



Deplatonising the Celestial Hierarchy. Peter John Olivi's interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysius

Sylvain Piron

► To cite this version:

Sylvain Piron. Deplatonising the Celestial Hierarchy. Peter John Olivi's interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Isabel Iribarren, Martin Lenz. Angels in Medieval Philosophy Inquiry. Their Function and Significance, Ashgate, pp.29-44, 2008, Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy. halshs-00258377

HAL Id: halshs-00258377

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00258377>

Submitted on 21 Feb 2008

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Deplatonising the Celestial Hierarchy.

Peter John Olivi's interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysius

Sylvain Piron

Angels have been a favourite topic of high medieval scholastics. They served as a case study for central philosophical issues, from spaciality and temporality to cognition and language. The interest they attracted cannot be solely explained by the various metaphysical subtleties provided by their bodiless, unchanging and ever-operating intellectual nature. Beyond the wealth of paradoxes they could offer to curious minds, their success is to a large extent also owed to their strategic epistemological importance. They occupy a place on the medieval map of knowledge where Graeco-Arab philosophical traditions and the Judeo-Christian revelation overlap in a manner that necessarily provokes many tensions. Biblical angels are spiritual creatures, playing various parts in the history of salvation, interfering now and then with the earthly course of events, and holding their ranks in the celestial court. On the other hand, the intellectual substances of Greek philosophy are conceived in relation to their cosmological function and as necessary elements in the triple chain of being, causation and intelligibility that holds together the universe.

These two different pedigrees could not be easily reconciled. The encounter of biblical and Neoplatonic angels produced one of the most crucial questions that theologians had to face in the second half of the thirteenth century : could they, or indeed, should they be identified? Except for a few cases to which we will soon turn, the question was not raised so abruptly. Nevertheless, the discussion of any aspect of the angelic being involved such a decision, which had a major epistemological value as to the way in which philosophy and theology would be articulated together. This paper will be mainly concerned with the original and seemingly solitary route taken by one of the most adventurous minds of the scholastic era. The franciscan theologian Peter John Olivi, educated in the Paris *studium* of the order in the

years 1266-1273, produced his main works during the following decade, while teaching in Languedoc convents, before incurring in 1283 a censure on the part of his fellow friars that was provoked by the unusual positions he was taking on many issues.¹ His intellectual project has to be understood in the background of the debates of this period. Thomas Aquinas was certainly the major thinker with whom he was sustaining an overall confrontation. More generally, Olivi's main drive was inspired by what he perceived as an abuse of Greek philosophy within theological issues that was, in his view, uselessly multiplying intermediary beings or mediations between God and the human beings. For the same motives, he was as well concerned with the parisian philosophers, whom he described as 'averroists' and who, as recent scholarship has shown, were as much leaning on Averroes as on the Neoplatonic tradition².

Discussions on angels occupy a prominent part of these critiques. As his famous tract on 'Glancing through the Philosophers' books' remarks, the higher their object has been, the less result the Pagan and Arab philosophers could obtain. If their knowledge of corporeal objects can be partially accepted, their discourse on separate intelligences is wholly erroneous, 'because they discussed them as if they were some kind of gods, as one can clearly see from the book of Proclus and the *Liber de causis*, and from the books of Avicenna and Averroes and many others'.³ To Franciscan's eyes, these remains of polytheism would necessarily lead to attribute to creatures qualities that befit only God, such as creative power or unlimited cognition. In his view, such theological errors suffice to invalidate at once all attempts at using pagan cosmology as a basis for angelological discussion. The mention in such a context of Proclus, whose *Elementatio theologicae* had been translated in 1268, is extremely interesting and revealing. Olivi could of course have had a look at it by himself, and found out

¹ David Burr, 'The Persecution of Peter Olivi', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 66, part 5, Philadelphia, 1976, is still the standard biographical approach. On Olivi's early years, see also my 'Olivi et les averroïstes', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 53-1 (2006), pp. 251-309.

² See for instance Dragos Calma and Emanuele Coccia ed., *Les sectatores Averrois. Noétique et cosmologie aux XIIIe-XIVe siècles*, in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 53-1/2 (2006), pp. 132-342.

³ F. Delorme, 'Fr. Petri Ioannis tractatus de perlegendis philosophorum libris', *Antonianum* 16 (1941) 31-44, cf. p. 43. This text probably belongs to a very early stage in Olivi's career, around 1274-76.

that in that work, Proclus was indeed describing the intelligences as deities. A milder hypothesis could be that his source of information on the Neoplatonist religion was Thomas Aquinas' commentary on the *Liber de causis*⁴. Methodically identifying the sources of the latter in the *Elementatio theologiae*, the Dominican master's efforts were, to the opposite, aiming at safeguarding as much as possible the philosophers' description of the hierarchical structure of the universe, correcting it with the help of the Pseudo-Dionysius in order to make it consonant with the Christian faith. As Aquinas makes clear in his introduction to the related and unfinished treatise *De substantiis separatis*, he intended to accept all of ancient knowledge on angels that matched the faith, and only reject what was contrary to it.⁵ No other attempt at fusing both traditions was pursued as consciously and in such detail in the thirteenth century, and that was certainly not a secondary matter, for in Aquinas's cosmology and metaphysics, angels occupy a crucial place, as warrants of world order and intelligibility.⁶

Taking a diametrically opposed stance, Peter John Olivi was refusing any identification between angels and intelligences. While he may appear isolated in explicitly holding such a radical view, Olivi was expressing concerns that were shared by a large section of the scholastic world. For instance, in the same period, the authoritarian answer of the bishop of Paris to the same question was also a clear negative. As Andrea Robiglio has remarked,⁷ one of the peculiarities of the 1277 condemnation lies in its emphasis on angels and separate substances or intelligences – the syllabus revealingly using the three terms in turn.⁸ This semantic hesitation reveals what dogmatical threat bishop Tempier and his advisers perceived

⁴ Thomas de Aquino, *Super librum De causis expositio*, H.-D. Saffrey ed., Fribourg, 1954. See in particular lectio 3 and lectio 32.

⁵ Thomas de Aquino, *De substantia separatis* (Opera omnia, ed. Leonina, t. 40D), (Rome : ad Sanctam Sabinam, 1968).

⁶ The latest treatment of Aquinas's angelology is provided by Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie. Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris : J. Vrin, 2002) and *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris : J. Vrin, 2002). See also the contribution of Isabel Iribarren to the present volume.

