



SEÇÃO: ÉTICA E FILOSOFIA POLÍTICA

## The republicanism of Coluccio Salutati and its Augustinian influence

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**Abstract:** In this brief article we will seek to support the thesis that there is in the thought of Coluccio Salutati, 14th century Florentine chancellor and prominent humanist, a clear republicanism that turns to the issue of the freedom of the republic and the active life of the individuals participating in it. However, in connection with this demonstration, we will also maintain that such republicanism has strong traces of Augustinian influence, mainly in view of the disposition of laws in the political arrangement, as well as the relationship between active life and the search for a human being's own good. In view of this, we intend to demonstrate that, in general, Salutati's Renaissance republicanism turns to the defence of the republic, its freedom and its characteristic of the proper scenario for the active life of individuals, however, it still maintains an ethical-political perspective typical of the medieval period, centrally influenced by Augustinian thought.

**Keywords:** Coluccio Salutati. Republicanism. Augustine. Renaissance.

**Resumo:** Neste breve artigo buscaremos sustentar a tese de que há no pensamento de Coluccio Salutati, chanceler florentino do século XIV e proeminente humanista, um claro republicanismo que se volta para a questão da liberdade da república e a vida ativa dos indivíduos dela participantes. Todavia, em correlato a esta demonstração, sustentaremos ainda que tal republicanismo apresenta fortes traços de influência agostiniana, principalmente em vista da disposição das leis no arranjo político, bem como a relação entre a vida ativa e a busca de um bem próprio do ser humano.

**Palavras-chave:** Coluccio Salutati. Republicanismo. Agostinho. Renascimento.

**Resumen:** En este breve artículo buscaremos sostener la tesis de que hay en el pensamiento de Coluccio Salutati, canciller florentino del siglo XIV y prominente humanista, un claro republicanismo que se vuelve hacia la cuestión de la libertad de la república y la vida activa de los individuos de ella participantes. Sin embargo, en relación a esta demostración, también mantendremos que tal republicanismo presenta fuertes huellas de influencia agustiniana, principalmente en vista de la disposición de las leyes en el ordenamiento político, así como la relación entre la vida activa y el seguimiento del ser humano. propio bien.

**Palabras clave:** Coluccio Salutati. Republicanismo. Agustín. Renacimiento.

### Introduction

The pertinent discussions on the relationship between ethics and politics, throughout the history of the West since Antiquity, have raised numerous different and even polarized approaches. Some approaches include the intrinsic connection between the ethical field and the political field, others, however, neglecting or at least underestimating such connection. Themes such as political action, the search for a good for



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human beings in society, the role of the law and its relationship with human nature, among several others, have fostered different conceptions about the best form of government. However, as a way of delimiting and grouping these themes, it can be said that the core of the ethical-political issue is the relationship between the action and the freedom of the human individual. In other words, the search for an ethical-political conception that allows human beings to be free, in the more *lato* sense of the term, both in their private actions and in their actions within society. This search may seem trivial to our 'modern minds', however, it presents different definitions both in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, becoming also a central discussion in the transition period between the medieval and modernity.

The transition between the Middle Ages and the Modern Age presents an extremely rich period in many ways, both artistic, intellectual and cultural. The commonly called Renaissance humanism, centrally that Italian, is a historical-theoretical period that allows us to analyse the possible tensions between ethics and politics in the understanding of active life within the social context, as well as the resonances of a tension between constructions arising from the classic thought and a medieval tradition, centrally Augustinian. We understand that this period in particular has characteristics that make it unique and essential to understand the transition between medieval and modernity, with regard to the discussion of the relationship between ethics and politics.

This period in question is extremely delicate, as there is a whirlwind of profound changes, at the most diverse social levels and from the most diverse nuances. Bignotto (2001, p. 33), dealing with this issue, clarifies us by arguing that: "it is necessary to recognize that we cannot speak of a passage from one era to another, but of several transformations, which occurred at different times and in ways that are not always compatible." One cannot neglect such an argument, which is relevant and pertinent, therefore, a delimitation still seems necessary to establish a point that more precisely defines our object of analysis. Having established

the parameters, the context and the moment to be analyzed, we still need the definition of an author or theory to be taken as an object of analysis of the problem between ethics and politics and that reflects the resonances of the existing tensions.

The referred transition between medieval thought and the incipient emergence of a broader understanding of the relationship between ethics and politics, between action and freedom, can be taken as the gestation of the period called Modern. We understand that the main support for the discussion undertaken in this period, centrally in Renaissance humanism, is the resumption of the classic republican tradition, which had been diluted in the Christian-medieval tradition that dominated a period of more than a thousand years. However, the idea that this period of Christian dominion, commonly called the 'Dark Ages', has not advanced in the ethical-political discussion seems misleading. On the contrary, several theories emerged and merged, making the Middle Ages a great period of syncretism and questioning. As Coleman (2000, p. 5) reminds us: "The Middle Ages established its own agenda and a collection of different political discourses that would be absorbed, transformed or discussed until the beginning of modern times."

The highlight of Italian humanism, as well as the subsequent Machiavellian thinking, is not due to alien reasons, it can be said that at this moment in the development of Western political thought there is a theoretical fracture, first, in terms of confrontation between theory and reality, second, in terms of overcoming and breaking. The confrontation movement between theory and reality can be traced in the resumption, by the humanists, of texts from Antiquity, centrally related to the republican tradition, as well as the restoration of precepts, values and political understandings arising from this resumption. However, the complete overcoming and rupture occurred only with the Machiavellian thought and its incisive perspective of resuming the classic Roman republican tradition.

As indicated above, the classic republican tradition was diluted and even obliterated in long

periods during the medieval period, as pointed out, a Christian-medieval tradition became strengthened. This Christian-medieval tradition, centred on the discussion about the relationship between ethics and politics, is based on the construction of Augustinian thought. We defend this thesis and start from it to try to understand how Italian humanism, undertakes the resumption of the republican tradition, but, fails to undertake the complete rupture with the Christian-medieval tradition. To support this perspective, it is necessary to first demonstrate how the Augustinian tradition breaks with the values of classical antiquity and establishes its own parameter of ethical-political understanding between action and freedom, mainly by political and cultural means.

This Augustinian establishment resonated throughout the Middle Ages and, in a broad sense, made all the ethical, political and cultural arrangements of Antiquity forgotten. The point is that in Italian humanism, Augustinianism was still reverberating, giving theoretical substrates that were reproduced through concepts, ideas and terms widely found in the main thinkers of Italian humanism. The theoretical constructions found in the three aspects of the theory of action that emerged in Augustinian thought, namely, the anthropological, legislative and political aspects, were recognized in many of the writings of Italian humanists, especially those prior to Machiavelli.

