

## Aquinas's worldview and his applicability in the political writings of the XIV century

*A Cosmovisão de Tomás de Aquino e sua aplicabilidade nos escritos políticos do século XIV*

CARLOS THADEU FREIRE DA COSTA<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In this paper we shall begin by analyzing Thomas Aquinas' worldview, which was based in an architecture of the universe in which God ruled supreme over it and in which, everything had been neatly established by his might. Then, we shall see how this conception was used by different political authors of the XIV century to defend different ideals of good-government and of the relationship between the church and royal power. Hence, this paper aims at showing how they used his concepts of God as a governor of the world as well as his idea of an eternal law in different fashion, to defend either the papalist view or the anti-papalist one. In order to do it we shall be looking at the works of John of Paris *On Royal and Papal Power* and also, of Alvarez Pelayo, *The State and the Weeping of the Church*. In addition, we shall see how both of them used the idea of efficient cause presented, by Thomas Aquinas, as one of the main causes to prove the existence of God, to defend their position. Thus, it will be shown how the legacy of the heavenly doctor could be used in different ways by XIV century thinkers and will be drawn attention to both the richness and diversity of the world of political thought in the later Middle Ages.

**Keywords:** Aquinas; Alvarez Pelayo; John of Paris; Political Writings; XIV Century

**Resumo:** Neste artigo, começaremos analisando a cosmovisão de Tomás

---

1 Mestre em História pela Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) e doutorando em História pela UFF. Contato: [thadeucosta@uol.com.br](mailto:thadeucosta@uol.com.br).

de Aquino que foi baseada em uma arquitetura do Universo, na qual Deus governaria de modo supremo e na qual, tudo teria sido estabelecido por seu poder. Depois, veremos como esta concepção foi usada por diferentes autores políticos do século XIV, para defender diferentes ideais de bom-governo e de relações entre a Igreja e o Poder Real. Este artigo, portanto, busca demonstrar como estes autores usaram os conceitos de Deus, como governador do mundo e o de lei eterna, presente na obra de Tomás de Aquino, de diferentes maneiras, de modo a defender ou um ponto de visto hierocrata ou um ponto de vista não hierocrata. Para fazermos isto, analisaremos as obras de João de Paris (Quidort), Sobre o Poder Régio e Papal e de D. Álvaro Pais, Estado e Pranto da Igreja. Além disto, também analisaremos como eles também utilizaram a ideia de causa eficiente, usada por São Tomás também para defender a existência de Deus, para defenderem sua posição. Será demonstrado, assim, como o legado do Doutor Angélico foi usado de diferentes maneiras, por pensadores do século XIV e será percebida tanta a riqueza quanto a diversidade do mundo das ideias políticas, na Baixa Idade Média.

**Palavras -Chave:** Tomás de Aquino; D. Álvaro Pais; João de Paris; Escritos Políticos; Século XIV

## Introduction:

The later Middle Ages was a period marked by a growing bulk of philosophical works and by the writing of multiple *summae* which attempted to make a conciliation between the works of Aristotle and the biblical text, as well as the works of the fathers of the Church (GILSON, 200). Amidst those who greatly contributed to these attempts, is Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), an important theologian and university professor, who was later canonized by the pope, in the year of 1323 (NICOLAS, 2021, p. 21-63).

The main work by Aquinas, the *Summa Theologiae*, however, was not just a work of conciliation, but rather an attempt of offering a complete architecture of the world by Christian lenses. After Aquinas's death, this architecture was used by other Christian authors, such as Alvarez Pelayo and John of Paris, to defend different political views for a much beleaguered Christendom by the first Half of the XIV century, as can be seen in both their works, *On Royal and Papal Power* (PARIS, 1974) and *The State and the Weeping of the Church* (PAIS, 1988).

In this article, we shall begin by tracing some key aspects of Aquinas's life and then, we shall proceed to analyse two of the main aspects of this world architecture: firstly, the idea of God presented by him as the creator and lord

of all things, and secondly, his idea of law and, particularly, eternal law. This can also help us to understand how he envisioned this order. After that, we shall analyse how we can trace the presence of such ideas in the works of both thinkers. While, in the work of John of Paris, these ideas helped to defend a very antipapalist political view, in the other, the same ideas were used as cornerstones for a papalist view of politics. Finally, we shall conclude with some considerations about how the legacy of this very important Christian philosopher, Thomas Aquinas, could be used in different manners by XIV century thinkers, even if sometimes, they didn't acknowledge this clearly.

We hope to offer a better understanding of the richly diverse world of later medieval political thought and how the works of "greater" and "lesser" philosophers could interplay in the affairs of that time. To attain these objectives, we shall use the methodology of the Cambridge School of Intellectual History, that tries to establish relationship between different thinkers and their ideas in order to have a better understanding of them and their impact (TUCK, 2011, p. 279-297; POCOOCK, 2003, p. 63-86).

We shall return to these considerations, in our conclusion.

