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Riccardo Saccenti

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The Ministerium Naturae: Natural Law in the Exegesis and Theological Discourse at Paris between 1160 and 1215

Riccardo Saccenti

Both Roman and canon lawyers began in the mid-twelfth century to give considerable attention to the theme of natural law, seeing it as foundational for their discipline. These legal discussions of *lex naturae* and *ius naturalis* have drawn considerable attention from modern scholars.¹ While far less attention has been paid to the contemporary treatment of natural law in

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¹ See Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Annabel Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Francis C. Oakley, *Natural Law, Law of Nature, Natural Rights: Continuity and Discontinuity in the History of Ideas* (New York: Continuum, 2005); Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law, 1150–1625* (Atlanta, GA: Scholar Press, 1997); Tierney, *Liberty and Law: The Idea of Permissive Natural Law, 1100–1800* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014). For a general overview on natural law doctrines in twelfth-century legal discourse, it is still useful to consider Rudolf Weigand, *Die Naturrechtslehre der Legisten und Dekretisten von Irnerius bis Accursius und von Gratian bis Johannes Teutonicus* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1967). For the most recent historiographical survey, see Riccardo Saccenti, *Debating Medieval Natural Law: A Survey* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016).

other disciplines, the concept was clearly important to early scholastic theologians.² This article will examine how a number of leading masters of theology at the cathedral school of Notre Dame and at the University of Paris (ca. 1160–1215) derived natural law theories from biblical exegesis and applied to those theories their understanding of the knowledge of God, of ethics, and of politics.³

Even before the emergence of distinct faculties of law and theology, at the University of Paris, the difference between the approaches of legists and theologians was already apparent. In the prologue to his *Summa*, the canonist Stephen of Tournai (1128–1203) distinguishes between the methodologies and subject matter of these two fields:

I invited two people for dinner, a theologian and a legist, whose inclinations diverge given the fields to which they are committed: If one likes the sour, the other wants the sweet. What to serve them, what not to serve them? Won't you reject what the other one requests? If I proposed to expound the current laws in a brief text, the lawyer would turn up his nose, shake his head, and dismiss our text, judging it unnecessary for him to explain his opinion of it to others. If I sought to inform the theologian about the mystical deeds of the Fathers of the Old Testament, he would attack our brief text as useless and condemn it as both prolix and unprofitable.⁴

Stephen implies that, while legists read the law literally, theologians sometimes read texts literally yet may offer an allegorical or “mystical” reading.

² Scholars have also considered natural law from a philosophical perspective, focusing on Thomas Aquinas's writings and suggesting that the Dominican master effectively summarized the medieval doctrine on this issue. See Mark Murphy, “The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, September 23, 2002, revised September 27, 2011, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-ethics>.

³ On the plural theological milieu in Paris between the last decades of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century, see Marcia L. Colish, “Scholastic Theology at Paris around 1200,” in *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, ed. Spencer E. Young (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 29–50.

⁴ “Duos ad convivium vocavi, theologum et legistam, quorum voluntates varia sparguntur in vota, cum iste delectetur acido, ille dulcia concupiscat. Quid demus? Quid non demus? Renuis tu, quod petit alter? Occurrentes in opusculo praesenti leges exponere si proponam, iuris peritus aegere feret, nares contrahet in rugam, caput concutiet, exporriget libellum, et, quod sibi notum reputat, aliis non necessarium opinatur. Patrum veteris aut novi testamenti gesta mystica si narrare coepero, sicut inutilia reputabit theologus et opusculum nostrum tum prolixitatis arguet, tum ingratitudinis accusabit,” Stephen of Tournai, *Summa*, ed. Johann F. von Schulte (Neudruck der Ausgabe Giessen, 1891), 1.

He ignores the possibility that legists may impose their own selectivity and construction on the rulings they cite and analyze. In deriving natural law from the Bible, the theologians discussed here do at times propose allegorical exegesis, but at the same time, they take some texts literally as universal principles, statements always and everywhere true. Our focus will be on Peter Lombard (d. 1160, bishop of Paris from 1159), and his successors in Paris who developed his legacy: his student Peter Comestor (ca. 1110–1179), Peter the Chanter (d. 1197), and Stephen Langton (ca. 1150–1228, archbishop of Canterbury from 1206).⁵ Their prime sources are the two passages from scripture that state the Golden Rule—Tobias 4:16: “See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another” and Matthew 7:12: “All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets.” They also draw from two passages from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, 1:18–20: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice: Because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him are clearly seen by the creation of the world, being understood through the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity: so that they are inexcusable” and Rom. 2:13–14: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law; these having not the law are a law to themselves.”⁶ Taken together, these passages propose that all human beings, thanks to their natural endowment of reason, can acquire knowledge of God by the inspection of the created order of nature, and that all human beings have the inborn capacity to access and live by natural moral principles that accord with God’s law.

⁵ Some relevant figures of the early twelfth-century theological landscape, such as Peter Abelard (1079–1142) and Hugh of St. Victor (1096–1141), already discussed the issue of natural law, developing a notion which would be relevant for their successors. More in detail, they contribute to shifting the focus from the Augustinian interest in original sin and the inability of humanity to pursue a moral path without the benefit of divine grace to the idea that human beings always have a certain understanding of basic moral principles. See John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Stefano Perfetti, “Taking Natural Law Seriously: Abelard on the Rational Analysis of Religious Belonging,” *Teoria* 27, no. 1 (2007): 161–73; Steven Jensen, *Knowing the Natural Law: From Precepts and Inclinations to Deriving Oughts*, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015).

⁶ The biblical quotations are drawn from the Douay-Rheims edition (available at www.drbo.org/lvb/) as its text is close to the Latin of Jerome’s Vulgate. The texts of the Parisian masters are quoted in Latin in the notes, following the printed editions or transcribed from the manuscripts.

