

## Jansenism between Theology and Politics. On Herder's interpretation of Jansenism

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### **Abstract**

Jansenism was a special kind of political theology and a real chapter in the history of European civilization. Even in our days, it is not considered completely revealed. The term "political theology" is a special category since it is the final outcome of prolonged research and interpretation procedures. These outcomes are hardly useful as footnotes only behind the term itself. They are rather to be mentioned in further explanations. Nevertheless, any political theology is primarily theology. Its political dimensions are determined partly through the perceived and verified position in its real-time society, and partly by primary and complete interpretation through biblical exegesis and dogmata which were understood as political acts contemporarily (but perhaps also later). Luther's criticism of selling indulgences may have been a simple and striking example. The practice of selling indulgences was undoubtedly a theological problem, but there was inevitable (as it really happened) its political nature too. In the case of creating sometimes a typology of "political" theologies it would be certainly interesting to study its relevant types. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are generally existing types of politically converted theology which return in similar forms from time to time with their own historical depth. Therefore it is not necessary to generate it repeatedly as a new discovery while targeting a way of thinking of any specific era. Political theology, as it must always be emphasized, is primarily theology. However, its conversion to a political one may be caused (as it was mentioned above) by a huge number of factors, let alone real historical incidences by any fortune. Thus, it is obvious that the theological factor is predominant in any interpretation. This way, reconstruction of the same factor is a key to opening the gate to political interpretation. Anyway, this dominancy even by recognising its nature cannot disguise the political background. Regarding these, transparency and intellectual courage are necessary to any interpretation since political struggle fought out in the medium of theology may discover substantial secrets as well.

**Kulcsszavak:** jansenizmus, politikai teológia, Herder, predestináció, Adrastea, Racine, Lucien Goldmann, Port Royal, XIV. Lajos, kegyelem, ösztönök, Szent Ágoston, Antonio Negri, Pascal

**Keywords:** Jansenism, political theology, Herder, predestination, Adrastea, Racine, Lucien Goldmann, Port Royal, Louis XIV., grace, Augustin, Antonio Negri, indulgence, Pascal

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*"Unfortunately, in the course of our work, we completely lacked the writings published to justify their cause [...]. As Germans and Protestants, we must not just look at things, we must look at things differently. But the news that one of the most renowned French writers intended to publish a history of Port-Royal confirmed my intention to investigate the fundamental questions and*

*above all, also the theological ones, especially since they are of themselves in the first line, such as the social primordial elements[...]."*<sup>[1]</sup>

Jansenism was a special kind of political theology and as such, also a chapter in the history of European civilization. The term "political theology" is a modern category that can only be used as a result of long processes of interpretation. First of all, political theology is above all theology. The political dimensions are expressed partly through their legitimately verifiable position in the society of their time, partly they are articulated – in connection with this – by corresponding interpretations of the biblical texts or other beliefs that had to be interpreted at that time (but perhaps also later) necessarily as political acts. Luther's criticism of the sale of indulgences may be a striking example of this. The practice of selling indulgences is undoubtedly a theological question, but it was completely inconceivable from the beginning that it would not be interpreted politically at the same time. A possible typology of "political" theologies would certainly bring many other concepts to light. But it is already certain that particular types return from time to time and become a recognized or secret tradition. It is therefore not necessary that they generate themselves in the consciousness as an unprecedented phenomenon in each case.

The concept of "political theology" is a relevant version of a broader "ideological paradigm"<sup>[2]</sup> that can be seen as an "ideology-critical and sociological family of knowledge theory" and which emphasizes not only the theological and/or existential relevance of religion, but also the philosophical, or the sociology of knowledge itself. This "family of thought" arises from the basic phenomena of political philosophy and political ideology. This family includes, for example, political romanticism, political <sup>[3]</sup> metaphysics, <sup>[4]</sup> political mythology, <sup>[5]</sup> and finally political theology itself. <sup>[6]</sup> Already here we could have identified the starting point of Jansenism, Augustine, the author of *De civitate Dei*.

*The theological element is also the key to understanding the political aspects.* The will for transparency and intellectual courage is necessary to open the political struggle fought out in the medium of theology because the instrumentalization of theology in politics necessarily entails a danger for theology from the beginning.

