Dissertation title:

What are the socio-political ethical models taught in the Patristic Church, especially in the Fathers, and in Plato's Republic, and to what extent are these compatible?

Student name: Cameron Macadam

Abstract:

In this essay I will examine the social-political ethics which the Patristic Church taught as ideal and establish a *spirutu partrum* of the early Fathers of the Church, defined as those approximate to the death of Augustine. I will compare the social and political thought of the Fathers with those of Plato, as outlined in his Republic. I will begin by looking at the Patristic church and the writings of the Fathers, examining the taught models and practice of the faithful. In the first chapter I will consider what the underlying principles are and where the Fathers lack consensus, to establish a spectrum of Patristic socio-political thought. This will form the basis of a Patristic model. In the second chapter I will look at the kind of society Plato describes, this chapter will be devoted to examining principles, and preparing for the third chapter in which the Patristic and Platonic model of society can be compared, focusing on the comparable sacrificial attitude of Christian charity and the Platonic quest for justice. We begin by exploring Patristic consensus, and because the essay looks at a broad period and range of figures, it has required careful selection of the best and most appropriate sources and examples, but with such a vast period and range of figures cannot examine them all. Although primary sources will form a key part of this dissertation, they are not used exclusively, and compliment texts which give a broader, less proscriptive depiction of the Patristic church. The essay will examine not only the philosophical and theological, but the practical and lived expressions of these teachings. We will then make a judgement as to how compatible the Patristic and Platonic/Socratic models are, and whether the principles, as well as the practise of these ideas, are compatible.

Contents:

Introduction

The early church is a phrase oft used, and variously applied, in this essay we refer more specifically to the Patristic era, and to the Fathers. Some thinkers consider theologians as late as Bernard of Clairvaux in the 11th century as church Fathers, and whilst there may be reason for this, this essay will limit itself to those Fathers of the church who lived before, or approximating, the death of Saint Augustine in 430 AD. I will try to establish which models and principles the Fathers considered as most important to establish a just society, and the behaviour expected from Christians. We will make the assumption, based upon research, that the Fathers are not simply a disparate group of characters existing over a number of centuries, with vaguely converging goals and ideas, but are instead a deeply spiritually united group whose views can be studied both individually and corporately.

The first chapter of this dissertation will begin by examining the teachings of the Fathers, focusing on dealing with wealth, its origin and proper use, and the dangers that accompany wealth. I will look at the pre-Christian practice of charity and pre-Christian patronal system, and its evolution into Christian charitable giving. I will consider the specifics of giving, for instance which beggars are to be favoured, and the implications for Christian leadership and elite. I will defend against claims that the Fathers teach a kind of Marxism or anarchism when they are promoting communalism and sharing of resources. In other places I will defend them from suggestions that their writings objectify the poor, when in actuality this is the product of philosophically stoic language[1], and does not convey a lack of compassion. The Patristic period chosen for study is extremely vast, and the primary sources that could

[1] Susan R. Holman, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Brookline, Mass: Baker Academic; Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008), 10.

have been chosen are immensely numerous, however most of the Fathers chosen are later than 300, and I have chosen to especially focus on St John Chrysostom, the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great and the two Gregory's – Nyssa and Nazianzus), Clement and Cyril of Alexandria, St Ambrose, Eusebius and St Augustine. My goal in this chapter is to establish *a spiritu partum*, a spirit of the Fathers, as it is impossible in an essay of this size to try to construct a socio-political model for each of the Fathers, or the whole pre-Augustinian church, it is has been necessary to select the texts and Fathers which best represent Patristic thought and trends. On most issues, especially those concerning the wealthy, and proper use of wealth, the Fathers form a spectrum. For instance, regarding private property St Ambrose lay at one end, who is viewed as a proto communist by many moderns[2], whereas St Augustine holds a much tamer stance and rarely addressed social action at all[3]. In most cases the Fathers fall within a range of similar views, however some issues like slavery have radical exceptions. Most Fathers gently advocate for freeing slaves, or accept slavery as an unfortunate evil, but Gregory of Nyssa stands practically alone in opposing slavery and advocating for its immediate abolition[4]. In all their writings they teach a deep and personal love of the divine, both as the object of worship and in one's neighbour. The chief spirit of the Fathers is sacrificial love, lived out for love of the divine.

Secondly, I will examine Plato's Republic and its motivating spirit, what values it establishes for society and government, both as a philosophical text and utopian vision. We have in Plato's Republic a text which explains how the soul and state may achieve justice and

[2] J. Bergida, "Patristic socialism?: Ambrose of milan and catholic social teaching on private property," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 22, no. 2 (2019), 264.

[3] Richard J Dougherty et al., *Augustine's Political Thought. NED - New edition*. Vol. 2. (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 258.

[4] Ilaria Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: the Role of Philosophical Asceticism From Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 2016),152.

harmony of their parts. Plato establishes sacrifice and selflessness as the virtues which lead the soul-state to perfection, it is a sacrifice of pride and property that facilitate contemplation of the divine from the top downward. The Philosophers must sacrificially compromise a life of pure contemplation for the state's good.

In the final chapter I will compare these two ethical systems, I argue that the Patristic model is mainly concerned with individual souls, and in a deeply personal way. Whereas Plato describes an ethical model for the city-soul, which loses the individual sense of the divine in man's soul, and is sometimes mechanistic, for instance discarding the disabled, or dehumanising the guardians to achieve harmony. However, both emphasise the importance of sacrifice and compromise to achieve the ultimate good, whether that be contemplation of the Good, or salvation through Christ Jesus. They are somewhat compatible as socio-political models as both models encourage sacrifice and compromise in public and domestic life for the sake of the common good of their neighbour, and seeking the Good, as a spiritual and temporal goal. Plato teaches sacrifice for harmony and philosophy, whereas the Fathers advocate sacrifice to obtain salvation.

I have chosen to compare these two topics because of the immense impact Plato had on early Christian thought, with Augustine describing Plato as anima naturaliter christiana. Many of the Fathers shared these Platonising tendency's in theology, and I will explore how similar their socio-political models are. Plato created a model for a state, something later political philosophers imitated, though the Fathers do not posit any systematic political theory. I will establish that just as Patristic Theology owes much to, and has much in common with Platonic thought, so to does Patristic socio-economic thought.

Chapter the first- Spiritu Patrum

Introduction & Pre-Christian models of charity

The context in which the Fathers were cultivated is of supreme importance, as it forms their teaching, and experience of leadership and charity, this is especially important when they were converts from paganism. In pre-Christian Roman society charity, in the Christian sense, did not exist, that is giving to your neighbour, seeing him as Christ, and acting as Christ toward him out of love of God. When the apostate Emperor Julian began to establish charitable institutions, this was an attempt to outdo the charity of the Christians who cared for huge number of people, for instance they were feeding and clothing 3000 widows in Antioch. It was not a pagan custom, and Julian was merely imitating Christian charity which had proved an effective evangelising tools, as the maxim of the day was 'see how they (Christians) love one another'. Greco-Roman society appreciated benefaction, where members of prominent families would sponsor important civic events, such as public games, or would improve streets or sponsor a temple. The focus varied regionally, the elite of Cappadocia liked to compete in erecting huge civic buildings,[5] but the civic common good of the polis, and prestige of the giver were the key motivating factors. Civic benefactors wished to embody the virtue of magnanimity, and in doing so received honour, respect, and authority. When patricians gave money and support to a cause they were creating a relationship, namely one of dependence, of patron and of client. The patron expected to receive, according to Plato[6], the self-satisfaction from helping his neighbour and the good deed of helping the neighbour itself. Begging was a very public affair and patrons expected

[5] Thomas A. Kopecek, "The Cappadocian Fathers and Civic Patriotism," *Church History* 43, no. 3 (1974): 294.
[6] Holman, *Poverty*, 192.

public thanks, something churchmen critiqued as vain[7]. Christian charity emphasised giving as a religious obligation, done out of love, above and beyond its civic and social benefits.

Pre-Christian charity emphasised the civic common good of the polis, and had precedent in pagan poetry and philosophy, including Homer's Odyssey which reads to 'that strangers in need are to be received as a brother'[8]. Because Greco-Roman charity focused on the common good it also became a question of civil obligation, for instance a family has an obligation to care for each other as does everybody in the civic body have a duty toward the whole[9]. Christian charity promoted a different kind of love, one of a radical and universal citizenship in which the needy were to be regarded as more than a social obligation, but as objects of sincere love and as kin[10]– brothers to whom charity is owed and sacrifice willingly made for.

Christian evolution

Christian charity built upon these existing praxis, expanding civic obligation into charity, love and religious obligation, including the needy within the universal fellowship of believers, and excluding nobody. Despite some universal charitable precedent, for instance Diogenes the cynic declaring himself a 'cosmopolities' (citizen of the world), it was never more than a peripheral vision[11]. The idea of a universal obligation compelling man to suffer for his neighbour's benefit was largely unknown. Though not ignoble, the mainline charity of the Greco-Romans never attained the deep personal love that the church preached, one of

[7] Holman, *Poverty*, 194.
[8] Holman, *Poverty,* 192.
[9] Susan R. Holman, "The Entitled Poor: Human Rights Language in the Cappadocians," *Pro Ecclesia* 9, no. 4 (2000): 478.
[10] Holman, Entitled, 489.
[11] Holman, Poverty, 197.

individual salvation and relationship with Jesus. The church referenced inferior pagan charity to reprimand Christian miserliness, St Basil stated that Christians should 'feel shame at the stories of the philanthropy of the Hellenes'[12], this was in response to the cold heartedness of the wealthy, who were loath to give to the poor and were put to shame by even pagan generosity. Basil points out to miserly Christians that even the Hellenes have a kind of charity, but the love Christians express should sacrificially imitate Christ, and if these rich cannot give freely then how poorly they imitate The Lord.

In the Fathers' writings there are two trends of spiritual encouragement to give generously, firstly seeing the poor as Christ for whom we want to suffer, and secondly imitating Christ's suffering for others. Based on the scriptural passage in Matthew 25 (36-37) that 'I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,' Gregory Nazianzus exhorts the faithful to 'share what we have with Christ'[13] embodied in the needy. Secondly, when giving the donor acts as Christ acted toward the poor, by imitating His selflessness they are divinised in the process and Nazianzus explains they become more fully 'sharers in that same divine image'[14]. Conforming one's life to Christ's model is crucial. Pre-Christian charity emphasised the good of the civitas, including supporting the needy, and patronising games or sacrifices, but did not emphasise the specific love of man as Christ's example had done.

Cyprian is a fine example of this transmogrification and Christian model of charity, born around 200AD to a wealthy aristocratic family, he converted around the year 246AD and quickly rose to prominence in the church as a bishop. As a patrician he had experience of the

[12] Holman, Poverty, 197.

[13] Susan R. Holman, Caroline Macé, and Brian J. Matz, "De Beneficentia: A Homily on Social Action Attributed to Basil of Caesarea," *Vigiliae Christianae* 66, no. 5 (2012): 474.

[14] Holman, *Entitled*, 483.

patron-client relationship, whereby a patron's support would acquire reliance and dependency from a client. It would also acquire, as noted by Clement in his *Quis Dives Salvatur*, the fawning attention of others, seeking only their own material benefit[15]. Upon converting Cyprian gave away the vast majority of his possessions to the church and the needy, keeping only enough so as not to burden the church with support of him. He rejected the 'vanity' of the patronal system,[16] and devoted himself to selfless Christian giving. Cyprian rejected this system, for him the key difference was that the Christian should 'lend (money, time and effort) without expecting repayment,'[17] in the spirit of Luke 6:30-31. He believed the Christian donor receives spiritual benefits, and no longer has the anxiety of worrying about his possessions and their due care, because he has shared a portion of his wealth, and demonstrated detachment[18].

Misuse of wealth

A recuring theme in Patristic texts is misuse, or mishandling, of wealth. Christian patrons, as well as being socially visible, hosting feasts and parties, had a duty of care for their fellow believers' soul, as well as material prosperity, and health, in short an 'obligation to care'[19]. This eased the conversions of the wealthy, who were not required to sell all their possessions, though this was a preferable and more perfect path[20]. Embracing Christianity meant rejecting the previous exploitative patronal relationship and replacing it with something which lent without expecting repayment and sought the temporal and eternal

[15] Holman, *Poverty*, 70.
[16] Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage," *Church History* 73, no. 4 (2004): 722.
[17] Dunn, *works*, 723.
[18] Dunn, *Works*, 723.
[19] Dunn, *Works*, 725.
[20] Holman, *Beneficia*, 468.

benefit of the recipient, done for the love of God. There were ways to morally use wealth, for selfless stewardship of the community.

The Fathers advise caution regarding a man's profession and business dealings, as they constitute human interactions. In modernity economics is generally viewed as something falling within the realm of mathematics, or a science in its own right, prior to this modern view of economics it was subsumed under the category of moral philosophy. This was because economics determines right relations with your neighbour, relating to your goods and spiritual wellbeing, likewise the Fathers certainly treat economics as something belonging to the moral realm.

They caution Christians to avoid, if possible, dealing in commerce, and denounce vociferously usury and landlordism. Chrysostom explains that the control landlords have over others lends itself to fostering the sin of pride, and similarly success in trade often requires lying, deception or unjust profiteering, and unlike manual labour (and those who profit from it) is insecure, and almost a form of gambling[21]. Because of the dangers inherent in transporting goods, it never was certain that if purchased they would be safely transported or sold at a profit making price. These dangers meant many traders would exploit the producers by paying less than they were due for their labour. Haggling also generally requires some deception, for instance telling the other party a misleading wholesale price. Though not inherently sinful, Chrysostom and the Fathers advise Christians to avoid trading unless absolutely necessary[22].

[21] Holman, *poverty*, 245.
[22] Holman, *poverty*, 247.

Concerning usury, the Fathers explain that the usurer leaches his neighbour's wealth and 'harms self with anxiety'[23], it is a sin that consumes the poor with debt, and the lender with a ferocious worry about his possessions. Usury is always condemned as an exploitative sin against charity because it traps men in a bind, extracting wealth like an unquenchable leach that uses its neighbour as a mere resource. St Basil compares the usurer to a bird who consumes all the seed in one field before moving on to eat the next, he uses imagery of nature's rape preaching that the usurer is like 'one who brings up all the marine beasts from the ocean'[24]. The animalistic language highlights the wickedness of the usurer who uses his neighbour as a commodity, when he ought to respect him following Christ's example. The usurer will find no true pleasure in this sin as he, states Basil, 'harms himself with anxiety'[25]. The usurer banishes the peace of God because he must constantly worry about protecting his possessions, which he prizes above his neighbour.

Patronal relations in emergencies

Despite the reformed patronal relations many newly converted souls continued to see giving through the lens of the old relationship. Even one as fervent as St Cyprian reverted to the old patronal model when facing difficulties with church discipline, using his authority as leverage, and thus choosing a less perfect path when practically necessary. During the second Dacian persecution many donors stopped giving to the church, and it became impossible and illegal to be thus religiously associated. Many rich lapsed out of fear of losing their possessions, Cyprian notes the heroic perseverance of the poor, when contrasted with

[23] Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen, "Basil and Gregory's Sermons on Usury: Credit Where Credit Is Due," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 418.
[24] Basil, *Usury,* 420.
[25] Basil, *Usury*, 418.

the comparative failure of the rich[26]. For the Fathers possession of wealth requires spiritual detachment to prevent possessions controlling their owner, a lack of possessions meant the poor had nothing to protect but their souls, whereas the rich were distracted with temporal goods. As many souls left the church during the Decian persecution, generally wealthier congregants, churchmen sought to protect their authority by weaponizing works of charity. Cyprian mustered funds, both personal and ecclesiastical, and used these in a style more recognisably that of patron and client to secure the loyalty of fellow churchmen[27]. Unlike the giving in more prosperous times, Cyprian used this wealth very strategically to secure loyalty and unity. There remained a marked difference from pre-Christian patronal relations, as this was done for church unity to guarantee the health of her members' souls, not for the personal gain of the patron. The former relationship was not so much destroyed, as transformed into a more paternal and loving relationship, in which the wealthy have a duty to care for the soul and body of their neighbour, and be willing to put their needs first as Christ had done.

