Aquinas, De Regno, Book One, Chapter 2, “The Absolute Merits of Monarchy” (pp. 11-13); Chapters 4-5, “The Historical Merits of Monarchy” (pp. 19-23)

Thomas Aquinas was a prominent Italian philosopher in the Medieval period. He had significant influence over modern philosophy. In particular, Aquinas had views that differed from the traditional Catholic Church at his time. He embraced the ideas of Aristotle, combined them with Christianity, and formed his own theories. Aquinas’s whole system of philosophy was understood as the modification of Aristotelian philosophy in light of the Christian gospel. The Catholic Church called him a saint in an appreciation for his hymns. His political philosophy contained a mix of both natural reasoning and speculative theology. Aquinas believed that God does not require people to live according to the Judicial perception of the Old Law. Therefore, he believed that a comprehensive political system based on Christianity was not right. And the Catholic Church had recognized the value of Aquinas’s teaching in regards to Christian revelation. As a philosopher, Thomas Aquinas adopted Aristotle’s theology by making his own account of Aristotle’s philosophical perception and knowledge. His philosophy was closely based on what he learned from Aristotle, citing many of Aristotle’s passages that were hard to comprehend and explaining them in his own insight.

This work particularly focused on the appropriate ruling of a monarchy. Using Aristotle’s philosophy as a reference, Aquinas believed that all regimes could be divided into six basic categories, according to how the regime is ruled and whether or not it is ruled justly. When ruled justly, the regime could be a monarchy ruled by a single ruler, an aristocracy ruled by a few aristocrats, or a republic ruled by a multitude of people. On the other hand, when ruled unjustly, the regime could become a tyranny ruled by a single ruler, an oligarchy ruled by a few oligarchs, or a democracy ruled by a multitude of people. According to Aquinas, the best regime among all six was the monarchy because it was the best when governed by one single individual instead of a group of people, and a just monarch resembled God. As a result, the ruler was able to keep the unity of peace. The government could work to act as one, bringing the regime closer to any intended goals.

In Book One, Chapter 2, Aquinas explained why a regime ruled by one man was better than a regime ruled by many. He argued that the main concern of a ruler was the “preservation of unity” of his people. It was an absolute obligation of the ruler since it laid the foundation for the security of welfare of the people he ruled. “Thus, the more efficacious a government is in keeping the unity of peace, the more useful it will be”(II, 17). Aquinas then used the ship as an example to argue that one man ruled better than “several who come near being one.” All men on a ship had to join together and pull in the same direction in order to move the ship. Any disagreement among them would fail the process completely. Therefore, only a single ruler could keep the unity of peace because there was no disagreement among rulers. Aquinas also listed some examples in nature to demonstrate the power of one single ruler and strengthen his statement on the effectiveness of monarchy.

In Chapter 4, Aquinas argued that “the royal dignity is rendered hateful to many people on account of the wickedness of tyrants”(IV, 30) because monarchy was the best and tyranny was the worst. Some people would want to be ruled by a king but discover that a tyrant actually ruled them. Immediately following the claim, Aquinas listed many examples to justify it. For example, in the Roman Republic, kings were driven out by the Roman people, who could no longer bear the royal arrogance - in this case, the tyranny. Therefore, the people of Rome turned the government into an aristocracy. Usually, men who lived under monarchies “strive more sluggishly for the common good” as they tended to not “confer upon themselves but upon another.” Aquinas continued to make references to the Romans. The Romans were constantly at war, and most Roman kings became tyrants, with few actually caring about the common good. Therefore, it destroyed the welfare of the people. In Chapter 5, Aquinas argued that a tyrant did not destroy the principal social good but obstructed the individual interest of his subjects. In fact, danger fell more for polyarchy than monarchy. Aquinas used the Roman Republic as an example to show such a transformation from polyarchy to tyranny and concluded that it was more expedient to live under one king than to live under several rulers.

Tusi, Nasirean Ethics, pp. 203 (“A child’s love falls short of that of a father”)-205 (“and just observance of the dues of everyone deserving”)

Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi, or Nasir al-Din Tusi, was a Persian philosopher born in 1201 in Tus, Khurasan, Khwarazmid Empire. He died in 1274 in Baghdad, the spiritual and political center of Islam that lasted for five centuries. Tusi was a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas and was considered the most celebrated Islamic scholar of the 13th century. He influenced other philosophers later, such as Ibn Khaldun and Niccolo Machiavelli. His most famous philosophical work was *Nasirean Ethics*, the principal treatise in Persian on ethics, economics, and politics. In *Nasirean Ethics*, Tusi was inspired by various precedent philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, as well as Muslim philosophers such as Al-Farabi. Tusi was concerned with virtue ethics, the criteria of the human mind and human behaviors by reviewing the moral and intellectual positions of Islamic civilization at the time. In later parts, he discussed the same topic from the domestic economy angle and the political angle as well.

