

“A Unity of Order”: Aquinas on the End of Politics

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Nonspecialists are often surprised to learn that Aquinas’s thought on Church and state is a matter of obscurity. After all, Aquinas is the most famous medieval thinker in the West, and the question of Church and state is one of the best-known medieval political questions. And yet his thought on that polemical topic remains obscure. As John Watt puts it: “There are too many ambiguities in his doctrine and too many unanswerable questions about what he did or did not hold.”¹

Why is his view not better understood? Part of its obscurity is the relative infrequency with which he writes on politics.² Another is the relative lack of interest in medieval political thought among political scientists and historians of political thought, an obscurity dating back to the Renaissance.³ Those who do study Aquinas’s thought, moreover, have been mired in a controversy over two key texts: one from book II of his *Scriptum* or commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* (d. 44, q. 2, a. 3, exp. text.), and the other in book II of *De regno* (On kingship), chapter 3 (no. 110). For brevity, I will use *S* for the *Scriptum* passage and *R* for the *De regno* passage.⁴ These two

¹ John A. Watt, “Introduction,” in *John of Paris: On Royal and Papal Power*, trans. J. A. Watt (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971), 9–63, at 40.

² Mark F. Jordan, “*De Regno* and the Place of Political Thinking in Thomas Aquinas,” *Medioevo* 18 (1992): 151–68.

³ James Hankins, *Virtue Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019).

⁴ References to *De regno* will be cited from *De Regno*, trans. I. Th. Eschmann (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949); translations from the *Scriptum* are taken from appendix II in this edition of *De regno*. The designations *S* and *R* to refer to the two disputed passages follow Eschmann, “St. Thomas Aquinas on the Two Powers,” *Medieval Studies* 20 (1958): 177–205, and Leonard Boyle, “The *De Regno* and the Two

appear to contradict each other, and with respect to fundamental political questions. The debate over these two texts points to what most contributes to the obscurity of Aquinas's teaching on Church and state: confusion about his vision of politics in human life. As I will show in this paper, Aquinas transcends modern categories of the "secular" and "belief" in his treatment of politics. Aquinas valorizes the integrity of political activity: that autonomy is not just a concession to the modern condition. It is in fact when Aquinas is most theological that he is most open to that integrity. The integrity of the political speaks to the intrinsic goodness of that order: it mirrors God's unity in its complex and ordered diversity.

In this paper I examine *R* and *S* to show their concordance. I argue that they are complementary in what they prescribe for relations between Church and state, and indeed grounded in the same account of the origins of political authority. Through this investigation we will uncover key principles of Aquinas's political thinking that show him to have a capacious vision of politics where humans achieve the actualization of their full beings as human.

A key notion will be *unitas ordinis*, or unity of order: the form of human cooperation in political life. As we will see, that form strikes a middle path between the simple unity of the individual person and the orderless collectivity of a crowd. For Aquinas, that order is itself a common good of politics, and an intrinsic one at that, before any "extrinsic" common good achieved by the people through that order. Part of why this seemingly secular consideration is good is its theological importance: it mirrors God.

Further, if Aquinas does not elaborate on political arrangements as much as one would like, nevertheless he offers sure guidance for the principles which ought to guide the prudent development of those arrangements in a particular time and place. Ultimately Aquinas shows that medieval political thought is in key respects not as alien and hostile to us as we might imagine, but in its own way equally concerned about the integrity of the political life.⁵

The Teaching of *S*

Aquinas's teaching on Church and state in *S* is widely accepted as his mature "two powers" teaching. Aquinas's most famous work, the *Summa theologiae* [*ST*], would eventually replace Lombard's *Sentences*, but in Thomas's own thirteenth century it was that compendium of quotations and arguments

Powers," in *Essays in Honour of Anton Charles Pegis*, ed. J. R. O'Donnell (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 237–47.

⁵ This paper advances the argument of my book on Aquinas's *De regno*, *The Christian Structure of Politics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2022).

from Christian sources compiled by the twelfth-century theologian-bishop Lombard that was the standard theology textbook in the Latin West—the Ur-text for theological teaching and scholarship.⁶

The *Sentences* is perhaps the most important Western book no one has heard of. It was so influential not only because it collected a rich trove of arguments, but also because it posed a critical question for medieval and early modern theology: how these diverse sources were to be systematized. Lombard assembled a cornucopia of quotations out of which many later thinkers drew their own questions and onto which they imposed their own order. Thus Aquinas's *Scriptum* is more than a commentary on Lombard: Aquinas used this text to develop his own thought.⁷

The argument of *S* is simple: spiritual and temporal power originate independently in God. They both possess the autonomy proper to fulfilling their task, which is to help humans seek their ends. In contrast with medieval theories that see politics as the maintenance department of the Church, on this account the spiritual power does not have complete authority over the temporal authority, and for two reasons: the temporal authority does not derive from the spiritual authority, and the temporal authority has a task that is distinct from that of the spiritual. The spiritual power does, however, have an indirect power over the temporal power in those things pertaining to the temporal.⁸

The question at hand in *S* is equally simple: "Should we always obey the higher rather than the inferior power?" Laurence Fitzgerald notes the importance of the context of the question, which is on obedience and authority.⁹ This was no abstract question, but a matter of urgency in the medieval West: what do princes owe to the pope? And what do subjects of princes owe the pope? Could the pope absolve subjects from loyalty to their ruler, for example? The fourth objection in *S* reads:

If, then, it were true that we must obey the more superior power, the spiritual power would have the right always to release a man from his allegiance to a secular power, which is evidently not true.

Aquinas prefaces his *respondeo* by making a distinction. There are two ways that the higher and lower power can relate to one another, he argues: the

⁶ Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 5.

⁷ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 40–1.

⁸ Eschmann, "St. Thomas Aquinas on the Two Powers," 178–79.

