

Title: “Re-reading as Contemplation: The political theologies of Augustine and Cicero as Sources for Thomas Aquinas’s account of *religio*”

Abstract: This article investigates the role played by Cicero and Augustine in Aquinas’s account of *religio*, in conversation with the original historical and textual contexts of the specific Ciceronian and Augustinian sources that Aquinas employs. Although originally in tension, both Ciceronian and Augustinian accounts of *religio* continued to influence medieval and early modern understandings of the relationship between religion, nature, and political identity. By introducing the concept of ‘potential parts’ and the distinction between ‘elicited’ and ‘commanded’ virtues, Aquinas is able to present an account of *religio* that, while indebted to Cicero and Augustine in different ways, remains uniquely his own.

Keywords: *Religio*/religion, republicanism, *ius pontificium*, Cicero, Aquinas, Augustine, potential parts

In the classical world, the concept of religion was often imbued with cultural and even political implications that extended far beyond the conceptual parameters of the various cosmological systems in which it functioned. For Cicero and other Roman jurists, the concept of *religio* was an important component of the juridical structure of the Roman republic that was intrinsically associated with the common good of the *polis*. As Christianity came of age under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire, however, it began to develop new articulations of the concept of *religio* in relation to the common good in ways that re-conceived—and at times directly challenged—classical religious archetypes from the Roman and Hellenistic world. Among the Christian authors of this period who engaged significantly with the political and cosmological implications of the Roman concept of *religio*, Augustine of Hippo is perhaps the most influential—building on existing traditions within North-African Christianity, in his *City of God* and other works Augustine articulated a version of *religio* that reframes the Ciceronian concept of *religio* in the context of an explicitly Christian political theology.

Despite these historical factors, at the beginning of his own treatment of the virtue of religion in the *Summa theologiae* Thomas Aquinas cites several definitions of *religio* from both

Cicero and Augustine successively, without acknowledging any conceptual tension between these two perspectives; Aquinas even seems to suggest that these different accounts of *religio* can be compatible, provided that they are understood in reference to the worship of the one God.¹ Aquinas begins by introducing a text from Cicero's *Rhetoric* (*De Inventione*), where Cicero argues that *religio* involves offering service and religious ceremonies to a superior nature, which is commonly called divine;² Aquinas's second Ciceronian text is from *On the nature of the gods*, where Cicero presents *religio* as a form of study or re-reading ('*relegere*').³ Immediately following this, Aquinas introduces two different Augustinian etymologies for *religio*: the first of these is taken from *The City of God*, where Augustine describes *religio* as 're-election' ('*reeligere*'), and the second is from *On true religion*, where he describes it as 're-binding' ('*religare*') of oneself to the one God.⁴

¹* An earlier version of this article was presented at the Symposium Thomisticum (Vienna, 2024). I am grateful to the conference organizers for inviting me to give this paper. I am also indebted to Raymond Snyder, Andrew Hofer, and an anonymous peer reviewer, all of whom offered insights that improved the final version of this article.

ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1.

² "SED CONTRA EST quod Tullius dicit, II *Rhet.*, quod "religio est quaedam tuitio naturae, quam divinam vocant, quae cultum vel caeremoniam affert." ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, s.c. Ottawa ed., 3:1830a.

³ "sicut Isidorus dicit in libro *Etymol.*, "religiosus, ut ait Cicero, a religione appellatus est qui retractat et tanquam relegit ea quae ad cultum divinum pertinent." ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co. Ottawa ed., 3: 1830a.

⁴ "Et sic religio videtur dicta a religendo ea quae sunt divini cultus, quia huiusmodi sunt frequenter in corde revolvenda, secundum illud *Prov.* III: "In omnibus viis tuis cogita illum." Quamvis etiam possit intelligi religio ex hoc dicta quod 'Deum reeligere debemus, quem amiseramus negligentes', sicut Augustinus dicit, X *De Civit. Dei*. Vel potest intelligi religio a religando dicta; unde Augustinus dicit in libro *De Vera Relig.*: "Religet nos religio uni omnipotenti Deo." ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co. Ottawa ed., 3: 1830a. Each of these texts is present in some form in Aquinas's earlier works. Three of the definitions used by Aquinas here in the *Summa theologiae* are already present in his *Sentences* commentary. In addition to Cicero's notion of religion as the offering of service or rites to the gods, Aquinas also includes Cicero's 're-reading' from *On the Nature of the gods* by way of Isidore's *Etymologies*, and Augustine's 're-choosing' from *De civ.* 10.3. These three definitions appear in question eighty-one of the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa* in this same order, with the addition of Augustine's notion of religion as 're-binding' from *On the True Religion*. "« Religio est quae superiori cuidam naturae quam divinam vocant, curam caeremoniamque afert » ; et dicitur a religando secundum ISIDORUM (Lib. VIII *Etymol.*, c. 2, n. 2; L. 82, 295), vel secundum AUGUSTINUM (X *De civ. Dei*, c. 3, n. 2; L. 41, 281), a reeligendo Deum quem amiseramus." *Super Sent.* III, 3, dist. 33, q. 3, a. 4. *solutio I. Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi Episcopi Parisiensis*, Mandonnet and Moos, eds., vol. 3 (Paris: Letheilleux, 1933), 1097-98. In another early text, the *Contra Impugnantes*, Aquinas also cites Augustine's notion of religion as 're-binding' from *De vera relig.* that he includes in ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1; in this same text,

Although the historical tension that existed between Ciceronian and Augustinian accounts of *religio* had long since subsided by the thirteenth century, Aquinas' juxtaposition of these texts effectively resurfaces this tension as a question for his interpreters. To what degree can the influence of these different Ciceronian and Augustinian perspectives be identified as textual influences in Aquinas's treatment of religion as a moral virtue in the *Summa theologiae*?

Although there is some existing secondary literature on Aquinas's approach to *religio*, none of this scholarship substantively engages the original historical context of Aquinas's Ciceronian and Augustinian sources.⁵

In the following, this article will be divided into two main parts that treat Aquinas's sources and his texts, respectively. The first part examines Aquinas's Ciceronian texts on

Aquinas also includes the same text from *De Invent.* II, c. 53, along *De civ.* 10 and a number of biblical texts. *Contra Impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, c. 1, 1-2. *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia, Iussu Leonis XIII P.M. Edita*, vol. 41, cura et studio Fratrum Praedicatorum (Rome: Ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1970), A53-A55. For a catalogue of Aquinas's citations of Cicero, see Clemens Vansteenkiste, O.P., "Cicerone nell'opera di S. Tommaso," *Angelicum* 36 n. 3/4 (1959): 343-82.

⁵ Placidus Rupperecht, "Die Tugend der Religion nach dem hl. Thomas," in *Divus Thomas* (Freiburg) 9 (1931): 146-72; É. Amann, 'Religion, virtue de,' in *Dictionnaire théologie Catholique*, A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and É. Amann, eds., vol. 13.2 (Paris: Letouzey et ané, 1937), 2306-2312; Paul Jung, *Das wesen des religiösen Aktes und der tugend der religion beim hl. Thomas von Aquin*, Dresden, 1941; Odon Lottin, 'La definition classique de la vertu de religion,' *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 24 (1948): 333-52, and "Vertu de religion et vertus théologiques," *Dominican Studies* 1 (1948): 209-28; A. Finili, OP, "On the virtue of religion and the infused moral virtues," *Dominican Studies* 3 (1950): 78-88; J. Lécuyer, "Reflections sur la Théologie du culte selon St. Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* (1955): 339-62; Joseph d'Amécourt, OP, "St. Thomas between St. Augustine and Cicero on the Virtue of Religion or The Significance of the Concluding Sentence of Each of the Five Ways," *Angelicum* 91.2 (2014): 231-72. Kevin Flannery, SJ, "What does St. Thomas Make of Aristotelian Religion?," *Doctor communis* 1-2 (2015/16): 39-61. There are also a number of secondary sources that emphasize the importance of Cicero in Aquinas's thought in a more general sense, without engaging the potential implications of the historical tension between Augustine and Cicero on *religio*. Charles P. Nemeth, *A Comparative Analysis of Cicero and Aquinas: Nature and the Natural Law* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017); John O. Ward, "What the Middle Ages Missed of Cicero, and Why," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Cicero*, William H. F. Altman, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 307-26; Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Medieval Aspects of Renaissance Learning*, Edward P. Mahoney, trans. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974), 33, et al.; E. K. Rand, *Cicero in the Courtroom of St. Thomas* (Milwaukee: 1946); W. Jaeger, *Humanism and Theology* (Milwaukee: 1943). See also the 2016 symposium in *Nova et Vetera* on the virtue of religion: *Nova et Vetera* 14.1 (2016): 15-198, which contains essays by Reinhard Hüter, Bruce D. Marshall, Romanus Cessario, O.P., F. Russell Hittinger, and Thomas Joseph White, O.P. Alexey V. Appolonov, "The Virtue of Religion in the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas," *Ethical Thought* 24.2 (2024): 34-46.

religion in their original context, and includes a note about early modern humanist retrievals of Cicero's account of religion and justice that influence some later interpretations of Aquinas.⁶ The concluding section of this first part deals with Augustine's understanding of *religio* in contradistinction to Cicero's, and the historical context for Augustine's view within early North-African Christianity. The second part of this article examines the textual structure of Aquinas's engagement with these Ciceronian and Augustinian sources in his own articulation of the concept *religio*. Examining Aquinas's own text in light of these sources, this article will argue that, although Aquinas draws on both Cicero and Augustine in different ways, within the immediate textual context of question eighty-one of the *Secunda secundae* Aquinas effectively re-voices the Ciceronian definitions that he initially cites within the context of an Augustinian understanding of interior contemplation.⁷ Building on this, however, it will also be shown that

