

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

君主国

Monarchy

Dante

但丁

Edited by

PRUE SHAW

中国政法大学出版社

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剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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To the memory of my father

ROBERT ALLAN SHAW

who founded the first Italian Department in an Australian University
and who taught me to love Dante

Acknowledgement

This book reproduces the English translation, and an abridged version of the introduction and notes, of Dante, *Monarchia*, the fourth volume in the series Cambridge Medieval Classics, where the English version is printed facing the Latin text, and is accompanied by a Latin index, a Map of the World according to Orosius, and a more extensive bibliography.

Introduction

Why read the *Monarchy*, Dante's treatise on political theory? A minor work by one of the world's great poets, written in the moribund language which he wisely rejected in favour of the vernacular when writing at full creative pressure, argued in a manner which can seem needlessly pedantic and repetitive in its procedures and its formulations, it expresses ideas which have been described as backward-looking, utopian and even fanatical. Yet a recent book on the political thought of the period can unselfconsciously refer to the *Monarchy* as a masterpiece,¹ and it is surely a text of remarkable interest. The originality and power of the political vision it embodies, the passion with which that vision is experienced and expressed, shine through the alien language and the alienating methodology. The small effort the text requires of its modern readers is amply repaid by the sense it conveys of a man passionately engaged in the political debates of his age, but equally passionate in his determination that the pressure of present concerns should not blind us to underlying principles. Only a grasp of universal truths about human beings and human life will furnish an answer to the fundamental question of how people should live together and what form of political organization best suits human nature.

The attempt to argue from first principles is one of the most strikingly original aspects of the *Monarchy*, but it is not a work of ivory-tower idealism, of theory divorced from political experience. Dante had been actively involved in the political life of Florence in

¹ Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe 1250-1450*, Cambridge 1992, p. 96.

the closing years of the thirteenth century and the early years of the fourteenth; he had enrolled in a Guild in order to be eligible for public office, had served on important councils, and had been elected in due course as one of the six priors who governed the city for periods of two months at a time. In October 1301 he had been sent as one of three ambassadors representing the commune to the papal curia in Rome, on a peace-keeping mission to Pope Boniface VIII, whose aggressive and duplicitous intervention in the affairs of Dante's native city threatened its independence and stability. He was never to see Florence again. As the competing factions within the Gueft party which controlled the city manoeuvred for power, a trumped-up charge of corruption in office was brought against him in his absence; the Black Guelfs had secretly made a treacherous alliance with the unscrupulous pope and so were able to oust the Whites (of whom Dante at this stage was one). A decree of January 1302 condemned him to a large fine, two years banishment from Tuscany and permanent exclusion from public office. The fine remaining unpaid within the stipulated three days, in March he was condemned to death at the stake should he ever return.

A political exile for the remaining twenty years of his life, he travelled throughout Italy, observing at first hand the devastating effects of factional intrigue and papal meddling in temporal affairs. What he had already experienced directly in Florence – public disorder, lawlessness, treachery, lust for power subverting any possibility of peaceful and orderly public life conducted according to principle and not shameless self-interest – he now saw as endemic to the whole country. His horizons broadened in exile to the point where he no longer identified himself with any political grouping, although the pro-imperial stance of his later years is closer to the Ghibellines than the Guelfs. Whether he wrote the *Monarchy* while there was still hope that the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII could unite Italy (and provide effective secular leadership for a country whose fragmentation into smaller political units and endless internecine warfare were exploited by a ruthlessly ambitious papacy), or whether he wrote it after these hopes had evaporated, is a question to which scholarship can give only a conjectural answer. But it is certain that when Dante engages with the centuries-long debate on the relative powers of pope and emperor (or 'monarch', as Dante usually calls him), his conclusions are born of direct and bitter experience.

In this sense, then, the *Monarchy* is not a work of theory divorced from practical experience of politics; rather, it grows out of painful personal experience of political life, and a thwarted desire to participate effectively in the public life of his native city. In another sense, though, the treatise is purely theoretical. Dante is arguing about principles and the conclusions to be drawn from them. The arguments are abstract, concerned to elucidate fundamental truths. At no point does he consider how his conclusions might be implemented in practice. Where Aristotle famously collected and examined the constitutions of 158 city-states as a preliminary to the elaboration of his *Politics*, and frequently refers to specific instances of actual political practice, Dante's argument is conducted on a different plane altogether, and can seem curiously devoid of concrete detail. He is interested not in how things are, but how they ought to be, though how they ought to be reflects, at a more profound level, how they really are, being based on a true understanding of human nature.

Although he is treading well-trodden ground – the relationship of papacy and empire is the central subject of political debate in the later Middle Ages – Dante's conclusions are entirely his own. This is especially true of the first two books of the treatise. Each of the three books addresses one of the issues identified in the opening pages as a source of confusion and therefore a proper subject of investigation: Is monarchy necessary to the well-being of the world? Did the Roman people take on the office of the monarch by right? Does the monarch derive his authority directly from God, or from some other source? Book I offers us a meditation on political theory, Book II an interpretation of human history, and Book III a contribution to the most fiercely debated political issue of Dante's own lifetime, the role of the papacy in relation to secular power.