A basic intention of political theology is that it directly constitutes the state. The values and attitudes that are right in their eyes should directly determine the life of the state and society. The accent is on the seemingly harmless attribute "immediate". Because this sentence is a clear declaration of war on any state-organized power, the mode of existence of immediacy makes state power superfluous, it even suggests that this immediacy of theological provenance works "better", "purer" and is more "moral" than the usual political power. Political theology thus becomes, unintentionally, entangled in the delegitimization of any existing political power. Bearing in mind that behind political theology is God Himself, we must truly understand the shocked resistance of political power to political theology. As unexpected as the conclusion may

seem, political theology is potentially almost revolutionary. Sometimes the inverse of this relation can also be true: in every revolution, there can be a piece of theology (doctrine of salvation, millenarianism or messianism). Particularly interesting are those cases in which the concrete revolutionary ideology itself has no theological dimension, while the mentality of the revolutionaries gradually religiously reasserts this ideology (as in Alexander Blok's *The Twelve*). How relevant the way of thinking of political theology was in the 17th and 18th centuries is probably also demonstrated by Leibniz's thesis of the "best of all existing worlds",<sup>[7]</sup> or Spinoza's anti-theological political theory.

The value-oriented alternative brings political theology, at least structurally, close to the modern politicizing *intelligentsia*. In this perspective, the Jansenists recall the struggle of the Enlightenment against the Ancien Régime. The history of Jansenism in the nineteenth century also shows that participation in these struggles was by no means merely an "analogical" one. This will also become relevant in Herder's interpretation of Jansenism.

Jansenism sparked a struggle that lasted more than two hundred years. This scale of the fighting also allows an analogy with the *Dreyfus* trial. Jansenism is an example of how a political theology, whose core ideas were originally anything but political, emerges. How Jansenism came to Augustine has its own history. It should be noted that Jansenius and Saint-Cyran also researched other origins before choosing Augustine. That Christianity was in crisis should not be denied. Why Augustine came into question as a new foundation is not easy to determine, because the real question is whether Augustine was regarded and chosen at the beginning as a theological *or* as a political-theological foundation. The focus on a church father, who played a particularly relevant role in the crystallization of the Christian system of ideas in his time, is regarded as a critique of Christian history to date. It is striking that the theological content of this recourse is primarily existential in nature. The relevance of existentialism draws attention to the fact that the typological location of existential philosophies has still not been found. The line of existential thinking should be worked out much further back into the past because of Augustine alone (for example Kierkegaard – Pascal – Augustine).<sup>[8]</sup>

The recourse to Augustine was also an expectant longing for the reality of the early Church as a reality. In fact, the statement "we had no church" may have been widespread. Saint-Cyran is said to have become estranged from his friends because he believed that there had been no "church" for at least six centuries.<sup>[9]</sup>

Augustine's theology also emphasizes human freedom and embraces it in its true destiny. Thus, he himself can come to the seemingly opposite conclusion, that man, although free, cannot realize the right life, because he cannot sufficiently limit his urges. Man thinks existentially, experiences himself as free, also wants to become free and then comes to the realization that he cannot live the life demanded by God. One can see that in this complex not only the later Jansenism, but also

the later Calvinism is anticipated. Man's defeat follows man's victory. This is also where the paradox arises: the theologically and politically tougher Jesuits proved to be more generous in the problem of grace – and *vice versa*: the Jansenists regarded the Jesuit policy of grace as "laxist". The battle for grace cannot be won; either way, God is to enter every life directly by His choice. On the *one* hand, the concept of the theocracy-state comes from this anthropology: The world-state must be God's state, in which the external circumstances must support a community of Christians who help people to shape their lives according to the divine demands. On the *other* hand, this political theology also arises in the competition of individual religions or individual Christian denominations. The existential dimension was only one side. The other side conceived a political theology, but not in the sense that theology wanted to have completely defined the political. Rather, Augustine was concerned with contemplating Rome's permanently crisis-ridden situation and thinking about a religion that would have corresponded to this situation. On many points, he confronted the real situation of the empire with the option of Christianity. He placed the emphasis on the necessity of stronger morality, against the cult of the individual pagan gods and against the comprehensive "acting", and the moral decay. He emphasized that Christianity could prevent the state from dying "from immorality." Certainly, Jansen's recourse to Augustine was also directed at the fundamental moral renewal ("cleansing") of the state/empire. At the time of Augustine's book, in a conversation between Arnauld and Nicole, the sentence came up: "We must build the New Jerusalem in Babylon".<sup>[10]</sup>