⁶ Concerning the influence of Cicero in early modernity, recent secondary literature has already established the importance of Ciceronian ideas for the development of early modern approaches to nature and natural law, and the role played by Iberian scholasticism in these developments. M. Hawley shows that Figures like Hugo Grotius, John Locke, John Adams were all in dialogue with aspects of Cicero's political vision. Michael C. Hawley, *Natural Law Republicanism: Cicero's Liberal Legacy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021). See also Benjamin Straumann, *Roman Law in the State of Nature: The Classical Foundations of Hugo Grotius' Natural Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). See also Cicero Romão Resende Araujo, "The two definitions of natural law in Hobbes," *Revista de sociologia e política* 4–5 (1995): 189–98. On the role of Iberian scholasticism in this context, see Annabel S. Brett, *Changes of State: Nature and the Limits of the City in Early Modern Natural Law* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), Jean-Paul Coujou, "Cicéron et Suárez. Les Métamorphoses Du Droit Naturel. Enjeux Éthiques et Politiques," *Studium* (Tucumán, Argentina) 20 n. 40 (2017): 55–77, David Lantigua, "The Image of God, Christian Rights Talk, and the School of Salamanca," *The Journal of Law and Religion* 31 n. 1 (2016): 19–41, and "The Freedom of the Gospel: Aquinas, Subversive Natural Law, and the Spanish Wars of Religion," *Modern Theology* 31 n. 2 (2015): 312–337; S. Adam Seagrave, "Cicero, Aquinas, and Contemporary Issues in Natural Law Theory," *The Review of Metaphysics* 62 n. 3 (2009): 491–523. S. Gustafson points out that tensions between Ciceronian and Augustinian political models continued to shape these developments, particularly in the Americas. Sandra M. Gustafson, "Between Cicero and Augustine: Religion and Republicanism in the Americas and Beyond," in *Religious Transformations in the Early Modern Americas*, Stephanie Kirk and Sarah Rivett, eds., 252–64, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

⁷ Among the secondary sources cited in note 5, this present article intersects most directly with the work of O. Lottin. Although Lottin does not consider the historical context of Augustine or Cicero in his treatment of *religio* in Aquinas, he does situate Aquinas's classification of religion as a 'part' of justice within developing medieval accounts of the cardinal virtues and the role of both Cicero and Aristotle in these developments, including Aquinas's use of the language of 'potential part.' The argument advanced in this article builds on Lottin in some respects, especially the importance that Lottin attaches to the

there are broader contextual features of Aquinas's thought in the *Summa* that may trouble an exclusively Augustinian reading of Aquinas on *religio*—outside of the immediate textual context of his treatment of *religio* in question eighty-one, Aquinas's classification of religion as a moral virtue within the larger context of justice differentiates him from Augustine in important ways, allowing Aquinas to find his own voice on the subject of *religio* in conversation with the received traditions that he engages.

I.a Cicero on *religio* and the common good

The first Ciceronian text that Aquinas cites is taken from the *Rhetoric* (*De Inventione*) and appears in the *sed contra* of article one of question eighty-one. In this text, Cicero argues that *religion* involves offering service and ceremonies to a certain higher nature, which is commonly called divine.⁸ In this text, which appears in the second book of Cicero's *Rhetoric*,

concept of 'potential part.' Odon Lottin, 'La definition classique de la vertu de religion,' *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 24 (1948): 333-52. It should be noted that in 1950, A. Finili disagreed in part with some of Lottin's views, as expressed in the following three articles: "Vertu de Religion et Vertu Théologiques," *Dominican Studies* I (1948): 209-28, "The Thomist Theory of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century," *Dominican Studies* II (1949): 104-44, and "La definition Classique de la vertu de religion," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 24 (1948): 333-53. Although valuable in its own right, this disagreement goes beyond the scope of this present article and concerns the wider implications of Lottin's account of the will in relation to the cardinal and theological virtues. Antoninus Finili, OP, "On the virtue of religion and the infused moral virtues," *Dominican Studies* 3 (1950): 78-88. J. d'Amécourt also emphasizes the difference between Augustinian and Ciceronian conceptions of religion in Aquinas's thought, but focuses primarily on the implications of Aquinas's conceptual definition of 'God' in relation to religion. d'Amécourt, OP, "St. Thomas between St. Augustine and Cicero on the Virtue of Religion or The Significance of the Concluding Sentence of Each of the Five Ways." In addition to other secondary literature cited in the following pages, this article builds constructively on the work of M. Silk, who outlines the importance of differences between Roman and North African Christian approaches to *religio*, and the subsequent reevaluation of Numa Pompilius in the medieval and early modern West. Although Silk briefly engages Aquinas and his medieval context (pp. 875-76), this present article contributes a more detailed textual study of Aquinas's use of Ciceronian and Augustinian notions of *religio* that highlights the importance of the concept of 'potential part' and of the distinction between 'elicited' and 'commanded' acts in Aquinas's engagement with these sources. Mark Silk, "Numa Pompilius and the Idea of Civil Religion in the West," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72 n. 4 (2004): 863-96.

⁸ "SED CONTRA EST quod Tullius dicit, II *Rhet.*, quod "religio est quaedam tuitio naturae, quam divinam vocant, quae cultum vel caeremoniam affert." ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, s.c. Ottawa ed., 3:1830a. Cicero's own text is as follows: "Religio est, quae superioris cuiusdem naturae, quam divinam vocant, curam

Cicero also describes *religio* as an instinctive manifestation of ‘natural law.’ In this context, Cicero is clear such natural inclinations should be understood within the wider horizon of the concept of justice (*iustitia*) which, as a habit of the soul, provides for what is owed to each even as it works towards the advantage of the communal whole. In this context, Cicero defines natural law (*naturae ius*) using certain inclinations found within nature. Understood in this way, *religio* is a kind of fundamental orientation of natural law.⁹ As something intrinsic to human nature implanted by a certain power, *religio* is a manifestation of the natural law, understood to be an inclination of nature itself.¹⁰ It is this second sense of *religio* that Aquinas refers to directly in the first article of question eighty-one: as a virtue whose roots lie in the dictate of

caerimoniamque affert”. Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, c. 53. LCL 386: 328.161. Concerning Aquinas’ citation of this text in *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, s.c., the editors of the Ottawa edition of the *Summa* note a textual variant, which appears in other printings, in which the phrase ‘quaedam tuitio naturae,’ is rendered as ‘quae superioris naturae.’ Ottawa ed., 3:1830a.40. In this case, Cicero’s own text is in fact closest to the version reproduced in the Leonine edition of the *Summa*: “SED CONTRA EST quod Tullius dicit, II *Rhet.* quod *religio est quae superioris naturae, quam divinam vocant, curam caeremoniamque affert.*” *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, s.c. Leonine ed., 9: 177. J. Turpin situates Cicero’s account of religion in relation to the historical emergence of the Roman Principate period (27-284CE). José Turpin, “Cicéron, De legibus I—II et la religion romaine: une interprétation philosophique à la veille du principat,” in *Teilband Religion (Heidentum-Römische Religion, Allgemeins)*, vol. 16.3 of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Wolfgang Haase, ed. (New York: De Gruyter, 1986). See also Dan-el Padilla Peralta, *Divine Institutions: Religions and Community in the Middle Roman Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

⁹ “*Iustitia est habitus animi communi utilitate conservata suam cuique tribuens dignitatem. Eius initium est ab natura profectum; deinde quaedam in consuetudinem ex utilitatis ratione venerunt; postea res et ab natura profectas et ab consuetudine probatas legum metus et religio sanxit. Naturae ius est quod non opinio genuit, sed quaedam in natura vis insevit, ut religionem, pietatem, gratiam, vindicationem, observantiam, veritatem. Religio est, quae superioris cuiusdem naturae, quam divinam vocant, curam caerimoniamque affert; pietas, per quam sanguine coniunctis patriaeque benivolum officium et diligens tribuitur cultus; gratia, in qua amicitiarum et officiorum alterius memoria et remunerandi voluntas continetur; vindicatio, per quam vis aut iniuria et omnino omne, quod obfuturum est, defendendo aut ulciscendo propulsatur; observantia, per quam homines aliqua dignitate antecedentes cultu quodam et honore dignantur; veritas, per quam immutata ea quae sunt aut ante fuerunt aut futura sunt dicuntur.*” Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, c. 53. LCL 386: 328.160-61. (Emphasis mine). In addition to referencing power or strength (in the physical or mental sense), *vis* can also be translated as ‘force,’ ‘vigor,’ ‘energy,’ ‘virtue’ or ‘potency.’ *LS*, s.v. “vis.” On the relationship between the positive laws of a state and the concept of natural law in Cicero, see Elizabeth Asmis, “Cicero on Natural Law and the Laws of the State.” *Classical Antiquity* 27, no. 1 (2008): 1–33.

¹⁰ LCL 386: 329.

natural reason to reverence God, *religio* directs human persons to perform ceremonial rituals in the service of a higher nature—which is commonly called divine.¹¹

Although not directly cited by Aquinas, for Cicero this natural inclination is connected to a broader sense of *religio* that is ordered towards the common good and the concepts of justice and law that preserve it. In this same text, Cicero's understanding of *religio* as an inclination of natural law is contextualized by a wider statement about the nature of justice, custom and law, and the role of religion in relation to these concepts. Cicero understands justice (*iustitia*) as a 'habit of the mind' that at once preserves that which is due to individuals and to the group as a whole. In this understanding, Cicero sees a distinct connection—within the context of *religio*—between the preservation of justice in society by the enforcement of laws and the practice of religion. Cicero argues that religion is the first of six component parts of justice: piety, gratitude, vindication, observance, and truth. Accordingly, *religio* is intrinsically connected to the common good of a society or *res publica*. In this same text from the *Rhetoric*, in the context of his description of *religio* as something intrinsically implanted in human nature, Cicero also describes the practice of *religio* in consort with the fear of law, as preserving those practices which emerge in society according to nature *and* those settled on by custom.¹²

For Cicero, the role of *religio* takes on a public and legal character in relation to the common good of the polis—in his *Republic*, Cicero proposes that a *res publica* emerges from the natural social orientation of individuals (rather than from weakness or pure utility); what draws these people together specifically according to justice and for the sake of the common good. In light of this, Cicero describes certain 'seeds' (*semina*) within human nature that not only form the source of personal virtue but also of the social reality of republic itself. According to Cicero,

¹¹ See Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, c. 53. LCL 386: 328.161. Text as in note 8. For context, see *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 2, ad 3. See also *ST* I^a II^{ae} Q. 94, a. 2, co.