In this context, it is seen in Italian humanism a resumption of classic values, such as honour, glory, the value of the human individual, active life in the city, driven by the wide translation and study of ancient texts, however, with clear foundations Augustinians still present. The very context of political life that was imprinted in the Italian republics, with emphasis on Florence, demanded a movement to value the precepts proper to political life represented in classical culture. We affirm that this is the imperative of reality, that is, the requirement to think about an ethical-political organization that would allow the strengthening and primacy of political action over theoretical formalisms. However, the strong medieval reference, mainly composed by the

Augustinian-Thomist tradition, through which Plato, Aristotle and other ancient classics were brought, was at variance with the ethical-political foundations perceived by the scholars of classical texts. As argued by Garin (2008, p. 19): "It was necessary to realize that, yes, the Middle Ages, in no way dark and barbaric, but full of the lights of civilization and the greatness of thought, fed on Antiquity and made it your."

From this perspective, even recognizing that to some extent the classics were present in the Middle Ages, we understand that the confrontation between the reality posed by the demands of active life, political action, in Renaissance society and its cultural construction, placed in doubt the inherited theoretical substrate of the medieval. The theoretical building erected in Medieval, even in the presence of classical shadows, did not give consistent ground for thinking about reality and the need to restore the place of the politician in the Renaissance environment and the incipient emergence of modernity. The Italian Humanism, civic or not, had the initiative to turn directly to the classics with an immense desire to read the texts within their original contexts, in this sense, confrontation begins to engender the assumptions of overcoming.

However, it proved extremely difficult to disentangle centuries of ethical-political theorization influenced by the Christian construction, as said, mainly Augustinian-Thomist. This first movement of humanism should be completed by a more prepared vanguard, both theoretically and culturally, to undertake the complete rupture and its overwhelming overcoming. We believe that it is possible to indicate the generations following the first humanists as this vanguard, with Machiavelli leading, mainly in view of his incisive criticism of medieval Christian ethical-political construction and his unrestricted adherence to the political values of classical antiquity. Factors such as the change in the historical perspective of reading and interpreting the classic texts, valuing the active life, building the legislative body and political organization of the republic, are preponderant to perceive the confrontation movement initiated by humanists. However, it should also be noted that

such factors did not enact a complete rupture with the theoretical features arising from aspects of the theory of political action that emerged in Augustinian thought and were predominant in the Middle Ages. This rupture will only occur in Machiavelli's thought through its radicalization in the resumption of classic Roman values and its fierce criticism against the predominance of an ethical formalism over the materiality of action in the political context.

Therefore, we will briefly discuss the work of Coluccio Salutati, a thinker little known among political commentators, but who played a leading role in the construction of Italian humanist republicanism and in the Florentine scenario in which Machiavelli and modernity subsequently emerged. To fulfil our intent, we will first seek to demonstrate the characteristics of the Christian-medieval tradition based on Augustine's ethical-political thought, presenting his concepts related to human nature, the constitution of laws and the possible political arrangement in the 'Earthly City'. Then, we will present the fundamentals of a resumption of the republican tradition in Coluccio Salutati, the humanists' own brand of his time, mainly from the movement to confront the political reality of his city, Florence, as well as of all of Italy, with the study and the critique of classic texts. Finally, we will try to demonstrate how, despite undertaking a fertile movement to revive the classic republican tradition, centrally through the revival of the classics, Salutati fails to make a complete rupture with the Christian-medieval tradition and still reflects fundamentals influenced by the Augustinian construction.

### 1 The ethical-political theory in Augustine

It is a complex task to demonstrate a political theory in the writings of Augustine, first because of the clear observation that the Bishop of Hippo did not write a specifically political work, much less theorize the theme in a system along the lines of the tradition of political philosophy. It is not difficult to find reluctance, by countless commentators, about the discussion of a theory, or even, a political thought in Augustine. Howe-

ver, the question is how to distinguish what is a political discussion in modern terms and what is a systematic construction of a doctrine that permeates all aspects that touch the political discussion. This seems to be the case with the Augustinian work, which builds a solid doctrinal system, Augustinianism, which certainly influences all intellectual discussion in the Middle Ages, in addition it posits themes dear to politics, such as justice, peace, etc. Such themes are placed as a basis for thinking about an ethical-political universalism that can reflect on the 'Earthly City', on the political organization of men, the good foundations of the 'Heavenly City', or 'City of God'. As Boyer instructs us (1970, p. 19-20):

The love for the sovereign Good that is the cement of the City of God, at the same time that it responds to the noblest inclination of the human soul, becoming the source of the characteristic and outstanding universalism of Augustinian thought. Truth, justice, charity, peace, these goods are truly the reflections of the face of God and this is because their search and possession unite men, instead of dividing them.

Certainly Augustine seems to be more concerned with the human redemption from his degraded situation of alienation from the divine presence, his intention is to provide an ethical-political understanding that allows the convert to yearn for his true 'mother Homeland'. In this sense, what constitutes in Augustine a discussion of political foundations is also a defence of the possibility of building an 'Earthly City' that is, in a way, an exercise for the believer who yearns for the 'City of God'. It is not a matter, then, of saying that Augustine ignores the theme of politics when making a theological defence of the faith in the face of the hardships of earthly life. Much less is it a movement to defend contemplation as the only way out of the Christian life. Augustine establishes a direct link between the Christian faith and the possibility of building a social organization minimally instructed by spiritual virtues.

In this sense, the entire elaboration of this link will take place through the clear submission of social and political life to contemplative spiritual life, thus, it is possible to find in Augustine the defence of the possibility of building a republic, or

a social life, that can minimally correspond to the foundations of faith. As Costa argues (2009, p. 13):

From the political point of view, what Augustine presents us are the ethical-political foundations, Christians, on which a just *Civitas* (*Earthly State*) can be built that, at the same time, is capable of promoting the temporal happiness of man – immediate aim of the *Earthly Civitas* – and that, in addition, leads him to 'True Happiness', to be achieved in Eternal Life – the supernatural purpose of man and the *Earthly Civitas*.

We certainly cannot fit the Augustinian theory within the framework of modern political theories, which would be at least anachronistic and unproductive. However, it is plausible and feasible to extract their concepts and perceive their consequences in the discussion about the construction of an ethical-political model for the constitution of individuals' actions in the political sphere, through the same understanding of man, by the constitution of laws and political arrangement, which allows us to 'assemble' such elements into a theory of political action.

