Aleksandar Molnar[1]
University of Belgrade
Faculty of Philosophy

Challenging Power Politics in the *politeia* Republicanism

Abstract

In the article the author discusses the emergence and the disappearance of early connection between the strong republican aversion to power politics and the consequential anti-imperialism (which was oriented against authoritarian supranational formations ranging from Athenian hegemony to the Roman Empire). First impulses towards shaping a republican political theory (by Athenian philosophers in the 4th century B.C.) he identifies in an increased interest in the state organization of the winning party in the Peloponnesian war that had knocked down Athenian hegemony – Sparta. At the end of the article the author describes how Christian political thought took root in the bosom of the Roman Empire, with its controversial eschatology of the Kingdom of God on Earth, which would subsequently undergo versatile ideological transformations in Europe.

Keywords: republicanism, polis, empire, power, eschatology.

The republican thought, as shaped by Athenian philosophers in the 4th century B.C., showed a strong inclination to praising the *politeia*

organisation of small city-state (*polis*), as well as the separation of powers and the rule of law. The reason for this was not the aspiration for objective description of what was going on in ancient small polis so much as it was the intention to encourage it to resist the strongest political temptation – the temptation of building hegemony or empire and practicing power politics (*Machtpolitik*), i.e. acknowledging the principle of aggressive authoritarian rule which as of Renaissance would be canonized in the doctrine of the Reason of State (*Raggione di Stato*). The disappearance of connection between the strong republican aversion to power politics (that would be renewed in the New Age by Immanuel Kant) and the consequential anti-imperialism (which emerged in the Roman Empire) was finally sanctioned when Christian political thought took root, with its controversial eschatology of the Kingdom of God on Earth, which would subsequently undergo versatile ideological transformations[2] in Europe. However, this connection was very important for the original republican position, and therefore in the reconstruction of the context of its development it is always important to bear in mind its reactive character in relation to the imperialistic consequences of the power politics, which got its embodiment only in the Renaissance – in the political teaching of the Reason of State, yet existed much before that as theoretically articulated phenomenon.

Thucydides and Athenian Hegemony

One of the certainly most enduring, fundamental and significant disputes in the entire history of the Western political thought is the one regarding the power politics. The period from Thucydides all to Carl Schmitt is featured by the – variable – understanding of politics as a skill

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2   When republicanism was renewed in the Renaissance, it no more acknowledged this connection due to the affirmation of the Reason of State doctrine, which promoted the (re)establishment of empire (after the model of the ancient Rome) as the highest external political end (see also: Hörnqvist 2004: 38 *et passim*). In the course of the 17th century, in parallel with the growing success of the Dutch republican experiment, as testified by Spinoza's political theory, republican thought got emancipated from this political external political end, although not yet from the Reason of State on the whole, so that one of its streams now manages to pass between the Scylla of fixation on small polis and Charybdis of fascination with the empire – affirming the principle of federalism. Kant's Romanticist republicanism, which emerged at the end of the 18th century, is different not only compared to the Reason of state republicanism of an Alexander Hamilton and federalist republicanism of a Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, but also compared to him-akin Rousseau's Romanticist republicanism, mostly because of the renewed fixation on the project of the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

to preserve and augment power, based on the premises of irreparably evil nature of man, feebleness (if not harmfulness) of reason, and decisionistic necessity to distinguish friends from enemies (Münkler 1987: 43; see also: Molnar 2006: 123 *et passim*). Thucydides put quite a clear formulation of power politics in the mouth of Athenian leader Pericles, when in 430 B.C., faced with Athenians' dissatisfaction due to the (bad) start of the Peloponnesian war, he gave his so called "last speech": "You should remember also that what you are fighting against is not merely slavery as an exchange for independence, but also loss of hegemony and danger from the animosities incurred in its exercise. Besides, to recede is no longer possible, if indeed any of you in the alarm of the moment has become enamoured of the honesty of such an unambitious part. For what you hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny; to take it perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is unsafe" (Thucydides 1991: 118 /II, 63). In this speech, as reported by his contemporary and admirer Thucydides, Pericles warned Athenians of three things: that in the earlier period all of them together (under his leadership) were building a hegemonistic position of Athens (tyranny) in the Hellenic world, which brought them power, wealth and reputation; that this hegemony (as any other) is unjust and can be maintained only by power – which implies, ultimately, also by war; and that the power politics course, once when taken, cannot be revoked, because the alternative to tyranny can be either slavery (a better case)[3] or complete destruction (a worse case). Once a consequent implementation of power policy is commenced, balance of powers cannot be re-established any more (for this dichotomy see: Aron 2001: 155 *et passim*), and therefore any invoking of justice or law becomes pointless (Schwarzenberger 1955: 9), so that nothing else remains but to resort to calculation and manipulations with the power.