¹² Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, c. 53. LCL 386: 328.161. Text as in note 9.

a republic emerges as a discrete social reality from these inclinations in two concrete stages: immediately after constructing utilitarian necessities like housing and fortifications in a definite place, the location is named a town or city and common places for gathering and religious ritual are established. Cicero holds that the social orientation of human persons towards the common good leads naturally to both of these stages of *res publica*.¹³

For Cicero *religio* is also explicitly engrained in the legal structure of a republic and the common good it represents. Beyond the connection between *religion* and natural law (*naturae ius*) that Cicero articulates in the *Rhetoric*, *religio* also has a specific context in the Roman legal system as a species of positive law. In his text, *On Laws (De legibus)* Cicero argues that religious law (*ius Pontificium*) was simply that form of civil law (*ius civile*) which pertained directly to the purview of the high priests (*pontifices*), such as sacrifices, vows, public holidays, graves, the correct performance of rites and who is to perform them.¹⁴

I.b Cicero on ‘re-reading’ and civil religion

Aquinas’s second Ciceronian text is taken from *On the nature of the gods*. Appearing in the first line of the *corpus* of the article, this text immediately follows the first text from the *Rhetoric* that Aquinas introduced in the *sed contra* of this article. In this text, Cicero argues that because the term ‘religio’ itself implies study and re-reading (*relegere*), those persons who are

¹³ Cicero, *De re publica*, 39-41. LCL 213: 64.

¹⁴ Cicero, *De leg.* II.19, LCL 213: 428.47-432.49. In the Roman view, *ius* is divided into two species: *ius gentium*, and *ius civile*. *Ius civile* itself is subdivided in two ways: “Jus Civile in the narrower sense, and Jus Pontificium or Sacrum, or the law of religion. This opposition is sometimes expressed by the words Jus and Fas...The Law of Religion, or the Jus Pontificium, was under the control of the Pontifices, who in fact originally had the control of the whole mass of the law, and it was only after the separation of the Jus Civile in its wider sense into the two parts of the Jus Civile, in the narrower sense, and the Jus Pontificium, that each part had its proper and peculiar limits. But after this separation was fully made the Auctoritas Pontificum had the same operation and effect with respect to the Law of Religion that the Auctoritas Prudentium had on the Jus Civile (Cic. *de leg.* II.19, 20).” See “Jus” in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, William Smith, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1870), 656-57.

considered to be ‘religious’ are those who study and ‘re-read’ those things which pertain to divine worship. Aquinas accesses this second Ciceronian quotation through Isidore of Seville, whose own rendering of this text is in fact a paraphrase of Cicero.¹⁵ In the wider context of book two of the original text, Cicero’s interlocutor Balbus contrasts this stoic approach to *religio* with superstition, which he attaches to some of the religious beliefs espoused by Homer and to those who practice prayer and sacrifice for the sake of their children’s longevity.¹⁶ Although Aquinas accesses Cicero through Isidore in this case, both of the original Ciceronian texts that Aquinas employs here were in circulation in the West during the middle ages, and would have likely been available to Aquinas. During the eleventh century, the monastery of Montecassino, where

¹⁵ “sicut Isidorus dicit in libro *Etymol.*, “religiosus, ut ait Cicero, a religione appellatus est qui retractat et tanquam relegit ea quae ad cultum divinum pertinent.” *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co.* Ottawa ed., 3: 1830a. See also Leonine ed., 9: 177. In this case the differences between the Ottawa edition and the Leonine edition are minor, and the critical edition of Isidore’s actual text differs slightly from both: “Religiosus ait Cicero (*Deor. Nat.* 2, 72) a relegendo appellatus; qui retractat et tanquam relegit ea quae ad cultum divinum pertineant. Hi sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, tanquam ex elegendo elegentes, ex diligendo diligentes, ex intellegendo intellegentes.” Isidore, *Etymolog.* Lib. 10, ad litt. R, 234. As in *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, W.M. Lindsay, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 419. For a textual analysis of the structure and argument, of Cicero’s *DND* and its sources, see J. P. F. Wynne, *Cicero on the Philosophy of Religion: On the Nature of the Gods and On Divination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 50-82. Cicero’s original text reads as follows: “qui autem omnia quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent diligenter retractarent et tanquam relegerent, hi sunt dicti religiosi, ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex eligendo ex diligendo diligentes ex intellegendo intellegentes; his enim in verbis omnibus inest vis legendi eadem quae in religioso. Ita factum est in superstitioso et religioso alterum vitii nomen alterum laudis.” LCL 268: 192.72.

¹⁶ In chapter two of *De natura deorum*, Cicero attributes this view to the stoic philosopher Balbus. Although significant portions of *De natura* have been lost, at the close of the remaining text of book three Cicero gives a general endorsement of Balbus’s views. LCL 268: 380.95. For an analysis of Balbus’s arguments in the larger context of *DND*, see Wynne, *Cicero on the Philosophy of Religion*, 111-181. On distinguishing Cicero’s own views from those of his interlocutors in dialogues like *De natura deorum*, see Charles Brittain and Peter Osorio, “The Ciceronian Dialogue,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero’s Philosophy*, Jed W. Atkins and Thomas Bénatouil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 25-42. For a recent study of Cicero’s approach to the concept of religion, see Richard Graham Short, “Religion in Cicero,” (PhD diss., Harvard 2012). S. A. Seagrave argues that although Cicero is influenced by stoicism to a certain extent, his *De natura deorum* in fact offers a rebuttal to certain aspects of stoic cosmology. Seagrave, “Cicero, Aquinas, and Contemporary Issues in Natural Law Theory,” 493-94.

Aquinas studied as a young boy, played an influential role in collecting and disseminating classical texts, including works of Cicero.¹⁷

What is it that the ‘religious’ person ‘re-reads’? Although Cicero makes no immediate connection here between the concept of *religion* and law, in the context of his other argument from the *Rhetoric* and *On laws*, one might reasonably conclude that among the ritual texts that Cicero describes are those duly promulgated according to the Roman law of religion. In the context of the religious law (*ius Pontificium*) of a republic, therefore, Cicero’s etymological definition of *religio* as ‘re-reading’ or ‘reading over’ could imply a study of those civil laws and promulgated rites that pertain to the civic exercise of religion. It is this kind of political theology—implied by the connection between the Roman sense of Republic and the Roman practice of religion—that forms the context for those specific Ciceronian texts that Aquinas cites.

By situating the notion of *religio* in the context of the *ius Pontificium*, Cicero makes it clear that the intrinsic connection between *religio* and the common good of a republic exists not only at the level of natural inclination, but in the context of positive civil law as well. However, this approach is contextualized by a preexisting account of the theological and political implications of the founding of the Roman republic. Specifically, the concept of *ius Pontificium* that Cicero invokes in *De legibus* is already situated within a context and history proper to Roman jurisprudence and cosmology that understood *religion* within the matrix of a specific political theology, rooted in a political and religious interpretation of the actions of Rome’s first kings—Romulus and Numa Pompilius.¹⁸ According to Livy, after fortifying the Palatine hill,

¹⁷ Although initially transmitted only partially, by the tenth century manuscripts of the full text of Cicero’s *De inventione* were available. L.D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), xxxiii, 99, et al. Among the texts available at Montecasino, an eleventh-century Carolingian manuscript tradition includes *De natura deorum* and other philosophical works. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission*, 125.

¹⁸ Later Roman historians owe much to the work of the earlier Polybius (d. 118 BC), who served as a source for both Livy (d. 17) and Cicero (d. 43 BC). Polybius’ historical account of the rise of the Roman republic contrasts Roman polity and customs with those of Sparta, highlighting the value of Roman

Romulus offered sacrifices as the first king of Rome. Livy is explicit that this was done according to existing religious rites that were associated with various forms of relevant authority: some sacrifices are offered to gods according to the customs of the Albans, the traditional inhabitants of Rome; other sacrifices were offered according to the Greek rites to Hercules, which according to the *Aeneid* were established in that region by Evander.¹⁹ Within the context of these existing rites, however, as king it is Romulus' task to ensure that sacrifice is offered on behalf of the polis. It would be Romulus' successor, Numa Pompilius, who would establish priestly offices as well, to ensure that the sacrifices that were required of the kingly office (*sacra regiae*) would never be neglected. The rationale that Livy offers for this explicitly associates these religious rites and their corresponding priesthoods with the peace and stability of Rome, as a counterpoint to the frequent bellicosity of her kings and citizens.²⁰ At this same time, Numa

practices and their capacity for empire. Frank W. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Polybius' approach to custom—which included *religio*—would be influential for the later tradition of Roman thought. Grant A. Nelsestuen, “Custom, Fear and Self-interest in the Political Thought of Polybius,” *History of Political Thought* 38 n. 2 (2017): 213-38. See also Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1: “A History” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-50. For more on Polybius' attitudes towards religion, see Frank W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 59-60. According to Walbank, Polybius “accepts what has been called the political view of religion, namely, that whether the gods exist or not, it is expedient that the people should believe that they do.” Walbank, *Polybius*, 59. M.G. Morgan provides a nuanced view of Roman piety during this period that contextualizes Polybius' skepticism. M. Gwyn Morgan, “Politics, Religion and the Games in Rome, 200-150 B.C.,” *Philologus* 134 n. 1 (1990): 14-36. On theology as a civic concept in Roman society, see Katharina Volk, *The Roman Republic of Letters: Scholarship, Philosophy, and Politics in the Age of Cicero and Caesar* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 214-18.

