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**Visions of Beatitude in Santa Maria Novella's *Paradise*
The Ultimate Goal of Human Endeavor in Monastic Tradition
and Dominican Thought**

While in the monastic tradition *visio dei* was expressed through *Maiestas Domini* images based on John's *Book of Revelations*, developments in scholastic thought from the mid 13th century onward have caused some significant changes in visualization of this dogma. In the chapel of Mary Magdalen in Bargello and the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella, *Paradise* and *Hell* are majestic images depicting deserving citizens among saints enjoying their face-to-face encounter with God before the Last Judgment and the general resurrection of the body. The article claims that the visual prominence and conceptual independence of Paradise and Hell from the Last Judgment as well as the lack of apocalyptic motifs in the Strozzi chapel is a consequence of Pope Benedict's XII *Benedictus Dei* constitution of 1336 which defines the time of ultimate reward and eternal punishment at human death, and not Last Judgment.