In his analysis Thucydides did not address Pericles' peace-building, federalist, "Pan-Hellenic project". Quite rightfully so, because this project, as observed by Jacob Burckhardt remained only "a pious wish" which did not have much in common with the reality (Burckhardt 144), more specifically, with the reality of power politics, which was in the focus of Thucydides' analysis. Greeks outside Athens – and particularly Spartans – could not look upon this project otherwise than as being an ideological mask of tyranny ("centralized will"), which could not

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3   This danger of becoming Spartan slaves was discussed by Edith Foster (Foster, 2010: 140 *et passim*).

be restrained any more and which, as any other power politics, became completely insatiable [4] leading towards the establishment of empire, as the final form of breaking resistance and optimization of domination. Admittedly, Thucydides himself regarded that "the primordial sin" of Athenians was their abandonment of (optimal) hegemony, after Pericles' death, and reach out for (unsustainable) empire (Minkler 2009: 29), associated with concurrent denting of their own "political ethos" (Volkmann-Schluck 1977: 59). The trouble associated with the power politics, however, was that it could not be hooped: it was clear already to Pericles himself that to take hegemonic power "perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is unsafe", where accumulation of resistance led to a spiral augmentation of fear of "dangers" and injustice in the process of eliminating those "dangers" by applying bare force, which ultimately wiped off difference between the defense of hegemony and the development of true empire. Thucydides' attempted to introduce into his analysis, in addition to power politics, the psychological aspect of Athenian "fear of loss of the in the meantime established position" of Hegemon, defended by Pericles (Münkler 2002: 21)[5]. However, this attempt was not particularly successful, since it only covered up the circulus vitiosus of tyranny, which had first pushed Athens towards the "position" of Hegemon, but after having installed it there, forced it to also secure such position, which was no more achievable without building a real empire, after the model of Persia – that same one so much detested by Greeks. This is quite a legitimate comparison, not only in foreign but also in internal policy. Although Pericles, struck by plague, died already in 429 B.C., just two years after the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, dictatorship traits of his rule were already quite evident, whereby route to autocracy (of Pericles or some of his successors) was tracked. Thucydides himself observed that in those first two years of the Peloponnesian war, while Pericles was in power, Athens "was a democracy in name only and instead actually government by its first man" (Thucydides 1991: 120 / II, 65), hence a monarchy. Consolidation of hegemony – which already showed the first contours of an empire – could not proceed free from an authoritarian turn, which wrote off Athenian democracy in favor of

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4 Burckhardt wrote about this quality of power politics at another place (see Burckhardt, 1958: 97).

5 When five and a half centuries afterwards, Plutarch wrote his biographies of great men of the ancient world, he reported that concord has never been reached among Greeks on whether Pericles refused to lift trade embargo imposed on Megarans – which was a casus belli – because he believed that "a concession" […] would be taken for a confession of weakness" or because he wanted "to demonstrate his power" (Plutarch 1990: 86 /31).

a government which, by all accounts, at the end of the development of empire would not be essentially different from the Persian monarchy (empire). On the whole, although even during Pericles "golden age", or immediately thereafter, Athens was not successful in its attempt to consolidate its hegemony, and consequently either to build an actual empire[6], there is no any doubt that power politics, already inaugurated by Pericles and (not only historically recorded, but also) theoretically founded by Thucydides, was quite consequential and that precisely this consequentialness indicated tight interwovenness of imperialist orientation with the authoritarian course of the internal policy.

Plato, Aristotle and Spartan *polis*

Ideological exposing of the "Pan-Hellenic project", unfavorable outcome of the Peloponnesian war, and ultimately also the turmoils which started already in the last two years of Pericles' reign and culminated upon the reestablishment of democracy at the turn of 5th and 4th century, tarnished not only the earlier leading role of Athens in the Hellenic world, but also its democracy as an exemplary model of state organization. In the 4th century B.C. an increased interest in the state organization of the winning party in the Peloponnesian war that had knocked down Athenian hegemony – Sparta, brought about the first impulses towards shaping a republican political theory. At that time this term was still non existent, taking into consideration that the word "republic" came from the Latin language, and was originally inseparably linked with the Roman res publica. In the first republican theory – the one in The Laws – Plato has no term for denoting state organizations of Sparta, Crete, and his own ideal state, yet observes that, as a matter of fact, all the other – starting from two mother forms of states: democracy and monarchy – "are not polities at all" (politeia) (Plato 1957: 117 /IV, 5). Also Aristotle has a similar approach in his Politics: he names the ideal government "politeia, the name common to all governments" (Aristotle 1975: 64 /III, 5, 2). Thus the first manifestation of republicanism is the one of politeia – which stems from the very nature of the state organization (politeia) in city-state (polis).

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6 Even more, the unfavorable outcome of the Peloponnesian war in 404 B.C. definitively prevented it in this, so that the Hellenic world would have to wait for yet another whole century, before Alexander Macedonian would continue from where Pericles and his Athenian successors bent their knees and, at least for a short time, establish an empire.