Although Cyprian claims he had completely abandoned the former system of patronage, he, and many of the Fathers, pragmatically utilised the cultural understanding of patronage to encourage to good works. In addition to spiritual motivation, the Fathers used language of civic patriotism to encourage giving. St Basil the great, coming from patrician stock, was well acquainted with traditional civic patronage, and as it had been the custom among Cappadocian patricians to construct vast civic buildings, he now encouraged building vast churches, and encouraged others to do likewise. His younger brother Gregory Nazianzus had no qualms taking tremendous pride in his brother's achievement, which had been to

[26] Dunn, *Works*, 737.
[27] Dunn, *Works*, 733.

organise the erection of the largest and most ornate building in the city, a Church[28]. Some complained that such quasi-patronal behaviour was unbecoming a cleric, to which he deftly responded that 'unless someone should say it brings harm to public affairs to erect a magnificently wrought house of prayer'[29], they ought not complain. Using civically patriotic language, Basil and others developed the old patronal system into something that aimed to benefit the spirit *and* body of Christians, without seeking earthly reward.

Appealing to the patronal relationship was only possible with major donors, generally few in number. Saint Cyprian explains that he was able to feed most of the city's poor with the donations given from only two wealthy Christian donors, how much more could be done with even a handful of similarly generous givers! The vast mass of donors in the early church were the poor, 'the saints' of which Paul writes, who gave their two talents, and willingly suffered for the church, while the rich hoarded their wealth. These were mostly transitory givers, those who would fluctuate between giving and receiving aid. This entrenched giving as a practical insurance too, and Clement preached not to be one 'who stretches out hands to receive but shuts when it comes to giving[30]'. Consistent community giving meant that the poor could rely on assistance, though if they were ungenerous, it may not be reciprocated. The church thus acted as a siphon and safety net, with monks, upper clergy and the churches charitable institutions directing the money.

Clergy described the relationship of the giver and receiver in language of duty, as the wealthy have a responsibility to the poor, and that the poor have a duty to pray for the giver, and the Christian community would always care for its people as a duty of love. By giving the

[28] Kopek, *Patriotism*, 295.
[29] Kopek, *Patriotism*, 302.
[30] Holman, *poverty,* 37.

donor imitates God and secures the intercession of God's good friends: the poor. Pre-Christian custom meant that many converts preferred to donate gifts which had a lasting aesthetic value, for instance favouring the purchase of gold chalices over giving money to feed the hungry poor. St John Chrysostom reminds the faithful that 'if you cannot find Christ in the beggar, you will not find Him in the chalice'[31], and that priority must be given to the dignity and welfare of the needy before the beautification of the Church. St Cyril sold church veils to feed the famine struck poor, as Ambrose had done with church property to pay the ransom of Christian slaves. Chrysostom sold church marble to assist the poor, something for which he was condemned at the synod of the Oak, resulting in his deposition[32]. The Fathers demonstrate that wealth must be used for the welfare of people, and sacrificial giving must prioritise people over beautiful ornamentation.

Right use of wealth

The Patristic church lacked the modern concerns about simplicity, namely whether it is morally appropriate for a church to possess large amounts of wealth, and whether churches should be stripped of gold and silver to pay for the needy. None of the Fathers advocated for this,[33] and they agreed that quality materials helped to enhance the liturgy and symbolise part of the mysteries hidden beauty. The object of good works are the poor, who are more precious than gold as they share in the divine image and take priority. Hence St John Chrysostom had no qualms selling church property for emergency poverty relief funds, whilst simultaneously being flanked by several clerics carrying solid silver crosses as part of his episcopal entourage[34], if necessity called these too would have been sold for his people.

[31] Holman, *poverty,* 215.
[32] Holman*, poverty*, 214.
[33] Holman, *poverty*, 215.
[34] Holman, *poverty*, 211.

The church never refused assistance given for the improvement of buildings or liturgy, but did encourage the faithful to redirect their aid toward nobler assistance of their brethren. Chrysostom warns that by excessively focusing on the beauty of the church the faithful will follow the blind carnality of the Jews, who loved the temple's beauty instead of Christ[35]. The presence of beautiful items proved important in keeping the attention of many faithful, as the church needed to compete with spectacular pagan festivals, these expensive objects helped capture the attention of the masses. The church accommodated the charitable preferences of donors, and practical necessity of spectacle, but always favoured assisting people more important than items.

Spiritual impact of poverty

The Fathers were greatly affected by the stoics, and is one reason why exhortations to almsgiving and charity lack the emotive personal language common today. We discover a more mechanistic account of charity, sometimes critiqued for objectifying the poor as mere cogs in the machinery of spiritual trade. The stoics taught that the 'soul is not effected by the body'[36], though Christian stoics could not ignore the body totally, as this too exists by God's ordinance. Clement gives a beautiful response to the gnostics of this kind who wanted Christianity to deal only with the soul. In the fourth section of his *Stromata*, he addresses himself 'to the true gnostic', meaning that the true gnostic is one who is concerned with reason and true knowledge, which implies love of God, rather than dualistic heresy. He draws upon the writings of Paul as the foundation of his teaching, which emphasises the importance of works and faith being united, as James states 'faith without works is dead'

[35] Holman, *poverty,* 217.

[36] "CHURCH FATHERS: *The Stromata* (Clement of Alexandria)," newadvent.org, 5.

(James, 2:14). He quotes St Paul to highlight the importance of bodily concerns, quoting 'spare them (from destitution), for (I) would have you without anxiety' (1 Corinthians, 7:32), Clement uses this to argue that poverty 'compels the soul to desire from necessity'[37], meaning a lack of material items will take priority and distract from prayer. Basil makes a similar argument, that to be severely poor makes it more difficult to live a harmonious life, and God wills all His creatures to have a basic standard of living[38]. A concept with much precedent in the Old and New Testaments, especially in the commands of Christ (Matt, 25), and the nation-wide charitable proscriptions for Israel, for example to leave grain to be gleaned (Leviticus 19:9-10) and to feed and clothe the needy (Deuteronomy 10: 18-19).

Clement makes it plain that beggary is not a virtue in itself[39], and as such monastic poverty sought spiritual detachment from possessions, rather than a poverty of depravation, the like of which the starving poor might experience. During the great famine of 370AD not a single monastic starved to death, as their renunciation of property, either in part or in whole, did not entail deprivation. Lacking possessions is not an intrinsic virtue, though several Fathers make the point that the poor are the favourites of God, as they are most naturally reliant on Him. Though to be God's favourite does not imply virtue, but simply a greater disposition to goodness, as virtue consists in a spiritual detachment from goods. Monks were regarded as more virtuous than the desperately poor and received alms preferentially. The goal of monastic life was spiritual detachment from all material wealth, which required renunciation of property, but did not consist in it alone. Most monks would keep some of their

[37] Clement, *Stromata,* 5.
[38] Holman, *Beneficia*, 473.
[39] Butterworth, *The Exhortation to the Greeks The Rich Man's Salvation; To the Newly Baptized*, 268.

possessions for the purpose of communal support, and not to drain the common supply unnecessarily.

In his *Quis Dives Salvatur* Clement regards wealth as something *adiaphoron*, a Greek philosophic concept, popular among the stoics, meaning that wealth is a thing of indifference, and its effect on the soul is mediated by right or improper interaction with it. A theme prevalent in Augustine and Chrysostom, but present in all Fathers who address the topic, is that true wealth is to be rich in faith[40], and thus true poverty of spirit is to be controlled by passions. The ascetic ideal of monastic spirituality is control of oneself (principally pride and greed), and mastery of the passions so that man can act sacrificially in imitation of Christ, with discipline to overcome self-interest.

The rich young man

A particular favourite of the Fathers is the story of the rich young man, who comes to Christ and asks, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life' (Luke 18:18-23) and is told to 'sell all that you have and distribute to the poor'. Many Fathers comment on this verse as a *perfect* example of selfless giving, with the harsh proviso that the young will be unable to receive salvation if he fails to sell his goods. It raises the question of whether salvation requires that every rich man sell his goods and donate the proceeds to the poor. This verse was of such power that Augustine attributes his decision to abandon his secular career, in favour of a clerical post, to this verse[41]. Opposing a literal universal interpretation of this verse Clement of Alexandria soothed the rich, who, unwilling to sell everything, despaired at certain damnation[42]. Many ordinary faithful used this verse to justify rudeness toward the rich, the

[40] Holman, *poverty*, 55.
[41] Holman, *poverty*, 67.
[42] Holman, *poverty*, 70.

Church in Alexandria combatted this reverse snobbery toward the rich[43], something Clement notes in his *Quis Dives Salvatur* as the 'insolent rudeness' of some. He condemns this attitude on account of the neutrality of wealth, as one might acquire virtue by its proper generous use, stating that 'the lover of money is not one who has possessions, but who desires them'[44].

Basil too, in common with most of the Fathers interprets this to mean that the rich young man was commanded to follow the path of perfection, and that it is not necessary for all the rich *en masse* to renounce their possessions[45]. He commands patrons imitate Christ's poverty of spirit, if they are unable to embrace actual perfect poverty. Among his congregation many objected that total divestment cannot be the perfect path, as it would render Christ's parable of the Talents in Matthew 25 mute[46]. They cynically interpreted this parable to mean that the well off should invest their resources and continue to act as stewards to the wider Christian community. This attempt to keep all their privilege was rebuked by Chrysostom who replied to the objectors to 'let no one worry about his stewardship' [47]. He tells his people that they must entrust these matters to God, and if He requires another steward, He will raise one from among those receiving gifts. Generosity is a duty of the individual, and spiritual detachment and selflessness can exist without total renunciation, but is an objectively inferior path.

In Chrysostom's *De Beneficentia* he uses language of traditional patronage, describing the relationship in terms of giver and debtor. He reminds his people that when giving alms God

[43] Holman, *poverty* 70.
[44] Holman, *poverty*, 79.
[45] Holman, *Beneficia*, 465
[46] Holman, *Beneficia*, 468.
[47] Holman, *Beneficia*, 468.

is made the spiritual debtor, as He promised to repay severalfold any good. The carnal rewards of patronage are replaced with spiritual indebtedness from God, and alms become the 'material of salvation'[48] by which God will bless His people, through the exalted needy. Such is the power and importance of this practice that he exhorts the faithful to work in order that they have the surplus to give alms. Chrysostom preached to 'work with your hands so that you may have something to give to those in need'[49].

Blessings of almsgiving

In the same homily he describes the poor as the fertile soil in which the seed of good works might be sown, framing the needy as gifts from God upon whom good works can be practised. To some this may come across as overly mechanical and objectifies the poor, but Chrysostom emphasises the blessings bestowed are spiritual and grounded in charitable love. The language of trade surely prompted cynics trying to buy spiritual benefits, but *his* focus is on souls and the blessings they will receive, namely their divinisation and the justice of almsgiving. Gregory of Nyssa describes almsgiving like an exchange of money in trade, with alms traded for grace and blessings. He also suggests practical forms of personal involvement in the lives of the needy, not merely impersonal financial giving. He tells the faithful that when they provide support and shelter, not to remove the needy to some distant place, but to shelter them in their own home, so 'no one may rob you of the treasure'[50] of good works. The wealthy must approach their poor brothers as favoured ones, because they lack the distraction of stewardship or property, and are often preserved from

[48] Holman, *Beneficia*, 470.
[49] Holman, *Beneficia*, 470.
[50] Susan R. Holman, *God Knows There's Need: Christian Responses to Poverty* (New York, 2009; online edn, Oxford Academic), 49.

'failing to follow the saviour'[51], as they will never struggle with issues faced men of important and status. There is clearly an ideal wealth level where the poor are neither driven into sin, or depravation, but are also not distracted by the 'disease of wealth,' which conquers men's souls and fosters pride in them.

Power of almsgiving

Giving alms requires genuine sacrifice, and St Cyprian explains that sacrifice and renunciation, to some degree, is essential to Christian living,[52] and not the preserve of those seeking perfection. His calls for alms were so demandingly sacrificial that many in the church complained that their children might starve, if compelled to give so generously[53]. Though complete renunciation was not universally necessary, alms required genuine sacrifice, rather than a symbolic donation. As much as 68% of the Roman empire existed at subsistence level or below,[54] and the church contained and provided for a proportionally large number of the poor. Most of the faithful were transient givers, who would sometimes be able to give to their neighbours, and at other times needed to receive their aid. St Basil complained that many wealthy Christians were less generous than these much poorer transient givers, and their objections were very inadequate and exceeding selfish. Many middle-class equivalents created uproar when asked to give something, stating that they could not give much without risking their family financial wellbeing[55] Despite their complaints, these families still had

[51] Holman*, Beneficia*, 475.

[52] Christopher M. Hays, "Resumptions of Radicalism. Christian Wealth Ethics in the Second and Third Centuries*," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 102, no. 2 (2011): 269.

[53] Hays, "Radicalism", 271.

[54] Holman, *poverty*, 19.

[55] Holman, Macé, and Matz, "*De Beneficentia*," 468.

servants, food for luxurious feasts and jewels in which to clad their wives. Their comparative poverty was only such when compared to the super rich, a comparison born of pride. Rather than firstly considering their neighbours, they ignored them in order to compete with the super-rich, thus they failed to help Christ in the poor.

Christian perfection

Clement of Alexandria outlines three paths a Christian could embrace, firstly the perfect path which would entail monastic living and spiritual detachment, practised through material detachment. Secondly the life of a simple believer, who is unwilling to renounce all goods, but tries his best to morally use his possessions. Lastly is the sinner who misuses his goods, and places his hope, trust and faith in them. Possessions are a matter of moral indifference, and using stoic language, he describes the perfect Christian is one who is wise and harmonious with nature, and God[56]. He should use his property to alleviate his neighbour's suffering. In his *Stromata* he explains that a man may shed all his goods, and yet remain rich in the passions, or on the other hand may retain all his possessions and be humble in spirit. The possession of property has no moral bearing, though the path of perfection requires a more ultimate renunciation that *must* be concomitant with spiritual renunciation to be effective.

Again, using stoic language, Clement explains that there are two categories of the indifferent which must not coveted, firstly that which *should* have no bearing on happiness (which can only come through life with God). Secondly are those things which lack the ability to produce any happiness, namely the irrelevant. Wealth, health, and all manner of material

[56] John R. Donahue, "STOIC INDIFFERENTS AND CHRISTIAN INDIFFERENCE IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA," *Traditio* 19 (1963): 439.

possessions fall into this first category, about which Clement counsels 'we should use indifferent things indifferently'[57]. He means that we must not become attached to these things as ends in themselves, but must use them for God's, and our neighbour's sake, and always considering the salvation of our souls. He provides practical examples of this, and in his *Stromata* writes that high quality food is a matter of indifference, and that becoming a Christian does not mean forsaking luxurious food[58]. In his *Paedagogus* he adds to this teaching by critiquing the wealthy of his day and their excessive feasts[59], at which many would feast until vomiting only to them eat more, an example of gross excess and waste, thus using something indifferent in an immoral way. Clement contrasts the feast held in honour of the prodigal son's return with these orgiastic feasts, to demonstrate proper and improper uses of food, that which rightly should be treated as indifferent and used morally. Like Nyssa, he rejects some levels of wealth as intrinsically excessive, for instance he critiques the wealthy some of whom 'cannot but ease themselves except in a superb way,'[60] as they required golden vessels for their excreta. The focus is on moral action and proper interaction with the material world in relation to the divine.