⁷ Andrea A. Robiglio, 'Breaking the Great Chain of Being. A note on the Paris condemnations of 1277, Thomas Aquinas and the proper subject of metaphysics', *Verbum. Analecta Neolatina* (Budapest), 6 (2004) pp. 51-59. Also essential in that respect is Ruedi Imbach, 'Notule sur le commentaire du *Liber de causis* de Siger de Brabant et ses rapports avec Thomas d'Aquin', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 43 (1996) pp. 304-323.

⁸ David Piché, ed., *La condamnation parisienne de 1277* (Paris : J. Vrin, 1999), pp. 100-104, art. 69-86.

in this issue. While the lectures and writings examined from the faculty of arts concerned only the philosophers' 'intelligences', Tempier must have felt that ascribing their characteristics and attributes to the Christian 'angels' could entail serious dangers for the faith. As they appeared in the lectures delivered at the arts faculty, most notably in Siger of Brabant's questions on the *Liber de causis*, these intelligences were invested with semi-divine qualities such as eternity, immutability, and actual infinity, that seemed to blur the gap between the divine and created orders. It is within that section of the syllabus that Thomas Aquinas was very possibly aimed and condemned, and quite rightly, since among all scholastic theologians, the Angelic doctor is certainly the one who most consistently tried to draw this identity to its final consequences.

As Loris Sturlese has pointed out, Albert the Great took quite a different track.⁹ By the time of his first commentary on the *Ethics* (Cologne, 1250-1251), which inaugurates his project of making the whole of the aristotelitian corpus understandable to latinity, Albert pointed at a methodological disjuncture. The intelligences, he explained, can be understood in two ways, either from the viewpoint of the divine offices performed by the nine orders of angels, or according to the order of nature. A philosophical inquiry, such as was being performed there, could only be entitled to discuss them in the second way.¹⁰ This epistemological turn, methodically distinguishing the knowledge of celestial beings that can be obtained by natural reason or through revelation, is indeed a major event in the history of Western thought. Still, its chronology needs to be slightly revised.

During the previous years, in Paris and then in Cologne, Albert had been commenting most of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus. Lecturing on the *Celestial Hierarchy* shortly before

⁹ Loris Sturlese, *Storia della filosofia tedesca nel medioevo. Dagli inizi alla fine del secolo XII* (Florence : Olschki, 1990), pp. 90-96.

¹⁰ Albertus Magnus, *Super Ethica*, ed. Kübel (Münster : Aschendorff), t. 2, p. 446 : 'Dicendum quod de intelligentiis dupliciter possumus loqui, aut secundum ordinem naturae aut secundum ordinem divinorum officiorum, secundum quod distinguuntur in novem ordines et recipiunt illuminationes a primo et sunt intelligentes per modum speculativi intellectus. Et sic non loquimur de ipsis hic, nec Commentator nec Philosophus, quia per principia cognitionis humanae ad huiusmodi non attingimus. Si autem loquimur de eis secundum ordinem naturae, sicut philosophi loquuntur, intellectus ipsorum habet rationem practici intellectus respectu omnium inferiorum.'

1248, he had already stated exactly the same point, albeit from a theological perspective. In the first chapter, a preliminar question noted that, if the hierachical disposition of angels is the proper subject of that book, the science involved is part of theology and its inquiries are governed by faith, not by the principles of natural reason.¹¹ To the question of knowing how angels are ‘illuminating’ humans, the Dominican master remarked that it would be easy to answer according to the philosophers’ opinion. Considering the intelligences as motors of the stars would allow to posit different types of natural influences on sublunar realities. The Christian theologian is not entitled to do so since, for him, angels cannot be formally and permanently associated with heavenly bodies. He should therefore consider their intellectual influence upon human minds only in as much as it is exerted in a voluntary way, while fulfilling a divinely ordered mission.¹²

In these remarks, Albert was motivated by a critique of the conciliary attitude of Philip the Chancellor, who was willing to associate the divine service performed by the angels with the cosmological function of the intelligences.¹³ The impossibility of equating both type of intellectual beings has been henceforth constantly maintained by Albert, on the grounds of an incompatibility between these two roles. Much later, in the *De causis et processu universitatis* (1263), Albert was blaming this time the Jewish philosophers for having confused ‘angels’ with ‘intelligences’.¹⁴ This last work, constructed as a paraphrase of the *Liber de causis*, was

¹¹ Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium de Caelesti Hierarchia*, ed. P. Simon et W. Kübel, (Münster : Aschendorff 1993), p. 45 : ‘Dicimus quod universalis habitus regens in omnibus theologicis est fides, quoniam in ea non possumus per principia rationis, sed per ea quae sunt supra rationem et naturam. Unde in haec doctrina quae pars theologiae est, fides est habitus regens, fides, dico, indistincta, quae est in credendo veritatem sacrae scripturae’

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 67 : ‘Dicimus quod secundum opinionem philosophorum facile esset respondere huic quaestioni. Ipsi enim ponunt intelligentias motores orbium et applicatos ad motum [...] Non autem possumus nos sic dicere, eo quod non ponimus angelos omnes coniunctos motui nec omnes movere orbis ; et ideo oportet aliter dicere, scilicet quod angeli non illuminant animas nostras nisi missi ad nos’.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 86 : ‘Nos autem distinguimus ordines secundum officia, quibus obsequuntur deo. Unde si poneremus aliquos angelos in motu orbium servire Deo, sicut dixit Cancellarius Philippus et Hieronimus [...] omnes essent de inferiori ordine, licet non possimus ponere sicut philosophi qui posuerunt eos coniunctos mobilibus ut formas’. Vérifier Cancellarius. On the slow emergence of interest for angels in the early scholastic period, see Marcia Colish, ‘Early Scholastic Angelology’, *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 62 (1995), pp. 80-109

¹⁴ Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universitatis*, p. 58, lin. 19-29 : ‘Ordines autem intelligentiarum, quas nos determinavimus, quidam dicunt esse ordines angelorum et intelligentias vocant angelos. Et hoc quidem dicunt Isaac et Rabbi Moyses et ceteri philosophi iudaeorum. Sed nos hoc verum esse non credimus. Ordines enim angelorum distinguuntur secundum differentias illuminationum et theophaniarum, quae revelatione accipiuntur et fide creduntur et ad perfectionem regni caelestis ordinantur in gratia et beatitudine. De quibus

intended as a mere presentation of the ‘peripatetician’ teachings (to which the *Liber de causis* would still belong, in Albert’s eyes). A theological discussion of angels would have been out of place there, but a few passing remarks show that the great Dominican scholar was drawing more than a methodological distinction between these two kinds of entities: while angels were described by the ancient theologians as capable of motion and of assuming a body, the peripateticians’ intelligences were instead ‘abstracted from all difference in time and space’.¹⁵ Albert’s followers, such as Dietrich von Freiberg and Berthold von Moosburg, would argue more explicitly along those lines, within the context of an opposition between the natural providence and the divine one.¹⁶ Thus, what had started as an epistemological distinction between different types of argumentation, continued by a separation between two classes of celestial beings, was finally taking the form of a non-conflicting coexistence between the natural and supernatural orders of reality, each one being regulated by its own rules.

