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PAPER

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St. Augustine

Augustine Aurelius (354-430) was a church father, who has influenced the thinking of most medieval scholars. He was born in North Africa and studied rhetoric in Carthage. Later on he was a teacher as well as in Carthage and in Milan. Augustine's way to Christianity went through Manicheism, scepticism and Neoplatonism. It was an influence by bishop Ambrosius that Augustine became a Christian. Augustine worked as a bishop in a town of Hippo.

St. Augustine was a religious thinker who contrasted nearly every subject to the Bible. He took many themes and views from the philosophy of Antiquity and included them in his Christian worldview. Augustine has dealt moral questions unsystematically within religious and metaphysical questions. The most remarkable works are Confessions (Confessiones) and City of God (De Civitate Dei). The concept of government power has had a great historical influence on later thinking. Because of him the value of moral responsibility against the government comes more important and it is via Luther even against the church. Secondly, the thoughts have had historical influence on how popes and emperors have fought over the superior power in Christendom.

Augustine read the Bible believing it to be true. He did not use the term state when he described two kingdoms. Augustine is by all means a problematic thinker. It is somehow useless to adjust this thought to modern contexts because the current governmental system and political activity realise in a very different and wider entity. This does not mean that there is a not similarity and the thoughts cannot be adjusted to modern times. Although his importance is not that powerful than in medieval times, his thoughts have maintained important. The problematic aspect of the interpretation is Augustine did not write any systematic responses to the themes that have later on described as political. Some thinkers have although seen similarities in his works. The works have inspired philosophers and theologians, for example about the relation between church and state, and about the justified war. It is important not to identify Augustine's communities with the political entities.

The closest example of the mundane society for him was Rome. The situation has started to change remarkably in the 500th century Rome. The emperor did not have *de jure* power. Rome was governed by a combination of a senate, officials and soldiers. The conditions of Rome were in favour of uprising social movement. Several members of the middleclass could move to the senate. Quite often they were already Christians or willing to convert into it. This renewal of social order started from emperor Diocletian's reorganization. (Bokentotter 2005, 58) Constantine continued to favour Christianity, although all of his reforms do not seem religious. This did not prohibit favouring Christians in governmental positions. (Leadbetter 2000a, 1081) Constantine and his successors added the social order by widening the senate. The situation in Constantinople was very good, the senate took thousands new members. (Bokentotter 2005, 58)

For Augustine and his contemporaries mundane culture and society was a problem as well as in written and in social level (Harrison 2000, 1215). Even though Augustine had accepted forcing as a method to suppress paganism- he did not tolerate it in the battle against Donatists (Bokentotter 2005 79). Rome as a city and as a name had many beliefs, superstitions and ideas (Mommsen 1951, 347). The Roman Empire was not even for Augustine's contemporaries an exemplary and unique

kingdom (MacCormack 1997, 647). Even Cicero had claimed that Romans did not share a view that could unify them as a people (Hollenbach 2002, 65). Cicero says that *res publica*, a community, is a thing belonging to the people which presupposes unanimity about justice and teamwork towards common good (Friis-Johansen 1999, 508). Augustine thinks that in a mundane world, a community is a shared thing (MacCormack 1997, 646). And the Roman Empire is not in line with this criterion (DCD XIX, XXI). Both Augustine and Cicero agreed about Rome not being a right kind of community. Augustine did borrow Cicero's legacy but he adjusted it to serve Christianity. In Augustine's thinking *res publica* is also a *civitas* when it is based on justice (Murray 2005, 214) and it is a social community (DCD XIX, XXI). Augustine tells a lot, for example, about *civitas Dei* but he never really defines his concepts of two cities. The reason for this is said to be its belonging to the Christian experiences. (Cranz 1950, 215) Augustine uses history as a proof why Rome never had been just. That is why it has never gained any special recognition (Weithman 2001, 242). But how it is, this world of Augustine? What belongs to it? What are the concepts and how Augustine's worldview is described?

Two kingdoms

Augustine divides the world to two kingdoms. There is a mundane city/kingdom (*civitas terrena*) and a heavenly city/kingdom (*civitas Dei*). Augustine refers often to the Bible (DCD III, XVI) where the name City of God comes from. The two worlds, mundane and heavenly are opposites dividing humankind to these two kingdoms (Qviller, 1996, 333), where they have different goals. Augustine wrote *De Civitate Dei* to understand the world's current state. There is a dichotomy between good and evil. How these two worlds look like?

Civitas terrene

People are driven by self-love in the mundane kingdom. The power of love has always been controlling since the first city was founded. The love for mundane things is never-ending and there is no end for it (DCD XIX, VI). Although people live together in this part of the world, they only act for their own good (DCD XIV, XXVIII). This kind of behaviour causes conflicts even for the best people (ibid. XIX, V). People's will to love themselves have set them in the same the line with a beast (ibid. XII, XXII). The situation in mundane kingdom equals to the Hobbesian state of nature. The war of everyone against everyone has gained superior form. People don't know any other way to act and live and they are not conscious of how better and how differently live can be structured. Some kind of patronising guarantees harmonious life but in Augustine's world it is temporal and it is only allowed towards irrationals and family members. All this irrational behaviour is because people don't know who is the God of Gods (DCDXI, I).