This leads to a key question: what should have been this nature of the state organization of polis. Putting aside all differences between (late) Plato and Aristotle, an interesting conclusion can be reached: the nature of politeia is inherently opposing to power politics, such as described by Thucydides on the example of Pericles and his immediate successors. Polis, above all, must be guided by the moral goodness, which is "neither war nor faction – they are things we should pray to be far from us - but peace and mutual good will" (Plato 1957: 20 /I, 4). Since he believed that "wars are occasioned by the love of money" (Plato 1982: 106 /I, 6) and since he regarded Pericles a poor statesman, under whom (admittedly, contrary to his intentions) the Athenian people "became wild" from the greed for money (Plato 1859: 187 /72), it is quite likely that under this "wildness" Plato implied precisely the entry of the greedy Athenians into the Peloponnesian war. Consequently from the developments during the Peloponnesian war, Plato drew a diametrically opposite historical lesson compared to Thucydides: war is the result of man's greed which would, when given free rein and if not curbed by the moral goodness, lead to citizens' wildness, and thereby to a negation of the politeia. To enable polis to overcome temptations of regression to a wild state, Plato argues, it is necessary to "avoid cynical realism in the service of power politics", praised by Thucydides, and to invoke logos, which asked for a rigid class order – in The Republic (Münkler 1987: 40-41), but indicated an incomparably more complex republican state organization already in The Laws. Although (most likely because of the time distance) he did not share Plato's utterly unfavorable opinion of Pericles,[7] Aristotle concurred with Plato on the harmfulness of war for the life of a polis. Should it occur that a polis enters a war, the aim of the war waged must be the soonest possible establishment of peace, because perpetuating war and disaccustoming citizens of living in peace and cherishing moral goodness leads straight to a disaster (Aristotle 1975: 195/VII, 13, 15). Aristotle, regrettably, envisaged one exception to this rule: against people intended to be subjects "by nature" (i.e. Barbarians) Greeks can always wage "a just war" (polemos dikaios) (Aristotle, 1975: 13 /1, 3, 8) – with the aim to put them at a place which the

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7   Yet however, in his Politics Aristotle ranked Pericles among "demagogues", who had, little by little, perverted Athenian republican organization, as established by Solon, towards democracy, as existing in Aristotle's time (Aristotle 1975: 52 /II, 9, 3/). Therefore, Aristotle not only excluded Pericles from the ranks of Athens's best statesmen, but also included into those ranks Nikia, Pericles' opponent and leader of the aristocrat party (Aristotle 1997: 56-57 /28/) – obviously because he defended the old Athenian republic against its progressive democratization.

"nature" had allegedly predetermined for them and to thereby satisfy justice. Thus, the notorious concept of "a just war" entered the history of political and social thought with quite a transparent nationalistic (or even racist) connotation, which in its subsequent evolution would assume increasingly more radical contents and increasingly more destructive proportions.

At any rate, to be able to take care of moral goodness and maintain proper state organization, Aristotle argues, polis has to be a small state, a city with its countryside, a political community which is autarchic, which has not moved far off from its beginning made by Synoikia, and in which people know each other at least through their clan affiliation (see also Mićunović 1988: 10). In The Laws – admittedly, guided to a great extent by the magic of the number 12 – Plato does not allow the number of households (or, more precisely, of pater familias) in a polis to exceed 5.040 (Plato 1957: 143 /V, 8/ and 178-179 /VI, 15), while Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics states lapidary: "You cannot make a city of ten men, and if there are a hundred thousand it is a city no longer" (Aristotle 1980: 246 /IX, 10, 1).

Citizens of a polis which remains small and avoids wars (except those "just") have a chance, subjecting themselves to the effects of the moral goodness, to overcome their animal ("wild") nature. While for Thucydides human nature is incorrigibly corrupt, Plato regarded that it can be reformed in the polis (Münkler 1987: 43), quite specifically, by means of mixed government, rule of law and popular unity. Spartan organization inspired Plato in The Laws to shape each government body (National assembly, Council of 360 members and Guardians of the law) by combining principles of democracy and monarchy, and Aristotle in his Politics to combine principles of democracy and oligarchy (Aristotle 1975: 102 /IV, 7, 4-6), in a way which already anticipated the liberal principle of separation of powers to legislative, executive and judicial (see Hefe 2009: 186). The situation is similar regarding the principle of rule of law. Although in The Laws he ascertained that (either monarchist or aristocratic) rule of philosophers would be the best state organization – which he advocated in The Republic – Plato now realized that for people (who are not gods) empirically best solution would be the rule of law (Plato 1957: 291 /IX, 14). On the other hand, in both Nicomachean Ethics and Politics Aristotle maintained the same stand: that "it is bad in any case for a man, subject as he is to all the accidents of human passion, to have the supreme power, rather than the law"

(Aristotle 1980: 128 /V, 6, 5), i.e. that in the polis "laws, when good, should be supreme" (Aristotle 1975: 71 /III, 6, 13). Here Aristotle insisted on the difference between the law and a treaty: a polis can be founded only on the law, and never on a treaty, because from treaties ensue exclusively military alliances which suppress the moral goodness (Aristotle 1975: 67 /III, 5, 11). This reflects memories of the Peloponnesian war trauma: when the contractual logic of the Attic naval alliance transcended from the international to the inner plane of the Athens polis itself, Athenians lost appreciation of the moral goodness, yielded to lust and finally trampled the laws under foot and nearly ruined their own politeia. Consequently, the politeia republicanism treated moral and law as one, parts of a single front on which polis was waging a war against the all-embracing lust, as the prime mover of not only hibris, but also of the individualism and the articulation of any interest pluralism. Therefore ethical teachings which Plato and Aristotle presented in their main works peaked in the stand that neither law nor moral are sufficient for the establishment of polis unity: only provided that there is an even more fundamental, more primordial, and stronger popular unity, polis will be able to prevent development of egoism of individuals, narrow interest groups and parties. And while in The Republic, he advocated revolutionary state in which power shall be taken by philosophers who are ready to expel all those above the age of ten, as incorrigibly corrupt (Plato 1976: 235-236 /VII, 18/), in The Laws Plato softened his stand and conceived his state as national, i.e. founded on the unity of "friendly association" which derives from "the affiliation to the same clan" (Plato 1957: 111-112 /IV, 3). The latter stand was adopted also by Aristotle, who at a certain place in the Politics, almost parenthetically, observed that "a state is not the growth of a day, any more than it grows out of a multitude brought together by accident" and that a threat of disunion exists all until "people of different nationality fully merge" (Aristotle 1975: 124/V, 2, 10).