Stewardship of wealth

The Fathers refer to wealth as an object of stewardship, among the strongest advocates of this, and wider advocacy for social justice, were Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom. Nyssa strongly articulated the view that wealth is a kind of common possession, rightly to be shared among all men, but especially entrusted to a few who must use it wisely and

[57] Donahue, "INDIFFERENTS," 442.
[58] Donahue, "INDIFFERENTS," 441.
[59] "CHURCH FATHERS: *The Paedagogus* (Clement of Alexandria)," newadvent.org, 3.
[60] "*The Paedagogus (*Clement of Alexandria)," 3.

selflessly realise its communal purpose [61]. In Chrysostom's *De Beneficentia* he explains his theology of the image to describe justice and stewardship, namely that Christ shared His image with all men in His incarnation and the logos centred creation story. As a result, God has given all of creation to mankind as common property[62]. By concentrating wealth too greatly he states that a man automatically incurs sin, because he has assumed to himself too great a portion of God's common creation. That man violates the respect owed to his fellow man on account of his equality as God's child, which corresponds with a sacrificial responsibility for his neighbour. Nyssa also writes that to deny him that portion of his shared common creation, which all men have a right to, is akin to theft[63]. Chrysostom had a similar interpretation and understood that wealth and private ownership are evils that entered the world with the fall before which everything was held in common[64]. Almsgiving and charity help to return to this pre-lapsarian ideal. The church doesn't promote communism or imagine it can recreate the peace and structure of Eden. Hence the distinction between the imperfection of inequality (the effects of sin), and sinful activities in themselves, for instance treating your neighbour as a financial commodity.

Theology of freedom

Gregory of Nyssa's almost unique Patristic position against slavery hinges upon this theology of image, and his theology of freedom, largely based upon the works of Origen who held a Platonic view of being whereby creation is an emanation of the form of the Good. Origen rejected Aristotle's teaching of natural slavery and accepted the equality of all souls. Nyssa

[61] Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, "The Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa's Theology of Freedom," *Modern Theology 38, no. 2 (2022): 366.*

[62] Ramelli, "The Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa's Theology of Freedom," 364.

[63] Ramelli, "Origen Theology of Freedom," 366.

[64] P. S. Heslam, "Property is theft": Abraham Kuyper and the Church Fathers on Poverty and Wealth, *Journal of Markets and Morality* 25, no. 1 (2022), 70.

rejected many forms of domination and misuse of God's creation, including slavery, believing that as God has given creation freely to all it must be made free all, and that ownership of any part must be ownership selflessly utilised for the common good. Hence Nyssa rejects some high degrees of wealth as intrinsically excessive, because it grants too much common property to one particular owner, and allows for a bad owner to neglect the common rights of each soul.

Societal pessimism

Augustine's pessimistic view of society meant that he accepted slavery as an unfortunate evil, no worse than the domination of a people by their king. Augustine considered the garden of Eden as the perfect society that lacked the need for kings or democracy[65]. Eve, as a woman, would by nature submit to Adam, as Augustine explains that women are naturally inferior in reason and therefore are naturally under the dominion of men in a 'servitude of love'[66]. At the fall this harmony was destroyed, and men now squabbled pridefully for their own benefit, each one seeking to dominate the other despite no precedent for this[67]. As a result, slavery and kingship, and every other form of domination, entered into the world as a general punishment for sin. Augustine interprets slavery as simply another evil domination, which by nature ought not to exist, but is a punishment for sin, akin to the presence of natural disasters, kingship and the breakdown of Eden's harmony.

Some modern authors interpret the communalist tendencies of the Fathers as communism, or anarchism, based on Patristic theories of domination, opposition to usury, property and

[65] Katherine Chambers, "SLAVERY AND DOMINATION AS POLITICAL IDEAS IN AUGUSTINE'S CITY OF GOD," *Heythrop Journal* 54, no. 1 (2013): 18.
[66] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 18.
[67] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 18.

caution toward tradesmen and merchants. Gregory of Nyssa is the most extreme example of this, and in many of his homilies equates any desire for power as the sin of pride[68], and cautions God's people to withdraw from military and political life, whilst still offering prayers for righteous victory and for peace[69]. Continuing in the stoic tradition, power is not an evil, but is very dangerous to the souls of those who wield it. Nyssa gives the example of two kings, firstly one who is truly attached to the role and power, he believes himself to be of great personal import and loves the trapping of rule. Secondly is the king who pursues duty alone and has a sensible detachment to his role, he understands that he can do good, but must do so impersonally and selflessly[70]. To do otherwise would embrace the 'disease of love of rule'[71], for necessary domination of one's neighbour must be undertaken with caution and detachment, lest pride be fostered. Domination of this kind destroys true friendship, states Nyssa, because true kinship recognises the equality of souls, and importance of serving our neighbour in imitation of Christ. Nyssa suggests that Christian participation in society must be a limited and pragmatic compromise, to preserve the Christian from worldly corruption. He advocates a kind of Christian realism, rather than teaching political idealism, and accepts that Christians cannot fully withdraw from political society. Gregory believes that all forms of political domination are immoral yet does not provide any alternate political system. He asks the faithful to be realistic and holy within the existing framework. He advocated ending the institution of slavery, as it was the most egregious, wicked and holistic form of domination, which stole man's God given autonomy.

[68] Johannes Aakjær Steenbuch, "A Christian Anarchist? Gregory of Nyssa's Criticism of Political Power," Political Theology: *The Journal of Christian Socialism* 17, no. 6 (2016): 574.
[69] Steenbuch, "A Christian Anarchist?" 578.
[70] Steenbuch, "A Christian Anarchist?" 578.
[71] Steenbuch, "A Christian Anarchist?" 579.

Augustine has similar pessimistic views about political engagement, though his response was altogether different, as he advocates inaction, and suggested very little in the way of social action. St Augustine defines slavery as the submission of one will to another,[72] domination of any kind also follows this definition. Augustine explains that before the fall domination did not exist and all men worked in common, and this was by God's decree because of man's equality as created in the divine image. Limited forms of domination were present from the beginning, for instance the animal kingdom is naturally subject to man's governance, and so too women submitted to men, as they were always inferior in the faculty of reason[73]. Augustine explains that after the fall kingship and many forms of domination often became necessary and useful but are not good in themselves. For instance, the kingship instituted by God in the Old Testament is a form of domination, thus contrary to Eden's perfect harmony, but practically necessary in a fallen world. Like slavery, Augustine attributes responsibility for suffering under this kind of domination to sin, which has caused man's initial perfect state to be revoked, and thenceforth to suffer unjustly[74]. There are no natural reasons why kingship, a mild form of domination, should exist.

Augustine states that kings can do good by restraining evil and 'achieve minimum disorder'[75], it is a very apophatic view of authority, and not a positivistic view of kingship or political order. As punishment for sin, domination will not end until the apocalypse when God will end these evils Himself, Augustine considers it impossible to end domination and it is therefore foolish to even attempt it. Both king and tyrant dominate[76], and because tyranny subverts even the post-lapsarian purpose of dominion he offers a few ways to resist a tyrant.

[72] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 13.
[73] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 15
[74] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 21.
[75] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 23.
[76] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 19.

He explains that if a king does not organise peaceable government, it might be appropriate to overthrow him. He gives the example of Spartacus' slave rebellion, that for a brief time he had usurped the throne, and because of his violent and unstable rule, it was appropriate to violently remove him. Thus, Augustine provides a framework for action in extreme cases, but rarely promotes social action or attempts at improving a system he considers naturally wicked. Though he lacked the ascetic quality of many of the Fathers, he was strictly in favour of valiantly suffering through the suffering inherent in the world.

He opposed domination principally because of the spiritual effects of pride; thus he advises the wealthy to undertake manual labour as a medicine to counter this. He considers material concerns, and the attempt to build the city of man, both impossible and overly distracting from building the city of God.

Slavery

A fundamental question of liberty divides the Fathers, namely slavery. Gregory of Nyssa, based on his formerly mentioned theology of image and freedom, opposes the institution as robbing man of his God given rights. He desires that slavery be abolished immediately, and even suggests the church should harbour fugitive slaves, contrary to civil law. Basil and Chrysostom held to the more moderate position which stated slavery was essentially bad, and that the church should encourage, but not force, slave owners to free their slaves. This moderate position held that slavery was not an intrinsic evil, which would necessitate immediate abolition, but was a serious imperfection that requires vigorous action. However, Theorodet and Augustine held that slavery could be a force for good in society, and Augustine carefully ranked it alongside other mild imperfections in society that entered the world at the fall, and not as a uniquely wicked institution. Nyssa wanted slaves freed

because slavery robbed them of their basic dignity, equally possessed among men, which ought to ensure freedom. The difference here depends on the degree of suffering the Fathers' are willing to accept as part of the human condition.

Like all the Fathers, Augustine too rejected Aristotle's belief in natural slavery, namely that some individuals possessed nature-souls of slaves, and ought to be in perpetual enslavement, which justified the hereditary status of the enslaved. Hardly soothing to modern ears, but St Augustine adds that the faithful must not treat slaves as objects, as if they were horses or gold plates[77]. Slaves must be accorded the dignity their humanity entitles them to, and the Fathers agree that a slave could be holier than a master. That some should be slaves, others free, and others masters is a result of the fall from Edenic perfection, according to Augustine. Augustine explains that God's justice is perfect, and slavery is both the perfect remedy for sin, and punishment for whoever receives it[78]. Slavery is part of the human condition on account of mankind's general fall and is realised in the particular lives of some on account of their sinfulness, or simply as a remedy for the faults that plague them most. A man whose chief fault is pride will be humbled by slavery, hence Augustine states 'it is better to be a slave of a human being than of desire'[79].

Theodoret observes that in several ways the slave has a superior state of living, and much like monks who voluntarily renounce their goods, suffers fewer risks to their salvation. In his *De Providentia* he explains that if slaves had to share some part of the worry their masters had, or deal with their affairs, they would be glad of their enslaved state[80]. Again, principally expressing concern for the spiritual issues associated with power and authority. He also

[77] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 155.
[78] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 153.
[79] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 154.
[80] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 160.

considered it unhelpful and cruel to release slaves without very good reason, even if they are Christian,[81] as they lacked the experience to survive in the modern world. His interpretation heavily relies upon St Paul's command, in Philemon (1:12), to the runaway slave that he should return to his master. Even the moderate Basil agrees with this argument, although he generally commends freeing of slaves, he explains that to free an unready slave is akin to plunging him into desperate poverty, preaching that 'for one who lacks in wisdom it is expedient that this person becomes the possession'[82]. Again, the focus is on the slaves wellbeing and their comfort in life, both spiritual and temporal. Even these pro slavery remarks were accompanied by a contextually great care, and concern for their correct treatment. Though Basil approves of whipping slaves, and right for the head of the family to whip his children and wife, it can only be moral if aimed at correction and improvement. He, in the stoic tradition, explains that punishment should be undertaken without anger and carried out for the sake of the punished, to teach discipline and good behaviour[83]. The Fathers recognise the divine worth of slaves, despite social custom to the contrary, and proscribe a basic standard which reflected their equally logos centred creation.

Universal citizenship and pre-Christian religion

Christian social ethics were more individual focused and universalist than the prior tradition, especially regarding religious rites. Greco Roman religion was a communal activity undertaken for the benefit of the localised *civis*, and represented a mechanical exchange of sacrifice for blessings. Roman sacral politics posited three principal points, firstly that there existed a number of powerful gods, in addition to a broader realm of spiritual and demonic

[81] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 163.
[82] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 163.
[83] Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery*, 155-56.

creatures. Secondly that sacrifices needed to be made to these gods for the welfare of the state, in a very transactional format, lacking the appeal to faith present in the Christian religion. Thirdly that the Roman empire, or other *civis,* thrived through studious observance of pagan religious rites, which required wholescale community participation in these religious duties[84]. Contrarily Augustine offers three largely apophatic maxims for Christian participation in politics. Firstly, that it must distance itself from worship of the person or state in the form of patriotic fervour, secondly to assist or not impede love of truth, and thirdly to consider God before any temporal interests[85]. These two views are not compatible because pagan sacral religion demanded the participation of the whole community, something that Christians were unable to do, as Augustine explains this would require worship of false gods and demons[86].

The gods are prideful and unhelpful and only concerned with external carnal sacrifice, whereas the true God asks for sacrifice of the heart. The gods spake to the Romans of their desire to 'spare the submissive and war down the proud'[87], their concern was temporal and trade like. When Rome was threatened in the Punic wars the Romans imported a fresh goddess, named Mater magna from the east, and Fabius Maximus ordered a 'sacred spring' where all newborn cows and diverse manner of beasts would be slaughtered in exchange for victory over Rome's enemies[88]. Failure to participate in these rights was viewed as a kind of terrorism, jeopardising the honour and success of Rome, hence many pagan authors attributed Rome's downfall to the spread of Christianity, because Rome had ceased to offer

[84] Dougherty, *Augustine's Political Thought*, 223.
[85] Dougherty, *Augustine's Political Thought*, 36.
[86] Dougherty, *Augustine's Political Thought*, 223
[87] Dougherty, *Augustine's Political Thought*, 228.
[88] Dougherty, *Augustine's Political Thought*, 228-229.

sacrifice as a united polis. Christianity preached an empire of the heart which focused on individual salvation and no longer on the quality and quantity of communal sacrifice, but on love and faith in the true God. Augustine, Eusebius and many other Fathers respond to the suggestion that they had caused Rome's demise by explaining that the pagan gods are actually demons, and that worship of the true God is much better for Imperial wellbeing. The focus is on sincere sacrificial love of God, and not carnal sacrifice.

Monastic living, and ideal

The Fathers universally encourage spiritual detachment, and the monastic life was held in the highest regard and respect, as the noblest and most spiritual way of life. Unlike modern monastic practice, few monks surrendered all of their possessions, and most would keep something to supply a side income for their maintenance, so as not to draw upon the pool of community resources. The Fathers edify and exemplify the poor as 'God's favourites', and as the *most* fertile soil for giving, especially in light of the exchange of prayers, that is the grateful intercessory prayers of the needy for their benefactors. Despite this, monastic poverty is regarded as the more perfect form of poverty, because it utilises material poverty for the purpose of fostering spiritual poverty and humility. St Basil gives account of a great famine in which no single monk died of starvation,[89] because the security offered by communal living and the generosity of the faithful, ensured poverty without worry of destitution. Donors favoured monastics who were willing to sacrifice their wellbeing for the good of others and acted as a reliable siphon for giving. A typical work addressed to monastics is that of Evagrius of Pontius, who counselled that monk's ought to life on the

[89] Holman, *poverty,* 228.

brink of poverty, with as few possessions to distract them as possible[90]. With fewer material concerns the monk can direct his intellect wholly toward God. Similarly, for all sections of society he advises that it is better to rely on others for your daily bread than yourself, as it requires surrender to divine providence. Spiritual sacrifice and love from monastics was prized, as they utilised the whole person of the monk for the service of others and love of God.

Monasteries tended to be dominated by wealthy individuals who had renounced their goods in favour of the simpler life. The reverence show to monks was also bestowed on widows, and orphans who had to accept involuntary celibacy and poverty, due to the loss of their spouse. St John Chrysostom addresses widowhood, claiming that many neglected and ignored widows, and again using the language of trade he explains that 'not small is the power of widow's prayers'[91], meaning that by assisting widows you gain a power spiritual advocate. The poor, weak and despised are the most treasured by Christians, not the wealthy or powerful. Chrysostom advises women to follow the advice of St Paul and not to remarry, as his own mother had not, and for widows to seek perfection in almsgiving and celibacy. He explains the importance of celibacy is not because of the uncleanliness of the marriage act, but rather to have more energy to devote to good works. He describes widowhoods challenges as the 'furnace of widowhood'[92] by which souls will be purified. Even widows are not exempt from almsgiving, in imitation of the widow of Zarephath. In 1 Kings 17 scripture depicts a story in which Elijah travels to a town and asks for something to eat and drink from a poor widow, despite having only a little left after which she will starve,

[90] Holman, *poverty,* 77.
[91] Holman, *poverty,* 178.
[92] Holman, *poverty*, 182.

she gives the prophet her last morsel. Elijah miraculously ensures she has an unending supply of food and drink from thenceforth. Chrysostom uses this story to demonstrate the strength and power of widows' prayers, and the spiritual benefits from being near to, and helping, widows. He counsels that widows should be invited to wedding celebrations in order to learn from them and grow in holiness,[93] and more generally to venerate their example in the community as models of Christ like sacrifice for spiritual and temporal benefits.