## 1. The Life of Thomas Aquinas and the ideas of Thomas Aquinas

### 1.1 The life of Thomas:

A son of a noble Family, the De Aquino, Thomas was originally destined to the Benedictine order, however, upon entering the recently opened university of Naples, in 1239, he began to be drawn by the Dominican order. Decided to enter the order, he joined it in 1244 when he was just nineteen. The order, bound to root out heresy of the Christian world, offered Aquinas all the means destined for him to attain his intellectual fulfillment and this, he did, studying with Albert the Great (JORDAN, 2002) one of the great introducers of Aristotle in the Christian world both in Paris and in Cologne.

After his studies, Aquinas became a professor in both Paris (1245-1259/1268-1272) and the roman curia (1259-1268) and wrote two of the main works of his life, the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae* (TEXEIRA, 2020, p.415-419). The first one, was an in- depth defense of the Christian religion and a response to Islam.

Christian thinkers had begun to approach much more through an effort of conversion based on compelling evidence rather than outright holy war and crusading, throughout the XIII century, while the second one, was exactly a work that tried to make this great conciliation, between the Christian worldview

and the works of Aristotle with which, Thomas had made contact in his days as Albert's pupil (TEXEIRA, 2020, p.415-419; NICOLAS, 2021, p.21-63).

Above all, as we have said before, the *Summa theologiae* offered an architecture of the whole world, which is ruled by a merciful God and in which everything is related to him, and returns to him, since he is the creator of all things and the maker by excellency. Aquinas's works were often criticized during his lifetime, and this forced him to defend himself against some of the other masters in Paris, particularly the Franciscan ones, who often saw with fear the incorporation of Aristotle within the cradle of Christian theology since him, Aristotle, was a philosopher famous for his materialistic, pagan, ideas and thought (TEXEIRA, 2020, p. 415-419). Yet, there was another problem: Averroes's ideas that not only followed Aristotle's philosophy without references to the bible, but also attempted to work philosophy in a completely independent way towards theology. That was something which Aquinas couldn't accept either. During his lifetime, Aquinas' prestige saved him from trouble, however, after his death, in 1274, some of his ideas came under scrutiny by some of his adversaries and a part of his ideas were condemned by Parisian Bishop, Étienne Tempier, in 1277, due to his meddling with Aristotle.

Despite this fact Thomas's work continued to influence both Parisian circles and Christendom as a whole. In part, this was due, as Étienne Gilson brilliantly puts it, to the inevitability of having to accept Aristotelian thought, which had helped, through the XIII century, the intellectuals of the Christian world to understand their reality better as a whole. Accepting Aristotle would have been better with someone who had tried to conciliate his view with that of a Christian and that was Thomas Aquinas. His major work was particularly important for a medieval population that was worried with religious questions as much as errands as, no matter if it was a great scholar or an uneducated man or woman. Nonetheless, it should also be considered that some of the greatest scholars in the Generation after Aquinas, such as Gilles of Rome and, as we shall see, John of Paris, had been taught by him. Additionally, since Paris was the major centre of theology of that time, the writings of such masters would necessarily have a great impact in the acceptance or the non-acceptance, either completely enthusiastically or not, of Aquinas's views.

As such, a venue of reception, either completely or just in some parts, had been opened for Thomas's ideas and his world view. But firstly, we must see how this philosopher understood two bases of it, the role of God and that of law.

## 1.2 The Role of God in the Summa Theologiae

Since, as we have seen, the Summa Theologiae offered an architectural vision for the whole world and the whole created universe, it was natural that Aquinas would have to start at some point in the construction of this great building. His decision was to begin it, after an introductory part about what theology was, by trying to explain what and who God itself is.

This was a very new approach towards Theology since, until then, as Joseph-Marie Nicholas puts it, it was common for treatises in Theology to start with analyses of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in Christianity, and only after to move to the conception of God, the Father. However, Thomas's option suited his objectives, since, as the same author says, if he was intending to establish a theology that would embrace the whole of creation, it was reasonable to start with the Father whom, according to the Nicene Creed, is responsible for the act of creating the whole universe. Nonetheless, it led to some criticism by some of his contemporaries.

God, according to St. Thomas, is the simplest of beings in the universe, and at the same time, the most important of them. It is a spiritual being, only and foremost, from which everything has come as well as the one responsible for maintaining the universe in its right order and as it should be. God is simple because, according to St. Thomas, as Étienne Gilson puts it, a complex being is a being composed by both form and matter (GILSON, 2020, p.229-253). Form is the spirit, while matter is exactly what it means: a being's material body (GILSON, 2020). Since God is only spirit, it has only form and thus it's simple. God is also a pure rationality, intellect, which means, an intellect that can know and by knowing, can will and take rational decisions. It is through this attribute that God works and creates the world around us with everything that it contains.