This was, unfortunately, not all that the politeia republicanism had to say about the problem of creating unity in the polis. Plato's concept from The Laws remained more radical than Aristotle's due to the aspiration to realize unity also by means of communion of women and children and of property (Plato 1957: 145-146 /V, 10), which was taken over from The Republic (Plato 1976: 136 *et passim* /V, 1-9) and which was subjected to Aristotle's sharp criticism (Aristotle 1975: 23 /II, 3, 1). Even worse, Plato evoked also the universal eugenic law, according to which "the shepherd or herdsman, or breeder of horses" or nation-builder will "first purify them in a manner which befits a community of

animals; he will divide the healthy and unhealthy, and the good breed and the bad breed" (Plato 1957: 140 /V, 7). This was a demonstration of genuine Social Darwinist policy before Charles Darwin, which gives Karl Popper right to accuse Plato as the first advocate of totalitarianism (Popper 1993: 1: 127 *et passim*): he postulated popular unity not as much as an ethical request, as on behalf of racial "health" and "good-breed" of the political community which exudes the spirit of tribalism. Therefore Plato's comparison of Night Council in the ideal state organization with a doctor who takes care of the "health" of state body (see Plato 1957: 386 /XII, 10) clearly indicates tyrannical component of the entire organization,[8] completely capable of developing truly "inquisitory" activity (Molnar 2001: 65).

Thus the politeia republicanism appeared as a radical alternative to the power politics in the service of imperialistic goals and heralded important civilizational goals such as peace-building, separation of powers and rule of law, which in the new age – admittedly reconciled with the individualism and (constitutional) contractualism – will become particular characteristic of liberalism. If Plato's and Aristotle's pleading for a certain minimum of popular unity could be echoed in the subsequent liberal concessions to national state – such as, for example, Mill's skepticism regarding possibility to build free institutions in ethnically mixed state (see Mill 1989: 162) – Plato's communism and racism already manifested not negligible totalitarian potential and clearly indicated a possibility of perverting all the achievements of the politeia republicanism in the Antiquity. This segment allows for a conclusion that the politeia republicanism had already started undermining its own position and that it juxtaposed imperialistic hibris, which was indifferent to the heterogeneity of the world it subjugated, with equally appalling alternative of narrow-minded tribalism, imbued with comprehensive nivellation, xenophobia and pursuit of internal enemy.

Polybius, St. Augustine and Roman Empire

The first indications of the end of the *politeia* republicanism came with Polybius' Histories. Although in view of the separation of powers and the rule of law, Polybius adhered to the politeia republicanism can-

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8 Plato assessed as an excellent feature of Sparta state organization a "tyrannical" rule of Ephorat, as the only one body capable of curbing "greedy" and "violent" monarchist government (Plato 1957: 116 /IV, 5). This was probably an unexplicated model after which he had conceived also his Night Council.

on, established by Plato and Aristotle,[9] in the light of the rise of Rome in the Mediterranean world in 2nd century B.C., he started making the first concessions to power politics. Thus, indeed, the autarchy of *polis* and its peacefulness had no more any significance for Polybius and he even challenged them as an obstacle on the path to hegemony. Sparta, which served as an ideal of city-state to both Plato and Aristotle, was perceived by Polybius as a paradigmatic case of a polis whose legitimate hegemonial aspirations kept crashing against the rigidity and autarchy of Lycurgus laws. The more flexible Rome did not observe such limitations and was more capable to confront challenges of hegemonial policy. In contrast to Spartans (but other Hellenes as well), Romans did not despise money[10] as a source of moral degradation and political corruption, but rather treated it is as a necessary means for achieving goals set in their conquests. "But if anyone is ambitious of greater things, and esteems it finer and more glorious than that to be the leader of many men and to rule and lord it over many and have the eyes of all the world turned to him, it must be admitted that from this point of view the Laconian constitution is defective, while that of Rome is superior and better framed for the attainment of power," and that is why the Romans had "in a short time brought the whole world under their sway, the abundant of supplies they had at their command conducing in no small measure to this result" (Polybius 1988: 520 /VI, 49/). In other words, although they had a superior politeia, Romans did not content themselves with the life within its boundaries, but embarked after "greater things" – among which the "greatest" indeed was fascinating bringing of "the whole world under their sway". Roman hegemony in 2nd century B.C. was a great novelty in the ancient world, which Polybius lavishly commended with no reserves, although it is quite likely that he did not expect its further strengthening and turning into a genuine, permanent and monolithic empire. Because, Polybius believed, the destiny of every polis, once it "attains to supremacy and uncontested sovereignty" is to

9   As a matter of fact, Polybius surpassed Plato and Aristotle in this regard, for which reason he was even dubbed "godfather of the checks-and-balances concept" of the American founding fathers (Nippel 1991: 40).

