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AN ARISTOTELEAN ARGUMENT FOR UNITY OF REGIMES IN DOMINICAN AND JESUIT PAPALIST WRITINGS

Abstract: Aristotle, arguing for the ‘Unmoved Mover’ in the *Metaphysics*, quoted Homer on the need for one leader. The *Metaphysics*, in Latin, included that quotation. Thomas Aquinas used examples from daily life in interpreting the *Metaphysics*. However, Dominicans, followed by the Jesuits, reversed this argument, saying Aristotle indicated the need for a single ruler in any polity. According to them, that ruler was the pope in the Church. In the sixteenth century this argument was attacked by John Calvin. Robert Bellarmine replied, rejecting Calvin’s interpretation of Aristotle’s text. However, in the seventeenth century, the entire argument from the *Metaphysics* ceased to have a place in political discourse.

Keywords: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, medieval papalism, Dominicans, Jesuits

Medieval writings on ecclesiastical and temporal politics depended on two types of argument, often employing a mix of both. An argument might be advanced on the basis of cited authorities, or it could depend on reason. The authorities cited could be Judeo-Christian or they could derive from classical Antiquity. The classical texts most often cited as evidence of universal principles were the works of Cicero, the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, and Aristotle,

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the influence of the last-mentioned postdating that of the others.¹ These arguments could be reinforced with Aristotelean syllogisms. Thus, the Dominican theologian Juan de Torquemada, in an oration delivered at the Council of Florence in 1439, argued for the superiority of monarchy with a major premise borrowed from the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, and a minor premise from a text attributed to John Chrysostom and from the *Catena aurea* of Thomas Aquinas. He followed these premises with others derived from Aristotle and Isidore of Seville, before concluding that the argument for papal power was valid.²

These arguments were used most frequently to support some form of Christian polity, whether with the pope, a general council or a Christian prince holding supreme power. However, another approach was possible. Marsilius of Padua argued for a lay polity to which the priesthood was subordinate and Christian orthodoxy was not allowed to be imposed by coercive means. This polemic was supported in *Dictio I* with logic and non-religious sources. However, *Dictio II* offered a rigorous and lengthy refutation of papal power based on Christian authorities.³ This reveals how either form of argument could be used to undermine ideas of Christendom, especially in a papalist form.⁴

No one authoritative author or book sufficed in medieval writings on politics. Even where a single author was often cited, as was Aristotle, no one work of that author served all purposes. Thus, when the *Politics* and the *Ethics* did not say what a polemicist wanted, he could appeal to other works by the Philosopher. Cary Nederman has underlined the ways in which the *Rhetoric* was used by John Fortescue. Marsilius, reaching even farther, employed Aristotle's tract on the motion of

¹ Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought 300–1450* (London: Routledge, 1996), 110–134; Cary J. Nederman, "Nature, Sin and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1998): 3–26.

² Juan de Torquemada, *Oratio synodalis de primatu*, ed. Emmanuel Candal (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1954), 23–24.

³ Cary J. Nederman, *Lineages of European Political Thought: Explorations along the Medieval / Modern Divide from John of Salisbury to Hegel* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 160–189; Vasileios Syros, *Die Rezeption der aristotelischen-politischen Philosophie bei Marsilius von Padua: Eine Untersuchung zur ersten Diktion des Defensor pacis* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

⁴ Conal Condren, "Marsilius of Padua's Argument from Authority: A Survey of Its Significance in the *Defensor pacis*," *Political Theory* 5 (1977): 205–218.

animals in the *Defensor pacis*.⁵ One of the more interesting examples of Aristotelian argument derives not from works focused on human action or the lives of animals but the most abstract of the Philosopher's texts, the *Metaphysics*. This argument reads, in the Latin of William of Moerbeke: "Entia vero non volunt disponi male, nec bonum pluralitas principatuum. Unus ergo princeps."⁶

This Aristotelean text, especially the phrase *pluralitas principatuum*, can be translated in different ways. Note these English versions 'plurality of principates,' 'power to rule' or 'plurality of sovereignty.' However understood, the phrase was used by certain Dominican papalists and some Jesuits to show that papal monarchy was the best regime for the Church Militant.⁷ Despite such uses in polemics, the phrase *pluralitas principatuum* was derived from a passage in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* which originally had nothing to do with either politics or law.

This passage appears in book XII of the *Metaphysics* (XII, 10, 1076a.),⁸ where Aristotle discussed the term substance in relation to its principles and elements. In section ten, near the end of that book, the Philosopher focused on the possibility of a plurality of principles in the universe, arguing for the necessity of a prime mover. He criticised those who gave primacy to mathematical number in the generation of all things, saying: "They give us many governing principles; but the world refuses to be governed badly. The rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be." The conclusion of this quotation is taken directly from book II of Homer's *Iliad*, an exhortation by Odysseus to the Argive host, urging unity in the face of Trojan enmity: "In no way will we Achaeans all be

⁵ Cary J. Nederman, "Aristotle as Authority: Alternative Aristotelian Sources of Late Medieval Political Thought," *History of European Ideas* 4 (1987): 31–44.

⁶ *Aristoteles Latinus* XXV 3.2 1995, digitised as https://www.hs-augusburg.de/harsch/Chronologia/Lspot13/GdeMorbecca/gui_1219.html. Two different readings, *nolunt* and *non volunt*, appear in quotations from this Latin translation.

⁷ For example, *Conciliarism and Papalism*, ed. J. H. Burns and Thomas M. Izbicki (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 211: "plurality of sovereignty is bad." The phrase was translated as "power to rule" at *Conciliarism and Papalism*, 230.