In Aquinas's works, there is the famous idea that we can prove God's existence through five ways. Such ways are firstly, God being the first mover, secondly, He being the first efficient cause, thirdly He having to exist from necessity, since if he didn't exist, there could be no other things in existence, fourthly from the gradation of the universe and fifthly, from the governance of the world. However, more than mere proofs, we believe that they are paramount for understanding the role of God in Aquinas's world view and his architecture. In effect, God is, for him, both the creator of this universe in which we live and, more importantly, its ruler, as if he was, in medieval terms, a king or emperor. In effect, it is because of his stature as its creator that he can govern the world and it's also because of that, that the fifth cause is the last to be enumerated. Since natural things, such as rocks, wood and the sea exist,

someone must govern them as no man does, and such being, can only be God. This can see by the text of the Summa itself:

The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world. We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God (AQUINAS,2002,p.796).

Thus, the role of God is that of a supreme ruler, a being that governs everything that has been created and, by means of It, the universe can and have an order. Without God, there can be no world architecture, and this is his importance in the work of this Christian thinker. God is the maintainer of the world, the fountainhead and the organizer of all things.

However, there remains a question. If God rules the universe and guarantees its existence how is this governance enacted upon its most relevant creation, humanity itself? Aquinas, throughout his text, defends human dignity by stating that human beings, of all the creatures that walk the earth, are the closest to God. That means that human beings also have a spirit and, as such, an intellect and can take rational decisions. However, that doesn't mean that God himself doesn't establish what is right and what is wrong for mankind.

Indeed, for Aquinas, God has established a set of laws, a set of codes that determine what is fair and what is unjust, towards human relationship. This is seen through his theory of Law. For Aquinas, God has established four types of law. These go from the most sacred and impossible to be made, only obeyed, down to the one that can be effectively made by humans. These are the Eternal Law, the Divine Law, the Natural Law and the Positive Law (AQUINAS, 2002). The first one, the most sacred of all of them, was created by God in the moment of creation and it's the law that, emanating from God himself, helps guarantee the order of the whole world and what is right and wrong in all its relations. The second and the third are correlated. For Aquinas, the principles of the eternal law had been established in men's hearts, and it was because of this that men generally think, regardless of being Christians or not, that killing another human being is intrinsically wrong and unjust. He named I the natural law. However, he also believed that, although this natural law had been established in the hearts of men, sometimes they could not perceive

its precepts. Thus, God created the Divine Law, revealed by the scripture in the Bible, to further clear mankind's mind and, as such, help them to attain complete salvation. The last law, the Positive Law, was seen as those laws that the human legislator could create, but those laws could not go, ideally, against what God had established through the other three laws explained above. Hence, the human legislator could only create a law if it confirmed what God had already made and established. As we can see below:

I answer that, As Augustine says (De Lib. Arb. i, 5) "that which is not just seems to be no law at all": wherefore the force of a law depends on the extent of its justice. Now in human affairs a thing is said to be just, from being right, according to the rule of reason. But the first rule of reason is the law of nature, as is clear from what has been stated above (Question 91, Article 2, ad 2). Consequently, every human law has just so much of the nature of law, as it is derived from the law of nature. But if in any point it deflects from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a perversion of law (AQUINAS, 2002, p. 3721).

Hence, the Role of God for St. Thomas is clearly that of a ruler of both inanimate world and the animate world, both rational beings, like humans, and irrational ones like other animals. And deservedly so, since God is Good and God is creator it's only right that He should rule the universe, according to His thought. Law is also only right, as long as it follows His principles, and a human legislator or ruler is only just as long as he follows them.

This position is also clear in his perception of God being the first efficient cause. Indeed, the efficient cause, is the cause that generate change in the material world due to its very nature. Thus, by naming God the first efficient cause, it is established that He is the final cause and responsible for every change within the material world. According to this position, without him, no change would be possible.

However, if St. Thomas created a world architecture based on both scripture and the influence of Greek philosophy, in which God is Almighty and everything must return to him, he, nonetheless, gave some latitude for human beings to govern their own affairs and was particularly mute about the political power due to the Church (DYSON, 2011). This allowed different thinkers, even though they were influenced by his thought, to have different ideas and views about that. This is what we shall see now.

## 2. The Presence of St. Thomas worldview in the political works of John of Paris and Alvarez Pelayo:

### 2.1 John of Paris:

We know very little about the life of John of Paris. What we do know is that he was a professor in the University of Paris and was a member of the order of the preachers (BONI, 1989, p.11; SOLÈRE, 2006, p. 751-752). We also know that he received many unusual sobriquets from his students such as “quidort”, the one who sleeps in french or monoculus, what makes us think that this thinker could only see with one eye (BONI, 1989, p11).

Nonetheless, and despite that, John of Paris became universally seen as an important political thinker because, in his time, he got involved in the serious political disputes between the king of France, Philip IV the Fair (r. 1285-1314) and the pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303). These disputes were marked, as Martin has put it, by the will of the French monarchy to tax the clergy, control their benefices and put some limits in ecclesiastical jurisdiction (MARTIN,2008, p.531-538). During the conflict, the clergy in France became very divided, with some, such as the also famous Franciscan theologian, Duns Scotus, and the Augustinian friar, Gilles of Rome, backing the pope while others, backed the king's position (LIMA, 2020, p. 463-473).

