

Introduction

At the ceremonies marking the end of the Second World War, General Douglas MacArthur acknowledged that the challenge ahead – preserving the peace – posed enigmas that could never be resolved by politics alone. “The problem basically is theological” he insisted.¹ Two decades earlier, writing under the shadow of the first Great War, Pope Pius XI reached much the same conclusion. He did not, however, shrink from offering his prescription for the theological road to follow. “It is . . . to be wished,” he wrote, “that the teaching of Aquinas, more particularly his exposition of international law and the laws governing the mutual relations of peoples, became more and more studied, for it contains the foundations of a genuine ‘League of Nations.’”²

Coming as it did in a 1923 encyclical on Saint Thomas Aquinas, “A Guide for Studies,” in which the supreme pontiff promoted the writings of the eminent medieval theologian as a source of wisdom for all areas of human life, it was not wholly unexpected that Pius would also recommend Aquinas to those engaged in reflection on “the duties of mutual obligation between nations.” The League of Nations had been founded a scant three years prior as a vehicle for maintaining peace. This pope, known for his skepticism toward this first modern initiative in organizing international society,³ found in his encyclical an opportunity to hint at an alternative, more theistic, set of principles for its construction.

¹ September 2, 1945. “Radio address to a world audience following the Surrender Ceremony of Japan aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri*” (<http://bay-journal.com/usa/macarthur-speeches.html> (Accessed February 10, 2014)).

² *Studiorum ducem*, no. 20, www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius11/P11STUDI.HTM (Accessed March 25, 2016).

³ This skepticism was expressed most pointedly in his first encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei* (December 23, 1922); for critical analysis see Robert John Araujo and John A. Lual, *Papal Diplomacy and the Quest for Peace* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2004), pp. 192–200.

Read today, the pope's attribution of internationalist phraseology to Thomas Aquinas cannot but seem anachronistic. Although rules governing the mutual conduct of states (diplomatic immunity and the like) have existed since Greek and Roman antiquity, the modern discipline of international law – a “law regulating the relations between the states alone to the exclusion of all other entities”⁴ – did not take shape until the eighteenth century. Indeed, the term itself appears to have been first coined by Jeremy Bentham in 1780. Moreover not only in word, but in substance as well, it was anachronistic to credit St. Thomas with an “exposition of international law.” True, in the section on law in the *Summa theologiae* we find a treatment of *ius gentium*, a law of peoples. But a reading of the relevant passages quickly reveals that Aquinas had in mind a set of moral norms that could be found throughout the different nations of the world (*ius apud gentes*). Therein he makes little or no mention of the norms that might bear specifically on the interaction of nations (*a ius inter gentes*), each understood as a collective entity with a moral or legal personality of its own.⁵

These qualifications notwithstanding, Pope Pius's comments about the value of taking Thomas Aquinas as a guide for reflection on the normative foundations of international society do have a sound basis. For in constructing his intricate *explicatio* of human and divine agency, St. Thomas also developed a compelling conception of peace. In the secondary literature, this conception has rarely been thematized in its own right. The result has been a distorted view of the place occupied by just war theory in Aquinas's overall political philosophy and theology. It has often been

⁴ Peter P. Remec, *The Position of the Individual in International Law According to Grotius and Vattel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 31. This work provides a good summary account of the emergence of modern international law as “an independent system of law between some abstract entities” (p. 30); see especially pp. 25–32.

⁵ Aquinas's sixteenth-century disciple Francisco deVitoria (died 1546) is often credited with introducing this idea when he spoke of a *ius* that might be applied *inter omnes gentes* in his *De Indis*. Allied with his references to a world-wide community (*totus orbis*), and even to the supranational authority of this community (*totus orbis auctoritate*), this lent credibility to the idea, promoted by some later historians, that the seed could be found in Aquinas. However, Peter Haggemacher (“La place de Francisco de Vitoria parmi les fondateurs du droit international,” in A. Truyol Serra, et al., *Actualité de la pensée juridique de Francisco de Vitoria* [Brussels: Bruylant, 1988], pp. 27–80) has shown that in Vitoria “*ius inter gentes*” functioned as an equivalent for *ius inter omnes homines*, namely a set of moral norms, binding upon individuals, that were recognizable across different cultures (in this vein Vitoria could also speak of a *ius* that could be found *apud omnes nationes*). In the measure that these norms were later thought to undergird a universal juridical order that could (and should) guide the conduct of nations vis-à-vis each other, a distant paternity can traced to Vitoria, although the actual articulation of the idea would not come until at least century later (at the hands of post-Grotian jurists such as Richard Zouche).

forgotten that for Aquinas the concept of just war rests on the more primary notion of peace, because, on his conception, the normative (baseline) condition of both domestic and international affairs is one of peace.⁶ As a consequence, the idea of just war can be given content, such that it will function as a genuine political ideal capable of guiding action, only on condition that the idea of peace can be adequately specified.

