of neighbour, community and God should always be placed about love of self),⁴² but it also marks a necessary flexibility in the hierarchy of ends. Remigio proceeds to arrange Aristotle's four causes – material, formal, efficient and final – into their own hierarchy of dignity. A final cause ranks first on this list because a final goal moves an efficient cause. An efficient cause, in turn, moves matter to receive form, whereupon a formal cause, having been introduced by the efficient cause, perfects the matter into which it has been introduced. A material cause, lastly, is simply potential being. Remigio points out that two basic combinations exist between these four types of cause - a mutual ordering of formal and material cause, and a mutual ordering of final and efficient cause. A formal cause, he argues, is the formal cause of matter, and a material cause is the material cause of form. A formal cause is therefore, in absolute terms (*simpliciter*), more worthy or noble than matter, because it actualises and perfects matter. However, within certain terms of reference (*secundum quid*), the reverse is true, because matter maintains form. The same reciprocity is also present in the relative values of a final cause and an efficient cause. The final goal causes the efficient cause in absolute terms, that is, in a primary sense (in as much as an efficient cause would effect nothing in actuality unless it is first moved by a goal). However, the efficient cause causes the final goal within certain terms of reference, that is, in a secondary sense (although it only moves by virtue of the goal which has first moved it, in the course of moving, it still leads towards the final goal).⁴³

Remigio's hierarchical arrangement of the four causes bears close scrutiny. To acknowledge that a strict hierarchy of ends is susceptible to modification, to suggest that there are certain circumstances in which a higher good can be ordered towards a lesser goal, is a significant concession to make. According to Remigio, the good of the Church is greater than the good of the temporal power but this hierarchy of superior and inferior ends does not preclude an intrinsically more worthy good being ordered towards an intrinsically less worthy goal in certain circumstances and within certain terms of reference. Remigio's immediate concern in this particular line of argument, and throughout *De Bono Pacis*, is to prove that individual goods should be sacrificed for the sake of the good of peace even if

⁴²*De Bono Communi* pp.43, 46-7.

⁴³*De Bono Pacis* pp.65-6, 69-70. cf. *Contra Falsos* XVIII p.45.

this means that goods which are in themselves more worthy (namely the property of the Church) will be ordered towards an intrinsically less worthy goal (namely the good of the temporal community). In Remigio's eyes, it would be wrong to conclude that, because peace is the goal of the body politic towards which the human community is ordered, it must be intrinsically more worthy than those things, be they people or goods, which are ordered towards it. On the contrary, Remigio claims that it is possible to argue that, in absolute terms, what is ordered towards the goal of peace may in fact be more worthy than the goal itself. In arguing that the good of the Church is intrinsically more worthy than the good of the political community, therefore, Remigio regarded the good of the political community as an intrinsically less worthy goal towards which the Church can nevertheless, in certain circumstances, be ordered. What makes this modification of the hierarchy of ends so significant for Remigio's broader understanding of the good of the political community is the connection which exists with his conclusion that, for any given action, the formal cause should be the good of virtue and the final cause the common good. If the individual human being is the material cause of such an action, and if peace is its efficient cause, then it is a reasonable inference that peace will effect nothing unless it is first moved by the common good but that, once moved, peace will cause the common good by leading towards it.

The third, and last, conclusion to draw is Remigio's practical recognition that the most which humans can hope to achieve in political association is a relative degree of peace and security, a safeguard against the consequences of sinful human behaviour. Such realism may, of course, simply be the result of the bitter lessons he had himself learned in 1301-2 and again in 1304 – peace, after all, had been the ostensible pretext, if not justification, for the diplomatic and military interventions of Matthew of Aquasparta, Charles of Valois and Nicholas of Prato. However, it also seems to have been produced by a particular reading of Augustine for whom 'the good of peace is so great that even in earthly and mortal concerns nothing is heard with greater pleasure, nothing is coveted with greater desire, and finally nothing better can be found'.⁴⁴ In *De Bono Pacis*, Remigio takes the first and last sentences from that part of book XIX of the *City of God* which enumerated the different kinds of peace which could be found in the created universe. "The peace of the body", Augustine writes, "is the ordered proportioning of its parts, the peace of the irrational soul is the ordered repose of its appetites, the peace of the rational soul is the ordered agreement of knowledge and action, the peace of body and soul is the ordered life and well-being of something living, the peace between mortal human and God is ordered obedience in faith under the eternal law, the peace of humans is ordered agreement, the peace of the household is the ordered agreement in command and obedience of those who live together, the peace of

⁴⁴Augustine, *City of God*

the city is the ordered agreement of citizens concerning what is to be commanded and what is to be obeyed, the peace of the heavenly city is the supremely ordered and harmonised fellowship in the enjoyment of God and in the enjoyment of each other in God. The peace of all things is the tranquillity of order (*tranquillitas ordinis*), and order is the arrangement of equal and unequal things which gives to each its due position”.⁴⁵