⁸ The English is quoted from the translation by W. D. Ross, ed., *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), XII (<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.12.xii.html>). The Greek, including the reference to Homer, *Iliad*, ii, 204, can be found in Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Volume II: Books 10–14. Oeconomica. Magna Moralia*, trans. H. Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 174–175.

kings here. No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counseling Cronos has given the scepter and judgments, so that he may take counsel for his people.”⁹ Although Aristotle was not dealing with human regimes, as he did in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, the statement about plurality of lords being bad reveals the possibility of its use, out of its context in the *Metaphysics*, in arguments for unified sovereignty.

As noted above, when William of Moerbeke translated the *Metaphysics* he rendered the relevant passage as “*Entia vero non volunt disponi male, nec bonum pluralitas principatum. Unus ergo princeps.*” It was in this form that most Western writers of the Middle Ages first encountered it. However, as will be seen below, Thomas Aquinas, Petrus de Paludanus, John of Ragusa and Juan de Torquemada used the alternative form *Entia nolunt*. So too did Dante in his *Monarchia*. In either form, this translation had echoes of the phrase *princeps legibus solutus*, found in Justinian’s *Digest* [*Dig.* 1.3.31]. Its combination of legal and philosophical principles was potentially useful to apologists for rulers challenged by subjects, as the popes were challenged by apologists for general councils beginning in the fifteenth century.¹⁰ This was not lost on Thomas de Vio Cajetan, who quoted the legal dictum about papal judicial immunity in his defense of Pope Julius II against an effort by a rebel council in Pisa (1512–1517) to depose him.¹¹ What was lost in translation was the fact that the Philosopher was quoting Homer in the context of battles fought in front of the walls of Troy.

The passage from the translated *Metaphysics* did not enter political thought immediately. A bridge can be found, however, in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. His commentary on the *Metaphysics* borrowed from ideas related to housekeeping and politics, arguing that these examples demonstrated that it was necessary to have a single ruler (*princeps*) of the universe, the prime mover, just as different families with their respective heads could not share a single house. The whole

⁹ Homer, *Iliad*. Books 1–12, trans. A. T. Murray and William F. Wyatt. Loeb Classical Library 170 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 174–175.

¹⁰ Francis Oakley, *The Conciliarism Tradition: Constitutionalism in the Catholic Church 1300–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 649–650; Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), 650.

¹¹ *Conciliarism and Papalism*, 35.

universe, in fact, was like a single principate (*principatus*) or a single kingdom under a unified rule, the rule of God.¹² Aquinas thought that human regimes cast light on the nature of the universe, at least in the context of a commentary on Aristotle's first philosophy.

Thomas took a related approach in the first part of the *Summa theologiae*. Question 103 focused on the government of creatures, especially their government under God. The *Prima pars* focuses on divine nature, not just on human affairs. Specifically, the third article inquires whether the whole world is governed by a single entity. The objections to this proposition underline the lack of unity in temporal affairs, leading to dissension. They suggested inexperience, foolishness or impotence, "which are far from God" (*quae a Deo sunt procul*).¹³ Aquinas presented a counter argument that there was one God, one Lord, to whom governance of subjects pertained.¹⁴ The answer to this question emphasised the proper end of government, the good. This required the best government of the world, which Thomas described as government by one.¹⁵ Thus disunity was contrary to the proper end of rule.¹⁶ Nor did the Angelic doctor allow a place in this context for a mixed constitution. Thomas concluded that the best government of the world had to be unified. This conclusion was justified by a reference to the *Metaphysics*, the now familiar saying "Entia vero non volunt disponi male, nec bonum pluralitas principatum. Unus ergo princeps."¹⁷

¹² "Unde relinquitur quod totum universum est sicut unus principatus et unum regnum. Et ita oportet quod ordinetur ab uno gubernatore. Et hoc est quod concludit, quod est unus princeps totius universi, scilicet primum movens, et primum intelligibile, et primum bonum, quod supra dixit Deum, qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum," <https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/cmp12.html>.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Summa theologiae... tomus primus, complectens primam partem* (Ottawa: Studii Generalis O. P., 1953), 616b.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 616b, "Quorum utrumque ad gubernationem pertinet, nam ad Dominum pertinet gubernatio subditorum [...]."

¹⁵ Ibidem, 616b, "Cum enim finis gubernationis mundi sit quod est essentialiter bonum, quod est optimum, necesse est quod mundi gubernatio sit optima. Optima autem gubernatio est quae fit per unum."

¹⁶ Ibidem, 617a, "Nam unum quodque intantum est, inquantum unum est; unde videmus quod res repugnant suae divisioni quantum possunt, et quod dissolutio uniuscuiusque rei provenit ex defectu illius rei."

¹⁷ Ibidem, 617a, "Relinquitur ergo quod gubernatio mundi, quae est optima, sit ab uno gubernante. Et hoc est quod Philosophus dicit in xii *Metaph.*: "Entia nolunt disponi male; nec bonum pluralitas principatum; unus ergo princeps."