I. PETER LOMBARD AND THE BASIS OF THE PARISIAN DISCOURSE

The Lombardian theologians approached these biblical texts by way of commentaries, through which they gained a sense of how best to read a text and which earlier exegetes were most useful in anchoring their own interpretations. Of particular interest are those commentaries composed in the twelfth century, especially the *Glossa Ordinaria*, compiled by masters associated with the school of Anselm of Laon.⁷ According to a tradition which goes back to Peter Comestor,⁸ it was Ralph of Laon (d. 1134/1136) who glossed Matthew, reworking the commentaries of Jerome and Origen through that of Paschasius Radbertus.⁹ Several manuscripts of the *Glossa* to Matthew date before 1140, while the *Glossa* on Luke combines the work of Anselm of Laon and Ralph, and its manuscript tradition dates around 1140. The *Glossa* on Paul's Epistles is attributed to Anselm of Laon. Its manuscript tradition dates to the first decades of the twelfth century.¹⁰

The *Glossa Ordinaria* consists mainly of the biblical text supplemented with two types of glosses. Interlinear glosses supply *scholia*, clarifications of the meaning of individual words and short phrases in the text. The margins

⁷ See *Biblia Latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile reprint of the editio Princeps*, Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/1481, eds. Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret T. Gibson (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), IV. The text is available also at www.glossae.net. A general survey of the manuscript tradition of the *Glossa Ordinaria* for the different books of the Bible is available online: Morard Martin, dir., *Glossae Scripturae Sacrae-electronicae* (Gloss-e), Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, 2016, gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/liste_temoins.php. A more specific repertory of the manuscripts of the *Glossa* on Paul's Epistles has been compiled by Francesco Siri and is available at <http://fama.irht.cnrs.fr/oeuvre/268391>. For an analysis of the process of creating the *Glossa Ordinaria* and of the different attributions of the glosses to the books of the Bible, see Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), esp. 32–33. In addition, see Alexander Andrée, "Introduction," in *Anselmi Laudunensis Glossae super Iohannem*, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis* 267, ed. Andrée (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014): x–xvi.

⁸ The information comes from Comestor's commentary on Matthew. See Beryl Smalley, "Some Gospel Commentaries of the Early Twelfth Century," *Revue de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 45 (1978): 147–80, reprinted in Smalley, *The Gospel in the Schools, c. 110–c. 1280* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985): 1–35.

⁹ See Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum*, libri 4, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 77, eds. David Hurst and Marcus Adriaen (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969); Origen, *Matthäus erklärung*, in *Origenes Werke*, vols. 10–12, ed. Erich Klostermann and Ernst Benz (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1935–55); Bede, *Expositio in Matthaei evangelium*, in *Patrologia latina cursus completus*, ed. J. P. Migne (hereafter cited as PL), 92: 9–132.

¹⁰ See Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983): 60–61.

contain readings of selected passages derived from patristic or early medieval commentators chosen by the glossator, or his paraphrase of them, offering no advice on how to resolve readings of commentators who differ. For the Pauline texts treated here, the *Glossa Ordinaria* swiftly ceded pride of place to the *Collectanea*, Peter Lombard's commentary on the Pauline Epistles, a continuous commentary more easily geared to classroom instruction.¹¹ The commentary, probably the result of lecturing on Paul's text, is attested in two redactions. It has been established by Ignatius Brady that the Lombard composed the first version of the *Collectanea* immediately after the council of Reims (1148), developing the glosses of Anselm of Laon and Gilbert of Poitiers, which had been collected in the *Glossa Ordinaria*.¹² The second redaction of the *Collectanea* dates after the final revision of the *Sentences*, that is 1157–58, and presents the deletion, addition, or revision of certain passages of the commentary.¹³

While the *Collectanea* has been available in print since the late nineteenth century in the *Patrologia Latina*,¹⁴ that edition is acknowledged to be quite faulty. It is therefore necessary to supplement it with citations from unpublished manuscript sources which show both the first and the second recensions of the pertinent texts. In this case, the Lombard did not change his exegesis of either Rom. 1:18–20 or Rom. 2:13–14; the readings of his comments on those passages are identical in manuscripts of both recensions.¹⁵

Peter Lombard clearly makes use of and goes beyond the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Rom. 1:18–20 and Rom. 2:13–14. In his own exegesis, he teaches that natural law has both a cognitive and a moral dimension. According to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the invisible things of God are made known by his visible creation, affirming the existence of God and his rational ordering of the universe. The divine order that governs the world also governs human behavior:

¹¹ On the *Collectanea* see Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 1:192–226; Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 44–48. On the increasing relevance of this work of Peter Lombard with respect to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, see Mark Zier, “Peter Lombard and the *Glossa Ordinaria*: A Missing Link?,” in *Pietro Lombardo: Atti del XLIII Convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 8–10 ottobre 2006* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2007): 361–409.

¹² See Ignatius C. Brady, “Prolegomena,” in *Sententiae in IV libros distinctae*, ed. Brady (Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971–81), 1–1:82*–88*.

¹³ Brady, 1–1:88*–89*.

¹⁴ Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in epistolas Pauli*, PL 191:1297–1696 and 192:9–520.

¹⁵ I used the manuscripts Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 144 (V) and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14266 (P), which respectively contain the *versio prior* and the *versio ultima* of the *Collectanea*.