Civitas Dei

The second part of Augustine's world is *civitas Dei*, heavenly kingdom. There people love God. The domination of others is unrecognisable and nothing (DCD XV, III) is personal. In heavenly kingdom people don't enjoy world, they use it. This behaviour and the love mentioned above is common for all and these make people's relations strict and unconditional. Communal feeling comes from necessity which supports the existence of groups. It is necessity, because it is equal with real love (*caritas*) (Arendt 1996, 108). It is not possible to link communal feeling to society or to think companionship in heavenly kingdom. All concepts or expressions which refer to politics are sin. They don't belong to this part of the Augustine's world and we cannot think heavenly kingdom as a society as its modern meaning or as an organization (Kirwa 1989, 224). This kingdom does not include politics. The world unifies people as well as it is a goal at the same time. Life can be active,

inactive or unifying. It is the *caritas* which binds people together.

The world is divided to these two parts and at first it does not seem deterministic. Augustine's worldview includes two parts for people to be part of. To be part of them requires subordination to judgement. A person cannot know the process behind the parts and there is no possibility to effect with any accomplishments.

What becomes out of Augustine's divided world?

In *civitas terrena*, need for power and to dominate others have become so obvious that they lose their significance and they become unquestioned qualities of life. When people try to maximize their private interests, there is a need to politicize world. Augustine thinks that all action in mundane "kingdom" is irrational. I strongly suggest otherwise. People trying to gain power and statue are rational by all means, at least from the self preservation point of view. Augustine thinks that even political institutes are bad even though they try to prevent people to do wrong. If we want to see what kind of people we are talking about, we need to seek for their objects of love (DCD XIX, XXIV). This applies as well as in individual as in collective level. So in *civitas terrena*, we are talking about people who love power and reputation as well as self-protection and safety. Is this somehow negative? In a world where people form two different "communities" there is no possibility to choose to where each individual belongs.

We cannot speak about *civitas* as a kingdom because for Augustine did not make any spatial separations. Plus there is not a straight line between *civitas* and *polis*. In Augustine's world these two separations are within each other and people can't know what they are part of. For Augustine people can't do anything but the very characteristic action belonging to each world. In *civitas terrena*, absolute self-love is mandatory. Augustine does not give any options to the object of people's action. They are after these things and they cling on to them as they are the only ones (DCD XV, XV). In Augustine's world sociality is the same in both kingdoms. The difference is how it flourishes and what means are used (ibid.. XI, XVII). Other difference is that in *civitas terrena* the life focuses in the body, not in the soul (DCD XIII, II). Although this separation would make division of *civitas Dei* and soul and *civitas terrana* and body very easy, it is not this easy. Augustine does not turn into dualism; he emphasizes the combination of soul and body (Coleman 2000, 326). This thought draws Augustine to the Manichaeism although he has earlier argued against their doctrines.

Augustine's world is strongly very dualistic. In *civitas terrena*, the situation is pessimistic and negative. Arendt has argues that when people are in the same situation, it is always a community (Arendt 1996, 100-101). For Augustine a mankind is a place where relations are unavoidable (DCD XIX, XVII). In *civitas terrene*, there are qualities that can be seen as religious and virtuous. Augustine permits people's own thoughts and behaviour in *civitas terrena* when in *civitas Dei* people think, love and live for God. This supports the dualistic world of Augustine.

The modern world and Augustine's world

Augustine's heritage is much more modern than it is thought. For example, Luther is considered to have followed quite strongly his thoughts and doctrines. In the *City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*) there is a modern description of weaknesses and of limited power of the secular, however wisely the power is executed (Fergusson 2004, 31). Augustine's description is said to have all the basic flaws what a political society has nowadays. The domination of others and hunger for power are still the main forces behind human nature. History and time will go on and nonetheless the Augustine's evil – *civitas terrena* and the related things – will be ever-present (Howard 2011, 173). People often talk

about achieving something to get somewhere. It is eschatological sign that separates the fallibility of human nature and need for the division of power (Fergusson 2004, 31). It can be traced to Augustine's twofold theory of two cities, a mundane and a heavenly city.

Augustine impresses the importance of secular power to prevent people to act irrationally. It is interesting because Augustine and Augustinian tradition were suspicious of the exercise of power because of the fundamental corruption of the human will (Coleman 2008, 13). The distinction between the church and state is generally thought to be a linear continuation of Augustine's two kingdoms. The expression "two-kingdom -doctrine" has said to describe Luther's political theology. It has the same failures than in Augustine's thinking; temporal and spiritual are distinct lines and they are excluded from critique of each others (Fergusson 2004, 39).

Arriving to today's world, the nation-states have build their identity on past events. Differing from this, the projects attempting at constructing of a world society, theoretical or more realist, have aimed on future: the common identity can be build through common goals and common destiny. This is the Augustinian idea in many theories of world societies. Although the unity of the humankind is clearly not reality today - with wars and other events - the Augustinian would place the hopes in the future.

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