¹⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* I.1, 7. LCL 114: 26. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII, 270. LCL 64: 78. On the historical veracity of Livy's account of Roman religion and the state of scholarship on this topic, see Charles Guittard, “Tite-Live, Historien de la religion Romaine?” *Les Études Classiques* 75 (2007): 79-91.

²⁰ “Tum sacerdotibus creandis animum adiecit, quamquam ipse plurima sacra obibat...ne sacra regiae vicis deserentur, flaminem Iovi adsidium sacerdotem creavit insignique eum veste et curuli regia sella adornavit.” *Ab urbe cond.* I.1, XX. LCL 114: 70. For a recent account of the early kings of Rome, see Mary Beard, *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015), 91-130. D. Levene describes Livy's presentation of Numa as in parallel, to a certain extent, with the figure of Romulus. As a kind of second founder of Rome, Numa accomplished in peacetime and in the sphere of religion what Romulus accomplished through war. David S. Levene, *Religion in Livy* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 134-41. See also Gwyneth McIntyre, “Camillus as Numa: Religion in Livy's Refoundation Narratives,” *Journal of Ancient History* 6, no. 1 (2018): 63-79.

also established a high priesthood (*Pontifex*), along with the rubrics for specific rites and a detailed liturgical calendar. The high priest would be responsible for performing these rites, and for all other acts of public and private worship.²¹

Livy, Cicero and Polybius all promoted a theologico-political reading of Numa Pompilius that associated Numa's establishment of *religio* as a public, legally structured feature of Roman society as a kind of *theologia civilis*; these authors associated *religio* with social cohesion and stability in such a way that this form of civic theology formed a key component of the *pax Romana*—the peace which united the Empire. For both Livy and Cicero, Numa's civic religion served as an inflection point that delineated the difference between the civil chaos that marked Rome's founding and the peace and social cohesion that the republic guaranteed.²²

How much of this larger socio-political context is adopted by Aquinas in his own treatment of *religio*? During the sixteenth century, the received textualities of both Cicero and Aquinas began to intersect in new ways. As Aquinas's text was increasingly adopted as a standard text of commentary in universities, rising humanist interest in classical pre-Christian texts became interwoven with the text of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*.²³ According to some of

²¹ Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* I.I, XX. LCL 114: 70.

²² M. Silk argues that Numa became a kind of paragon for Roman historians, who associated his religious legislation with the peace, stability and superiority of the republic. Mark Silk, "Numa Pompilius and the Idea of Civil Religion in the West," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72 n. 4 (2004): 864. "In his *Republic* Cicero describes Numa's religious innovations as part of a broader project of fostering prosperity, justice, and community through markets, games and festivals." Silk, 864, 867-68, et al. See Cicero, *De re publica*, 41. LCL 213: 64. In the case of Cicero, he did not see his frequent expressions of theological skepticism as undermining his active support for the institutions of state religion. See Mary Beard, "Cicero and Divination: The Formation of a Latin Discourse," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 76 (1986): 33-46. See also W. Mary Beard, "The State Religion in the Late Roman Republic: A Study Based on the Works of Cicero," (PhD diss. Cambridge, 1982a), 10, et al. R.G. Short argues that Beard's "main objective is to...argue that religion at Rome (in the late Republic) was primarily public and political, and not private and personal." Short, "Religion in Cicero," 6. See also R.J. Goar, *Cicero and the State Religion* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), 12-13.

²³ Martin Grabmann, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, vol. 3 (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1956), 370–410. See also *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, vol. 1 (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1926), 392–431 and *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, vol. 2 (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1936), 512–613. Reginald Lynch, *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae and Eucharistic Sacrifice in the Early Modern Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 5-9, 100-50.

Aquinas's interpreters during this period like Dominic Soto, much, if not all, of Cicero's Numian context is implied by Aquinas; in Soto's commentary on the *Secunda pars*, he specifically invokes the example of king Numa and republican law as the context in which Aquinas' teaching on *religio* should be understood. Although the specific case of Christian *religion* falls within the *dominium* of the Church, rather than the state, in Soto's reading of Aquinas the Roman concept of *republican law* is the context in which the religious authority of the Church—and that of the state, in the case of natural religion—is correctly understood.²⁴ In part because of his concern for the legitimate sovereignty of the native peoples encountered by the Spaniards in the Americas, for Soto and other Salamancan Dominicans it was important that the *dominium* of states and republics remain independent of their religious affiliation with the Church. In this regard, Soto echoes the approach of his teacher, Francisco Vitoria.²⁵

²⁴ Soto, *De iustitia et iure*, lib. 1, q. 1, a. 1 (Salamanca 1556/Madrid, 1968), 772-74. In this context, Soto is commenting on Aquinas' teaching on the concept of sacrifice (as one of the exterior acts of *religio*) in *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 85*. Andrée Comparot, "La tradition de la "République" de Cicerón au XVI^e siècle et l'influence de Lactance," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 82, n. 3 (1982): 371-91.

²⁵ "quia sacrificium exterius est signum interioris sacrificii, id est affectus et conceptus quo cognoscimus esse subjectos Deo...*quia in omni republica* observamus aliquas caeremonias per quas solum colimus principem et non alium. Ita ergo Deo opertet quod offeramus aliquam caeremoniam quae non offeratur alteri; et haec est sacrificium: ergo soli Deo sacrificium est offerendum." Vitoria, *In ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 85, a. 2. Comentarios a la Secunda secundae de Santo Tomás*, vol. 4 (Salamanca, 1934), 299-300. (Emphasis mine). On the contributions of these Salamancan thinkers to the development of natural law theory and the concept of international law, see Annabel S. Brett, *Changes of State: Nature and the Limits of the City in Early Modern Natural Law* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), and *Liberty, Right, and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); J. A. Fernández-Santamaría, *The State, War and Peace: Spanish Political Thought in the Renaissance, 1516-1559* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Bernice Hamilton, *Political Thought in Sixteenth-century Spain: A Study of the Political Ideas of Vitoria, DeSoto, Suarez, and Molina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); I Del Moral, "Francisco de Vitoria's Unexpected Transformations and Reinterpretations for International Law," *International Community Law Review* 15.3 (2013): 287-318. Heinrich A. Rommen, "Nature and Scope of International Law," In *The State in Catholic Thought: a Treatise in Political Philosophy*, (Cluny Media, 2016); Roger Ruston, *Human Rights and the Image of God*. London: SCM Press, 2004. James Brown Scott, *The Spanish Origin of International Law: Francisco De Vitoria and His Law of Nations* (Union, N.J.: Lawbook Exchange, 2000); Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law, 1150-1625* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997); Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Lantigua, "The Freedom of the Gospel: Aquinas, Subversive Natural Law, and the Spanish Wars of Religion," *Modern Theology* 31 n. 2 (2015): 312-337, and "The Image of God, Christian Rights Talk, and the School of

I.c Augustine: religio and the one God in Christian North Africa

Although adopted in part by some members of the sixteenth century Salamancan school, the Roman understanding of *religio* was not always so positively received by earlier Christian theologians. In Christian usage, the adoption of a Numian model of civic religion as the social foundation of Christian religiosity seems to be of humanist, rather of than patristic or scholastic, origin.²⁶ Many early Christian theologians, who lived under the pre-Constantinian Roman Empire and suffered greatly for disobeying its religious laws, not only refused to adopt Rome's Numian model for *religio*, but actively employed it as an anti-type of the *religio* proper to the Christian Church, inverting the Livian and Ciceronian association between religion and the stability of the polis by asserting that in fact the true *pax civilis* is found only in the communion of the Church. This theme emerged strongly in North Africa, where Tertullian argued that, rather than ennobling Roman society and sustaining it politically, Rome's socio-religious commitments were actually a burden for the Roman people because they were fundamentally superstitious.²⁷ In contrast to Numa, who is supposed to have brought civilization and order to an otherwise warlike and disorganized people by directing *religio* towards a multitude of gods, Tertullian contrasts the figure of Christ. Tertullian argues that, unlike Romulus and Numa, Christ did not come to the uncivilized, but to those who were already members of highly evolved societies and yet remained deceived by their own misguided sophistication. Their deficit, according to Tertullian, is not a lack of political sophistication or social stability, but a lack of

Salamanca," *The Journal of Law and Religion* 31 n. 1 (2016): 19-41.

²⁶ M. Silk argues that, although the Latin Church fathers tended to dismiss Numa Pompilius and the form of civil religion he represented in favor of their own, "in due course humanist intellectuals began to make him an object of admiration again. From the Renaissance on [Numa] exemplified the effective use of religion to mold nations." Silk, 863.