⁹ Laurence Fitzgerald, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers," *Angelicum* 56 (1979): 515–56, at 541.

lower power can be derived from the higher power, or the lower and higher powers can be derived in common from “one supreme power.” This distinction matters because of what it implies about the roles of the two powers. If the lower power derives from the higher power, then that lower power is a creature of the higher power to be directed as the higher power sees fit. If the lower power does not derive from the higher power, however, then the lower power is not subordinate to the higher power in all things, but only insofar as the functions of the higher power bear upon those of the lower power, and specifically as that common source relates them.

So which describes the relation between the spiritual and secular powers? Aquinas writes that it is the latter case: they originate independently in the same higher power, God. Thus, while the spiritual power is higher than the secular power, the secular power is not wholly and completely subordinate to the spiritual power, but only insofar as God has subordinated the temporal to the spiritual. This is a shorthand for something like this: the temporal is only subordinate to the spiritual insofar as the manner in which God has constituted it bears upon the spiritual.¹⁰ Thus the secular power is free to undertake its own activities, as Thomas says in the reply to the objection (ad 4), “in the things that belong to the *bonum civile*.”

In *S*, as in many other works of the time, the test case of this doctrine comes with the pope, who is not simply one example among many of spiritual power, but its apex. Further, for much of the history of the papacy, the pope has had not only spiritual authority as head of the Church, but also temporal authority as sovereign of the papal states. The pope was often said to have the *plenitudo potestatis*, or “plenitude of power.”¹¹ But what was the source of his temporal authority: an independent claim to temporal authority, or his spiritual authority?

According to Aquinas in ad 4 of *S*, the pope represents a “special case,” as the “spiritual and secular powers are so joined in one person.” In other words, the spiritual authority of the pope does not by necessity grant him direct temporal authority. Temporal power may be instrumental to their spiritual power, and even today the Vatican city-state exists to assure the freedom of the pope in his exercise of that spiritual ministry.¹² But that argument does not entail that his temporal power flows from his spiritual power. In fact, Aquinas argues in *ST* II-II, q. 10, a. 10, ad 2, that “the authority of

¹⁰ Eschmann, “St. Thomas Aquinas on the Two Powers,” 178; Fitzgerald, “St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers,” 541–42.

¹¹ Charles N. R. McCoy, *The Structure of Political Thought: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963), 123.

¹² Thomas Reese, *Inside the Vatican* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Caesar precedes the distinction of faithful from unbelievers." The historical differentiation of spiritual authority from temporal authority matters greatly for Aquinas: as political authority precedes Christian spiritual authority in time, so it maintains its own end or purpose even granting the superiority of the latter over the former.¹³

The teaching of *S* embodies a long-standing Christian tradition called "Gelasianism," what is better known as the "two swords" doctrine for the opening words of the document in which it was most famously laid out.¹⁴ Gelasianism took shape with the fifth-century Pope Gelasius I's rejection of the priestly status of the emperor.¹⁵ This tradition has two components: a dualism of Church and state, and the primacy of the spiritual above the temporal. A hallmark of this tradition is the "indirect power" of the spiritual power over the temporal power. The spiritual power has no direct authority over the secular. Rather, it has an indirect authority insofar as spiritual and secular matters overlap. In other words, neither the temporal nor the spiritual power is collapsed into the other: they are coordinated and ordered to one another without either losing its distinctive role. This is a prime example of Aquinas's *unitas ordinis* (unity of order), as we can see more clearly in contrasting it with other theories.

Indeed, the Gelasian tradition has been far from the only way of understanding Church–state relations, and in modern historiography has come to be seen as opposed to two other flourishing schools of thought: the Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions. It is easy to exaggerate the dichotomy between these two camps.¹⁶ Augustine and Aristotle were enormously influential on most medieval thinkers, and their "influence," itself an ambiguous concept, was hardly univocal. For instance, most medieval Christian thinkers agreed with Aristotle on the political nature of the human person, and most accepted some version of Augustine's notion of the "two cities." The differences between two "Aristotelian" thinkers might be as considerable as those between an "Aristotelian" and an "Augustinian," and two adherents might appropriate the same thinker in radically different ways.

Rather than viewing the historical record of medieval thought as a pitched

¹³ McCoy, *Structure of Political Thought*, 12.

¹⁴ *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*, ed. John O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 79.

¹⁵ Francis Oakley, *Empty Bottles of Gentilism: Kingship and the Divine in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 99–102; Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 10–11.

¹⁶ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:38–39.

battle between these two traditions, it is more productive to examine how the profound differences between these two thinkers were received in the medieval period, and how that reception conditioned the diverse responses medieval thinkers offered when faced with fundamental questions about political life, questions that no medieval political thinker could ignore.¹⁷ Further, for our purposes they are primarily useful as terms of contrast with Aquinas.

The later Augustinian tradition tends to devalue the importance of politics, asserting that citizenship in the City of God is the only lasting thing. However, it abandons the subtlety of the North African bishop's original "two cities" thesis in advocating for theocracy or hierocracy, despite the difficulty of finding an argument for any such notion in the work of Augustine himself.¹⁸ This tradition typically radically subordinates the temporal to the spiritual. Perhaps the greatest Augustinian, Giles of Rome, argues that all temporal authority derives directly from the pope.¹⁹ In so doing, Giles only partially appropriates the Gelasian tradition. In embracing the primacy or superiority of the spiritual power over the temporal, he comes close to denying any meaningful differentiation of the two powers. He sees the temporal as the public utilities branch of the Church.

The tradition which claimed the inspiration of the Greek philosopher Aristotle defends the autonomy of political life vis-à-vis spiritual authority. Aquinas is often associated with Aristotle, although he is too *sui generis* to be simply representative of a school.²⁰ Better contenders for that role are thinkers coming not long after Aquinas, including Aquinas's own student John of Paris, who argued in defense of the claims of Philip IV of France against Pope Boniface IV,²¹ and the theologian Marsilius of Padua, who wrote a treatise against papal power in defense of the Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV.²² In their efforts to emphasize the differentiation of the temporal from the spiritual, they sound quite Gelasian. They are less committed to the

¹⁷ Cary Nederman has been at the forefront of this conversation, e.g., "Nature, Sin and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 3–26.

¹⁸ Michael Bruno, *Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine's Political Thought* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), 21–22.