Invisible things. It [the verse] shows what is knowable of God and says so variously, because he is known in various ways, that is, that he is eternal, omnipotent, and the like. As invisible things are known through things that are made, those who knew heaven, earth, and other created things to be immense and endless, understood in their mind that the creator himself is incomparable, immense, and eternal.¹⁶

By creation. By man in particular, because he stands out among other creatures or because of the correspondence he has with all creatures. For he occupies space as do corporeal ones; he feels as animals do; he comprehends as do the angels. Thus it is said [Mark 16:15]: *Preach the gospel to every creature.*¹⁷

According to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, non-Christians can act in accordance with God's requirements thanks to the natural law lodged in their conscience. This aptitude is a natural endowment, a function of the image of God in which humankind was created, and which God restores to fallen humanity. The glossator explains:

For when the Gentiles. In fact, he [Paul] said that the gentile is damned for doing evil and saved for doing good. But if, as it were, he has no law and no knowledge of good and evil, it might seem neither can be imputed to him. On the contrary, the Apostle states that the Gentile does have the natural law even though he lacks the written law, for he knows and is aware of good and evil. Thus, we are to believe that his acts are good or evil and that he is saved or damned deservedly. His doing good and being saved occur only thanks to the grace and faith that renew the natural image of God in man, made sluggish by longstanding vice. Without this renewal he would do evil and be damned, accused of his unnatural vices by his own conscience and, in any case, by the grace that heals what

¹⁶ "*Invisibilia*. Ostendit quid de Deo scire poterit pluraliter dicit, quia pluribus modis cognoscitur, scilicet quod eterna, omnipotens, et huiusmodi. Intellecta ipsa invisibilia per facta, qui per celum et terram et alias creaturas quas immensas et perpetuas esse intellexerunt, ipsum conditorem, incomparabilem, immensum eternum, mente conspexerunt," *Glossa Ordinaria*, IV: 1058va (translations here and elsewhere mine).

¹⁷ "*A creatura*. Ab homine per excellentia, quia excellit inter alias creaturas, vel propter convenientiam quam habet cum omnibus creaturis. Est enim localiter in loco cum corporibus, sentit cum animalibus, intelligit cum angelis. Unde: *Predicate evangelica omni creature*," *Glossa Ordinaria*, IV: 1058va.

opposes nature. The image in the human soul is not so completely destroyed by the stain of worldly affections that no lineaments remain of its attributes; the image of God impressed in the human soul at its creation is not completely lost. But this desire is not removed by nature without grace; rather, it means that the action of grace requires nature. And, because the inner man is renewed with this grace, the law of justice is rewritten, deleting the guilt of sin.¹⁸

In reworking the position of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the Lombard adds the idea that the moral principles grasped by the Gentiles by means of natural law are symmetrical not only with God's law but also with the natural human capacity to come to a knowledge of God through the rational examination of creation. This natural knowledge of God, to be sure, is not exhaustive for the Lombard; it does not include everything human beings need to know in order to be saved. A sufficient knowledge of the Trinity is possible only through revelation and inner inspiration.¹⁹ Rather, the Lombard suggests that since everyone can acquire a basic knowledge of God by natural reason, there is no excuse for rejecting theism as such.

¹⁸ "*Cum enim gentes.* Cum enim dixerat gentilem damnari si male operaretur saluari si bene, sed cum legem non habeat, quasi nesciat quid sit bonum quidve malum, videretur sibi neutrum debere imputari. Contra Apostolus, etsi non habeat scriptam legem habet naturalem, quia intelligit et sibi conscius est quid sit bonum et quid sit malum. Et ideo credendus est bene uel male operari, et merito saluari uel damnari. Bene operari dico et saluari quod non est, nisi per gratiam et fidem que renouat naturalem imaginem Dei in homine ex uitio et uetustate sopitam sine qua renouatione male operatur, et damnatur accusante eum conscientia uitium quippe contra naturam est quod utique sanat gratia. Non enim usque adeo in humana anima ymago terrenorum affectuum labe detrita est ut nulla in ea lineamenta remanserint. Non omnino deletum est quod ibi per imaginem Dei cum crearetur impressum est. Proinde uitio sanato per gratiam naturaliter fiunt ea que legis sunt. Non quod per nature nomen negata sit gratia, sed potius per gratiam reparata natura, qua gratia interiori homine renouato, lex iustitie rescribitur quam deleuerat culpa," *Glossa Ordinaria*, IV: 1059vb.

¹⁹ "Quomodo ergo hic dicitur quod tres personas per facta intellexerunt uel cognouerunt? Ad quod dicimus eos hanc distinctionem summe trinitatis quam fides catholica profitetur nullatenus habuisse uel habere potuisse absque doctrine uel interne inspirationis reuelatione. Fit enim reuelatio tribus modis: per opera, per doctrinam uel per inspirationem. Reuelauit enim deus per opera ueritatem, sed non per doctrinam uel per inspirationem," Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in epistola Pauli*, in Rom. 1:20–23, PL 191, 1328D–1329A [V f. 13ra–b; P f.16va]. Peter Abelard seems to present a similar position, noting the capability of the *philosophi* to achieve a certain understanding of some contents of Christian doctrines. See Peter Abelard, *Theologia Summi Boni*, 1:94–114, in *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica*, vol. 3, *Theologia 'Summi Boni'*, '*Theologia Scholarium*', eds. Eligius M. Buytaert and Constant J. Mews, CCCM 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986): 356–63. However Peter Lombard's position is quite different. See *Sententiae* 1:68–70. Certainly he agrees with the Pauline idea that God the Creator can be known in the creation, which

For God hath manifested it unto them, as if he [Paul] says that they [the Gentiles] hold God's truth, because *that which is known of God*, that is, what is knowable of God, *is manifest in them* by the order of reason; as if to say that they have in themselves the source from which they can achieve what is knowable of God: that source is natural law. Thus [the biblical verse] says what is knowable of God, because several things about God are knowable through nature, such as the mystery of redemption and incarnation. What is knowable of God is what we can achieve with this kind of disposition and natural reason. On the contrary, what is unknowable about God is the reason of his subsistence or his nature, which is unknown to every creature.²⁰

For the Lombard both natural ethical knowledge and natural theology stem from the natural law accessible to all by human reason. The knowledge thus imparted does not require God's direct and explicit revelation. He analyzes Rom. 2:14—"For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law; these having not the law are a law to themselves"—and explains: "Natural law is: You shall not insult anybody, you shall not steal with deceit and you shall abstain from perjury, you shall not desire your neighbor's wife and other similar rules, and in summary: you should never do to another what you would hate to have done to you by another, which coincides with the evangelical doctrine."²¹ Natural law provides to all human beings knowledge of the basic moral principles governing human actions. Moreover, Peter Lombard stresses that

contains vestiges of the Trinity, but the Lombard argues against Abelard that natural reason by itself does not tell people what they need to know of the revealed mystery of the Trinity. See Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 1:259; Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 76.