As a thinker of his time and of the reality experienced by Christianity, Augustine could not escape the necessary confrontation between the defence of the emerging Christian faith and the decadent Roman political tradition, which faced each other in a chaotic scenario from the political and cultural point of view. The need to build a doctrinal basis that could support his view of the existence of two cities led him to theorize the bases of political thought consistent with his claims. Augustine's intention is more to instruct the believer who lives in the 'Earthly City' than to propose some political salvation for it, so his political construction is centred more on the individual than on the political body. It is possible that this is one of the keys to understanding the unfolding of all his theorization. As Brown (1972, p. 24) points out:

At this point, it should be clear that what we call Augustine's political thought gravitates to the problems of human behaviour in politics. The Christian subjects to whom he preached and the Christian authorities to whom he wrote giving advice were not, for Augustine, 'natural political animals'; they were men who were faced with a whole range of purposes and objects of love, who were just a few among the many created by living in a political society,

Taking this perspective of understanding about the construction of an incipient theory of political action in Augustine, we do not intend to find terms and concepts that can simply be 'copied' in authors of the Renaissance or the beginning of Modernity. It would not be the case that we only seek to identify in the humanist or political texts of medieval and modernity, concepts a *tout court* that are or have emerged in Augustinian thought. The central point of the question is to demonstrate the constitutive features of a theory of political action in Augustine, or at least the theoretical constructions that make it possible to perceive its influences in the formation of an articulated political thought, it is preponderant to understand that the movement he started puts the 'political scope' under the domain of the 'ethical scope'. According to Arquilliére (1934, p. 9): "the idea of *pax*, as explained in *De civitate Dei*, is 'the cornerstone' of a series of concepts that are constantly repeated in medieval political literature, such as those of *iustitia*, *inoboedientia*, *libertas ecclesiae*, *tyrannus*, etc."

The developments arising from this arrangement placed the necessary delimitations to think about the very constitutive aspects of a theory of political action still reverberated in Italian Humanism, as we will try to demonstrate. What, in the classical tradition, was seen as the objectification of a material construction of political action, comes to be seen as the subjectification of a formal adaptation to universal precepts and detached from any link with particularities of the individuals' social experience. What can be argued about the Augustinian attack on the entire political-cultural construction around examples of civic, heroic virtue, aimed at the exaltation of glory and the effectiveness of concrete action, expressed in education through literature and traditional customs Romans, tells us exactly the objective of this process of devaluation of the active perspective of politics in favour of a contemplative and selfless perspective of ethical action.

The ethical-moral basis evoked by Augustine is that developed in his theory of will, in these terms, the safeguarding of 'good intention', whether in the formation of will or in action in the political sphere,

must be the 'North' of all and any orientation of the individual. "In any case, St. Augustine's answer is radical: there is no other cause of sin than the unregulated will, the *improba voluntas*." (CAPITANI, 1994, p. 163). The implication of this format is clearly intuited in the perspective of a political construction that allows the individual to improve his spiritual virtues, to enjoy relative peace and happiness in the realm of politics, but not achieving the completeness of his 'Supreme Good', because his true happiness is in the 'City of God'. The possibility of building a social life precariously established by political institutions is justified only by the need to improve the love, *Caritas*, as well as the exercise of the principle of *Justice* that moves the believer, namely, his adherence to the divine will.

Thus, political life is mirrored by the definition of spiritual life, which will be fully realized only in the 'City of God'. According to this understanding, the peace achieved in political living is only a misshapen shadow of the true peace to be experienced in eternal life. In the words of Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, XIX, 27):

In the final peace, however, which should be the objective of the Justice that we try to acquire, in this land, as nature will be endowed with immortality, of incorruptions, it will lack vices and we will not feel any inner or outer resistance, it will not be necessary, to Reason, rule over passions, because there will be no [...] This state will be eternal and we will be certain of its eternity. Therefore, in the peace of that happiness and in the happiness of that peace the sovereign good will consist.

It is possible to point out in the Augustinian work the possibility of the existence of momentary peace and happiness for individuals in the 'Earthly City', being, however, incomplete, temporary and liable to make man hostage to a corrupted life. Such a corrupted character of the earthly constitution of politics cannot offer man any kind of lasting glory or honour, much less a happiness that is established as his end or supreme good. The decrepit scope of the politics, for Augustine, is the scope of the struggle between the two 'Cities', with the individual still divided in such a dualistic reality.

The human being is divided between the imposition of a natural citizenship, that of the 'Earthly

City', and a citizenship by choice, conversion, that of the 'City of God'. This point is crucial to understand one of the foundations of Augustinian political doctrine, the 'detachment' that characterizes the citizen in relation to his obligations towards his earthly homeland. Its importance is given for two reasons, first, the understanding that the carnal nature, including politics, must be subdued by a new spiritual nature, including towards its citizenship in the 'City of God'; second, the historical-theological understanding of a linearity that has started and will inevitably end. As the Bishop himself (*De Civ. Dei*, XV, 2) indicates: "When the 'two cities' undertook their evolutionary course, by successive births and deaths, the citizen of that world was born first and then the pilgrim of time, who belongs to the City of God."

In the face of this reality, an orderly society cannot be formed, committed to the enhancement of virtues and spiritual improvement, having as 'examples', individuals who seek fame, honour and purely earthly dignity. According to the bishop of Hippo, it is precisely the search for earthly glory, honour and fame that originates and feeds the 'Earthly City', while love for God originates and feeds the 'City of God'. Still in the words of Augustine himself (*De Civ. Dei*, XIV, 28):

Two loves, therefore, founded 'two cities': self-love, leading to the contempt of God, the Earthly City; love for God, leading to contempt for oneself, the Celestial City. The first City in itself glory, and the second City in God, because that first seeks the glory of men, and the second, by maxim, the glory of God...

It is extremely important to understand this distinction made by Augustine regarding the 'love' founder of the two antagonistic cities. Whether for the foundation of a love for the homeland, aimed at the defence of the country, the acceptance of its laws and customs; or by the restriction of the various motives and ways of founding the different cities. The Augustinian proposition breaks down the main foundations that legitimized and sustained the political foundations of ancient classical societies. In his view, it is not possible to reconcile the two loves, one cannot 'serve two masters'.

In the case of Italian Humanism, the prospect

of seeking peace and justice that enables an orderly political body will still be perceived in some authors, mainly in Coluccio Salutati, but also in Savonarola and Bruni. However, this movement will still take place in a perspective in which the result of such an arrangement is propaedeutic to eternal peace and happiness. The Augustinian postulate of the possibility of establishing an orderly political body in order to guarantee, even in the 'Earthly City', a certain peace and justice, brings with it the need to establish legislative bases for such an order. In view of this premise, Augustine will establish conceptual frameworks that directed the understanding of the laws towards a profoundly formal, universalist and completely dependent on divine ordination. His appreciation of Platonic philosophy, as well as the Ciceronian legal scope, made him reflect on a theoretical construction that was guided by the centrality of laws in the constitution of the political body.

A formal understanding of the establishment of ordering of laws led Augustine to a theological-metaphysical construction, in which the origin of the laws is obviously in God and radiates to man in a form, first spiritual, then natural and, finally, rational, positive. In these terms, obedience to God, social harmony in the love of others and political submission to the positive law of men, constitute the three areas in which Augustine will consider the construction of laws. According to him: "... peace between man, being mortal, and God is obedience ordered by faith under the Eternal Law. The peace of men among themselves, their orderly harmony [...]. The peace of Civitas, the ordered harmony between the rulers and the governed" (*De Civ. Dei*, XIX, 13).

