

Introduction

In *City of God*, Augustine famously writes that the two cities are created by two kinds of love: “the Heavenly city by love of God (*amor Dei*) carried as far as contempt of self,” and the earthly city “by self-love (*amor sui*) reaching to the point of contempt for God” (*ciu.* 14.28).¹ Significantly, the grammar of these two loves betrays their difference: one is relational, the other is not. That is, looking at *amor Dei* grammatically, we can read the “of” contained therein as, at once, the subjective genitive and the objective genitive; both speak of the same love, the former referring to God’s love for us, carried as far as the cross, the latter referring to our return of this love, carried as far as the martyr’s witness.² While *amor Dei* bears the relationality of its love in its very grammar, *amor sui* betrays its narcissism. Collapsing the subject and object into one, it is the verbal image of a self loving itself.³

Taking this as but one instance of the symbolic richness that Augustine’s language affords us, if we examine it with his vision of the two cities in mind,

¹ Throughout, I quote the Bettenson translation, unless otherwise noted. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003). For the Latin, I use the critical edition of *De Ciuitate Dei* that can be found in the *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (CCSL 47–48). Since I refer to the text so frequently, I merely refer to the chapter and book in in-text parentheses. All Latin references stem from the critical editions collected in the *Corpus Augustinianum Gissense* (Basel: Schwabe, 1995).

² There is some debate over this reading of the term “*amor Dei*” in Augustine. Burnaby argues that Augustine distorts St. Paul’s meaning by reading *amor Dei* solely as the objective genitive, or our love for God, in *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 99. I, however, follow Oliver O’Donovan’s reading in *The Problem of Self-Love in Augustine* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1980), 130. O’Donovan’s reading, I believe, fits better with the ontological framework presented in *City of God*.

³ See again O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Augustine*, 142.

this book explores the relationship between the earthly city and the political sphere as it is presented in *City of God*, asking whether Augustine's decision to call both by the same name (*ciuitas terrena*) bears any intelligible significance. In brief, I will argue that it does, and that this relationship is best described as hegemonic: for Augustine, the earthly city *covets* the political sphere, claiming it for itself, and so gaining its name from its earthly orientation.⁴ This, however, does not mean that the earthly city invents politics, only that it co-opts the political project for its own ends. Yet, because Augustine never expressly unpacks how the two meanings of *ciuitas terrena* relate, this interpretation is not immediately obvious from the text. Instead, his word choice has posed difficulties for many seeking to understand the status of politics in his thought.

Currently, there are two dominant theses about this linguistic overlap: either Augustine uses the term *ciuitas terrena* indiscriminately because the two meanings amount to the same thing – that is, the political sphere is “the realm of sin” – or, his indiscriminate use of *ciuitas terrena* is merely literary, and no precise relationship between the two meanings can be found.⁵

⁴ I mean hegemonic in the negative sense, as in when a hegemonic force occupies a conquered territory, it declares its rule legitimate, while the truth of the matter is that the territory belongs to another – in this case, God. Setting its eyes on the political realm as a prize worth having, the members of the earthly city have staged a coup, claiming the political sphere for their own and attempting to shape it in their own image.

⁵ John Milbank, *Theology as Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 411. For the former thesis, see Herbert Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Reinhold Niebuhr, “Augustine's Political Realism,” in *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr*, ed. Robert McAfee Brown (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 123–141; Peter Kaufman, *Incorrectly Political: Augustine and Thomas More* (Sound Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Milbank, *Theology as Social Theory*, and William Cavanaugh, “The City: Beyond Secular Parodies,” *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (London: Routledge, 2002), 182–200. For the latter thesis, see Weithman, who writes, “No visible society or institution can be identified with either the City of God or the earthly city. The distinction between the two cities is an eschatological rather than a political one.” Paul Weithman, “Augustine's Political Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 237. Though acknowledging an overlap between the two meanings of *ciuitas terrena*, Harrison similarly argues that Augustine “writes within a tradition of rhetoric which was not at all constrained by matters of general consistency.” Carol Harrison, *Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 216. To be sure, I agree that the two meanings of *ciuitas terrena* are not synonymous, but that is not to say that there is no consistency of vision behind his word choice. Wetzel sidesteps the difficulty by translating the term in two ways, using “secular city” to describe the mixed city and earthly city to describe the city of self-love. James Wetzel, “Splendid Vices and Secular Virtues: Variations on Milbank's Augustine,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 2 (2004):