²⁷ Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 21.29-30, LCL 250: 114. For Tertullian on king Numa, see also *Apologeticus*, 25.12-13, LCL 250: 140 and *De spectaculis*, 5.93, LCL 250: 246. Silk, 869. Sabine MacCormack, "Cicero in Late Antiquity." In *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 255-61.

truth. Tertullian argues that Christ gives such overly civilized persons the ability to see the truth.²⁸ According to Tertullian, the gift of this sight enables the person to affirm Christ's divinity, and to be reformed in goodness by the recognition of Christ as true God. Conversely, Tertullian argues, if the recognition of true divinity has such an ennobling effect, the delusion of false gods effects the opposite. Tertullian believes that this contrast between the truth of the Christian religion and the falsehood of the Roman one requires that those who have been given 'eyes' to see the truth must renounce that which is false.²⁹ Although proponents of Roman civil theology maintained a certain ambivalence toward the truth of the pantheon it proposed for civic observance, for Tertullian true deity is in fact the crux of the connection between *religio* and the ennobling of the human person; unless the object towards which human religiosity is directed is truly divine, it does not have this effect. Accordingly, Tertullian argues that republican sponsorship of a given divinity does not play a discernible role in the determination of the 'truth' of this same divinity—it is Christ himself who establishes himself as true God by imparting the 'eyes' to understand the truth. When understood in Christian terms, according to Tertullian the unity and peace that Livy and Cicero value appears to be more a function of Christian eschatology than of civil politics.

The grammatical footprint of Tertullian's approach to *religio* can be seen in later North-African theologians, most notably Augustine.³⁰ In a (probably deliberate) etymological

²⁸ "ut ad vos quoque dominatores gentium adspiciam homo fuit Pompilius Numa, qui Romanos operosissimis superstitionibus oneravit. Licuerit et Christo commentari divinitatem, rem propriam, non qua rupices et adhuc feros homines multitudini tot numinum demerendorum attonitos efficiendo ad humanitatem temperaret, quod Numa, sed qui iam expolitos et ipsa urbanitate deceptos in agnitionem veritatis ocularet. Quaerite igitur si vera est ista divinitas Christi. Si ea est qua cognita ad bonum quis reformatur, sequitur ut falsae renuntietur, conperta inprimis illa omni ratione quae delitiscens sub nominibus et imaginibus mortuorum quibusdam signis et miraculis et oraculis fidem divinitatis operatur." Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 21.29-30, LCL 250: 114-16.

²⁹ Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 21.30-31, LCL 250: 114-16. See also Jed W. Atkins, "Tertullian on 'The Freedom of Religion,'" *Polis* 37, no. 1 (2020): 145–75.

³⁰ Augustine follows Lactantius in changing the Ciceronian word-play on *religio* to signify 'binding' (*religo*), rather than 're-reading' (*relegere*). "As is well known, Cicero's etymological exploration

reframing of Cicero's notion of *religio* as 're-reading' (*relegere*),³¹ in *On true religion* (*De vera religione*)—which Aquinas cites in question eighty-one—Augustine describes religion as a 'binding' or 're-binding' (*religare*) of oneself to the one, true God. The name of Augustine's text alone—*On true religion*—already invokes the context of Tertullian's North-African Christianity. In this text, Augustine describes this binding as a kind of interior illumination, by which we are bound to the one God—who is Father and Truth—without any creaturely intermediary.³² In Augustine's text, this 'binding' is characteristic of true religion, which is defined by its orientation to the one, true God as first principle of all created things; a religion directed to anything created can only be false.³³ Aquinas couples this text from *On true religion* with a different Augustinian etymology of *religio* found in the *City of God*. Here, religion is understood as 're-election' (*reeligere*).³⁴ Augustine introduces this etymology in chapter three of

(probably whimsical) of 'religion' was later contested by Christian apologetics, most notably Lactantius (third century) and later Augustine (fourth century), for whom the Latin word *religio* stemmed (probably whimsically too) from the verb *religo* (to re-bind), because religion means binding someone to the divinity (for further reading on these etymologies, see Meslin 1988: 24–42; Smith 1998: 269–70). This set a characteristically theological (Christian) way of thinking about religion that has been a problem not only for theologians, but also for historians of religion, anthropologists and other social scientists (Asad 1993). Indeed, we cannot reduce religion to inner devotion (although this should not be neglected either) and, to our understanding, Cicero's exploration seems much more descriptive and open to other religions than Lactantius' or Augustine's inner re-binding. In any case, the most interesting thing about these two etymologies may be that they both coincide on one thing: the reiterative aspect of religion. Whether we recollect or we re-bind, whether the etymology of religion is *relego* or *religio*, we are fundamentally talking about some kind of repetitive action (Latour 2002). No matter how it is defined, religion has to do with reiteration: of words, actions, intentions or memories. How it repeats and replicates itself over time and space is what we ethnographers are here to find out." David Berliner & Ramon Sarró, eds., *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 2–3. See Michel Meslin, *L'expérience humaine du divin: fondements d'une anthropologie religieuse* (Paris: Éditions du Cerne, 1988); Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," *Man* (new series) 18 n. 2 (1983): 237–59; Bruno Latour, 'Quand les anges deviennent de bien mauvais messagers,' *Terrain* 14 (1990): 76–91.

³¹ Berliner and Sarró, eds., *Learning Religion*, 2–3.

³² "religet ergo nos religio uni omnipotenti deo, quia inter mentem nostram, qua illum intellegimus patrem et veritatem, id est lucem interiorem, per quam illum intelligamus, nulla interposita creatura est." *De vera relig.* 113. CCL 32: 259.122–25.

³³ See *De vera relig.* 112. CCL 32: 259.105–21, et al.

³⁴ "Et sic religio videtur dicta a religendo ea quae sunt divini cultus, quia huiusmodi sunt frequenter in corde revolvenda, secundum illud *Prov.* III: "In omnibus viis tuis cogita illum." Quamvis etiam possit

book ten, where he argues that, although the Platonists may have understood something of God philosophically, their worship of the same—that is, their sense of *religio*—is distorted by the fact that they choose to offer worship to a multitude of angels, rather than to the one God alone.³⁵ In many ways, this definition of *religio* is similar to the one Augustine proposes in *On true religion*: authentic religion recognizes God as first principle, and worships him without created intermediaries. Even if the Platonists claim to understand God in the first sense, their practice of theurgy violates the second.³⁶

Both of these Augustinian etymologies of *religio* place religion within the context of Christian faith and conversion, without using the social role of religion in Roman republicanism as a preamble. Like Tertullian, Augustine’s emphasis on the truth of divinity effectively differentiates his approach to *religio* from a Ciceronian one.³⁷ For Augustine, the fall of Rome signaled the ineffectiveness of pagan civic religion, even on its own terms; Christian *religio*, on the other hand, does provide a form of real social cohesion, albeit always in reference to the supernatural finality of the heavenly city.³⁸ Indeed, following the tradition of North-African

intelligi religio ex hoc dicta quod ‘Deum reeligere debemus, quem amiseramus negligentes’, sicut Augustinus dicit, X *De Civit. Dei*. Vel potest intelligi religio a religando dicta; unde Augustinus dicit in libro *De Vera Relig.*: “Religet nos religio uni omnipotenti Deo.”” ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co. Ottawa ed., 3: 1830a.

³⁵ “ipse enim fons nostrae beatitudinis, ipse omnis appetitionis est finis. hunc eligentes uel potius religentes (amiseramus enim negligentes)—*hunc ergo religentes, unde et religio dicta perhibetur*, ad eum dilectione tendimus, ut perueniendo quiescamus, ideo beati, quia illo fine perfecti.” *De civ.* 10.3. CCL 47: 275.26-31. (Emphasis mine).

³⁶ See *De civ.* 10.3. CCL 47: 274.1-276.55. See also *De civ.* 10.9-11. CCL 47: 281.1-286.1.

MacCormack, “Cicero in Late Antiquity,” 274-85. On the influence of Platonic views of religion in this context, see Jude Dougherty, *The Logic of Religion* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 14-35.

³⁷ For example, see *De civ.* 10.3, 7, 9, 15, et al. Additionally, K. M. Girardet also argues that Augustinian and Ciceronian approaches to natural law itself are not entirely congruent. Klaus Martin Girardet, “Naturrecht und Naturgesetz: Eine Gerade Linie von Cicero zu Augustinus?” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 138, 3/4 (1995): 266-98. On the socio-political context of Christian virtue in relation to pre-Christian models, see Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

³⁸ In addition to attaining the goal of heaven, for Augustine the worship of God also teaches us to recognize His providence in those earthly blessings that have been wrongly attributed to false deities. *De civ.* 10.14. CCL 47: 288.1-29.

Christianity, Augustine's *City of God* can be understood as a Christian counter-narrative that intentionally subverts the juridic and cosmological ideologies of Roman *religio*. Regarding the legend of king Numa Pompilius, which provided justification for the inclusion of religion within the sphere of Roman civil law, M. Silk has argued that in his *City of God*, Augustine deliberately positions his own understanding of *religio* in opposition to existing Ciceronian archetypes. Silk traces the development of Augustine's anti-Numian understanding of Christian *religio* across the corpus of the *City of God*, beginning with the deconstruction of the Numian connection between the *pax Romana* and Roman civil religion in books two and three. In book three, Augustine insinuates that Numa's religion is rather the product of demonic influence.³⁹ Here, Augustine argues that the peace that marked the reign of king Numa was wrongly attributed to the gods of Rome—originally imported from other locales. Although the military expansion of Rome was later associated with this same sense of civil peace, Augustine points out that the peace which Numa himself enjoyed was not marked by such conflicts. In this regard, Augustine offers a critique of the political cosmology particular to post-Republican Rome, which saw its outward military expansion as a manifestation of the civil peace that Roman religious practice ensured.⁴⁰ Augustine continues to highlight the distinction between the religiosity of republican Rome and that of the Roman Empire, by noting that, despite the deeply traditional attitudes of many Romans who, like Cicero, believed that civic peace was tied to the ancestral religious practices of the Roman polis, over time the Romans had in fact added many gods and religious practices to those initially established by king Numa Pompilius.⁴¹ However, Augustine argues that the

³⁹ Silk, 870-72. "The attack on Numa is part of the *City of God*'s massive critique of Rome's civil theology. Although easy to miss amidst the elaborate fun he makes of the minor functional deities of Roman life, the pagan rationales for this system of religious practice are clearly addressed by Augustine." Silk, 871. See *De civ.* 3.9-12. CCL 47: 70.1-74.33.