It may sound paradoxical to bring together Albert the Great and Peter John Olivi on such an issue, since they represent the two most conflicting intellectual attitudes of theologians towards philosophy in the Thirteenth Century. Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that both were operating a similar distinction, be it for diametrically opposite reasons. While the German Dominican school was disassociating angels and intelligences on the intention of preserving a realm for the autonomy of philosophy, the Languedoc Franciscan was seeking to disentangle the description of biblical angels from all concerns linked with the cosmological function of the separate intelligences. Their respective endeavours were of course guided by divergent designs. If both of them were contented with safeguarding purely

philosophia nihil potest per rationem philosophicam determinare.’ See also pp. 191-192.

¹⁵ Albertus Magnus, *De causis*, p. 92, lin. 24-36 : ‘Angelos enim theologi dicunt de caelo mitti ad terram et de loco transire ad locum, species corporum vel corpora assumere, quamvis multum consona sit rationi, tamen in hoc opere non est a nobis suscepta ad explanandum. Peripateticorum enim hic positionem defendimus qui negant intelligentiam loco diffiniri... Et id quod est in intelligentia, universale esse dicunt, quod ubique et semper est, abstractum ab omni loci differentia et temporis.’

¹⁶ L. Sturlese, ‘Il “De animatione caeli” di Teodorico di Freiberg’, in R. Creytens and P. Künzle ed., *Xenia Medii Aevi Historiam illustrantia oblata Thomae Kaeppli OP* (Roma: Storia e Letteratura, 1978), pp. 174-247. Also T. Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie*, pp. 143-171.

‘theological’ angels, Olivi had no interest at all in the philosophical entities to which Albert would devote so much energy. Another common point is the importance that both of them attributed to the Pseudo-Dionysius. Olivi was aware of his relations to Proclus that Aquinas had pinpointed. Therefore, if the Franciscan’s overall project can be described as aiming at a ‘deplatonisation of the world’¹⁷, stripping down all natural mediations between God and the human world, one of his most daring task would be to ‘deplatonise’ Dionysius himself.

The main locus for such an effort is Olivi’s own commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, of which only a long preliminary disputed question has been published by F. Delorme¹⁸. This work occupies an important place in the young Franciscan’s career. It is indeed his only œuvre that has been properly ‘published’ before his censure in 1283. The commentary is dedicated to his provincial minister who, as the preface states, had commissioned its writing. This local dignitary, Bermond d’Anduze, who is not heard about anymore after 1280, had been a strong support of Olivi during the previous years. He apparently knew that his protégé had important points to make on the understanding of the Pseudo-Dionysius, and therefore encouraged him to do so. Different clues allow to locate quite precisely the composition of this commentary during the summer classes of 1280 within the Franciscan provincial *studium* in Montpellier¹⁹. Grounding his work on the latest state of scholarship, Olivi had at as his disposal Robert Grosseteste’s translation and was making abundant use of the commentary appended to it, mostly for its semantic and grammatical explanations of the Greek text. Before entering into this commentary, it may be profitable to turn first to some other places where Olivi is making clear, in a shorter and sharper way, the main rule he was following in his explanation of the *Celestial Hierarchy*.

¹⁷ As Prof. Theo Kobusch pointed to me, it would be more proper, but less elegant, to speak of a ‘de-neo-platonisation’, since Plato himself has little to do with it.

¹⁸ Petrus Iohannis Olivi, *Quaestio de angelicis influentiis*, F. Delorme ed. in Bonaventura, *Collationes in Hexaemeron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*, (Quaracchi : Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1934), p. 363-412. I am currently preparing a critical edition of the whole commentary, together with Dr. Piroška Nagy. The *Lectura super librum de Hierarchia Angelica* [henceforth, LSHA] will be quoted below from its best manuscript, Vatican, B.A.V, Urb. lat. 480.

¹⁹ A full study on the chronology of Olivi’s work is due to appear in the *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, synthesing elements exposed in my unpublished PhD (Paris, EHESS, 1999).

A few years before the composition of the commentary, some passing remarks show that he had already made a radical exegetical choice when approaching the Pseudo-Dionysius. These comments appear in a series of disputed questions produced in Languedoc soon after the 1277 Paris condemnation. A number of these texts were strongly attacking the main tenets of Aquinas' angelology.²⁰ Two themes in particular were submitted to intense criticism. In the first place, the lack of material composition in angels was in itself perceived as a dangerous position since conceiving them as pure forms would make them closer to God than to the rest of the creation. And since matter was, for Aquinas, the principle of individuation, this position entailed, as a consequence, that no individual angel could be identical to another, which meant that each angel had to be a species of its own, a useless natural constraint imposed on God's unlimited creative power in Olivi's view.

Another major bone of contention concerned the angelic cognition that would, according to Aquinas and many other thirteenth century theologians, rely on innate ideas, 'connatural intelligible species' through which angels would obtain a knowledge of all that they can know by nature. These innate ideas would also serve as a criteria for the hierarchical distinction of these purely intellectual beings. The higher the angels, the more universal and less numerous ideas would be required.²¹ Olivi's theory of cognition is rejecting and literally reversing the main points of Aquinas' doctrine²². Negating the necessity of any type of intermediary intelligible 'species' in the human cognition, he refused it as well in the case of angels. On that particular issue, he was again pointing to the dependence on a polytheist aspect of pagan philosophy. If intelligences were conceived as gods, their forms could be identical to their essence, a property that, for a Christian, could befit only God. Olivi then perspicaciously noted that Aquinas could not follow his sources thoroughly for that reason.²³

²⁰ These texts have recently been analysed in great detail by Tiziana Suarez-Nani, 'Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 70 (2003), pp. 233-316. On their dating, see 'Olivi et les averroïstes', pp. 255-257.

²¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Summa theologiae*, Ia pars, q. 55, a. 2 and 3.

²² Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle-Ages* (Cambridge :CUP, 1997); Dominik Perler, *Théories de l'intentionnalité au Moyen Age* (Paris : Vrin, 2003).

²³ Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, Bernhard Jansen ed., Quaracchi (Bibliotheca

Turning back to the same issue while commenting chapter 12 of the *Celestial Hierarchy*, he spoke of Aquinas as ‘following the philosophers’ theology’²⁴. He was even more critical of the way in which his adversary pretended to agree, not only with the philosophers (in that case, the *Liber de causis*), but also with the Pseudo-Dionysius. As an answer, Olivi started by stating that all that Dionysius had to say about angels refer only to their state of glory and, therefore, should not be used as a basis to describe their natural cognition.²⁵ The same remark occurs again in the course of a long question on the free will. While arguing in favour of the use of discursive reason in angels, Olivi was insisting that they cannot have instantly an actual knowledge of all the conclusions that can be drawn from the first principles, but would have to acquire it by making in turn the necessary logical inferences. If Dionysius appears to negate such use of reason in angels, this is because he was only concerned with their beatific vision.²⁶

These passing remarks are confirmed by an equally abrupt statement made in the opening considerations of the commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*. As usual in a scholastic prologue, the lecture starts by explaining the subject-matter, the form and the end of the commented book. The first of these questions was here solved in one remarkable sentence : ‘Here, it isn’t dealt with the nature or the natural properties of angels, except maybe secondarily and for other reasons, but it is only dealt with the properties that the angelic orders have obtained through glory and consummated grace’²⁷. Olivi, who did not consider theology as a science, did not put the question in the same terms as Albert had done, but the result was unequivocally similar : for him as well, the *Celestial Hierarchy* is only a work of

Franciscana Medii Aevi, IV-VI), 1922-1926, 3 vols, [henceforth, *Summa*], t. 1, q. 36, p. 641-642 : ‘Secuti sunt autem in hoc paganos philosophos qui ponunt quod intelligentiae sunt naturaliter plenae formis ; in hoc tamen discordant ab eis, quia philosophi illi volunt quod huiusmodi formae seu species sint omnino idem quod simplex essentia earum, nec mirum, quia ponunt eos esse deos, isti vero ponunt esse diversas ab essentia earum’.

²⁴ *LSHA*, fol. 159va : ‘Quidam enim theologie philosophorum sequentes sumpserunt ex hoc argumentum quod angeli sint universales, et quod in superioribus species speciales sint universaliores quam in inferioribus, quia et essentias seu naturas ipsorum superiorum dicunt esse universaliores quam naturas inferiorum’.

²⁵ *Summa*, t. 1, q. 34, p. 613 : ‘in omnibus verbis Dionysii est regulariter advertendum quod semper loquitur de angelis et eorum cognitione, prout sunt beati’.

²⁶ *Summa*, t. 2, q. 57, p. 381-2 : ‘Si autem aliquando a Dionysio videantur dici non habere intellectum discursivum, scias quod ipse fere semper loquitur de eis in quantum sunt beati videntes omnia per Verbum in Verbo’.

²⁷ *LSHA*, fol. 130rb, prol. : ‘Quantum autem ad materiam, sciendum quod hic non agitur de naturis aut proprietatibus naturalibus angelorum, nisi forte aliquando ex consequenti et propter aliud, sed solum hic agitur de proprietatibus ordinum angelicorum quos per gloriam et consummatam gratiam sunt consecuti’.

theology, not of natural philosophy. Its readers should not be fooled by its apparent proximity with pagan philosophy. The ‘most christian theologian’ was believed to be a direct disciple of saint Paul.²⁸ Like John the Evangelist, he had been educated in greek philosophy, and spoke indeed the platonicians’ idiom.²⁹ Yet, after his conversion in Athens, he put it to use for a totally different purpose. Trying to read back through his theological text a philosophical inquiry on the nature of celestial beings would amount to a total misunderstanding of this book.

The crux of the matter can now be stated clearly. In Olivi's view, the celestial hierarchy does not consist in a hierarchy of intellectual natures ; it cannot be depicted as a ladder of spiritual beings, one more perfect than the next, that would somehow fill in the abyss separating God and the human creatures. For Olivi, this gap is unsuperable, and should be widened as much as possible in order to safeguard both the divine and the human freedom. Confronted to such a divide, the angels are irrevocably on the side of the creatures. The hierarchy of which Dionysius is speaking, then, only consists in a hierarchy of ‘consummated grace’, distributed inequally between subjects sharing an equal dignity to receive it.

A long discussion is devoted, in the third chapter of the commentary, to the definition of the hierarchy provided by Dionysius, as consisting in ‘order, science, operation and assimilation to godlikeness’. Discussing Grosseteste's and Hugh of Saint-Victor's discussion of the same issue, Olivi is taking great care to explain that ‘science’ cannot be limited to the intellectual acts but has to encompass the most sacred one which is the act of charity. For that purpose, he manages to translate the initial couple ‘science and operation’ into the scholastic dyad of ‘habitual disposition (*habitus*) and act’. This move allows him to propose, later on,

²⁸ *Summa*, t. 1, q. 16, p. 325 : ‘Dionysius tanquam christianissimus theologus’ ; LSHA, fol. 143ra, cap. 4: ‘Dionysius qui fuit Pauli singularis discipulus’.

²⁹ Petrus Iohannis Olivi, *Lectura super Iohannem*, Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. X dext. 8, fol. 6vb-7ra : ‘conformans se phylosophie grecorum cuius et in quorum lingua hoc evangelium scribebat, utitur nominibus abstractis et sepe cum articulis in designationem precellentie et transcendentie divine. Quando enim Platonici volebant proprie exprimere Deum et eius perfectiones vel in abstracto vel in neutro substantivo cum articulis distinctis dicebant ‘lo bonum’, ‘lo ens’, ‘la vita’, et aliquando addebant ibi ‘per se’ vel ‘super’, dicendo ‘lo per se ens’, ‘lo per se bonum’ vel ‘lo superbonum ens’ vel ‘super bonum’ et huius modis loquendi multum utitur Dyonisius in libris suis tamquam Grecus et in grecorum philosophorum sapientia enutritus’

his own definition of hierarchy as consisting in ‘dispositions and acts of grace, and an order of dignity and primacy or subjection and inferiority, either connected to the dispositions and acts of grace or comprehended in them’³⁰. Such a definition would certainly prevent any possibility of reading the text in a noetical key.

