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Althusius, Johannes (1557–1638)

A. (Althus, Althusen, Althaus) was a native of Germany, born in Diedenshausen in Westphalia in (about) 1557. He studied in Cologne and in Geneva, as well as in Basel, where he received his doctorate in civil and ecclesiastical law (1586). A. went to teach at the Reformed Academy in Herborn (Germany) in 1584, becoming rector in 1597. While at Herborn he published *Civilis conversationis libri duo* (1601) and *Politica* (1603).

Following the publication of *Politica* A. went (in 1604) to become Syndic (a civil office) at Emden in East Friesland, a stronghold of the Reformed faith in Germany, and a city from which some of the leaders of the Dutch Reformed community came. Emden also served as a place of refuge for English Protestants during the reign of Mary Tudor. While in Emden A. published two expanded editions of *Politica* (1610 and 1614) as well as *Dicaeologica* (1617), his attempt to draft a legal system from the Bible, Roman law, and other systems of law. A. would eventually become an elder in the church at Emden, a position he held for twenty-one years, until his death in 1638.

A.'S USE OF AUGUSTINE

A. is best known to the modern reader as the author of *Politica* (= *Politica methodice digesta*). The structure of A.'s thought is perhaps most easily and quickly grasped by a quick comparison with Thomas *Hobbes and his *Leviathan*. If Hobbes argued for the necessity of centralizing all political power in the 'leviathan', A. argued that there were numerous and varied associations and levels of political power, with these various associations and governments all having limited power and influence. Central to A.'s thought—and one of the things which most drew the ire of his critics—was his assertion that (political) sovereignty resides at the lower levels of human/political association (*consociatio*). Indeed, for A. the 'rights of [political] sovereignty' (*jura praeterea majestatis*) reside not in the magistrate (e.g. the king), but in 'the commonwealth or universal association' (*Reip. vel consociationi universali attribui*) or in the people themselves (*Politica*, Preface).

Given that A. was—by his own description—a political scientist, it is no surprise that we find him turning to *De civitate Dei*. While the tone and tenor of *Politica* is quite different from the thought of Aug., A. does make use of Aug. at a number of points. Early in *Politica*, when A. asserts that political authority is legitimate, he references *civ.* A. argues at one point that a (civil) ruler is necessary for the benefit of both individuals and the larger group(s). In this context A. references Aug. when he writes that ‘to rule, to govern, to preside is nothing other than to serve and care for the utility of others, as parents rule their children, and a man his wife’ (*imperare igitur, gubernare & praesidere hic nihil aliud est, quam aliorum utilitatibus inservire & consuler, uti parentes liberis imperant, vir uxori*) (*Politica* 1.13; *civ.* 19.14). A. references, but does not quote Aug. at this point. A. here uses *Thomas Aquinas to similar effect. In context, Aug. portrays various forms of rule as taking place as one journeys—by faith—to the celestial city. And for Aug. those who rule do so not because they love power, but because of duty and a love of mercy. A. turns to this same passage from Aug. later in *Politica* (9.25) when he discusses the nature of the ‘supreme’ political power in a commonwealth. Political power is for the sole purpose of serving and advancing the well-being of the subjects of a commonwealth. Political power—ultimately—derives from the purposes it is to serve, which for A. are ‘the utility and necessity of human social life’ (*utilitate scilicet & necessitate vitae humanae socialis*). Thus *civ.* 19.14 is used to help buttress this Althusian conviction.

In *Politica* A. devotes ch. 9 to ‘Political Sovereignty and Ecclesiastical Communication’. One of the key assertions in his writings is that the larger political associations follow, and are ultimately dependent on, the smaller and more fundamental or natural political associations—the most fundamental being the family. Ultimately, for A. the ultimate ownership of a political realm (i.e. in terms of where ultimate political sovereignty resides) rests in the people themselves. The king may *administer* the commonwealth, but the people *own* it. In this context A. references Aug.’s quotation of Cicero, where Cicero speaks of a commonwealth as the ‘weal of the people’ (*rem populi*), and suggests that a commonwealth can be ruled in a number of ways—by a king, by a few persons, or by the people themselves as a whole (*Politica* 9.4; *civ.* 2.21; Cicero, *The Republic* 2.27).