²⁰ "*Deus enim reuelauit illis*, quasi diceret uere detinent ueritatem dei, quia *hoc dei quod notum est*, idest id quod de deo noscibile est, *manifestum est in illis* ductu rationis; quasi diceret in se habent unde noscere possunt quod cognoscibile est de deo, scilicet naturalem rationem. Ideo dicit quod de deo noscibile est, quia multa sunt que de deo per naturam sciri possunt, ut de misterio redemptionis et incarnationis. Notum dei est hoc, quod in huius mundi dispositione et naturali ratione assequi possumus. Ignotum uero dei est ratio subsistentie eius, uel nature que omnem latet creaturam," Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in epistolas Pauli*, in Rom. 1:18–19, PL 191, 1326C–D [V f. 12va; P f. 15vb]. On Peter Lombard's natural theism see Colish, "Faith in Peter Lombard's *Collectanea*," in "*Fides Virtus*": *The Virtue of Faith from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, eds. Marco Forlivesi, Riccardo Quinto, Silvana Vecchio (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2014), 39–51.

²¹ "*Lex naturalis est: iniuriam nemini inferre, nichil alienum praeipere a fraude et periurio abstinere, alieno coniugio non insidiari et cetera talia, et ut breuiter dicatur: nolle alius facere quod tibi non uis fieri, quod euangelice concordat doctrine*," Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in epistolas Pauli*, in Rom. 2:14–16, PL 191, 1345B [V f. 18va; P f. 19ra].

the content of natural law is perfectly coincident with that of Scripture, in particular with the divine law given to Moses on Mount Sinai. According to the master, there is a clear equivalence between the prescriptions of natural law found in the philosophical and legal traditions, and those in the Ten Commandments.

Such a position is quite close to that of several canonists of the second half of the twelfth century, including the already quoted Stephen of Tournai.²² The roots of this idea go back to Gratian (ca. 1070–ca. 1150), whose legal analysis Peter Lombard knew quite well, evidenced by the fact that he owned and used a copy of Gratian's *Decretum*, and this manuscript, together with the rest of his library, was left to the chapter of Notre Dame at his death.²³ In his *Decretum*, Gratian combines two definitions of natural law in the same doctrinal framework. On the one side there are the statements of natural law which are contained in scripture, namely in Tobias and in Matthew. Gratian thus explains that "The human race is ruled by two things, namely, natural law and customs. Natural law is what is contained in the Law and the Gospel. By it, each person is commanded to do to others what he wants done to himself and is prohibited from inflicting on others what he does not want done to himself. So Christ said in the Gospel: 'whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets.'"²⁴ On the other side, the *Decretum* reports the definition of natural law that comes from the Roman legal tradition and is deeply influenced by ancient Stoic philosophy.²⁵ According to this second definition, "Natural law is common to all nations because it exists everywhere through natural instinct, not because of any enactment. For example: the union of men and women, the engendering and rearing of children, the common possession of all things, the identical liberty of all, or the acquisition of things that are taken from the heavens, earth, or sea, as

²² See Weigand, *Die Naturrechtslehre*, 144–48.

²³ See Brady, "Prolegomena," 1–1:19*–20*; Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 39–40; Matthew Doyle, *Peter Lombard and His Students* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2016), 42–43.

²⁴ "Humanum genus duobus regitur, naturali uidelicet iure et moribus. Ius naturae est, quod in lege et euangelio continetur, quo quisque iubetur alii facere, quod sibi uult fieri, et prohibetur alii inferre, quod sibi nolit fieri. Unde Christus in euangelio: 'Omnia quaecunque uultis ut faciant uobis homines, et uos eadem facite illis. Haec est enim lex et prophetarum,'" Gratian, *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, ed. Emil Friedberg (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagstalt, 1879), 1. English translation in Gratian, *The Treatise on Laws (Decretum DD. 1–20)*, trans. Augustine Thompson, O.P. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 1.

²⁵ See Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, vol. 1, *Stoicism in Classical Latin Literature* (Leiden: Brill 1985), 341–89.

well as the return of a thing deposited or of money entrusted to one, and the repelling of violence by force. This, and anything similar, is never regarded as unjust but is held to be natural and equitable.”²⁶

Peter Lombard is clearly aware of this legal discourse and of the contents of Gratian’s *Decretum*, and in shaping his understanding of Paul’s text he reflects the attempt to consider the two traditions, the legal and philosophical and the biblical, as equivalent.²⁷ The definition of natural law taken from the legal tradition, with its prohibitions, is perfectly consistent with the statement of the book of Tobias, while the prescriptions of the Ten Commandments are clearly summarized by the words of Jesus according to Matthew 7:12: “whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.”

Peter Lombard explains the simultaneous coincidence and distinction of natural law and positive divine law with reference to the biblical anthropology of Genesis 1:27 and, following Augustine, to the consequences of Original Sin for human moral life. Such a connection between natural law and the idea of man created in the image of God was already mentioned in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, as we have seen above. The Lombard reminds his readers that human beings were made “in the image of God;” thus, each human being has the natural ability to understand the principles of moral life. It is true that Original Sin weakens the natural understanding of the law, but God’s grace action grants a “restoration” of the image of God and thus the possibility for each human being to have certain knowledge of the highest moral rule.