Conclusion

The Patristic church addressed many issues, the responses to which were frequently at odds with the prior Greco-Roman traditions. The church was forced to resist, fight back and prepare for martyrdom, as was the case regarding sacral religion in the state, and the necessity for citizens to offer sacrifice to the gods. The church did not intend to build the city of man, as the pagans conceived of it, by offering communal worship for the polis, but rather be prepared to die before offering pagan sacrifice. In areas the church was forced to reject the spirit of pre-Christian traditions but continued to use its language and cultural potency for the furtherance of new ideas and practices. This was the case with the Patron-client relationship which never fully disappeared, and proved a powerful tool for church discipline aimed toward spiritual improvement of the church. The twin horns of duty and hierarchy remain important for guiding society, and those with wealth, education and authority must be especially cautious to use it well. There is a tremendously pessimistic streak in the Fathers who, unlike Thomas Aquinas, offer no systematic political theory, but instead focus on how the individual soul can navigate to Heaven's shore. The early church expectantly

[93] Holman, *poverty*, 180.

waited for the coming of the Lord, and had no need to establish an idealised political order, they sought a compromise, navigating the reality of life, alongside the hope of the End of days. The goal of communal and individual life is to find God through right action and holiness, to that end the Fathers will build upon any foundation that is not wholly rotten. Hence their willingness to appeal to patronal charity. The Patristic church is principally concerned with the individual, and commands charity as the rule of life, and an essential part of being Christian, as we find the divine in our neighbour, who is made in His image. Patristic social ethics value sacrificial love for temporal and spiritual benefits, directed at finding God in one's neighbour and being willing to suffer for him, offering up alms material and prayer for supreme love of the human as God's child above all other concerns.

Chapter – the second

Introduction

Plato's Republic addresses two questions, firstly what justice is, and secondarily whether the just life is happier and more advantageous than the unjust, in addition to being the morally right course[94]. Plato is concerned with justice 'independently of its consequences for the rewards and reputation that may or may not follow from it' (368c[95]). In his Republic he is philosophically concerned with things in their nature, as well as effect. Namely whether justice *is* right or wrong. His Republic answers philosophic questions, rather than political ones, and though he provides very practical social ethics, their particular expression is often incompatible with Patristic ethics. In terms general and particular, the particular expression cannot be reconciled with Patristic ideas, whereas the general spirit of his ethics is fairly compatible. He encourages sacrifice from different sections of society for the good of the whole, especially from those nearest the Good, the guardian class. He shares a wariness of wealth, and a realistic spirit of compromise, concerning what is actually possible, for the Church this means accommodating things like wealth, and for Plato it meant abandoning his perfect Rustic City. His Republic examines justice in the state and individual, principally how they each be unified and harmonious.

The principal question of social ethics in Plato's Republic is how to define justice, his answer challenges a common sense view of morality which most people accept. In response he offers his own radical view of justice, which requires sacrifice, and love of the Good, from the individual soul and component parts of the state. In his Republic Plato speaks through

[94] Sean McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic': An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020), XIV.
[95] Here and in the following all references of the Republic are taken from the Penguin classic edition, 2007.

the person of his old master Socrates, and although he uses the character for effect, rather than simply a mouthpiece for himself, Socrates gives a Platonic view. Socrates represents the finest of men, a true philosopher and lover of the Good, he was put to death in 399 BC for what amounted to opposition to the Athenian democratic system. He opposed the pride of the Athenians, who continued their doomed war against the Spartans. He is thus able to frequently praise Spartan communal practises, like the syssitia meals, and reverence of their system of government which had a specialised citizen class, alongside helot workers. Socrates typifies the philosopher king and is contrasted with different dysfunctional souls represented by characters, for instance Thrasymachus most clearly represents the tyrannical soul.

Plato demonstrates the kind of educational dialectic, which helps souls develop to higher planes of understanding, by having Socrates and other characters engage in it. For instance, we might identify Adeimantus beginning as the money loving oligarchic soul, throughout the Republic he gradually grows in confidence and love of courage, developing into a timocratic soul. Socrates describes and demonstrates the purpose of guardians, namely, to improve their neighbour's, and the whole state's, virtue and usefulness. Socrates, by engaging in self-sacrificial dialogue which purposefully contains mistakes and falls far below his actual philosophic standard, offers a weak response to Thrasymachus' challenge in the first book, to bait the others into the dialogue and create greater philosophic engagement. He reproves the Athenian masculine ideal, largely based on the Homeric hero, which particularly valued the virtues of courage, bravery and action, while often neglecting the more intellectual virtues. Plato writes Socrates as the antithesis to this, as the man of knowledge who is plainly nobler and superior to the other characters, he is the archetypal philosopher king.

The republic as analogy

His Republic maps a utopian society, though it should not be read as a manifesto for utopianism, in the way one might read Marx's manifesto, as he focuses on the nature of justice and other philosophical ideas. Plato examines the human soul, and fundamental questions of virtue and human interaction, and chooses to examine the soul through a city model. He explains that these analogies are compatible because just as water, whether contained in a glass or in a swimming pool is of the same essence, so too are questions of morality applicable to both the city and the individual soul. His social ethics reflect how a soul ought to be ordered, that is the action of the tripartite soul, and whether a soul is controlled by the passions, spirit or reason. Platonic social ethics in the Republic can mainly be explored in two ways, firstly by examining what justice is and its implications, and secondly by looking at the kind of society Plato describes as the ideal polis. For instance, we read Socrates explaining that 'Justice is having and doing what is one's own and belongs to oneself,' (433b) for a man this means exercise of virtue and practice of his particular specialisation. In the first book, which many scholars consider pre-existed the Republic as an independent dialogue, Socrates defines justice largely by what it is not as he counters different notions of what justice is, before offering his own thoughts.

In defining virtue Socrates uses the word Arete, meaning excellence, to describe the ideal of virtuous behaviour. The excellence of a kitchen knife is its sharpness, whereas a theatrical knife is its inability to do harm. In man's case justice is to attain Arete, which is perfect excellence in the practice of virtue, which can be achieved by both the individual and community. We will firstly examine the first principles Plato establishes, which underpin his complex arguments and philosophic discussion, secondly, we will look at the form they take

in the ideal state. Plato precisely defines what he means by justice, the soul, the state and other terms, but their practice often subverts common sense assumptions, as too it was intended to disturb those of the Athenians.

The nature of justice – Cephalus

The Republic begins with a group discussion on the nature of justice and how to define it. The first to offer a definition of justice is Cephalus,[96] who states that justice is to fulfil your obligations. He defines this in the simple commonsense morality of the day stating that justice is a 'straightforward principle: we must never tell lies' (331d), that we must 'speak the truth and pay one's debts' (331e) and do likewise to the gods if 'on account of a successful voyage' 'I owe a sacrifice to the god' (331e). This simplistic account of virtue is commonly convincing, and often produces honourable results among ordinary people, but lacks philosophic specificity. Cephalus is a wealthy elderly man who has lived an honourable and respectable life, though had been wildly indulgent in his youth, and he lacks the philosophic knowledge to offer a definition of justice beyond his common sense and custom based understanding[97]. He cynically suggests that his accumulated wealth can be used to offer sacrifices to the gods, to buy forgiveness for his sins. Cephalus' son agrees and improves on his fathers' definition, demonstrating the Greek tradition of honest family living, and that good behaviour and education are to be passed on and enhanced within the family, which is a kind of mini-polis. Cephalus' definition is too specific and lacks the level of philosophy needed to continue in the dialogue, as such he quietly retires from his leading role in the discussion as Socrates turns his attention to the more philosophic younger men, and their

[96] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 11.
[97] Peter J. Steinberger, "Who Is Cephalus?" *Political Theory* 24, no. 2 (1996): 172.

education. Socrates shows respect to this well-meaning old man, and allows him to go on his way, and focuses on improving the young, who symbolise the potential reality of the Republic. Plato's ethics desires mutual improvement through knowledge of the forms and educational dialectic.

Cephalus' son Polemarchus adds that part of justice is to give your enemies what they deserve too. This implies that just as a man ought to be honest, some part of him ought to be crafty to defeat their enemy, according to Polemarchus the just man should be a 'clever guardian and also clever thief'[98]. He teaches an ethics of like for like, friendship to friends, and ill will to one's enemies. Socrates replies to this argument with two responses, firstly by likening justice to a craft, and secondly by defining justice as something to improve men's lives. Socrates compares the just man to a doctor, and that the craft and practice of a doctor is medicine, whereas the just man practises justice as his craft[99].

Plato argues that if Polemarchus were being consistent, then right and just practice of medicine would mean healing your friends, and hurting those patients you dislike[100]. This is plainly contrary to the common-sense morality of Cephalus and Polemarchus, who reject as immoral the notion of a doctor hurting patients. In this case the craft of medicine is a conditional good, like most crafts, because medicine can be practised to hurt as well as heal. Justice is an unconditional good, and Plato states that it can never be rightfully used to make another man's life worse, thus demonstrating that to harm your enemies is false justice. To act unjustly toward even an enemy is to rob him of some of his excellence, and as a craft must perfect and enhance virtue it cannot be a part of justice to harm one's enemies[101].

[98] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 14.
[99] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 13.
[100] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 14.
[101] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 20.

Socrates skilfully points out that whether a man's enemies are good or bad depends on the quality of the man, as an evil man may have good men for enemies. Cephalus accepts that he cannot defend his definition of justice and says 'I don't really know what I did mean, but I still think justice is to help your friends and harm your enemies' (334b). His common sense is not philosophically defensible, and Cephalus is convinced to agree with Plato's argument that 'it is never right to harm anyone at any time'(334e). Justice must always improve man's condition.

Nature of justice – Thrasymachus

Socrates longest dialogue is with the sophist Thrasymachus, who normally argues for pay without genuine conviction, which enables him to make cunning and vigorous arguments, whilst lacking the common decency of Cephalus and Polemarchus. He represents that which Plato finds objectionable in Athenian culture, namely the prevalence of sophists who argue for pay whilst perverting the democratic state, who lack interest in truth or philosophy. He argues that conventional morality is foolish, and that true justice is whatever benefits the strong, Thrasymachus' justice is self-interest. He states that justice 'is simply what is in the interest of the strongest party' (338c), and that justice is for the ruled to follow their leader, for their master's benefit. Socrates asks to Thrasymachus to consider who the state's leader will be and explains that because man is imperfect it is possible that the leader could enact laws that may accidently harm them. If Thrasymachus' definition is accepted it would be equally right for the ruled to obey laws damaging the ruler, as benefitting him[102]. A true sophist, Thrasymachus replies that 'a ruler, in so far as he is a ruler, makes no mistakes' (340e), this ludicrous argument attempts to justify self-interest as the definition of justice.

[102] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 28.

Thrasymarchus understands political power, and justice, as the exploitation of the weaker by the stronger classes, reiterating that conventional morality is a mere tool for the stronger to circumvent, and use against the weak[103]. Thrasymarchus has a low view of the 'just man' and attacks Socrates and his view of justice as pathetic, explaining that Socrates' just man 'always comes off worse than the unjust' (343d). Ironically in Socrates' case this was true. Thrasymarchus' justice allows for avoiding taxes, stealing and lying, even though these contradict the conventional morality of the masses, whom he compares to sheep. Thrasymarchus views injustice, as defined by Socrates, like a superpower[104], though continues to accept the importance of appearing to be conventionally just, as it allows a man to navigate ordinary life and to strategically act for his benefit. He represents a tyrannical soul which gives into evil and erotic desire, oppressing and attacking his fellow man for maddening and wicked gain[105].

Socrates explains that he does not intend to focus injustices' practical applications, saying 'I don't think that injustice pays better than justice even it if has a clear field' (345a). The unjust man is covetous, as admitted by Thrasymachus, and desires 'more than his share in everything' (349c). This covetousness creates division and conflict and 'wherever it arises it creates civil war and disunity'[106], the hyper individualist focus of the unjust man creates division and weakness in the state. Socrates gives the fine example of a group of thieves, whose thievery Thrasymachus may be able to excuse as it results in personal gain, but Socrates doubts the ability of a gang to function without at least internal community order. There must be some honour among thieves for the group to function and achieve its goals,

[103] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 24.
[104] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 46.
[105] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 225.
[106] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 46.

otherwise mistrust and personal interest will make impossible their work of thievery[107]. Thrasymachus is willing to accept the functional instrumental value of Socrates' justice, as useful for achieving one's goals within a community, like a gang of thieves, but not its fundamental objective superiority.

Justice and happiness

Though Socrates emphasises that true justice is necessary for the happy life, and practically necessary for a full life, it is not alone sufficient[108]. Socrates explains that the just man does not covet things for his own sake, and thus will lack the desire to participate in political life, as most politically active participate for their self-gain. Work of any kind must be untaken for the dual benefit of the labour itself (producing medicine, building or governance), and secondly the motivating spirit of the man, usually money and honour, and occasionally justice and the Good. The just man does not seek wealth or honour and will only present himself to rule in order to prevent rule by one worse than him.

Nature of justice- Glaucon

Glaucon essentially agrees with Socrates but is unhappy with his defence of justice and asks him to defend justice in essence, as well its practical benefits,[109] which he does by his analogy of the city. Glaucon argues that most people adopt common sense morality for appearances sake and tells the story of Gyges ring to demonstrate that justice *seems* important for appearance, but not effect. This is a ring of invisibility which allowed the user to act undetected. Glaucon tells the story in which Gyges uses it anonymously to 'seduce the Queen, murder the king and seize the throne' (360a). Glaucon states that most would act

[107] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 46.
[108] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 85.
[109] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 57.

similarly if given the chance, and that by acting in accord with Socratic justice, a man would forfeit enormous personal gain. Commonly wealth and power are thought to bring happiness, hence Glaucon challenges Socrates to explain how Gyges would have been happier had he not used the ring selfishly. In the story the ring was discovered inside a hollow bronze horse, the metal later used to symbolise the appetite, demonstrating that Gyges acted disorderedly seeking appetitive pleasures, not true justice and the forms.

Glaucon gives a second example of a man with a reputation for justice, who receives all the social and political benefits that accompany a reputation for justice. He contrasts this with a wholly just man who has a false reputation for injustice, which seems to be a veiled reference to Socrates' sad execution. Socratic justice implies that the just man, wrongly suffering, will be happier despite the risk of being 'scourged, tortured and imprisoned, after enduring every humiliation' (362a). Adeimantus adds that most Athenians embrace justice for its reputation and teach their children justice for instrumental and not intrinsic value, and would therefore rather be unjust with a reputation for justice, than suffer unjustly. Socrates does not offer a direct response, but replies with his city analogy representing the soul, and will explain the fundamental value of a harmonious soul at peace with itself.

The city analogy

Plato prefers examining justice in a city than in an individual, and explains that 'we may therefore identify justice on a larger scale in the larger entity, and so easier to recognise' (368e).Socrates maps out two models of an ideal city, the first is the rustic city, which contains the bare minimum needed for subsistence, its simplicity makes it an unattractive prospect to Glaucon, who suggests few people would ever desire such a spartan life. Plato then describes a second city, the *kallipolis* (beautiful city), and goes on to develop it until it

reaches its final form as the city of philosopher kings. He will later consider the human soul in terms of the city's different castes of which there are three, which reflects the tripartite soul, consisting of reason, spirit and appetite. Reason is the rational part, and noblest faculty, of man's soul, which considers, understands and chooses man's actions. Spirit is that motivating part of man's existence which instinctively leads him to prefer some actions, it is the second noblest portion. Thirdly is the appetitive faculty, which appertains to physical necessities, like food and drink, it is the basest faculty of the soul. Plato's ontology implies that this first rustic city more perfectly mirrors the form of the Good, though in reality this city is unrealisable. Some suggest the rustic city is a satire of contemporary simple life theories[110], which idealised happiness with the bare minimum and demonstrates the impossibility of a city which would require a polis of citizens motivated principally motivated by the reasonable faculty of their soul. The city containing luxury is feverish, because it must accommodate more than that which is necessary for subsistence, and moves the human polis from a quasi-family, natural unit to the socio-political. The polis will require governance to be run well, rather than existing in natural simplicity, because man's selfish nature requires control in order to choose the Good. Like the soul, the state will require discipline for the reasonable faculty of the soul to dominate, as Plato does not imagine selfless behaviour will be forthcoming otherwise.