It is correct to argue that practically all the ancient peoples took from religion the necessary legitimation for the establishment of laws and customs, having in the figure of their political leader a spokesman for the gods. However, such legitimation through divine intervention in the ordering of laws had a character marked by the political and social identity of the people. In this sense, the observation made by Combes (1927, p. 119) is quite pertinent:

The essence of the law is to determine, in effect, in short and expressive formulas, which, in a higher order and in the interest of the country, all citizens, without exception, must do or avoid. Originally, as the authority, as we have seen, is closely linked to cult, the law was clearly religious in character. All peoples believed that they had their code of gods. Minos was just the spokesman for Jupiter, Licurgo de Apollo, Numa of the nymph Egeria.

However, Augustine implements a universalism that was even unthinkable in the construction of the relationship between laws and national religion, the law of God is not aimed only at a specific people, after the coming of Christ, not even Jews, such legislation is instituted for every being human. In this sense, man as a pilgrim in the 'Earthly City', follows the laws by order of submission to authority, but if such submission prevents him from following the laws that bind him obedience to God and his heavenly citizenship, he must abstain to follow earthly laws. As Augustine clearly indicates: "Do not be concerned with the diversity of laws, customs or institutes, which destroy or maintain earthly peace... if it does not prevent religion from teaching that the only, true and supreme God should be worshipped." (*De Civ. Dei*, XIX, 17). In this way, the relationship between religion, customs and laws is altered, which in the classical tradition was given as an arrangement of dependence and legitimation based on political customs through legitimacy arising from religion, it is configured as complete independence of religion about political customs.

As will be seen in the study of the construction of a legislative understanding of the republic in Italian Humanism, centrally in Salutati, to a certain extent, the perspective imposed by Augustine will still be present in the idealization of a political body virtuously anchored in universal laws that allow good ordering and safeguarding justice. It is necessary to point out that within a theory of political action, the individual's dependence on the political body is intrinsically linked to the degree of commitment of the laws to an ethical-political ideal of citizenship. In this way, denying the law a necessary character of centrality in the identification of the individual with the political body, the bond of commitment of the citizen with the very structure of ethical-political organization of society is undone.

The Augustinian theoretical construction regarding a legislative structure, in a broad sense, offers exactly the possibility for the individual to constitute himself as an agent disconnected, in an ethical-political scope, from the political-social implications of laws that are not based on valid principles for the execution of their faith and spiritual yearnings. The unfolding of this disposition in the understanding of a social arrangement will lead to a complete predominance of the ethical foundation over the political foundation, in other words, the safeguarding of the predominance of ethics, internalized in spiritual principles, places in discredit the need for an individual commitment based on customs, laws and ideals purely established in favour of the materiality of political action.

The foundation that supports the ethical-political building in the classical tradition is precisely the individual's commitment to political institutions and their customs, as well as to their concrete action in the social sphere with the other individuals in society. It is exactly against this commitment that Augustine opposes his understanding of the relationship between ethical intention and political action. In the political aspect, fundamental in a theory of classical political action, the individual's acceptance, participation and commitment to public life is essential to determine his degree of adhesion and social belonging.

In Augustinian theory, this aspect is subjugated and placed in the background, the political structure of the institutions is subject to the supremacy of the ethical-moral disposition that the individual must assume from his search for moral and spiritual improvement. It is correct to argue that there is a kind of indifference, an almost stoic *adiáphora*, that leads the individual to not care about the discussions regarding the best form of government, the search for political freedom or even the relationship between social institutions. For Augustine, the believer, a citizen of the 'City of God', should not be concerned with the issues that concern the political dispute and the form of government, as follows: "In reality, the type of *Civitas* adopted by who embraces the faith that

leads to God, as long as it does not go against divine precepts" (*De Civ. Dei*, XIX, 19).

The political understanding printed by Augustine will bring an inversion of the classic model, something that will reverberate throughout the Middle Ages and adapt to the different political arrangements suffered in this long period. The disposition of a relationship of predominance of ethics over politics will remain firm until the beginning of Modernity, being a parameter for most theoretical constructions on politics within Christianity. The notes undertaken so far impose on us the perspective that a theory of political action in Augustinian thought is established by an understanding of human beings and their '*telos*', a legislative arrangement that reflects this anthropological understanding and seeks to order it, as well as a political aspect that seeks to justify the precarious existence of human beings on the earthly plane and their commitment to a 'homeland' present only in a transcendental way, but existing in a spiritual way.

As indicated in the introduction, in this first moment we seek to demonstrate how an Augustinian ethical-political construction profoundly altered the traits inherent in classical political tradition, responding to a period of tension in the transition between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, basing a new ethical-politics tradition that would become dominant in Christianity. This Christian-medieval tradition, built on Augustinian thought, will be confronted in a new period of tension, now in the transition between the Middle Ages and Modernity. As indicated earlier, this moment will be undertaken by Italian humanism and its resumption of the republican tradition. However, as we pointed out at the beginning, we will try to demonstrate how such a resumption will not be able to definitively break with some fundamentals of the Christian-medieval tradition. As already planned, we will now focus on the work of Coluccio Salutati to undertake this discussion and to try to demonstrate how the republicanism that emerged in Italian humanism still had strong medieval influences, mainly Augustinian.



## 2 Renaissance republicanism in Coluccio Salutati

As indicated, the transition period from the Middle Ages to Modernity, centrally to Italian humanism, is a scenario of intense theoretical effervescence, presenting extremely interesting authors. Certainly, the author or theory to be defined as the object of analysis of our investigation must encompass in its core the points that we previously outlined as guiding parameters. The confrontation between a wide and massive Christian-medieval tradition, strongly rooted in concepts and ideas arising mainly from the Augustinian tradition, in the face of new postures of study and reception of the classics and the recognition of their culture and ethical-political construction.

Starting from the premise of analysing the work of an author that deals with the relationship between action and freedom in the context of social life in the period of formation of Italian civic humanism, whose thought still mixes medieval concepts and new humanist perspectives arising from the study of the classics, we turn for Coluccio Salutati. As indicated by Bignotto (1991, p. 21): "Salutati's work provides us with an interesting document for understanding the transition from problematic medieval to Renaissance politics." The distinguished Florentine chancellor stands out for his intellectual and political performance, notably his theoretical production is not detached from his empirical experience in the political affairs of his nation. In the opinion of Taranto (2001, p. 210): "It is Coluccio Salutati [...] who best represents the union and knew how to embody, with his moral treaties, his letters, his political pamphlets, the model of the engaged intellectual." The status of chancellor of an important 14th century Italian city, Florence, certainly imposed the need to confront the issues of active life in the city. This need became one of the central points of his questions and writings.