10 While Plato, after the model of Sparta, advocated that the value of (iron) currency should be restricted only to the *polis* that mints it (while in other poleis such money should remain worthless) (Plato 1957: 148/V, 12/, Polybius recognized as one of the most decisive causes of the fall of Spartans' hegemonial policy precisely the worthlessness of their money outside the boundaries of their city-state: as soon as they would move outside the Peloponnese Spartan military troops would stay without supplies, because their homeland was far away, and they could not buy needed commodities with their currency (Polybius 1988: 520 /VI, 49).

sink into moral decadence, which stirs the populace to rebel against (allegedly or actually) "grasping" rulers and establish – all in the name of "freedom and democracy" – a perverted "mob-rule" (Polybius 1988: 526 /VI, 57), with which starts a swift fall, and through which continues the incessant historical rotation of state organizations. What happened to other poleis, will happen to Rome, whose hegemony will vanish in a certain specific historical constellation just the same way as it had come into being.[11]

Historical developments, however, took a different course. In the following four centuries, social-political organization of Rome underwent deep structural changes. Firstly, already in the 1st century B.C. Rome ceased to be a polis and became the capital of Italica, as an in nuce territorial state. Until then, citizens of the Apennine Peninsula mostly spoke Latin and adopted Roman customs and *Weltanschauung*, and served in the army under the same terms as Romans, so that ultimately Rome was forced to satisfy their increasingly frequent and strong requests to be granted full citizens rights and equality in the distribution of booty in exchange for their further participation in campaigns – so that on the basis of *lex Iulia* from 90 and *lex Plauta Papiria* from 89 all Italics became part of the *populus Romanus* (Bleicken 1993: 36). Although this can be regarded a logical outcome of the logics of Rome republic political life – featured by the balancing of strong oligarchic tendency and openness of citizenship rights (Schnapper1996: 118) – it produced a destructive retroactive effect on the very concept of that republic. Namely, if during the entire period of the republic the syntagm res publica accompanied ethnical (and not only political) self-determination of the *populus Romanus*[12], at the end of this period it already began to corrode both in ethnical and political terms (Molnar 1997: 28). At that time, gradually and almost imperceptibly, the amorphous populus Italicus started pushing back the until then sacrosanct populus Romanus. Since the state organization, appropriate for the needs of polis, had remained unchanged, political life started to bypass government bodies which were no more able to channel it, and to even to utilize its deficiencies. National assemblies, as a "democratic" element, were the

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11 Polybius' cyclic theory, *anakýklos politeion*, was a faithful successor not only of Plato's theory from The Republic, but also of Thucydides' *anánke*, and concurrently it was a predecessor of Machiavelli's *necessità* (Münkler 1982: 103)

12 Once successful in their struggle to remove the yoke of foreign (Etrurian) kings, Roman people pledged to do the same in future, against any (domestic equally as foreign) pretender to restoration of royal rule.

first one to bow due to quite an obvious handicap: since the old populus Romanus had disappeared, and the new populus Italicus, with all its particularities, was not recognized – a vacuum appeared in the republican government arrangement, to where the army started stepping in. Although already Italicaly transformed, the army could not just replace the unfunctional assemblies (where pauperized Roman city mob was for sale in exchange for support to political leaders), but instead, as the main pillar of the Roman imperialism – it necessarily aspired towards blowing up the entire republican organization. Authoritarianly organized, the army needed a capable and agile commander, and the only form of (plebiscitarian) "democratism" it knew was to judge, appoint and relieve commanders. But then, since there was no such an unity as the Roman army, in practice this type of "democracy" led to flaring up fight among different military fractions (and not only them) for the commanding power, which was thereby becoming increasingly more totalitarian and destructive in relation to two remaining republican authorities (see also Wittfogel 1988: 125-126). Roman military-political concept of imperium Romanum, which in the 1st century B.C. started its dangerous rise from imperium proconsulare and which finally prevailed in the 3rd century, consumed in the meantime not only the auctoritas of the Senate, but also the very imperium proconsulare (Hinsli 2001: 50). And in order that imperium could hold as a designation for one, single, primarily military and entirely centralized authority in the Roman Empire it was necessary that it meet two criteria. First, it had to be universally spread over all the Roman citizens, who were no more either populus Romanus or populus Italicus, but potentially populus Mundi, considering that as of 212 all the free men who lived in the territory of the Empire were granted citizenship right. Second, it had to be recognized by Roman citizens as their authority, but voluntarily rendered to the emperor. It was difficult to find legitimating basis for such voluntary rendering, and the search oscillated from the notion of a mystical monarchy (see Cazenave and Auguet 1990: 121 *et passim*), headed by a deified emperor, which had been already practiced by Alexander Macedonian and which in Rome first Gaius Julius Caesar started to politically adjust, on the one hand – and the stoic theory of royal duties in cosmopolis (which fully replaced ancient polis), according to which the transfer of power from people to emperor put before the emperor a duty to act for the welfare of the entire empire/cosmopolis and all the citizens, on the other hand (Rostovcev 1990: 410; Molnar 2001: 120 *et passim*). In the end, at the period of the Dominate, a compromise

was found in the Christian religion, which reconciled stoic theory of royal duties (and moral in general) with the Caesaropapist picture of the world, in which the emperor was "living law" (lex animata, nomos empsuchos) and irresponsible tyrant – but only as long as he did not obstruct his subjects (particularly the Church) to "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God" (Mark 12: 17).