The rustic city

Socrates demonstrates that community living is necessary 'because the individual is not self-sufficient' (369b), though he suggests a city could exist with only a handful of men. He suggests that a basic city could contain as few as five classes of men, including producers of

[110] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 54.

the most basic necessities, merchants, transport workers (sailors), retailers and labourers. He is plain that men have 'different natural aptitudes' (370 b) and thus the city should specialise its manpower for the communal good. Ultimately Glaucon questions whether the city is too austere to be realistic. The rustic city contained few recreations, and nothing akin to the games common in the ancient world but will have 'few luxuries' (372c). The society is ordered and harmonious, simple and happy, with each man performing his duty, but is too simple for most ordinary people to accept and lacks an external purpose. Socrates explains that the inhabitants will have a 'healthy life, die at a ripe age and bequeath a similar way of life to their children' (372d). It is instrumental, lacks luxury and has no vision of philosophic enquiry or end orientated toward God or man, it is a lived expression of the form of the Good, and therefore does not need philosophic inquiry into its nature, it merely *is*[111]. Glaucon critically remarks it is just the 'fodder for a community of pigs!'(372-d), which gives way to a more complex civilisation which lacks the simplistic purity of the original. Socrates will then describe the beautiful city, which contains more luxuries, though states that there is still much truth to be discerned from a man 'even in a fever' (372e), meaning that this inferior state is still of sufficient excellence to facilitate enquiry into justice's nature.

The original model mirrors the family unit, and Plato has no need of guardians or auxiliaries as the ideal state is small enough that nobody would bother fighting for the limited luxuries available. Socrates believes luxuries breed greed and desire for more, which leads to wars and are the reason why the ideal polis will need a military force of auxiliaries. As the state is not a natural entity like the family[112]law must exist within it to regulate relations between

[111] Christopher Lowe, "The City of Pigs: a Key Passage in Plato's Republic," *Philosophie Antique* 17 (2017): 68.
[112] John Russon*, Politics, Money, and Persuasion: Democracy and Opinion in Plato's Republic*, 53.

families and disparate components of the state[113]. This regulated polis is 'in fever' to provide the kind of luxuries Glaucon desires, and the state must be extremely well controlled. The polis requires a whole guardian class of philosopher rulers to control the state, who themselves are required to live lives of radical communism[114]. The additions to this new state are really the additions of fever, which requires philosophic rule, and division of the people to manage and organise. Socrates' 'true city'[115] is simple and undivided, but as Glaucon is forced to note, cannot exist in reality as a city state, because like the sun emanating being (an image of the form of the good), it cannot retain its initial purity in the sensible world. The city of pigs is an impossible perfect ideal, which gives way to the theoretically possible feverish city.

Hierarchy of the Republic

In Plato's state there are three classes, firstly the ruling class of philosopher kings, these are the distant elite of philosophers who guide the state by the art of philosophy and governance, their concern is to govern for the welfare of the polis' citizenry. Secondly the guardians and auxiliaries, these are the soldiers and middlemen of the state who will enforce the rule of the philosopher kings, and are the class from which philosopher kings are selected. Lasting are the labouring classes, the mass of workers in agriculture, industry and trade who are governed by the superior classes. Slavery too is implied, but slaves are counted as the property of whichever class owns them, and not a distinct class. Plato

[113] John Russon*, Politics, Money, and Persuasion: Democracy and Opinion in Plato's Republic*, 53.
[114] Loren Lomasky, "POLITY AND ECONOMY IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC," *Social Philosophy & Policy* 37, no. 1 (2020): 243.
[115] Lowe, "The City of Pigs," 68.

emphasises the distinctive specialised nature of these roles and that society must be hierarchical and specialised, to reflect an ordered soul.

The central argument of Plato's Republic is that justice pays both in its effects and essence, however the class most associated with justice is most distant from its effects as lived by the bronze class. Socrates is very clear that guardians will not want to rule because they will prefer spending time in pure contemplation of the forms, instead they are forced by law to descend from pure contemplation and return into the cave of the sensible world. Glaucon asks whether 'we not doing the philosophers an injustice by making them live a worse life' (519-520a), Socrates replies that the purpose of the law and polis is not concerned to make 'any one class outstandingly happy' (519-520a) but is interested in the whole. Socrates also introduces a second notion of justice, which is concerned with justice as paying what is owed, something very important for the guardian class which owes their specialisation and governance to the state[116]. The silver and gold classes must be sacrificially compelled to live an austere communal existence without property, wealth, marriage or honour, lest these knowledge lovers be distracted from philosophical contemplation. They need to make decisions of law and government for the state by using their craft of specialised philosophic wisdom.

Communal guardianship

Alexander Gray notes that Socrates' state contains 'communism of a limited group'[117], namely communism among the guardian caste. Guardians have no property and live a wholly shared community life, they must embrace the simplicity of the original city, focus

[116]John-Otto, Phillips, "Law, Compulsion and Community in Plato's Republic." *Polis* 28, no. 1 (2011): 12.
[117] Russon, *Politics, Money, and Persuasion*, 8.

that simplicity toward philosophy and governance, and use it to make the Good a reality. Money is an area where the abstract concepts Plato describes coincide with the reality of everyday life, as even in this idealised polis there will still need to be foreign and domestic trade. Cities are not natural units, but necessary features of human society needed to provide the three basic needs implied in the Platonic model, that of shelter, basic services, and food[118]. Guardians are necessary in the *kallipolis* to legislate and govern, but Socrates explains that it will not be appropriate for them to legislate the minutiae of economic policy. The guardians will lack knowledge to regulate the economy and will be unable to do so unless they study the matter, and risk developing an attachment, and subsequently adopt bad habits[119]. Plato is sympathetic to the Spartan model where the citizenry focus on warfare and state business, and the practical details, especially those relating to manufacture and agriculture, are left to the helot slaves[120]. The Socratic state cannot fully adopt this model without dividing the unity of the state into opposing factions. To protect the guardians there must be a 'radical communism'[121], where they are robbed of occasions for snobbery and normative behaviour and are dehumanised in the process of their perfection. The purity of the guardians is essential to good rule and leaves two options regarding economic policy, either direct intervention in economics, which Socrates later demonstrates will result in the Timocratic state, or they must foster an order generating principle[122] in the state. This will be established by the guardian's purity and tone of their

[118] Russon, *Politics, Money, and Persuasion*, 29.
[119] Lomasky, "POLITY AND ECONOMY IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC," 238.
[120] Lomasky, "POLITY AND ECONOMY IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC," 236.
[121] Lomasky, "POLITY AND ECONOMY IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC," 243.
[122] Lomasky, "POLITY AND ECONOMY IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC," 238.

law and governance. The ordered tone of philosophic rule should cause the citizens to act justly without constant direct intervention by the guardians.

Possible utopia

At the beginning of chapter seven Glaucon accepts the practical benefits of this state especially the 'mutual loyalty citizens would feel' (471) but wants to focus on 'proving that it can exist and how it can exist'(471e). He is sceptical about the ability for it to exist, but Socrates is clear that the ability for the state to exist does not affect its quality as a model. He uses the analogy of a painter, asking whether a 'painter (who) paints a picture of an ideally beautiful man… if he (the painter) is any the worse for not being able to prove that such a man could really exist' (472d). Socrates concludes that Glaucon is right to an extent, because his idealised state will remain an impossible abstraction until it is made possible that 'the other (non-philosophical souls) are forcibly barred'(473d) from political life. Plato desires rulers, kings and those in authority be truly philosophic souls, that is souls with a love and desire for wisdom[123], he hopes for government by the excellent. He explores this question using several analogies, principally the analogy of the cave and the sun, which both describe the duty and nature of the wisdom-lover/philosopher.

Wealth and trade in the Republic

Socrates describes his ideal city, by degrees of imperfection, to accommodate and provide for the luxuries Glaucon seeks. Plato has a dim view of wealth and property and requires strict controls to regulate their presence in the state. The Republic demonstrates four underlying principles regarding wealth[124], or in this case provision of that which Glaucon

[123] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 192.

[124] H. P. P. Letter, "The Significance of Poverty and Wealth in Plato's Republic," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 22, no. 3 (2003): 189.

calls ‘ordinary comforts’ (372d), those goods absent in the rustic city. Firstly, justice is more important than wealth, and thus each man should prefer to do his duty, in whichever specialised area is his own, rather than seeking wealth. Secondly the moderate life is the moral life, and excess must always be avoided lest it ruin the soul-cities harmony. Thirdly excessive poverty and excessive wealth cause disharmony in a state because man’s nature is so often inclined toward greed. Lastly every desire, even those commonly regarded as legitimate in Athenian culture and business, are damaging to society, thus Plato limits private enterprise in the city. Wherever self-interest conquers community interest, the state and soul will lose its harmony and quality of justice. Currency is permitted as an unfortunate necessity, though it will be forbidden to the guardian caste, to facilitate trade with outsiders, Socrates states ‘we’ll get a currency and established trade with outsiders’ (370-371).

Plato wishes there to be a close personal attachment and love between citizens within the polis, and that a bond of justice binds all members of the city state[125]. He prefers private property to be totally outlawed among the philosopher kings and guardians, to ensure they will not become covetous, and safeguard government by the excellent. For a similar reason trade in kind will be the norm of exchange within the polis[126], so that citizens cannot establish huge reserves of person wealth and grow prideful. Ordinary fiat currency lacks the personal aspect of trade in kind, thus impersonal exchange is only acceptable with outsiders who could upset the delicate balance. Economics remain important for the property-owning bronze caste, who make up the vast majority of the state’s people. They must use their

[125] Russon, Politics, *Money, and Persuasion*, 55.
[126]Russon, Politics, *Money, and Persuasion,* 55.

currency in a spirit which the guardians establish by their rule, even though they exist in a more relaxed communal property-owning environment.

Brotherhood of metals

Glaucon praises the Socratic ideal at the beginning of book seven, especially highlighting the loyalty of citizens, and the brotherhood that uniting the polis. The brotherhood he refers to is founded upon a lie, that is the noble lie and the myth of the metals. When referring to the myth Socrates uses the word noble, which is sometimes translated as well born, meaning that it is of aristocratic parentage[127]. The foundational myth itself is that all men have sprung from the same soil, and hence all citizens are of one nature and origin. The myth makes it possible for the citizens of the ideal polis to see every neighbour as familial and to say 'we', referring to the whole polis, rather than to the smaller family unit, or individual. The lie of common and spontaneous origin is then enhanced by the myth of the metals, namely that each soul has an intrinsic character, either gold, silver or bronze which will determine their position in the polis and level of responsibility. The metals refer to the three classes which exist in the state, the philosopher caste, the guardians and auxiliaries and the ordinary people. The process of education and training are undertaken so that the metal may be discerned in a child, though citizens are told that the gods discern it[128], so it cannot be questioned. Glaucon tells Socrates that he 'should be ashamed'[129] for telling this blatant lie. He explains that justice requires the lie in order for the state to function and softens the blow of the second portion of the lie by explaining that the myth of the metals is a myth,

[127] Kateri Carmola, "Noble Lying: Justice and Intergenerational Tension in Plato's 'Republic'," *Political Theory* 31, no. 1 (2003): 40.
[128] Carmola, "Noble Lying," 52.
[129] Carmola, "Noble Lying," 50.

which is a less serious falsehood than the initial tale of shared origin[130]. He does not consider this a true falsehood. Socrates notes that there is some precedent for this kind of story, that which he refers to as the 'Phoenician thing', that is the story of Cadmus who planted dragon teeth to create soldiers who then went on to populate Greece, and in particular Thebes[131]. He uses this to demonstrate that states have used myths approximating his own to explain the creation of their state, and that it can be successful and believable[132], and does not undermine justice in the state. The lie prevents resentment or greed in the state because each class will believe that their status is not based on ability or hard work, but on their unchangeable and divinely instituted nature. Plato wants a state where there is a genuine sacrificial brotherly love between citizens, even if he must lie to create it.

Community spirit in the polis

Socrates wishes the polis to be as unified and harmonious as possible, and as well as more radical measures he recommends communal meals which Plato describes as both 'frightening' and 'amazing'[133]. Few would question the benefit of a communal meal, but Plato's praise seems excessive, and interestingly it is one of the few things he had consistently praised throughout his many years of writing[134]. A strict hierarchy mirrors the control of the spirit and appetite that reason must have in the soul, but there must also be harmony, and communal eating helps to break down unnecessary divisions, and eradicate any pride or distrust within the hierarchal castes. Plato was greatly inspired by the Spartan syssitia where the whole community came together, often as part of military training, and at

[130] Carmola, "Noble Lying," 50-51.
[131] Carmola, "Noble Lying," 53.
[132] Carmola, "Noble Lying," 56-57.
[133] Carmola, "Noble Lying," 51.
[134] Michael Jackson, and Damian Grace, "Commensality, Politics, and Plato," *Gastronomica* 17, no. 2 (2017): 51.

other times simply as a civic affair. The whole community of all ranks and degrees of wealth would come together, thus eliminating much gossip and envy, and developing a truly united polis[135]. Athenians and Thebians also engaged in these communal meals, but were more segregated socially and economically, which limited their effect. When describing the idealised state Socrates enforces this practice for the guardians, from whom the rulers are selected and who govern and guard the state. Socrates states that the guardians will 'go regularly to the mess together' (416e), and he focuses the majority of chapter two and three explaining the role of guardians and way they should live communally. They must sacrifice self will to pursue the Good for the sake of the polis.

Contradiction of philosophic rule

There appears to be a contradiction in that Socrates proposes that the just life is always the best life, but also demonstrates that in his ideal city the noblest element (guardians) will be, to use to analogy of the cave, dragged back into the cave for duty's sake, away from direct contact with the sun. Their compromise allows for a greater communal good, at the expense of their personal good, as they mediate and guard the 'light' of enlightenment. Without their mediation the Good would be, as it were, pearls cast before swine. Socrates must remain consistent with three proposals for his theory of justice to be acceptable, firstly that justice and happiness are never incompatible. Secondly, that philosophers naturally will not desire authority, and lastly that philosophers will only consent to govern if an extrinsic force compels them[136]. Some scholars have suggested that philosophers can only be happy if they have an outlet for their philosophy[137], but this is clearly contrary to Socrates' beliefs. Eric

[135] Jackson, and Grace, "Commensality, Politics, and Plato," 52.
[136] Phillips, "Law, Compulsion and Community in Plato's Republic," 116.
[137] Phillips, "Law, Compulsion and Community in Plato's Republic," 121.

Brown suggested a solution which maintains all three propositions, namely that the law forcing philosophers to rule creates justice and therefore the obligation and just conditions for philosophers to rule happily[138]. He suggests that the philosophers desire to be obedient to the law, compels them to express their specialisation in its fullest sense within the confines of the law. They are acting justly toward their neighbour, whilst still principally focusing on the Good and the pure, they find fulfilment in duty and sacrifice.

