Carl Schmitt, Erik Peterson, and Giorgio Agamben: the war for Christian political theology

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Power and its sources have always been essential questions for political philosophy. One of the ways to legitimize power is political theology which was discussed at length during the XX century. The proposed paper considers Christian political theology as a project constructed by Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben. Both thinkers defended their models and criticized their main "enemy", Erik Peterson. While Schmitt believed in Christian legitimization for the status quo and Agamben dreamed of the coming community without an identity, Peterson argued that Christian doctrines (Trinity, Parousia, etc.) deem any political authority meaningless. A majority of researchers scrutinized and critically evaluated the level of theoretical arguments of the aforementioned thinkers. On the contrary, we have chosen to analyze all of the key and referenced theologians (Paul, Eusebius, Eunomius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine) to prove that Schmitt-Agamben's notion of Christian political theology is controversial. Like Peterson with Eusebius, Schmitt and Agamben employed loose translations in trying to integrate their ideas (sovereignty, absolute anarchy) into original Christian texts. The detailed analysis allows the paper to deliver a kind of negative conclusion that Christian political theology has no ground in the sources these thinkers have credited. Nevertheless, our research calls for a new round of discussion: was this critique caused by Christian sources selected inappropriately by Schmitt, Peterson, and Agamben, or by the essential incompatibility between Christianity and political theology? Polemics might get a new "positive" horizon with the help of this question.

Keywords: κατέχον, Christian political theology, μοναρχία, felicitas, δύναμις, gloria, Roman Empire, civitas Dei

A conversation no one has participated in

Heinrich Meier once made a crucial claim regarding the discussion between Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss. His idea was that its participants were in fact absentees arguing with each other (ein Dialog unter Abwesenden) (2013: 17). This framework could be applied as well to our present rivals, Carl Schmitt, Erik Peterson, and Giorgio Agamben. During the XX century, they deliberated on the very notion of Christian political theology *in absentia*. Political theology is an old concept designating the task common to both the church and political authorities to establish and legitimize their power by resorting to divine symbolism. In the field of political philosophy, the notion received its second birth after the ground-breaking XX-century debates over the role the Christian church played in power relations.

In the 1920s', Schmitt claimed political theology to be a transmission of theological concepts into politics (2005: 46), and counter-revolutionary conservatives allied their

efforts with the Catholic Church[1] (1996a: 21; Schmitt, 2005: 30; 36–37)[2]. Exploiting the authority of Paul, the German thinker presented the universal history as the history of theologically and eschatologically legitimized political power. His former friend Peterson argued that no political theology is compatible with Christianity. His tenets were the Cappadocian dogma of the sole rule of God transcending every terrestrial monarchy, and Augustine's rejection of providential political legitimization favored by Schmitt. In Peterson's view, the orthodox Trinity exposed by Gregory of Nazianzus contradicts the idea of the monarchial king ruling as the Son of God (2011b: 103). Peterson demonstrated how Eusebius and Augustine represent heretical political theology and orthodox Christian eschatology respectively (105). According to Peterson, Christianity is a religion of personal relationship with God, free of politics and governmental concerns. After Peterson's death, Schmitt wrote, in his second volume of *Political Theology,* that empire was inseparable from the Roman church (2006: 59) since it produced sovereignty ordained by the divine authority. Schmitt confronted other Peterson's arguments as well: Gregory of Nazianzus' doctrine of the Trinity contains an internal war between the Son and the Father (2008: 122–123) unless some kind of universal monarchy is established. According to Schmitt, the Eusebius-Augustine distinction is biased and used by Peterson without proper justification (100). Thirty years after Schmitt's response, Agamben, inspired by Metz and Taubes, endeavored to mediate the discussion by providing a third opinion on the issue. Trying to prove that Peterson did not comprehend the true economic meaning of the Trinity (2011: 7; 16; 73), Agamben constructed an anarchic Pauline eschatology against Schmitt's right-wing ambitions (2005: 110–111). Agamben combined most of the early Christian sources available to propose the distinction: Paul, following Jesus, became a proponent of the destruction of the Roman Empire and an adviser to the coming community, while the church fathers came to a collaboration with political authorities by establishing a Christian "economy" of salvation and the Trinity (125-126).

The general amount of literature on the controversy between Schmitt and Peterson[3] is so enormous that even the titles and the authors' names overlap. The list given in the footnote cannot contain all the works[4]. In reviewing the texts, I was surprised to find

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1. For Schmitt, Catholicism is a political phenomenon directed at liberalism (Filippov, 2016: 504).

2. As Schmitt later argued, the state always takes the function of the restrainer (κατέχον) by holding the Antichrist back and keeping the peace inside (2006: 60).

3. Aleksey Yarkeev, in his recently published article, thoroughly introduced the debate between Schmitt and Peterson. He has extensively outlined all the key arguments put forth by Schmitt and Peterson. I refer to his article if one looks for a detailed paraphrase of the contest instead of my brief exposition (2022). There is however a clear implicit bias (206–208) in this exposition whose impartiality Schmitt would have questioned. Yarkeev tells nothing of his acquaintance with studies dedicated to Patristic political theology published after Schmitt's thesis of 1922: Varro's theology greatly differs from Bakunin's or Schmitt's concepts (200), "Eusebius' political theology" has been widely doubted (2022: 198; 206). Geréby claims that Schmitt did not comprehend the Trinity contrary to monotheism, a fact totally ignored by Yarkeev, who cites Geréby's article (193; 199; 201). Agamben attacking both Schmitt and Peterson could not, I suppose, be used as a neutral reference here (194; 197; 207–208). In the course of further research, I will try to shed some light on all of the topics mentioned above.

4. Böckenförde points to the importance of faith in Schmitt (1981: 234) while Momigliano shows that no pagan Roman political theology existed to confront Christianity (1986: 296). Nichtweiß thinks that Peterson

that no research devoted to Agamben intervening in the discussion has been conducted. In addition, not much effort has been made to investigate the usage of ancient sources besides Eusebius and Gregory of Nazianzus over which philosophers argue. Most of the scholars were occupied with arguments, ignoring the insights the study of the original references may have given.

I plan to examine Paul, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine in the paper. I am trying to make the case that political theology is hardly applicable to any of these Christian thinkers exploited by modern authors. Consequently, I will analyze Agamben's and Schmitt's approaches toward Paul; then, by exploring the Peterson-Schmitt-Agamben polemics I will estimate the implicit role Gregory of Nyssa played. Finally, I would like to present the contribution to the debate that is hidden in the study of Augustine. The methodology I am going to implement will be based on an analysis of the historical and philological aspects of the problem through understanding ancient sources in their original form. This will be indicated by bracketed essential notions. I will sometimes make a technical translation into English if necessary, and outline the discrepancies in which some facets of modern interpretation appear. In avoiding the debates themselves and pure theoretical arguments, I limit myself to the question as to how the textual evidence scrutinized below affects the representation of Christian political theology in the 20th century.