Ptolemy of Lucca, one of the Angelic Doctor's immediate successors, took a somewhat different approach. Arguing that all dominion comes from God, this friar resorted to the *Metaphysics* to show that a multitude of those exercising lordship is reducible to one, the king. This reduction to one resembles the way in which nature is reducible to God as Prime Cause. Ptolemy also compares the universe to an armed multitude making up a single army.¹⁸ Elsewhere, Ptolemy argues that all lordship comes from God, the Prime Mover, and exists to promote a good end. In Aristotelian terms, this meant being moved by the Prime Cause to promote beatitude or at least "to act according to virtue."¹⁹

The fourteenth-century Dominicans leaned heavily toward papalism. Thus, Hervaeus Natalis, without citing Aristotle, argued in his tract on papal power for the existence of a universal prince able to correct errors and move all his subjects toward the good of the republic.²⁰ Guillelmus Petri de Godino, another Dominican friar, appealed directly to the *Metaphysics*. He used the argument from "plurality of principates" not being good to conclude that "therefore, there is one prince" (*unus ergo princeps*). Christ would have provided badly for the Church if He had subjected it to twelve princes (the Apostles) or fourteen rather than to one sovereign, Peter and his successor, the pope.²¹

Petrus Paludanus, a friar preacher who depended heavily on the thought of the Angelic Doctor,²² resorted to the same argument in his *Tractatus de potestate papae*. He employed the argument against "plurality of principates" when discussing the preeminence of the pope in

¹⁸ Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers, De regimine principum*, trans. James M. Blythe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 147.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 152–153.

²⁰ Hervaeus Natalis, *Hervei Natalis Britonis in quattuor libros sententiarum commentaria* (Farnborough: Gregg, [1647] 1966), 369B, "Sciendum quod cum cum praesidentia principis in omni principatu ordinetur ad hoc quod moueat omnes subditos illius principatus ad bonum, seu finem reipublicae... ."

²¹ William D. McCready, *The Theory of Papal Monarchy in the Fourteenth Century: Guillaume de Pierre Godin, "Tractatus de causa immediata ecclesiasticae potestatis"* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), 148, "Non est similiter dicendum quod subiecerit omnes omnibus, quia pluralitas principatum non est bona, ut dicitur 12 *Metaphysice*, et ideo concluditur ibidem: unus ergo princeps." Godin concludes with a reference to John 10:16: *Fiet unum ovile, et unus pastor*.

²² Jean Dunbabin, *A Hound of God: Pierre de la Palud and the Fourteenth-Century Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 70–91.

the Church, with authority over it. An essential aspect of that teaching was the belief that “the Church, ruled by the Holy Spirit, could not be badly ordered. Therefore, the Church, among all the world’s communities, should be the best ordered.”²³ Paludanus went on to say that “the Church’s polity” (*politia ecclesiae*) had to have “one prince and ruler” (*unum principem et rectorem*).²⁴

To support that teaching, Paludanus drew an argument from the history of ancient Rome. The Romans realised that the republic needed only one consul and thus they decided, on the basis of experience, that they needed one emperor to rule over them all. In support of the need for one *imperator*, Petrus quoted the argument in the *Metaphysics* about the evil of having a plurality of rulers.²⁵ Paludanus later added an argument that any army needed only one commander, referring to biblical generals like Joab together with France, which, although having two marshals, had only one constable (*unus connestabulus*).²⁶ Petrus returned to the argument from Aristotle as proof of a minor premise of a syllogism on papal power. Once again he argued that the world would not be well ordered in spiritual matters without one man in charge. Perhaps by going back to Aquinas’ original argument, the friar reminded his readers that all things, to be well ordered, needed rule by one [God, the Prime Mover]. Paludanus concluded with a full quotation of the key passage from the *Metaphysics*.²⁷

Like most authorities, a phrase like *nec bonum pluralitas principatum* could be used in more than one way, as long as unity was maintained.

²³ Petrus Paludanus, *Tractatus de potestate papae* (*Bibl. de la Ville, 744*), ed. Petrus T. Stella (Zürich: Pas-Verlag, 1966), 123, “Maior patet, quia ecclesia, que regitur Spiritu sancto, non potest esse male ordinata; immo inter omnes communitates mundi ecclesia debet esse Melius ordinata.”

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 123–124.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 124, “ad ultimum per experientiam cognoverunt quod necesse erat reipublice per unum consul... . Unde fecerunt ex tunc imperatorem, qui solus super omnes regnaret. Unde in XII *Metaphysice*, Pluralitas principantium non est bona, unus ergo princeps.”

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 140.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, 139–140, “Minor patet quantum ad primam partem, scilicet quod mundus non esset bene ordinatus in spiritualibus et consequentibus, nisi in eis haberet unum hominem presidentem. Quia, sicut mundus non esset bene ordinatus in entibus, nisi haberent unum ens omnibus entibus presidens, propter quod concluditur in fine XII *Metaphysice* Entia nolunt male disponi; pluralitas, autem, principatum non est bona; unus ergo princeps.”

Outside the Order of Preachers, the Augustinian Hermits produced some of the most forthright papal apologists of the later Middle Ages. One of these was Augustine of Ancona, known as Augustinus Triumphus. Michael Wilks, writing about this friar's *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica*, argued that this papalist treated "unity and monarchy as different aspects of the same principle." The need for a single ruler was buttressed by a reference to the *Metaphysics*, our familiar saying about "plurality of principates." As Wilks noted, the opposite conclusion would leave a regime as "a hydra-headed monstrosity."²⁸

A different conclusion can be found in Dante's *Monarchia*, with its argument for universal rule by the emperor, especially by Henry VII of Luxemburg. The poet argued that there had to be judgment where conflicts existed and that neither God nor nature would have left temporal regimes lacking this vital role, otherwise conflict could arise between princes without a judge able to correct their faults or those of their subjects.²⁹ Dante argued that this proved the necessity of monarchy, and quoted Aristotle to buttress this conclusion: "Therefore, monarchy is necessary for the world. And the Philosopher understood this reasoning when he said: 'Things hate to be in disorder; but a plurality of principalities is disorder; ergo, there is but one prince.'³⁰ Dante's emphasis on imperial sovereignty contradicted Augustinus' high papalism, but both arguments could be supported by quoting Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

The phrase from the *Metaphysics* could even be used by Marsilius of Padua to set up a straw argument for hereditary monarchy because it resembles God's universal monarchy. The Paduan did this only to argue that an elected ruler was more likely to be chosen for virtue

²⁸ Michael Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages: The Papal Monarchy with Augustinus Triumphus and the Publicists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 45. The text is cited in Augustine of Ancona, *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica* (Lyon: Petrus Ungarus, 1484), q. XII ad tertium.