At this point, it seems appropriate to point out a different, more or less *postmodern* approach, which also chose the Augustine of the theocracy as his political-theological starting point. In his work *Empire*, published in 2000, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt attempted to describe the current state of the world in the medium of political theology.<sup>[11]</sup> A new approach worth mentioning here is the emphasis on the biological in the form of biopolitics. Negri and Hardt also refer to Augustine in general: "Imperial power can no longer resolve the conflict of social forces through mediatory schemata that displace the terms of conflict [...]. This is the essential novelty of the imperial situation [...]. At this point, then, as Augustine says, our task is to discuss, to the best of our powers, the rise, the development and the destined ends of the two cities [...] which we find [...] interwoven [...] and mingled with one another. The<sup>[12]</sup> parallels to the initial situation of Jansenism are obvious. The specific political theology of Jansenism also includes *mutatis mutandis*, the following task: "We need to investigate specifically how the multitude can become a political subject in the context of Empire."<sup>[13]</sup>

Among the different intellectual profiles of Jansenism was purely philosophical. The proximity to Pascal, the even closer (and often investigated) simultaneity with Descartes, and the multiple parallels to Leibniz and Spinoza, Montaigne and other thinkers may have played their role here. The problem is that in these investigations there are no systems against systems, but rather ideas, theses and attitudes are mosaically compared with others and such comparisons can hardly be

generalized. The determining factor, which we cannot completely reconstruct, is that this political theology had a logical foundation that was by no means only "formal", only "geometric" (*more geometric*). This logic was a "special science" that included everything that determines the use of reason in the knowledge of reality. [14] One can say so much here, that this logic justifies positive and worldly thinking. The consequences of this object-oriented positive thinking can be seen in Jansenist thought.

Another chapter would be the philosophical impact of Jansenism (or Jansenist Augustinism). In many places, Jansenism played a catalytic role in one direction or another. For example, *Voltaire's multiple relation to him is well known: on the one hand, he adopts the humorous superiority over the Jesuits as a means of struggle, on the other hand, he calls the god of the Jansenists Dieu Terrible*. For us, Rousseau's anthropology without Augustine and Jansenism is inconceivable, while for Hume, Jansenism is worth mentioning solely because of his attitude to miracles.

Pascal's Jansenism is a much-discussed topic. Herder's very appreciative attitude towards him is easy to reconstruct as, [15] after all, he does not count him among the inner circle of Jansenists. It is known that Pascal appears in his *Les Provinciales*, which is also relevant to "media history", as a spokesman and advocate for the Jansenists, [16] but his statements in which he does not see himself as a Jansenist are also known. The real problem in this confrontation for us is the *typological unclassifiability* of Pascal's philosophy. In this philosophy, on the one hand, *geometric* thinking is articulated, on the other hand, an openly admitted *intuitionism* (the actors are the "scholars of geometry" and the "intuitive minds"), which even allows the truth of all positions as a matter of course. Because of this unique typological position, it is difficult to determine Pascal's relationship to Jansenism, because the *danger of arbitrariness* with the handling of the individual perspective theses can hardly be eliminated. [17] After all, Pascal also articulates one of the fundamental problems of Jansenism as his own dilemma: a purely intellectual religion would be worthless to the people.

The history of Jansenism is a history of persecutions, which repeatedly have certain recurring traits, even in their own culture and differ significantly from the persecutions of the Huguenots. [18] This story sometimes produces humorous elements, [19] but it is yet unquestionably a very problematic process. In this process, a special *persecutor-persecuted* relationship comes about, which can become brutal at any one time. On the one hand, the Jesuits are trying to postpone the current collision to the papal infallibility problem, while on the other hand, this process welds the Jansenist's step by step into an organized intellectual *dissident* movement. [20] The almost "two-hundred-year war", which is fought with Jansenistic writings, Jesuit reactions, multiple investigations and papal bulls, Pascal hints at the beginning of his defence that Arnauld is not a "heretic" because of what he said, but "because he is Arnauld". This situation, which prevailed from the beginning, illustrates well the story with the "hourglass". [21]