The guardian philosophers are charged with leading the polis to the Good, they must separate themselves to contemplate the forms and lead the whole polis toward justice and harmony. The most basic, and numerous, bronze citizens perform manual work, including all agriculture, trade, industry, and all other affairs not restricted to the nobler metals. Although these citizens are those about whom the least is written, they are the group for whom the greatest sacrifice is made, and who receive the greatest returns from their labour. This class is restricted from participation in political life whatsoever, to distance the state from the democratic system. Bronze citizens have the most freedom, for instance they are free to marry, have access to private property and are free to pursue their special area of expertise in commerce and community life. The silver and gold classes rule without receiving the conventional benefits like money and honour, which Socrates explains will not interest them and would in fact corrupt the philosopher. Because of the just rule of their betters the bronze class will receive the benefits of rule, and all the fruits of their labour. Social harmony exists because Socrates' proposals are unchanging, and each class can only concern itself purely with its own business, and not meddle. The bronze are not subject to the rigorous education of the guardians or auxiliaries, and if they were to meddle it would cause

[138] Phillips, "Law, Compulsion and Community in Plato's Republic," 127.

degradation of the soul, and result in the chaotic democratic state. Like the soul, the bronze appetite must submit itself to the higher faculties, or else the state will become disordered. The bronze lack the proper education to engage in philosophical dialectic and discernment of the good. The guardians are taught *techne* (craft of rule) and are not permitted to begin dialectics until aged thirty-five, and only after reaching the age of fifty can they take over the main duties of government. Mirroring the soul, justice in the city is 'doing one's own work and not meddling' (433a).

The producers are those who have bronze souls, which represents the largest group in the state, they represent the appetitive part of the human soul, though the individuals in this group are not supposed to be appetitive in their behaviour. They should be noble and virtuous within their own specialisation, and have a love of harmony and justice, including not meddling in the business of the upper castes[139]. They will be formed not like the guardians, with a vigorous and encompassing education, but instead will be formed by the spirit of the polis which will be guided and formed by the nobler metals and their legislative programmes. Socrates states that the guardians will not legislate for every small detail like the 'young observing a proper silence in the presence of the elders' (425b), or 'keeping one's hair and clothes and shoes tidy' (425b). He states that to legislate for such things 'is no use and nothing comes from them (laws)' (427a). He boldly says that 'good men need no orders' (425e), meaning by this that the ethos of the state and order generating principle will be sufficient that the citizens will be formed with a correct notion of justice without specific command micromanagement. The guardians would also be corrupted if compelled to engage in this kind of legislation, as they would become too involved in the life of those

[139] Haewon Jeon, "The Interaction Between the Just City and Its Citizens in Plato's Republic: From the Producers' Point of View," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 52, no. 2 (2014): 184.

beneath themselves. Each component must subject itself to rule by the excellent, and seek the Good in their specialisation, and willingly sacrifice their own will for the good of the polis.

Avoidance of excess

The guardians must prevent excess of wealth and poverty in the state because this makes individuals unable to perform their task, and will also foster hatred and resentment[140]. Socrates explains that poverty makes a man unable to perform his task and gives the example of a potter who will be unable to afford the 'necessities of his trade' (421d), thus damaging the whole polis. On the other hand, the wealthy potter will become complacent, idle and 'no longer want to ply his trade' (421d). Either extreme will damage the state, and guardians must legislate to forbid this kind of behaviour. Later in book nine Socrates will describe how a perfect state might become corrupted, and describes the oligarchic state, the second level of the soul-state's degradation following the timocratic state. This occurs because the honour loving decedent children of the previous state will come to desire wealth and comfort, and will favour practical trade based usefulness over principle[141], and will be left without restraint owing to the relaxed education of their Timocratic fathers. Socrates defines an oligarchy as 'a society where wealth counts' (550c), it arises because of overaccumulation of wealth, and of greed and a general movement away from the Timocratic 'ambitious, competitive man' (551b) typified by Cephalus. The soul state is transformed into the 'money loving businessman' who begins to more closely resemble Thrasymachus (a tyrannical soul). This kind of state is poorly governed because money and

[140] Jeon, "The Interaction Between the Just City and Its Citizens in Plato's Republic," 184.
[141] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'* 235.

practicality are considered as the vital interest, not contemplation of the forms. The state is at war with itself and two factions within the state always competing for money, Socrates explains the 'rich and the poor are always plotting against each other' (552c), something the guardians are meant to prevent (423). Socrates is loath even to describe the oligarchic state as a state because it is not a unified polis in harmony with itself but is instead a community containing within itself a class war. For this reason, Socrates explains that many disunified soldiers would be unable to defeat a much smaller force which is truly unified. In politics and war harmony and unity provide strength and guarantee success, and citizens must surrender the capacity for excessive wealth for the polis' good.

The guardians must protect the philosophical focus of the state, and internally protect their education and purity to lead the whole polis from the cave. The guardians sacrifice enables harmony and justice in the state, and their prominent status means that they are held to a higher standard. Marriage is forbidden in the guardian class, and they are only permitted to procreate by lottery, which appears random but in practice is rigged by more senior guardians. Its purpose is to breed the noblest men possible, allowing the best to breed most commonly and the least noble to breed least frequently. These guardians will engage in feasts for the length of which they are 'married' to another, if a child results from this union it will be taken away to a state nursery at birth and taken care of, never knowing its parents. The purpose is to destroy any private connections which would corrupt the guardians, as they might prefer the good of their children over the polis' good. This, along with the noble lie and myth of the metals will ensure just rule by the guardians, and equal treatment of all in the state.

Analogy of the cave and the ideal state

Socrates uses the analogy of the cave to explain what philosophy is, and how the different people involved in the state, and components of the soul will act. He describes the soul-state using the analogy of a cave, in which individuals are trapped at a cave's base, and are able only to see a shadowy puppet show, cast by a fire lit behind them, which they cannot see as their heads are strapped forward facing. Socrates describes a man who escapes, at first, he will be blinded by the fire, and then he will later be blinded by the sun when he leaves the cave, representing the sensible and then intellectual world. He imagines that should this enlightened man deign to return to the cave he will no longer feel at home, for he would be 'blinded by the darkness' (516 e). This is an interesting phrase, by which Socrates seems to mean that he would no longer comprehend the realm of inferior reality, because he is accustomed to higher understanding in the form of the Good – the sun. Socrates explains that if the now enlightened philosophical man attempted to free the trapped men, they would lay hands upon him and perhaps kill him. They have formed habits by their education of life within the cave and are unwilling to move out of it. Initially the philosophical man also needed to be 'forcibly dragged' (515e) from the cave, which is approximate to the forced origin of Plato's Republic and forced education and law coercing the portions of the state. The nobler castes will require force to motivate their sacrifice.

Education and habit

Habit and education are highly important for producing quality guardians and auxiliaries, their education intended to promote the centrality of the form of the Good and good habits of excellence of virtue, and of specialisation. Socrates thinks that education is one of two essentials for training the gold and silver classes of the state, the second is a naturally suited

soul, namely their metal. A rigorous education encompassing athletics and art to foster both courage and manfulness (applicable too to women), and gentleness and love of knowledge will ensure moderation. Plato has a deeper understanding of education that most moderns, who often view education as simply learning a set of information, a kind of practicality Socrates' would have critiqued as oligarchic. He explains that knowledge is not putting knowledge where once there was none, but is a turning movement of the whole soul[142], it is a reorientation of the self toward the Good, which is by nature desirable and attractive. Knowledge is knowledge of forms, and forms are good in themselves. To approach the Good requires a correct disposition, which seldom few young possess[143]. As such those few souls deemed suitable for the highest responsibilities of the state will be cautiously and wisely trained before they are allowed to approach the dialectics, lest a youthful spirit descend into sophistry.

Socrates' state is willing to include women at all levels despite Athenian culture, and will decide upon the merit of children, and their metal regardless of parentage. In this sense it is a meritocracy, though one determined at a very young age. Plato seeks souls that have the capacity to most embody his four cardinal virtues, wisdom, courage, moderation and justice, as these are holistic values to be inculcated through education. Even in a city where virtuousness is not the norm, it is possible for citizens philosophers to be happy, in the mould of Socrates. Socrates counsels those suffering injustice not to aggressively fight for an improved situation, but to lead a 'quiet life and do their own work'[144]. The philosophical man cannot gain power in an unjust state, without being corrupted, for if he wishes to gain power

[142] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 212.
[143] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 207.
[144] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 187.

and promulgate his views, he must acquire money and power and allies, and likely descend to the sophistry and rhetoric common in Athens. In short, he would destroy his soul's beauty, and instead he should retreat from public life and protect the inner polis of his soul, he must be stoic toward the world's difficulties. He must not sacrifice himself unless it will cause some genuine improvement.

Descent of the soul-city

Socrates describes the way in which the soul-city could descend into timocracy, which occurs due to problems with education, and other issues which will always originate with 'strife of the ruling class' (545d). Platonists often appeal to mathematics when challenged, because numbers are the best example of an abstraction without sensible empirical reality and lends credence to the Platonic forms. As such, he explains that the philosophic state will begin to decline when the guardians relax the procreation lotteries and allow more than the perfect number of children to be born[145]. These excess children will be appointed to roles despite lacking the high-quality metal required for the task, they will neglect and 'undervalue the training,' (546e) and in turn cripple their ability to discern the different metals of men, thus breeding thence a 'pedigree of strife' (547a). The misplaced bronze and iron will use their power to seize private property and honour to outdo their neighbour, whereas the silver and gold guardians will continue in their high mindedness. They will not yet openly covet honour and status, though crucially the ruling elite will now be divided. As a united and selfless community of leaders is essential to the state's wellbeing, this is disastrous. Greed and selfishness will destroy the polis.

[145] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 280.

The main problem of the timocratic state is the meddling of different metals in affairs that are not their own, and the disharmony among the guardian elite[146]. The Timocratic state is identified by Socrates as analogous to Sparta, which had many elements of communalism that Socrates appreciated, but lacked true unity because Sparta was divided between helots and the military aristocracy. Love of money will lead the Timocratic state to the Oligarchic state because the hoarding of wealth will increase and come to dominate the citizens. The state further will declinate into democracy, which we can identify with Athens, and is a criticism of unique power from Socrates who was killed by the Athenian state. The democratic state will arise as the citizens become ever less constrained in their pursuit of wealth, something which will then seep into every crevice of the polis. Socrates explains that the divide between rich and poor will grow and 'democracy originates when the poor win,' (557a) because they will reject the rich as they become increasingly oppressive. The democratic man 'lives day to day' (561 c), he lacks the focus and direction of the forms and has no peace, he is without fixture, though even still he has some sense of order to restrain himself from those 'pleasures which lead to expense rather than profit' (558d). He lacks the honour of the timocratic state, which would despise something evil such as stealing from a widow, whereas the Oligarch would be tempted dependant on his reputational impact. The democratic man will be unfixed and waver between fear and shame[147], without a positive love of order or honour.

Government should not benefit only a few, crucially it is not based on consent, which is a recipe for disharmony and immoderation. A comparison between the democratic (Athenian) and Timocratic (Spartan) states shows that that the polis which is more just and virtuous will

[146] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 232.
[147] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 245.

be best run, and always most effective, as demonstrated by the Spartan victory. Socrates made a similar argument earlier in the Republic, when he explained that a high quality and united band of warriors make better fighters than a numerically superior force with money, because true unity and love of the polis as a family, and not love of money, will result in victory. Lastly comes the tyrannical man who will use his wealth against the people with a private army, paid with loot, he has a mad and erotic desire, not merely the modern sexual meaning, but a deeper desire of the soul to seek pleasure without restraint or virtue. He is the result of excessive liberty and disunity in the state.

Myth of Er, practical religion

Plato ends his Republic in a spectacular and practical fashion, he has spent the whole Republic outlining the perfect state through complex philosophical dialogue. He ends his Republic with an easily understood story prescribing morality and goodness: the myth of Er. In this story Er, a Pamphlyian soldier, passes away and sees the horrific punishments of wicked souls, stating that 'for every wrong a man has done he must pay ten times for each' (615a). Some were so wicked that they are condemned to eternal punishment. At the end of the appointed punishment each soul is be permitted to choose its own fate, in similar fashion to Dante's hell. The Homeric heroes of whom Socrates is sceptical, unwisely choose violent and aggressive animals like the lion, eagle, or ape. Wise Odysseus has learnt from his ambition and is cleansed of it (620b), he thus chooses the 'uneventful life of an ordinary man' (620c), his life showed him that the nobler life is that of the philosopher, who has learnt that he cannot change the world and is better off pursuing the inner polis. He has learnt to sacrifice worldly desires of money and fame, and seek true goodness instead. The myth seems to be aimed toward baser metals who are incapable of philosophy, instead they

can be threatened into behaving morally, out of fear for eternal punishment and promise of a better life.

Religion in the state

Religiosity plays a role in the Republic, and when it was written there were two main trends in religious practice, firstly the established rites of festivals and feasts and of common piety, and stories akin to the myth of Er, rewarding virtue and punishing vice[148]. Secondly ecstatic mystery religions, which sought to purify the soul through personal experience, and seems to have appealed to Plato as it accommodated complex philosophical perspectives[149]. Plato believed that the gods have some intermediary role with the form of the Good, though the Republic's philosophers are to examine the Good without regard to the characters of the gods, as described in popular piety. Socrates wants to censor stories about the gods, especially their more capricious and vicious deeds, for instance. Socrates believes that if these stories were spread, they would degrade the state's citizens, and they would imitate the gods, who are meant to be exemplars. Similarly, guardians' access to poetry must be limited, and bad stories about the gods are either censored completely, or altered to make them acceptable. As such stories in the Republic will only be used to edify and encourage virtue and justice, and access to literature is sacrificed to freely pursue the Good.

An impossible utopia?

Socrates' utopian vision of the state describes political and social ethics emphasising the harmony of the individual and the tripartite soul, in both the individual and city. Leo Strauss thought Plato was describing a deliberately impossible utopia, and that Socrates insistence

[148] Richard Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) 39.
[149] Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, 244.

that it is possible, is ironic[150]. Donald Morrison disagrees and states that Plato has described an ideal abstraction, which could practically form the basis for a Greek colony, or useful reforms within a state. Morrison explains that the city of pigs and other later cities would only be possible if the citizens were all like Socrates, noble minded and happy in simplicity[151]. Morrison believes that by describing the state he is promoting an abstraction, that any effort spent trying to attain will improve the state[152]. This seems true, and the values Plato promotes are equally important for the individual and for the state, and thus are applicable noble abstractions to be used for personal or communal perfection, and a genuine exhortation to sacrificial seeking of philosophy.

Conclusion

Socrates ends his Republic by stating, in relation to the myth of Er, 'if we remember it, it may preserve us in turn' (621c). Namely that we must believe in the immortality of the soul and in doing so find peace with god, our neighbour and ourselves. The socio-political ethics of the Republic principally focus on justice, what it is and how we can achieve it in our souls and in the state. This state mirrors the tripartite soul and correspondingly has a reasonable part, a spirited part and an appetitive part, Plato has Socrates, his carefully chosen mouthpiece, explain how the state can achieve justice, moderation, and perfect virtue. His ethical view of society is order focused and makes great sacrificial demands of those with the greatest knowledge and authority, namely the guardian class which must sacrifice family and property to facilitate the perfect utopia. The unity of the state is sealed by a lie, which Socrates goes to great lengths to explain is not a true lie, which would be contrary to virtue.

[150] Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, 233.

[151] Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, 252.

[152] Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, 235.

The polis is held together like a family unit, and among the guardians this ethic of unity is particularly strong, as they lack private property or family, but instead live together, eat together and engage in dialectics together. They sacrifice that which most people consider essential to pursue pure contemplation of the Good, and to offer themselves to govern, by duty and by law, to create harmony and mirror the excellence of a harmonious soul.

Chapter the third- compatibility of Patristic and Platonic ethics

Introduction

The Patristic Church and Fathers seem to address different questions from Plato in his Republic. In the Republic Plato tries to answer two main questions, namely what justice is, and how it can be achieved, both in the state and individual. The Fathers socio-political ethics are concerned with attaining salvation in Heaven, how souls can do right by God and achieve their salvation and that of their neighbour. I argue that the *ideals* of Platonic justice and Christian charity are somewhat compatible, thought their expression is often vastly different, and sometimes at odds with each other. Fundamentally Plato advocates for sacrifice to facilitate harmony and philosophy, and the Church advocates sacrifice for salvation.