Agamben and Schmitt versus Paul

Taubes explains the background required to understand Agamben[5]. In his lectures, the professor tells the audience how Paul declares war against Nero in the sense of political theology (2003: 16), proclaims *nomos* as an equivalent to the emperor, and professes a new community to come (24). Lacking any evidence for the first two assertions, Taubes exaggerates Paul's political activism: I have not identified any explicit attack on Nero expressed by Paul[6]. Agamben was so moved by Taubes' brief remarks to consider military

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was not opposing any political theology; rather he fought against the appropriation of religion by politics (1992). Metz distances himself from Schmitt through establishing left revolutionary political theology as Barth did in the 1920's (1997). Assmann inverts Schmitt's formula: religion is secularized politics (2000: 20), Geréby proves that Schmitt, who belonged to the Latin Catholic tradition, confused monotheism with the doctrine of the Trinity (2008: 21). Hollerich provides the context of the Weimar Republic (2008: 7–10), Britt stresses how Agamben substitutes Schmitt with Benjamin (2010: 278), Kahn links political theology with faith-decision scheme and sociological methodology (2011: 105–108), Meier locates friend-enemy division within theological area (2011: 90), Taubes brings historical and personal evidence of Peterson warning Schmitt (2013: 27–28), Vatter demonstrates Schmitt's reliance on Hobbes' theory of representation (2014: 259–260), Schmidt refutes Agamben's claim of Peterson's antisemitism (014: 201–202), and Roberts attempts to dissolve the strong tie established between theology and Schmitt's theory (2015: 471–473). Allen attempts to criticize Peterson relying on Church Fathers (2017: 11) while Passos elucidates the nature of martyrdom described by Peterson in a sharp opposition to Schmitt's sovereign (2018: 488; 507–508).

5. Taubes was deeply influenced by Metz's 1997 leftist political theology project (163–164).

6. Taubes seems to misread Paul through Revelation where John couples the empire with the Antichrist (1 Jn. 2:22). I use a conventional reference style citing a New International Version translation supplemented by necessary Greek terms as derived from the Koine Greek New Testament edition. Both Bibles are included in the reference list. It is only in the 10th footnote do I mention Septuagint and Vulgate to highlight a linguistic shift.

and revolutionary power as analogous to his 'coming community' concept (Filauri, 2020: 125), allegedly found in Paul, that he dedicated *The Time That Remains* to Taubes and cited him throughout. In fact, some authors have regarded Agamben's scope as insufficient due to his bias toward Benjamin and Schmitt (Britt, 2010: 265)[7]. I will reconstruct and validate the whole-body argument Agamben implements by analyzing Paul and juxtaposing him with Schmitt's approach. Agamben's main take on Paul rejects identity politics[8]. However, Paul does not prescribe what Agamben regards to be necessary, namely, living without identity ("not not-Jew" (2005: 51)). Agamben devotes a considerable amount of time to elaborating the passage "ὡς μὴ" that he discovered in the speech of Paul delivered in Corinth:

> "To live in the Messiah signifies the expropriation of each and every juridical-factical property (circumcised/uncircumcised; free/slave; man/woman) under the form of the *as not*. This expropriation does not, however, found a new identity; the "new creature" is none other than the use and messianic vocation of the old (2 Cor. 5:17: "So if anyone is in the Messiah, the new creature [kaine ktisis]: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new")" (27).

For Agamben, one lives in a messianic condition after the crucifixion when all identities turn meaningless. In the epistle, Paul makes a very different point. The main topic of the 7th section of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is marriage. Generally, Paul says everyone should turn their attention toward themselves because in that case they can find a gift from God (χάρισμα ἐκ Θεοῦ (1 Cor. 7:7)). Therefore, mundane deeds should be replaced by spiritual riches and the search for God within. Though Paul makes several suggestions regarding preserving virginity or fidelity to a marriage partner, he still puts an accent on the indifference to all of these rules: "Are you pledged to a woman? Do not (μὴ) seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not (μὴ) look for a wife" (1 Cor. 7:27).

If someone follows Pauline Christ in the first century, they should not change their worldly attitudes: who has been engaged — do not divorce; who has been virgin — do not marry. While Agamben emphasizes the annihilation of identities, Paul stresses the senseless nature of society and the earthly experience. The phrase "Ὡς μὴ" in Rom. 7:30–31 implies the feeling of void accompanying the Second Coming. Hereby, weeping (κλαίοντες) means the same as not-weeping, while using (χρώμενοι) stands for the same as non-using (1 Cor. 7:30–31). Though Paul does not destroy all identities, he destroys the actual roles that existed before Christ's emergence. Agamben stops at 7:31 after which the main positive message begins: "I would like (Θέλω) you to be free from concern (ἀμερίμνους) (1 Cor. 7:32)". The motto of St. Paul's depicts a state of mind that guarantees

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7. Even more recent evidence has been presented demonstrating that Agamben misused Paul's texts without proper justification (Kniss, 2019: 209).

8. Cimino stresses Paul's notion of *simul*, stating that Agamben's project is destined to fail within Europe (2017: 297).

love of God without attachment (ἀμερίμνους)[9] to this world (κόσμος). People have a radically new identity within Christ's body and within the Christian community: our love aimed at the divine (ἀγάπη) should be the primary object of care (μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ Κυρίου (1 Cor. 7:34)). After all, Paul's approval of virginity rather than marriage directs us to the second problem that Agamben's reading conceals. Paul states that he instructs us how to avoid distraction (παραβάσεως (1 Cor. 7:36)), that is, worldly identities look valuable in terms of a comfortable union with God. I believe this fact constitutes the reason why Agamben does not mention the beginning of the "ὡς μὴ" construction: "I wish that all (πάντας) of you (ἀνθρώπους) were as (ὡς) I am (ἐμαυτόν) (1 Cor. 7:7)".

As the reader might remember, this quote comes from Agamben's interpretation of the Second Epistle to Corinthians in which he defends non-identity politics. However, Paul never proves the old (ἀρχαῖα) to be the same value as the new (καινά) (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul speaks not about messianic time itself: rather, he points to the baptism and the process of expiation that Christ has made possible. Agamben's trick is performed through the substitution of 'Christ' for 'Messiah'. It would not be a mistake in the case of Septuagint when its authors coined the Greek term "χριστός" for the Hebrew notion "mašíaḥ".[10] Paul refers to Christ as the divine son who has redeemed us from primordial sin (προπατορική αμαρτία). Like in the Epistle to Romans, Paul reputes that, in Adam, humanity dies, while in Christ mankind lives (1 Cor. 15:20–22). In the passage above, the apostle approves a possibility of eternal life through the crucifixion[11]. Moreover, in Christ, newborns are living in an open possibility of salvation and just behavior (1 Cor 5:18). As master of the ecclesia, Paul outlines the path that leads one to discover God in the depths of his heart (καρδία) (2 Cor. 5:11). A scheme of likeness is neither non-identity nor revolution. Christians should wait and remain the same (μείνῃ) until the Lord comes: they avoid disturbance to achieve spiritual harmony with God (1 Cor. 7:40). What is the relationship between the indifference and the imperial rule made obligatory by Roman laws? Agamben affirms Paul to be a passive trespasser of the law who contrasts "ἀγάπη" with "νόμος" (2005: 98). Despite the law being deactivated, humans should not break it. In a letter to the Romans, Paul preaches;

> "Everyone (Πᾶσα ψυχὴ) must submit (ὑποτασσέσθω) himself to the governing (ὑπερεχούσαις) authorities (ἐξουσίαις), for there is no authority (ἐξουσία) except that which God (Θεοῦ) has established. The authorities that exist (οὖσαι) have been established (τεταγμέναι) by God" (Rom. 13:1).