⁴⁰ See *De civ.* 3.10. CCL 47: 71.1-72.52.

⁴¹ See *De civ.* 3.12. CCL 47: 73.1-74.33.

religious politics of Numa himself were equally misplaced. Not thinking to attribute the peace he enjoyed to the true God, Numa attributed this success to a variety of other deities. Despite their varieties of personal qualities and geographic diversity, for Augustine divinities of this kind—whether Greek, Alban or Trojan—were equally powerless.⁴² This powerlessness—which masquerades as powerful—is not the mark of a lesser deity in a platonic hierarchy. As a deception which masks the truth of divinity, it is indeed demonic, and therefore cannot be the object of true religion in any sense. Therefore, in the text Aquinas cites from *On true religion*, Augustine will emphasize the *omnipotence* of the true God.⁴³

Augustine believes that true religion—and those human acts (whether moral acts or ritual practices) which constitute it—is rightly directed towards divine things. In the tenth book of his *City of God*, Augustine argues that the fulfillment of true *religio* begins with the interior sacrifice of the heart, which is offered through the love of God and of neighbor.⁴⁴ This connection between true religion and the one God is further contextualized by a number of other, broader Augustinian assumptions about the way in which the human person—understood as the image of God—can rightly approach God through the medium of created signs.⁴⁵ In *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine famously describes creation using the doctrine of signs, in which the very

⁴² See *De civ.* 3.11. CCL 47: 72.1-73.29.

⁴³ See *De vera relig.* 113. CCL 32: 259.122-25.

⁴⁴ *De civ.* 10.5. CCL 47: 278.57-63. True sacrifices in this sense are those works which unite us to God in communion, and those services we perform for our neighbor out of the same desire for union with God. Employing another etymological trope, Augustine suggests that sacrifice (*sacraficere*) implies something divine. True sacrifice, as true religion, therefore, can only concern the true God. “proinde uerum sacrificium est omne opus, quo agitur, ut sancta societate inhaereamus deo, relatum scilicet ad illum finem boni, quo ueraciter beati esse possimus. unde et ipsa misericordia, qua homini subuenitur, si non propter deum fit, non est sacrificium. etsi enim ab homine fit uel offertur, tamen sacrificium res diuina est, ita ut hoc quoque uocabulo id Latini ueteres appellauerint. unde ipse homo dei nomine consecratus et deo uotus, in quantum mundo moritur ut deo uiuat, sacrificium est.” *De civ.* 10.6. CCL 47: 278.1-9. (Emphasis mine).

⁴⁵ See *De trin.*, 10.11. CCL 50: 324.1-325.28. *De doct. chr.*, I.3 (3) and I.4 (4). Simonetti, 20.1-22.10 and 22.1-18. *De civ.* 11.25. CCL 48: 344.1-345.47. *De diversis quest. oct. trib.* 30. CCL 44a: 38.2-40.64. See Joachim Küpper, “Uti and Frui in Augustine and the Problem of Aesthetic Pleasure in the Western Tradition (Cervantes, Kant, Marx, Freud),” *MLN* 127 n. 5 (supplement), (2012): S127-29.

identity of created things themselves is shaped by their relationship with their Trinitarian creator. Our own approach to this same creator is enabled by learning to appreciate—and use—created things as signs which not only reveal their divine origin but enable our enjoyment of this same Trinitarian source.⁴⁶ This difference between creation and Creator, which properly distinguishes which things should be used and which should be enjoyed, also distinguishes the difference between true and false religion in the *City of God*. In book ten of this text, the sense of sacramentality that Augustine attaches to this distinction elsewhere is clearly present. Here, Augustine describes the worship of the invisible God through the medium of visible signs as patterned on the incarnation, by which the One who is invisible rendered himself accessible to our sight.⁴⁷ Understood in this way, the sacramental character of Augustine’s Trinitarian epistemology and cosmology form the essential context for understanding Augustine’s concept of true religion in the tenth book of the *City of God*.

II.a Aquinas on *religio*: an Augustinian re-voicing

Aquinas’s treatment of *religio* appears in the ‘second part’ of the *Summa theologiae*—one of three major divisions of this text. Where the first part of the *Summa* is focused on God as exemplar and on what he creates, and the third on the Incarnation and its effects, the *Secunda pars* turns its attention to the human person as image of God and directed to God.⁴⁸ As a subdivision within the *Secunda pars*, the ‘second part’ of the ‘second part’ divides specific

⁴⁶ See *De doct. Christ.*, I.3 (3) and I.4 (4). Simonetti, 20.1-22.10 and 22.1-18.

⁴⁷ *De civ.* 10.13. CCL 47: 287.1-22. The outward sacrifices associated with the Church’s practice are not required by God for his own sake—rather, they are means by which the interior sacrifice of the heart is fostered and manifested. *De civ.* 10.5. CCL 47: 276.1-278.63. In book nineteen of the *City of God*, Augustine gives his own direct reinterpretation of Cicero’s understanding of *justice* in the context of the Christian obligation to love God above all things. Although Aquinas does not cite this text directly, the conclusions that Augustine states explicitly here are implicit in his earlier, ironic treatments of Ciceronian *religio* earlier in the *City of God*.

⁴⁸ See *ST I^a II^{ae} prolog.* and *ST III^a prolog.*

human virtues according to the pattern of the three theological and four cardinal virtues.⁴⁹

Aquinas situates religion among the later of these, not as a theological virtue but as a ‘part’ of the cardinal virtue of justice.⁵⁰ In both the *Sentences* and the *Summa*, Aquinas appeals explicitly to Cicero’s division of justice into ‘parts’ in *De Inventione*—in this text, we have seen that Cicero associates *religio* with the law of nature and lists six component parts of justice: religion, piety, gratitude, vindication, observance, and truth. As previously established, this forms part of the larger textual context for Cicero’s more specific definition of *religio* as ‘ceremonies and service’ (*De Inventione* II, c. 53) that Aquinas cites at the outset of question eighty-one. In the *Summa*, Aquinas introduces this text from *De Inventione* in question eighty of the *Secunda secundae*, and uses this list as a structure for the following section of the *Summa*. In these following questions, each of Cicero’s ‘parts’ of justice receives its own treatment as a specific virtue in its own right.⁵¹

Although this structural approach to the ‘parts’ of justice associates Aquinas’s understanding of *religio* with Cicero’s to a certain extent, by introducing the language of ‘potential parts’ Aquinas also distances himself from Cicero in important ways. For Cicero, we have seen that the broader context of this definition from *De Inventione* associates religion with a certain understanding of justice under natural law, in which both the goods of the individual and the community are fulfilled. As an intrinsic inclination of nature, religion is present as an orientation for both the individual and the social whole. While Cicero associates religion with the natural orientation of justice towards the divine *and* the social welfare of society, however, in

⁴⁹ *ST II^a II^{ae} prolog.*

⁵⁰ See *ST II^a II^{ae} QQ. 80-91.*

⁵¹ Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, c. 53. LCL 386: 328.161. *Super Sent.* 3, dist. 33, q. 3, a. 4. Mandonnet/Moos, 3: 1092. *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 80.* For the structural role of these parts in the following questions of the *Secunda secundae*, see *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, prolog.* and *ST II^a II^{ae} QQ. 101-109.* For Aquinas’s use of Cicero’s conception of *ius naturale*, see Randall B. Smith, “Understanding the Context of the ‘Natural Inclinations’ and the Natural Law: Thomas Aquinas’s Use of Cicero’s *De Officiis* in *Summa Theologiae* I-II, Q. 94, A. 2,” *The Thomist* 89 (2025): 459-92.

Aquinas's view religion is in fact *only* associated with the first of these. In both the *Sentences* and the *Summa*, Aquinas interprets religion's relationship to justice as a 'part' using the language of 'potential parts.'⁵² The language of 'potential part' allows Aquinas to distinguish those virtues which participate only partially in the definition of justice. In his treatment of the potential parts of justice in question eighty of the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa* (which occurs immediately prior to his direct treatment of the virtue of religion and its acts), Aquinas argues that justice in the proper sense implies a debt owed between equals—in the case of religion, a debt is owed to God despite the fact that the creature is not God's equal, and the debt cannot be repaid in a measure equal to the initial gift.⁵³ As a potential part therefore, religion takes its definition from justice, while at the same time only imperfectly fulfilling the whole of justice's proper definition: although religion is not something between equals, it is something *owed*. Also in question eighty, Aquinas introduces the same text from Cicero (*De Inventione* II, c. 53), that will play a central role in his definition of religion as a virtue in question eighty-one—this time, however, he uses the text of Psalm 116 (115): 12 to clarify what might be *owed* to God in this context: "How can I repay the Lord for all the great good done for me?" The following line of the psalm, although not repeated explicitly by Aquinas, might have suggested a fitting response to his medieval audience: "I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord."⁵⁴

Aquinas frames this text from *De Inventione* as a response to this question from the psalmist: what is *owed* to the Lord emerges as a certain interpretation of the Ciceronian definition of

religion as service or ceremonial worship offered to what is called divine. In different textual

⁵² *Super Sent.* 3, dist. 33, q. 3, a. 4. Mandonnet/Moos, 3: 1092-1104. More specifically, Aquinas introduces the notion of 'potential part' as a way of understanding religion's relationship to other parts of justice, such as one's obligations to family and nation of origin. *Super Sent.* III, dist. 33, q. 3, a. 4. *solutio* I. Mandonnet/Moos, 3: 1095-98. *ST II^a II^{ae}* QQ. 80-81. On Aquinas's use of the concept of 'potential part' in this context, see Lottin, 'La définition classique de la vertu de religion'. See notes 5 and 7.