Neither of these alternatives, however, is satisfactory. On the one hand, the conflation of the two meanings takes his pessimism about politics too literally and on the other, few of Augustine's linguistic decisions are *merely* literary.⁶

Indeed, I will argue, a literalistic interpretation Augustine's pessimistic tone is out of sync with the work's genre. As Pierre Hadot ably demonstrates, one cannot read the ancient philosophers as if they were merely pouring their emotions onto the page.⁷ Instead, one must interpret their rhetoric in light of its overarching purpose. Describing the genre of writing known as psychagogy – the art of leading souls to a state of health – Hadot explains that the ancient philosophers believed the human condition was marked by a sickness of soul which prized material things above their true worth; seeking to achieve “the sought-after therapeutic and psychagogic effect” for their readers, they meticulously crafted the “formulations necessary” to cure them of such mistaken beliefs.⁸ The same can be said of Augustine. Christianizing the genre, to be sure, Augustine attributes our distorted vision to sin and argues with a view to religious conversion.⁹ Yet, like all other authors writing works of psychagogy, he seeks to correct the vision of his readers by carefully crafted rhetorical arguments.

275. This is helpful for clarifying which *ciuitas terrena* he is referencing, but does not resolve the problem of the relationship between the two entities. Again, I think only a sacramental semiotics provides a conceptual framework that adequately addresses the question.

⁶ Many scholars read Augustine as a pessimist. See the previous footnote. Niebuhr, for example, calls Augustine the “first great realist.” Niebuhr “Augustine's Political Realism,” 124. Peter Brown famously characterized Augustine's pessimism as a loss of worldly hope in his great biography's chapter “The Lost Future.” Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 139–150. For a critique of the realist reading of Augustine, see James V. Schall, SJ, “The ‘Realism’ of Augustine's ‘Political Realism’: Augustine and Machiavelli,” *Perspectives on Political Science* 25, no. 3 (1996): 117–123.

⁷ Michael Lamb has also invoked Hadot as a fitting guide for interpreting Augustine's political rhetoric in his recent article “Beyond Pessimism: A Structure of Encouragement in Augustine's *City of God*,” *Review of Politics* 80 (2018): 591–624.

⁸ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 201. Citing Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* as an example, Hadot shows how its author sought to counteract his readers' gluttony by reminding them that even the best gourmet dishes really comprised “dead fish, birds and pigs” (185).

⁹ Letters that explicate Augustine's intention in writing *City of God* include *ep.* 184A and *ep.* 10*. Using Hadot, Kamimura explores the difference between Christian spiritual training in *City of God* and its philosophic forerunners. Naoki Kamimura, “Scriptural Narratives and Divine Providence: Spiritual Training in Augustine's City of God,” *Patristica*, suppl. vol. 4 (2014): 43–58.

Situating *City of God* within this framework, it becomes clear that our interpretation of its political passages must begin with the recognition that the work is psychagogic. Viewed in this way, Augustine's pessimistic rhetoric about Roman politics emerges as curative; applying the medicinal art of contraries, Augustine aims to liberate his readers from an excessive attachment to Rome so that they might express a proper allegiance to the city of God.¹⁰ Accordingly, in speaking of Rome's faults and failings, he does not cast it as the "realm of sin" *per se*; rather, he does what is necessary to resituate the Roman *ciuitas* within an eschatological worldview.¹¹ Reading the political passages of *City of God* in this light, I will argue that Augustine's goal is to help us see the world, even the political world, anew: as part of a created order that is *good*, but that points beyond itself all the same.