¹⁹ Tierney, *Crisis of Church and State*, 193–98; McCoy, *Structure of Political Thought*, 122–23.

²⁰ Nederman, "Nature, Sin and the Origins of Society," 5.

²¹ Arthur P. Monahan, "Introduction," in John of Paris, *On Royal and Papal Power*, trans. Arthur P. Monahan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), xi–xlix.

²² Cary Nederman, "Afterward," in Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor pacis*, trans. Alan Gewirth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 443–54.

primacy of the spiritual, however, with John downgrading it to a "dignity" rather than a power, and Marsilius coming close to denying it altogether.²³

A key distinction between these two traditions emerges from this description: their divergent interpretations of Gelasianism. The Gelasian tradition at its best can synthesize the disparate tendencies of these two schools, and we see this with Aquinas. In *S*, Aquinas takes seriously the "Aristotelian" affirmation of the integrity of political life without denying the primacy of the spiritual defended by *soi-disant* Augustinians. He thus takes the best of both traditions in articulating a unity of order between the temporal and spiritual. As Jean-Pierre Torrell writes, Aquinas combines "roots in Augustine" with "Aristotelian fervor."²⁴

This interpretation of *S* has been uncontroversial in recent decades, and accords well with parallel texts of Aquinas that, while too short to lay out in a full argument of *S*, at least confirm it in part, as I. Th. Eschmann agrees. But *S* fits less obviously with the argument of Aquinas's other extended discussion of Church and state, *R*, and Eschmann in fact argues that the two presentations are polar opposites, calling *R* "Gregorian" and "hierocratic," words often used to describe the above-mentioned Augustinian tradition.²⁵ What is at stake is whether *R* represents an Augustinian moment in which Aquinas directly subordinates temporal to spiritual. Such an argument would amount to a betrayal of the Gelasian tradition so beautifully captured in *S*. Further, such a reading of *R* would play into modern fears about medieval thought as bent upon the radical subservience of politics to religion.

The Ambiguous Case of *R*

The passage of *De regno* that mostly directly concerns us comes toward the end of that text:

Thus, in order that spiritual things might be distinguished from earthly things, the ministry of this kingdom has been entrusted not to earthly kings but to priests, and most of all to the chief priest, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff. To him all the kings of the Christian People are to be subject as to our Lord

²³ McCoy, *Structure of Political Thought*, 123–31; Marc F. Griesbach, "John of Paris as a Representative of Thomistic Political Philosophy," in *An Etienne Gilson Tribute: Presented by His North American Students, with a Response by Étienne Gilson*, ed. Charles J. O'Neil (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1959), 33–50.

²⁴ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:41.

²⁵ Fitzgerald, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers."

Jesus Christ Himself. For those to whom pertains the care of intermediate ends should be subject to him to whom pertains the care of the ultimate end, and be directed by his rule. (*De regno* II, ch. 3, no. 110).

There are several ways to interpret this dense passage. On one of most influential accounts, Eschmann's, reads *R* as contradicting the argument of *S*. Eschmann argues that *R* implies the direct power of the spiritual over the temporal, a position which reverses that of *S*. Moreover, according to Eschmann, in the special case of the pope, *R* argues that "the pope here has one power only, viz., the spiritual power," and, "by its nature, spiritual power includes secular power."²⁶ Further, according to Eschmann there is a great difference in methodology between *S* and *R*. Eschmann argues that Aquinas adopts in *S* an *a posteriori* mode of argument, one that probes questions of law and jurisdiction, while in *R*, and *De regno* in general, Aquinas turns to an "aprioristic method based on the teleological analysis and coordination of the function of the two powers."²⁷

This argument about methodology matters because Eschmann thinks it shows a contradiction between *R* and *S*. This putative difference would also bear upon the place of politics in the thought of Aquinas. To treat politics in *a posteriori* terms, as Eschmann claims of *S*, is to see politics as a matter of practical knowledge and empirical investigation. In other words, it is to see politics from the point of view of political actors: as a domain of practical judgment and action. To treat politics in *a priori* terms, as Eschmann claims of *R*, is to see politics as a matter of theoretical knowledge and speculative investigation. In other words, it is to see politics from the point of view of a theologian: a view circumscribed not by the exigencies of political life, but by the externally imposed dictates of religion.

Eschmann's argument is hasty in analysis and tendentious in tone, which is a disappointment, given his pioneering early work on *De regno*. This has led a few scholars to reject his argument and affirm that the passage can be interpreted to square with *S*.²⁸ But while these scholars raise important points, a full reckoning with *De regno* requires acknowledging that, on its face, *R* does present itself as an example of the Augustinian tradition. Indeed, a few scholars have dismissed *R* as unrepresentative of Aquinas, including John Finnis.²⁹ For instance, the language "all the kings of the Christian People

²⁶ Eschmann, "St. Thomas Aquinas on the Two Powers," 179.

²⁷ Eschmann, "St. Thomas Aquinas on the Two Powers," 182.

²⁸ This is the approach of Boyle, "The *De Regno* and the Two Powers," and Fitzgerald, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers."

²⁹ John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 228.

are to be subject [to the pope] as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself" is quite strong, suggesting that the pope has direct temporal authority over kings. That suggestion is only deepened by the subsequent description of temporal rule as "intermediate" to the "ultimate" end of spiritual rule.

Yet this *prima facie* judgment sits in uneasy tension with the opening words of the text: "In order that spiritual things might be distinguished from earthly things." Indeed, Torrell takes such a distinction to be at the very heart of *S*, which we have already identified as Gelasian or dualist.³⁰

In other words, the relationship between *R* and *S* is not immediately obvious. That ambiguity is not improved by the relative neglect of *R*. This is why, I argue, one ought to explore the fuller meaning of this passage by contextualizing it within *De regno*. Such contextualization is valuable because *De regno* is an unfamiliar text, and so interpreting parts of it with reference to other parts helps illuminate the work more generally. The context of *De regno* also helps to establish the connection between the "two swords" and the origins of political and spiritual authority in *R*, which is precisely the focus of Aquinas in *S*.

