

The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology

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Christian Political Theology in an Age of Discontent
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first published in 1957 ernst kantorowicz s the king s two bodies traces the king s two bodies the body politic and the body natural back to the middle ages by placing the concept in its proper setting of medieval thought and political theory kantorowicz demonstrates how the early modern western monarchies gradually began to develop a political theology illustrations

this book aims to provide new historical and theoretical perspectives on political theology with an interdisciplinary approach from political philosophy and theology to art and history after a comprehensive introduction and three introductory chapters on both the theory and the concept of political theology based on the works of schmitt de lubac and kantorowicz this volume explores the transferences between the temporal and the spiritual experimented on the past it interprets some historical events medieval crusades royal wisdom and early modern idea of tolerance examines some philosophical and theological narratives john of paris spinoza locke bayle leibniz montesquieu toqueville and deciphers some rites royal coronations and representations the holy crown royal banquets royal coats of arms

this collection of studies in the history of political thought from late antiquity to the early eighteenth century ranges broadly across themes of kingship political theology constitutional ideas natural law thinking and consent theory the studies are linked together by three shared characteristics first all of them explore the continuities that existed during those centuries between legal political thinking and theology second nearly all of them transgress the sharp dividing line traditionally drawn between the medieval and the modern which did so much in the past to distort our understanding of intellectual developments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries third all of them raise historiographic questions or probe the metahistorical methodological questions which have troubled the field for the past quarter century and more

can secularisation in the legal and political domains settle modernitys scores with religion anton schatz and marinos diamantides provide a genealogical mapping of the universalisation secularisation thesis that is both widely saluted and mistrusted as master narrative of modern political and normative history questions the outdated suggestions of carl schmitts political theologybuilds upon a refined version of giorgio agambens close reading of christian government as managementidentifies western christian tensions within jurisprudenceconcludes that what the wests secular universality is passing off as politics or law is really an attempt to manage its own dwindling primacy

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at a moment in which interest in political theology is rising acceptance of a public role for religion is declining and cynicism regarding both political and religious institutions is overflowing this book investigates the possibilities and constraints of a christian political theology that can meaningfully mediate scripture doctrine and political reality in critical dialogue with political theologians and political philosophers past and present we explore the origins meaning and purpose of christian political theology in an age of growing discontent with the once impregnable liberal democratic order of yesteryear approaching politics as both art and science this book lays a challenge at the feet of political theologians to offer a theological account of politics that is genuinely illuminating of political reality and efficacious for the faithful who seek to operate within it

almost 100 years have passed since carl schmitt gave his controversial definition of the sovereign as the one who decides on the exception in his by now classic political theology 1922 written at a time of crisis the book sought to establish the institution of sovereignty not from within a well functioning governing machine of the state in a situation of normality but rather as the minimal condition of state order in the moment of governmental breakdown the book appeared anachronistic already at its publication schmitt went against max weber s popular thesis defining secularization as a disenchantment of the world characterizing modern societies and instead suggested that the concepts of modern politics mirrored a metaphysics originating in christianity and the church nevertheless the concept of political theology has in recent years seen a revival as a field of research in philosophy as well as political theory as studies in the theological sub currents of politics economics and sociality proliferate

few historians trace grand themes across many centuries and places but ernst kantorowicz s great work on the symbolic powers of kingship is a fine example of what can happen when they do the king s two bodies is at once a superb example of the critical thinking skill of evaluation assessing huge quantities of evidence both written and visual and drawing sound comparative conclusions from it and of creative thinking the work connects art history literature legal records and historical

documents together in innovative and revealing ways across more than 800 years of history kantorowicz s key conclusions that history is at root about ideas that these ideas power institutions and that both are commonly expressed and understood through symbols have had a profound impact on several different disciplines and even underpin many works of popular fiction not least the davinci code and they were all made possible by fresh evaluation of evidence that other historians had ignored or could not see the significance of

this book presents a genealogy of the concept of political theology through the theory of encryption of power

is contemporary international order truly a secular arrangement theorists of international relations typically adhere to a narrative that portrays the modern states system as the product of a gradual process of secularization that transcended the religiosity of medieval christendom william bain challenges this narrative by arguing that modern theories of international order reflect ideas that originate in medieval theology they are in other words worldly applications of a theological pattern this ground breaking book makes two key contributions to scholarship on international order first it provides a thorough intellectual history of medieval and early modern traditions of thought and the way in which they shape modern thinking about international order it explores the ideas of augustine thomas aquinas william of ockham martin luther and other theologians to rise above the sharp differentiation of medieval and modern that underpins most international thought uncovering this theological inheritance invites a fundamental reassessment of canonical figures such as hugo grotius and thomas hobbes and their contribution to theorizing international order second this book shows how theological ideas continue to shape modern theories of international order by structuring the questions theorists ask as well as the answer they provide it argues that the dominant vocabulary of international order system and society anarchy balance of power and constitutionalism is mediated by the intellectual commitments of nominalist theology it concludes by exploring the implications of thinking in terms of this theological inheritance albeit in a world where god is only one of several possibilities that can called upon to secure the regularity of order

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in liberty dominion and the two swords historian lester l field jr places historical relations between church and state in a new context by examining the ancient origins of two concepts that dominated medieval political discourse liberty of the church which became the battle cry of the reform papacy during the investiture contest of the late 11th and early 12th centuries and the doctrine of the two swords which distinguished the medieval church and monarchy as inviolable institutions

although as long ago as the 1940s ernst h kantorowicz exhorted medievalists to make greater use of liturgical sources historians largely continued to ignore the magic thicket of prayers benedictions and ecclesiastical rites that comprise the liturgy instead they left liturgical sources to specialists interested in the development of individual rites through time this volume inspired by kantorowicz s insights builds on the work of a new generation of scholars who see liturgical sources as integral to understanding medieval politics and society the individual essays focus on different polities and regions of medieval christiana europe but all concentrate on the high middle ages a period in which the importance of liturgy to political cultures has traditionally been seen as being in decline together the essays demonstrate how a careful reading of liturgical sources can shed new light on political cultures and practices how liturgical rituals shaped politics and how political realities influenced liturgical ceremonial they demonstrate the interrelationship between liturgical scholarship and political theory and challenge the paradigm of the desacralization of kingship and politics in this period

the politics of heaven and hell makes an invaluable contribution to the understanding of classical medieval and modern political philosophy while explaining the profound problem with modernity christianity freed men from the overwhelming burden of ever thinking that their salvation will ultimately come from the political order writes fr james schall s j modernity on the other hand is a perversion of christianity which tries to achieve man s salvation in this world it does this by politicizing everything which results in the absolute state the distance from the city of god to the leviathan is not at all far

once the city of god is relocated on earth the best defense against this tyranny is the adequate description of the highest things of what is beyond politics both reason and revelation are needed for this work and they are eloquently and ably set forth in this book

this volume brings together ten distinguished scholars of history literature music theatre and art to explore the political and cultural implications of the court s transgressive new character

an anthology of classical arabic texts debating legitimate power and authority in the muslim community after the prophet muhammad

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