What is more, I will argue, Augustine's decision to give the term *ciuitas terrena* a dual meaning is not accidental, but reflective of his overarching theological and metaphysical commitments. In what follows, I will demonstrate that Augustine's writings are shot through with a grammar that reflects his Christianized notion of Platonic participation – what I call a *sacramental* grammar. Indeed, as Robert Markus has noted in his excellent work on Augustinian semiotics, sacramentality – the quality of acting as a sign that points to God – is at the center of Augustine's whole worldview.¹² Developing this thought, E. J. Cutrone comments on the expansiveness of this notion of sacramentality: for Augustine, the material world as a whole points beyond itself toward a "deeper, inner reality" and

¹⁰ In a similar vein, von Heyking has argued that Augustine's antipolitical rhetoric has obscured the degree to which he agrees with the ancient political philosophers, though ultimately von Heyking's study finds deeper agreement than mine. John von Heyking, *Politics as Longing in the World* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001).

¹¹ Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 411.

¹² Robert Markus, "St. Augustine on Signs," *Phronesis* 2 (1957): 60. For other work on signs in Augustine, see Clifford Ando, "Augustine on Language," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 40, no. 1 (1994): 45–78, and "Signs, Idols, and the Incarnation in Augustinian Metaphysics," *Representations* 73, no. 1 (2001): 24–53; B. D. Jackson, "The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes* 15 (1969): 9–49; Mark D. Jordan, "Words and Word: Incarnation and Signification in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*," *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980): 177–196; Giovanni Manetti, *Theories of the Sign in Classical Antiquity*, trans. Christine Richardson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Robert Markus, "Augustine on Magic: A Neglected Semiotic Theory," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 40, no. 2 (1994): 375–388. For a reading of Augustine's sacramental worldview that ultimately counters my position, see Phillip Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

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is thereby “revelatory of the divine mystery.”¹³ By paying attention to the way in which *City of God* reflects the sacramental cosmos in which Augustine finds himself, I find that Augustine shows us how politics is related to the earthly city, even if he does not explicitly tell us.

To be sure, Augustine’s writings as a whole are full of such signs waiting to be read – allusions, word plays, and double entendres – all these are designed to reflect the rich, meaning-laden world he inhabited.¹⁴ As Gertrud von Le Fort has aptly explained,

Symbols are . . . the language of an invisible reality becoming articulate in the realm of the visible. This concept of the symbol springs from the conviction that in all beings and things there is an intelligent order that, through these very beings and things, reveals itself as a divine order by means of the language of its symbols.¹⁵

In Augustine, this conviction reaches its apex in his reading of creation as a divine speech act. This belief is not only the root of his deep sense that created things speak of God by virtue of their createdness, it is also why he considers rhetoric to be a divine art – a way of beckoning to the human heart written into the very fabric of creation.¹⁶ However, to borrow from von Le Fort yet again, while the fecundity of symbols is central to the way Augustine thinks, speaks, and writes, “The language of symbols, once universally understood as an expression of living thought, has largely given place today to the language of abstract thinking.”¹⁷ If we are to truly understand the place of politics in Augustine’s *City of God*, we must recover this older language, this *sacramental* language.

Therefore, what I develop in this book is a reading of *City of God* that reflects the sacramental ethos of the text. According to this reading, a proper understanding of the relationship between politics and the earthly city is rooted in Augustine’s way of speaking about the earthly city; in particular, it pays attention to the fact that the earthly

¹³ E. J. Cutrone, “Sacraments,” in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Fitzgerald and John C. Cavadini (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 741. Cf. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, 117n6, where he writes that “the term *sacramentum* may well be the most semantically dense term in Augustine’s theological vocabulary,” explaining that its “range of meanings . . . extends far beyond its vastly more limited usage within modern Christian theology.”

¹⁴ Cf. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, 152.

¹⁵ Gertrud von Le Fort, *The Eternal Woman* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁶ By virtue of their createdness, they participate in the qualities of the God who created them, and so point to God as their origin. Again to call on von Le Fort: created things are “signs or images through which ultimate metaphysical realities and modes of being are apprehended, not in an abstract manner but by way of likeness.” *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

city is consistently presented as a *simulacrum* (counterfeit imitation) of the heavenly city. For our purposes, the central implication of this presentation is as follows: while the city of God receives its eternal home as a gift, the earthly city grasps at the world to make it its home. Thus, while Augustine believes that the world has a sacramental meaning, in that it naturally points beyond itself to God, he also believes that the earthly city imposes an antisacramental meaning on it: one that reorients the significance of earthly things back to itself, political life included. For Augustine, then, the earthly city is defined by its perpetual attempt to edit the original meaning of reality – to erase meanings it does not like, and to reenforce illusions in which it has a stake. Much of what he says about politics is informed by this insight.