⁵³ *ST II^a II^{ae}* Q. 80, a. 1, co. Carl A. Lofy, "The meaning of 'Potential Whole' in St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Modern Schoolman* 37 (1959): 39-48.

⁵⁴ Psalm 116: 12-13. NABRE.

traditions of the *Summa theologiae*, the word *cultus* is at times interspersed within Cicero's text from *De Inventione*—although *cultus* is used by Cicero in the passage that Aquinas cites from *On the nature of the gods*, its introduction into the text of *De Inventione* in some cases could be taken as a kind of interpolation of Cicero that reinforces the fact that it is *worship*, and not merely the re-reading of legal or liturgical texts, that is owed to God in justice.⁵⁵ Whatever the significance of this textual variant, however, it is Aquinas's use of the category of 'potential parts' in this context that distances him from some aspects of the wider textual context of this quote from *De Inventione* that pertain to socio-political obligation.

When Aquinas introduces this text from *De Inventione* again in question eighty-one, his understanding of this text becomes more explicitly tied to a worldview that resembles Augustine's cosmological monotheism. In the corpus of this article, he immediately positions this text alongside a series of etymologies for *religio* from both Cicero and Augustine and concludes that, whether *religio* is understood as frequent re-reading, whether as a re-choosing of something lost through negligence or as a kind of binding, fundamentally *religio* implies an ordering to God.⁵⁶ Further, when all of the articles of question eighty-one are considered as a

⁵⁵ When quoting this Ciceronian text in this context the Roman manuscript tradition for the *Summa* adds the word *cultus* to Cicero's definition. "Et primo quidem, quidquid ab homine Deo redditur, debitum est: non tamen potest esse aequale, ut scilicet tantum ei homo reddat quantum debet; secundum illud Psalm. : *Qud retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?* Et secundum hoc adiugitur iustitiae *religio*, quae, ut Tullius dicit, *superioris cuiusdam naturae, quam divinam vocant, curam caeremoniamque vel cultum affert.*" *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 80*, a. 1, co. Leonine ed., 9: 174. Although this variant does not appear in the Piana edition of question eighty, it does appear when this same text is cited again in the *sed contra* of the first article of question eighty-one. *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 80*, a. 1, co. Ottawa ed. 3: 1827b.; *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81*, a. 1, s.c. Ottawa ed., 3:1830a. For the text in question from Cicero's *De Inventione*, see note 8. For the text in question from *On the nature of the gods*, see note 16.

⁵⁶ "Sive autem religio dicatur a frequenti relectione, sive ex iterata electione eius quod negligenter amissum est, sive a religatione, religio proprie importat ordinem ad Deum. Ipse enim est cui principaliter alligari debemus, tanquam indeficienti principio; ad quem etiam nostra electio assidue dirigi debet, sicut in ultimum finem; quem etiam negligenter peccando amittimus, et credendo et fidem protestando recuperare debemus." *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81*, a. 1, co. Ottawa ed., vol. 3: 1830b. This approach is reminiscent of some aspects of Augustine's argument in book ten of the *City of God*. See *De civ.* 10.3. CCL 47: 275.26-31. See also *De civ.* 10.1, 10.4. CCL 47: 271.1-274.100; *De civ.* 10.4. CCL 47: 276.1-12.

textual whole, a consistent reliance on Augustinian themes emerges more clearly. After introducing the two Ciceronian texts studied here in the first article of question eighty-one, Aquinas shifts almost exclusively to Augustinian sources for the remainder of this question, relying extensively on references to the tenth book of the *City of God* as he develops his own understanding of *religio* in the following articles of question eighty-one.⁵⁷

What then, becomes of the Ciceronian notion of ‘re-reading’ that Aquinas introduces at the outset of question eighty-one? When the specific, textual progression of question eighty-one is examined closely, it seems that Aquinas has effectively re-voiced Cicero’s sense of *religio* as ‘re-reading’ (*Deor. Nat.* 2, 72) within the conceptual world of Augustinian interiority. Immediately after introducing Cicero’s notion of *religio* as ‘re-reading,’ Aquinas offers the text of *Proverbs*, “in all your ways be mindful of him,” before introducing Augustine’s definitions of *religio* from the *City of God* and *On True Religion*.⁵⁸ Like Cicero, Aquinas states that what is ‘re-read’ are those things which pertain to divine worship.⁵⁹ Although Cicero’s notion of *religio* as ‘re-reading’ might be satisfied by an external study of liturgical texts or laws, this is not the case for Aquinas’s approach to this same concept. Rather, Aquinas holds that this re-reading takes place interiorly, where the things relevant to divine worship are frequently ‘turned over’ (*revolvere*) within the human heart. Aquinas clarifies his meaning by using the text of *Proverbs* 3:6 to reframe this re-reading in biblical and monotheistic terms: “in all your ways, reflect (*cogitare*) on Him.”⁶⁰ Aquinas’s invocation of this scriptural text in this context seems to

indicate that, not only is religious reflection or contemplation primarily an interior matter of the

⁵⁷ Augustine mentioned fourteen times in course of question eighty-one. Of these Augustinian references, seven are to the *City of God*. See *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, obj. 2 and 3, co., ad 4, a. 4, obj. 4, a. 7, obj. 3, ad 2.*

⁵⁸ *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co. Prov. 3: 6. NABRE.*

⁵⁹ “Et sic religio videtur dicta a relegendo ea quae sunt divini cultus, quia huiusmodi sunt frequenter in corde revolvenda, secundum illud *Prov. III⁶*: “In omnibus viis tuis cogita illum”.” *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co. Ottawa ed., 3: 1830a-b.*

⁶⁰ *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, co.*

heart, but that the object of this interior reflection—those ‘things’ that pertain to divine worship—are in fact those that pertain to God directly. This ‘turning over’ or ‘re-reading’ must be interior to the person, precisely because of the structure of the proper acts of religion itself. Although *religio* does have exterior acts proper to itself, its intelligibility as a virtue depends on the interior acts of devotion and prayer—indeed, it is the first interior act of devotion that is the principle of the other interior and exterior acts of *religio*.⁶¹ As the most primary of religion’s interior acts, it must therefore be in devotion that the most fundamental expression of *religio* as an interior re-reading or ‘turning over’ is found.⁶²

II.c Aquinas on the relationship between charity and religio

In the immediate textual context of questions eighty and eighty-one, it is clear that Aquinas’s appropriation of Cicero has already taken a contemplative and Augustinian turn. Additionally, we have seen that the language of ‘potential part’ that Aquinas introduces in question eighty has effectively allowed Aquinas to distance religion from a Numian conception of the civic and social obligations that are integral to the larger concept of justice.⁶³ Aquinas reinforces this in his responses to the objectors in question eighty-one—responding to objectors who argue that the definition of religion should include certain social or familial ends, Aquinas introduces another important distinction that shapes his mature teaching on religion. Here, Aquinas distinguishes between those acts that are *elicited* (and therefore proper and immediate to

⁶¹ *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 7, co.* For the interior acts of religion (devotion and prayer), see *ST II^a II^{ae} QQ. 82-3*. For the exterior acts of religion (bodily reverence, sacrifice, oblations, tithes and vows), see *ST II^a II^{ae} QQ. 84-8*.

⁶² *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 82, a. 1, co.*

⁶³ Although Aquinas cites Numa’s role in establishing the Roman republic in other contexts, he does not mention him or the Ciceronian connection between *religio* and republicanism in his treatment of *religio* in the *Secunda secundae*. In his commentary on the *Letter to the Hebrews*, Aquinas mentions the role of Numa Pompilius in the establishment of Roman senate, invoking a conceptual parallel with the role of the apostles in the Church. *Super Heb.*, c. 12, 1, lect. 4. *Super Epistolam ad Hebraeos lectura*. As in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, vol. 2, Raphael Cai, ed. (Rome: Marietti, 1953), 491.

the virtue in question), and those that are *mediated* through the formality of another virtue, but *commanded* by the virtue of religion.⁶⁴ This distinction between proper/elicited acts of a virtue and those that are commanded by the same virtue is an important one in this context, and it can be seen to play both a structural and a conceptual role. Structurally, it is the *elicited* acts of religion that Aquinas treats in the questions immediately following questions eighty and eighty-one, in which the *proper* acts of the virtue of religion are delineated.⁶⁵ Conceptually, the notion of *commanded* acts of religion allows for many other areas of human life to be potentially associated with religion, without playing a necessary and intrinsic role in its formal definition.

Proper/elicited acts distinguish those acts that are proper to a given virtue rather than another, and form the integral components of its definition. Aquinas argues that, while all virtues have a special object that differentiates them from other virtues, some virtues also have the ability to act as general virtues by commanding the acts of other virtues.⁶⁶ In the case of religion, the acts of other virtues can be commanded by religion and thus done to give honor to God, but these acts in themselves are not constitutive of what religion is—although socially oriented acts of justice towards one’s neighbor *can* be commanded by religion in this way, these acts do not comprise the essential definitional set of what religion is—only the properly elicited acts of religion define religion in this way.⁶⁷

The distinction between ‘elicited’ and ‘commanded’ acts of *religio* not only reinforces the difference between Aquinas and Cicero concerning the relationship between *religio* and

⁶⁴ *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, ad 1. Aquinas concludes something similar in the *Sentences*, invoking the concept of ‘potential part’ but without explicitly introducing the distinction between elicited and commanded acts of virtue. *Super Sent.* III, dist. 33, q. 3, a. 4. *solutio* I. Mandonnet/Moos, 3: 1097.

⁶⁵ *ST* II^a II^{ae} QQ. 82-100 for these acts and their corresponding vices. Beginning with the principal, interior acts of devotion (82) and prayer (83), Aquinas also identifies secondary and external acts of religious *latria* as well, such as bodily reverence (84), sacrifice (85), oblations (86), tithes (87), and vows (89).