One of the central points in Jansenism is an attempt at the renewal of Catholic Christianity, *strictly from its own substance*,<sup>[22]</sup> which makes the recourse to Augustine transparent. In our view, his is a special version of political theology, a player also of the Enlightenment, which is progressively changing consciousness. This is about large states/empires/societies that are organized "ideologically", i.e. under the sign of a comprehensive, also theoretically founded worldview. These states/empires/societies can easily find themselves in a situation where they must resort to their own truths and are confronted with the fact that they are not successful, even if the original truths apply and these are their own truths. *But this creates an analogy with any society that is similarly organized, including real socialist societies.* However, I treat this analogy only as a promising analogy and refer to the extensive literature (fiction and theory) which regarded communism as a kind of "ideologically" guided state formation in which the same basic problem arose in the same form ("What, then, is the real basic position?").

Lucien Goldmann attempted (Goldmann, 1959) reconstruct Jansenism as political theology in the context of a Racine interpretation structurally and sociologically.<sup>[23]</sup> At the same time, he interpreted his experiment as a methodological pilot project, which wanted to confirm the truth of a special literary-theoretical conception in Racine. It seems to us that his project on literary theory was by no means completely unsuccessful. It is another question that the sixties also demonstrated a great interest in the rivalry in literary theoretical methodology anyway and since then Goldmann's approach has hardly been properly continued so that the literary theoretical dimension of this work can easily give the impression of an isolated remnant of the past for today's reader. For me, the real problem of *Le Dieu caché*, which Goldmann wants to solve in a discursive-logical chain of political absolutism, of Racine, Pascal and of the body of the Jansenist, as well as of theology and aesthetics, by pointing out social structures and the intellectual currents isomorphic to them. If one takes the social body of the Jansenists out of this chain of problems, Goldmann's thesis is that Jansenism was ultimately the common worldview ("ideology") of a certain social group, the *noblesse du robe*, which had a constructive political and legal view and attached great importance to its own role in the government of the state.

From the phenomenon of Jansenism as a political theology of extraordinary duration and complexity, Jacob Soll (Soll, 2011) highlights the same moment as the key to the interpretation and explanation of the movement. His starting point, however, is not as sociological as Goldmann was. Rather, he starts from the Jansenism of the sixties of the 17th century than from a political-administrative entity and searches for his "secrets". He is talking about Jansenists who – to put it unhistorically – belong to the higher bureaucracy and perform the intellectual functions of the administration. They are remarkably similar to the later *technocrats* and state lawyers. In many ways different from Goldmann, but also similar to him in some respects, Soll directs his attention to the demise of this layer, which he presents as a classic problem of intellectuals, namely as the dilemma *of intellectuals and power*. Again, similar and dissimilar to Goldmann, Soll explains

the Jansenists' change of horizon by resetting this layer, which he attributes, predominately, to Colbert's political initiative which, above all aims to put an end to the dilemma of this layer between power and intellectual ethos by founding the *Petite Academia*. A Jansenistically established state must also be a theocracy, from Montesquieu's distribution of power this state would concentrate on law (judicial power). This state must, of course, be rationally established and it cannot get into debt. In the realization of his resources, he can, consequently, hardly renounce the ecclesiastical property. A relatively large space is occupied by the discussions about whether Jansenism, in the Weberian sense, stood for the interest on loans or not. This problem arises in the VIII letter of *Les Provinciales* (Pascal, 1841, 139-160). The text seems to be a clear positive opinion, but upon a *close reading*, it turns out that the protagonist is more amused by the Jesuit's arguments than that he himself would have taken a firm positive position for the interest rate. [24] The linking of Jansenist activities with one's own financial well-being is also part of political theology because from the individual Protestant sects to the neoliberal economic reformers of the state, one's own economic ambitions were not entirely independent of the concepts of best governance.

Goldmann and Soll seize the substance in the fate of Jansenism in part in the same event of the removal of the intellectual theology of Jansenism from immediate power. Herder's interpretation about two hundred years earlier also goes in the same direction.