John decided to support the king and thus wrote an important essay known as *De potestate regia et papali* which was translated, at least in the XX century, as *On Royal and Papal Power*. Although it's not very lengthy, this treatise proposed some novelties within the world of political ideas. Firstly, it is considered by some, as the first treatise to propose an idea of social contract and, secondly, it is also seen as one of the first statements of capitalist thinking since in it, John defended that one man could deprive other man of having access to some good -even if that behaviour by his part was immoral-so long he was the owner of that good (LIMA,2019,p.467).

The main objective of the treatise, however, is to determine that both royal and priestly power should be in balance, with the royal power having power over men and things and priestly power having power over men's souls and their conscience. Furthermore, these powers shouldn't overlap like Gilles of Rome, one of the main papalists of his day, defended, but each should respect each other, and each should stay inside its own sphere of influence.

John's thinking, however, didn't stop there; he also defended, perhaps in a more polemical fashion, that if the kingly power decided to no longer obey the Church, the church could not force him either, leaving to it only to pray for



the king so as he could return to the path of righteousness and justice. John himself was not in favour of that. He defended that the spiritual power had a higher dignity than the secular. However, he opened a venue for the possibility of a process of laicization within the state, which eventually happened. As we can see, in his own words:

*Now concerning the power of ecclesiastical correction or censure, one must know that directly it is nothing but spiritual, because it can exact no penalty in the external forum except conditionally and accidentally. For although it is the function of an ecclesiastical judge to lead men back to God, and to lead them away from sin and correct them, he has this power only in the manner in which it was given him by God, that is, in respect to separating [the sinner] from the sacraments and from fellowship with the faithful, and things of this kind which pertain to ecclesiastical censure. And I say "except conditionally" insofar as the penitent must wish to repent and accept a pecuniary peace (PARIS,1972, p.66).*

Thus, only if the king so wished, the ecclesiastical judge could place unto him different types of corrections. Moreover, those could only be spiritual, not temporal, or political. Going further on his treatise, John came to defend that those who defended a supremacy of ecclesiastical power over temporal power were in fact guilty of the same error as that of Herod, since they saw in Christ a king of this World, while He was a king not of this world. As we can see below:

*The other error was that of Herod who, hearing that Christ was born king, believed He was an earthly king. The Opinion of certain modern thinkers seems to be derived from this. They react against the above mentioned error by going to the completely opposite extreme, and claim that the lord pope, inasmuch as he stands in the place of Christ on Earth, has dominion, cognizance, and jurisdiction over the temporal goods of princes and barons (PARIS,1972, p.2.)*

For John, the papalist current of politics was a grave mistake, one that the church should correct for her own good, lest it should commit the same mistake of Herod who, believing that Christ was a king of this world, committed what Christian tradition and religion called the "massacre of the innocents", by killing all the infant children in Bethlehem, after Christ was born. A highly innovative thinker, we believe that John took the framework from his ideas from the Thomistic worldview. In fact, all the main scholars agree that he was chiefly influenced by Thomas Aquinas, whom he even defended with a *correctorium corruptoris* (SOLIÈRE,2002, p.751; BONI,1989,p.12). This can be further stressed if we consider that he was a

Dominican friar and those had adopted the ideas of the heavenly doctor as their own official current of theology. Finally, John composed his treatise as a joint of different topics, even though they were all related with the political question between royal power and the Church. This form of composition was very alike to that of Aquinas who had written about everything pertaining to the world of philosophy and theology.

As to the question of the influence of his worldview in John's work, for us it is clearly established by the way in which he writes his treatise. By defending that the ecclesiastical power should only deal with spiritual questions and that the temporal power should only deal with natural ones, it seems that John is drawing a distinction between the spheres of natural and divine or revealed law, as Thomas had defended (AQUINAS, 2002). As such, in the Thomistic way, the natural law is to preserve men while the divine law is revealed by the holy scripture and guarded by the church who must minister to the flock and ensure salvation. Moreover, in his treatise, it's as if the legitimacy of both came from God and his eternal law, directly. Thus, he defended that the ideal scenario is one in which both these powers should be in balance and help one another. This also indicates a strong influence from Thomas Aquinas, since, as we have seen, he also believed that all kinds of law were connected, by the grace and action of God. This influence is even stronger if we remember that for him, John, although they were independent, the spiritual power was superior to the temporal power. This seems to agree with the idea that Divine Law was superior to natural law, even if they were both legitimate by themselves, in his treatise. The notion of a superiority of the divine law over natural law was fundamental to Thomas's worldview, even if he hadn't had necessarily the idea that they both came directly from God, rather seeing them as a ladder, in which the ultimate cause was God (AQUINAS, 2002). Hence, John is always thinking with the fundamentals given by his master even if he aligns them in a different way.

By using Thomas's architectural cosmic view, John could create a treatise that defended a more balanced stance for the relationship between the kingly (secular) and priestly (spiritual) power. However, he was not the only political thinker of his age to get inspiration from Thomas's worldview to defend his own.