⁶⁶ *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 18, aa. 6, 7; Q. 60, a. 3, ad 2.

⁶⁷ *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, ad 1 and 2.

justice, but also qualifies Aquinas's account of *religio*'s relationship to the Augustinian notion of *caritas*. Beginning in question eighty-two, Aquinas offers a more detailed account of the specific nature of the interior 're-reading' that takes place in the exercise of this virtue. Although religion can act *through* the acts that are proper to other virtues, there are interior and exterior acts that are proper to religion and are said to be elicited directly by the virtue of religion itself.⁶⁸ Of all the elicited acts of the virtue of religion, interior devotion is not only the first in the order of operation, but is also the most primary of all of religion's acts; all other internal and external acts of religion are related to devotion as to a principle.⁶⁹ Aquinas defines devotion as a willing readiness to give oneself over to the service of God.⁷⁰ As an act of the will, devotion is a self-offering for the service of God as one's last end, by means of which all other acts are directed towards this same final end.⁷¹ What causes this willing devotion to the service of God is the contemplation of divine goodness under the specific aspect of beneficence. Aquinas argues that this proximate, contemplative cause of religion's act of devotion takes the form of an interior love (*dilectio*) of the beneficence of divine goodness itself.⁷² Is Aquinas's notion of 'interior love' necessarily congruent with Augustine's account of the interior enjoyment of *caritas*?

In one sense, the connection between devotion and *dilectio* implies a further Augustinian parallel. Like Augustine, Aquinas closely associates *religio* with the infused virtue of charity. The 'love' (*dilectio*) that serves as the proximate cause of devotion is also identified by Aquinas as the technical name of the principal act of the infused virtue of charity.⁷³ In the context of charity, *dilectio* is kind of materially dispositive cause, by means of which we love God because

⁶⁸ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1, ad 1.

⁶⁹ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 7, co.

⁷⁰ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 82, a. 1, co.

⁷¹ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 82, a. 1, ad 1.

⁷² ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 82, a. 3, co. In this article, Aquinas argues that the specific form of contemplation that causes religious devotion is twofold: the consideration of God's goodness in the primary sense, and human failure in a secondary sense.

⁷³ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 27, *prolog.* and Q. 28, *prolog.*, et al.

of His beneficence and the benefits we have received from Him.⁷⁴ This represents the first disposition by which the person is inclined to love God in friendship.⁷⁵ For Aquinas, the contemplation of divine beneficence disposes us towards both religion and charity.

Strengthening the link between religion and charity even further, Aquinas goes so far as to name charity as the principle of the virtue of religion.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, although charity and religion have the capacity to become closely intertwined, Aquinas does not believe that they are identical: charity may be religion's principle, but it does *not* immediately elicit religion's acts.⁷⁷ Both Tertullian and Augustine hold that the truth of the Christian worship is an important determining factor for the definition of the concept of religion. We have seen that this orientation towards the truth of God is important for Aquinas as well. As we have seen, for Augustine this manifests itself in a particular theology of charity. In the *Summa*, however, charity and religion remain focused on slightly different objects. In the case of charity, its immediate orientation is spiritual union with God; in the case of *religio*, the immediate end of religion as a virtue is that a person give themselves to God and to works of divine worship. However, although charity does serve the end of worship, it does so *through the medium* of religion, rather than by directly eliciting these acts itself.⁷⁸ the difference between

⁷⁴ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 27, a. 3, co.

⁷⁵ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 27, a. 3, co. Building on this material disposition to love God as our beneficiary, Aquinas continues using the remaining three species of causality—formal, final, and efficient—to describe the love of God for His own sake in charity.

⁷⁶ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 82, a. 2, ad 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 82, a. 1, ad 1. In his earlier *Contra Impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, Aquinas seems to advance a much more exclusively theological interpretation of Cicero's definition of religion in *De Invent.* II, c. 53, pairing it with Augustine's *De civ.* 10.1. CCL 47, 273.67-8. *Contra impugn.* c. 1, 1-2. Leonine ed., 41: A53-A55. (In the *Summa*, Aquinas engages Augustine's teaching on *Latria* in his responses to the objections in ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 1). Aquinas's more exclusively theological approach to religion in this text is partially explained by the genre of the text itself, in which Aquinas is defending the concept of religious life in general, and of mendicant religious life in particular. Although Aquinas does offer a treatment of the specific case of religious vows in the *Summa* (ST II^a II^{ae} QQ. 186-89), his earlier treatment of religion in *Contra Impugnantes* lacks the distinction between proper/elicited and commanded/mediated acts of religion that Aquinas employs in the *Summa*.

religion and charity that emerges here corresponds to a larger distinction within Aquinas' thought. Although Augustine closely associates religion with the teleology of charity, in the *Secunda pars* Aquinas does not intrinsically associate religion with a teleology that extends beyond the natural potencies of the human person. Indeed, Aquinas is very clear that the virtue of religion is *not* numbered among the theological virtues that are infused with sanctifying grace.⁷⁹ Instead, as a potential part of the virtue of justice, religion remains conceptually coherent, to a certain extent, with or without reference to the theological anthropology of grace and charity. If Aquinas retains God as the 'truth' of *religio*'s object—a notion that was of utmost importance for North-African Christianity—this truth is no longer necessarily associated with an explicitly theological horizon.

Aquinas's distinct approach to religion complicates his relationship with the Trinitarian and sacramental environment in which Augustine places religion. Although Aquinas certainly employs a psychological framework of *imago* in the *Secunda pars*, he also retains an Aristotelian account of a kind of natural good that corresponds to the formality of the natural virtue of justice and its respective parts.⁸⁰ By associating religion with natural virtue Aquinas seems to imply at least the conceptual possibility that some form of the teleology proper to *religio* could exist outside of the explicit context of Christian worship. Without introducing any equivocity with

⁷⁹ *ST* II^a II^{ae} Q. 81, a. 5. With the gift of sanctifying grace, however, an *infused* species of the virtue of religion is also of course given. See Jean Porter, "The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the *Summa theologiae*," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 12 (1992): 19-41; Michael S. Sherwin, "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtues," *The Thomist* 73 (2009) 29-52; Joseph d'Amécourt, OP, "St. Thomas between St. Augustine and Cicero on the Virtue of Religion or The Significance of the Concluding Sentence of Each of the Five Ways," *Angelicum* 91.2 (2014): 231-72; Rudi Te Velde, "The Hybrid Character of the Infused Moral Virtue According to Thomas Aquinas," in *Faith, Hope, and Love: Thomas Aquinas on Living by the Theological Virtues*, Harm Goris, Lambert Hendriks, Henk Schoot, eds. (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 25-44.

⁸⁰ For the importance of Trinitarian image in the *Secunda pars*, see *ST* I^a II^{ae} *prolog.*, et al. K. Flannery argues that aspects of Aquinas's approach to religion in the *Summa* are compatible with Aristotle's philosophical account of religion. Flannery, "What does St. Thomas Make of Aristotelian Religion?"

regard to the truth of the virtue's object that would lead to worship of anything other than God as first principle, for Aquinas it seems that religion's independence from the theological virtues implies that Augustine's more explicitly theological and sacramental hermeneutic assumes the status of a *possible* fulfillment of the teleology of religion, rather than a constitutive aspect of its definition.⁸¹

Conclusions

In the preceding pages, this article has focused on four definitions of *religio* that Aquinas cites as sources for his own account of religion as a virtue in the *Summa theologiae*. Taken from both Cicero and Augustine, the first part of this article investigated the different textual and historical contexts of each of the texts that Aquinas cites, and exposed the inherent tension that originally existed between Ciceronian and North African Christian approaches to religion, especially during Augustine's lifetime. The emphasis on the truth of the Christian religion that emerged so strongly in Tertullian and Augustine is visible in Aquinas as well, particularly in his treatment of the proper, elicited acts of the virtue of religion. As we have seen, in this immediate textual context Aquinas re-frames the two Ciceronian texts that he initially offers using language that is interiorly oriented, relying on Augustine and a series of biblical texts to frame the acts of devotion and prayer in a manner that reflects the influence of the received Augustinian tradition. However, the broader context of Cicero's presentation of religion as a part of justice does exert a notable degree of structural influence on Aquinas's presentation of religion in both the *Sentences* and the *Summa*. Nevertheless, it is precisely Aquinas's adoption of the language of 'potential

⁸¹ In contrast to Augustine, Aquinas tells us that religion, considered simply as a moral virtue, could have potentially legitimate expressions in a wide variety of non-Christian contexts. See *ST II^a II^{ae} Q. 85, a. 4, co.*, et al.

part,' that allows him to distance his own account of religion from the socio-political cosmology that is so important for Cicero's account of religion as a part of justice.

Aquinas's comparatively positive relationship with Cicero as a source may be due in part to a difference in historical context—unlike Augustine and Tertullian, the tensions that shaped the relationship between the Christian Church and the Roman empire in earlier historical periods are not factors in the same way for Aquinas. In early modernity, Cicero and other Roman authors would increasingly be viewed as constructive dialogue partners by Christian humanists, who would use the authority of these sources to construct their own projects, at times in dialogue with Aquinas. As constructive interactions with the text of Aquinas, those appeals to Roman republicanism that appear in Salamancan authors like Vitoria and Soto represent a generative contribution that would reach beyond the immediate context of the *Indes* controversy at Salamanca; their renewed approaches to concepts like natural and international law, human rights, and natural religious instinct that would continue to be developed by Suárez, Grotius, and many others during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸² Although Cicero's Numian political theology may not form a structural part of Aquinas's teaching on *religio*, it is precisely the conceptual possibility of *religio* under natural justice in Aquinas that provided the basis of the Salamanca School's response to the important questions of human rights that emerged during the sixteenth century.

⁸² For an overview of these developments, see the secondary literature listed in footnote 26.