This, I will argue, is why a careful reading of Augustine's political analysis shows that the earthly city's activity within the political sphere does not define political life, but only corrupts it. In other words, on Augustine's reading, the earthly city recasts the political project in a way that undermines its true essence, precluding the possibility of genuine political community. Importantly, Augustine's sacramental language also reflects this insight; in the end, the dual use of the term *ciuitas terrena* turns out not to be a concession of politics to the earthly city, but symbolic shorthand for the relationship between a tyrant people and the world they covet.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE PROJECT WITHIN THE EXISTING LITERATURE

To reiterate, then, this monograph takes two facets of *City of God* seriously in order to explore its presentation of the relationship between politics and the earthly city: these are its psychagogic character and its sacramental ethos. The book begins by laying out Augustine's vision of the earthly city, proceeds by tracing out his psychagogic strategy, and ends by articulating his sacramental vision and the place of politics within it. By showing how Augustine's political pessimism fits into this psychagogic strategy and considering the place of politics in the vision to which it leads, I hope to open up conceptual space between the antisocial practices presented by the earthly city as political, and the underlying social endeavor that is, for Augustine, truly political. More than this, I hope to show how Augustine encourages his readers to participate in this underlying social endeavor.

I am, however, hardly the first to explore Augustine's understanding of the relationship between politics and the earthly city. For interpreters of Augustinian political thought writing in the first half of the twentieth century, what seemed to be at stake in this question was its implications for a Christian society in postwar Europe.¹⁸ Increasingly, however, the concern of scholars turned to the question of church–state relations.¹⁹ Most notably, what we see as the twentieth century unfolds is a reaction against what Arquillière has called “political Augustinianism” – the medieval absorption of the political realm into the jurisdiction of the Church.

For advocates of political Augustinianism, however, the subordination of political authority to the Church opened up the possibility of a new era

¹⁸ Major works on Augustine's political thought during this period include John Neville Figgis, *The Political Aspects of St. Augustine's "City of God"* (London: Longmans, 1921); Gustave Combès, *La Doctrine Politique de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Plon, 1927); Henri-Xavier Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme Politique. Essai sur la Formation des Théories Politiques du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J Vrin, 1933), and Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et La Fin de la Culture Antique* (Paris: E. De Boccard, 1938).

¹⁹ In the Straussian world, there has been a steady stream of publications on Augustine's political thought. However, situated in the discipline of political theory, this tradition tends to focus on the status of Augustine in the history of political thought rather than the status of politics in his theological worldview. In many ways, the conversation has occurred quite apart from that in religious studies and theology, though that is beginning to change. The father of this tradition, of course, is Ernest Fortin, and his most influential works include “St. Augustine,” in *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 176–205, and “The Political Thought of St. Augustine,” in *Classical Christianity and the Political Order*, ed. Brian J. Benestad (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 1–30. Other helpful studies in the Straussian tradition pertaining to Augustine include Pierre Manent, *Metamorphoses of the City*, trans. Marc LePain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), and *The City of Man*, trans. Marc LePain (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Douglas Kries, “Augustine's Response to the Political Critics of Christianity in the *De Civitate Dei*,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2000): 77–93; Michael Foley, “The Other Happy Life: The Political Dimensions to St. Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues,” *The Review of Politics* 65, no. 2 (2003): 165–183; Mary Keys, “Augustinian Humility as Natural Right,” in *Natural Right and Political Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Catherine Zuckert and Michael Zuckert*, ed. Ann Ward and Lee Ward (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 97–116; Daniel Burns, “Augustine on the Moral Significance of Human Law,” *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 61, no. 2 (2015): 73–98; and all the essays in *Augustine's Political Thought*, ed. Richard Dougherty (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2019). Arguably, Jean Bethke Elshtain is also in this tradition. For her work on Augustine, see *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998); “Augustine,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 35–47; and “Why Augustine? Why Now?,” *Theology Today* 55, no. 1 (1998): 5–14.