As would be expected of a medieval schoolman, Aquinas's account of peace is multifaceted. It includes an analysis of the different subjects to which the predicate "peace" may be applied: God,⁷ the psyche of an individual person,⁸ within various collective entities (inter alia civil and ecclesial society), as well as between human beings and God.⁹ Kinds of peace are likewise considered: peace within God,¹⁰ the "perfect peace" of the heavenly Jerusalem,¹¹ the "true" but "imperfect peace" of our present condition¹² (itself divided into the positive peace of social concord and the negative peace of security from violence), the mediate peace of the *ecclesia* that straddles both worlds,¹³ the "false peace" of evildoers, which is peace in appearance only,¹⁴ and the "illicit peace" that can arise when the good, for the sake of concord, wrongly cooperate with the wicked.¹⁵ All of this is

⁶ Haggenmacher rightly notes that it is "vers la paix que s'oriente l'ensemble de la 'Quaestio de bello'" (*Grotius et la guerre juste*, p. 123). Readers will usefully consult pp. 123–126 of the same work, where the author elucidates in what measure it can be said that Aquinas developed a "classical" vision of war in the context of international order.

⁷ Commenting on St. Paul's dictum "the peace of God (*pax Dei*) which surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), St. Thomas explains (*In Phil.*, section 159) how peace, insofar as it signifies the tranquility of order, is found first and foremost in the source of order (*in principio ordinis*) namely in God (*scilicet in Deo*).

⁸ See *ST II-II*, q. 29, a. 3.

⁹ See, for instance, *In Rom.* 10:15 (section 841), apropos Paul's reference to the "Gospel of peace," where Aquinas notes how peace may be found (1) between men and God, (2) between all men, and (3) within a single man.

¹⁰ In *In Phil.* 4:7 (section 159), after noting how there is "peace in God" (*in Deo ... in quo est pax*), St. Thomas explains how "from this profound source peace flows first into the beatified in whom there is no disturbance either of guilt or punishment," and secondarily "into saintly persons" (adding that "the holier they are, the less their minds are disturbed"). See also *Super De div. nom.*, chapter 11, lect. 1 "De divina pace et de eius causalitate in communi" (sections 876–891), and *In Ioh.* 14: 27 (section 1963).

¹¹ *Comp. theol.*, II, chapter 9 (p. 204, lines 433–434): "... in the future [kingdom of God] there will be complete peace" (*omnimoda pax*).

¹² *ST II-II*, q. 29, a. 2, ad 4: "... true peace (*pax vera*) is twofold. One is perfect (*perfecta*)... The other is imperfect (*imperfecta*), and it is had in this world."

¹³ See *In I Tim.* 2:2 (section 59) where the peace proper to the Church (*ecclesia ... habet pacem propriam*) is contrasted to the peace of terrestrial society (*pax terrena*).

¹⁴ *ST II-II*, q. 29, a. 2, ad 3: "Pax ... malorum ... est pax apparens et non vera."

¹⁵ Apropos Rom. 12:18 ("If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men"), St. Thomas writes that "sometimes other people's malice stands in the way of our having peace with them, inasmuch as no peace is possible unless we consent to their malice. Such peace is obviously illicit (*quidem pacem constat esse illicitam*)" (*In Rom.*, section 1010).

set within a causal account of how true peace arises and what factors are conducive to its undoing.

It is with respect to his elucidation of “sins against peace”¹⁶ that St. Thomas brings the theme of international society to his discussion. Defining “war” as violence done by one “multitude” (the fighting force of a people or nation) against another, in contrast to sedition, whereby violent acts are committed against the order internal to a single multitude, he worked from the idea that the peoples of the world together constitute a *community*, for which there is a corresponding condition of concord, hence of *inter-national* peace. Familiar to us now, the postulation of *amity between nations* as a distinct category of peace (which St. Thomas uses alongside the more mundane concept of peace qua security) was still a novel idea in thirteenth-century Europe. Aquinas introduced this idea by the back door as it were; it is implied by his technical definition of *bellum* as an application of armed force against external enemies who have disrupted the (normatively) prior condition of peace. By virtue of the contrast with sedition, it is made clear that the disruption in question severs the bond that ought to exist between two or more nations. But apart from an allusion to the “community of the whole world” in his youthful commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard,¹⁷ the ideal of amity between nations, taken precisely as the normative (“natural”) condition of humanity, is never stated by him directly. The task of developing this underlying supposition of international community would fall to his commentators, in some measure by Vitoria, and much more explicitly by Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio (1793–1862).¹⁸