De regno is not a treatise, however, and so does not systematically present Aquinas's teaching. Juxtaposing the relevant sections of *De regno*, however, uncovers in *R* a claim consonant with *S*: Aquinas lays out the political order both in its integrity and in its limitations under the indirect power of the spiritual. This is the heart of the Gelasian doctrine, as we saw above.

The Teaching of *R*

In what follows I lay out four sections of *De regno*, and argue for an interpretation of *R* in light of those sections: chapter 1 of book I and chapter 1 of book II, both on the origins of political authority; two locations in chapter 3 of book II, one on the end of political authority (no. 106) and the other on the distinction between political and spiritual authority (no. 111).

In chapter 1 of *De regno* I, Aquinas argues for the natural origins of political community and authority: "Yet it is natural for man, more than for any other animal, to be a social and political animal, to live in a group. This is clearly a necessity of man's nature" (nos. 4–5). Aquinas argues that basic features of humans make clear that humans are naturally political: our possession of reason, our relative defenseless, our use of speech. Aquinas thinks that humans need other humans to survive, and that humans are possessed of attributes to thrive in communal life. These are facts about human nature that can be known through reason without any need for revealed truth.

³⁰ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:13.

Aquinas cites ancient thinkers who argued on the basis of reason, particularly Aristotle and Cicero. He only invokes the Bible to confirm their point.

Aquinas then continues this line of thought in chapter 8: "If, then, it is natural for man to live in the society of many, it is necessary that there exist among men some means by which the group may be governed." Thus human authority exists by nature.

Human beings are political by nature, meaning that their forms of authority and community are natural. The upshot of this argument for our inquiry is simple: political authority is not derived from spiritual authority, but is derived independently of it. Indeed, we do not need revealed truth to know that: reason is our guide in political matters for Aquinas. *R* is thus far in agreement with *S*.

Aquinas could have made other arguments. He might have argued, for instance, that politics is a result of sin, not of nature. This would place political authority firmly under the thumb of the Church. He might also have argued that the origin of political activity and authority is nature, but that the effects of sin have vitiated our will and reason such that the natural propensities of human beings to be social have been severely damaged. Aquinas, however, chooses neither such course. He chooses, rather, to emphasize the natural origins of politics, origins which make that activity and authority explicable to reason.

Note, too, that Aquinas's method is empirical in this part of *De regno*, which puts it in line with *S*, pace Eschmann.³¹ Aquinas observes inductively certain facts about humans that he believes tend to show them to be political. Thus far, in other words, Aquinas treats of politics in *R* as he does in *S*: as a matter of practical knowledge and empirical investigation rather than theological speculation.

In our second passage is chapter 1 of *De regno* II, Aquinas shifts toward a practical question: how the king ought to govern. This question takes up the rest of *De regno*, including our final two passages (from ch. 3 of bk. II). What we should underline here is Aquinas's argument that "we learn about the kingly office from the pattern of the regime of nature" (no. 93). Particularly, Aquinas writes, we should understand that the royal office is a particular example of a universal case: divine government. The king "is to be in the kingdom what the soul is in the body, and what God is in the world" (no. 95).

Where our first passage (from bk. I) argues through reason for the natural origins of politics, this first chapter in book II confirms that human government conforms to the divinely revealed government of God. This parallel

³¹ Eschmann, "St. Thomas Aquinas on the Two Powers," 182.

is important because of what it says about reason for Aquinas: what we can know through reason can be confirmed by revelation. They are not mutually opposed sources of knowledge. Indeed, Aquinas argues in this passage that "reason is to man what God is to the world" (no. 94). The king is to govern through reason.

This argument is further important because of what it does not say. In many Christian visions of politics, such parallels between earthly and divine rule lead to a primary focus on the order between divine government of creation and ecclesiastical government of the world. In other words, the chief parallel to God's rule is not political authority, but the Church. The aforementioned Giles of Rome, for instance, argues that the pope rules all people and all lands in the name of God, and he delegates political power to kings. In such a scheme, political rule derives from Church governance. This is not what Aquinas claims here in chapter 1 of *De regno* II. Rather, he relates temporal government directly to divine government.³² If Aquinas was going to adopt a "hierocratic" approach to politics in *De regno*, this would have been a prime opportunity to do so. Instead, he reaffirms the importance of politics.

But this passage (bk. II, ch. 1) is also important because of how it bears upon *S*. In *S*, Aquinas argues that the relationship between two powers created by one power is governed by that creating power. Here we see that God constituted temporal power so as to be an earthly analogue to God's own rule. We know, then, that whatever the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual power, it will have to account for the lofty character of the temporal power that Aquinas has thus far adumbrated: necessary by nature, and after the pattern of God's rule of creation. Indeed, we should bear in mind that our third and fourth passages, as well as *R* itself, arise in a chapter 3 of book II, which explicitly continues this conversation about the human as following the divine pattern of government.

In our third passage, which comes just before *R* in chapter 3, Aquinas argues that political authority must secure virtue: "For men together form a group for the purpose of living well together, a thing which the individual man living alone could not attain, and good life is virtuous life" (no.106). The end of political community and authority, Aquinas writes, is virtuous living. Virtue for Aquinas means what it means for Aristotle: the excellence of a thing. Political activity, then, has at its end the excellence of human beings (see bk. II of *Nicomachean Ethics*).

For what other ends might Aquinas have argued? Survival, pleasure,

³² Fitzgerald, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers," 556.

honor, and power are obvious choices, as noted in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aquinas, like Aristotle, will dismiss those possibilities as inadequate in chapters 7–11 of *De regno* I. For Aquinas as well as Aristotle, the end of politics is ultimately human happiness. Aristotle of course does not subscribe to Aquinas's Christian notion of happiness, but in both cases they are seeking a human end beyond the merely material.³³

Indeed, this passage in book II (ch. 3, no. 106) and the one in chapter 1 of book I combine to echo Aristotle's important line from the *Politics*: the city, which is to say the exemplary human community, is founded out of the necessities of humans, but exists also to pursue the excellence of those same persons (1.1252b30–53a1). In other words, politics is about both survival and higher goods. Aquinas reproduces this argument in framing the origins of politics in human necessity (*De regno* I, ch. 1) and its ends in terms of human flourishing (bk. II, ch. 3).