Among the consequences of this interpretative choice, Olivi had to take an unusual position, defending the strict equality of the human and the angelic souls. A later question is dealing with the compensation of the fallen angels by the elected. In as much as their absolute beings are concerned, the intellectual part of the human soul (*mens humana*) is strictly equal to angelic mind.³¹ Thanks to this identity, a limited number of humans are able compensate the fallen angels in the celestial court. The same theme is defended in the course of the commentary, against Aquinas’ distinction between the ‘rational’ nature of humans and the ‘intellectual’ nature of angels. Although such a distinction is indeed grounded in the text itself, Olivi insists that Dionysius is not talking here about the respective essences of human and angels, but only of their hierarchical statuses. He is furthermore opposing to this distinction the famous promise that ‘we will be like angels in the sky’ (Mt. 22, 30)³², understanding the comparative as a real sign of identity.

Another difficulty was to explain how one and only gift of divine grace, identical in substance, could be distributed inequally. Speaking with extreme caution on a topic for which no experimental knowledge is available, Olivi suggest that this sole gift could contain a

³⁰ *LSHA*, fol. 145va, cap. 6 : ‘Sicut enim ex hiis que supra dicta sunt patet, ratio ierarchie consistit in habitibus et actibus gratie et in ordine dignitatis et presidentie vel subiectionis et subsistentie habitibus et actibus gratie connexa vel in illis comprehensa’. This definition encompasses both the celestial hierarchy, where the order of dignities is included in the acts and habits, and the ecclesiastical, where these terms are only connected together.

³¹ *Summa*, t. 1, q. 48, p. 759 : ‘quidam non indocte dicunt quod mens angelica et humana quoad absolutam quidditatem specierum simpliciter sint aequales, in suis vero individuis iuxta beneplacitum creatoris possunt accipere dispare gradus quantum ad substantialia et quantum ad accidentalia et quantum ad natura et gratuita. Unde et animam Christi quoad omnia credimus nobiliorem omni mente angelica’

³² *LSHA*, fol. 142va-b : ‘Tertio forte dubitabit quis de hoc quod nos vocat rationales, angelos vero intellectuales ac si sint duo gradus essentialis entium gradatim ascendentium, sicut sunt esse et vivere. Ex quo quidam acceperunt quod intellectualitate sit differentia specifica angeli, rationale vero sit differentia ipsius hominis [...] hic ad presens tamen dicere sufficiat quod ex verbis Dionysii hoc trahi non potest, quia ipse non curat hic loqui de diversitate essentiali hominum et angelorum, sed solum de diversitate status eorum ierarchici, quin potius ipse alibi vult quod salva tota specie nostre nature, nos erimus aliquando intellectuales sicut nec sunt ipsi, quod esse non posset si predicta sunt vera’. See also, fol. 145va : ‘Tenemus enim pro firmo et hoc ipsum auctor iste dicit libro de *Divinis Nominibus*, capitulo primo, confirmans hoc per verbum Christi dicentis Mt. 22°, quod erimus sicut angeli Dei in celo’

multiplicity of partial reasons³³. In the same way as the human body is composed of a plurality of partial forms, that can be added or diminished without endangering the unity of the whole, one act can be subdivided into a multiplicity of partial reasons, closely united with one another. Following that model, celestial hierarchies and orders could differ according to the number of partial reasons they would receive out the same gift of grace³⁴. Degrees within the angelic hierarchy would then only depend on this unequal distribution. The conclusion of such an explanation leads once more to a total reversal of Aquinas' views. Instead of being defined by its most universal and simple character, the highest beatific vision would be described as encompassing the most numerous partial reasons under which God can be perceived by the glorious minds.

A major theological concern was underlying Olivi's position. Earlier in 1280, he had been working on another treatise that has unfortunately not survived. It would have been dealing with 'the superiority of Christ's soul and his mother's over all the other ones'.³⁵ Some elements of this discussion can be found in the commentary itself, but even more in the preliminary question. To begin with, the equality of human and angelic minds was precisely argued in order to conclude with the confirmation of an article of faith : 'Thus we believe that the soul of Christ is more noble than any angelic mind'³⁶. The affirmation is as clear as can be. The human soul of Christ, accompanied by his mother's, occupies the first rank of the celestial court, higher than any angel³⁷. According to some visions, saint Francis would

³³ *LSHA*, fol. 146ra : 'Circa perscrutationem huius questionis et consimilium est cum multa sobrietate iudicii procedendum, quia circa archana supercelestium modicam aut nullam habemus experientiam ... Occurrunt autem mee modicitati ad presens duo modi satis, ut credo, probabiles [...] Primus igitur est quod, eisdem donis aliquo modo eiusdem speciei existentibus in omnibus ordinibus et ierarchiis, possint plures rationes ad invicem modo aliquo specie differentes in predictis donis multiformiter comprehendi, ex quarum diversitate et mutua preeminencia formalis diversitas ierarchiarum et ordinum statuatur'.

³⁴ *LSHA*, fol. 146vb 'ponit modus iste quod in superioribus ordinis et ierarchiis, caritas et sapientia et consimilia dona, plures et eminenciores rationes amoris et sapientie in se habeant quam in inferioribus, sicut scientia magistri plures habet in se rationes scientiales eiusdem scientie quam habeat scientia discipuli sui, et pro tanto modus iste ponit ierarchias differre per rationes donorum varias et inter se specie differentes, quia licet habitus totalis ipsorum donorum sunt idem specie iuxta modum superius prescriptum, nihilominus habent inter se plures rationes partiales ab invicem specie differentes'.

³⁵ See my 'Les œuvres perdues d'Olivi : essai de reconstitution', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 91 (1998), pp. 370-1.

³⁶ *Summa*, q. 48, p. 759 : 'Unde et animam Christi quoad omnia credimus nobiliorem omni mente angelica'.