Whereas the ancient Greeks, from Thucydides onward, had developed a conception of inner and outer war (*stasis* and *polemos*), a war between fellow Hellenes versus a war against barbarians, they did not distinctly articulate this against the backdrop of a twofold conception of peace. Nor did the Greeks assert with any confidence that peace, not war, was the normative condition of humanity. Expressions of an agonistic conception of life, as, for example, the character Clineas in Plato’s *Laws*, who

¹⁶ *ST* II-II, qq. 37–42.

¹⁷ *IV Sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 3co: “... and between a single bishop and the pope there are other grades of dignities corresponding to the grades of unions insofar as one congregation or community includes another one, as the community of a province includes the community of the city, and the community of the kingdom includes the community of the province, and the community of the whole world (*communitas totius mundi*) includes the community of a kingdom.”

¹⁸ *Saggio di dritto natural appoggiato sul fatto* (Theoretical Essay on Natural Right Based on Facts), published in Palermo, 1840–1843.

boldly states that “the peace of which most men talk . . . is no more than a name; in real fact, the normal attitude of a city to all other cities is one of undeclared warfare,” were not uncommon in the ancient world.¹⁹ Like the oscillation of day and night, or the change of seasons, endemic warfare was thought to have a vital role to play in the maintenance of cosmic and human order, for in the words of Heraclitus “all things happen by strife and necessity”; “war,” he added, “is the father of all and the king of all,” as it is from war that the differentiation of gods and humans, slaves and freemen arises.²⁰

Among the Greeks there were of course advocates of the contrasting harmonic view. Thus in a famous passage of the *Gorgias*, we find Socrates asserting that “wise men . . . say that the heavens and the earth, gods and men, are bound together by fellowship and friendship, and order and temperance and justice, and for this reason they call the sum of things the ‘ordered’ universe, my friend, not the world of disorder or riot.”²¹ This vision of cosmic order would later be taken up by the Stoics. But while peace qua harmony was attributed by them to the cosmos as a whole, we do not find them differentiating peace on two levels – within a single people, on the one hand, and among the world’s diverse peoples, on the other – as would later be supposed by Aquinas.

The Greek idea of cosmic order would find expression among the Roman thinkers inspired by stoicism, for example, Marcus Aurelius or Cicero, who spoke of a “law of nature” that could bind together the whole human race under a single set of moral norms. That the nations of the world together constitute a community, distinct at once from the *civitas* and the broader unity of the empire, was, however, not yet articulated by the Romans as a genuine political ideal. The tendency rather was to view the barbarian as a recalcitrant other, who could either enter the expanding empire by abandoning his pretension of independence, or, holding to this pretension, he would render himself a fit target of perpetual enmity.

Although treaties could be signed between Rome and peoples outside of the empire, these had an ad hoc character that did not signal the willingness of the first to enter into relations with the latter on a footing of equality. External war thereby took on a quasi-natural character, as there

¹⁹ Plato, *Laws*, I, 626a. See Martin Ostwald, “Peace and War in Plato and Aristotle,” *Scripta Classica Israelica* 15 (1996): 102–118.

²⁰ Cited in G. S Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 193.

²¹ 507e–508a11.

was no firm social bond that could unite Romans and barbarians into a broader community wherein the inherent diversity of each would be respected. Internal war, by contrast, was indeed considered unnatural, for it violated the unity proper to the empire. Moral strictures against war, and restrictions placed on the resort to it, were directed chiefly to conflicts arising within the empire. At this level, war was inseparable from sedition. Rupturing the natural bond of the perfect community, *pax Romana* or empire, sedition was counted among the gravest of crimes and would be punished accordingly.