Another important reference to Aug. is found in Chapter 9 where A. discusses the nature of political power—particularly at the higher levels of political association (usually something like the commonwealth is in view). For A. political power is real and legitimate, but it is (1) always to be seen as limited and derivative—since all power comes from God, and the ruler is accountable to God; and (2) political power at the higher levels of political association flows from the lower levels of political associations (e.g. the city and the province) to the higher/larger levels of political association (e.g. the commonwealth). In this context A. explicates his own position in contradistinction to Jean *Bodin. A. argues that power can be lawfully delegated, such that a ruler (e.g. a king or a body of

civil rulers) *administrates* or *leads* the commonwealth but does not *own* the power. In this context A. quotes Romans 13, warns against the danger of tyranny, quotes Bartolus of Sassoferrato on truth’s superiority to Caesar, and quotes a classic passage from Aug.: ‘when justice is taken away, what are realms except great bands of robbers’ (*remota itaque iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia*) (*Politica* 9.20–1; *civ.* 4.4).

While A. quotes or references Aug. in just a few places, at least one key area of conceptual agreement is worth mentioning. Aug. contended that (apart from the Church) there are three central spheres or realms or polities in which a person lives and with which a person has to do: (1) the house (i.e. the family), (2) the city, and (3) the world (*civ.* 19.7, 14). For Aug., the house or family takes priority. Because of ‘the law of nature and society’ (*vel naturae ordine vel ipsius societatis humanae*) a person has easier access to his or her family and the opportunity to serve it. A. does reference Aug. explicitly at this point to buttress his argument that a ruler is to serve those over whom he is placed. But, interestingly, A. does not appear to use Aug. here to buttress his contention that the family is the most fundamental and natural of political associations—a key aspect of A.’s political thought.

EVALUATION

A. was a transitional figure who developed certain Protestant insights and convictions into a political theory of ‘symbiotics’, where man is ‘political symbiotic man’ (*hominis politici symbiotici*). A. advances the idea of political association (*consociatio*) whereby a commonwealth comprises numerous and varied political associations. A. argued repeatedly for the limited nature of political power, and contended that political power ultimately rests with the people, even if this same power could be administered by those to whom this power had been delegated. A.’s use of Aug. is limited, but not insignificant. He agreed with Aug., and utilized Aug., to give support to his claim that persons and groups come together to form political associations so as to advance the well-being and social harmony of the members of those political associations. In particular, A. turns to Aug. to buttress his own conviction that rulers have political power in order to benefit others.

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BODIN, JEAN; DE CIVITATE DEI; HOBBS, THOMAS; POLITICAL THOUGHT; THOMAS AQUINAS

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Amalarius of Metz (775–851/2)

A. (Amalherus, Amalheri, Amalhere, Mialheri, Malheri) of Metz, called also A. of Trier, A. of Lyon, A. Fortunatus, or A. Symphosius, was a reforming liturgist during the reign of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. His activity follows on the liturgical reforms led by *Boniface and *Alcuin, which aimed to institute a uniform and Rome-inspired *liturgy, since the contemporary Gallican liturgy had become perceived as anarchic. After the relative failures of his predecessors, A. managed to leave a lasting mark by establishing an allegorical and symbolical interpretation of the liturgy (versus the physical interpretation of *Paschasius Radbertus). His authority, well founded during his lifetime, endured until the twelfth century.

Apart from a poem relating his journey to Constantinople on a diplomatic mission for Charlemagne, all A.'s writings deal with liturgy. Yet none of them is a mere theoretical treatise: A. gives precise comments in relation to concrete practices. His way of explaining is new and peculiar to him. Over a forty-year period A. exploits the same idea according to which religious rites cannot be unmotivated. Present already in his first writings, the *Epistula Amalarii ad Petrum abbatem Nonantulanum* (*Non.*), and the *Epistula Amalarii ad Carolum imperatorem de scrutinio et baptismo* (*Bapt.*), this orientation develops into A.'s symbolical and mystical interpretation of the Eucharist, the *Missae expositionis geminus codex* (*Cod. I and II*) and the *Canonis missae interpretatio* (*Can.*), only to change into a long demonstration of the symbolical and mystical meaning of the structure and characteristics—permanent and variable ones—of liturgical practice. A.'s quest results in his magnum opus the *Liber officialis* (*Off.*), which was published three times (823, 829, 835), each time with new additions. At the end of his life, A. participated in the controversy concerning predestination, in which he took the side of John Scottus *Eriugena against *Gottschalk of Orbais.