³⁷ *LSHA*, fol. 145vb : 'Certa fide tenemus scilicet quod Christus in quantum homo et eius mater, qui utique sunt eiusdem speciei nobiscum, sunt in gradu ierarchico transcendente omnes ierarchias et ordines angelorum et

already occupy the third rank, having taken the place left vacant by Lucifer³⁸. This very possibility required, not only a natural equality of all minds, but even more that the principle of hierarchisation would belong to the realm of grace.

The same requirements of faith are at the center of the main theme under discussion in the long preliminary question which had been disputed shortly before the commentary. Here, in a rather solemn way, Olivi was admitting he was parting with ‘the common opinion of modern doctors’ who refuse to admit that any angel could contribute to the substantial glory of an inferior, but would only play an indirect role³⁹. This general agreement was a consequence of the condemnation of 1241, that emphasised strongly the personal and direct character of the beatific vision⁴⁰. Olivi felt it was possible to follow a different track, treating the common opinion with respect, but no more than a human fallible opinion⁴¹. The possibility of an active part played by the superior in the beatific vision of the inferior is argued in a complex and subtle way. One of the crucial argument runs as follow. While seeing God, the angel, in all his intellectual clarity, become his mirror and his expressive image, in such a manner that the lower angels, by seeing him, see reflected in him a vision of God to which they do not have a direct access.⁴² Such a vision, reflected in the superior angels, is indeed

hominum beatorum’.

³⁸ *Summa*, t. 1, q. 47, p. 753: ‘Amplius, ad hoc faciunt multae revelationes viris sanctis divinitis factae in quibus est aperte monstratum quod sancti migrantes ad caelos assumuntur ad loca angelorum qui inde sunt lapsi ; sicut et de patre nostro Francisco sollemnis visio fertur quod pro suae humilitatis excessu obtinere debebat sedem primi ac supremi capitis angelorum qui pro sua superbia ad infima ruit’.

³⁹ F. Delorme ed., *De angelicis influentiis* : ‘est hodie modernorum doctorum communis opinio quod nullus angelus illuminat inferiorem angelum in hiis que spectant ad eorum gloriam substantialem’.

⁴⁰ Marie-Dominique Chenu, ‘Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIIIe siècle’, *Mélanges A. Pelzer*, Louvain, 1947, p. 159-181, repris in *La Théologie au douzième siècle*, Paris, Vrin, 1976³.

⁴¹ *De angelicis influentiis* : ‘Licet enim cum reverencia sit tractandus pro eo quod est omnium doctorum huius temporis, nisi tamen prius indubitabili fide claresceret, quod est de mente et substantia catholice fidei, non est ei tamquam catholice fidei adherendum, sed solum tamquam humane opinioni modernorum doctorum’. The critique is especially aiming at Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia pars, q. 106, a. 1, ad 1 : ‘omnes angeli, tam superiores quam inferiores, immediate vident Dei essentiam ; et quantum ad hoc, unus non docet alium’. But all modern doctors, including Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure, are indeed criticised.

⁴² *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 372-373 : ‘Constat enim quod illa intellectualis et habitualis claritas et illa actualis visio, qua superior angelus videt Deum, est Dei speculum et imago expressissima et suo obiecto, scilicet Deo, immediatissima et coniunctissima et totaliter in eum tamquam in suum intimum obiectum ordinata et relata, in tantum quod nullus posset videre actum illius visionis quin eo ipso aliquo modo videret Deum prout est eius obiectum ... [angelus inferior] videt enim Deum prout est obiectum gloriae superiorum ordinum et prout in eo refulget et repraesentatur’. It should be noted that Olivi had a strong taste for mirrors. Cf. *Summa*, t. 3, q. 73, p. 67 : ‘Post hoc attende de reflexione aspectus a speculis, quod est praemissis admirabilius, unde et specula in nostro vulgari vocamus miracula et speculari in eis vocamus mirari’.

adding something to the substantial glory of the lower ones, making available to their more limited capacities an increase of beatitude that could not have obtained by themselves.⁴³

The key to this innovation owes again to the same move, anchoring the celestial hierarchy on the created human soul of Christ. Having been so closely united to God, this soul now enjoys him in an incomparable way. Its ascent to the top of the celestial court certainly gave the angels a new and higher taste of the divinity.⁴⁴ In other words, the event of the Passion did affect the unchanging history of the eviternal beings. In the same fashion, one can deduce that the ascent of Francis must have had a similar effect. There is no objection to the possibility that the substantial glory of the blessed would increase constantly, while new elect are taking their place within the celestial court⁴⁵. These considerations are gradually leading us to the core of what Olivi was trying to convey in his reworking of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus. Against the Neoplatonic mediating role of the intelligences, he was insisting on the role of Christ as the sole mediator between the believer and the creator. His comments on the very first lines of the *Celestial Hierarchy* are taking advantage of the initial invocation that opens the book to recall that role.⁴⁶ This theme is the real center of gravity of the whole commentary. The true meaning of the shift Olivi is undertaking in his interpretation of the

⁴³ *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 367 : 'Divinum enim obiectum et multae rationes divinae, quae in eo sunt, prout sunt participatae a superiori angelo, per eius habitus et actus redduntur magis proportionales aspectui inferioris angeli quam si ipse angelus solummodo aspiceret Deum prout est ab omnibus segregatus et in nullo participatus. Unde Deus quodam modo praesentatur et praesens exhibetur aspectui inferioris angeli per hoc quod superior angelus praesentat sibi suam propriam gloriam substantialem, in qua Deus praesentialiter possidetur et participetur'.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 373 : 'Hoc autem evidenter patet consideranti quid gloriae provenit angelis ex gloria animae Christi a tempore incarnationis Verbi et citra. Anima enim illa habet unum gradum et unam rationem divini amoris divinique gustus, qui nulli creaturae potuit unquam per se et in se communicari, scilicet amare et gustare Deum ut proprium suppositum [...] Quando igitur hunc gradum experti fuerunt angeli in ipsa anima Christi sic ipsam eis viscerosissime expandentem, nunquid eo sursum acti sunt ad percipiendum illum gustum in ipsomet Verbo seu ad gustandum Deum prout est obiectum illius gradus talis amoris et gustus?'