Probably just because it did not have its battle of Actium, the Peloponnesian war could bear rich political-theoretical fruits – ranging from theoretical elaboration of power politics to politeia republicanism – which Rome observably lacked from the mid 1st century B.C. Cicero, who was among the first to indicate the dusk of the politeia republicanism, had no any living example after which he could, like his predecessors Plato and Aristotle, shape a theoretical model of the republic. In his last treatise On Duties (44 B.C.) he could just resignedly observe: "And so in Rome only the walls of her houses remain standing — and even they wait now in fear of the most unspeakable crimes — but our republic we have lost for ever. [...] It is while we have preferred to be the object of fear rather than of love and affection, that all these misfortunes have fallen upon us. And if such retribution could overtake the Roman People for their injustice and tyranny, what ought private individuals to expect?" (Cicero 1978: 180 /II, 8). And while during the period of the Principate any memory of politeia republicanism could vanish because in the reality everything that could have served to it as a foothold had vanished, the disappearance of the theory which would treat empire as a culmination and logical outcome of power politics has completely different causes. Although Roman Empire brought power politics almost to an acme, it did not have its Thucydides, who would welcome it, expose and then theoretically expound. The focus of Roman Empire deliberations shifted therefore to the moral-religious level, where the only alternative to uncritical admiration of the existing was the religiously motivated criticism, ranging from resignation over everything that is of this world in the stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, to bitter fight against everything godless in the early Patristic. However, a new critical impulse is noticeable in the latter, which shall be of great importance for the subsequent transformations of the republican political thought and that relates to conceiving the ideal of a new empire, even more superior compared to the existing – the Kingdom of God on the Earth.

In his True Word (around 178), Celsus attacked Christianity because it wanted to "sacrifice faith of the [Roman] fathers and Greek wisdom" for the sake of a God who first promised the Jews that they would be "masters of the whole world", and then "left them with not so much as a patch of ground or a home". About a quarter of century later, Christian writer Origen rebutted Celsus, saying that Romans should not shrink from the Christian God because he had punished Jews after killing Jesus Christ. Furthermore, if Romans embrace the Christian faith and pray to "overcome their enemies; or rather, to have no enemies at all" (Origenes 1926: 441 /VIII, 70), he would enable them, as a matter of fact, to be "masters of the whole world". To this purpose, Origen even pointed at the coincidence of Jesus Christ's birth and establishment of "Pax Augustus", building upon this a history of salvation centered round the Roman Empire (sprout on that peace and directed to Christianity: Nippel 1991: 43). Two centuries later it turned out that the embracing of Christian God as the patron of Roman people made them neither invincible nor capable of becoming "masters of the whole world"; quite the contrary, Christian chieftain Alaric with his Visigoths plundered Rome in 410, heralding soon fall of Western Roman Empire. The more dented was Western Roman Empire by the Barbarian assaults and inner unrests, the lesser grounds Church father had to uphold Origene's naïve faith in God's patronship of the Empire under Christian spiritual supremacy, and to prophesy its turning into a genuine cosmopolis, that would have anything to do with the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Teaching of Aurelius Augustinus makes a caesura in this process of the distancing of the Church from (the western part of) Roman Empire, and the "city of Man" in general. Already at the beginning of the City of God, in every "city of Man" he recognizes inevitable imperial ambitions, which the Roman Empire, bringing them to the extreme, has ultimately exposed as auto-destructive: "city of Man", accordingly to its sinful nature, not only "aims at dominion, which holds nations in enslavement, but is itself dominated by that very lust of domination" (St. Augustine 1987: 5 /I, Preface). The sin upon which it was built cannot be overcome, much the same as the empire itself cannot last for eternity and incorporate in itself the whole humanity. And indeed, the larger the empire – the stronger the turmoils that shake it, the more the subjugating force gets in intensity the more grows the resistance it encounters, both outside and inside. "For although there has been, and still is, no lack of enemies among foreign nations, against whom wars have always been waged, and are still being waged, yet the very extent

of the Empire has given rise to wars of a worse kind, namely, social and civil wars" (St. Augustine 1987: 861 /XIX, 7). Augustine well understands and theoretically articulates the hopelessness of the situation in which Roman Empire got stuck, together with its power-politics, at the beginning of the 5th century: after five centuries of increasingly more disastrous eruptions of the centripetal forces, aimed at either secession of its parts, or conquering of the imperial centre, it no longer had power either to socially and politically integrate "foreign nations" over which it had already established its dominion, or to subjugate remaining "foreign nations" which (like Visigoths) were becoming an increasingly huge external threat.