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9. Antonello demonstrates Agamben's profound error in *The Kingdom and The Glory* concerning the distinction "ζωή" and "βίος" within a Christian frame. Paul speaks of "ζωή" as a pure life free from any mundane attachment, and prefers it to "βίος", the people who do not know God (Antonello, 2019: 176).

10. Septuagint: Isa. 45 (Οὕτως λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύρῳ), Ex. 40 (καὶ λήμψῃ τὸ ἔλαιον τοῦ χρίσματος καὶ χρίσεις τὴν σκηνὴν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἁγιάσεις αὐτὴν καὶ πάντα τὰ σκεύη αὐτῆς), and 1 Kgs. 1 chapter (καὶ χρισάτω αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ Σαδωκ ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ Ναθαν ὁ προφήτης εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ισραηλ, καὶ σαλπίσατε κερατίνῃ καὶ ἐρεῖτε Ζήτω ὁ βασιλεὺς Σαλωμων). However, the substitution was not rendered in the Latin Vulgate based on the Hebrew original text (the last quote in Latin: et unguat eum ibi Sadoc sacerdos et Nathan propheta in regem super Israhel et canetis bucina atque dicetis vivat rex Salomon).

11. E.g., in 2 Cor 5:18, Paul speaks of reconciliation (καταλλάξαντος) with God by means of Christ's sacrifice.

Strangely enough, Agamben avoids this tough passage during his seminars (Welborn, 2015: xv)[12]. Some readers suppose that Paul prescribes subjugation to the authorities[13], whilst Agamben lacks knowledge of the anarchist reading of the fragment with which he could easily unite his interpretation[14]. In the end, Beatrice proves the fragment was a forgery made in the 2nd century. Paul uses the words "Πᾶσα ψυχὴ" in the context of celestial powers designated by "ἐξουσία" (angels), which is why the clergy combined the fragment on angels with that on tax paying (Rom. 13:6–7) to achieve practical aims (Beatrice, 1973). A brief historical and hermeneutical excursion will help to acknowledge Paul's main concern, that of salvation and spiritual angelic forces. Agamben's next line of argument leads to his reconsideration of the notion of community. He views it as a remnant free of any identity or predicate, even of any measure. (2005: 57)[15]. The epistle is also read by Schmitt. He supposes Jews to be excluded from salvation for their sins and disobedience,[16] and finds the state of exception separating Christians from non-Christians in Paul's corpus (2006: 59). Despite Taubes' victory in the dispute, I could only add Paul's phrase that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). Schmitt writes:

> "Its [Christian republic's] nomos was determined by the following divisions. The soil (Der Boden) of non-Christian, heathen peoples was Christian missionary territory (christliches Missionsgebiet); it could be allocated by papal order to a Christian prince (Fürsten) for a Christian mission" (1950: 27; 2006: 58).

One might think Schmitt is describing the Middle Ages, not Paul's epistles. He assumes that "the attachment to Rome signified a continuation of ancient orientations adopted by the Christian faith" (2006: 59), and traces ancient Christianity back to Paul and the *katechon* (60). Schmitt writes that Christians built their identity on the division of imperial soil to demarcate the land they could convert. While Schmitt may be right concerning the late papal agenda, he misreads the foundation of exception. Paul wants to profess Christianity even to Spain (Badiou, 2003: 28) while simultaneously unbinding

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12. We should do justice to Agamben, however: he mentions this passage once implying that obedience to political authority will be abolished "ὡς μὴ" by the deactivation (2005: 33). Defending his theory via equivocation, he still does not connect this passage with the Epistle to Corinthians, the fact that Welborn may read as an attempt to bypass the issue. Agamben's attitude is symptomatic of a leftist interpretation of Paul: Jennings finds it sufficient to say "that Paul is using terms that are perfectly recognizable in Roman political discourse" and "Paul's readers in Rome would recognize in these words the very words of the authorities" (2013: 32, 191). Such commonsense arguments only hinder Paul's intentions.

13. Theologians like Irenaeus (Adversus haereses), Origen (Contra Celsum), St. Thomas (1949; Marey, 2016) and contemporary scholars such as Clinton Morrison (2009) or Ernst Käsemann (1994) believe "ἐξουσίαις" to stand for earthly authorities as a part of the Christian state concept.

14. Barth writes that politics will be replaced with God's eschatological wrath in the first edition, and that the State is equivalent to the Devil in the second version of his bestseller (1968). I advise reading Rizzi's 2006 article for a more detailed account since my primary topic is different.

15. Welborn argues that Agamben is lacking firm ground in his theory of community without identity (2015: 66–67). Correspondingly, Harrison finds that the way Agamben approaches politics based on the Epistle to Romans is unclear (2019: 503). Yet. they fail to grasp the lack of textual evidence I strive to demonstrate pointing to Agamben's misreadings.

16. If one believes Taubes' account of their conversation (2013: 30).

the exception from the soil and empire. He speaks of a spiritual vocation, not a mundane one.

Returning to Agamben, the background of his thought is a small quote from Rom. 11:16 about "premise". While Agamben famously rejects Badiou's universalism found in Paul (2005: 52), the Italian thinker misunderstands the apostle right on this point. The remnant is viewed in an anti-elitist way since it refers to the community without identity. I cannot provide textual evidence to support his point. To the contrary, the apostle insists that God distributes salvation according to his grace (χάριτος) regardless of the deeds (ἔργων) people perform. Hence, God chooses (ἐκλογὴν) those who should expect salvation; it is written that "So too, at the present time (καιρῷ) there is a remnant (λεῖμμα) chosen (ἐκλογὴν) by grace (χάριτος). And if by grace (χάριτι), then it cannot be based on works (ἔργων); if it were, grace would no longer be grace" (Rom. 11:5–6).

The "Λεῖμμα" designates the remnant literally, that of a small group of devout believers strong in their faith (πίστις) who will be saved in God's eternal blessing. Furthermore, the quote does not contain "premise" in any sense: "ἀπαρχὴ" is an ancient term signifying "first fruit" which has deep Hebrew connotations in the Old Testament (Rom. 11:16). All sacrifices Yahweh asked the Jewish people to perform were first born calves of clean domesticated animals and new-born babies[17]. Paul subverts the model[18] because Jesus as the firstborn son of God was sacrificed for humanity during Pesach. Therefore, Paul speaks about the redemption of Original Sin, and the path of salvation for those who have accepted Christ's sacrifice. As I have demonstrated before, Agamben tends to omit crucial points described after the quotes he makes. In the 17th verse, Paul explains that "some of the branches were broken" ("τινες τῶν κλάδων ἐξεκλάσθησαν") referring to those who being sinful were excluded from heaven (Rom. 11:17). In contrast to Agamben's notion of a society without identities, this phrase represents spiritual exclusion.

Agamben and Schmitt versus the Antichrist

Katechon is the highest point of the controversy Agamben and Schmitt were involved in:

> "The *katechon* is therefore the force — the Roman Empire as well as every constituted authority — that clashes with and hides *katargesis*, the state of tendential lawlessness that characterizes the messianic, and in this sense delays unveiling the "mystery of lawlessness." The unveiling of this mystery entails bringing to light the inoperativity of the law and the substantial illegitimacy of each and every power in messianic time.
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> This is how the messianic is fulfilled in the clash between the two *parousiai*: between that of the *anomos*, who is marked by the working of Satan in every power [potenza], and that of the Messiah, who will render *energeia* inoperative in it. An

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17. Ex. 12 scholars have not come to a consensus regarding the historical rite of first-born children being sacrificed by their parents.

