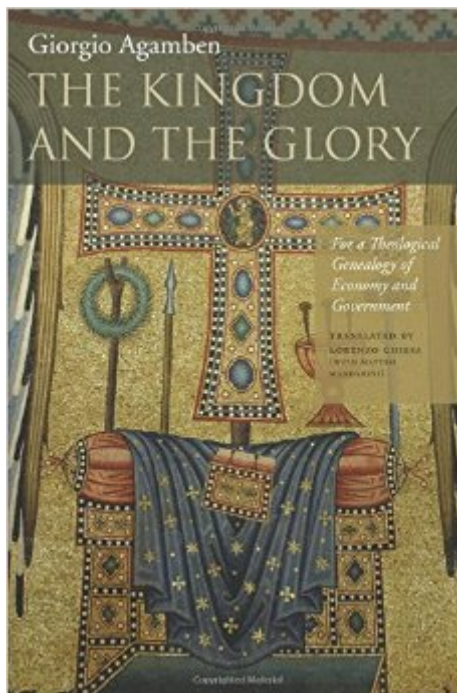


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The Kingdom And The Glory: For A Theological Genealogy Of Economy And Government (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)



Synopsis

Why has power in the West assumed the form of an "economy," that is, of a government of men and things? If power is essentially government, why does it need glory, that is, the ceremonial and liturgical apparatus that has always accompanied it? In the early centuries of the Church, in order to reconcile monotheism with God's threefold nature, the doctrine of Trinity was introduced in the guise of an economy of divine life. It was as if the Trinity amounted to nothing more than a problem of managing and governing the heavenly house and the world. Agamben shows that, when combined with the idea of providence, this theological-economic paradigm unexpectedly lies at the origin of many of the most important categories of modern politics, from the democratic theory of the division of powers to the strategic doctrine of collateral damage, from the invisible hand of Smith's liberalism to ideas of order and security. But the greatest novelty to emerge from *The Kingdom and the Glory* is that modern power is not only government but also glory, and that the ceremonial, liturgical, and acclamatory aspects that we have regarded as vestiges of the past actually constitute the basis of Western power. Through a fascinating analysis of liturgical acclamations and ceremonial symbols of power—the throne, the crown, purple cloth, the Fasces, and more—Agamben develops an original genealogy that illuminates the startling function of consent and of the media in modern democracies. With this book, the work begun with *Homo Sacer* reaches a decisive point, profoundly challenging and renewing our vision of politics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Of the many things that can be said about the work of Giorgio Agamben, being lazy with his research isn't one of them. In fact, I imagine that if by some freak accident, all our sources regarding ancient and medieval theology were somehow lost to fire, one could, with a bit of extrapolation, reconstruct it all again just using Agamben's corpus of works. And if that really did come to pass, *The Kingdom and the Glory* - encyclopaedic as it is in its scope and its grasp - would be the go-to book from which to begin. Ostensibly a book about the theological roots of modern government, Agamben's actual procedure takes place by way of a meticulous - almost pedantic - tracing of the way in which theologians from Polycarp to Aquinas attempted to answer the age old chestnut: just how does God - who is supposed to be transcendent and removed from the world - go about governing that very world? Or, to put it in Agamben's preferred idiom, how does the Kingdom relate to the Government? Agamben's answer - or at least the answer he finds in theology - is: by way of an economy. 'Economy' here understood not in the modern, narrow sense of 'distribution of goods', but in the wider sense of 'organization' and 'administration' (Agamben pretty much always uses the Greek spelling, 'oikonomia', to mark the difference). Central to the book's narrative then, is that the Christian doctrine of the trinity, in which God is at once unified and triune, and whose relations are organized by a divine oikonomia, is - in its formal functioning at least - at the core of today's apparatuses of modern government - including, perhaps especially so, democratic government.

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