⁴⁵ *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 405 : 'Forte dicetur quod secundum hoc continue cresceret substantialis gloria beatorum, quia in nova glorificatione cuiuslibet animae de novo introeuntis caelos cresceret gloria eorum, saltem in glorificatione illarum quae ad superiores ordines assumuntur. Quod isti [sc. Olivi] non habent pro inconvenienti [...] Quanto enim aliquod corpus in suis partibus principalibus plus crescit et perficitur, tanto ex hoc redundantior et perfectior virtus in omnibus suis partibus resultare videtur ; sed corpus hierarchiae caelestis in nova glorificatione animarum crescit in suis partibus principalibus'.

⁴⁶ *LSHA*, fol. 131ra. : 'Ex prima enim propositione qua dicitur quod omnis perfecta illuminatio a Deo in nos descendit et sic per consequens in Deum nos reducit sequitur quod si nos volumus illuminari ad contemplandum supercelestia, quod debemus invocare Christum qui est ipsa veritas et essentialius fontani ac paterni luminis et quo omnis humana illuminatio procedit, et per quam tamquam per nostrum mediatorem ad patrem qui est fons luminis nos reducitur. Hinc igitur est quod ante primam conclusionem, istam primo interponit, dans in hoc ipso nobis exemplum inchoandi nostras inquisitiones et studia ab oratione et a Christi invocata intermediatione'.

celestial hierarchy lies in this defense of the exclusivity of the Christic mediation. Beyond this christological emphasis, one can also sense the importance of the historical dimension that is being introduced here. The dynamic conception of the diffusion of beatific vision among the elect and the glorious angels can be read as a sign that, in his view, eternity will not be a stable state⁴⁷ ; it will rather be the continuation of an history of grace, of which the Incarnation has been the central event. Under all appearance, the diffusion of glory will not cease, as in a positive thermodynamic system.

Going back to our initial confrontation with Albert the Great, some conclusion can also be drawn at an epistemological level. The core of Olivi's attitude was not to distinguish between fields of inquiry, but rather between orders of reality. The disconnection between the orders of grace and nature he is propounding is a striking feature, that deserves to be taken as a parallel to the Dominican's disjunction. On the same issue, a strong point is being made in the first question *De novissimis*. Among arguments tending to prove that happiness can be obtained without the vision of God, one has a clear Neoplatonic stamp. It states that the order of final return (*reditus*) to God has to conform itself to the order of this initial exit from God (*exitus*). Angels, who played in the role of intermediaries in the exit, should have a similar part in the return⁴⁸. The refutation poses no problem, but allows to make a spectacular statements. It doesn't suffice to stress that angels weren't in any way intermediaries in the creation process. More importantly, Olivi stresses that, since the final return to God belongs to the supernatural order, it doesn't need to coincide with the natural process of production of things. The only supernatural symetry lies in the fact that creation was the act of God alone, as

⁴⁷ *Summa*, t. 3, q. 75, p. 144 : 'Et quia superineffabilis et superimmensa et superexcessiva lux Dei offert se beatis intellectibus ut infinitissime praedominans aspectui eorum, ideo ipse aspectus et eius visio sic se habent acsi summe agerentur seu agitentur ab ea. Non intelligas autem quod haec agitatio sit inquietativa ac divaricativa et repercussiva et confractiva aspectus beatorum, immo est suavissima et summe confortativa et excitativa ac sursum activa et acuitiva et simplicificativa seu coadunativa aspectus eorum'.

⁴⁸ Petrus Iohannis Olivi, *Quaestiones de novissimis*, P. Maranesi ed. (Grottaferrata : Coll. S. Bonaventura, 2004), p. 91 : 'Item, ordo finalis reductionis omnium in Deum debet conformari ordini primordiali exitus rerum a Deo, ergo sicut in exitu sunt angeli ordinati tamquam intermedii inter nos et Deum, sic debet esse et in finali redditu'.

much as the final beatitude is in God alone.⁴⁹ A third remarks hammers the point home, by recalling that the order of grace doesn't necessarily follow that of nature. To the contrary, in order to let the grace of the benefactor show more, the last can become first and vice versa.

The confrontation with Albertus Magnus allows us to discern an apparent major disregard in Olivi. While the Dominican was distinguishing and articulating two levels of reality, the Franciscan doesn't seem to have had any concern at leaving aside the whole natural science of the heavens. Still, it cannot be said that the price for Olivi's radical theological interpretation of the *Celestial Hierarchy* was a necessary neglect of all cosmology. One has to recall here his own peculiar strategies on strictly philosophical issues. His main point, as he often stated, was to put under question the aristotelitian science that was received, so he felt and feared, as revealed truth and his author revered as the 'God of our times'. Following Siger of Brabant, he insisted that philosophy cannot be contented with authority argument⁵⁰. The main grounds on which he tried to prove Aristotle wrong were the definition of the categories on the one hand, and problems of physics on the other hand, especially dealing with movement.

In what is left of his literary output, little attention is given to the cosmological issues. But the little there is shows that Olivi was ready to go on, on this topic as well, with the same contesting attitude. For instance, he was ready to defend the notion that the matter of all corporeal bodies would belong to the same species, not being bothered by Aristotle's view that the incorruptible matter of the heavens belongs to a different gender than the corruptible one.⁵¹ In the same vein, the *De novissimis* contains a long and imaginative discussion of the

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 93 : 'Secundo dicendum quod pro quanto finalis reductio est supernaturalis, non debet coaequari naturali ordine exitus rerum, sed solum eius supernaturali ordini in quantum est supernaturalis. Et hoc modo invenitur ibi coaequatio, quia sicut creatio est a solo Deo, sic et finalis beatificatio est a solo ipso et in ipso. Tertio dicendum est quod ordo gratie non necessario nec semper sequitur ordinem nature, quin potius aliquando ut gratia largitoris magis appareat ...'

⁵⁰ See David Burr, 'Petrus Ioannis Olivi and the Philosophers' *Franciscan Studies*, 31 (1971), pp. 41-71 ; François-Xavier Putallaz, *Insolente liberté. Controverses et condamnations au XIIIe siècle*, (Fribourg : Editions Universitaires, 1995), pp. 132-135 ; Sylvain Piron, 'Olivi et les averroistes', art. cit., pp. 260-265.