*Nasirean Ethics* had its special significance as a great thinker wrote it at the crucial time of power shifts. During the time period, Tusi and other Muslim scholars struggled with the Mongol’s plundering of Islamic lands, which caused the extinction of the Caliphate and a new form of Islamic learning, law, and civilization. In the preamble section, Tusi gave his own account of the special circumstances he encountered during the composition of *Nasirean Ethics*. The work was not only exposed to Tusi’s contemporary Islamic scholars but also to those from other foreign regions as well as thinkers from later times. Tusi treated nothing in isolation or subjectively in *Nasirean Ethics*. In fact, all rules related to human conduct were independent, absolute, real, and right. He saw revelation and legislation as necessary. In the third discourse, he discussed the essence of religious societies, the relationship between time-bound revelation and the developing need for legislation and authority.

For instance, Tusi used a child-father analogy as an example of typical types of relationships. Tusi argued that if a child knew his father during their life, they would never receive love. Nor would he have a love for him. “For this reason, children have been enjoined to show kindness to their parents, while the latter have not been so enjoined in respect of the children”(Tusi, 203). Tusi believed that while children showed kindness to their parents, parents did not show respect in return to their children. Soon after, Tusi began elaborating on different types of love relationships. He first argued that the love a ruler had for his people should be like paternal love, modeled after the sympathetic father “in respect of sympathy and compassion, solicitude and graciousness, nurture and indulgence, and in his quest for best interests, his warding off of unpleasantness, his attraction of good and his prohibition of evil”(Tusi, 203).

The second model of love was derived from the “impressions and turbidities of (all) misfortunes.” Tusi considered it as a love of the creature for the Creator. “[F]or love is based on knowledge, so how can there be love in one who has no knowledge of Him and is unaware of His diverse continual graces and manifold successive favours reaching both soul and body”(Tusi, 204)? Here, Tusi used the technique of hypophora, posing a rhetorical question and then answering it. “It may well be that such a one, in his own imagination, sets up an idol, which he recognizes as his Creator and Object of worship”(Tusi, 204). He then explained that the love of parents obtained both obedience and veneration, which was a sign of true love and could be seen in no other type of love. Tusi also compared teachers with fathers in their ranks in veneration.

Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter 17, “Concerning Ruthlessness and Compassion: Whether It Is Better To Be Loved Than Feared, or Feared Than Loved” (pp. 269-278)

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli was a renowned Italian diplomat and philosopher during the Renaissance. He was best known for his political treatise, *The Prince*. Niccolò Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* after his imprisonment and torture by the Medici, partially because, in aspects like politics and ethics, *The Prince* was known to be in sharp contradiction with the Catholic and scholastic philosophy that prevailed at the time. It focused on political theories and served as a guide for not only the “prince” but a leader in general. The word “prince” meant the monarch or any equivalent title of one who holds supreme, sovereign power. *The Prince* proposed different methods that princes could use to achieve their ambitions and goals and whether such a process was justified or immoral.

The first few chapters established the book’s outline. Then, the following chapters focused on a variety of practical, diplomatic means for a prince to attain power. The bulk of the book focused on the qualities and ethics of the prince himself. For example, Machiavelli proposed that some personal virtues such as generosity and benevolence that were good in general circumstances might not be appropriate for a prince. Instead, they might even cause harm to the prince’s power. However, meanwhile, the prince might be able to take advantage of vicious acts such as cruel and harsh punishments because such acts might actually be helpful in certain ways for the stability of the society.

In Chapter 17, Machiavelli asked the question of whether it is better to be more feared or more loved. Here, Machiavelli used the technique of hypophora, posing a rhetorical question and then answering it. “Is it better to be loved than feared, or to be feared than loved? The answer is that a prince would like to be both. But since it is difficult to reconcile these two, it is much safer to be feared than loved - if the one must cede to the other”(Machiavelli, 271). Machiavelli agreed that a prince should want to be considered compassionate rather than ruthless. At the same time, the prince should also want to avoid misusing such compassion. Machiavelli used Cesare Borgia as an example. Cesare brought Romagna back to peace and prosperity, although he was considered ruthless. Machiavelli then made a contrast with the people of Florence, who, afraid of being titled ruthless, left Pistoia destroyed ruthlessly. Compared to them, Cesare’s ruthlessness could be perfectly ignored, as his compassion was emphasized and featured enough as an excuse, attempting to produce the good for the people as a whole.