of virtuous politics. For its critics, this solution was no solution at all, as politics with a powerful Church turned out to be just as corrupt as before. Here, it must be noted that the real disagreement between the two parties was over the relationship between the institutional Church and the city of God. For the political Augustinians, the Church was equated with the city of God to such an extent that it could be counted upon to heal politics. For their critics, the Church was no guarantor of such healing and, therefore, could not be the morally pure city of God that the former had supposed. Though an extensive foray into the question of their relationship and its political implications is beyond the scope of this book, my reading of *City of God* does suggest that a truly Augustinian answer would not side with either camp; rather, it would conceive of both the Church and the relationship between the Church and the city of God sacramentally.²⁰ That is

²⁰ The question of the relationship between the Church and the city of God in Augustine's thought is a fraught one. In *City of God* itself, it is not clear that he makes a strong distinction between the two, but many recent readers have wanted to draw a line between the *corpus permixtum* that is the institutional Church and the pure city of God. Cf. John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 245; Harrison, *Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*, 220; von Heyking, *Politics as Longing in the World*, 37, inter alia. This solution is attractive because it avoids the obvious error of maintaining the Church's perfection and yet still maintains the distinction between the two cities. Following this line of thought, Weithman, for example, has argued that because the members of the two cities are intermingled in the Church, there cannot be an identification of the Church with the city of God: Weithman, "Augustine's Political Philosophy," 236. Yet, I think the dichotomy between identification and equivocation is the wrong distinction to make if we are to be true to Augustine's own thought. Furthermore, for Augustine, each member of the pilgrim city is as yet imperfect – in the process of being healed. While some partake of the sacraments with ill intention, Augustine writes that it is the "City of God" who "has in her midst some who are united with her" in this way – this is not how he differentiates between the Church and the city of God (*ciu.* 1.35). As Dodaro has rightly argued, Augustine does not conceive of the Church institutionally, as moderns do, but as the body of Christ made visible. Cf. Robert Dodaro, "Ecclesia and Res Publica: How Augustinian Are Neo-Augustinian Politics?," in *Augustine and Postmodern Thought: A New Alliance against Modernity?*, ed. L. Boeve, M. Lamberigts, and M. Wisse (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 238. This being so, the most we can say is that certain persons show up to church without *amor Dei* and that some who participate in its sacraments will not "join her in the eternal destiny of the saints." Ibid. Nevertheless, not all members of the former group will be part of the latter because human beings are capable of conversion. Accordingly, the real distinction, if we are to follow the distinction between the mixed and the pure, is between the city of God on pilgrimage and the city of God triumphant. The former is a *corpus permixtum*, both as a whole, and in each heart, and the latter has been brought to perfection. All this said, in recovering Augustine's sacramental use of language, we find that there is a way to distinguish between the Church as the visible body of Christ and the city of God; viewed from a sacramental perspective, we can say that the visible Church is a sacramental sign of the city of God: not a mere symbol, and yet not strictly speaking identical either, in that

to say, because Augustine conceives of the visible Church as the community bound together by the sacraments – and not primarily in terms of its hierarchy, and because he conceives of the visible Church as a synecdoche of the city of God – and not as identical or equivocal to it, he is not forced into the terms set forth by the abovementioned debate. For him, participation in the sacraments facilitates participation in *amor Dei* but does not guarantee it; this belief lays the groundwork for a very different conversation about the role the Church can have in healing politics.

Just as the relationship between the Church and the city of God remains in the background of the debate over political Augustinianism, so too, does the relationship between politics and the earthly city. Turning to the modern critics of the view, we find two predominant interpretations of Augustine's thought: first, that most famously promoted by Deane, in which Augustine the realist sees politics as the realm of the earthly city *per se*; and second, that most famously promoted by Markus, in which Augustine the proto-liberal presents the political sphere as a neutral space in which the two cities are inextricably intertwined.²¹ In the former, the state is the earthly city; in the latter, the state is neutral.²²

While Rowan Williams's influential essay "Politics and the Soul" sought to resolve the abovementioned debate by denying the *de facto* neutrality of the political sphere and, at the same time, refusing to concede politics to the earthly city, it did not provide a definitive answer as to what view of politics held both positions together. After all, Williams argued, Augustine is not a political thinker; "we cannot really say that he has a theory of *the* state at all."²³ Confronted with this difficulty, scholars

what we do not see is greater than what we do. Cf. Charles Mathewes, "A Worldly Augustinianism: Augustine's Sacramental Vision of Creation," *Augustinian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2010): 338–340.