18. On the takeover of Easter in the New Testament, see the monograph written by Propp (1999: 459–461).

explicit reference is made here to I Corinthians 15:24: "Afterwards the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God and the father, when he will render inoperative all rule, and all authority [potesta] and power"); 2 Thess. 2 may not be used to found a "Christian doctrine" of power in any manner whatsoever" (Agamben, 2005: 111).

Schmitt is explicitly cited by Agamben as belonging to the mainstream of 2 Thess. readers (108–110). All of the preceding arguments constitute the ground for two different political eschatologies (7). Potentially, Agamben, who has been so well acquainted with Schmitt's corpus, attacks the following passage from the German thinker: "Not only fanatic sectarians but whole generation of pious Protestants and Greek-Orthodox Christians have seen in Rome the Antichrist or the Babylonian whore of the apocalypse" (Schmitt, 1996a: 3).

According to the German jurist, no Catholic or even the apostle himself would consider the empire to be the Antichrist. Agamben opposes Schmitt's inclination to reverse the formula, and restores anarchical Paul for whom the Antichrist is tantamount to empire. This step not only helps Agamben to break with the Catholic tradition represented by Schmitt but also undermines the movement of counter-revolutionary conservatives like Maistre[19] and Cortes who were anxious about the Antichrist (15). The German thinker connects Paul, the Catholic movement, monarchies, and counter-revolution which he contrasts with Bakunin's political theology[20].

> "I do not believe that any historical concept (Begriff) other than *katechon* would have been possible for the original Christian faith. The belief that a restrainer (Aufhalter) holds back the end of the world provides the only bridge between the notion of an eschatological paralysis of all human events and a tremendous historical monolith like that of the Christian Empire of the Germanic kings" (1950: 29, 2006: 60), and;

> "The emperor's office was inseparable from the work of the *katechon*, with concrete tasks and missions (konkreten Aufgaben und Missionen). This was true of a monarchy or a crown (Königtum oder einer Krone), i.e., of rule over a particular Christian land and its people (christliches Land und sein Volk)" (31, 2006: 62).

Schmitt identifies the Pauline *katechon*[21] actual for Christian Empire[22] with the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. For Schmitt, representation as a fundamental

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19. Filippov has noted that whereas Maistre has an idea of divine monarchy, identical with Schmitt's project, Schmitt still diverts from Maistre's position (2012: 233–234).

20. Meier illuminates one of the tenets of such a sharp opposition between left- and right-wing philosophers. For religious faith, no good human nature could exist because human evilness which results in the original sin stems from an innate disdain for God's sovereign power (2011: 78–81; 84). This heretical exposition permits Schmitt to describe the political nature of any divine enemy in secular terms (120; 159–162).

21. In his book, Meier shows that a restrainer and the Antichrist are empty signifiers, which depend on an enemy defined by current political authorities (2011: 120; 161).

22. Paul's concept of empire has created a controversy that has yet to be resolved. On the one hand, Wright believes Paul contrasts Christ with Caesar to implicitly reject all that is imperial (2013: 1283; 1298), and White links Paul with Daniel's vision of four kingdoms (2009: 330). On the other hand, Barclay maintains

element of true sovereignty[23] arises from *katechon,* which gives theological legitimacy to the exercise of personal power (2005: 30)[24]. Catholicism was a model for the politics of decision favored by Schmitt (Hollerich, 2011: XXII)[25]. He even laments that the church had been too absorbed in faith and lost its political authority (Schmitt, 1996a: 23). In order to hold back the Antichrist until the *parousia*, the church must commit to a counter-revolution that would return her to God's law-giving formula (36). In a brief sketch, I have shown how Schmitt inserts St. Paul into these right-wing ecclesial politics. Therefore, when Agamben re-appropriates Paul, he shows the discrepancy between his revolutionary non-identity message and the "religion of Jesus" (2005: 126–127). Schmitt tries to read Paul as the first source of Church-State unity legitimization in his counter-revolutionary project (37).

The Second Epistle to Thessalonians is often regarded as a work that scholarship distrusts, simply because it looks different in contrast to the first epistle (Colin, 2004). Moreover, the epistle has a significant resemblance to the late apocalyptic style of John's Revelation. Whatever its authenticity, let us take a look at the apostle's short message. Paul refers to someone called a man of lawlessness (ἀνομίας) who brings destruction (ἀπωλείας) (2 Thess. 2:3). That man exalts himself above God, and pretends to be divine. The combination of the two following lines suggests that Paul talks about moral decay, not lawlessness. In claiming a false identity, this hideous person dishonors God. Therefore, Paul does not describe anarchy in terms of law but in terms of impurity and unimaginable blasphemy (Colin, 2004: 228). Then, Paul states that the mystery is present and somebody restrains (κατέχων) it (2 Thess. 2:7). The Second Coming precedes God destroying the "ἄνομος", who operates through Satan's orders (2 Thess. 2:8).

There is no explanation in Agamben's argument why "ἄνομος" will be destroyed by God's breath, or what is God's purpose in destroying a utopian community devoid of oppression and exception. Moreover, Colin highlights another collision: Satan becomes "a highly implausible restrainer" who stimulates his own destruction via *parousia* (2004: 229). The fact that his removal also initiated the rebellion misses the point Paul makes. Agamben's research rests on the long tradition of political philosophy based on Hobbes (Stasis: 2nd lecture). As for Leviathan, Agamben insists on Hobbes' belief that God pos-

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that empire is a peripheral phenomenon, while the main battle takes place between cosmic powers like grace and sin (2011: 383–384). Kim does not find any anti-imperial agenda in Paul's writings (2008: 66). Paul rarely remembers the empire and tends to neglect contemporary political phenomena like the crisis of succession (Thate, 2014: 213; 237). Heilig takes an intermediate position claiming that the empire was not an essential enemy of Paul, though he criticized it indirectly (2015: 157–158). Our own interest in contemporary philosophy does not allow us to decide who is right in the dispute between Bible scholars: our Paul is close to the second opinion since excerpts from Agamben's reading do not present a coherent line of anarchical Pauline theory. In case of further interest, I suggest reading Heilig's full work containing a balanced review of the previous research on Paul's attitude to the empire.

23. Vatter emphasizes that for Schmitt, who inherited theology from Hobbes, religion is determined by certain governmental policies (2014: 259–260).

24. Geréby observes how Schmitt contradicts "The Concept of the Political" where he claims that universal imperial peace would be impossible, so the foundational Catholic principles are replaced with ethnic particularism: his Catholicism originates in the Grand Inquisitor negatively depicted by Dostoevsky as Jesus' executor and restrainer (2021: 29; 33; 46).

25. In Schmitt's view, reality is synonymous with a decision (Ball, 2013: 76).

sesses sufficient sovereignty to organize the eternal order and glorified kingdom against the worldly sovereign who is under the rule of the Antichrist (2015: 66–70). Will it be *anomos*? It is hard to say yes. Could Schmitt win the battle of absentees if Agamben fails?