A.'S USE OF AUGUSTINE

A. considers Aug. as the safest of harbours, *portus tutissimus* (letter to Guntardus, *Off.* III), the ultimate point of reference when it comes to navigating the right course in the sometimes turbulent sea of ideas. It is also in Aug. that A. finds adequate protection against potential detractors (*Off.*, praef.; *Off.* I, praef.). Finally, as *vir doctissimus* (*Off.* I, 22.4) Aug. is by far the most quoted authority, with the number of Augustinian quotations far surpassing those taken from *Bede, Jerome, or Ambrose. These abundant quotations are generally made with explicit mention of their precise source. A. quotes from a relatively high number of works by Aug. (twenty-two titles), with a clear predilection for *en. Ps.*, *ep.*, and *Io. ev. tr.* The great majority of the quotations can be found in the four *libelli* of the *Liber officialis*, where they are used to justify A.'s liturgical interpretations. Often, but not always, the Augustinian quotations are used to support symbolic interpretations of ritual practices. Many times, A. calls on Aug. to justify the numbers structuring the liturgical calendar and events: the forty days of Lent (e.g. *Off.* I, 5.2, cf. Aug., *ep.* 55.28), the four daily moments of fasting (e.g. *Off.* II, 2.8–9, cf. Aug., *div. qu.* 81), the seventy days of the Septuagesima (e.g. *Off.* I, 1.13, cf. Aug., *c. Faust.* 12.36, the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost (e.g. *Off.* I, 36.1–3, cf. Aug., *ep.* 55.32), the eight days of the Octave (e.g. *Liber de ordine antiphonarii* (*Ant.*) XIII, 30, cf. Aug., *s. Dom. m.* 1.3), etc. On other occasions, e.g. when dealing with the question whether or not one should fast on Saturdays (*Off.* IV, 37.13 ff., cf. Aug., *ep.* 36), or discussing how the dead should be buried (*Off.* IV, 41.8, cf. Aug., *civ.* 1.12–13), Aug.'s words are of a purely referential (i.e. non-interpretative) nature but still have authoritative value.

In a more general way, A.'s reception of Aug. can best be related to the latter's *signum—res* theory (see SIGNS AND SEMIOTICS) according to which certain earthly realities must be apprehended as figures that make mystical knowledge more intelligible (cf. *doctr. Chr., mag.*), with the notion of *sacrament for Aug. presupposing that of likeness (*similitudo*) (*ep.* 98.9, cf. A. *Off.*, prooemium 7). A. assumes that liturgical action is a divine institution in the same way that Scripture is. Every single element in it is used to actualize an aspect of sacred history. Semiotically, A. conceives liturgical actions as global entities in which all things are connected: every single rite participates in the nature of the liturgical action to which it belongs. Consequently, it is A.'s objective to justify the distinctive liturgical 'offices' by explaining their origin. Thus he argues that the office of matins just before dawn is a moment of prayer dedicated to those who, due to their ignorance, have not yet seen the light break through. That is the reason why specific psalms are sung whose meanings refer to the *raison d'être* of the service itself.

However, in contrast to Bede's theory of biblical exegesis, A. never really develops Aug.'s theory of scriptural hermeneutics. He only makes one clear but short allusion to it when he deals with the lambs in wax that are distributed to the faithful at the Easter octave (*Off.* I, 17.2). Referring to Aug. (*ep.* 55.11), A. specifies that these lambs are only figures. While the *signum—res* model is indeed a common Augustinian theme linking A.'s writings, it is at the same time little more than