Anticipating further decline of (at least one – Western – part of the already halved) Roman Empire, Aurelius Augustine abandons it, in spite of the fact that it had made early Christians' dream true, and embraced Christianity as the state religion. To better consolidate his theoretical position, he resorts for help to old politeia republicans, as to enlist their criticism of moral degradation of Rome back in time while it was a republic, into a much more general and far-reaching settling of accounts with the "city of Man" as such. Thereby he fully adopted Sallust's judgment that the moral erosion had started back at the time of victory over Carthage (146 B.C.), when Romans ceased fear from foreign enemies (because they had none any more that would be a genuine threat), and adds that the main sin that already then pushed Romans to the path of decline was "lust for power", which "established its victory in a few powerful individuals, and then crushed the rest of an exhausted country beneath the yoke of slavery" (St. Augustine 1987: 42 /I, 42).[13] In other words, the cause of fall was the same power politics, which was praised by Thucydides and Polybius and which took many centuries before it became fully developed and turned the entire world into a hostage of an unreliable, unstable and dilapidating empire. Born of sin (i.e. Romulus' fratricide), just like any other "city of Man", Rome could not end differently but in sin – in the perpetuation of power, that revolves back at it, in order to finally consume it completely. And all this necessarily must be so, because God punishes wicked people for their sin. The tool of his punishments are actually those same wars,

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13 In his Histories (78-67 B.C.) Sallust described moral decline of Romans alleging, in the tradition of the politeia republicanism, that its drivers were "discord, avarice, ambition and all the other evils which arise from great good fortune" (see Sallust 1991: 195 /I, 11 M/), which could include also this "lust for dominion", on which St. Augustine will later base his analysis of the self destructiveness of "cities of Man".

through which tyranny manifests and which turns people into an infinite union of executioners and victims. Already at the beginning of The City of God Augustine alleges that "God's providence constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind" (St. Augustine 1987: 6 /I, 1). Consequently, destruction of Rome by Visigoths in 410 was quite in compliance with the "customs of war" until then practiced by Romans in the building of their Empire, and its only manifested peculiarity was that Alaric spared greatest Christian "basilicas" (St. Augustine 1987: 12-13 /I, 7), thereby implementing "God's providence" that the only salvation for men is in the city of God. However, the fact that not only pagans were victims to destruction and that all Christians were not spared, is to be attributed to God's unwillingness to trade with men; embracing of the Christianity had to come from faith, and faith asked for uncertainty. God's providence should not have any association with the causality of this world, as otherwise it would make the city of God profane and compatible with sins, the same way as the "city of the Man". Therefore war history of Rome (at least from the end of Punic wars), as described by Aurelius Augustine, fits well into the universal history of "God's acts of penalty for sins", which "could always struck both those who take and those who do not take part in war" and which eliminated Cicero's earlier endeavors to subject war to strict legal rules (Kleemeier 2003: 15).

Still, all this does not mean that, by condemning power politics, St. Augustine wanted to resume the original positions of politeia republicans and advocate a utopia of small, autarchic and ethically harmonized polis. His Christian faith would not allow him this and, in spite of undisputable affinity for Plato's philosophy, he made no any attempt of theoretical synthesis in this direction. Instead, he redefines the very idea of the empire and its world historical importance: on the one hand, he emancipates the postulate of an empire-centered universal and eschatological history of the link with the Roman Empire and binds it exclusively to the Kingdom of God on the Earth while, on the other hand, does not conceive this Kingdom of God on the Earth, accordingly to the letter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, as something that shall occur at the end of history, but postulates it as a "City of God" which continually protracts through history, in order to struggle, alone, with its own powers, even before the announced second coming of Jesus, for the ultimate victory (See Löwith 1990: 210 *et passim*; Nigg 1996: 149 *et passim*; Molnar 1997: 210 *et passim*). And to postulate something like this, Aurelius Augustine could not stop at the moral condemnation

of war, as certain Church fathers did at his time. Quite the contrary, in parallel with the exposure of war as the means of God's punishment, Aurelius Augustine further develops Aristotle's teaching on the "just war", through which he develops the apology of a specific power politics of Christian rulers, legitimized through the already mentioned "God's providence", i.e. the interpretation of signs that allegedly indicate God's will to direct historical developments. Wars waged by Christians ruler end up, admittedly, both with victories and defeats, yet in either outcome Aurelius Augustine endeavors to recognize corresponding "God's providence". When Christians are victorious, then it is a "just war" which spreads round the globe not only the word of God, but also love (because an enemy against whom a war is waged can be loved as well, but this would not lessen the resoluteness to break his power).[14] If they lose, Christians are again winners. God has punished them because they became overweening, or warned them not to become overweening, or wanted to spur them to improve themselves, or triggered them to "become more spiritualized". Wars are, at any case, the best way for believers to learn current demands of their God, which solely the Church is capable to interpret. In this context, Aurelius Augustine warned, the Church must not deceive believers regarding the final fate of any "city of Man", including here the Roman Empire as well: they are all destined to disappear from this world and yield their place to the "City of God". Much the same as "cities of Man" rose and fall in wars the past, so it will be in future, all until none of them shall exist and the only one remaining "City of God", i.e. one and only Christian Church, shall confront the imperative of entering the last "just war" against the last enemy: the Antichrist and his army. Through all just and unjust wars God's intention in the history leads believers towards preparing themselves for this apocalyptic battle, to which Aurelius Augustine dedicated a good share of the 20th book of the *City of God*. This was a message to his Christian contemporaries not to attach as great importance to Roman Empire (as just one in a sequence of "cities of Man"), because it will not be able to avoid the disaster, as to the "City of God", which gets ready to defeat in this last "just war" all the powers of Evil and institute the Kingdom of God on the Earth (see also Molnar 1997: 215-218).