²⁹ Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy: An Historical Study with Accompanying Translations of Dante Alighieris Monarchia, Guido Vernanis Refutation of the Monarchia composed by Dante and Pope John XXII's Bull, Si fratrum* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 118.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 119; Dante, *Monarchia*, trans. Richard Key (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1998), 8–9, "Est igitur Monarchia necessaria mundo. 6. Et hanc rationem videbat Phylosophus cum dicebat, 'Entia nolunt male disponi; malum autem pluralitas principatum: unus ergo princeps'"

and thus more fully resembled “the ruler of the universe.”³¹ Marsilius, moreover, used *principatus* as a synonym for the *pars principans*, the ruling element in the polity.³²

Subsequent to the Western Schism (1378–1417) challenges to papal sovereignty arose. Thus, in the context of the Council of Basel’s revolt against Pope Eugenius IV (1431–1447), the Dominican theologian John of Ragusa supported council against pope. Nonetheless, although he was a conciliarist, John defended the place of the pope, Peter’s successor, in his role as head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. To support this contention, the friar argued that the Church had a beautiful order under the rule of one supreme prince. This argument was reinforced with the quotation from the *Metaphysics* which is our subject.³³

This was the background of Juan de Torquemada’s argument for papal sovereignty within the Church. Even when he was not writing polemics about papal power, he was sensitive to the possible meanings of the terms *princeps* and *principatus*. In fact, when composing questions based on the gospel for the feast of Peter’s Seat or *cathedra*, Torquemada argued that there was an excellent reason to move Peter’s seat from Antioch to Rome: it was done in honor of the faith. He said, citing Gratian’s *Decretum*, that Rome had the principate of the nations. It once was the seat of superstition, holding the principate of the gentiles; that regime had been replaced with the principate of the Church, the papacy.³⁴ Likewise, he argued, reporting to the Council of Basel on a dispute over the orthodoxy of the Augustinian friar Agostino Favaroni,

³¹ Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of Peace: The Defensor Pacis*, trans. Alan Gewirth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 79–80.

³² Unn Falkheid, *The Avignon Papacy Contested: An Intellectual History from Dante to Catherine of Siena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 58–59, 72.

³³ John of Ragusa, *Tractatus de ecclesia*, ed. Franjo Šanjek (Zagreb: Hrvatska Dominikanska Provincija, 1983), 129–130 at 129, “Entia nolunt disponi male; nec bonum pluralitas principatuum; unus ergo princeps.” Conciliarism had deep roots in the West, although it was uncommon in the Order of Preachers; see Brian Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory: The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955).

³⁴ Juan de Torquemada, *Questiones spiritualis conuiuij delicias preferentes super euangeliis tam de tempore quam de sanctis* (Lyon: Gueynard, 1509), f. clxxxvi^{ra-b}, “sed translatio ista de antiochia in romam fuit optima ratione facta propter honorem fidei Christiane et gloriam apostolice sedis et **ecclesiastici principatus**. Unde. ii. q. vii. Beati [c. 37] ‘in vrbe roma’ petrus et paulus martyrium pertulerunt. que **principatum et caput obtinebat nationum**. vt vbi erat caput superstitionis. illic

that the ecclesiastical principate was not founded by divine wisdom if it was subject to uncertainty and fallible.³⁵

Torquemada did not employ the quotation about “plurality of principates” drawn from the *Metaphysics* in his earliest polemics,³⁶ he only resorted to it when the Council of Basel was trying to depose Eugenius IV. In the autumn of 1439, Pope Eugenius started a counteroffensive against the council. To accompany a bull entitled *Moyses vir Dei* (4 September), condemning conciliar claims to supremacy, the pope staged a debate on the relative powers of the pope and general council. Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, the former president of the Council of Basel, was charged with defending the conciliar cause. Torquemada upheld papal primacy. One argument he refuted was that there could be “a supreme power different from that of the pope.” Torquemada was charged with replying to Cesarini by upholding papal power. He also turned to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* to prove supreme power could not be shared: “Secondly, it is not a good thing to have a plurality of princes. And if a thing is not good, we must not believe it to have been instituted by Christ in his church.”³⁷ Torquemada’s actions and writings, on behalf of Pope Eugenius, were rewarded later that year with a promotion to the College of Cardinals.

In 1441, Torquemada wrote a commentary on the bull *Laetentur coeli*, issued by Eugenius IV for the Council of Florence, which declared the Greek and Latin churches reunited, however temporarily. This text included a reaffirmation of papal primacy. In support of this contention, he cited Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* once more to demonstrate that “plurality

caput quiesceret sanctitatis. et vbi **gentilium princeps** habitabat. illic **ecclesiarum princeps** moraretur” [emphasis mine].

³⁵ Gian Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio*. (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, [1901–1927] 1961), henceforward quoted as Mansi, XXX: 1032, “Quia ergo decebat firmatum esse robur ecclesiastici principatus, & non incertitudinis fallibilitatisve confusione jactari, divina sapientia non fundavit illum super rebus incertis.” See also Mansi, XXX: 1034.