## **2.2 Alvarez Pelayo**

Alvarez Pelayo was born in Galicia, in Northwestern Spain, in the year of 1275. He was the son of Gomes Pay Chariño, an admiral of the Crown of Castille, albeit illegitimate. Nonetheless, he was accepted by his Father who

sent him to the court of King Sancho IV of Castille (reign: 1284-1295), his friend, to study (SOUZA, 2020, p. 491-496). Afterwards, Alvarez went to study at the Cathedral school of Santiago, in his native Galicia. By the year 1296, he had received papal authorization to receive holy orders and thus, became a priest. After that, he went to Bologna where he studied between 1296 to 1304, becoming a master in both canon and civil law. During his stay at Bologna, Alvarez was tutored by Guido de Baysio, a renowned teacher (1250-1313), who was also a firm defender of the supreme political rights of the papacy (SOUZA, 2009, p.75).

In 1304, another important event happened in Alvarez's life as he attended the general chapter of the Order of the Friars Minor, better known as Franciscans. He became so touched by his experience that decided to join the order, becoming an important member of that religious family in Italy thereafter. From this moment, up to the year 1330, Alvarez lived in Italy, as both a professor of canon law and a confessor, travelling throughout the Northern and the central part of the peninsula. This experience was relevant because he became acquainted with many of the issues facing the Italian people and communes of his time. Such knowledge would be taken to his main work, *State and weep of the church, later on*.

However, while in Italy, Alvarez Pelayo also saw the effects of the invasion of two holy roman emperors, Henry VII, who invaded the peninsula between 1310 and 1313, and Louis IV the Bavarian, who invaded between 1327 and 1329. Even if these invasions had minor differences, their main objective was similar: to impose imperial authority over Italy and, above all, over the papacy with the emperor taking for himself the position of supreme defender and leader of Christendom. This worldview, known as imperial, had been created primarily by the staufer emperors of the XII Century and had already clashed with the papalist worldview and with the popes who defended it between the 1100's and the first Half (tem letra maiúscula?) of the 1200's (OAKLEY , 2021).

Although he was a Franciscan, Alvarez decided to support the papacy and became a staunch defender of the papalist position. Most Franciscan thinkers were members of the spirituals, a branch of the order, and generally favoured the emperor over the pope in the early fourteenth century. This happened, because the popes were generally against a widely assumed idea among these *spirituals*, who believed that Christ and his disciples were completely poor and had no property and also believed that the order shouldn't have any either. We believe that he took this decision, due to his formative years in Bologna and his strong loyalty towards the papacy. In fact, in this regard, Alvarez aligned himself more with the *conventual* branch of the order, which attempted to compromise the rule of St. Francis with current events and that continued

to greatly respect the papacy as the supreme representative of God on Earth. Thus, in terms of Franciscan thought and spirituality, he is closer to Francis of Meyronnes and Peter John Olivi, who defended the papalist positions. This is our best way to describe the rift that occurred between him and the other main thinkers of his order, such as Ubertine Casale, Michael of Cesena or the better-known William of Ockham, whom all supported the emperor over the pope (SOUZA, 2009).

Nevertheless, and despite suffering persecution, during the occupation of Rome by Louis IV forces, Alvarez loyalty was noted and the pope, John XXII, residing in Avignon, offered to him a position of ecclesiastical judge at the curia. Alvarez accepted and seemed to have made a good job. In 1332, he was given the episcopal seat of Morea, in then Frankish controlled Greece. However, this arrangement was quickly changed and, in 1333, he was sent to Silves, in Southern Portugal, as Bishop. During his stay in Avignon, Alvarez became acquainted with many of the problems of the church. These, in turn, might have served as the basis for the writing of his main work, *State and weep of the church*, as we will see briefly.

Alvarez was Bishop of Silves in Southern Portugal from 1333 to his death in 1349. During his tenure, he had to face a serious struggle with the Portuguese king, Alfonso IV (r.1325-1357). This king, grounded in the latest lay juridical theories, which were those of the commentators, and on the institutions laid down by his Father, the king Denis (r. 1279-1325), was bent in strengthening royal power and authority in the Kingdom, in a process of state making analogous to that of France or England at the same time. Due to the large feudal lordships owned by the clergy, the church became one of his main targets, which caused Alvarez much annoyance. It was in this context, that he made a revision of the *State and the weep of the church*. Yet, unable to tame the tide, Alvarez was forced to go into exile by the year 1348 dying of old age, in Seville, in the year of 1349.

Alvarez Pelayo main work, *State and weep of the church*, as we have already seen, went through successive writing periods and revisions, reaching its final form at when our thinker was already close to his death, in 1340 (BARBOSA, 1988, p.15-60). Far greater than John's work, this book was divided in two parts. The first one was dedicated to how the church and Christian society in general should be governed while the second one, addressed many issues facing Christian society and the church in particular, during his lifetime. Hence, the book is, in our understanding, a general treatise on Christendom, understanding here Christendom as this Christian society, ruled by the church and particularly, by the papacy.