Herder's relationship to Jansenism is a special phenomenon. On the one hand, there is an encyclopaedic philosopher of history, whom one can hardly describe completely because of the wealth of his knowledge. On the other hand, there is also his theoretical creativity, who in the study of French history, including the history of ideas, reaches the brink of incredibility. He can even claim bravos in this field, which, from today's point of view, can be compared with the heuristic results of leading historians or social scientists. From a bird's eye view, it is clear that Herder's conception of language was fundamentally different from that of Port-Royal, as was his view of art and religion. However, all these differences do not prevent Herder from having dealt with everything that the French present and history can muster at a high level. In his masterful comparison of Greek and French tragedy, Jansenism is thematized primarily because of Racine. [25] It might require its own investigation if one wanted to compare *the political character of Jansenism (also as political theology) with Herder's decidedly anti-political view of history*. [26] In another context, Herder anticipates Norbert Elias' sociological theory of the process of civilization (for example: "[...] in which kingdom has the flowering of the knightly world been more beautiful than in France?"). [27]

If one is looking for the political, more precisely, the "not exclusively theological" contents of Jansenism, Max Weber should be consulted. In general, Weber's encounter with Jansenism itself can be regarded as a far-reaching symbol of the tenacious "shadow existence" of this direction. In the first version of *Protestant Ethics*, Jansenism is not addressed. In the 1919 revision, Weber

takes up some moments from Honigsheim's work on Jansenism (Honigsheim, 1914). He thus works on Jansenism more or less "by chance", based on the fact that Honigsheim also shapes the direction of interpretation for him (as "first hand"). Weber characterizes his situation in such a way that he cannot examine the "correctness of Pascal's belief in predestination" (Weber, 1920, 122). In the context of *Unigenitus* or Quesnel's reflections, Weber touches on the "various speech rights and knowledge claims" (Weber 1990: 141). These rights and claims are an under-examined problem of intellectually oriented Jansenism, for it was threatened even more than other religious movements by the distance from popular piety. In the 18th century, Jansenist nuns became protagonists (rather "targets") of a comedy by Molières (*Les Précieuses ridicules*, 1659) [28] because of their serious scientific claims and their high language. Weber's references to Jansenism focus on the differences between Jansenists and other Protestant predestination(s). They, therefore, move in the context of the broader framework of Protestant ethics. After all, he considers the Jansenists of Port-Royal to be predestined. It becomes apparent that for him the most important question is whether this doctrine can be understood as a means "to react to religious anxiety effects". He concludes, also on the trail of Honigsheim, that Jansenist predestination does not meet these demands. A recurring thought of Weber is that the history of rationalism and modern rationalization, in general, can by no means be irretrievably and unambiguously associated with Protestant ethics. This is not possible because the forms of capitalist business operations are considerably older than the Reformation. His judgment of Jansenism is also determined by the fact that Catholicism "from time immemorial, and up to the present, regards Calvinism as the real enemy". [29]

The most concrete and direct description of Jansenism is given by Herder in a text entitled "Louis XIV." The very nature of this text, as well as the character of the publication, appear to be a new stage in the philosopher's development. Since this publication appeared in the *Adrastea* 1801-1803, shortly before Herder's death, [30] only hypotheses can be made about the further development of these new trains of thought. Already the collective title reveals the modification of the hitherto prevailing historical-philosophical attitude. He defines the text with the collective title as "events and characters of the past century" and is also oriented towards other educational and communicative goals. But even the conception is no longer a purely historical-theoretical discourse. The text combines analytical parts with descriptions and information, reports and illustrations and takes a step in the direction of a periodical. The concept presupposes that its reader is interested not only in the creative-theoretical but also in the current intellectual and political processes at home and abroad. [31]

Therefore, it is not entirely problematic to determine the genre of Herder's "Louis XIV" (as well as that of *Adrastea* itself). Herder's approach is to present a historical chapter in its uniqueness as a closed period. Therefore, his writing is monographic, factual, well organized and didactic. "Louis XIV" is one of the most relevant texts in Herder's *Adrastea*. And as if this limitless



expansion of the simultaneous interests in knowledge were not enough, Herder provides the individual historical chapters with an excursus, in which he abstractly picks out a concrete context of the preceding historical presentation, in order to later return to the relevant historical linearity. If one were to be a maximalist, it would be possible to conceive a new philosophy of history as a unit based on the history of "Louis XIV" solely with the help of these abstract-philosophical digressions. [32] Herder joins Voltaire with appreciation at the beginning of his account and confirms that Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* "had truth at heart". [33]