³⁶ He referred to the need for one ecclesiastical principate; see Mansi, XXX: 1032, “Quia ergo decebat firmatum esse robur ecclesiastici principatus, & non incertitudinis fallibilitatisve confusione jactari, divina sapientia non fundavit illum super rebus incertis.” See also Mansi, XXX: 1034.

³⁷ Torquemada, *Oratio synodalis de primatu*, 12. Similarly, Petrus de Monte appealed to the *Metaphysics*, wrongly citing book XI, in Mansi, XXX: 1190, to prove that a multitude is better governed by one.

of principates” was bad.³⁸ Torquemada added another argument from nature, the unity of a hive under a king bee and the conformity of migrating cranes to their leader, an argument drawn from the canon *In apibus* in Gratian’s *Decretum* [C. 7 q. 1 c. 41].³⁹

The remainder of Torquemada’s career was mostly spent in the Roman curia, participating in public affairs, promoting ecclesiastical reform and writing on a variety of issues. The most important of his writings was the *Summa de ecclesia*. Completed in 1453 and dedicated to Pope Nicholas V, the book offered a defense of the ecclesiastical institution, as well as a systematic argument for the superiority of pope over council. In defense of the papacy, Torquemada argued that there had to be a single unifying power, a rector and prince, presiding over the Church.⁴⁰ One of his arguments to this end was an appeal to nature. It was more natural for one to rule many than for many to rule one. “Nature,” he said, “loves singularity.” To support this contention, Torquemada cited book XII of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as rejecting “plurality of principates” in the Church. Unlike most polemicists, the friar noted that the original argument of Aristotle was a proof of the unity of the first principle, not of communities.⁴¹

In the *Summa de ecclesia*, Torquemada also addressed the relationship between spiritual and temporal power within Christendom. Here he cited Aristotle’s *dictum* about “plurality of principates” being bad; but he denied that this meant there was only one power in Christendom,

³⁸ Juan de Torquemada, *Apparatus super decretum Florentinum unionis Graecorum*, ed. Emmanuel Candal (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1942), 97.

³⁹ Ibidem. For a previous Dominican writing on the king bee, see Thomas of Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus* (Douai: ex Typographia Baltazaris Belleri, 1627). See also Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, ed. Hermann Stadler (Münster: Aschendorff, 1920), II: 1172–1181, 1580–1581, which mentions at 1580 an opinion of Aristotle that this ‘king’ is actually the mother of all the bees in a hive. Thomas Kaeppli and Emilio Panella, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum medii aevi* (Rome: ad S. Sabinae, 1970–1993), IV: 352–355 no. 3775.

⁴⁰ Juan de Torquemada, *Summa de ecclesia* (Venice: Michael Tramezinus, 1561), f. 118v.

⁴¹ Ibidem, f. 119v, “Primo, quia naturalior est principatus unius in multos quam possit esse multorum in unum. Natura enim principiorum amat singularitatem, ut ait beatus Augustinus. Primo de nuptiis & concupiscentia. Hinc Aristoteles probans unitatem primi principii 12. metaphysice ait. Entia nolunt male disponi, neque bonum pluralitas principatuum; unus ergo princeps.” Torquemada also repeated the argument from nature from Gratian’s c. *In apibus* [C. 7 q. 1 c. 41].

with the papacy controlling lay rulers directly. Instead, he argued that secular principates were subject in a certain way to “the power of spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.”⁴² This was a more complex use of Aristotle than in the debate with Cesarini, the *dictum* from the *Metaphysics* being used to defend lay powers while still maintaining the Church’s spiritual superiority. Torquemada was giving princes their own sphere but under the higher directive force of the Roman pontiff.

As early as his critique of Agostino Favaroni, however, Torquemada had pointed out that the members of a political body could not be united as the members of the mystical body were joined to Christ. Head and members simply did not share a single life-giving spirit.⁴³ Jacques Maritain rightly saw in Torquemada’s *Summa* a predecessor of the argument of Robert Bellarmine that the papacy had only indirect power in temporal affairs.⁴⁴

Torquemada’s last polemic was the *Opusculum ad honorem Romani imperii et dominorum Romanorum* (1468). It was a reply to the writings of Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo which argued that the Roman Empire had usurped royal rights. Writing in haste, the elderly cardinal defended the legitimacy of the Empire.⁴⁵ In this context, Torquemada appealed twice to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. One argument was that monarchy was based on eternal wisdom, which was manifested by the natural principle that “plurality of principates” was not good.⁴⁶ The other was that God was

⁴² Ibidem, f. 99r, “Pluralitas principatuum quorum unus non subest alteri, non est bona, sed non sic est in proposito, quoniam inter Christianos principatus potestas principatus secularis aliquomodo subest potestati iurisdictionis spiritualis sive ecclesiasticae...” This is an answer to an argument advanced at *ibid*, f. 98r.

⁴³ Mansi, XXX: 1032, “Membra autem corporis politici non sic; non enim in eis unus spiritus omnia membra vivificans & regens communis est capiti, & membris, sicut in corpore ecclesiae; & ideo non possunt habere talem unitatem, quam membra corporis habent cum Christo.”

⁴⁴ Jacques Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar’s*, trans. James Scanlan (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930), 75–78.

⁴⁵ *Three Tracts on Empire: Engelbert of Admont, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini and Juan de Torquemada*, ed. Cary J. Nederman (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2000), 31–35, 118.