The Roman conception found extension in the Christian Middle Ages, especially among those canonists and civil lawyers (also called “Romanists” or Legists”) who viewed the Christian Emperor as *de iure* ruler over the whole world. Thus in his famous enumeration of seven kinds of war, the influential canonist Henry of Suse (Hostiensis), writing in the *Summa aurea* (1239–1253), placed at the head of his list the war that could be waged “between believers and infidels.” This sort of war he deemed unqualifiedly “just on the part of the faithful.” To underscore its likeness to the wars, legitimate in his eyes, that ancient Rome waged against foreign peoples (thus considering Christendom as heir to the legal prerogatives of the Roman Empire), Hostiensis termed this war against the infidels “Roman war” (*bellum Romanum*).

By contrast, Hostiensis declared illegitimate the wars that Christian princes waged against each other. Insofar as these princes were bound together by a shared faith, any deliberate disruption of the resulting political community (the Holy Roman Empire as it would later be called) had the character of civil war, and on this ground would be deemed “unjust.” Significantly, there was here no natural bond of sociability that could join together nations of the world, regardless of their positioning vis-à-vis the Christian faith. Hence religious difference was in principle a ground for war and there could be no sense in speaking of an international society that prescinded from the unity of the faith.

Taking the unity of faith as the horizon for just war was a standard procedure for the medieval jurists and theologians who wrote under the influence of Gratian’s *Decretum*. Entirely devoted to the topic of armed coercion, the famous *causa* 23 of Gratian’s compendium (book 2) was set within the perspective of what today is termed “holy war,” the use of force against persons and groups deemed enemies of the faith. Indeed, the *causa* opens with the report of a particular incident – a case of heresy into which a group of bishops had lapsed, and its repression by their Catholic counterparts acting on orders of the pope. It concludes, likewise,

with an invocation of the Crusades. Citing the authority of Pope Leo, Gratian boldly asserts how “it is even allowed vigorously to exhort anybody to make a defense against the adversaries of the holy faith and to incite everybody to fend off the violence of the infidels.”²²

Against this backdrop, St. Thomas’s treatment of just war in his “*Quaestio de bello*” takes on special salience. The defense of faith no longer occupies central stage. Instead, the resort to force is justified by reference to the well-being of the *respublica* and the maintenance of the “common good,” philosophical terms that clearly are of Greek and Roman provenance. Nor is any reference made to the Christian emperor. The locus of legitimate war-making power is now placed squarely upon the prince (*princeps*), with the supposition that there will be a multitude of such rulers, each possessed of supreme executive and judicial authority. Although not entirely novel in identifying independent princes rather than the emperor as the locus of war-making authority – such a view had been articulated some two decades earlier by Pope Innocent IV – in its overall framework Aquinas’s treatment of just war bore the stamp of his originality. To sum up what later will be developed in more detail, this originality results from his deft ordering of these elements.

First of all, there was Aquinas’s overall approach to the normative assessment of war, which was constructed around principles of natural reason, rather than by an appeal to the teaching of faith. This is not to say that he would deny the legitimacy of using force to uphold the specific interests of the Christian religion. Comments in his corpus can be found which justify some of the rationales for what later would be termed “defensive holy war.”²³ But unlike nearly all of his predecessors, such rationales were introduced as secondary considerations, applications as it were, but were not central premises of his doctrine.

Second, St. Thomas broke with standard medieval usage whereby *bellum* had designated a broad range of violent acts, including strictly interpersonal violence (assaults or self-defense), police action against criminals, uprisings against established authority, and armed struggles between independent political communities. Following in the path already marked out by Innocent IV, Aquinas restricted the application of *bellum* to the last-named category. This is the procedure that he follows in detailing the “sins against peace.” By the same token, his approach highlighted the distinction, familiar to us today, but in his time only

²² Causa 23, q. 8, dictum post canon 28.

²³ See, in particular, *ST* II-II, q. 10, a. 8.

just emerging, between two forms of organized violence: one pitting two or more factions of a civil community against each other and another whereby independent communities embarked on a course of armed conflict. The former, discussed under headings such as “sedition,” “tyrannicide,” and “just revolt” had the effect of rendering “civil war” a distinct topic for moral inquiry.

Third, Aquinas introduced one of the first *ex professo* discussions of legitimate war-making authority. Unlike Augustine, who took up this theme within a broader argumentation about the obedience due to divine commands,²⁴ or the medieval jurists, who discussed it by reference to the concrete political structures of the day, St. Thomas articulated it as an abstract principle, the first of three requirements that must be met if a war was to be counted just. In so concisely identifying the independent prince as the locus of war-making authority Aquinas was in fact well ahead of his time. Here his thought provides a glimmer of what was to come – a multitude of sovereign princes, juridically equal, each with war-making authority. His articulation of the principle would have a formative effect on subsequent medieval and even early-modern political philosophy. The centrality that legitimate authority would come to have in the later just war literature is unthinkable without Aquinas’s influence.