As a prominent humanist he turned to the rich theoretical production of Antiquity, certainly having a very strong influence from the Greco-Roman thinkers. Bianca (2010, p. XII) gives us news of the way in which Salutati solidifies the bases for his approximation with classical authors, mainly

romans, as follows: "At the age of 23, therefore, with Prisciano, Virgilio, Lucano, Orazio, Coluccio laid the foundations for his library and started writing down his codes. This was the turning point, the possibility to read the authors of antiquity directly and in full...". However, it cannot be neglected that Salutati is a Christian man thinking and acting in a society still guided by values generated in a medieval ethical-political tradition. Ullman (1963, p. 27) is very prudent in trying to perceive in Salutati traits that can support a thesis of wide break between Italian humanism and medieval tradition, according to him: "Coluccio in particular was a humanist in a state of evolution, with many medieval features still holding on to him."

The ideal of contemplative exercise, religious values and the search for a pious spiritual life, still represented an indelible mark on the ethical-moral formation of Italian men in the Renaissance, as a precondition for the true freedom of the individual. "The inherent and general irreligiousness of Renaissance humanism is a creation of nineteenth-century historians, secular liberals (who approved) and conservative Catholics (who were horrified), but not of the Renaissance itself" (NAUERT, 2000, p. 56.). The political context in which Salutati is inserted can be characterized by the flourishing of humanism and as a pillar of modern republican thought. These two factors, the flourishing of humanism and republicanism, raised a point of tension between the old medieval ethical-political tradition, markedly scholastic based on the supremacy of contemplation over political action, and the need for a new tradition capable of justifying life active in the republic. How to reconcile the Christian ideal of contemplation and the need for a broadly active life in the republic?

This was one of the fuels that boosted the production of Coluccio Salutati, as instructed by Garin (1952, p. 38): "Political life and a life of thought are actually shown in Salutati [...] the wise, the *douto*, he is not a loner separated from the things of men, but a man who responds to his vocation, who serves his heavenly lord amid the turmoil of earthly life." The Florentine chancellor is faced with the need to defend the humanist constitution

of the republic on the basis of active life, at the same time that he cannot abdicate his faith and his ethical-moral assumptions. Certainly, these notes do not bring anything new to the exercise of understanding the transition between the medieval ethical-political tradition and the Italian humanism represented by Salutati. What, then, would be the basic point for understanding this very explicit fact? Or rather, what are the existing tensions inherent in this transition and what are the perceived influences and overcoming?

From these intricate questions, our proposals for understanding this moment of tension arise. The influences arising from the Christian-medieval tradition and the confrontations operated by Salutati's Renaissance republicanism need to emerge in a unanimous movement of analysis. Thus, we will fix the axis on which Salutati's thought revolves, the question of the law as a guideline for thinking about active life and freedom in the republic; second, we track the influences of the Christian-medieval tradition, mainly Augustinian, which still affect the formulation of the ideal of freedom and the end of ethical action; and finally, the possible overcoming undertaken by Salutati, as well as its limitations, in relation to this medieval Christian tradition, and its contribution to the formation of Italian humanism.

It seems to us quite useful to understand at first the atmosphere formed in 14th century Florence within which Salutati is inserted and develops his republican foundations. When he was appointed chancellor of the republic, Salutati assumed a position that until then was only devoted to representing Florence, through official correspondence with external governments. However, the intellectual capacity of the individuals who held the position, as well as the prestige they enjoyed before the authorities of the republic, made the chancellor a true Secretary of State. It cannot be denied that the central paradigm of the Renaissance is the resumption of classical arts, mainly rhetorical and literary, thus, the chancellors should be well-versed man, as pointed out by Garin (1996, p. 23): "The Florentine chancellors, who remained stable despite the rapid changes

of the supreme magistrates of the Republic, were recognized specialists in legal science and rhetoric, that is, in the techniques of persuasive speech and human relations." Given this observation, it is easy to intuit that your posture as a representative of a republican government should reflect your appreciation for the legislative arrangement that founded such a government and the defence of the republic in the face of attacks by neighbouring despotic and tyrannical governments.

During the 31 years, from 1375 to 1406, in which Salutati was at the head of the Florence chancellery, there were many opportunities that he had to put into practice the defence of the republican constitution of his city and to fight, in theoretical sense, the attacks both internally as external against it. Let us analyse Garin's description (1996, p. 25) of the scenario in which Salutati assumes the chancellery:

The moment was dramatic. The Hundred Years' War reached a critical point, with the English almost thrown out to sea; Charles IV was about to disappear, leaving Wenceslau in the midst of difficulties; the Church was afflicted, between Avignon and the schism; Bernabò Visconti saw the unreliable Gian Galeazzo grow; Joana I was going to the end; the struggle between Venice and Genoa grew. Florence was about to declare war on Gregory XI, appealing to Pisa, Lucca, the Visconti and Hungary. The ban would fall on the city; and the end of the war would see the bloody streets and the palaces set on fire by the revolted Ciompi.

After the middle of the 14th century, Florence goes through numerous adverse situations, from the black plague, which ruined the city in 1348, the instability caused by popular unrest, until the 1370s. The culmination of this instability occurs with the *Ciompi* revolt, in which a provisional government is established that lasts from July 22, 1378 to August 31, 1378. This episode of the Ciompi created a kind of "trauma" in the Florentine elite, and even in the view of those more conservative intellectuals. As Najemy (2000 p. 85) indicates: "Half a century later, the *Histories of the Florentine People*, by Leonardo Bruni, would clarify how crucial the memory of the Ciompi was and the fear of social revolution for the vision of the civic humanism of the Florentine past." The demand for greater popular participation in the Florentine

government, one of the demands of the workers who boosted the revolt, has a very short duration, but which left reflexes that lasted for some years after its end. However, even in the last decades of the 14th century, Florence will see the rise of oligarchs and the strengthening of the bourgeoisie, mainly financial. As Bignotto (1991, p. 14) reminds us: "The oligarchs saw the danger. If, from 1378 to 1382, a regime more open to the poorest sections of the population ruled Florence, from that date onwards we will see the consolidation of the power of bankers and large traders".

However, internal disturbances were not the main attacks against Florentine freedom, the values assumed in view of its defence of the republican regime should be defended in the face of the growing attacks by tyrannical governments against Tuscany. One of the main disputes fought by Salutati was the defence of the republican government of Florence against attacks by princely kingdoms. The disputes between the republican government of Florence and the princely government of Milan revolved around the discussion about freedom and the best form of government. The whole scenario of the end of the 14th century was marked by intense dispute between these two political and economic poles in Italy.