I would not agree that either of them was right. Schmitt, like many church fathers before him (Tertullianus, 1960: Chapter XXIV; Origenes, 1899: Chapter 2.30) discovers the political theology in Paul that legitimizes the authority of the Roman Empire through the Antichrist and apocalypse. Nevertheless, it is highly improbable that the terrestrial society responsible for the crucifixion curbs the revolt of the Antichrist against God. Agamben seems to be correct in not identifying Paul as a loyal collaborator with the empire. There is no other evidence in the New Testament to identify the *katechon* and empire (Peerbolte, 1997: 142). Figures like Caligula and Nero cannot pretend to be Orthodoxy's defenders. Furthermore, Colin indicates that the fall of the empire would serve as the third sign of the apocalypse, whereas Paul mentions only two of them (2004: 229). To achieve the result he wants, Schmitt, as Agamben did after him, de-contextualizes Paul. I will return, once again, to Taubes who wrote that Agamben disregarded his humble claims that Paul forbade one to "stand out" until the Second Coming (2003: 45; 54) and went on with sweeping assertions. Taubes' statement that Schmitt's *katechon* was politicized and secularized demonstrates his incisiveness in dealing with Paul (43)[26]. The aim of Agamben's work is to attack Schmitt, so he is attracted to thought that is both radical and lacks support in the text. He still misreads Paul as Schmitt did before him. Paul does not praise or condemn the empire: he remains indifferent to it and is focused on God inside[27]. Thus, Paul is not a valuable source for citing in the projects of 'Coming Community' or 'Counter-Revolution'. Contrary to Schmitt, Agamben correctly describes Paul and the ecclesia, though he has not fully grasped the apolitical nature of Paul's words. It can even be said that Paul's indifference undermines any political interpretation of the *Katechon*.

Finally, I need to write something positive about the fragment derived from Paul. Contemporary scholars either dismiss the possibility of the interpretation due to a fact of forgery (Peerbolte, 1997: 149), or present ingenuous solutions like Colin who assumes that Pseudo-Paul cites Daniel and alludes to the archangel Michael with wide and rich textual evidence provided (2004: 243). The epistle bestows a tool for textual critique that destroys both attempts to coin Pauline political theology. I will continue the investigation in the next chapter by taking a look at the other side of the argument.

Schmitt versus Peterson allied with the Cappadocians

One should approach *The Time That Remains* and *The Kingdom and the Glory* as a sequence: first, Agamben shows how Paul professes a revolutionary political theology, then demonstrates what happened when Christians after Paul organized terrestrial and celestial hierarchies around the Trinitarian economy (οἰκονομία) of the salvation (σωτηρία)

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26. Though I disagree with Taubes since he reacts positively to Agamben's re-insertion of Paul's *mysterium* against the "amorality of its theological institutionalization".

27. A new identity Badiou grasps (2003: 13).

(2011: 29–30). According to Agamben, the Trinity was a political instrument divided between God's glorified supremacy and divine management of redemption (11–14). Outlining the unity of economics and theology in the early church period, Agamben criticizes both Peterson[28] for pure theology and Schmitt for pure politics (66). Agamben's attack becomes especially interesting if one remembers that Schmitt accuses Peterson slightly differently. Peterson is the point where long-standing rivals agree. Schmitt argues that the Trinity dogma formulated by Gregory of Nazianzus contains a kind of "στάσις" inside that can be analogically transferred to civil societies (2008: 122). Along with a famous argument regarding Gregory of Nazianzus through which Geréby criticized Fellechner[29], Peterson gives a hint as to which distinction better captures the issue of Trinitarian political theology. Eunomius and Gregory of Nyssa's theologies are only sketched by Peterson, but they could be a tool for dissolving the Schmitt-Agamben line of attack:

> "That Arianism in all its varieties is interested in the concept of μοναρχία (μοναρχία-Begriff)[30] is evident. Eunomius speaks about it …" (1931: 560), and;

> "But with that, as Gregory of Nyssa says, we rise above the opposition of metaphysical monism and pluralism (des metaphysischen Monismus und Pluralismus), above Judaism and paganism, and arrive at the Gregory Nazianzus' idea of a true order that is beyond all ἀταξία denoted by the terms (die Begriffe) anarchy, polyarchy, and monarchy" (561).

In the apology, Eunomius employs terminology borrowed from politics and Greek moral philosophy. He describes the subordination of the Son to Father in terms of "δύναμις" that denotes a political power in general; "μοναρχία", "ὑπεροχή", and "βουλή", which have clear political connotations, are also exploited by an Arian supporter (Barnes, 1998: 60; 64; 66). He depicts the Son as the so-called "δημιουργός", as the power of the Father who has him to perform certain actions like creation. It is significant that Eunomi-

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28. Moreover, Peterson is accused by Agamben of supporting antisemitism on behalf of his traditional Catholic hostility toward Jews (Peterson, 2011c: 31; Agamben, 2011: 8). Nonetheless, Schmidt dismisses the attack stating that Peterson defends Israel several times as a chosen people whose salvation is necessary (Schmidt, 2014: 201; Peterson, 2011c: 32; 36; see also Hollerich, 2011: xxiii; xxvii–xxviii).

29. Fellechner finds that theology exists independently of politics in the Cappadocian fathers' corpus (1978: 53–55). In Geréby's opinion, Schmitt has not grasped the notion of Trinity which is in sharp contrast with monotheism, polytheism, and a subsequent Latin tradition represented by Augustine, Boethius, and St. Thomas (2008: 18; 21; 30). Plantinga's research supports the argument proposed by Geréby relying on crucial differences between Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine who represent Eastern and Western theologies respectively (1986: 334). The fact that not all scholars agree on Gregory of Nazianzus drives me to search for additional sources necessary for a definite conclusion. For instance, Allen, who endorses Schmitt, does not see Gregory overthrowing the divine monarchy of Arians (2017: 18–20). Although Allen is prone to making mistakes due to his ignorance of the fact that Philo broke with Pseudo-Aristotle's "De mundo", Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine disavowed terrestrial monarchy, the widespread of subordinationism took place in the 2nd century AD, and monotheism was not equivalent to Trinity (11; 13; 15).

30. Note the confluence of notions like "Begriff" and "Monarchie" used by both Schmitt and Peterson through the years. Peterson attacks political theology targeting the sociology of concepts expressed in *Der Begriff des Politischen.*

us gives the name of "μοναρχία" to a divine authority that structures the subordination of Holy Spirit to Son and Son to Father (Eunomius, 1987: Chapter 27)[31]. Hence, Eunomius makes the step toward political categories which he carries into theological matters[32]. Furthermore, his theory allows one to speak of any ruler as having a divine predicate because political concepts are appropriate to the Godhead.

A number of articles written by Steenbuch (2015: 579–582), Bozinis (2018: 278; 282), and Bentley (2001: 65–67) have examined how Gregory's distancing from political Arian theology purifies key notions of Eunomius. Gregory would have resembled an ordinary Cappadocian Father if he had not delved deeper in his apolitical refutation of Eunomius. In Gregory's view, Eunomius' subordinationism brings in polytheism which Gregory demonstrates to be anarchy (ἀναρχίαν) and democracy (δημοκρατικὴν αὐτονομίαν) completely disavowed by the Bishop of Nyssa (Gregory of Nyssa, 1960a: Chapter 484, 1960b: Chapter 3). The various pagans who believe in the plurality (διαφόρους) of gods are complicit in the same mistake of failing to see the true Godhead (1960b: Chapter 6). He underscores that subordinationism has a tremendous consequence: if Jesus had been created (κτίσεως), people would have struggled in an eternal war for power (κράτος) (1960b: Chapter 4). Why should people be subordinated (ὑποχείριον) to someone equal (ἰσομοιρεῖν) to them in nature?[33] Gregory's proof continues as follows:

> "Such a thing resembles tyranny, when power (κράτος) is given not to superiority (ὑπεροχῇ) of being, but with nature remaining equal (ὁμοτίμῳ): the creation is divided into servant and master, so that one part of it rules (ἄρχειν), while the other is subordinate (ὑποχείριον), this honour having been won by luck, as in a raffle (διακληρώσεως), by the one who was allotted advancement above his equals" (1960a: Chapter 526, 2018;[34] : Chapter 526).