⁵¹ *Summa*, t. 1, q. 48 : 'tota materia corporalis omnium corporum est secundum se eadem specie [...] Et sic dicunt aliqui de perspicuitate caeli et aeris ; non enim curant isti de positione Aristotelis quae dicit quod caelum

possibilities of sensorial bliss in the heavens, accepting that they could be ‘the vehicle and medium of the most noble melodies, sweet-smelling fragrances and the most pleasing flavours’.⁵² This digression ends with a severe note, recalling that it is not the task of theology to dwell so long on such topics. The whole discussion was in fact meant to respond to the opinion of philosophers who ground their science on sensorial experience and deny such possibilities out of insufficient reasons.⁵³ In the end, such an attitude was leaving open, for purely theological reasons, the possibility of a non-aristotelitian cosmology, although not attemptig seriously at fulfilling such a program.

But if something is lost, with the disregard of cosmology, something could be gained as well with Olivi's angelology. As we noticed, with him, the angels are more akin to humans than in most theologians. Therefore, in a more intense fashion, some discussions of their properties and actions can serve as a test case for discussing anthropological questions, under the laboratory condition of an experimental exclusion of the bodily aspects of humanity. And since the main activity of the beatified angels and the elect was sharing their love of God and expressing their mutual love, these theological texts are suprisingly revealing important reflections on human love as well. The initial question *De novissimis*, on the otherworldly beatitude, is trying to argue from the human thisworldly experience, in order to figure out what is awaiting the blessed. This type of demonstration is notabl put to use, in order to show that love and vision are necessarily connected. Since ‘all perfect friend wants to see his higher friend, at least from time to time’, ‘the desire of vision belongs to the definition of friendship, at least the perfect one’⁵⁴. The other major disputed question in that series is dealing with the

tanquam incorruptibile non habet aliquod unum genus cum elementis corruptibilibus’

⁵² *De novissimis*, pp. 107-112. Cf. p. 108 : ‘nobilitatis est eis quod possint esse veicula et subiecta nobilissimarum melodiarum et odoriferarum fragrantium et suavissimorum saporum’.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 112 : ‘horum profundior et prolixior pertractatio non est sic theologico negotio necessaria ut in ea debeamus diutius occupari’ ; p. 108 : ‘Si enim dicas quod hoc non possit esse nisi in elementaribus aut in mixtis ex quatuor elementis, dicetur tibi quod probes et cogeris fateri non habere aliam rationem nisi quod nondum es hox expertus nisi in corporibus inferius quod palpasti. Unde nec philosophi huius mundi ad hoc aliam afferunt rationem et ideo supponunt hoc tamquam principium experimento probatum, et ecce optimam rationem philosophorum, dicunt enim, non sumus aliter experti, ergo non est nec potest aliter esse, ac si omne quod est et esse potest, sit subiectum sensuali experientie ipsorum’.

⁵⁴ *De novissimis*, p. 74 : ‘Omnis enim perfectus amicus summum amicum suum desiderat videre, saltem aliquando ; et precipue illum quem super se et super omnia amat, et potissime quando ipsum in tantum super omnia diligit quod omnia alia nichil reputat respectu ipsius, nec sibi placent nisi solum propter ipsum et in ipso

mutual love of the elect, trying to define whether one loves more his superior in the celestial court than oneself⁵⁵. Olivi was certainly not the first one to raise the topic ; Bonaventure had already provided lengthy and subtle discussion on the various ways in which one could either prefer oneself, his superior or his inferior. Out of the many arguments displayed to show the superiority of the love of others over self-love, Olivi is stressing the instinct of being ready to die rather than being deprived of the society of the loved ones⁵⁶.

Even the discussion of angelic locution in the commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* is marked by such emphasis⁵⁷. The Franciscan was not content to discuss the possible modalities of angelic speech, like most of his colleague would do, sometimes at great length like Giles of Rome. He was also taking into account the only possible contents of such linguistic experiences, which would be concerned with sharing their mutual love :

‘It is clear that it belongs to the nature of perfect friendship, to enter inside and be intimately joined to what one loves above all in his friend, that is, the heart and the love of this friend. Accordingly, we see among ourselves that lovers try, as much as they can, to pour their heart or the interior of their heart into their friends heart, and vice versa. And because, while they are down here, they cannot achieve it perfectly, they do it through the intermediary of the bodies, as much as they can’.

‘This society of friends requires a mutual company, and a mutual enjoyment of each other, that will never be perfect unless they can visibly see their interior faces, and

... Talis amicus non potest beatificari seu quietari nisi prout habeat quod super omnia amat, scilicet visibili presentia et societate tanti amati perfrui. ... Ergo omnino de ratione amicitie saltem perfecte est desiderium visionis. Item certum est omni homini quod visio rei multum dilecte vehementissime inflamat et amantem iocundat, sed beatitudo dicit ultimum de potentia inflammationis et iocundationis super re amata.’

⁵⁵ See the important discussion of this text in Alain Boureau, *La religion de l'Etat. La construction de la République étatique dans le discours théologique de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 2006).

⁵⁶ *De novissimis*, p. 133 : ‘Preterea, etiam in vita ista videmus quod tanto amore amicitie quis afficitur ad filium vel patrem vel fratrem vel sponsam vel socium, quod libentissime se exponit morti pro eius ; et est sibi summa mors vivere sine ipsis ; et multis videtur quod tantum vellent non esse quam in eternum vivere sine omni amabili societate. Ergo talis amor socialis videtur se habere ad amorem sui solius fere sicut se habet forma ad materiam.’

⁵⁷ Petrus Iohannis Olivi, ‘Quaestio de locutionibus angelorum’, *Oliviana*, 1, 2003, [on line - <http://revues.oliviana.org>], : ‘constat hoc esse de natura perfecte amicitie posse, scilicet intimari et intime iungi ei quod in amico pre ceteris amat, hoc autem est cor et amor sui amici. Unde et in nobis videmus quod amantes quantum possunt, gestiunt suum cor seu viscera sui cordis refundere in cor amici et e converso, et quia dum hic sunt, non possunt hoc ad plenum, faciunt hoc per corpus intermedium prout possunt’.

experimentally taste their interior loves, and unless they intimately embrace each other in the most spiritual hugs of each other's hearts'⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ Ibid. : 'Perfecte etiam societati quia perfecta societas amicorum requirit mutuum convictum et mutuam sui ipsorum fruicionem que perfecte nunquam erit nisi visibiliter videant suas facies interiores et nisi experimentaliter gustent suos interiores amores et nisi per intellectualissimas adhesiones utriusque corda se intime amplexentur'