Fourth, by articulating the notion of just war in derivation upon the more fundamental concept of peace – which he parsed into a set of subcategories, thereby bringing new clarity to the discussion – Aquinas helped lay the groundwork for what would later be termed “international law.” A set of norms regulating the mutual relations of nations, this new system of law (which as we have already noted did not emerge in full form until the eighteenth century) is premised on the core idea that peace is “the general condition of the world at large,” and “war the exception.”²⁵ Of central importance to what the same author aptly terms the “just-war outlook in the generic sense,” is the supposition that “any resort to war require[s] at least some kind of affirmative justification: specifically a belief that the only acceptable reason for undertaking war [is] to uphold some larger community ideal, such as the rule of law.”²⁶ This, in substance, is the central postulate around which Aquinas built his theory of just war,

²⁴ *Contra Faustum manichaeum*, XXII, 74–75; the *Decretum canon Quid culpatur*; see *Ethics of War*, pp. 107 and 112.

²⁵ Stephen C. Neff, *War and the Law of Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

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namely that armed force could be resorted to *solely* in the interests of a “just cause”: to restore a peace that has been disrupted (or threatened) by a particularly egregious wrong.

Fifth, St. Thomas offers an account of the causation of peace, by which he establishes a direct link between the theological virtue of charity and the imperfect peace of the temporal order, with justice exercising a mediate role. “Peace,” he writes, “is the ‘work of justice’ *indirectly*, insofar as justice removes the obstacles to peace: it is the work of charity *directly*, for love is a unifying force.”²⁷ The idea that peace is a positive reality that follows upon a union of the affections directed toward the common good is ultimately what led Aquinas to situate his discussion of war within the *ST* questions on charity rather than the subsequent sequences of questions on justice. The framework of charity provided an opening through which evangelical inspiration could enter into his treatment of war and peace.

Finally, the flip side of identifying a tight causal linkage between charity and peace is a parallel emphasis on the causal role of sin in the genesis of conflict. Aquinas’s treatment of war and other forms of violence was set in an account of how passions such as anger and hatred provoke discord. On this understanding, the problem of war cannot be separated from the broader problem of evil. Rooted in the doctrine of “original sin” (exemplified by Biblical stories such as Adam and Eve’s fall from grace, Cain’s killing of Abel, and the Tower of Babel), Aquinas’s teaching on evil proceeded from the Augustinian assumption, shared by most Latin theologians of the period, that violence is endemic to this “fallen” world. In a purely descriptive sense it is the norm in our post-lapsarian condition. This in turn impacted Aquinas’s conception of peace, as it would appear to follow that war can never be decisively eradicated from the human condition. But at the same time Aquinas believed that the grace of Jesus Christ had provided a remedy for original sin. How deeply this grace could penetrate the temporal structures of the world, healing and thus strengthening our natural (“normative”) ordination to peace qua social concord, would become a major theme for Aquinas’s disciples in the modern period (from Taparelli to Pope Benedict XV and his successors), who attempted to coordinate (on Thomistic principles) the doctrine of just war with the perpetual peace tradition that had emerged from Rousseau and Kant.

²⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 29, a. 3, ad 3.

Aquinas's postulation of charity qua friendship as the primary source of peace between nations is compelling, but also raises a number of difficult philosophical and theological issues. Philosophically, his emphasis on friendship between nations, with justice relegated to a subordinate "mediate" role, weighs into a debate that in our own day has pitted communitarians against Rawlsians. The latter have maintained that if a broad-based society such as the European Union (and by extension international society as a whole) is to function effectively, strong bonds of shared identity and fellow-feeling are in the last analysis superfluous. "Communitarians" have argued the contrary, namely that justice will be observed within a society only when there is a prior consensus regarding its core values and collective commitment to some "higher" shared purpose.²⁸

St. Thomas was subjected to a kind of Rawlsian critique before the letter in a book published in 1946 by Bruno de Solages.²⁹ The Toulousain professor faulted Aquinas for approaching the problem of war first and foremost from the "subjective" perspective of the prince's individual conscience. Emphasizing how Aquinas placed his treatment of war within the treatise of charity, and with his concomitant focus on "right intention" (understood as an extension of the virtuous love of the "other"), on de Solages' reading Aquinas approached war primarily as an issue for the confessional, and thus part of his broader "casuistry of sin." A more appropriate placement for this topic, de Solages argues, would have been the treatise of justice, such that war could now be examined from the "objective" perspective of community rights and obligations.³⁰ Quite strikingly, around the same time, we find another French Thomist, Jacques Maritain, adopting the communitarian posture that a well-ordered public life necessarily engages values deeper than relations of justice. He applied this view