The tenth chapter of the Ludwig biography deals with the *French clergy*. In this way, "political" theology is taken for granted. Equally, this choice of topics enables Herder to show off his profound knowledge of the subject of "French clergy". Herder also begins his presentation in such fundamental depths that he even describes the genesis of the word "clergy". In the context of "Louis XIV" he praises the fine spirituality because the clergy under him have been characterized by decency. Herder even goes superlatively through his passionate recognition: "Where and when did such educated men of spirit, talent and customs come together then under him?" [34] Seemingly completely unprepared, Herder then gives a negative verdict on the French clergy, and in concentrated uniformity. Without further ado, he declares the "witty eloquence" of this clergy "hollow" and "empty". First of all, he cites Bossuet's world history as an example of this "hollow emptiness", which he dismisses as a "beautiful table speech" and "declamation air building". Considering that from 1800 to 1803 Herder may, with the greatest right, consider himself to be at least the leading historian in world history, this judgment is made with serious ethical motives. *Herder, the universal historian, fights Bossuet, the universal historian.*

It is understandable that the historical consideration of Jansenism was mostly focused on theological problems. It is clear, however, that the complex of papal infallibility can by no means be the only medium of the political in political theology, for in this case, one would have to ignore Bartholomew's Night, absolutism, the Sun King with Colbert and Mazarin, Luther and Calvin, the Thirty Years' War, the Inquisition, Spanish colonization, Pascal and Jansenism, the Dutch Revolution and much more. The "emptiness" in the consciousness and language of the clergy alluded to in the Bossuet critique also proves to need determination in this environment. The general thesis about the spiritual emptiness of the clergy is undoubtedly provocative, it must be studied strictly scientifically as a hypothesis. But it must also be confronted with other processes of these centuries, Protestantism, Jansenism or the Enlightenment because the "empty" consciousness is also a relational concept. It is about which consciousness and which questions are "empty". Assuming that one side has an "empty consciousness", this fact also determines the level of discussion. It means that the other side cannot intellectually bring all weapons before the public. Everyone is right against the empty consciousness, at most one cannot publicly acknowledge it. Herder's critique of Bossuet thus contains a potential that is universally historical and goes beyond the centuries-long problem of Jansenism, because this criticism also applies to

the Enlightenment. This idea also seeps into Herder's interpretation of Jansenism. Starting from the empty consciousness, he declares the determined unproductivity and superfluity of the fight against Jansenism, he declares it to be a pseudo-problem. [35] The "empty consciousness" of the *Ancien Régime* may also provide a legitimate connection to the French Revolution.

If one transforms Jansenism further in the direction of historical and political dimensions, the hypothesis can be put forward that the division of Jansenist intellectuals, through the establishment of the Small Academy, greatly exacerbates the immanent tension of political theology *en générale*. It distances the Jansenist clergy from their worldly work on the state and society. It makes it impossible for the Jansenists to meaningfully carry out with energy and motivation for effective activity flowing from the idea of the election of grace. The criticism of Lucien Goldmann, that his "sociologically" derived explanation for the Jansenist reaction is too narrow and one-dimensional, is therefore not entirely valid because this "sociological" derivation is also theological because of this motivation of the election of grace. Political repression is not only a pragmatic act of redistributing power, it is also an act that translates into the theological. The excessively strong motivation that captures man in the horizon of predestination cannot be realized. [36]

In the concept of "Louis XIV" one finds an introductory biography of the Sun King, which also has its structural position in this complex work. Here the prologue is followed by five short "acts", which – in the prose of the historical discourse – overlook the biography of the king. The first act describes the great hopes of the young king, and the second the first wars, which the young king entered mainly because of his longing for fame and awards. The third act looks at Ludwig's later wars not only critically, but also philosophically, from the perspective of dramaturgical justice: "The nemesis turned the wheel quietly" and the court became a "mausoleum". In the fourth act, the will of fate appears even clearer – Mrs Maintenon appears, she is "the servant of strict fate". Here the principle "I am the state" is taken to extremes, only to leave the space to the nemesis again in the fifth act.