Bozinis finds out that Gregory refers in the quote above to the theory of stasis articulated by Aristotle in his critique of democracy (2018: 288–289). Returning to the original Old Testament purpose of the verse "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness" (Gen. 1:26)[35], Gregory believes no inequality is possible among people created in the image and likeness of God. He even indicates that human governments (δυναστεῖαι) undergo changes and revolutions (μεταβολάς) due to the lack of foundation in the subordination of one man to another (Gregory of Nyssa, 1960a: Chapter 527). Having demonstrated

31. The translator Richard Paul Vaggione obstructs the political connotation implied by Eunomius via translating "sole supremacy" instead of "monarchy".

32. E.g., a key notion of Greek political discourse — "ισότητα" or "equality" — is exploited by Eunomius to shape the theological model of subordination (1987: Chapter 26).

33. Gregory distinguished himself from most church fathers by abolishing slavery, the fact that seemed consistent with both his theological and political views. He reveals that even the Son did not become a slave (Maspero, 2010: 684).

34. I use two modern critical translations made by Stuart George Hall with corresponding Greek terminological apparatus taken from Werner Jaeger's critical edition of the original text.

35. The formula of image and likeness was a part of court customs during pharaohs, and then applied exclusively to kings. The authors who wrote Genesis democratized what was an elitist sense of the phrase through the universal creation of Adam and Eve (Sarna, 2001: 12).

that revolutions happen because of unnatural tyrannical coercion, Gregory implicitly excludes an internal war within the Godhead.

Gregory of Nyssa clarifies how a Christian should perceive a divine Trinitarian monarchy without recourse to a terrestrial analogy. Established monarchy (μοναρχίας δόγμα) — not tyranny — is only possible if there is no split between different orders (μὴ εἰς διαφόρους ἀρχὰς), contrary to Eunomius upholding the hierarchy of Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and humanity at the very bottom. The Sole God (μίαν θεότητα) is the only legitimate ruler without any analogy (Chapter 531).

To sum up, Gregory of Nyssa destroys both Eunomius' political discourse of the divine and Schmitt's ambitions to transmit the notion of *stasis* from the Trinity to humanity. Using Eunomius' language, Gregory shows that most of the notions with political connotations of subjection are incompatible with the monarchial Trinity[36]. Moreover, this fact prevents the war that was possible for Arius and Eunomius, since all men are considered equal under the rule of God to whom monarchy is the most appropriate term. Gregory's anarchism[37] obstructs Agamben's attempt to establish his own history of Christian economics; the *homoousian* Trinity offers no account for any established hierarchy[38].

Totaler Krieg: Schmitt versus Peterson and Augustine. Peterson versus Eusebius and Schmitt

In the end, the Eusebius-Augustine controversy stands as a focal point for Peterson's apology for Christian theology (2011b: 103–105). In his view, while Eusebius glorifies the Roman Empire, Augustus, and Constantine for maintaining peace and preparing for the Second Coming (92–93), Augustine dissolves the peace of nations (pax gentiles) by asserting that only divine peace (pax Dei) could be completely realized as a gift of God (105). Schmitt argues that Peterson draws a political delimitation between friend and enemy without textual proof on the side of Augustine (2008: 94–95; 99; 100; 102). One of the ingenious and plausible solutions was provided by Taubes who revealed that Schmitt had not sufficiently grasped the secret message (encrypted by Peterson) regarding the danger of consolidating with Nazism (2013: 28). My point is not that Taubes simplifies the

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36. His charge stems then, in part, from divine infinity by comparison to which Eunomius' analogical and ordinary language is inferior (Fortuin, 2019: 72–73). Gregory instead recommends the usage of apophatic language free from mundane analogies (77).

37. One should be cautious in adapting such a word to describe Gregory as Steenbuch does. Gregory favors monarchy instead of anarchy maintaining that terrestrial power could not avoid unnatural corruption (Gregory of Nyssa, 1960b: Chapter 3). On top of that, being a man of official position, he never calls for any actions to overthrow the empire.

38. Hostility with which Gregory perceives Eunomius' political theology may determine the absence of Gregory's theology in Agamben: he refers to him only twice in the whole body of the text (Agamben, 2011: 12; 59–60). Agamben did not grasp the meaning of Gregory's ontological use of "δύναμις" excluding the economy of salvation. It is not just Gregory's universalism that differs from the picture presented by Agamben, but his social agenda to promote equality is also theologically grounded.

issue, but I want to present source-based evidence that Peterson was wrong considering Eusebius[39] and right considering Augustine[40].

Peterson, like Burckhardt before him, represented Eusebius in an unfair caesaropapist fashion, which Agamben also makes use of (2011: 10). Peterson lacks sufficient support in this case despite being the source of inspiration to outline a further opposition between Eunomius and Gregory. Nevertheless, Schmitt did not deviate from a politicized image of Eusebius either. Presenting two classes of Christians, Eusebius himself prefers an ascetic and holy life to mundane ordinary existence (Eusebius, 1920: 48–50)[41]. This corresponds to the theory endorsed by Jewish exegete Philo[42]. To some extent, Eusebius portrays the empire as the 4th kingdom that will be destroyed in accordance with Dan. 2:40, associated with Thess. 2.7 (Hollerich, 2019: 479), whilst Constantine was only a part of providential history that the bishop abandoned in the last commentary on Isaiah (Hollerich, 1990: 323; Rapp, 1998: 687). Overall, Eusebius is a figure too dubious to be picked up by Peterson in contrast with Eunomius. What is it about Augustine?

For both Peterson and Schmitt, *De civitate Dei* was of primary importance: suddenly, the latter does not use early Augustine's writings that contain more politics resonating with his own theory[43]. Augustine, while fighting the Donatists in North Africa, believed that the empire must suppress heretics in order to achieve religious peace[44]. He even went so far as to claim the Donatists to be the Antichrist about whom Paul and John tell about in the Bible (Potestaì, Rizzi, 2012: 65). Before the sack of Rome by Alaric, Augustine praises Theodosius I for the empire's Christianization (Markus, 1970: 85), though he never concedes eternal peace or the union between the emperor and the Son as his predecessors (Eusebius, Prudentius, John Chrysostom, Jerome) upheld (57). This last circumstance proves that Schmitt's argument designed to contextualize Augustine after 410 does not reach its goal. Referring back to the main source over which the dispute was fought, I believe that *De civitate Dei* resembles Paul's indifference to worldly affairs. Augustine dissolves the previous alliance between the empire and Christianity (Papadopou-

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39. Some scholars even believe Eusebius and Augustine are not different in having the same vision of theological politics transcending worldly organizations (Hollerich, 2021: 11).