That most Platonic of Fathers, Augustine's, offers an interpretation of faith that is completely compatible with Plato's view of justice. He states that faith is understanding that the mind needs to be purified in order to see God, and to that end the cave allegory is concerned with purifying the mind[153] (ref II – 12), as the soul moves from impurity of the appetite, to the purity of the sensible – Christ. Christ is the means by which man can be purified and see God. For Augustine faith is this recognition of man's inability to see God, because our souls are so impure, by their appetitive nature, therefore to turn to God is a turn away from the appetitive to see God in beatitude. Augustine represents this view, of a kind of mass (of the people) Platonism, in contrast to the base carnality of the Jews, whereas Christians have internalised the sacrifices, the Jews continue performing old and now useless rituals[154]. His

[153] Phillip Cary. *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*. (New York, 2008) 12.

[154] Cary, *Inner Grace: Augustine*, 23.

social pessimism means that he cannot, like Plato, hope for this to transform the state, but his Christian hope means that Augustine can anticipate individuals, and parts of society moving toward this reality.

The Platonic and Patristic models share many ideals, about justice, sacrifice and love of the good, though the necessity of an ideal state is not present in Patristic writing. Carl Schmitt's theory of the *Katechon* supposes that Christian politics is based on the assumption of an apocalypse, namely that any political system is bridging the gap between Eden and the Apocalypse, and holds back chaos[155]. Christian political order is a 'politics of the present'[156] according to Schmitt, accordingly the Fathers were not concerning with organising a systematic political order, but rather navigating lived experience in the expectation of the Lords return. This kind of political order is simply about restraining, and putting off the chaos of the end for another era, as such we cannot expect anything like Plato's systematic theology.

Patristic ethics focuses on the individual and his likeness to Christ, as man's dignity originates with Christ, Matthew 25 (36-37) makes this interpretation clearest when it commands Christians to see giving as an act done directly toward Christ. Christians are supposed to love their neighbour as Christ, with an individual love, for which they are willing to sacrifice even the goods of their household, indeed St Cyril demanded that families suffer deprivations to provide for the needy. Plato too prescribes a deeply personal love, though his is focused more clearly on the entire polis, he explains that the state is not concerned with the happiness of any one group, even philosophers in pursuit of the noblest goal must

[155] Julia Hell "Katechon: Carl Schmitt's Imperial Theology and the Ruins of the Future," *The Germanic Review* 84.4 (2009): 290.

[156] Hell, Carl Schmitt's Imperial Theology, 290.

sacrificially govern for the polis' sake. Plato's dual concern is that of the whole polis on one hand, namely a collective, and the individual's soul being well ordered and just, though does not seek anything akin to salvation for his polis' citizens. Socrates ideal state focuses on the unity and justice of the individual for their soul's end and for the collective harmony of the state, though Socrates mainly focuses on just relations governing the polis' success, rather than just relations between smaller groups of individuals. Which was essential in Christian teaching which had to be less abstract. Though Augustine's view of faith demonstrates that the method of seeking God could be equally Platonic, and quite unlike the modern evangelical focus on faith/Christ alone, but rather Christ and the means to see God, after faith in our inability to do so otherwise.

Failures in the soul

The Christian focus is on the individual's salvation and improvement of their neighbour's lot, and shares with Plato an emphasis on justice. The Christian form of charity emerged from an abusive and aggressive system of patronage and replaced it with giving without expecting any returns, positing justice for its own sake and, that of God. Plato states that justice is the best course of action because the possessor of justice will live the most harmonious and happy life. Likewise Christian souls must live in justice for their own peace and salvation. Saint Basil gives the example of the rich man whose wealth weighs him down, and ties him to earthly concerns that are unable to deliver happiness. Christian wealth is a tool which can be properly or improperly used, but must not be coveted, or else the soul will become weighed down and distracted with this temporal concern. The image of a Christian corrupted by wealth is like the oligarchic man described by Socrates. The Oligarchic man is a corruption of the timocratic man, he has discarded honour and courage because he fears

financial ruination[157]. He allows wealth to control him rather, than control the wealth, and seek God or the Platonic Good.

Both ethical systems are sceptical about the ability of wealth to enhance a man's life, but rather acts as a distraction from contemplation of the Good. Socrates has such a low view of wealth he imagines that the existence of even basic private property would corrupt the philosopher kings of his state, and is only willing to accommodate for absolute necessity, for instance not sharing toothbrushes, or other items for personal hygiene reasons. The guardians are not even permitted to engage in normal marriages or to live alone but exist in a communal state sharing spouses and property, and never knowing their children. They will also be restricted from legislating on matters of commerce, lest they form dangerous habits and connections with material possessions[158]. The Christian ideal must be compelling, realistic, and grounded in reality, which is why none of the Fathers advocate a wholescale compulsory renunciation of wealth as pre-requisite for salvation or participation in the Christian community. But both value the spirit of renunciation. Wealth must be carefully restricted and managed in the Platonic state, the same is true of wealth in the Christian's life and society.

Monastics and guardians

Renunciation was the Christian ideal, which can be most clearly seen in monastic life. The monastic ideal, especially in the rule of St Basil, is clear that renunciation reduces or destroys one's ability to act without reference God or neighbour. The Pachomian monasteries of his time operated like labour colonies, and placed prayer first, and attended

[157] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 288.
[158] Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, 235.

to temporal needs as a community. In his instructions to Egyptian monastics Evagrius Ponticus explains that the ideal monk lives on poverty's brink[159], though due to security of healthcare and food need not find this poverty a distraction from his prayer life. Unlike modern monasticism, total renunciation was rare, and often a little private wealth was kept in order to support the monastery and be less of a burden. The guardians live a kind of monastic ideal within the polis, though instead of choosing the monastic life they are chosen for it based upon the acceptability of their soul-nature. Both the monk and guardian are expected to sacrificially renounce wealth in order to be from temporal concerns, they do so to pursue contemplation of The Good, either the impersonal Platonic Good of the forms, or the Christian God. It prevents pride and enables their seeking the Good to be without property or personal relations outside the community of their fellows. Both must descend from the cave of pure contemplation, for the guardians this will involve the application and consideration involved in governing the state. For the monk this involves the practical labour of serving one's neighbour, though this is not a distraction, for the monk equivalent to unhappiness a guardian will feel about being forced to abandon pure contemplation to pursue governance. The monk's duty is to serve God and know Him both in contemplation and service, so although less intellectually near to God, service of the poor is fundamental to the monastic charism. Monks were permitted to operate small businesses like basket weaving[160], or keeping libraries, as long as they didn't impede spiritual detachment, and financial profits were returned to the community. The obligation for both poetry and gymnasium among the guardians, to foster courage and gentleness, is mirrored by the monastic emphasis on work and prayer. Socrates assumes that those with gold natures will

[159] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 77.
[160] McAleer, *Plato's 'Republic'*, 83,

be happier and most suited to the gold vocation, namely philosophy, and are thus compelled by law. Monastic sacrifice is much more personal and consists in a reformation of self, a free gift to the Good, that is God. Rather than being selected, monastics sacrificed their life and property freely.

There is a critical distinction in that whilst the monastic ideal can be lived out, the philosopher guardians have to sacrifice the ideal philosophical life, namely one of pure contemplation, in order to descend into political affairs. Though the monks must engage in labour this forms part of their contemplative life, whereas the guardians have to sacrifice a nobler life of contemplation, for the greater good of the polis, and therefore must be involved in politics. The ideal life of the guardian is almost identical to that of a monastic, though when practiced in the *Kallipolis* is an inferior life (if we view the monastic life as Platonically superior) because the guardians fulfil a political role. Monastics are not called upon to fulfil a role in state government because theirs is a spiritual mission, and the Fathers are doubtful about the ability to establish any kind of ideal state, or in fact the use of an ideal state, as the church awaits beatitude after the apocalypse.

Communal religion

Occasionally people suggest that the Fathers promoted a kind of communist communitarianism, as they will do with Plato's ideal. It might be better to consider these aspects of a communitarian system, rather than communist, because it is better to disconnect this system from the class warfare of communism. The appetitive bronze class receive the greatest benefits of their labour, and the guardian class live totally communally, without rooms, or property or privacy. The monastic life, and Christian ideal of community is of a natural family of families, and love of one's neighbour and family as individuals. They

embrace renunciation for the good, not to construct an economic utopia, nor does the Christian ideal force this sacrifice on others.

Religion plays an integral role in both socio-ethical models, though in Plato's Republic religion forms a part of social control rather than a salvific path. Plato was sympathetic to the ecstatic mystery cults which promised purification of the soul, and he had a genuine love of the gods as the objects of cultic worship. His view on the gods is complicated, and they inhabit a space somewhere between the demiurge and his translating of the pure form of the Good into the sensible[161]. The gods are purely good, in the Republic Socrates repeats this that 'in reality of course god is good'(379b), as he highlights the falsehoods present in popular stories. Socrates will leave religious matters to the Oracle of Delphi and believes that true worship is a good in itself. In his Republic religion is a valuable a form of social control, as well as true philosophical worship of the gods being important, but it must be distanced from the myth makers and poets, like Homer, who corrupt the gods image with wickedness[162]. By supressing these false stories, he wishes to make the genuine goodness of the gods clearer, and thus facilitate their proper contemplation.

The gods are important to Plato but are not the ultimate Good which is the object of philosophic contemplation. His is not a theocentric state, but an seeks an order driven harmonious state. There is a deep pessimism in the Fathers regarding the state and politics because as they highly doubt the possibility of building the *Civitas Dei*, a city where God is the focus. Augustine, among the most politically pessimistic, explains that the only source of our happiness can be contemplation of the Good, in the person of Christ Jesus[163]. The

[161] Jon D. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford, 2010), 209.
[162] Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*, 214.
[163] Dougherty, *Augustine's Political Thought*, 44.

experience of intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of the Good is through the specific love of the revealed God. God does not require a special nature, or guardian class to access, and indeed many from the peasantry became monastics, namely those belonging to the equivalent appetitive class. Patristic love of God is more egalitarian than Platonic philosophy.

Shared pessimism

Patristic pessimism is derived from the inability to construct the city of God on earth, and is somewhat present in Plato when he, through Socrates, declares that there 'will be no end to the troubles of states…until philosophers become kings in this world' (473d). He, unlike the Fathers did believe that the ideal state could be established, though demonstrated that in practice this was unlikely, as most states were not governed by philosophically minded rulers. It is why states were so troubled. So that in theory a perfect state may be established by the sacrificial compromise of the philosophers best life, in practice it is unlikely, if not impossible to be *fully* implemented. Socrates is the model of the ideal guardian and was highly philosophical and even lacked money and attachment to goods, thus corresponding, and inspiring Plato's ideal guardian. Both Plato and the Fathers advise that men focus principally on their inner polis, namely, to pursue philosophy, virtue and harmony within one's soul, without worrying about external affairs. Hence the Fathers command men to do their duty, but to withdraw from political life, St Cyril counsels withdrawal from political and military life. Augustine refused to advocate a political system comparable with Aquinas', because it would be wasted and impossible to realise. In both accounts what matters is to do one's duty, to love God and neighbour sacrificially, or to pursue the Good, and if practicable to do as much as possible to improve the polis without risking your own soul or salvation. Accordingly, Saint Cyril advises Christians to withdraw from political life as it risks their souls,

but concedes that simply by living in a political *civis* Christians will and must play a part, even basic concerns like engaging marketplace discussions, and sharing communal spaces and facilities. The God of Christianity is accessible to all souls regardless of status, and is the imminent focus of the Christian soul, more so than the effete and hidden Platonic Good.

The Fathers also had doctrinal reasons not to attempt to establish the ideal state, firstly because the early Christians assumed that Christ would return very shortly, and therefore no need existed. Augustine is clear that the city of God cannot be established in the present, though will come after a time of cleansing before the Lord's return. The goal of Christian government, practically, is to bridge the gap between creation and the apocalypse with order and decency, it will always be a restraining principle (VI ref 27). The Patristic state therefore cannot hope to be an ideal one, but must aim to be a pragmatic and realistic ordering force, trying to put off the inevitable apocalyptic chaos to another age. Carl Schmitt suggests that this principle of *Katechon* has filtered into every corner of political discourse from that of the Third Reich with their eschatological Aryan empire, to the communists withering away of the state. These states, like the Patristic model, do not fully embody their finality, but expect its eventual arrival, though unlike these models Christians cannot effect the time or hour, and must patiently wait.

Patristic socio-political thought thus tempers hopeful waiting of the Lord's return, with stoic acceptance of their situation and pessimism about constructing the perfect state. The Christian hope is one of eternal beatitude, not the construction of a perfect state, even though this may form a part of the eschatological process. Christian hope is a compromise between the reality of the situation, and an acknowledgment that Christ offers eternal

goodness, not just the withering flower of temporal perfection. Plato's guardians also make sacrifices, but their 'reward' is a well-run and orderly state. Christians must internalise their sacrifices as they no longer offer the appetitive sacrifices of the old law[164]. Christian sacrifice is a 'broken spirit and contrite heart' (Psalm 51:17), externalities are effected by inward disposition, like acts of giving charity, but the ultimate reward is that of heavenly bliss.

The Platonic state is at odds with Christian morality in several areas, firstly the noble lie, alongside the myth of the metals, denies the fundamental *imagio dei* present in each human. It provides an explanation of man's common origin, intended to foster city wide unity, but focuses on brotherhood as the key practical component, rather than the divine origin of man. Similarly, the state removes the God given right of freedom to marry, own possessions and know one's children, from the guardians without asking their consent in these matters.

Domination and the state

The Fathers imagine that in Eden there had been no domination, though some do speak of the natural headship of men over women due to superior reasoning faculties, but even this is a mutual submission done willingly and lovingly. In a certain sense Eden, in Patristic thought, approximates the rustic city of pigs which Socrates first proposes, but which is rejected as overly simplistic. There is no strict hierarchy in this original city, which is simplistic enough to contain just a few families, and is almost an extension of the natural family unit. Man's desire for goods, and unwillingness to accept the simple life leads Glaucon, here representing the ordinary man, to reject it, just as Eden too is lost because of man's fallen nature being unwilling to accept the order and harmony of the original state.

[164] Cary, *Inner Grace: Augustine*, 23.

Just as Eden was lost in sin, the rustic city cannot be gained because of man's disorderedly behaviour and lack of justice in the soul.

The Fathers state that with the fall domination entered the world, for Augustine this includes slavery and kingship which represent different degrees of domination. Man shares an intrinsic likeness to God, which in an ideal world would be realised by the total equality and harmony of society as in Eden. Augustine likewise rejects the idea that private property existed in Eden, but believed it was a totally unified polis with shared communal property. In Socrates' first utopian city a hierarchy, or even philosophical elite, does not really exist, because it is a natural unit, an ideal natural outgrowth of the family. When goods superfluous to subsistence are introduced, the state must introduce a strict hierarchy, mirroring Platonic ontology, where the philosophers who have the easiest access to the Good, through their contemplation, must govern and emanate their understanding throughout the whole state. Harmony and justice can either exist by extreme simplicity or by strict control of whatever is introduced, Plato believes temporal possessions will almost always corrupt, and the only way to provide these and limit the scope for corruption is to have a strictly controlled hierarchy of classes. In the *kallipolis* and city of philosopher kings, each tier specialises in its own area, and justice within the state consists in not meddling with the business of any other class. Augustine sees domination simply as the control of one man over another, for which there is no natural purpose[165]. Contrary wise the Socratic state is full of domination. However unfortunate domination is, it is acknowledged both in the Fathers and by Plato as a part of our reality, and as such all the Fathers, except Gregory of

[165] Chambers, "DOMINATION AUGUSTINE'S CITY," 21.

Nyssa, will accept even slavery, that severest form of domination, in some degree as not intrinsically unjust.

Unchristian ethics of the Republic

Some aspects of Plato's Republic will elicit repulsion from modern readers, and are incompatible with Christian ethics, which has so deep a concern with the individual as Christ. Plato recommends that children that are born outside of state rigged procreation lotteries, or are disabled, should be discarded, and left to die. Within his framework his logic is sound, as these individuals have not been produced by the careful selection of guardians for breeding, or would drain the state of time and resources. These individuals are simply draining the state, they are unable to fulfil any function corresponding to the soul, and are unable to specialise, they must be discarded as they have no place in the utopian model of Socrates, in short, they are superfluous and must be eliminated from the polis. Much like Plato's views about accommodating for luxuries only with strict control, these people are another fever to be dealt with.