⁴⁶ Hubert Jedin “Juan de Torquemada und das *Imperium Romanum*,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 12 (1943): 247–278 at 272, “et idem Philosophus dicit XII. Metaphysice: Entia nolunt male disponi; pluralitas principatuum non est bona; unus ergo princeps.”

the universal prince, on whose rule, as stated by Aristotle, nature and regimes were modeled, which fit within natural law.⁴⁷

Cajetan, who was influenced by Torquemada's papalism, employed Aristotle's *dictum* in his *Apologia*. He had written it on behalf of Pope Julius against the rebel council at Pisa. Jacques Almain replied on behalf of the Sorbonne, which had been prodded into action by King Louis XII of France, one of the pope's foes. Cajetan's *Apologia* was a reply, in turn, to Almain's polemic. The context of this exchange was the biblical passage Matthew 18:15–20 saying that the Church could correct an erring brother, the power to bind and loose being conferred on all the apostles, not on Peter alone. Almain had quoted Jean Gerson as saying that these verses empowered a general council.⁴⁸ Cajetan replied that both the pope and the Church could not have supreme power and there was not a third power to intervene between them. Cajetan's reply was grounded in Aristotle but looked at the complexities afflicting the faithful if there were two competing powers, each claiming supremacy. Thus, he said: "However, it is not appropriate that there be [two] powers of jurisdiction in the Church without a third power in it superior to both of them; plurality of sovereignty is bad."⁴⁹

Having discussed conflicting commands issued by rival powers, Cajetan concluded that either the pope had supreme jurisdiction over the Church, or no one had it. If neither the pope nor the community of the Church had jurisdiction over the other, this created the threat of chaos. He quoted Aristotle a second time before saying that Christ, "eternal wisdom," would not have instituted such a "plurality of principates" because of its malign results.⁵⁰

In his commentary on the *Summa theologiae*, Cajetan discussed the argument for a unitary government of the created world. He accepted the need for government as a promoter of the good and argued for the necessity of unity by appealing to both reason and authority. The argument from reason ran: government is intended for an end; therefore,

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 273, "Ergo quod unus post deum super omnes homines visibili conversatione principetur, est conveniens iure naturali." See also the reference to c. *In apibus* at Jedin, "Torquemada und das *Imperium Romanum*," 273. *Three Tracts on Empire*, 120.

⁴⁸ *Conciliarism and Papalism*, 155–156.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 211.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

it is intended for the good; and, therefore, it is one. This unity arises from a natural appetite, and thus it resists being divided. Dissolution of unity would arise from a defect in any being, and so a divided regime is defective. Cajetan's argument from authority in this context is derived from the same passage from Aristotle used by Aquinas in the text of the *Summa theologiae* and by Torquemada in his *Summa de ecclesia*. Unity is essential for the survival of a regime, and therefore nature, which abhors a vacuum, cannot accept divided or shared sovereignty. This unity is derived, in Aristotle's thought, from the prime mover. Here Cajetan and his Dominican predecessors invoke a line of thought as old as the *Iliad* to resist any threat to the survival of a regime operating in this world. This was especially true for Cajetan because of the papacy which had been threatened by a conciliar revolt at Basel, attempting to impose reforms on the Roman pontiff and to depose him when he resisted. It was also threatened by the assembly at Pisa.⁵¹ Torquemada, before him, had seen this revolt against the background of Hussite dissent, which threatened the visible unity of "the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."⁵²

The use of this text by Dominicans did not stop with Torquemada and Cajetan. In his *relectio* on civil power, Francisco de Vitoria, the leading light of the School of Salamanca, defended papal monarchy as the best regime for the Church. One of his arguments for this was in the first *Relectio de potestate ecclesiastica* (1532), which states that the unifying rule of one was necessary. The Church was not just a commonwealth, it was a single body. Thus, it would be bad for there to be a multitude of rulers in the Church. A body with many heads, princes or prelates, would be monstrous. There was to be one administrator in ecclesiastical affairs, just as in secular matters.⁵³ In his second *relectio*

⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia* (Rome: Editio Leonina, 1889–2000), V: 455–456.

⁵² Mansi, XXX: 567, "Magnus autem error & periculosus toto corpori ecclesiae esset error circa potestatem papae capitis ecclesiae." Torquemada had said this was an error of many & *nunc per Bohemos*; see Mansi, XXIX: 776, "Ecclesia catholica est illa ecclesia, quam fideles profitentur in symbolo tam apostolorum quam Nicaeno, cum dicitur: Credo in Spiritum sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, & iterum: Et unam sanctam catholicam, & apostolicam ecclesiam."

⁵³ Francisco de Vitoria, *Relectiones theologicae R. P. Fr. Francisci Victoriae* (Madrid: Manuel Martin, 1765), I: 9, "Multitudo principatuum esset mala: ergo non expedit in Ecclesia esse varias, & distinctas potestates, maxime cum Ecclesia sit non solum una respublica, sed unum corpus... Et sic habere multos Principes, aut Praelatos, videtur quasi habere multa capita unius corporis: quod mon-

on ecclesiastical power, Vitoria returned to the same line of argument to prove that there was one ecclesiastical fold with one shepherd. Otherwise, there would be plurality of rulers, which Aristotle had dismissed as pernicious.⁵⁴ Rule by one, monarchy, was best, he said, referencing the *Metaphysics*, *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. This explained why Peter and his successors alone ruled the Church by Christ's ordaining.⁵⁵

This line of argument had some influence among the Jesuits. Thus, Francisco Suárez, in his *De legibus*, presented an argument for monarchy without rejecting popular sovereignty entire. The Jesuit theologian admitted that monarchy might be best for civil regimes, according to Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*, as well as from the example of Christ in founding the Church. It also was frequently used as a form of government among the nations. However, Suárez argued that other forms of regime were not bad. Natural law did not require humanity to give power to one, few or the entire community. The choice between these forms of government necessarily fell to human will.⁵⁶ However, once power had been transferred, the community retained no leverage over

struosum est: ergo potius convenire videretur, ut unus, atque idem res seculares, & Ecclesiasticas administraret." See also Francisco de Vitoria, *Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 54–56. Vitoria cited the *Metaphysics*, with its quotation from Homer, in this *relectio*; see Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 54 n. 14. The same text was cited in the commentary on Thomas' *Summa*; see Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 19, which says that to rule by many would result in confusion.