The argument in chapter 1 of *De regno* I could be interpreted to give a low interpretation of the importance of politics: that political life exists for mere material survival. After all, Aquinas thinks that it is in part what humans lack to survive on their own that draws them into community. Further, one might be also inclined to interpret the passage as a low vision of politics out of a supposition that Aquinas takes human happiness to depend upon revelation. Such a low vision of politics here would accord well with an understanding of Aquinas as some sort of "theocrat" who thinks political authority exists to do mundane work subservient to the Church. Further, we noted that Aquinas might have argued here in book I that sin has vitiated the political nature of the human person. The passage just before *R* in book II, with its argument for virtue as the end of politics, is another place where Aquinas could have made such an argument.

But at this point before *R* (ch. 3, no. 106), Aquinas thinks that virtues can be had by and through reason. In other words, this passage extends the argument of chapter 1 of book I to bring it into conformity with Aristotle. Human beings employ their reason in politics, and their exercise of reason conduces to virtuous living.

This reading of our passages in book I and in book II leading up to *R* complements the analogy between human and divine government in chapter 1 of book II, the passage that confirms through revelation what book I argues through reason about the natural origins of politics. Book II here (ch. 1) also

³³ Mary Nichols, response to Robert Bartlett, in Nichols and Bartlett, "Aristotle's Science of the Best Regime," *American Political Science Review* 89 (1995): 152–60, at 152–55; James V. Schall, S.J. "Transcendence and Political Philosophy," *The Review of Politics* 55 (1993): 247–65.

elevates and ennobles politics by seeing it as a microcosm of divine activity in creation. The argument leading up to *R* (ch. 3, no. 106) confirms that nobility: human beings use their reason to govern earth in imitation of God, and they do so for a lofty purpose: virtue.

In the first three passages from *De regno*, Aquinas makes interlocking arguments about the independent origins and lofty aims of politics. It thus far is theocratic neither in argument nor in spirit. This leads us to conclude that, at least thus far, *De regno* is in conformity with *S*.

Our fourth and final passage is also in chapter 3 of book II (no. 111), just after *R* (no. 110). It continues the argument of chapter 1: defining the office of kingship. To do so, Aquinas offers a historical account that (1) criticizes civil religion and (2) distinguishes between earthly and spiritual:

Because the priesthood of the gentiles and the whole worship of their gods existed merely for the acquisition of temporal goods (which were all ordained to the common good of the multitude, whose care devolved upon the king), the priests of the gentiles were very properly subject to the kings. Similarly, since in the old law earthly goods were promised to the religious people, . . . the priests of the old law, we read, were also subject to the kings. But in the new law there is a higher priesthood by which men are guided to heavenly good. Consequently, in the law of Christ, kings must be subject to priests. (*De regno* II, ch. 3, no. 111)

This passage presents the historical articulation of temporal and spiritual goods, which correlate with temporal and spiritual authorities. Aquinas's history lesson begins with ancient pagans ("the gentiles"), proceeds to Israel ("the old law"), and then to Christianity ("the new law"). He tells the story of how the priesthood became superior to princes: subservient to them when they served the temporal good, which is unquestionably under the aegis of kings, and superior to them when they came to serve spiritual goods, which are higher than temporal ones.

Aquinas's mode of presentation in this passage, which highlights the differentiation of spiritual goods from temporal ones, perhaps obscures what unites these three stages: the goodness and naturalness of earthly goods. Unlike an "Augustinian" who would see these goods as merely useful, Aquinas emphasizes the goodness of these earthly ends. He does so in two ways. First, at all three stages he affirms the authority of the king to provide for the common good. Political authority is never questioned, but in fact confirmed at each stage. Second, Aquinas argues that political authority has

existed before spiritual authority. In other words, political authority did not originate with or derive from spiritual authority. This comports with his argument in chapter 1 of book I that political authority is natural: if it is natural, then one would expect to find it long before Christianity.

The argument in the passage following *R* (no. 111 in ch. 3) further comports with chapter 1 of book II: human governance is modeled after the pattern of divine governance, which we took to mean that political activity is important, not a mere afterthought or drudgery. This fourth *De regno* passage (aside from *R*) confirms that, even with the rise of the Church and ecclesiastical governance, temporal power continues to be important. In terms of *S*, then, both spiritual and temporal authority are derived from God, and God has set up their relationship.

There is a subtler way in which Aquinas affirms the importance of politics across all three stages. Note the fundamentally historical method Aquinas deploys here. This is not the “aprioristic” method which Eschmann claims to find in *De regno*. Or, better yet, *De regno* comprises a mix of methods. In book I, Aquinas take an empirical approach, and here (our last passage in book II) Aquinas again turns to the empirical record of history. While there are no doubt theological principles that inform Aquinas’s argument in *R*, it is a far cry from the strictly “teleological analysis” Eschmann claims to find in it.

Again, were Aquinas to treat politics in *a priori* terms in *De regno*, he would be treating politics from the point of view of a theologian: a view defined not by the exigencies of political life, but by the principles of theology. His empirical turn here, however, shows that Aquinas is sensitive to the nature of politics. Political activity cannot be fully described by a set of theoretical principles. It involves an irreducibly practical domain of action and judgment.

The effect of these sections upon the interpretation of *R* is manifold. We noted earlier that, at first glance, *R* betrays a possible theocratic strain. We particularly observed that the language “all the kings of the Christian People are to be subject [to the pope] as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself” suggests that the pope has direct temporal authority over kings, and that the characterization of temporal rule as “intermediate” to the “ultimate” end of spiritual rule reinforces that suspicion. If this were true, then *R* would indeed contradict *S*.