According to Peter Lombard, all human beings, both Jews and Gentiles, pagans and Christians alike, can benefit from the action of God’s grace. He explains: “Healed of vice by grace, they did by nature what is in

²⁶ “Ius naturale est commune omnium nationum, eo quod ubique instinctu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur, ut uiri et feminae coniunctio, liberorum successio et educatio, communis omnium possessio et omnium una libertas, acquisitio eorum, quae celo, terra marique capiuntur; item depositae rei uel commendatae pecuniae restitutio, uiolentiae per uim repulsio. Nam hoc, aut si quid huic simile est, numquam iniustum, sed naturale equumque habetur,” Gratian, *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, 2. English translation in Gratian, *The Treatise on Laws*, 6–7.

²⁷ On the relation between Peter Lombard and Gratian see Artur M. Landgraf, “Diritto canonico e teologia nel secolo XII,” in *Studia Gratiana, post octava Decreti saecularia auctore Consilio commemorazioni Gratianae instruendae edita*, vol. 1, eds. Giuseppe Forchielli and Alfonso M. Stickler (Bologna: Institutum Iuridicum Universitatis Studiorum Bononiensis, 1953), 373–413; Joseph De Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIe siècle: Sa préparation lointaine. Avant et autour de Pierre Lombard. Ses rapports avec les initiatives des canonistes. Études, recherches et documents* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1948); Enrico Spagnesi, “Distinguere compilare componere: Metodo teologico e metodo canonistico nel XII secolo,” in *Pietro Lombardo*, 193–224.

the law, not because what we call ‘nature’ as it is said, is denied by grace, but rather because nature is repaired by grace, and this grace, present in the renewed human being, is described as the law of justice which cancelled guilt. In fact, here the term renovation describes what has been cancelled of old.”²⁸ The master seems to suggest a distinction between the role of God’s grace with respect to human nature and the distinction between natural law and divine positive law. It is to avoid the moral consequences of Original Sin that God restores his image in human beings, allowing them to continue to understand natural law even if they remain Jews, pagans, or Gentiles.

Peter Lombard also maintains this account of natural law in his *Sentences*, where he discusses the moral status of the intentions and actions of people who lack the Christian faith.²⁹ Considering the alternative between a radical denial of any positive value of the behavior of non-believers, and the idea that intention and action can be good regardless of faith, he asserts that good intentions are not just those that merit eternal life. Intentions and actions can also be called good because of their utility, or because they indicate the good, or because they are species of the good, or because they are licit.

II. SACERDOTIUM AND REGNUM AT PARIS: PETER THE CHANTER AND PETER COMESTOR

Peter Lombard’s *Collectanea* marks a turning point in contemporary understanding of the relationship between natural law and biblical revelation. For, as we have seen, he posits an equivalence between the general and universal moral principles that human beings possess innately and the theological knowledge they acquire by the rational examination of God’s creation, to which both the Old and New Testament refer. This concord between divine and natural law grounds the extension of the Lombard’s account to matters of politics by Peter Comestor and Peter the Chanter.

²⁸ “Proinde, uicio sanato per gratiam, naturaliter fiunt ea que legis sunt, non quod per nature nomen ut dictum est, negata sit gratia sed potius per gratiam reparata natura, qua gratia in interiori homine innouato, lex iusticie scribitur, quam deleuerat culpa. Hoc enim illic scribitur per renouationem, quod deletum erat per uetustatem,” Peter Lombard, *Collectanea in epistolas Pauli*, in Rom. 2:13–14, PL 191, 1345C [V f. 18va; P f. 22va].

²⁹ “Bonum enim multipliciter accipitur, scilicet pro utili, pro remunerabili, pro signo boni, pro specie boni, pro licito, et aliis forte modis. Solaque illa intentio remunerabilis est ad vitam, quam fides dirigit; sed non illa sola bona est, ut aiunt. Nam, si quis Iudaeus vel malus Christianus necessitatem proximi relevaverit naturali pietate ductus, bonum fecit, et bona fuit voluntas qua illud fecit,” *Sententiae*, 1:564. On this passage see Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2:484.

Peter Comestor extracts both an ethical and a political doctrine from the parable about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37).³⁰ Following exegetical tradition, he identifies the Good Samaritan who helps the “half dead” man with Christ and understands the innkeeper as the Church. According to this exegesis, the two pence that the Good Samaritan/Christ gives to the innkeeper/Church are the two Testaments of the Bible, given for the deliverance of mankind. In addition, the words of the Good Samaritan to the host—“whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee” (Luke 10:35)—authorizes the Church to add doctrines and rules to those of the Holy Scripture.

This display of mercy toward the “half dead” man follows the Golden Rule as natural law. Comestor adds that, in this parable, “neighbor” has both a general and a specific sense. The general sense refers to all; the strict sense alludes to natural law. “Here the Lord seems to use the word ‘neighbor’ in a different sense with respect to the one we usually assume. In fact, in the rule: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ the word ‘neighbor’ means every man. But the Lord uses the term ‘neighbor’ in a stricter sense, meaning one who fulfills natural law, that is, one who does to all men the things he would that men would do to him and does not to others the things he would not want them to do to him.”³¹

Peter Comestor follows Peter Lombard and the tradition that identifies natural law with the very content of the scripture, stressing the point that this law, in scripture, is given to the Church and its fulfillment is thus entrusted to the *magisterium* of the Church. The Church must “use” the natural law invoked in scripture to minister to mankind, and may add to that law the positive laws needed to achieve this end. It is Christ who gives this authority to the Church, thus enabling it to fulfill its obligations.³² As

³⁰ On Peter Comestor see *Pierre le Mangeur ou Pierre de Troyes, maître du XII^e siècle*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). On the importance of Comestor’s exegesis and on its links with the heritage of Peter Lombard, see Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952); Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools, c. 1100–c. 1280* (London; Ronceverte, WV: The Hambledon Press, 1985), 1–35. A more recent examination of the Lombard’s exegetical bequest is offered in Mark J. Clark, “The Biblical Gloss, the Search for Peter Lombard’s Glossed Bible, and the School of Paris,” *Mediaeval Studies* 76 (2014): 57–113. See also Clark, *The Making of the Historia Scholastica* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015).

