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Special Issue Reprint

Religion and Politics: Interactions and Boundaries

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The aim of this Reprint "Religion and Politics: Interactions and Boundaries" is to investigate the long and complex relationship between politics and religion from the late Middle Ages to the present day. The sixteenth century, marked by the Reformation and the profound fracture of Christian unity, represents a decisive turning point. In this period, the new confessional realities that emerged from the Protestant Reformation confronted the resistance of the Roman Church and the repressive mechanisms of the inquisitorial systems, particularly in southern Europe. While in many regions dissenting faiths were suppressed, elsewhere the persistence of religious conflict forced jurists, theologians, and political thinkers to reconsider the connection between religious unity and the stability of the State. Practical needs and a growing awareness of individual and collective rights gradually fostered a new consciousness, paving the way for the modern concepts of religious tolerance and freedom of conscience.

Within this broad framework, the essays collected in this Reprint address different aspects of that evolving dialogue between religion and politics, examining how the boundaries between spiritual and temporal authority have been continuously renegotiated. From the persecutions of heresy in the late medieval and early modern periods to the modern debates on secularization, pluralism, and freedom of belief, the contributions gathered here seek to illuminate the multiple ways in which religious and political phenomena have interacted, overlapped, and reshaped one another across multiple centuries.

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