This is unacceptable from a Patristic viewpoint, the prohibition not to murder, of which abandonment is a type, makes this plain. Additionally, the Fathers focus a great deal of writing on Christ's specific love for each soul, generally and in doing good deeds and almsgiving. Despite this Socrates' emphasis on justice and harmony recognises the importance of virtue, and goodness towards neighbour. The noble lie creates something that Christian faith also does, namely a deep and universal love of your neighbour as family, though Plato limits this within the polis rather than a universal citizenship. And despite the Patristic talk of duty and stoic impersonal, and transactional language, there is a deeply

personal love of the individual, and a universal citizenship of all men, and specific fraternal love between Christians.

Conclusion

The Republic's polis is an analogy of the soul, which Socrates uses to demonstrate how to establish justice in the soul and state, and to explain that justice is good and leads to the happiest and most harmonious life. The Patristic church is focused with souls, and doubts whether it would even be possible to construct the ideal state, the Fathers' focus is on duty and love of neighbour. Above all else they focus on salvation and love of God. They differ from Plato in individual specific love of people as Christ, opposed to the far more general abstraction of Platonic thought, which enables the disabled to be killed and marriage forbidden. These two ethical systems are largely compatible and hold similar ethical values, for instance the compatibility of the monastic and guardian ideal of contemplation of the divine, and renunciation of property and attachments. The guardians and monastics personify the principles that the whole church, or polis, are exhorted to follow, namely detachment and love of neighbour, harmony, virtue, and justice. The ethos of the Patristic church is directed towards the perfection and salvation of oneself and neighbour, just as the Platonic ideal wishes to build up the state-soul in arete, that is perfection of virtue.

Conclusion – final

The Patristic church spans a vast period of time, inculcating a wide variety of figures, and in this essay, I have tried to construct a spirit of the Fathers, as regards their socio-political thinking. The Fathers have a deep individual love for souls which they express by distributing alms, not only because of the charitable temporal benefits for the receiver, but also the spiritual benefits both to the giver and receiver. This typifies the new relationship that was baptised by the Patristic church, and evolved from the often-abusive patronal system which proceeded it. The Patristic church accepted theories of domination as part of the fallen world, and even accepted to some degree the presence of slavery, though differed depending on the Father as to the degree of acceptability. The Fathers ethical system is deeply personal and requires loving the person of Christ in your neighbour. As well as spiritual matters the church was extremely practical, for instance permitting great ceremonies and largesse at church festivals, to rival the pagan spectacles, as well as the accepting a very gradual abolition of slavery, so as not to disturb relations with the state.

The soul-state described in Plato's Republic beautifully allegorises the harmony and justice one seeks to establish in one's soul, most particularly by the careful hierarchical ordering of society. Socrates explains, often indirectly, what justice is and how we might improve the excellence of ourselves and those around us, he suggests an abstract model for the city, but also makes it simple enough to be practically useful, especially by the addition of the myth of Er which acts as a layman's exhortation to virtue. The texts have very similar political-ethical views though differ as regards the general and particular, as Patristic ethics focus on the individual as making up the whole, whereas Socrates is far more focused on the whole as a mirror of the soul, and thus analogy for enlightenment and contemplation of the divine.

Both ethical systems demand sacrifice to achieve contemplation of the Good and to achieve a successful society and government.

Bibliography

"Anima Naturaliter Christiana." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. (Encyclopedia.com.)

Aakjær, Johannes Steenbuch. "A Christian Anarchist? Gregory of Nyssa's Criticism of Political Power." *Political Theology* 17, no. 6 (2016): 573-588.

Altman, William H. F. *The Guardians in Action: Plato the Teacher and the Post-Republic Dialogues from Timaeus to Theaetetus*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021.

Altman, William H. F. *The Revival of Platonism in Cicero's Late Philosophy: Platonis Aemulus and the Invention of Cicero*. Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2016.

An Answer to Clemens Alexandrinus's Sermon upon Quis Dives Salvetur? what Rich Man can be Sav'd? Proving it Easie for a Camel to Go through the Eye of a Needle [Quis dives salvetur? Quis dives salvetur?]. London: 1690. http://nottingham.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/answer-clemens-alexandrinuss-sermon-upon-quis/docview/2240888192/se-2.

Arruzza, Cinzia. "THE PRIVATE AND THE COMMON IN PLATO'S REPUBLIC." *History of Political Thought* 32, no. 2 (2011): 215-233.

Begemann, Elisabeth. "Cicero's Theology and the Concept of Fate." *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 15, no. 1 (2014): 225–246.

Bergida, J. (2019). "Patristic socialism?: Ambrose of milan and catholic social teaching on private property." *Journal of Markets and Morality*, 22(2).

Bobonich, Christopher., Oxford University Press. *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.

Bradshaw, David. "Plato in the Cappadocian Fathers." In Plato in the Third Sophistic. Vol. 50. Berlin, München, Boston: *De Gruyter*, 2012. 193–210.

Burns, Anthony. "Augustine on Administration: The Politics of Social Institutions in The City of God." *The European Legacy*, Toward New Paradigms 26, no.1 (2021): 22–38.

Butterworth, G. W. The Exhortation to the Greeks The Rich Man's Salvation; To the Newly Baptized. Harvard University Press, 1919.

Byers, Sarah Catherine. *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine: A Stoic-Platonic Synthesis*. 1st ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Carmola, Kateri. “Noble Lying: Justice and Intergenerational Tension in Plato's "Republic".” *Political Theory* 31, no. 1 (2003): 39–62.

Cary, Phillip. *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*. New York, 2008.

Chambers, Katherine. “SLAVERY AND DOMINATION AS POLITICAL IDEAS IN AUGUSTINE'S CITY OF GOD.” *Heythrop Journal* 54, no. 1 (2013): 13–28.

Chorell, Torbjörn Gustafsson. “Unsecularizing History and Politics: Jayne Svenungsson and Karl Löwith on Meaning in History.” *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 82.2 (2021): 176–192.

CHURCH FATHERS: Hexaemeron, Homily VI (Basil) (newadvent.org)

CHURCH FATHERS: On the Soul and the Resurrection (St. Gregory of Nyssa) (newadvent.org)

CHURCH FATHERS: The Paedagogus (Clement of Alexandria) (newadvent.org)

CHURCH FATHERS: The Stromata (Clement of Alexandria) (newadvent.org)

Clement, of Alexandria, Saint, approximately 215. Clement of Alexandria, with an English Translation by G. W. Butterworth. *The Exhortation to the Greeks, The Rich Mans᾽Salvation, and the Fragment of an Address Entitled, To the Newly Baptized.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1919.

Clement, of Alexandria, Saint, ca. ca. 215. A Homily of Clement of Alexandria, Entitled: Who Is the Rich Man That Is Being Saved? England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; E. & J.B. Young & Co., 1901.

Donahue, John R. “STOIC INDIFFERENTS AND CHRISTIAN INDIFFERENCE IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.” *Traditio* 19 (1963): 438–46.

Dougherty, Richard J. et al. *Augustine's Political Thought*. NED - New edition. Vol. 2. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2019.

Downs, David J. “Prosopological Exegesis in Cyprian's "De Opere et Eleemosynis".” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (2012): 279–293.

Duncan, Christopher M., and Peter J. Steinberger. “Plato's Paradox? Guardians and Philosopher-Kings.” *The American Political Science Review* 84, no. 4 (1990): 1317–1322.

Dunn, Geoffrey D. “The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage.” *Church History* 73, no. 4 (2004): 715–740.

Elm, Susanna. *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*. University of California Press, 2012.

Ferrari, G. R. F. *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Forell, George W. “CHRIST AGAINST CULTURE? A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE POLITICAL ETHICS OF TERTULLIAN.” Selected Papers. Annual Meeting - *American Society of Christian Ethics* (1978): 27–41.

Full Text of "*On Order [De Ordine] St Augustine Commentary Catholic Theology*". Archive.org. https://archive.org/details/OnOrderDeOrdineStAugustineCommentaryCatholicTheology.

Full Text of "*St. Basil and His Rule: A Study in Early Monasticism*". Archive.org. https://archive.org/details/stbasilhisrulest00meaduoft.

Głodowska, Anna, Paulina Matera, and Rafał Matera. “Plato’s The Republic Recovered. A Few Ethical, Economic and Social Aspects in Contemporary Dialogues.” *Annales Etyka W Życiu Gospodarczym* 20, no. 6 (2017): 7–20.

Grube, G. M. A. “The Marriage Laws in Plato’s Republic.” *The Classical Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1927): 95–99.

Hart, D. “The ‘Whole Humanity’: Gregory of Nyssa's Critique of Slavery in Light of His Eschatology.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 1 (2001): 51-69.

Hays, Christopher M. “Resumptions of Radicalism. Christian Wealth Ethics in the Second and Third Centuries.” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 102, no. 2 (2011): 261–282.

Heinaman, Robert. “Why Justice Does Not Pay in Plato’s Republic.” *Classical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2004): 379–393.

Hell, Julia. “Katechon: Carl Schmitt’s Imperial Theology and the Ruins of the Future.” *The Germanic Review* 84.4 (2009): 283–326.

Heslam, P. S. “Property is theft”: Abraham kuyper and the church fathers on poverty and wealth*. Journal of Markets and Morality* 25, no. 1 (2022).

Holman, Susan R. *God Knows There's Need: Christian Responses to Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Holman, Susan R. Review of Treasure in Heaven: The Holy Poor in Early Christianity, by Peter Brown. *Journal of Late Antiquity* 10, no. 1 (2017): 282-285.

Holman, Susan R., Caroline Macé, and Brian J. Matz. “De Beneficentia: A Homily on Social Action Attributed to Basil of Caesarea*.” Vigiliae Christianae* 66, no. 5 (2012): 457–81.

Holman, Susan R., *The Hungry are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Holman, Susan R., *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic; Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008.

Hösle, Vittorio. “Cicero’s Plato.” *Wiener Studien* 121 (2008): 145–70.

Ihssen, Brenda Llewellyn. “Basil and Gregory’s Sermons on Usury: Credit Where Credit Is Due.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 403–430.

Iveson, Richard. “Plato in the Belly of the Beast: Force-Feeding Servitude in the Republic.” *Culture, Theory and Critique* 60, no. 3-4 (2019): 327–343.

Jackson, Michael, and Damian Grace. “Commensality, Politics, and Plato.” *Gastronomica* 17, no. 2 (2017): 51–62.

Jeon, Haewon. “The Interaction Between the Just City and Its Citizens in Plato’s Republic: From the Producers’ Point of View.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 52, no. 2 (2014): 183–203.

John Chrysostom on Almsgiving and the Use of Money by Blake Leyerle. *Harvard Theological Review* 87, no. 1 (1994): 29-47.

Kochin, Michael S. “War, Class, and Justice in Plato’s "Republic".” *The Review of Metaphysics* 53, no. 2 (1999): 403–423.

Kopecek, Thomas A. “The Cappadocian Fathers and Civic Patriotism.” *Church History* 43, no. 3 (1974): 293–303.

Kraut, Richard. *The Cambridge Companion to Plato.* Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Kries, Douglas. “Echoes and Adaptations in Augustine's Confessions of Plato's Teaching on Art and Politics in the Republic.” *Augustine's Political Thought*. NED - New edition. Vol. 2. United States: Boydell & Brewer, 2019. 152–172.

Lamb, Michael. “Between Presumption and Despair: Augustine's Hope for the Commonwealth.” *The American Political Science Review* 112, no. 4 (2018): 1036–1049.

Lane, Melissa, *Plato, The Republic,* London: Penguin Classics, 2007.

Leemans, Johan. *Reading Patristic Texts on Social Ethics: Issues and Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by Brian J Matz, and Johan Verstraeten. Catholic University of America Press, 2011.

Letter, H. P. P. “The Significance of Poverty and Wealth in Plato's Republic.” *South African Journal of Philosophy* 22, no. 3 (2003): 189–206.

Lomasky, Loren. “POLITY AND ECONOMY IN PLATO’S REPUBLIC.” *Social Philosophy & Policy* 37, no. 1 (2020): 233–248.

Mayer, Wendy. “POVERTY AND SOCIETY IN THE WORLD OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.” *Late Antique Archaeology* 3, no. 1 (2006): 465–484.

McAleer, Sean. *Plato's 'Republic': An Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020.

Mikalson, Jon D. *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Miller, Samantha L. "Chrysostom’s Monks: Lessons on Poverty and the Rich Life." *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 58, no. 1 - 4 (2013): 79-98.

Mintz, Avi I. “The Education of the Third Class in the Republic: Plato and the Locus Classicus of Formative Justice.” *Teachers College Record (*1970) 118, no. 10 (2016): 1–18.

Nails, Debra. “PLATO'S REPUBLIC IN ITS ATHENIAN CONTEXT.*” History of Political Thought* 33, no. 1 (2012): 1–23.

On the Inscriptions of the Psalms. Lectio-divina.org.

Phillips, John-Otto. “Law, Compulsion and Community in Plato’s Republic.” *Polis* 28, no. 1 (2011): 108–125.

Platova, Jana. (PDF) *Clement of Alexandria’s Homily "Quis Dives Salvetur?" and Its Pastoral Challenges for Alexandrian Christians*. Researchgate.net.

Potter, Julian Joseph. “Meaning in Eternity: Karl Löwith’s Critique of Hope and Hubris.” *Thesis Eleven* 110, no. 1 (2012): 27–45.)

Powell, J. G. F. “Cicero’s Reading of Plato’s ‘Republic’.” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. Supplement, no. 117 (2013): 35–57.

Ramelli, Ilaria L. E. “The Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa’s Theology of Freedom.” *Modern Theology* 38, no. 2 (2022): 363–388.

Ramelli, Ilaria. *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: The Role of Philosophical Asceticism from Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Reid, Heather L. “Sport and Moral Education in Plato's Republic.” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 34, no. 2 (2007): 160–175.

Roberts, Richard H. “Transcendental Sociology? A Critique of John Milbank's Theology and Social Theory Beyond Secular Reason.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46, no. 4 (1993): 527–536.

Russon, John. *Politics, Money, and Persuasion: Democracy and Opinion in Plato's Republic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021.

Scherz, Paul. “Grief, Death, and Longing in Stoic and Christian Ethics.” *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 45.1 (2017): 7–28.

Schwartz, Avshalom M. “Divine Epiphany and Political Authority In Plato's Republic.” *History of Political Thought* 44, no. 2 (2023): 213–233.

Silvas, Anna M. The Rule of St. Basil in Latin and English: A Revised Critical Edition. Collegeville, Minnesota: *Liturgical Press*, 2013. muse.jhu.edu/book/46690.

Singh, Devin. “Eusebius as Political Theologian: The Legend Continues.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 108, no. 1 (2015): 129–154.

Stander, Hennie. “Chrysostom on Hunger and Famine.” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 67, no. 1 (2011): e1–e7.

Steinberger, Peter J. “Who Is Cephalus?” *Political Theory* 24, no. 2 (1996): 172–99.

Stewart, G. M. “Malcolm Schofield: Cicero: Political Philosophy.” *Ethic Theory Moral Prac* 25 (2022): 521–523.

Uchaev, Yevgeny. “The Concept of Katechon in the Thought of Carl Schmitt: Towards a Different Universalism?” *Sotsiologicheskoe obozrenie* 22.4 (2023): 26–45.

Ziesler, J. A. “The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire. By L. William Countryman. New York and Toronto, Edward Mellen Press, 1980. Pp. Viii–239. No Price Given.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35, no. 4 (1982): 383–384.

Zyglidopoulos, Stelios. “On Becoming and Being an Ethical Leader: A Platonic Interpretation.” *Journal of Business Ethics* 173, no. 1 (2021): 1–11.