³¹ “Nota quod hic dominus aliter uidetur accipere proximum quam nos soleamus accipere. In illo enim mandato ‘diligens proximum,’ nomen proximi omnis homo intelligitur. Dominus stricte hic accipit proximum ut eum proximum dicat, qui implet legem naturalem, idest qui facit alii que sibi uult fieri et non facit que sibi non uult fieri,” Peter Comestor, *Super Lucam*, Cambridge, Pembroke College ms. 75, f. 43vb.

³² Comestor.

Comestor explains elsewhere, the prescriptions of the two biblical passages that enjoin the Golden Rule are the “two swords” which the Lord gave to the Church, thus empowering it to perform its assigned duties.³³

This political understanding of natural law accomplishes two objectives for Comestor. It grants authority to the Church. By the same token, it limits the authority of the secular princes. The same idea can be found in Peter the Chanter and those in his circle. The Chanter offers a further development of this position.³⁴ What emerges is a serious critique of the idea of power (*potestas*), distinguishing three possible meanings of this term. One meaning of *potestas* is the government of the prince in terms of the practice of justice (*iustitia*) and mercy (*miser cordia*). Christ is the example of the ruler who exercises this *potestas*, unifying both the princely and priestly powers. A second meaning is the power of punishing injustice, a function proper both to princes and to members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. According to a third and last meaning, *potestas* refers to the imposition of the prince’s will. In this sense, it is the source or the origin of tyranny because it involves an identity between the prince’s will and the law, which excludes any kind of advice (*consilium*) or limit.

Peter the Chanter explains that the proper model of the good prince is Jesus Christ and the way in which he fulfills his duty. In fact, “He teaches us, with doctrine of the scriptures rather than with his power [*potestas*], to purify ourselves with the doctrine rather than with miracles and with humility, and reason, and human advice rather than with force.”³⁵

Peter the Chanter presents a model of good political authority, which has Christ as its proper exemplar. Against the idea of *potestas* as imposition of the prince’s will, he suggests that the good prince subordinates his power to the authority of the Church, as warranted by scripture and by the rules and practices that scripture entitles the Church to add. The good prince must understand this arrangement correctly and exercise his own share of power with humility, recognizing the rational endowments of those he rules and accepting their advice on the model of biblical “just kings” such as David, Solomon, and Josiah.

³³ Comestor, f. 80ra.

³⁴ See John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970). See also Philippe Buc, *L’ambiguïté du Livre: Prince, pouvoir, et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Age* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1994), 53–54.

³⁵ “Docet autem nos hic utens auctoritate sacre scripture non potestate sua, nos magis doctrina debere purgare quam miracoli, et humilitate, ratione, et consilio humano quam potential,” Peter the Chanter, *Super unum ex quatuor, in Matt. 4, 4*, Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine ms. 297, f. 43rb.

III. NATURAL LAW AS “RATIO”: STEPHEN LANGTON’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE TWO BIBLICAL STATEMENTS

Stephen Langton raises a different issue concerning natural law, focusing specifically on ethics but refining the analysis of it. Langton deals with natural law in his biblical commentaries in his *quaestiones disputatae*, and in some of his sermons. In doing so, this master conforms to the trifold duties of lecturing, disputing, and preaching that Peter the Chanter describes, in a famous passage of his *Verbum abbreviatum*, as the proper activity of a master of theology.³⁶ In fact, as scholars such as Riccardo Quinto and Lauge O. Nielsen have shown, there is a notable continuity between the ideas in Langton’s exegetical works, his disputed questions, and his sermons.³⁷ Natural law is a theme that recurs throughout the different genres of his oeuvre.

Langton examines natural law in his commentary on the *Collectanea*, applying to that text the same kind of exegesis that the Lombard applies to Paul.³⁸ Following the Lombard’s reading of Rom. 2:13–14, Langton observes that the innate human capacity to grasp natural moral law has a strong negative implication as well. No one, including the Gentiles, can plead that they are ignorant of the law (*ignorant iuris*) as an excuse for failing to observe God’s ordinance. Langton explains this teaching by way of an example:

³⁶ “In tribus autem consistent exercitium sacre Scripture: in lectione, disputatione, predicatione. Cuilibet istorum inimica est prolixitas, mater obliuionis et nouerca memorie. Lectio ergo primo iacitur quasi stratorium et fundamentum sequentium, ut ex ea omnia amminica quasi ex quondam fonte ceteris duabus proponientur. Superponitur secundo structura uel paries disputationis. Vt enim ait Gregorius: ‘Nil plane intelligitur, nil fideliter predicatur nisi prius dente disputationis frangatur uel teratur.’ Tercio erigitur tectum predicationis ut *qui audit dicta ueni* et cortina cortinam trahit. Post lectionem igitur sacre Scripture et dubitabilium disputationis inquisition, et non Prius, est predicando. Religionis uero Christiana est de fide et bonis moribus; lectio et disputatio ad fidem refrenatur, predicatio ad more,” Peter the Chanter, *Verbum abbreviatum*, 1.1, *Corpus Christianorum Continuation Medievalis* 196, ed. Monique Boutry (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 9.