In this context we see Salutati fighting one of his most intense and heated defences for the freedom of his people. The clash against Antonio Loschi da Vicenza, secretary of the Duke of Milan between 1398 and 1404, demonstrated the commitment with which the topic of freedom was discussed and how Florentine freedom was defended by his chancellor. As Garin (1952, p. 4-5) tells us:

In 1399, it seems, the vincentino Antonio Loschi (1368 – 1441), Pasquino Capelli's successor in the Viscontian chancellery, writes a brief *Invectiva in Florentinos*, which is a true and proper propaganda book in favour of Gian Galeazzo Visconti's expansion policy. To Pietro Tuchi, who had sent him the booklet, Salutati returns, on September 11, 1403, his answer, an *Invectiva*, which, while being a ferocious condemnation of Viscontian politics, becomes a hymn to the *florentina libertas*.

In this episode of his career, Salutati finds himself obliged to respond to the attack on the very

character of freedom enacted by the Florentine republic, in this sense, the mere rhetorical and conceptual tone of freedom should give rise to a more incisive imposition on the nature of the Republic itself. The political context in which the dispute is inserted, as already mentioned, focused on the defence of a princely, expansionist and tyrannical government, represented in the figure of the Duke of Milan, made by Loschi, against the defence of a republican government, based on freedom, represented by Florence, undertaken by Salutati.

This framework in which Salutati plays the role of defender of freedom and active life, in a republic that still stands between moments of stability and instability, can be taken as the aspect of reality in which the thinkers of Italian humanism will be confronted. The political 'puzzle' in which Italy was formed during the transition between the 14th and 15th centuries, stood as a challenge to the resumption of the values and ideals of Classical Antiquity, as well as a gap between the medieval political tradition and the emergence of modern political thinking. One cannot neglect the fact that the general scenario in Europe tended towards the imposition of centralized regimes, mainly in view of the movements that took place in countries such as Spain, France and England. In this sense, the defence of a republican freedom, centred on civic values and guided by the arrangement of solid laws that would allow a wide popular participation, was increasingly painful.

Trying to reconcile the republican values and ideals inherited from the classics, taken up through an extensive study of their texts and contextualizing their writing environment, with the ethical-political concepts and assumptions arising from the medieval tradition, was the great step that should be undertaken by humanists like Salutati. However, this step would not yet be a rupture with medieval traditions, it would still be a confrontation that foreshadowed the necessary overcoming. What we find in Salutati, as well as in other humanists of his time, is still the period of 'metamorphosis', the stage in which two ways of conceiving themes such as politics, freedom, active life, are amorphous intertwining. From this understanding, it is clear that a new stage of

overcoming and rupture will still be necessary.

The questions posed by the reality faced by Salutati will remain until the period in which Machiavelli writes his main works, he will be the herald of a more profound and irreversible split. However, let us continue to analyse in Salutati's thinking the concepts, terms and constructions that can be clearly identified with the Christian-medieval tradition, mainly Augustinian. These traits, even in the face of the broad defence made in view of freedom and the republican arrangement, are shown implicitly or explicitly in concepts and definitions aligned with the themes worked in the medieval period. Let us take a deeper look at the theme of laws in the work of the Florentine Chancellor, seeking to demonstrate the validity of our arguments, based on what we have already presented so far regarding his defence of freedom and the republican model of government.

### 3 Augustinian influences on the republicanism of Coluccio Salutati

The republicanism present in the thought of Coluccio Salutati, as we demonstrated in the previous topic, arises from a double movement, first, the resumption of the classics in view of the revival of the republican tradition, second, the confrontation with a reality that demanded the defence of a free, organized and independent government, in a republican way. In view of this, there is no doubt that the themes of homeland, justice and truth are extremely dear to Salutati, these are the pillars that support his defence of Florentine freedom in the face of the aforementioned attacks by the Milan secretary. According to the chancellor himself Florentine:

Each citizen being a member of his city and his people, and not a foreigner, I assume the cause of my homeland, that homeland that each one has an obligation to defend, and I ask those who will devote a little time to read these things of mine, that they observe me benignly while I argue for the truth, for the justice and the country (SALUTATI, 1952, p. 9).

These will be the indelible marks present in most of the theoretical constructions of the humanists, however having nuances that still belong

to the medieval constructions, even though the rupture movements can be perceived in them. In Salutati these themes will be deeply linked to the understanding of the law and its place of predominance over other aspects of political life. As Ullman (1963, p. 20) rightly points out, Salutati was one of the most accomplished *dictator*, letter writer, having a vast production of official and personal letters. In these letters he expresses much of his thinking on the issues of freedom, homeland and, above all, laws. However, the more informal tone of the letters does not allow us to glimpse the most delineated features regarding his position on these themes. In view of this, we will turn to his main work on the theme of the law, taking care not to neglect the other works in which he discussed these matters.

Salutati makes an extensive defence of the primacy of the science of laws over the other sciences, especially those considered by him to be speculative. In his work *De nobilitate legum et Medicinae*, he makes such a defence before medical science. However, in the course of his argument, as well as seen in the rest of his works, the chancellor touches on the basic themes of his thought, the truth, justice, the family and the homeland, still safeguarding his Christian identity, even in relation to the issue of active life. According to Garin (2009, p. 193): "The most well-known aspect of Salutati's work is precisely here, in the ardent celebration of active life, of Christian charity in the face of mere contemplation, of the common good, of the family, of friendship, from love to freedom and homeland".

In this central work of Salutati's thought, we hope to identify the clearest traces of his double influence, either through a reluctant Augustinian foundation of the universality of laws and the predominance of his formalism, or in the aid of classics such as Aristotle, Seneca, Cicero and others classics of republicanism. Its intention is to highlight the central position of laws in the construction of a republican freedom, beginning by demonstrating its nature and applications. Regarding the search for a definition for 'law', Salutati (1947, p. 13) states that: "I will first say what the law is, in order to ob-

tain and issue, what is its nature, applications and task". However, for Salutati, the freedom acquired in active life within the republic is rooted in the formal character of the law itself, even though it has its horizon of realization within the scope of the political, it imposes itself through its formalism.

This will be your central guideline and your anchor stone in the face of the discussion with Master Bernardo in *De Nobilitate*. The formalism in the Salutatian understanding of the legislative aspect is characterized by two points, the first is the universal constitution that underlies the freedom that is the object of the law that governs the free action of man, in view of his Supreme Good, and that has its origin at will. According to the chancellor: "Since each human act is truly free, freedom being the property of the will and reason and the object of the will an end and a good, it follows that man, as a man, acts for an end and a good" (SALUTATI, 1947, p. 15). In this understanding, Salutati makes freedom belong to the realm of the will, as expressed in his statement, each man is free in his will and reason. One can perceive the formalist principle of the will in the fine arrangement between freedom and the ultimate end, a good, proper to man.