If Thucydides had started the antic apology of the power politics, then Aurelius Augustinus ended it, triggering the avalanche of medi-

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14 Thereby Aurelius Augustine's theory of "just war" not only negates Cicero's, but actually reinstates Aristotle's theory, with the only difference that instead of Barbarians it relates to unbelievers and, in ultima linea, followers of the Antichrist.

eval anathemas on it as a sin, with the aim of its substitution with the Church project of continual building of the Kingdom of God on the Earth, on the one hand, and legitimizing self-stylization of emperor as a Katechon, on the other. In the beginning, Aurelius Augustine's inclination to deepening gap between the "City of God" and all the existing "cities of Man" – including the Roman Empire itself – will not encounter strong resonance, primarily due to the Christian thinkers approach in treating them both as parts of a single "organic whole". The organic social teaching, which developed in 5th century B.C. in Greece, was built into the foundations of the Christian understanding of the Church, only due to the initial disinclination to separate Church from the state, the organic understanding of the Church was transferred also to the Empire. The Empire was treated as a function of Corpus Christi, as a part of much more broadly understood Ecclesia, inside which there is both spiritual authority (sacerdotum) and the secular authority (regnum). Although, of course, a distinction was made between individual "organs" of this religious-political organism, the supremacy of "head" was never questioned, and until the middle of 11th century Caput Ecclesiae was the Emperor. This unity starts falling apart only as of Pope Gregory VII, and the Church and Empire (later, state in general) shall become two bodies, two organisms, each with its own "head" (Struve 1978: 5 *et passim*).[15] These are the circumstances allowing to adequately use Aurelius Augustine's teaching for legitimizing Catholic Church's endeavors to recover, with the aid of hierocracy and sacred war, the "organic" unity of the Western world, but with the Pope as the "head". Aurelius Augustine's teaching both on the Empire, and on war and peace, will then become one of the chief arguments backing more militant Popes; aspirations to impose themselves, in their capacity of the Vicars of Christ (until his second coming and the final battle against the Antichrist) – as the heads of the militia Christi which shall embark into a thorough suppression of the omnipresent sins and into placing foundations for the building of the Kingdom of God on the Earth, not shrinking even from finding enemies in almost all "cities of Man".

Aurelius Augustine was not only preparing the ground for the rise of the Catholic understanding of sacerdotum and Vatican power policy in the Middle Ages, but also started with the desacaralization of the very image of the empire, which was already established in the pre-Christian

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15 Thus in 12th century John of Salisbury writes about the state as an organism, i.e. a hierarchized whole made of different parts subordinated to the head, i.e. ruler (who is at the same also above the law).

Roman Empire. After the Roman principes, staring already from Octavian, had established the tradition of self-deification aimed at gaining divine powers with which they would institute peace and order on the Earth, Christian Church demonstrated readiness to flirt with this practice, giving to the emperor the role of Katechon, i.e. the "guardian" of the order of this world and "preventer" of Antichrist to get loose and immediately commence the ultimate battle, which shall put an end to that world. This understanding was not to be easily suppressed and in the Middle Ages it will be meritable for the Carolingian restoration of the idea of empire, and subsequently for the creation of the concept of sacrum imperium, based on which Emperors, from Frederick Barbarossa onward, will legitimize themselves as the rulers of the Holy Roman Reich. And while until the 15th century this construction had prominently transnational characteristic, it shall start weakening more and more from then onward and linking the notion of Empire to the "German nation" (Nigg 1996: 149; Minkler 2009: 121; Molnar 1997: 119-120). Then, as a matter of fact, all the mentioned variants of the power politics, including the one developed within politeia republicanism itself, proved to be worn out and unusable. The new century started with the search for new theoretical and practical syntheses. The first of them (Reason of State republicanism) endeavored to harmonize elements from the legacy of pagan republicanism with the elements of anti-Christian imperialism (guided by the ideal of Roman Empire before Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity) and to thereby give broadest possible impetus to power politics (canonized teaching on the Reason of State). The second one (federalist republicanism), opposed to the first one, already had to fit elements from the legacy of pagan republicanism into the newly developed tradition of "Christian republic", which no more was either Katechon, or "Kingdom of God on Earth", but – a pacifistic federation of the European (and potentially also of all the world) countries. Finally, the third (Romanticist republicanism), reacting to rendering the tradition of "Christian republic" senseless in secular projects (from which the United States of America, United Nations and European Union shall finally evolve), would put on the agenda return to the earliest beginnings – small polis, comprehensive Kingdom of God on the Earth, or some original creation of archaizing imagination.

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