²⁸ On this debate within the context of the European Union, see Andreas Follesdal, "The Sort of Nationalism and Patriotism that Europe Needs," in Gregory M. Reichberg and Henrik Syse, *Ethics, Nationalism, and Just War: Medieval and Contemporary Perspectives* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), pp. 267–289.

²⁹ *La théologie de la guerre juste: Gènes et orientation* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946). De Solage's critique was directed mainly at the central role that Aquinas had accorded to *recta intentio* in the threefold conditions of a just war. The other rationale that had dictated Aquinas's placement of war within the treatise of charity – namely that unjust war is a sin against charity since it disrupts the peace of nations that ultimately derives from charity – is largely neglected in de Solage's account. This is discussed in further detail in the text that follows.

³⁰ This in fact was the path followed by most of Aquinas's successors (including Vitoria and Suárez), who would downplay the role of "right intention," by which Aquinas had established an explicit link between just war and the theological virtue of charity. In examining this development, Haggemacher (*Grotius et la guerre juste*, pp. 404–406) observes that whereas "legitimate

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in his influential speeches³¹ about the moral challenges that would have to be faced in rebuilding the peace in war-torn Europe.

It has often been remarked that St. Thomas's contribution to the emerging just war tradition is mainly within what is now termed *ius ad bellum*: norms bearing on resort to armed force. His threefold criteria of a just war – legitimate authority, just cause, and right intention – are invariably cited in this connection. By contrast, the saint's analysis of right and wrong conduct in war is usually accorded only a marginal role. True enough, read in the light of today's preoccupations, the issues that he does highlight in articles 2–4 of question 40 – clerical involvement in the military profession, the use of ambushes and other “stratagems” in wartime, and the licitness of fighting on holy days – can seem quaint if not wholly inapplicable in the context of modern warfare. And paradoxically, the one area where he has had a discernible influence on subsequent *in bello* reflection – the assessment of side-effect harm or “collateral damage” – arguably results from a misreading of the key text in question (*ST* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, on the permissibility of killing in self-defense).

Despite these disclaimers, it can safely be said that Aquinas offers more of an *in bello* teaching than has generally been recorded in the standard accounts. In a way we should not be surprised that this is so. Born into a military family – his father and at least two of his brothers, as well as his brothers-in-law, were knights – Aquinas's early immersion in the world of knighthood left its imprint throughout his writings, sometimes in the most unexpected of places. His many allusions to military exercises and equipment (much of it obviously based on first-hand observation), and willingness to quote from military manuals, show that not only did he have “an intimate familiarity with knighthood and its appurtenances,” but more generally possessed “a wide and precise knowledge of military

authority” and “just cause” were drawn by Aquinas with reference to the virtue of justice, he deliberately inserted “right intention” in *ST* II-II, q. 40, so as to counterbalance the tendency, already prevalent among the civil and canon lawyers, to assess war on external grounds alone, thereby leaving out of consideration “the interior attitude of belligerents and [their] combatants” (p. 404, my translation). Hence, for example in *ST* II-II, q. 66, a. 8, ad 1, we find Aquinas condemning those who are motivated to participate in a just war out of lust for booty (an allusion to the sinfulness of mercenaries). Despite this emphasis, Aquinas could nevertheless recognize with the lawyers that no obligation of restitution would hold in such a case. (Only mercenaries engaged in an unjust war would be so bound.) He thereby made clear how the moral assessment of war proceeded from a more comprehensive set of principles than the externally verifiable elements of justice that constituted the framework of legal analysis.

³¹ Published under the title *Messages 1941–1944* (Paris: Paul Hartmann, 1945).

affairs.”³² A careful reading of his writings that deal expressly with war and related matters – most especially his discussion of military prudence and battlefield courage in the *Summa theologiae* – but also his more numerous side comments on military affairs, evince a keen interest in the profession of arms. Many of his observations bear on the opportunities and risks that this profession occasions for the life of virtue.

³² Edward A Synan, “St. Thomas Aquinas and the Profession of Arms,” *Medieval Studies* 50.1 (1988): 404–437 (at 406–407).