Since Alvarez's works weren't translated into English, we shall use the most reliable translation available. This translation was made in Portugal, during the 1990's. Due to that, we shall provide English translations to the passages of the text in this article.

Although Alvarez Pelayo was a Franciscan, who generally did not have a very favourable Opinion of Thomas's, it seems clear that he had some influence of Thomas's thought in his own works, as some scholars dedicated to him already pointed out (COSTA, 2020, v. 13, p. 113-129). We can take two examples of how his ideas were linked with those of the heavenly doctor. Firstly, there is the question of papal power, as we can see below:

That the first see is judged by no one Dist. XXI, Chap. In tantum. "As the first see will be judged by no one". Cause. IX, q. III, chap. Patet. "And that nobody will lawfully judge of its judgement. "And bellow: "Nobody launched boldly it's hands against the apostolical peak to whose judgement is unlawful to go against". And later: "And the canons never determined that his judgement should be lawfully judged by someone, that is, of the roman church, and stablished that it was important to not dissolve its sentence. In fact, Christ reserves for himself the cause of judgement of the lord pope". (PAIS, 1990, 339; Our translation)

We can see how Alvarez believed that the human world needed to be divinely ordained, with the pope being stablished in the Summit of the social hierarchy and being superior to any human governor. In fact, the pope was the governor of Christian society, as much as God himself was the governor of the world itself. Moreover, the pope was the efficient political cause of all other political powers, since him, and only him, could crown the holy roman emperor, as the supreme political power in the secular world, and the bishops, subordinated to him, were the only ones who could crown the other kings. Thus, making their reigns legitimate (PAIS, 1991). The pope had all this power, because he was, as a dignity, made to the image and likeness of Christ, by Christ himself after his resurrection. Hence, that made him only answerable to Christ, as both God and man, after his death. We can see the aforementioned passage bellow:

(...) In effect, the pope is, the successor of the first man, Adam, because, typically, God The Son formed the pope as his vicar to his image and likeness. In fact, the pope really represents Christ on Earth, as such, the one who sees him with contemplative sight and faithful eyes also sees Christ. Because of that he said to Peter (Matthew XVI): "You are Peter called rock by me, etc (PAIS, 1992, p. 361; Our Translation)

Thus, the pope was so bound to Christ that no man could judge him, only God could. Alvarez followed Aquinas's thought, since for Thomas, as we have already seen, the efficient causes in the world were always related to the spiritual and God himself, who in turn, were the final causes of all material transformation, which included political transformation. Following these lines of thinking, Pelayo could defend the basics of the papalist position. However, the world in which he lived, was not that of the first papalists of the late XI century (OAKLEY, 2012, pp.15-42). Royal power, just like we have seen through John's ideas, as well through the very biography of Alvarez, had greatly increased during the late XIII and early XIV century and it was thoroughly impossible to stay oblivious to it. In fact, one of Alvarez main rivals in political thinking, Marsilius of Padua, was a stern defender of ultimate power being delivered to secular authorities, particularly, the Holy Roman emperor. Some parts of Alvarez's treatise were in fact written as an attempted debunk of Marsilius's views (SOUZA, 2006, vol.51, p.75-98).

Due to that, Alvarez, in the Steps of Gilles of Rome, and in contrary to pope Gregory VII, for example, defended that secular royal power was needed and could be used for good. Nonetheless, in order to avoid creating a great rift in his papalist views and to not establish a contradictory line of thought something that, according to at least one of his main scholars, it was always one of his main preoccupations, Alvarez did not defend that both powers should be autonomous each in its own sphere, like John had, but instead, defended that secular royal power was linked to the spiritual power. Thus, a king, in order to be legitimate, had to be instituted by either the pope or a bishop in his stead, and had to be always loyal to the church. He also had, to be a good man, who followed the virtues of the Bible and most importantly, had to have great catholic faith. In fact, it seems that according to Alvarez, this was, sometimes, even more important for a king to be legitimate than to be the son of a previous secular monarch. It is also implied, that the church should always take this in consideration before anointing a king.

Considering all this, it is clear that, for Alvarez, just as the pope was an efficient cause and the governor of the Whole (tem letra maiúscula?) world, the secular kings were an intermediate cause, by which his rule could be extended, since the spiritual always needed the help of the secular to enforce some of its determinations upon the rebellious or to be defended against heathens, heretics or muslins. And this was also so, because canon law forbade the spilt of blood by clergymen, as it has always been defended by Alvarez in his works. We can see an example of how it was expected that this secular power should aid the spiritual power in the following passage, in which Alvarez discusses if the clergy is eligible to pay taxes to this power:

In relation to what is said about taxation, we should say that the spiritual power does not pay taxes to the temporal power as if the latter was a superior in dominion, but rather as a tithe for the peace and tranquility which the temporal power must provide to the church and its goods. This solution is clearly expressed in the Cause XXIII, q. VIII, cap. Tributum. Of that I have spoken in article XXXVII, vv. Eighth and following. (PAIS,1992,p.579)