Three features of Augustine’s exposition of *pax et concordia* appear to have struck a particular chord with Remigio. His immediate response to this passage is to pick out the phrase ‘tranquillity of order’ (*tranquillitas ordinis*) as a term which describes the good of the whole world. In support of this observation, he cites Aristotle’s analogy of the army in book XII of the *Metaphysics* - all things are ordered towards one another as well as towards their ultimate goal.⁴⁶ No less important, is the connection which Remigio then makes between the order which gives each thing its due position and the justice which gives each person their due. Peace and justice are thus concepts which Remigio regards as closely related. Indeed, he draws particular attention to the *causal* relation of one to the other. Thus, in *De Bono Communi*, when he argues that the common good of the multitude is acquired and preserved by means of justice, Remigio illustrates the process with Isaiah 32.17: ‘the fruit (*opus*) of justice is peace’.⁴⁷ He uses the same biblical text in two sermons to the Priors of Florence. If the priors want to rule in peace, then, according to Isaiah, justice must be done. Only justice and virtue can restore harmony to the city since, without justice, no city can be ruled well.⁴⁸ It is the third element in Remigio’s understanding of book XIX of *De Civitate Dei* which is, perhaps, the most intriguing of all. Like Albertus Magnus, Remigio acknowledges that human communities can exhibit a ‘bad’ as well as a ‘good’ form of peace. Peace, he writes, can thus be understood in its proper and true sense (*proprie et vere*) or it can be understood metaphorically (*metaphorice*). In its true sense, peace and order will always be part and parcel of moral goodness; again Remigio quotes Isaiah, this time chapter 57: ‘there is no peace for the wicked’.⁴⁹ In its metaphorical sense, however, peace does not imply the presence of moral goodness. It is in defending this metaphorical sense that Remigio, like Albertus Magnus, appeals directly to the three categories of goodness which, according to Aristotle, can form the object of the human will - moral worth, benefit and pleasure. The correctly-ordered love of human beings for one another, he writes, is embodied by the true friendship described in books VIII and IX of the *Ethics*: such love is exhibited, not for the sake of any benefit secured by the individual doing the loving, but for the sake of the virtue which is

⁴⁵*City of God* XIX.24

⁴⁶*Contra Falsos* XVIII pp.42-43.

⁴⁷*De Bono Communi* p.4.

⁴⁸Sermon 24 (eds.G.Salvadori and V.Federici, ‘I Sermoni d’occasione, le sequenze e i ritmi di Remigio Girolami Fiorentino’, *Scritti Vari di Filologia a Ernesto Monaco*, Rome 1901, pp.455-508) p.481; 27 p.483.

⁴⁹*De Bono Pacis* p.59.

possessed by the individual being loved. For individuals to love one another because of the benefit which will accrue for themselves is, by contrast, a reflection of human imperfection; indeed, for Remigio this serves as a sad indictment of his own age. Everybody, he laments, now seems to love one another out of self-interest. Christians love Muslims and Jews in the hope that they will be rewarded by them, whilst Muslims and Jews love Christians for the same reason. Political communities love one another only for the sake of mutual assistance in war or in exchange for other beneficial acts which each of them will perform.⁵⁰

So where does this leave Dante's conception of peace in *Monarchia*? How does this reading of Augustine and Remigio help explain the particular, not to say distinctive, role which peace is given within Dante's political thinking? In the first instance, it might indicate that the synonyms of peace and concord, *pax et concordia*, form a more conceptually complex pairing that they are sometimes taken to represent. Two further conclusions follow. Separation of peace from the life of virtue, identifying the former as the goal of the exercise of political authority and the latter as the goal of human relations according to correctly-ordered love, is a vitally important line for Dante to hold if he is to maintain the practical separation of the temporal power from the spiritual power to which the rest of his treatise is devoted, that is, if he is to avoid the hierocratic consequences of papal plenitude of power which he saw as so damaging both to the Church itself and to Christendom as a whole. Dante was able to do this because of the way in which Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Politics* and *Metaphysics* strengthened one of two possible readings of Augustine's *City of God*. Strictly speaking, the utility of peace within a mixed community could only mean using material goods of self-sufficiency and security as an instrumental means of attaining the ultimate human goal of union with God in eternal beatitude – this was how Giles of Rome read Augustine and, as a result, he subordinated the temporal power to the spiritual power in a direct line of command. Alternatively, Aristotle's distinction between different types of goodness meant that peace could be understood either as a morally worthy good which was effected by the virtuous actions of individuals or as a utility which could also benefit those who were less virtuous; in other words, and despite what Isaiah had said, there *could* be peace for the wicked. The consequences of this *second* reading for the exercise of authority by both the spiritual and the temporal power were far-reaching. They are encapsulated in the way in which Dante interprets the twofold order, the *duplex ordo*, of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Humans are ordered towards each other and towards their ruler but this harmony of wills produces three common goods: first, the order of peace, the end to which the exercise of temporal authority is directed and which results from love of individuals towards one

⁵⁰*De Bono Communi* pp.24-30.

another; second, the life of virtue, the perfection of moral and intellectual capacity of humankind which is made possible when such a framework is guaranteed; and third, eternal beatitude, the good to which the exercise of spiritual authority of the church is directed and which results from the correctly-ordered love of individuals towards God. Peace, in short, is something which can be secured by a temporal ruler without it necessarily being ordered towards God, without it necessarily being used correctly, without it necessarily placing the jurisdiction of that temporal ruler under the authority of the Church.

The fact that peace under the emperor Augustus, the *pax Augusta*, represents the one and only time that universal peace has been attained by the human community indicates, indeed, that the temporal ruler does not have to be subordinate to the Church, or even to be a Christian, in order to attain such a goal. *That*, for Dante, was the true utility of peace. The fact that peace could be used correctly, the fact that it would be directed towards God at some point in the future under a second Augustus, a new Scipio, was in many respects a separate question. For the purposes of *Monarchia*, it was enough to prove that such concord could be achieved without the intervention or the supervision of the pope.