Therefore, Machiavelli argued that a prince should not worry about being ruthless if that kept his subjects united and loyal. Machiavelli admitted that under normal circumstances, people are willing to submit and offer their loyalty to the prince. However, Machiavelli defined men as naturally “ungrateful, fickle, dissembling, hypocritical, cowardly, and greedy”(XVII, 271). When any kind of danger approached them, people were much more likely to turn against the prince whom they loved than the prince whom they feared. “For love is supported by a bond of obligation which, since men are evil, they break on any occasion when it is useful for them to do so; but fear is supported by a dread of retribution which can always be counted on”(XVII, 273). Machiavelli warned that a bond of love could be easily broken due to the evil qualities men naturally inherit. However, fear was stronger, as it was supported “by a dread of retribution.”(XVII, 273) The fear of punishment was always effective regardless of the situation. Machiavelli believed that, in an ideal state, the prince should be loved and feared at the same time. In addition, as a prince made his people fear him, he had to remember that hatred might cause his downfall. To avoid hatred, he must keep away from his people’s properties and make sure all the executions are justified.

Locke, Two Treatises of Government, Chapter 8, “Of the Beginning of Political Societies,” Sections 95-99 and 107

John Locke was a British philosopher during the Enlightenment. He was most famous for his social contract theory. His theory also influenced other Enlightenment thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. Locke was born in 1632 in England. Both of his parents were Puritans. During his undergraduate years, Locke found the classical curriculum boring. Rather, he found the worlds of modern philosophers such as Rene Descartes more interesting. He was later introduced to experimental philosophy. Locke was involved in politics when Ashley, whom he met at Oxford and who exerted much influence on Locke’s political theories, became Lord chancellor in 1672. Around the time of Ashley’s Shaftesbury, the Whig movement, the Exclusion crisis in 1681, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Locke completed the composition of the *Two Treatises of Government*. This work was seen as against absolute monarchy but rather for individuals as the basis of political legitimacy. Characterizing by opposition to authoritarianism, Locke encouraged the audience to use reason to seek the truth rather than simply listening to the authorities. Similarly, for political institutions, using reason for a path to the truth would best benefit human individuals and societies both materialistically and spiritually.

In *The First Treatise of Government*, Locke claimed that all men were naturally free, making a refute against Filmer’s claim that men were born into helpless servitude to authority and, therefore, absolute monarchy was the legitimate government. Locke denied that there was no such reason or scripture that supported Filmer’s supposition as evidence. In *The Second Treatise of Government*, Locke argued that sovereignty resided in the people and explained the nature of legitimate government in terms of natural rights and the social contract. Locke successfully undermined Filmer’s theory of absolute monarchy. He showed that Filmer’s monarch actually contained limited power of different categories. When Locke displayed each separately, it was evident that monarchs did not have legitimate absolute power over the people.

In Chapter 8, Locke stated once again that men being were “by nature all free, equal, and independent”(VIII, 95). And the only way that men could lose such naturally born liberty was by joining a community and uniting with one another of their own free will for the sake of security from external influences. Because they voluntarily chose to work together, the majority had the will and right to “act and conclude the rest.” In addition, because an individual chose to be a part of the community, he had an obligation and responsibility to every other person within the community. Vice versa. “And thus every man, by consenting with others to make one body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation to every one of that society to submit to the determination of the majority, and to be concluded by it”(VIII, 97). Locked also mentioned that opinions and debate were unavoidable when people united with each other. He warned that any person within the whole must understand his decision of giving up all the power for the benefit of the majority. Therefore, such a collection of consents from men who untied together would form the basis of any legitimate government.

A few moments later, Locke used the father-child analogy to argue that just like the relationship between a child and his father, the government had to practice “with care and skill,” “with affection and love to those under it.” Only this way could it “procure and preserve to men all the political happiness they sought for in society”(VIII, 107). And people would naturally become accustomed to this form of government because they found it “both easy and safe.” Such a form of government was simple, natural, and obvious to them, in contrast to the inconvenience of absolute monarchy. “Since then those who liked one another so well as to join into society, cannot but be supposed to have some acquaintance and friendship together, and some trust one in another; they could not but have greater apprehensions of others than of one another: and therefore their first care and thought cannot but be supposed to be, how to secure themselves against foreign force ”(VIII, 107). Locke concluded that this was the rightest and most natural, peaceful way for people to be ruled without any threat to the ruler.