Hence, the clergy could be taxed by secular kings, but only if it was in the name of a meritorious cause, namely the defence of the Church against these threats. Once more we can see the influence of Thomas's thought. In this case, through the idea that the positive law, the law enacted by the human legislator, such as the king, could and should be under the divine law, represented on Earth by papal power itself. Hence, for him, divine law was not just the commandments and the teachings of Jesus at the gospel, but rather, it was also what came out from the pope's mouth and the church canons, which was in line with his papalist position. In fact, one can say that Alvarez was a political thinker very worried in rendering the old Augustinian political thought, which defended the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal and was one of the bases for papalist thought, more aligned with the times and in giving it other lines of justification, beyond the traditional ones. Therefore, we believe that we can't say that he was just a nostalgic thinker, such as other researchers have defended.

Thus, throughout his treatise, Alvarez uses some aspects of Thomistic thought to defend papalism, whether by the idea of universal government and efficient cause, or by a personal interpretation of Thomas's views of how law acted upon the world and the Whole (tem letra maiúscula?) of the universe.

## **Conclusion:**

In this paper, we have seen how two very different thinkers used Thomas's Aquinas cosmic architecture, as presented by his summa, to defend two different positions of political thought in the first half of the XIV century. One of them was a defender of royal power against what he perceived to be the encroachment of papal power in domains that should not belong to it. The other was a defender of the traditional papalist position. According to it, the pope had supreme power over all human affairs. However, he was subtle and shrewd enough to understand that times were changing and thus clearly granted some legitimacy to royal power and also tried to establish its proper sphere of action.

After that comparison, we would like to reach some conclusions. Firstly, we would like to think about Thomas's role in the intellectual world of his day, and how he influenced those who came after him. Concerning the history of Political thought, it was originally common to only give credit and study those thinkers dubbed as classics (TUCK, 2011, p.279-297; POCOCK, 2003, p. 63-83). Hence, during the Middle Ages, one would study Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Ockham, and Marsilius of Padua, for example, leaving a plethora of medieval political authors in the dust, since it was perceived that they didn't contribute to the development of political thought and political institutions as we see them today. Later on, due to the efforts of the Cambridge school, this was changed and all authors who had contributed for the political debate during their time passed to be seen as relevant and worthy of studying (POCOCK, 2003, pp.63-83) .

The objective was to see how we could stablish lineages of political thought and to see how different political languages were created, in order to better understand the dynamics of thought and political change in a given time period.

We agree with this methodology. However, it seems to us that some of the authors dubbed as classics are important, not because they were more intelligent than those that were not classified as such, but because they were able to make broad reflections about the world and its political issues in all aspects, in their societies. In Thomas's case, this is remarkable, since he did not only write two major summas, but also, wrote other academic works, such as *Caetana Aurea*, a series of comments on the four gospels, a commentary on the standard textbook on theology in his time, *The Book of Sentences* of Peter Lombard, and also wrote specific advice about how to govern the Jews to the Duchess of Brabant. Hence, they became a good frame for authors and thinkers more interested only in certain aspects of their societies and their political organizations or, at least, who we perceive as being so. Thus, we should see Aquinas, as a base from which new authors could formulate different ideas about politics and how it should be managed.

The second conclusion is how the applicability of these worldview ideas were not static, with only one interpretation being possible, but rather that a very large range of interpretations of Aquinas's views were considered and were indeed made by these authors. For John, his teacher offered a good intellectual frame to defend the power of the Capetian king against the church, while Alvarez used Thomas's worldview, alongside other influences, to defend his papalist position. We can argue that this was done, because Thomas himself was not clear whether he agreed or disagreed with the papalist vision of power and politics. In fact, even modern historians debate whether he was a papalist



or not. Latin authors tending to say that he was, while English speaking ones tending to say that he was not (GILSON, 2020,p.703-715; DYSON,2011,p.278). However, we would argue that alongside with that, his opinion and his construction was just too important to be left out as a possible ground for building sophisticated and complex arguments either in favour or against any political vision during the later Middle Ages. We can give more credit to this interpretation, if we remember that his ideas were sometimes disjointed and lacked sometimes being coherent internally as a whole. According to some of his scholars (*frase solta, sem sentido*). Thus, we can say that political authors and political men could apply Aquinas's ideas in the most different ways conceivable, always saying that this was the right way to interpret his thinking. In fact, the posterior creation, during the XV and XVI centuries, of various lines of Thomism, helps us to clearly see this.

Thus, applicability and flexibility, these were two main characteristics of Thomistic worldview in the political thought of the late Middle Ages of the XIV century. Perhaps, this was also one of the reasons why it was so popular in the parts of the western world that remained catholic after the reformation and remains popular, inside the catholic church today.