40. Contrary to previous sections, I almost do not cite Agamben in this chapter because the Italian philosopher is not frequent in referring to Augustine: I have been able to find a few fragments from *The Highest Poverty* devoted to Augustine's monastic rules (Agamben, 2013: 29; 36). Agamben tends not to politicize Augustine, unlike Paul and the Cappadocians, while his followers make some attempts which I will try to evaluate at the end.

41. Despite being so praised in the bulk of Eusebius' works (1890: 582–590; 591–592; 690–691; 826–830; 887–889), Constantine would have belonged to the second class of Christians for waging many wars and retaining pagan symbols such as *Sol Invictus* (Siecienski, 2017).

42. Like Hebrews or Essenes being a pious minority among Jews, a small portion of Christians constitute the spiritual elite who have abandoned bodily pleasures at all (Eusebius, 2003: 136–138; 169–172; Hollerich, 1990: 318; 2021: 37).

43. As Augustine matures, he develops a more skeptical position towards power and empire (Brown, 2013: 146).

44. Sketching the theory of just war that St. Thomas would endorse in the Middle Ages, Augustine distinguishes malevolent and benevolent coercion depending on the ends (Augustinus, 1898: epistula 93.6; 93.16.; Brown: 2013: 136).

los, 2021: 178–180). He outlines not a battle between earthly and ecclesial powers as later popes and scholastics would portray his magnum opus in their fight against monarchial supremacy over investiture[45], but an eschatological warfare where a society (civitas) represents a spiritual unity created according to two types of love (*caritas*) (Weithman, 2001: 235; 237. Dyson, 2001: 179)[46].

Though Peterson and Schmitt have highlighted the significance of the eternal peace (pax aeterna) in Augustine[47], they have missed some pieces of the puzzle. Augustine believes politics and theology to be different areas of personal activity. As in the case of the Roman Empire, politics motivates people to strive for glory (cupido gloriae)[48] and commit sins (peccatum) (Augustinus, 1899: Chapters 5.12; 14.28). The earthly city seeking for some good out of pragmatic reasons tends to persist in wars and annexations (Chapter 15.4). Christian people working for salvation should resist (resistitur) earthly goods that have the end (finis) of gaining glory (Ibid.). Glory makes it necessary to love vain goods and even kill your relatives; in this fashion, Augustine describes the emergence of the terrestrial city (civitas terrena) since the moment when Cain and Romulus, full of the will for power (regnum) and glory murdered their brothers (Chapters 15.1; 22.6). Therefore, Christ's first coming was not connected with the blessing of Augustus and the empire; on the contrary Jesus helped the true religion (vera religione) to spread, and not the imperial expansion to grow (Chapter 4.29).

In this end, God distributes his kingdom (regnum) irrespective of the values the rulers might have (ipse dat regna terrena et bonis et malis) (Chapter 4.21). People obey any power over them; pilgrims from the heavenly city obey the laws to sustain the peace (pax) between both societies (Chapter 19.17)[49]. Politics for God is meaningless: people who have strong faith cannot change their attitudes under a rule of a pagan king. Moreover, Christian blessed rulers such as Constantine and Theodosius were given the power to reveal that not every earthly dominion is evil and immoral (Chapters 5.25; 5.35). Both cities

45. Schmitt is a representative of Political Augustinism — which has nothing to do with Augustine claiming all earthly cities to be contingent — widespread after Gelasius introduced the division between "auctoritas" and "potestas" standing for the church and the state respectively (Sabète, 2011: 130–137). Scholars have also become victims of contamination between Augustinism and Augustine: for instance, ignoring the late interpretation of Gelasius and scholars' general consent (Brown, 2013: 322; Cranz, 1950: 217–219; Marey, 2017a: 55–56). Berlanga believes the separation of sacred and secular powers was designed by Augustine (2016: 11; 19; for a general exposition of Berlanga's monograph see Marey, 2017b: 127–128). He is not alone among researchers in this regard (Böckenförde, 1981: 237).

46. Moreover, Weithman writes that Augustine, having attacked Cicero, changes the Roman notion of *civitas*: he replaces the common good and justice with God worship (Weithman, 2001: 241). Augustine subverts Cicero's theory since no genuine *res publica* is possible on Earth (Markus, 1970: 65).

47. In *Christ as Imperator,* Peterson finds out that Augustine alters the tense from "dedi" to "dabit" and substitutes Virgil's Caesar with Christus Imperator, a fact that remains unnoticed by Schmitt (2011a: 145).

48. Augustine's attitude toward *gloria* allows me to make the case against Agamben's political theology of liturgy and glory. Augustine connects glory with the terrestrial and sinful nature of humans who, being consumed by mundane deeds, remain ignorant of divine love.

49. Exegeting Rom. 13:1–7, Augustine speaks of human *"potestas"* and rejects *"cupiditas"*. He equates "potestas" with the power of the soul achieved by grace of God since after the fall men could do only evil being consumed by *"cupiditas"* (Rizzi, 2007: 233). He neutralizes the quote which was early read in favor of terrestrial authorities eliminating thus Evangelic political theology constructed by church fathers.

are intertwined on Earth and will be separated upon the Second Coming (Chapter 11.1)[50]. Therefore, Christians should not destroy political institutions and find salvation even if they are labeled lawbreakers (Chapter 19.17). God gave the Romans a kingdom (regnum dedit) as to other nations, as to the Jewish people: none of them were chosen due to their political identity since spiritual citizenship does not cross the earthly one demarcated by the kings (Chapter 5.31). God brings happiness (felicitas) by his call for people to be saved by his gift and election (felicitatem vero non dat nisi bonis) (Chapter 4.32).

Points taken from Augustine bear a close resemblance with Paul regarding the call, election, love, and indifference when rendered in Latin. With the book's progression, this similarity gains momentum. Augustine directly cites Paul maintaining that the main virtue (virtus) is a personal conscience (conscientiae suae) which subverts the chase for glory. Glory may come only after virtue as good people behave after being saved by God (gloriam quae a solo Deo est non quaerentes) (Chapter 5.12). Paul's words that people should seek God in their hearts (in corde) are equal in fact to Augustine's claim that mundane glory diverts us away from spiritual love (amor) (Chapters 5.14; 5.18). Augustine deepens Paul's approach: the law (lex) depends on people. Good people convert even death (mors) into some kind of good (bonum), whilst vicious human beings transmute the law into malfunctioning evil (malum) (Chapter 13.5). In light of the divine word that justifies the Christian love of God, the law becomes unsatisfactory[51].

One may refute our elaboration of Augustine's apolitical theology by stating that we do not provide any direct evidence. However, fighting against all the aspects of Roman paganism, Augustine challenges Varro's division between three theologies, namely fabled, natural, and civil (fabulosi, naturali, et civili) (Chapter 6.5)[52]. Here, Augustine aligns himself with a long-established Christian tradition of criticizing Varro that Tertullian (Tertullianus, 1954: II.1) and Eusebius (2003: 57–59) support as well. None of them are aware of the fact that Varro and Scaevola agree that political theology adjusted to a polis is inferior to what Varro believes to be the true natural religion of philosophers (Fortin, 1980: 248). In addition to Augustine allying himself with the mainstream, Fortin provides another piece of evidence why Augustine denounces Varro: he avoids contemporary pagan rites and politics and refers instead to such an old and unpopular source as *Antiquitatis rerum divinarum* so as not to offend Romans (255). By knowing this, we can better understand his lack of interest in the Roman Empire.