³⁷ See Quinto, *Doctor Nominatissimus. Stefano Langton (†1228) e la tradizione delle sue opere* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994), 30–43; Quinto, “La constitution du texte des ‘Quaestiones theologiae’ d’Étienne Langton,” in *Étienne Langton: Prédicateur, bibliste, théologien*, eds. Louis-Jacques Bataillon, Nicole Bériou, Dahan, Quinto (Brepols: Turnhout, 2010): 525–62; Lauge O. Nielsen, “Langton’s Questions on the Ten Commandments: Biblical scholarship and the art of disputation,” in *Étienne Langton*, 623–44.

³⁸ See Dahan, “Les commentaires bibliques d’Étienne Langton: Exégèse et herméneutique,” in *Étienne Langton*, 201–39. See also Quinto, “Stephen Langton,” in *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, vol. 2, ed. Rosemann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 46–47.

What should we think regarding a man who has been in Saladin's prison since his infancy and thus has heard nothing about the [Christian] faith? Lacking education, it is clear that this ignorant man is damned, as is the infant who is being brought to receive baptism yet dies en route; the faith of those who bring him is insufficient to save him. This question is asked since many of the Lord's judgments are unfathomable. Still, if the prisoner, exercising his natural aptitudes, is led by reason to grasp that there is a single first principle, one should believe that God will visit his mind and will raise it to higher things.³⁹

Langton also amplifies the relationship that the Lombard posits between grace and natural ethics. While the Gentiles can fulfill God's law naturally (*naturaliter*), they exercise that activity because grace is given to them first. Langton offers the following explanation for this primacy of grace:

And so, it is the case that "he who is well-enlightened, when he turns his eyes [to the highest things], he sees, at first, thanks to a miracle, and then, thanks to nature, since primacy [*principaliter*] is proper to grace while operation [*ministerium*] is proper to nature." And it is also true that "one who is a Gentile and who fulfills the law naturally [*naturaliter*] does so because of grace. So that a primary role is proper to grace and a secondary one is proper to nature," as he [Paul] says.⁴⁰

The natural capacity to grasp and follow the moral law is thus restored by grace in all human beings, Gentiles included. Langton amplifies this point

³⁹ "Quid ergo de illo qui a puericia est in carcere Saladini nec aliquid audiuit de fide? Certe ignorans ignorantie sicut puer qui deferitur ad baptismum et in uia moritur, dampnatur nec proderit ei fides eorum qui deferunt eum. Et queritur quia iudicia domini abyssus multa. Sed tamen incarceratus exerceat naturalia sua ut ductu rationis cognoscat unum esse principium, est credere quod dominus uisitatibit intellectum eius et promouebit ad maius," Stephen Langton, *Glossa in Magnam glossaturam*, in Rom. 2:13, mss. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1302, f. 7va; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14443, f. 260vb.

⁴⁰ "Vnde sicut hec est uera: 'iste qui modo est illuminatus cum primo dirigit oculos uidet per miraculum et uidet per naturam, quia principalitas est gratie siue miraculi, ministerium uero nature,' ita hec uera: 'iste qui gentilis fuit naturaliter facit ea que legis sunt et per gratiam facit ea que legis sunt, ut principale sit gratie secundarium uerum nature,' ut dixit," Stephen Langton, *Glossa in Magnam glossaturam*, in Rom. 2:13, mss. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1302, f. 7vb; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14443, f. 261ra.

in one of his disputed questions devoted to natural law.⁴¹ Tobias relates the negative aspect of natural law, the notion that its universal possession removes any excuse for immorality. Matthew relates its positive aspect, affirming that our innate rational capacities make possible for all a natural ethics fully in tune with divine law. At the same time, Langton adds, qualifying that affirmation, “You have to desire the right things.”

Starting from these considerations, Langton establishes a semantic equivalence between the biblical statements “All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them” and “All the things whatsoever you have to will that men should do to you, do you also to them.” The master elaborates on the term “have to” as presenting a distinction between the duties that follow from precepts (that is, from rules which are mandatory) and the duties that follow from counsels (that is, from rules that are optional). Langton considers in particular the rules governing obedience to natural law. If a mandate derives from the Golden Rule, it is a precept and is obligatory per se; if it is a counsel, it is optional and its requirements depend on the circumstances. Langton adds a third alternative:

That [the precept of natural law] should be understood from both the obligation that follows from precept and the one that follows from counsel. Thus it means: you must will anything either according to precept or to counsel, and so on. And this word “act” that follows likewise relates both to precept and to counsel. But if you consider “you wish” or “you must” according to counsel, then “act” is understood the same way. Likewise if the first are considered according to precept, then “act” also must be considered that way. And thus they should be understood consistently.⁴²

Langton’s analysis explains that the letter of the Golden Rule can be assumed from both the side of the precept and the side of the counsel, but

⁴¹ According to Quinto’s numbering of Langton’s collected questions, this text has been labeled CAMB 127. See Quinto, “*Doctor Nominatissimus*,” 244. On the disputed questions see also Quinto, “La constitution du texte des *quaestiones theologiae*,” in *Étienne Langton*, 525–62; Stephen Langton, *Quaestiones Theologiae: Liber I*, eds. Quinto and Magdalena Bieniak (Oxford: The British Academy / Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴² “Quod communiter est intelligendum de debito preceptis et de debito consilii. Vnde est sensu: ‘quicumque uelle debetis de precepto uel de consilio’ etc. Et hoc uerbum ‘facite’ quod sequitur similiter se habet communiter ad precepta et consilium. Sed si hoc uerbum ‘uultis’ uel hoc uerbum ‘debetis’ tenetur pro consilio, et hoc uerbum ‘facite’ similiter. Item, si primum pro precepto, et hoc uerbum ‘facite’ similiter. Et ita conformitatem accipi debent,” Stephanus Langton, *Quaestio de hoc quod dicitur: Quicquid uultis ut faciant uobis homines, eadem facite illis*, Cambridge, St. John’s College, ms. 57, f. 201rb.

