

Würde

Dignity

(Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Herausgegeben von Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, Band 7, Verw – Z, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1984, 2004 (1972-1997), S. 637-677)

(ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗ ΚΟΝΔΥΛΗ, »ΠΕΡΙ ΑΞΙΟΠΡΕΠΕΙΑΣ«, ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ: ΔΕΥΤΕΡΗΣ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΤΟΥ (Μετάφραση λατινικῶν κειμένων : ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ), ΙΝΔΙΚΤΟΣ, ΑΘΗΝΑΙ, 2002)

PANAJOTIS KONDYLLIS

PANAGIOTIS KONDYLLIS

»I. ‘Dignity’ in ancient Rome«, pp. 637-645, is by Viktor Pöschl / Victor Poeschl and will only be translated here after the complete translation of the P.K. text, pp. 645-677[, which is never going to happen]

© 2025 to whenever. Translated from the German and Greek by the Crazy Man Barbarian Idiom Barbarian Idiot.

I. ‘Dignity’ in ancient Rome. II. ‘Dignitas / Dignity’ in medieval theology.

I. ‘Dignity’ in ancient Rome

»I. ‘Dignity’ in ancient Rome«, pp. 637-645, is by Viktor Pöschl / Victor Poeschl and will only be translated here after the complete translation of the P.K. text, pp. 645-677[, which is never going to happen, but here are the first lines of the text, which in themselves are compelling and of great interest...]

‘Dignity’ (‘dignitas’) is in Rome first of all a political concept. Belonging to the nobility, official (officious) function(s) / functioning / positions, service to the community, commonwealth, polity, but also dignity of appearance, presence, occurrence, demeanour, air(s), of the manner/way of expression, of leading one’s life / one’s mode, style of life (lifestyle [[but not in today’s Hedonismus-Konsum sense]]) are essential elements of Roman dignitas / dignity. The gloss, shine, lustre, splendour, sheen, glory, glamour, brilliance,

brightness, radiance which they (Romans) have, belongs to the peculiarities, characteristics of the order of life of/in Rome. Leading politicians have a personal entitlement to dignity, to recognition and consideration, which in our world would not only appear presumptuous, pretentious, arrogant, overweening, but absurd. Thus, as he explicitly states several times, CAESAR is waging / waged civil war for the sake of his dignitas / dignity. ...

...

...

...

VIKTOR PÖSCHL

II. 'Dignitas / Dignity' in medieval theology

Like early-Christian theology, so too did medieval theology support, prop up, base its concept of dignitas /dignity on the teaching, doctrine, theory of man being made in God's image / the likeness, resemblance of man to God. We cannot / should not wonder / be surprised about this continuity. Because the teaching, doctrine, theory of man being made in God's image / the likeness, resemblance of man to God constituted one limb, member of an antithetical (conceptual) pair (of concepts), which as a whole was indispensable, essential for Church ideology. That / This means : man as the image and likeness of God represented and constituted the inevitable, indispensable (not to be thought away) reverse side of man as the originator, perpetrator, creator, author and at the same time the victim of the Fall of Man / Original Sin. If likeness to God / being made in God's image guaranteed the future salvation (redemption, deliverance) of man, thus reference/pointing to his / man's sinfulness served in relation to that, to found, justify the present-day [[i.e. in the Middle Ages]] necessity of more or less ascetic disciplining. The disciplining was supposed, indeed, in regard to the presumed, assumed sinfulness, in any case, to occur, but it could, in the final analysis, finally, only find in the hope of salvation a plausible, reasonable, lucid or else consoling, comforting, consolatory justification — a salvation (redemption, deliverance), which for its part [occurred, was found] not only thanks to the effect, impact of (divine) Grace, but was also considered secure, certain, safe, because man as the likeness, image of God seemed to carry the beginnings in relation to that salvation ontologically within itself. This scale of thoughts explains why for the Church the likeness of man to God / man being made in God's image and the sinfulness of man were equally indispensable : both complementarily contributed, in relation to that, to underpinning, reinforcing its (the Church's) claim to/on (the) education, bringing up, training (of man) and claim to/on dominance (dominant authority, ruling).

One must take into account this context in order to understand the persistence, perseverance, insistence with which dignitas / dignity is spoken of / about exactly before or after the gloomy, dark, sombre, dim, murky statements, contentions, propositions about the present state (of affairs) / situation of man ; that is why the ontologically given human dignitas / dignity acquires, obtains its whole, entire, total glory, splendour, magnificence precisely from

/ out of (the) contrast to/with the misery, wretchedness, destitution of (fallen) man (after the Fall). Against this bold, (provocatively) cheeky forgetfulness of God, PAULUS DIACONUS asserts, projects the obligations, duties which arise, result from the *dignitas humanae originis* [dignity of human origins / descent]. This goes back / is reduced to the fact that God condescended to create man with his own hands, and indeed *plenum atque perfectum, habentum in se et dignitatem qua praecelleret, et potestatem qua cunctis animantibus imperaret, soliserviens [soli serviens] illia [illi,] quo ei cuncta fuerant subjugata, ut imperaret mundo, serviret Deo* [full, complete and also perfect, having in himself the dignity thanks to which he would be superior to other animate beings, and the power with which he would be their master, ruler, governor, commander, controller, being a slave / servant only to Him [i.e. God] who subjugated (subjected, subordinated) to him [i.e. man] everything, in order to rule, govern, control, command the world and serve God]⁴⁵. The same dignity which permits, allows the rule, dominance of man over the rest of creation at the same time imposes on him (man) the duty, obligation to serve God, since it (i.e. dignity) originates, stems, springs, comes exactly from God. JOHANNES SCOTUS ERIUGENA differentiates, distinguishes with the same strictness between the state (of affairs) (situation) before and the / that state (of affairs) (situation) after the Fall of Man and believes, thinks, opines that man's true nature cannot be recognised in this latter state (with and after the Fall of Man), which stands / is (found) under the influence, sign, aegis of sensoriality (sensuality (pertaining to the senses in general and not just to sexual arousal etc.)). Rather we should realise, be clear, visualise that that true nature *ad imaginem Dei priusquam peccaret condita est* [in the image of God is put together, constructed, built, completed before he (man) sinned / sinning] and that it (the said true nature of man) at that time / in those days / back then *omnum sensum corporum, omnemque mortalem cogitationem pro ineffabili naturae dignitate . . . fugit* [flees from (is / was superior to) every sense of the body, and every mortal thought because of the unutterable, unpronounceable dignity of its nature]⁴⁶. That / This means, signifies that the essence, nature, character and the dignity of man are free of every sensoriality (have no relation to the senses), i.e. they only take root and exist in the spirit. Because as Johannes formulates it in his (neo)platonistic conceptuality, *homo est notio quaedam intellectualis in mente divina aeternaliter facta* [man is an intellectual notion (idea, conception) made (created) in eternity / perpetuity in the mind of God]⁴⁷ and because of that / accordingly he dominates, rules over the sensorial world *non mole partium, sed rationabilis naturae dignitate* [not on account of the mass, weight, magnitude of his parts, limbs, but on account of the dignity of his rational nature]⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ PAULUS DIACONUS, Homilia 15. MIGNE, Patr. Lat., t. 158 (1853), 1205 f.

⁴⁶ JOHANNES SCOTUS ERIUGENA, De divisione naturae 4,5. Ed. Thomas Gale (Oxford 1681), 170.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 4, 7 (p. 171).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 4, 10 (p. 182).