At this point, we come to Herder's description and interpretation of the academies of Louis XIV. He keenly observes the new possibilities of science, the orientation of the Small Academy and also to the present, the interest in the East, in the Eastern languages and their translations. Herder comes very close to Goldmann and Soll in his objective, we would say today, scientific/political presentation of the new academy. He sees it as an advantage that they (the two academies – E.K.) as royal institutions gave men of science or scholarship a place in the state." [37] It is actually this same moment that Goldmann describes as the true social tragedy of the Jansenists as representatives of a vital political theology. But it is also precisely at this moment that Soll continues to elaborate with historical and sociological analyses about half a century after Goldmann. The problem and the event in these three approaches are fundamentally the same. However, the interpretation is not identical, because at the beginning Herder does not see the

moment of the power-oriented "replacement" of the former "men of science and scholarship", the hidden Jansenist dimensions. This deficiency is then explained in the 10th chapter of the Louis biography, which is entitled "French Clergy". This title reveals that Herder celebrates the victory of science in the founding of the Small Academy, in his own way even one of the Enlightenment. It separates the scientific/political significance of this foundation from its power/political dimension.

Jansenism as a political theology was essentially a Christian reform movement that wanted to renew non-Protestant Christianity. Not only the analogies between the religious and the other (other "ideological") movements are important, but also the possible explanation for this phenomenon. We would look for these reasons in the social-ontological field. Although the "real" system arose based on the same religion, as a real institution it has gradually deviated from the representation and realization of the original values. In the universe of political theology, but also of the ideologically organized state, it is a well-known phenomenon that the *necessities of social existence undermine the validity of the norms* and values of the original intellectual foundations.

From Herder's perspective, Jansenism is seen as a product of the crisis of Catholic Christianity and at the same time as a reaction to it. To judge this crisis from a purely theological point of view goes beyond our legitimacy. However, it is nevertheless there. It has a theological-doctrinal (casuistic) dimension (with the problem of grace) and a clear institutional side. The "God hiding" is a manifestation of this condition. Through the following summary of Herder's theology based on his *letters concerning the study of theology* (1785), I would finally like to show why for him the examination of Jansenism was not fundamentally theological, why he treated the history of Jansenism within the political framework and why at one point he also understood Jansenism itself and its theology as incommensurable.

Herder starts with Jesus and sees Christianity as a comprehensive plan. His reading of the Bible involves the fact that it also contains the rules of proper Bible reading. This approach is reminiscent, among other things, of Spinoza's comparable undertaking in that it must, intentionally and unintentionally, raise basic philosophical problems, at least in hermeneutics. Herder lacks the sharpness of Spinoza's question, he thinks lightly, cheerfully and elastically. In contrast to the dominance of the dogmatic-doctrinal character of the Jansenism discussion, Herder compliments the scholarly investigations from theology decisively. These studies are not only irrelevant, they are directly harmful because they divert attention from true Christian thought. Herder's not many, but without exception, weighty ironic statements about some hair-splitting in the Jansenism discussion are thus not random casual statements, but rather expressions of his unified theological system of thought.

Herder takes it seriously that Christianity is a faith. Man is to believe in the mighty plan of Christianity, whereby the Old and New Testaments form a unity. Those who relativize this vast

unity from the direction of the analysis of individual texts do not know what they are doing. The evangelists were not intellectuals or philologists, they tried to fix their memories. These are facts that were obviously facts in the eyes of the evangelists and radiate the conception of the age of Jesus. Herder does not fight at all to declare miracles in his own time events that obviously could not have happened in Jesus' day. Herder's historicity turns out to be a deeper and truer historicity. He does not want to subject the experience of the original actors to a revision either with the prerogative of hermeneutics or with that of other sciences. He demonstrates his attitude with the example of an Indian king who negated the existence of ice because he could not imagine the freezing of water. The miracle is inseparable from the life of Jesus as a historical fact.

Herder wanted to at least greatly reduce the doctrinal (casuistic) dimension of faith. In their new beginning, the Jansenists relied on doctrines. However, the fact that their long struggle for the renewal of Catholic Christianity had to be exhausted in the constellation Louis XIV – Sorbonne – Gallicanism – Jesuits – Rome – Calvinism – Port Royal was not intended by them.



1. kép Johann Gottfried von Herder 1744-1803



2. kép Port Royal kolostor



3. kép Jansenizmus - Larousse



#### 4. kép Jean Ganière pour l'Almanach des Jésuites

##### Further reading

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Conference presentation:

Konf: Jansenism and Literature in Central Europe. International Conference and Humboldt Kolleg at the Research Centre for the Humanities. Budapest, May 11-15, 2022.