⁵⁴ Vitoria, *Relectiones theologicae*, I: 92, "Multitudo enim Principum est pernicioza, ut Arist. etiam dicit..." see also Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 134.

⁵⁵ Vitoria, *Relectiones theologicae*, I: 100, 143; Vitoria also said of Christ, "cujus est summa sapientia, & providentia."

⁵⁶ Francisco Suárez, *Selections from Three Works*, ed. Thomas Pink (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 37–38, "Stando ergo in iure naturali non coguntur homines eligere determinate unum ex his modis gubernationis. Quia licet inter eos monarchia sit melior, ut Aristoteles late ostendit et colligi potest ex gubernatione et providentia totius universi, quam oportet esse optimam, et inde conclusit Aristoteles (XII *Metaphysicorum* in fine) esse monarchiam dicens: Unus ergo princeps, idemque ostendit exemplum Christi Domini, in institutione et gubernatione suae Ecclesiae, ac denique id etiam suadet frequentior usus omnium nationum, licet hoc (inquam) ita sit, nihilominus alii modi gubernandi non sunt mali, sed possunt esse boni et utiles; ideoque ex pura lege naturae non coguntur homines habere hanc potestatem in uno vel pluribus vel in collectione omnium. Ergo haec determinatio necessario fieri debet arbitrio humano."

the ruler.⁵⁷ The one exception to this supremacy was a lapse by the ruler into tyranny.⁵⁸

Although he allowed for the possibility of other regimes than the monarchic to be created, Suárez had little to say otherwise about such things. He allowed for the possibility of power being delegated to other rulers or even to cities (*aliquibus civitatibus*), but not to those subordinate regimes having their own power.⁵⁹ The closest the Jesuit came to addressing the nature of polities was a contention that “a temporal republic or a temporal kingdom” (*republicam temporalem vel regnum temporale*) could not promote “peace and political happiness of a republic” (*pacem et felicitatem politicam reipublicae humanae*) by “natural honesty” (*de honestate naturali*). Only embracing the Catholic faith could promote the happiness of any temporal regime.⁶⁰

A late but important use of this argument, omitting Aristotle’s name but turning directly to Homer, can be found in a chapter of Calvin’s *Institutes* to which the Jesuit cardinal Robert Bellarmine replied. The original argument is found in book IV of the *Institutes*, in which the Geneva reformer discussed the true and false Church. In Chapter 6 he attacked the papacy, denying the universal primacy of the Roman see. Among the traditional papalist arguments refuted were those for unity based on nature. Calvin answered some of these by denying they were universal in scope. Answering a citation of the canon *In apibus*, without citing its source, he denied that all bees throughout the world had chosen one king. Moreover, every migrating flock, he said, had its own leader, not just a single leader of all.⁶¹

Refuting arguments from civil government, Calvin, without mentioning Aristotle, went directly to the quote from the *Iliad* in Greek. Here he claimed that the quote, attributed to Odysseus, applied only to unity within one kingdom, which could not tolerate two kings or a partnership between two princes. It did not require a monarch for the whole world:

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 49.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, 44, “nisi fortasse in tyrannidem declinet.”

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 48–49.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 166.

⁶¹ John Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* (Geneva: apud Iacobum Stoer, 1618), 394; Idem, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1909), II: 375.

They quote an observation of Homer, that it is not good to have many governors, with similar passages of other profane writers in commendation of monarchy. The answer is easy; for monarchy is not praised by Ulysses in Homer, or by any others, from an opinion that one king ought to govern the whole world. Their meaning is, that one kingdom does not admit of two kings, and that no prince can bear a partner in his throne.⁶²

The Jesuit cardinal Robert Bellarmine replied to this and other Protestant arguments in his *Controversiae*. Calvin was the chief target of this polemical *magnum opus*; but it also criticised such figures as Luther, Schwenckfeld, the Magdeburg Centuriators, Zwingli, Theodore Beza and Michael Servetus (Bellarmine 1856–1862, I: 1–575, e.g. 19A–20A, 23A–B, 31A, 40A–B, 322A, 336A, 338A, 342A). Among the Catholic theologians to whose authority Bellarmine appealed on various issues were Torquemada, Vitoria, Domingo de Soto and Melchor Cano.⁶³ In reply to Calvin’s argument from Homer, Bellarmine too cited the *Iliad* in Greek, without mentioning Aristotle as an intermediary source.⁶⁴ The *Metaphysics* in the Latin translation by Moerbeke had fallen out of Reformation-era polemics by the time of Calvin. New translations of Aristotle, including those of the *Metaphysics* by Cardinal Bessarion and Marco Antonio Flamminio, were displacing older ones; but Calvin and Bellarmine read Greek.⁶⁵

⁶² Calvin, *Institutio*, 375, 394, “Ad ciuilia deinde exempla nos vocant, citant Homericum illud Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω & quae eodem sensu in monarchiae commendationem leguntur apud profanos scriptores. Facilis est responsio. non enim hoc sensu vel ab Homericō Ulyssē, vel ab aliis laudatur monarchia, quasi vnus debeat totum orbem imperio regere: sed indicare volunt, regnum duos non capere: & potestatem (ut ait ille) impatientem esse consortis.” The English translation is from Calvin, *Institutes*, II: 2, 375.