that in each case it is not just a part of the statement which is optional or mandatory, but the whole sentence. According to this discussion, the master seems to undermine the mandatory nature of the precepts of natural law, which can be considered in terms of counsels with respect to different circumstances. Langton explains this point in another *quaestio disputata*, dedicated to the Ten Commandments, where he notes: “We say that counsel does not commit in and of itself but with respect to the circumstances, while precept commits by itself, so that a person is always obliged by a precept but not by a counsel, if not for the place and time. But this statement has a double value: ‘this man is mandated always to fulfill the precept.’ If the adverb [always] is referred to the verb ‘mandate’ the statement is true, while if it is referred to the verb ‘fulfill’ it is false.”⁴³

Langton seems to consider “the mandate to fulfill the law” to be essential, while the simple “fulfillment” is optional. This explains that, according to Langton, natural law is a sort of general principle, a point of reference for all human beings, while a “positive law” is required to define how to accomplish a precept, adapting it to each specific human context and circumstance. In several of his sermons, as Phyllis Barzille Roberts notes, Langton developed the political consequences of this understanding of natural law as the moral rule to which all men are subject, whose content is revealed in the Scripture and which is the only proper criterion for determining the rightness of the laws of a community.⁴⁴ Natural law is not the specific topic of any of Langton’s sermons. But, like justice and the nature of kingship, this theme is regularly present. The sermons he preached as archbishop, aimed at a general audience, understandably lack the technical semantic and doctrinal analysis found in his scholastic exegesis and *quaestiones*; rather, their goal is to offer practical guides to moral and political life. Langton’s sermons present natural law as a limit on the exercise of

⁴³ “Dicimus, quod consilium non obligat ex se, sed ex casu. Sed praeceptum obligat ex se. Et homo semper tenetur ad praeceptum, sed non ad consilium nisi pro loco et tempore. Haec tamen duplex est: ‘iste tenetur semper tacere preceptum.’ Si adverbium respicit hoc uerbum ‘tenetur,’ uera; si hoc uerbum ‘facere’ falsa,” Stephanus Langton, *Quaestio de preceptis decem*, in Nielsen, “Three Questions on the Old Law and the Gospel Precepts by Stephen Langton,” in *Cahiers de l’Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin* 78 (2008): 3–36, at 18.

⁴⁴ Phyllis B. Roberts, *Stephanus de Lingua-Tonante: Studies in the Sermons of Stephen Langton* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968): 123–30. On Langton’s sermons see also Roberts, *Selected Sermons of Stephen Langton* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980); Roberts, “Master Stephen Langton Preaches to the People and Clergy: Sermon Texts from Twelfth-Century Paris,” *Traditio* 36 (1980): 237–68; Bériou, “La prédication d’Étienne Langton: Un état de la question quarante ans après la thèse de Phyllis Roberts,” in *Étienne Langton*, 397–426.

royal power, an issue to which the events leading to Magna Carta in 1215 made him and his English hearers acutely sensitive. Obedience to natural law is an attribute of a good king.⁴⁵ This, then, is the primary context in which Langton elaborates the political implications of natural law, which he inherited from the earlier exegetes and theologians in the Lombardian tradition that have been considered here.

IV. CONCLUSION: NATURAL LAW BETWEEN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND HISTORY OF SALVATION

As this analysis of natural law in the thought of Peter Lombard, Peter Comestor, Peter the Chanter, and Stephen Langton has shown, their exegeses of biblical texts yield vigorous if varied defenses of natural law. Successive theologians in this group developed and nuanced that defense over the course of their teaching and preaching careers. They agreed with St. Paul that natural law has a cognitive as well as an ethical dimension; thanks to their common possession of reason and an innate moral sense, all human beings can know and follow ethical principles equivalent to God's revealed law. They held that divine grace has created mankind with this natural aptitude. Grace takes the first step, for Langton, in renovating mankind's fallen state and enabling all people, including Gentiles and other non-Christians, to exercise that aptitude. For the Lombard and his followers, St. Paul also provides assurance that natural reason enables all people to arrive at a knowledge of God through the knowledge of his created universe. For some authors of this group, it is these affirmations and empowerments that were of greatest interest. For others, the same conditions eliminated any excuse for atheism or immorality. All four authors appreciated that the Golden Rule can be viewed as both a positive and a negative injunction. Langton distinguished more precisely between precept and counsel in this connection, and distanced his own view from that ascribed to the canonists. Comestor and the Chanter extrapolated from

⁴⁵ See Roberts, *Stephanus de Lingua-Tonante*, 127; Roberts, "Sermons, Preachers, and the Law," in *De Sion exiit et verbum domini in Hierusalem: Essays on Medieval Law, Liturgy, and Literature in Honour of Amnon Linder*, ed. Yitzhak Hen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001): 119–28, esp. 121–24. For a quick fix on the English political context in which Langton gives his sermons see John C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 3rd ed., ed. George Garnett and John Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 188–297. Despite the considerable number of publications on the Magna Carta keyed to its 800th anniversary in 2015, this volume remains the classical account on the issue.

their exegesis of the parable of the Good Samaritan a highly partisan political theory, placing the authority of the Church above that of secular princes, and finding in this text a divine warrant for whatever post-biblical innovations the Church may institute in the fulfillment of its mission. Our understanding of the treatment of natural law in medieval thought needs to be expanded to take fuller account of the contributions of the biblical exegetes, whether in the seminal period of early scholasticism here considered, or more widely.

University of Bergamo.

King's College London, European Research Council project,

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