The arguments developed in the first book to prove that mankind is best governed by a single world-ruler or monarch, whose sovereignty and jurisdiction encompass and override those of all lesser kingdoms and their rulers, are largely derived from Aristotle. But before these arguments can be advanced and defended, a principle must be established which provides the point of reference to which we return for validation and confirmation that our arguments are sound. (Each of the books will start with the enunciation of such a principle: the sense of an ordering and shaping intelligence which imposes a meaningful pattern on complex material is strong

throughout. There is no point, Dante will remind us later, again echoing Aristotle, in arguing with those who deny first principles.)

The principle enunciated in the first book is this: mankind considered as a totality has its own function or purpose, a purpose which cannot be fulfilled by any individual, however brilliant, or by any single group or race, however gifted, but only by the whole of humanity considered precisely as a whole. That purpose is to realize human intellectual potential, *simul* (all at once) and *semper* (all the time). Man is set above the animals by his capacity to reason, and below the angels by the limitations placed on that capacity by his earthly body. His knowledge of the world comes to him through his senses; his reason interprets the data they supply. It is man's unique hybrid status in the created world – the combination in him, and in him alone, of mind and body – which defines his essential nature and identifies humanity's purpose, whose fulfilment is thus a collective enterprise. The means necessary to achieve this goal is peace, for only peace enables human beings to realize their potential fully and continuously.

Any collective enterprise will require an individual to lead, guide and direct those engaged in it. This is true of any social grouping, from the smallest (the individual household or extended family) to the largest (the *regnum*). Here Dante is closely following Aristotle, whose authority he explicitly invokes, but for Aristotle the city-state was the largest political entity. Dante adds the kingdom to Aristotle's list, following medieval theorists like Aquinas and Giles of Rome, and reflecting the political reality of medieval Europe, where the independent Italian communes or city-republics provided a parallel to the Greek city-state, but where larger kingdoms included many cities within their borders. Dante's final step brings him to a conclusion which is not Aristotelian at all: if humanity as a whole is engaged in a collective enterprise, it too will need a leader or ruler to ensure that it achieves its goal. A single sovereign authority set over all lesser rulers is thus a logical necessity, given the nature of human beings and the purpose of their lives.

A first group of arguments in support of this thesis turns on the ordering or structuring of reality, and the relationship of that ordering to final ends or goals. Again the argument is Aristotelian, but the conclusion is not. Wholes consist of the sum of their parts and are prior to and superior to any single constituent element.

This is true of any aspect of the natural world (of the human body, for example; of an army; of any political grouping of whatever size). If we consider humanity as a whole made up of lesser parts (kingdoms, cities, communities, families), we find that each of these parts requires a leader; logically then the whole must also require a leader. Equally and inversely, if we consider humanity as one part of a larger whole (the universe or created world), then again we find that a single ordering principle operates in the cosmos; it ought also therefore to operate in each of its component parts, of which the human race is one. Humanity so ordered will most closely resemble God, by mirroring the principle of oneness or unity of which he is the supreme example. The analogy from macrocosm to microcosm (which lies at the centre of Book I) is now extended to include the concept of law: just as the whole sphere of heaven, which contains the created universe in Ptolemaic astronomy, is governed by a single movement (that of the *Primum Mobile*) and a single source of motion (God), so the human race is best ordered if it reflects this pattern or structure by having a single ruler and a single law emanating from him.

A second group of arguments addresses the issues raised by this first intimation of the monarch's function, which is that of peace-keeper and lawgiver. Without a world-ruler there will be no way of resolving the conflicts which inevitably arise among lesser kings and princes competing for territory and power. There must be a supreme authority capable of resolving such disputes or else mankind is condemned to endemic conflict. The resolution of conflict must be just, but the person most able to enact justice is a world-ruler: his will alone will not be incapacitated by greed or acquisitiveness, and his power, being absolute, can ensure that justice is enforced. The meticulous examination of the concepts of justice, volition, appetite, power, greed, love, and their complex inter-relationships, is grounded in Aristotle; the conclusion is Dante's own.

The function of the monarch is next clarified in relation to freedom. Freedom, which comes from free will, is the source of human happiness both on earth and in the afterlife. The human race is at its best when it is most free. But it is most free when it is governed by a world-ruler, because only then does humanity exist for its own sake. This fundamental point about autonomy and means and ends

takes us to the heart of Dante's argument: laws and legislators, political regimes and those who wield power in them, exist for the sake of the citizens and not vice versa. Their power should be neither a means to personal aggrandizement, nor an end in itself, but a means to ensure that their fellow human beings can achieve self-fulfilment individually and collectively. Only a world-ruler can guarantee this. Dante draws on Aristotle in identifying three forms of faulty or perverted government (tyranny, oligarchy and mob-rule), under which men do not exist for their own sake, but become instruments serving some other end (the interests of the tyrant, the few in power, or the mob). Under the overlordship of a world-ruler these three forms of government (the rule of one, of a few, of the majority) can function as they ought and aim at freedom, and thus the happiness and self-fulfilment of their subjects. The monarch as overlord will be best able to dispose other kings and princes, for he alone can, by virtue of his role, be free of greed, which perverts judgment and obstructs justice.