In light of these four other sections, however, it is difficult to read all of chapter 3 of book II in that same light, and further quite reasonable to read it in conformity with *S*. To begin with, Aquinas has argued for politics as a robust sphere created not out of the Church’s will, but out of God’s will for human needs and excellence. Aquinas affirms in *R* that politics has an origin

independent of spiritual things. Aquinas has stressed that independence in the historical origins of politics, in its basis in rational nature, in its end in virtue, and in its conformity to the divine government of the universe.

Thus far the argument of *De regno* thus far fits the second case of *S*: temporal and spiritual government are both created by God. *R*, in other words, complements the Gelasianism of *S*, whereby a unity of order coordinates the spiritual and the temporal without reducing one to the other. More generally, the spirit of *De regno* gives us a *prima facie* reason to reject a theocratic reading of the disputed passage. Aquinas has presented earthly things as important and noble, being conducted by reason, confirmed by revelation, and directed to virtue. Thus politics has never appeared as merely ancillary for Aquinas in *De regno*, but rather as an important activity in its own right. Indeed, in book II Aquinas explicitly rejects civil religion.

When we turn to the passage of *R*, its opening line takes on new meaning: "Thus, in order that spiritual things might be distinguished from earthly things, the ministry of this kingdom has been entrusted not to earthly kings but to priests." This sentence preserves the distinction between spiritual and earthly things that we have seen Aquinas make throughout *De regno*. We can read it as in line with the dominant emphasis of *De regno*: the spiritual and temporal are distinct, each with their proper competences. While in chapter 3 of book II Aquinas wants to emphasize the importance of the spiritual, he does so without recanting his argument throughout *R* on the integrity of the political.

Further, consider how Aquinas ends the passage: "For those to whom pertains the care of intermediate ends should be subject to him to whom pertains the care of the ultimate end, and be directed by his rule" (no. 111). This line reinforces the message of his historical argument earlier in chapter 3, in *R*: with the rise of Christianity, the spiritual has been articulated from the temporal and given a place of priority. But Aquinas does not thereby collapse the distinction between the temporal and spiritual or the unity of order between them. Moreover, Aquinas has nowhere made a case for the direct subjection of temporal authority to spiritual authority. And so, by the logic of *S*, political authority as presented in *R* would be only indirectly subordinated to the Church.

We have seen another way in which Aquinas affirms the integrity of the political: the method of *De regno*. Aquinas uses both *a priori* and *a posteriori* methods of reasoning in *R*, contrary to Eschmann. As a theologian, Aquinas perhaps does not take politics to be central to his investigation, but in *De regno* he recognizes it as the practical domain that it is.³⁴

³⁴ Jordan, "De Regno and the Place of Political Thinking," 151–68.

Establishing the coherence of an author's texts is a fraught business, and such an enterprise does not admit of the certainty of a geometric proof. As Fitzgerald writes, we are primarily interested to see that such texts do not conflict.³⁵ But we have gone further and seen positive proof of their coherence. It is to the foundation of that coherence that we now turn.

The Unity of Order

In our analysis of *S* and *R*, we have had recourse to the idea of unity of order: the Gelasian complementary ordering of spiritual and temporal power. It is at the foundation of both *S* and *R* and calls for further elaboration. I will argue that attention to this key concept shows the place of politics in Aquinas's politics.

As Russell Hittinger explains, Aquinas conceives of many social orders as having a *unitas ordinis* or "unity of order." Aquinas describes the unity of order in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*:

It must be known that the whole which the political group or the family constitutes has only a unity of order, for it is not something absolutely one. A part of this whole, therefore, can have an operation that is not the operation of the whole, as a soldier in an army has activity that does not belong to the whole army. However, this whole does have an operation that is not proper to its parts but to the whole.³⁶

As Aquinas takes pains to show here, a unity of order means that the parts of a social body are related to each other and compose a whole without being reducible to that whole.³⁷ Each part of this whole can perform a task or "operation" distinct from the whole, but that task nevertheless contributes to the overall task. In an army, for instance, each soldier or group of soldiers might have specific tasks around munitions, supplies, medical services, and so on, but their tasks when properly coordinated would contribute to the general goal of victory. In other words, the parts are brought together to serve a common purpose without losing sight of their individual purposes.

³⁵ Fitzgerald, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers," 551.

³⁶ Aquinas commenting on *Ethics* 1.5; cited in Russell Hittinger, "The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine: An Interpretation," in *Proceedings of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, XVIII Plenary Session* (Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2008), 81.

³⁷ Hittinger, "Coherence of the Four Basic Principles," 81.

One can also think of it in terms of "goods": the common good of the whole is meant to serve and contribute to the individual good of its members.³⁸

This unity of order is so-named because it is not a simple unity, with which it can be helpfully contrasted: "For it is not something absolutely one," as Aquinas writes above. A simple unity obtains among parts which exist merely to serve the whole, as the organs of a body serve a living thing, or as the parts of a car engine serve the car. It is the image not of a group of people, but of one person.

This sort of unity has played a leading role in politics across history, and should be painfully familiar to the twenty-first-century reader. With the twentieth-century rise of ideology and technology, such images of political order were more likely to be called "totalitarian." A one-party state in which political authority controls every aspect of life would be a similar "simple unity," as everything in Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy was understood as serving the singular (supposed) good of the State, the People or the Homeland, or some other abstraction that was taken for the good of the whole.³⁹ Indeed, an understanding of political society as a simple unity depends upon such abstractions because healthy political life never genuinely reflects that unidimensional homogeneity. By its nature, political life is always richer: a constellation of individuals pursuing their own goods even as they interact with others in the pursuit of common goods.

Aquinas's unity of order can also be distinguished from the opposite of a simple unity: a mere aggregation or collection. Such societies fall short of anything like a unity, as Hittinger describes with reference to some idealized depictions of the order of the market: "A purely accidental unity ensuing upon the choices and actions of individuals who follow their own preferences."⁴⁰ Aquinas envisions something more substantive.