## References

AQUINAS, Thomas The Summa Theologica; Translated by fathers of the English Dominican province. London: MBS Library, 2002

BARBOSA, João Morais. Introdução In: PAIS, Álvaro. Estado e Pranto da Igreja, Vol.1.Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica,1988, pp. 15-60

BONI, De. Luís, Introdução In: Boni, Luís(editor) Sobre o Poder Régio e Papal. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1989

BONI, De. Luís.” A Escola Franciscana: De Boaventura a Ockham” In: Veritas, Porto Alegre, 2000, vol.45, pp.317-338

COSTA, Da.C.T.F.” A Presença da Ideia de Lei Eterna nas obras de D. Álvaro Pais “Estado e Pranto da Igreja” e de Egidio Romano “Sobre o Poder Eclesiástico” In: Nearco, Rio de Janeiro, 2020, vol., 13 pp. 113-129

DYSON, R. W. Introduction In: DYSON, R. W. (Org.). Aquinas: Political Writings. Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. XVII-XXXVII

FAVIER, Jean. Philippe, Le Bel. Paris: Fayard, 1998

GILSON, Étienne. A Filosofia na Idade Média. São Paulo: Martins Fontes Editora, 2020.

GILSON, Étienne. O Espírito da Filosofia Medieval. São Paulo: Martins Fontes Editora, 2020

JORDAN, William. Europe in the High Middle Ages. Londres: Penguin Books, 2002

LIMA, Jivaldo José.João Quidort de Paris In: SOUZA QUEIROZ, de. Guilherme; NASCIMENTO SOUSA, De. Renata Cristina (Orgs.) Dicionário: Cem Fragmentos Biográficos, a Idade Média em Trajetórias. Goiânia: Editora Tempestiva, 2020, pp. 463-473

MARTIN, Hervé et al. (Orgs). Les Capétiens, Paris: Éditions Perrin, 2008

NICOLAS, Marie-Joseph. Introdução à Suma Teológica In: AQUINO, de. Tomás. Suma Teológica I. Ipiranga: Edições Loyola, 2021, pp. 21-63

OAKLEY, Francis. The Mortgage of the Past:Reshaping the Ancient Political Inheritance (1050-1300). Yale: Yale University Press, 2012.

OAKLEY, Francis. The Watershed of Modern Politics: Law, Virtue, Kingship and Consent (1300-1650). Yale: Yale University Press, 2015.

OAKLEY, Francis. Empty Bottles of Gentilism: Kingship and Divine in Late Antiquity

and the Early Middle Ages (to 1050). Yale: Yale University Press, 2012

PAIS, Álvaro. Estado e Pranto da Igreja, Vol.1. Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1988

PAIS, Álvaro. Estado e Pranto da Igreja, Vol.2 Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1991

PAIS, Álvaro. Estado e Pranto da Igreja, Vol.3. Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1991

PARIS, Of. John. On Royal and Papal power. New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1974

POCOCK, John. O Conceito de Linguagem e o métier d'historien In: POCOCK, John. Linguagens do Ideário Político. São Paulo: Edusp, 2003, pp.63-83

SOLÈRE, Jean-Luc Jean de Paris In: GOUVARD, Calude; LIBERA, Alain; ZINK, Michel (Orgs.). Dictionnaire du Moyen Âge. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006, pp. 751-752

SOUZA., De. José Antônio. “Álvaro Pais, Marsílio de Pádua e o artigo 68 do Livro Primeiro do Estado e Pranto da Igreja”, In: “Veritas”, Porto Alegre, 2006, vol.51, pp.75-98

SOUZA, De. José Antônio. As Relações de Poder na Idade Média Tardia: Marsílio de Pádua, Álvaro Pais e Guilherme de Ockham. Porto Alegre :Est Edições/ U. Porto Edições, 2009

SOUZA, De. Armênia Maria. Álvaro Pais In: SOUZA QUEIROZ, de. Guilherme; NASCIMENTO SOUSA, De. Renata Cristina (Orgs.) Dicionário: Cem Fragmentos Biográficos, a Idade Média em Trajetórias. Goiânia: Editora Tempestiva, 2020, pp. 491-496

TEIXEIRA, S. Igor. Tomás de Aquino In: SOUZA QUEIROZ, de. Guilherme; NASCIMENTO SOUSA, De. Renata Cristina (Orgs.) Dicionário: Cem Fragmentos Biográficos, a Idade Média em Trajetórias. Goiânia: Editora Tempestiva, 2020, pp. 415-419

TUCK, Rcihard. História do Pensamento Político In: Burke, Peter (Org.) A Escrita da História: Novas Perspectivas. São Paulo: Editora da Unesp, 2011, pp.279-297

VASCONCELOS E SOUSA, Bernardo.D. Afonso IV. Casais de Mem Martins: Temas e Debates, 2009

### Como citar:

COSTA, Carlos Thadeu Freire da. A Cosmvisão de Tomás de Aquino e sua aplicabilidade nos escritos políticos do século XIV. Coletânea. Revista de Filosofia e Teologia da Faculdade de São Bento do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, v. 22, n. 44, p. 375-393, jul./dez.2023