The monarch's function as lawgiver is next considered in terms of the Aristotelian principle of efficiency or economy of effort. The unnecessary multiplication of means is bad: what can be achieved by a single agent is better so achieved. The law must come from a single source, even though in practice there will be regional variations in the implementation of laws to accord with local circumstances.

Dante's final argument is the argument from unity. We come full circle back to our first principle, humanity's collective endeavour, but now seen in terms of how wills can most effectively be directed collectively. Again the reasoning is Aristotelian: unity is logically prior to goodness; humanity as a whole is a kind of concord, and concord is a good; concord therefore has its root in unity; thus the collective will of humanity requires a single guide, and this need can only be met in the person of a world-ruler.

Aristotle's science provides the view of the world which underpins Dante's political theory, which is grounded in Aristotelian notions of causation, potentiality, priority, number, and order. But Dante owes to Aristotle not just his assumptions about the nature of the world and the way it is to be described and understood, but also the methodology of his treatise. The discipline of Aristotelian formal logic underpins Dante's argument in this sense, providing

the procedures and the terminology around which it is constructed: the sense of how an investigation should be conducted and what constitutes a sound argument; the need to agree first principles and use syllogistic reasoning to reach conclusions whose validity is unimpeachable; the technique of disposing of opponents' arguments by identifying and naming the fallacies they embody. Paradoxically, if one were asked to nominate the single medieval text which throws most light on the *Monarchy*, it would have to be not the Latin version of the *Politics* (of which Dante may or may not have had first-hand knowledge), nor even William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Ethics* (which he certainly knew, along with Aquinas' commentary on it), but the *Summule logicales* of Petrus Hispanus (later Pope John XXI), a work which not only details with painstaking thoroughness the procedures of dialectic and disputation, but also functions as a compendium of definitions of the basic concepts of Aristotelian philosophy (genus, species, substance, accident, agent, patient, generation, corruption, form, matter, the four kinds of cause and the five kinds of priority).

Dante of course sees Aristotle through a Christian filter – the filter of his own Catholic faith, his knowledge of the Bible and the writings of the church fathers, the commentaries on Aristotle of Aquinas and others. Although there are striking points of convergence between Aristotelian and Christian thinking on such central questions of ethics as *cupiditas* and its destructive role in human social life, there is little in the arguments of Book I that is specifically Christian – even the argument from the unity of God and the discussion of free will have Aristotelian parallels. But if we look at the opening and closing chapters which frame these central arguments the Christian focus is insistent and determining.

The opening chapter, in which Dante explains his purpose, is rich in biblical allusions, explicit and implicit. The fruit-bearing tree, the buried talent, the disinterested pursuit of truth with no thought of financial gain, the prize honourably won and bringing deserved glory, the confident trust in help from on high: all these are resonant images for a reader familiar with the Bible. Indeed the opening words of the treatise reveal the quintessential amalgam of Aristotelianism and Christianity which is to be its most distinctive feature. The Aristotelian observation that all men have a natural desire to know – already used by Dante as the opening sentence of

another work, the *Convivio*: 'As the Philosopher says at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, all men naturally desire to have knowledge' – is here expressed in terms of their relationship to their maker, for it is God who has 'stamped' or 'imprinted' human beings with this love of knowledge.

The final chapter of Book I, where the philosophical arguments are for the first time linked to history, is marked by the same fervent sense of Christian witness. We are reminded of that moment in time when humanity did briefly enjoy universal peace, when the world was ruled as God intended it should be and a universal monarchy existed: the moment of Christ's birth under the reign of Augustus. The chapter ends with an impassioned apostrophe to the human race to recognize the error of its ways and heed the lessons of philosophy, of history and of Scripture (which correspond in broad terms, as we shall see, to the three books of Dante's treatise). With perfect symmetry Book I closes, as it had opened, with a quotation from the Psalms.

Book II is a powerful, poetic, if at times perplexing, demonstration or 'proof' of Dante's deeply held conviction that the role of the Roman empire in human history was crucial, its successful world domination a part of God's providential plan for mankind, and its authority therefore legitimate and legitimately exercised. The monarchy described in Book I is no idealized philosophical abstraction, but a concrete reality which once existed and could exist again. Dante now draws extensively on the work of historians, especially Orosius and Livy (although his knowledge of Livy may not be firsthand). But also, and arrestingly, he draws on the classical poets Virgil and Lucan, whose great epic poems the *Aeneid* and the *Pharsalia* are repeatedly cited as uniquely valuable testimony for the role in human history of the city and people whose story they celebrate. While the historians are mentioned briefly and by way of corroboration, the poets are quoted verbatim and their words are made central. These poetic fragments set into the prose text give an absolutely distinctive character to this book, a resonance and intensity which set it off both from what precedes and what follows. Pagan poetry stands alongside the Bible as true testimony to God's intentions: the *Aeneid* becomes, in Bruno Nardi's memorable phrase, 'la Bibbia dell'Impero', the Bible of the Empire. Where