Certainly, this construction is not aligned with a structure of classical thought, its basis of proposition is guided by a formalist understanding of the will that ensures the freedom of the individual. Salutati, in a way, reflects an Augustinian conception that bases the understanding of freedom in a formal-universal term from the will. Let us take the opinion of Bignotto (1991, p. 21) on this issue: "More than operating the distinction between empirical knowledge and theoretical knowledge, he seeks, using some elements of Saint Augustine's political theory, to find the practical validity of knowledge that should mirror a universal point of view". The perspective assumed by Salutati placing the motive of freedom in the will and reason, linked to action in view of a good, does not exclude the possibility of thinking about such freedom in the construction of an active life in the city.

On the contrary, in fact this is the point at which his reading of the classics compels him to want to 'shape' freedom back into action. This is configured

as the reality confrontation movement, of which we have already mentioned, which demanded from the humanists a response to the need to defend a new understanding of freedom, something that corresponded to the real political condition constituted in its context. However, this movement is conditioned to the formal source, still used by Salutati, of freedom itself as constitutive of each human act provided by the will. In this sense, we can point to a continuation of the Christian-medieval tradition, centred on the theme of freedom as a good of the individual arising from his own will and alien to destiny. In Garin's opinion (2008, p. 39):

In fact, Salutati's entire texts, *De Fato, fortuna et casu* had solved, at the level of practical certainty, the insoluble difficulties and contrasts that the problem of destiny poses to human reason. It is the free act of will that sets man free, while reason shows him the impossibility of freedom.

Salutati's intention to shape the freedom of action of individuals, still comes up against the formal understanding that this is only possible by thinking about freedom itself as it had previously appeared in man himself. In other words, an anthropological freedom based on formal foundations. The overcoming of this paradox, the split between a formal understanding of freedom and the concrete demand for a new conception of freedom that started from the very reality of the political arrangement, would only emerge in Machiavelli's thought. What is still seen in Salutati, as well as in other humanists of his time, is the continuity of an ethical-political construction that expresses the predominance of the formal over the material, mainly within the scope of political action.

As we demonstrated in the first topic, it is precisely in Augustinian thought that the relationship between ethics and politics takes this direction, leading individuals to adhere to a formal commitment to ethical principles and leaving the concrete obligations of political life in the background. Another point is at the origin of the universal character of the law, the 'Supreme Good' that is constituted as the end of the human act, being guided by the freedom provided by the will and reason, is consistent and is preceded by the divine law. In the words of Salutati (1947, p. 15):

In fact, since each law is a direction, a principle and a rule of practical reason, it must be said that everything is preceded by divine law, because God governs and rules all things and men themselves. Now, everything that is governed by another must necessarily have a correspondence with those who govern it, otherwise that operation would not pass through it.

Certainly, this formal perspective of the law preserves the place of importance for contemplation, an ideal of the Christian tradition, in the construction of freedom within the socially active context of the republic in which the reality of the law arises. The natural law, expressed by Augustine, takes shape in the Salutatian construction of precedence of divine law as a guideline for man's own freedom arising from his will. In these terms, the link that refers Salutati to the Christian-medieval tradition is shown in its submission to a vision in which the very possibility of recognizing freedom, as well as a minimally ordered society, is only guaranteed in the universal character of laws consistent with the divine will.

The tipping point is exactly the objective to which the author sets out when undertaking his work, his main concern is to combat what he thinks is the error of empty speculation, that is, the search for knowledge not based on applicable universal parameters. However, in Salutati's humanist view, sciences such as medicine and the incipient 'physics of celestial bodies' were the so-called 'speculative sciences'. "In *De nobilitate* Coluccio showed his relatively low esteem for medicine and science in general" (ULLMAN, 1963, p. 89). The attacks against the arguments of Master Bernardo, who was a doctor and who defends the primacy of medicine over the rule of law, has exactly the objective of safeguarding the urgency of the latter in view of their applicable universal character. In view of this observation, the basis of understanding that he will develop throughout his work is placed, his willingness to defend the supremacy of laws, as well as the freedom they guarantee, is only feasible based on universal bases for understanding his origins and maintenance.

In developing his understanding of this arrangement of origin and maintenance of laws, as well as its legitimacy as a universal foundation, Salutati clearly

reproduces the Augustinian understanding of precedence of laws. In this sense, the so-called human laws must be combined with natural laws, while these are vestiges of divine law, in this way, the origin of all laws is the divine law, which expresses its precedence over all human and natural laws, as Follow:

The true law is born of nature, not of human decree, as it is said to be human. No human determination can in fact be said to be law if it does not fully agree with the natural law that is the vestige of that divine. The divine law imprints in human minds the natural law which is a common principle of human acts and which, in our souls, pushes them towards what is decreed by that first immutable divine and eternal law (SALUTATI, 1952, p. 17).

The formalism of Salutati's legislative understanding inextricably links him to the medieval tradition that predominantly reflects the Augustinian understanding of divine-natural precedence for laws, however, his humanist character still makes him seek the applicability of laws in the realm of active life. Following the coherence of our argument, it is necessary to understand that the stage of confrontation, which constitutes a prelude to the stage of rupture in Machiavelli, brings in its core exactly the paradoxical contrast that we have sought so far in Salutati. Classical authors such as Cicero and Aristotle appear in *De nobilitate*, however, as a form of rhetorical and literary support for statements that express a clearly Christian basis. In this sense, the use of classics reflects a rhetorical need to seek justification in the very classic constitution of understanding laws.

Obviously, this movement is beneficial to protect the republican spirit, figured in Cicero, as well as the scholarly spirit of philosophical authority, in Aristotle. We will find in Salutati's work, the resource of these and other classic authors, however, already aware of the author's rhetorical construction, we are forced to identify what really maintains his theoretical argument. Since Salutati's objective is to present a defence of laws as applicable universal knowledge, parameters whose origin is immutable and eternal and whose representation in human society is applicable exactly for these qualities, we can identify his attempt to present the materiality of such knowledge.

The materiality of the law, its concreteness, is established precisely because of its applicability in the production and maintenance of political balance and order in the republic based on the action of the individuals themselves. According to the chancellor: "The law, on the contrary, has as its main purpose the common good, while judging the individual with justice and equity, this is the greatest good and the salvation of the city and the nation" (SALUTATI, 1952, p. 145). The law establishes the guidelines for the actions of individuals, ensuring equity in relations and the maintenance of order, 'the materialization of the formalism of the law'. The question that arises in this applicability of the law, its materiality in the search for the common good, is that it is still permeated with concepts and understandings that refer to the predominance of ethical intention in the power of will.

Salutati still reflects the Augustinian dualist vision between 'earthly society' and 'heavenly society', submitting to this view his own understanding of the need for order in that first in view of the hope of that second. In view of this, the law has the earthly character of ordering society, aiming at the common good, but, reflecting its divine origin in the promulgation of justice and equity. On this aspect present in Salutati's thought, we have an important example presented by Garin (2009, p. 195), as follows:

As noted in the letter to the Zambecari, heavenly and earthly Jerusalem are confused on the plane of this life, where the citizens of the two cities meet side by side and in constant contrast. The divine city, the kingdom of charity and peace, is conquered while seeing itself being built; but this construction is completed in the earthly struggle. The world – we read in *De Saeculo et religione* – is the way of mortals, the feature that guides our pilgrimage. It is a continuous test in which you cannot fail. It is the devil's gymnasium – adds Salutati – where we fall to fight like good knights, but defenceless like naked fighters in the arena, with no weapon other than the strength of our Will...