²¹ Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*, and Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). Both, in other words, worry that in the past politics has been absorbed under ecclesial jurisdiction and that a misreading of Augustine provides no theoretical arguments against this absorption. Accordingly, both readings of Augustine, despite their serious differences, want to emphasize the autonomy of secular institutions over and against any political claims of the institutional church. The first responds to political Augustinianism by relegating the two cities to their own separate arenas, the second by depicting the political sphere as a neutral space in which the two cities, interpreted as the religious and the nonreligious, meet.

²² In this literature, the state, rather than the political community, is equated with politics. I will address this aspect of the scholarship in Chapter 6.

²³ Rowan Williams, "Politics and the Soul: A Reading of the City of God," *Milltown Studies* 19/20 (1987): 57–58. Reprinted in *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 110.

after Williams have either focused on the way Augustine conceives of Christian statesmanship or turned to constructive projects, using Augustinian ideas to think about contemporary issues.²⁴ It remains to be seen a precise relationship between politics and the earthly city can be found in *City of God*.

Meanwhile, the debate about the status of politics has reached a stalemate.²⁵ As Michael Bruno has pointed out in *Political Augustinianism*, the field can be divided into two camps: the pessimists and the optimists.²⁶ The pessimists continue to cast the political sphere as the “realm of sin,” describing the work of the statesman as “damage control.”²⁷ The optimists, on the other hand, continue to

²⁴ For the best of the former, see Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); for the best of the latter, see Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

²⁵ Earlier studies that either touch or focus on the status of politics in *City of God* include Peter Brown, “Political Society,” in *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Markus, 311–335 (New York: Doubleday, 1972); Peter Dennis Bathory’s *Political Theory as Public Confession the Social and Political Thought of St. Augustine of Hippo* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1981); George Lavere, “The Political Realism of Saint Augustine,” *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980): 135–144, and “The Problem of the Common Good in Saint Augustine’s *Civitas Terrena*,” *Augustinian Studies* 14 (1983): 1–10; Oliver O’Donovan, “Augustine’s City of God XIX and Western Political Thought,” *Dionysius* 11 (1987): 89–100; Peter Burnell, “The Problem of Service to Unjust Regimes in Augustine’s City of God,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, no. 2 (1993): 177–188, and “The Status of Politics in St. Augustine’s City of God,” *History of Political Thought* 13, no. 1 (1992): 13–29.

²⁶ Michael Bruno, *Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine’s Political Thought* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 230–244. Bruno’s book is the best available resource for understanding the development Augustinian political thought in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

²⁷ Milbank, *Theology as Social Theory*, 411; Kaufman, *Incorrectly Political*, 4. Ultimately, Milbank’s view of Augustinian politics is that of Niebuhr, though this concession of politics to the earthly city leads him to present the Church as the new realm of politics. To my mind, this is simply a restatement of a position equating the state with the earthly city and the institutional Church with the city of God triumphant. Other notable works in this movement that draw on Augustine include Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000), and the work of William Cavanaugh, especially “From One City to Two: Christian Reimagining of Political Space,” *Political Theology* 7, no. 3 (2006): 299–321, and “The City: Beyond Secular Parodies,” 186. While Cavanaugh follows Milbank in declaring the political order to be sinful and the Church to be the new realm of politics, Graham Ward seeks a renewal in the political sphere through the Christian engagement. For Dodaro’s critique of Milbank’s stance on politics and the Church, see Dodaro, “*Ecclesia* and *Res Publica*,” 256–270. Though Dodaro is somewhat more favorable to Kaufman’s brand of pessimism in the essay, he still argues that Kaufman “misreads Augustine’s intention” and that Augustine offers what he thinks is needed: “a set of religious practices through which Christian statemen undergo