Here it would be helpful to consider a claim that Aquinas was somehow a progenitor of secularism. Obviously imputing secularism to Aquinas is anachronistic. Something like secularism would be beyond the imagination of most people in most times and places, as Aquinas's history of civil religion in chapter 3 of *De regno* II attests. After all, secularism entails a great deal

³⁸ McCoy, *Structure of Political Thought*, 51–53; and Gregory Froelich, "The Equivocal Status of *Bonum Commune*," *The New Scholasticism* 63 (1989): 38–57.

³⁹ Eric Voegelin, "Modernity without Restraint: The Political Religions, the New Science of Politics, and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism," in *Collected Works Of Eric Voegelin*, ed. Manfred Henningsen, vol. 5. (Columbia, MO: University Of Missouri Press, 1999).

⁴⁰ Hittinger, "Coherence of the Four Basic Principles," 81.

more conceptually and practically than just the falling away of religion, a misunderstanding which Charles Taylor rejects as “subtraction stories.”⁴¹

Nevertheless, Aquinas’s account of social orders offers an analysis of them, even if we durst not speak for him. Much hinges on how one defines secularism. On some simple accounts, secularism would be an aggregation: political and spiritual authority indifferently coexisting in society. On others, especially those more suspicious of secularism, it would be closer to a simple unity, with political authority exercising extensive control of religion in the name of (putatively) temporal goods.

In either case, secularism would not seem to be a unity of order. For, in its more obvious meanings, secularism entails the radical separation of religious and political authority. But, of course, that is precisely what a unity of order encompassing religious and political authority would presuppose.

Church and State

With this account of unity of order in hand, we are prepared to see how Aquinas’s arguments in *R* and *S* reflect that model. He understands this unity of order to describe society at two levels: at the level of Christendom, or Church and state, and at the political level. In what follows, I will consider how Aquinas relates Church and state as a unity of order. I will then consider political life as a unity of order and describe that unity of order as an intrinsic common good.

S and *R* are both examples of the “indirect power.” As we noted above, they conform to “Gelasianism” or the “two swords” doctrine, which entails two aspects: a dualism of Church and state, and the primacy of the spiritual over the temporal. This “primacy” is not total, but only with respect to those matters where the spiritual and temporal overlap. Thus the power of the spiritual over the temporal is not direct, in that the spiritual power has authority over the temporal power insofar as it pertains to temporal matters, but rather indirect, only insofar as those temporal matters bear upon the spiritual.

The indirect power, which can initially seem clunky, becomes more intuitive in meaning when one grasps how this power is indirect. A key application of this indirect power, we saw above, is to distinguish it from Aristotelian and Augustinian alternatives.

So-called Augustinian visions of Church and state relations describe their relationship as a substantial unity to show how political authority exists instrumentally to serve the ends of the Church, as with Giles of Rome’s claim

⁴¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007), 26–29.

that all political power derives from and depends upon the papacy. This vision is sometimes called "organic," because it suggests an image of society as a "super-individual" behaving like one organism, with all parts playing an instrumental service toward the one ultimate good. It is worth noting that this sort of social order is precisely what many criticize when they reject Aquinas and others as "medieval." It is also precisely what Aquinas rejects.

If the pendulum swings too far in the other direction, however, one ends up with a church and state like that predicated of a certain reading of Marsilius of Padua, for whom temporal and spiritual authority have little to do with each other. It would seem that political and spiritual authority would not be ordered together in any way, but rather accidentally juxtaposed in society.

Gelasianism makes legible the "unity of order" arising out of Aquinas's Church and state teaching: religious and political authority are not conflated, nor are they unrelated. They form a unity of distinct but coordinated parts. When Aquinas speaks of "Christendom," then, a controversial term that perhaps conceals more than it reveals, he has in mind the unity of the Christian people of the Latin West united under the distinct spiritual and temporal powers.⁴² Temporal and spiritual authority are united by an ordering to a common end, to secure the flourishing of the human person. Yet each has a distinct role that is not reducible to that of the other, and in turn they each serve an end that is not reducible to that of the other. Aquinas thinks this is the nature of the sort of social ordering that can secure human happiness.

In many ways, however, the more interesting question is how political community is itself a unity of order in *De regno*.

The Emergence of the Political the Created Order

We have seen that in other works Aquinas refers to political communities as a "unity of order." Aquinas makes several claims in *De regno* that support that argument. More importantly, Aquinas defends the integrity of political life. Aquinas assumes throughout *De regno* that political community is a unity of order. Most notably, he describes the task of political authority as securing the "unity of peace" (bk. I, ch. 2). For Aquinas, peace means legal order contributing to the common good, including the virtue of its citizens. Indeed, the virtue of the citizens is an implicit theme in *De regno*, which Aquinas links directly with the "unity of peace" (bk. II, ch. 4).

⁴² See the appendix on 105–6 in Eschmann's trans. of *De regno*.

This appeal to virtue further underlines the nature of political community as a unity of order. Virtue means the goodness or excellence of something: the end of politics is just to make human beings good. And Aquinas specifies that the virtue of humans is not to be developed in them as though they were children or animals: obedient slaves. Since humans are free, Aquinas argues, they cannot be governed so as to serve merely the private end of the ruler. They must be governed as free persons: toward a common good which is truly common to all of them (bk. I, ch. 2) Anything else would be tyranny.

Precisely because humans are free, in other words, they cannot be treated as mere parts that serve the good of the whole, nor can they be treated as instruments of the head. To be ordered in a unity for Aquinas means that each part contributes to the whole and the whole contributes to each part. To understand the political community as a unity of order is to see it as an important activity that fulfills what it means for each member to be a human being.

Indeed, the “common good” of which Aquinas speaks in *De regno* is not simply the common goods obtained by the community: it is the intrinsic good of the community itself in its ordered unity.⁴³ This is the good of a social complex that is fully itself and fully oriented toward its characteristic activities.

The common good of the order of human community, by the way, mirrors the ordered structure of creation and even God. Aquinas presents the order of politics as being nested in other complementary orders. Particularly, it fits within the broader cosmos, which of course is governed by God. That cosmos itself, in turn, images God. In other works, Aquinas argues that “the order of the universe . . . mirror[s] the divine nature [i.e., God] as far as a creature can.”⁴⁴ For Aquinas, created things and God are of course fundamentally different. But to the extent that created things can form a unified and harmonious order, they come as close as they can to the simplicity and order of God (*De regno* II, chs. 1–2). In other words, to the extent that political order is achieved, it has a quasi-divine goodness to it. Aquinas can offer no higher praise.