⁶³ E. g. Robert Bellarmine, *Opera omnia* (Naples: apud Josephum Giuliano, 1856–1862), I: 19A–20A, 23A–B, 31A, 40A–B, 322A, 336A, 338A, 342A.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 312B, “Denique ex Poetis, Homerus in 2. Lib. Iliados sententiam protulit ab omnibus pene scriptoribus celebratam, οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω. Ad quod Homeri testimonium quod solum ex tam multis adversus sententiam suam objecit, respondet Calvinus lib. 4. Instit. cap. 6, § 8. *Facilis est. inquit, responsio: non enim hoc sensu vel ab Homericō Ulyssē, vel ab aliis laudatur monarchia, quasi vnus debeat totum orbem imperio regere; sed indicare volunt, regnum duos non capere, et potestatem (ut ait ille) impatientem esse consortis.*”

⁶⁵ Andrew Taylor, “Introduction: The Translations of Renaissance Latin,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 41 (2014): 329–353 at 333–334; Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo*

The cardinal's reply to Calvin on the quotation from Homer deserves some attention. His critique begins with a summary of Calvin's position, including a quotation from the *Institutes*. Bellarmine accuses Calvin of using ambiguity to confuse those who are unprepared in the treatment of this topic.⁶⁶ His reading of Homer was that the text referred to the rule of a multitude. If Calvin had read the text that way, they would agree on its meaning, valuing monarchy over polity or aristocracy for governing a multitude. Such a group was not well ruled by many and power is impatient with collaboration.⁶⁷ If Calvin was referring to the rule of a province or region, he had not properly understood what Homer says. The text referred to the rule of an entire army drawn from many parts of the Achaean people to attack Troy. Such a multitude could only be ruled well by one, a monarch.⁶⁸ No one can doubt that Bellarmine meant this argument to apply to the multitude of the Church governed by the Roman pontiff.

Manetti and Desiderius Erasmus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45, 76–77.

⁶⁶ Bellarmine, *Opera omnia*, I: 312B, "At certe si facile fuit Calvino respondere, facilius nobis erit responsionem ejus refutare. Nam vel nihil dicit, vel quod nos dicimus dicit, vel falsum dicit, et sibi contradicit. Si enim, cum ait unum regnum non capere duos, vim facit in verbo *regnum*, et vult dicere, regnum proprie dictum non capere duos, quia si duo sint, non erit regnum proprie dictum, cum regnum proprie sit unius hominis summa potestas: tum nihil omnino dicit, sed solum ambiguitate verborum offundit tenebras imperitis. Nam eo sensu dicere, regnum non capit duos, idem significat ac si aliquis diceret, regimen unius non est regimen duorum: et unus homo non sunt duo homines; ad quod pronuntian- dum nihil opus est sapientia Ulyssis."

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, I: 312B, "Si vero non vim in verbo facit, sed per regnum intelligit multitudinem, quae regi debet: tum idipsum dicit, quod nos dicimus. Idcirco enim asserimus monarchiam praestare politiae et aristocratiae, quod multitudo non commode regatur a multis, et potestas impatiens sit consortis."

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, I: 312B–3A, "Si denique vult intelligi per regnum, non quamvis multitudinem, sed unam aliquam provinciam, sive unum exiguum regnum: ut sensus sit, uni provinciae unum esse regem attribuendum, non tamen idem esse judicium de toto orbe terrarum: tum et falsum dicit, et sibi ipsi contradicit. Nam Homericus Ulysses non disputat de constituenda republica in aliqua una provincia, sed concionatur ad universum exercitum Graecorum, qui tunc pugnabat ad Trojam, in quo exercitu multae nationes erant, multi principes, aliquot etiam reges, atque affirmat non oportere eam omnem multitudinem a multis regi, sed ab uno. Itaque sensus ejus celeberrimae sententiae non aliud esse potest, quam in quavis una multitudine unum esse debere rectorem primum: quod quidem aequale locum habet in exiguo regno, et in maximis imperiis; non enim uni regno exiguo unus debetur rex, quod illud regnum sit exiguum, sed quod sit unum."

With this polemical exchange, the argument from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was cast off the central stage of Western political debate. It was too far removed from the proper use of authorities cited in context to survive. Even Calvin and Bellarmine had abandoned the *Metaphysics* by directly quoting from the Greek. The fading of this argument is well illustrated by referring to Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Hobbes twice criticised Cardinal Bellarmine's arguments in favor of papal power, arguing that Christ had not left to the Church such coercive power as the Jesuit theologian attributed to the pope.⁶⁹

Hobbes was also critical of Aristotle's political ideas, including the belief in government by laws, mere words on paper that lack enforcement with swords.⁷⁰ Hobbes says that the quotation from Homer is concerned with bees and ants, which he described in Aristotelean terms as political creatures. Having presented this argument, Hobbes went on to dismiss it as irrelevant to political life, especially to unitary sovereignty enforceable by coercive means. The orderly life of insects came from nature, Hobbes said, but human regimes depend on the artificial arrangements their people have made. Insects lack reason and real judgment in the natural order, therefore, they are incapable of founding a true polity.⁷¹ Thus, the argument from natural order in the form derived from the *Metaphysics* ceased to have a place in political thought. Note that the argument vanished without any significant dissent, even by leading Dominicans and Jesuits.

⁶⁹ Hobbes' references to Homer have no political content; see Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme & Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 49, 76, 152, 364–365, 406–409.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, 505–506. Hobbes also rejected Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as repugnant to reason; see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 497.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, 502–507.

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