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50. Only Heaven could be the *"ecclesia perfecta"* transcending earthly congregations (Meconi, 2014: 251; 254).

51. Augustine summarizes the point in *De Libero Arbitrio*: political law (lex sociatis) does not function according to the divine will (Augustinus, 1956: Chapter 1.5.13), while eternal law (lex aeterna) governs all of creation. In his early exegesis, the bishop of Hippo speculates that law stimulates committing sins (peccatum) and since the moment of Original Sin the free will of humans needs some blessing (gratia) from above where the Divine law (lex Dei) rules (1971: Chapters 12; 34).

52. Among continental philosophers engaged with Church Fathers, only Lyotard was concerned with Augustine's desire to abstain from all mundane politics and public events, especially theatrical performances. The French thinker criticized the bishop for his dismissive attitude and gave credit to Varro (1974: 7–10). Lyotard, though, is unaware that Varro is close to Augustine in his critical attitude towards the imperial pantheon.

Finally, Peterson and Schmitt ignore that Augustine developed an ingenious solution to the *katechon* problem (Peerbolte, 1997: 138). While the bishop of Hippo makes false assertions concerning the similarity between Paul and John, he writes that the empire-version or Nero-account seem dubious and esoteric: he feels the same lack of justification we have expressed in the 3rd section (Augustinus, 1899: Chapter 20.19). One would be surprised not to find Augustine's independent version of the *katechon* due to his sincere statement: "I absolutely confess I do not know what he said (Ego prorsus quid dixerit me fateor ignorare)" (Ibid.). The inexorable argument of Augustine is that all sense is reduced to the Antichrist preceding the *Parousia*. It may surprise some readers to learn that Augustine would not have embraced the Emperor-Antichrist theory after criticizing the Roman Empire. As a result, he provides a neutral eschatological meaning to a symbol that has been exploited by both hostile and friendly Rome church fathers[53]. Augustine does not get involved in politics at all: the body of *De civitate Dei* is apologetically directed to protect Christianity. As Markus writes, "It [the empire] is theologically neutral" (1970: 55). The *ecclesia* does not represent the divine city to which everyone finds a path through faith and God's grace. Therefore, Augustine refrains from eschatological politics; if one recalls Schmitt speculating on the decline of Rome, geopolitical surroundings, and barbarians, Augustine would look like a madman not exploiting *katechon* against the empire and pagans. Augustine and Paul both asserted that a pious Christian must stay indifferent to the mundane and save the love (caritas) of God in their inner heart. Augustine's simplicity and frankness overwhelm theories proposed by Schmitt, Peterson, Taubes, and Agamben, who have all mistakenly decontextualized Christian books.

Even if Kaufman presents Agamben and Augustine as allies based on revolutionary potential of refugees and spiritual pilgrimage (2019: 24; 48; 65), and even if Peck describes the similarity in their descriptions of sovereignty (2015: 74; 78), I should reject their claims because they contain a profound fallacy; they assume that Augustine was a political theologian. However, they fail to demonstrate any evidence for his politics of pilgrimage or critique of sovereignty. Moreover, to correct Peterson once again with some of his hints (2011b: 101), Orosius would be a better example of a political theologian whom Augustine assails. He argued, as an Augustinian disciple, that divine Providence allowed the empire to keep the faith, persecution to cease, and the Caesars to be compared to God (Marcus, 1970: 161–162). Repercussions of Orosius' views constitute Augustine's disenchanted neutrality toward power, empire, and the earthly church (54). The above reading highlights Schmitt and Agamben's vulnerability to Augustine's complex ideas, while Peterson misreads Eusebius.

Conclusion

We have provided three different cases of theology (namely Paul, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine) which are free of and even hostile to politics. Paul subverts Agamben's and

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53. According to O'Donovan, Augustine waits for *parousia,* spiritually transforms society, and refrains from making political statements (1996: 82–83).

Schmitt's theories of *katechon* that are essential both for revolution or for retaining the status quo. In presenting the clear proof of Peterson's account of Trinity opposed to monotheism and terrestrial monarchy, Gregory rebukes Eunomius' politicization of theology and his use of divine analogies. By abstaining from *gloria* and politicization of *katechon,* Augustine reaffirms Peterson's choice against Schmitt.

The intention of this paper was not to defend Peterson, whereas it rebukes the left and right political theologies of Schmitt and Agamben: Peterson misinterprets Eusebius and remains ambivalent toward the Cappadocians and Orosius, as well. I have presented evidence of several arguments he could have improved. Over and above this, Peterson promotes his vision of public theology endorsed by the church that my present research cannot support. My objective was to demonstrate that most of the claims made to politicize certain Christian figures ignore theology that is essentially removed from politics and the public sphere. There seems to be an inevitable gap separating the Greek and Latin early theological tradition from such Catholics as Schmitt and Peterson or secular philosophers like Agamben.

I dare hope that the negative result I have achieved will open a wider horizon for the following debates: was the failure of Christian political theology caused by the inappropriate sources that were chosen? As medieval political theology became a legitimate topic among scientists studying kings' or Popes' bodies, liturgies, or sanctity, the problem described above now awaits a new consideration. At this stage, I could only conclude — and thus promoting further research — the war over Christian political theology did not take place.

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Карл Шмитт, Эрик Петерсон и Джорджо Агамбен: война за христианскую политическую теологию

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Власть и ее источники — вечные вопросы политической философии. Один из вариантов легитимации власти — это политическая теология, то есть использование секуляризованных концептов в политических целях. XX век был наполнен спорами о политической теологии. В статье рассматривается только ее воплощение в христианстве, сконструированное Карлом Шмиттом и Джорджо Агамбеном. Будучи теоретическими оппонентами, оба мыслителя отстаивали собственные проекты, критикуя главного «врага», Эрика Петерсона. Если Шмитт защищал христианство как основание для государственного *status quo*, а Агамбен выступал провозвестником грядущего сообщества вне идентичности, то Петерсон считал, что догматы христианства (Троица, Второе пришествие и т.п.) лишают политическое господство смысла. Большинство исследователей стремились изучить и оценить уровень теоретической

аргументации оппонентов, игнорируя вклад самого Агамбена. В статье предлагается иной путь, предполагающий последовательный анализ всех цитируемых упомянутыми мыслителями текстов (Ап. Павел, Евсевий, Евномий, Григорий Нисский, Августин). На основе исследовательской литературы и собственных философско-филологических реконструкций доказывается проблематичный статус тезисов Шмитта и Агамбена. Оба философа злоупотребляют, как и Петерсон в отношении Евсевия, вольными переводами и желанием внедрить в текст иной эпохи собственные идеи, будь то модель теологически обоснованного суверенитета или упразднение государства и насилия. Детальный анализ позволяет продемонстрировать «негативный» итог: христианскую политическую теологию нельзя построить на тех источниках, которые для политических философов оставались конвенциональными. Работа призывает к новому витку дискуссии: является ли критика христианской политической теологии следствием необоснованного выбора источников Шмиттом, Петерсоном и Агамбеном или же результатом несовместимости христианства с политической теологией?

Ключевые слова: κατέχον, христианская политическая теология, μοναρχία, felicitas, δύναμις, gloria, Римская империя, civitas Dei