As we have pointed out, Salutati receives the influence of Christian thought constant in the medieval tradition, such thinking is predominantly Augustinian. Augustine's ethical-political theory, based on his theory of will, serves as a basis for understanding freedom, its centrality in the ethical construction of the medieval political

paradigm is clear. The concern of Augustinianism is to safeguard the ethical freedom of man's will in the face of the onslaught of political relations and obstacles that appear as constituents of human society. As we have already said, ethical formalism, through the will, marks this position of Augustine, especially when his intention is to point out that in man there is a faculty capable of receiving from the divine will the guidelines for the formation of his own will and the assumption of his freedom. In this way, the human will, expressed in its free will, is only truly free when guided by the law that expresses the divine will.

Salutati is influenced by this Augustinian view, which is clearly expressed in his formal conception of the composition of the laws and their origin in the divine will. And it is exactly this influence that makes him want to safeguard the place of the predominance of the intention and strength of the will as a search for appreciation of the divine will and its decoding in the construction of human laws. However, the ethical formalism of the Augustinian will defends the freedom of man as a citizen of the celestial kingdom, temporarily inhabiting the earthly kingdom, marked by sin and corruption. Salutati needs a formalism that defends man's freedom as a citizen of the republic. In what we have seen so far, such formalism is found exactly in the conception of a good that is established as coming from the divine will imprinted in the reality of the laws, but which takes place, even if temporarily, in active life in the city. At this point Salutati (1947, p. 190) is quite explicit when referring to Augustinian thought:

Augustine's words will seem very true to you if you compare them to other knowledge, that is, science compared to wisdom. Now, since the true and supreme end of man is not knowing or earthly knowledge, but that supreme blissfully that consists in seeing God as he is, and enjoying his sight, and loving him, and being united to him eternally in the love that thus unites the lover to the beloved, who through this love unites with God becomes one spirit with him; because we cannot achieve all this with science or human speculation, but by the grace of God through the virtue of our actions, it is certain that your happiness belongs to the active life, **whose principle is the will**, and not that speculative which accomplishes by intellect (emphasis added).



Thus Salutati maintains the position of formal primacy of ethical principles through the will, recognizing its need in justifying a freedom expressed in the universality of the law. But at the same time it brings the same level of importance to active life as a collective realization of freedom. The confrontation between the reality of the need for the materiality of the law, given the formal predominance that gives it universality and legitimation, appears in the construction undertaken by Salutati. Its contribution to the future rupture in relation to the ethical-political paradigm of the Middle Ages lies precisely in the fact that the law is associated with the realization of the common good in the collective life of the city. The action in the collective context of social life receives an outline delineated by traces of classical thought, as already indicated, mainly by Greek and Roman influences, Aristotle and Cicero. We see, for example, Salutati making the following reference to Aristotle: "In laws the objective is the conservation of society, the common good, political happiness. In this, according to Aristotle, legislators contribute, whose objective is to make citizens good and obedient to the laws" (SALUTATI, 1947, p. 104--105).

The humanist paradigm that emerged in Salutati's thought bears the mark that will become indelible throughout the development of Italian humanism and that will serve as a guideline for the consolidation of republican thought. It is necessary here to make an attempt at argumentation that allows us to understand why Salutati, as well as the 'pre-Machiavelli' humanists, cannot achieve a total rupture with Christian-medieval thought. In view of what we have argued so far, we argue that there are three problems that constitute the limitations of Salutati, as well as that of the other humanists of his time. The first is the fact that anthropologically the Augustinian ethical-political theory, from which Salutati is influenced, operates a split between the moral formalism of the will and the materiality of political action, that is, the freedom of the will in Augustine is in the fact of freeing the man from the need for action to achieve good.

The second problem is that in the legislative

aspect in Antiquity, the understanding of the origin and reality of the laws was guided mainly by the political, dynamic character of the relations in the social body. In Aristotle's Greek thought, law is part of the field of practical sciences, its field of action is what shows itself to be transitory and changeable, such domain belongs to the *phronesis*. While the idea of a Supreme Good belongs to the field of what is perennial and immutable, that domain belongs to *sophia*. Thus, the legislator does not operate through the search for a universal good, or from it, but in view of what is changeable and transitory. Still in the Roman tradition, through the apprehension of the thought of the classics, the laws were still devices that posed themselves in response to the vicissitudes of political life, the fruit of the very culture that pushed the individual towards social living. The third problem is the clear political consequence of the first two assumptions, which are perceived as ethical limitations that hinder the perspective of political action aimed at the transience of internal and external disputes.

Salutati is one of the authors that best exemplifies the scenario of tension and confrontation that existed in Italian humanism and in the construction of a Renaissance republicanism, however, this process is complex and will really become a rupture with medieval ties only in Machiavelli's thought.

## Conclusion

It cannot be denied that Renaissance republicanism, typical of Italian humanism, arises as a defence of freedom and the valorization of action, however, there is still the weight of the formalism of the norms that direct active life, the laws, these having a universal parameter. The need to maintain a place of importance for universalization that underlies the regime of laws, in the construction of the republic, generates a supremacy of the formal over the material. This is shown in the constitution of Salutati's republican thought that sees the law as a universal presupposition of freedom derived from divine authority and concretized in the common good of active life. What is seen in Salutati's thought is the typical



picture of Renaissance humanism, a period of confrontation between the Christian-medieval tradition and the search for a more dynamic political thought. As we have tried to demonstrate, such a confrontation did not directly provoke a rupture with the medieval Christian tradition, but it laid the necessary foundations to build a new tradition, based on classic republican values.

Certainly, it is necessary to deepen these problems in order to understand more fully the entire ethical-political constitution of Italian humanism in its transition from the Middle Ages towards Modernity. Obviously the consequences of this movement will be felt in the construction of the ethical-political paradigm of modern republican thought. The resumption of Antiquity Classics, the search for valuing active life in cities, the fight against tyrannical principalities and governments, all these characteristics are part of the movement to revive and strengthen a republican tradition in Italian Renaissance humanism. It can be said that without this period of confrontation between the Christian-medieval tradition and a republican tradition, we would not have the strengthening of republicanism represented by Machiavelli and later by the English and French republican thinkers of the 17th and 18th centuries. The typical features of the Christian-medieval tradition will still be perceived in the 'post-Machiavelli' periods, however, in an increasingly attenuated manner, making the republican tradition increasingly focused on the political sphere and the construction of a more dynamic social reality. However, we will not have enough space to undertake such a deepening.

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