These considerations about the goodness of political order underline and extend what we have already seen with Aquinas’s Gelasianism: the nobility and integrity of politics. Aquinas’s account of the subordination of the temporal authority to the spiritual authority depends upon the temporal authority having an integrity of scope and end. That integrity is supported by how Aquinas describes politics: an area of free persons actualizing their

⁴³ Froelich, “Equivocal Status,” 51.

⁴⁴ Froelich, “Equivocal Status,” 50.

good in concert with other free persons. In these different ways, we have seen something like the "emergence of the political" in *De regno*. To be sure, this "political" does not mean here a "secular" space distinct from the "religious," even a term of contrast to it, which is a modern and contingent conceptualization. Moreover, Aquinas does not have in mind anything like the modern state, an equally modern and contingent development.⁴⁵

But Aquinas does recognize in *De regno* an art of government. In *De regno* we see Aquinas underline the importance and difficulty of political life as viewed from within that very set of practices. Aquinas joins Aristotle in seeing politics as a noble end that develops important aspects of human nature. If he parts from Aristotle in not seeing politics as the final end of humans, then Aquinas at the very least is closer to Aristotle than he is to modern thinkers who see in politics primarily the avoidance of violent conflict and the satisfaction of material needs.

To be sure, there is no point in domesticating Aquinas, in making him "safe for democracy." Nevertheless, this Thomistic political naturalism as we have seen it here responds to Quentin Skinner's suggestion that Augustine's *City of God* encourages the Christian "not to concern himself with the problems of 'this temporal life.'"⁴⁶ Implicit in this suggestion are two claims: Christianity denies the importance of politics, and that, to the extent that Christianity does value politics, it is precisely as subservient to the Church.

Aquinas rejects both of these suggestions, however much he benefits from the intellectual legacy of Augustine. We have already seen that Aquinas does not take politics to have a low end. For him, politics is directed by reason, not a lust for power or a struggle for a minimalist notion of peace, as seems to be the case for Augustine. Aquinas rather thinks reason can lead humans to virtue through political activity. Indeed, this is a role of reason sanctioned by God, as we saw in chapter 1 of *De regno* II.

Further, Aquinas does not make politics subservient to the Church. The point Aquinas makes in *S* finds similar expression in *R*: political authority does not derive from spiritual authority, but rather originates in the most mundane needs and the highest potential of the human person. To be sure, political authority as Aquinas understands it is entangled in a dense network, including empire and papacy above and what we loosely call "feudal" relations below.⁴⁷ And yet Aquinas clearly delimits a sphere of the exercise of politics for his royal reader, one with a coherent end and a robust method.

⁴⁵ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 349–58.

⁴⁶ Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 349.

⁴⁷ Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 351.

On that note, a neglected point for the integrity of the political in *De regno* comes from its genre. This text is a letter to a prince, not a theological treatise. It is thus an example of the “mirror of princes” genre, of which the most famous example is *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli.⁴⁸ As befits its genre, *De regno* exhibits a pedagogical dimension. Specifically, Aquinas’s mode of teaching emphasizes the naturalness of politics and the responsibility of the king to attend to his political duties. Those duties concern the first chapters of the letter, with little to no reference to the Church, which arises only later in the text. For scholars, this is not an ideal treatment: it leaves them wondering how political and spiritual authority are related. For the prince, however, this is the optimal presentation: it shows that politics deserves to be treated on its own terms.

Thus Francis Oakley is able to argue that *De regno* “clearly exhibits the same Aristotelian understanding of the nature and purpose of political society, and is, in fact, replete with quotations from the *Politics*.”⁴⁹

The unity of order reflects Aquinas’s intellectual temperament. Aquinas always seeks a golden mean. On countless topics, Aquinas seeks to take the closest approximations of the truth wherever they are to be found and reconcile and synthesize those positions according to deeper, underlying terms. Against extremists who reject the integrity of political life or the importance of moral and spiritual ends for politics, Aquinas seeks in *R* and *S* to reconcile both. This, we saw earlier, was to balance the best of the Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions. Aquinas refuses to give one monolithic influence over the other, but saves the proposition on both sides.⁵⁰ But this is just why Aquinas is such a great thinker: not because he is always “innovative” or “novel,” but because he is a masterful synthesizer of those who come before him.

Conclusion: The Myth of the Medieval

Fitzgerald notes that *De regno* actualizes one of Aquinas’s great principles: grace does not destroy nature, but rather elevates and perfects it.⁵¹ This is a principle that non-Thomists may have heard, but perhaps wondered what it means and what difference it makes for Aquinas’s thought. For that matter,

⁴⁸ Allen Gilbert, *Machiavelli’s Prince and its Forerunners: The Prince as a Typical Book De Regimine Principum* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1938).

⁴⁹ Francis Oakley, *The Mortgage of the Past: Reshaping the Ancient Political Inheritance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 113.

⁵⁰ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:41.

⁵¹ Fitzgerald, “St. Thomas Aquinas and the Two Powers,” 547–48.

it is a principle that many Thomists know well, yet may not appreciate in its implications for his political thought. *De regno* supplies such an answer.

This principle bears upon Aquinas's political thought in a particular way, as Aquinas has a strong sense of the human person as a political animal. Humans are made for political community, and their religious nature only reinforces their need for the political.

This principle introduces a tension in modern readings of Aquinas: some would rather Aquinas's teaching on politics were "secular" in our sense, but it is profoundly theological. Indeed, it is precisely when the arguments of Aquinas are most theological that they are most open to reason, and most celebratory of politics. If nothing else, a careful reading of *De regno* might encourage us to be more open to the riches of the medieval age, riches as fruitful for our own age as for theirs.⁵²

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⁵² The author wishes to thank for their help with this article Peter Berger, S.J., John Berkman, and Russell Hittinger.