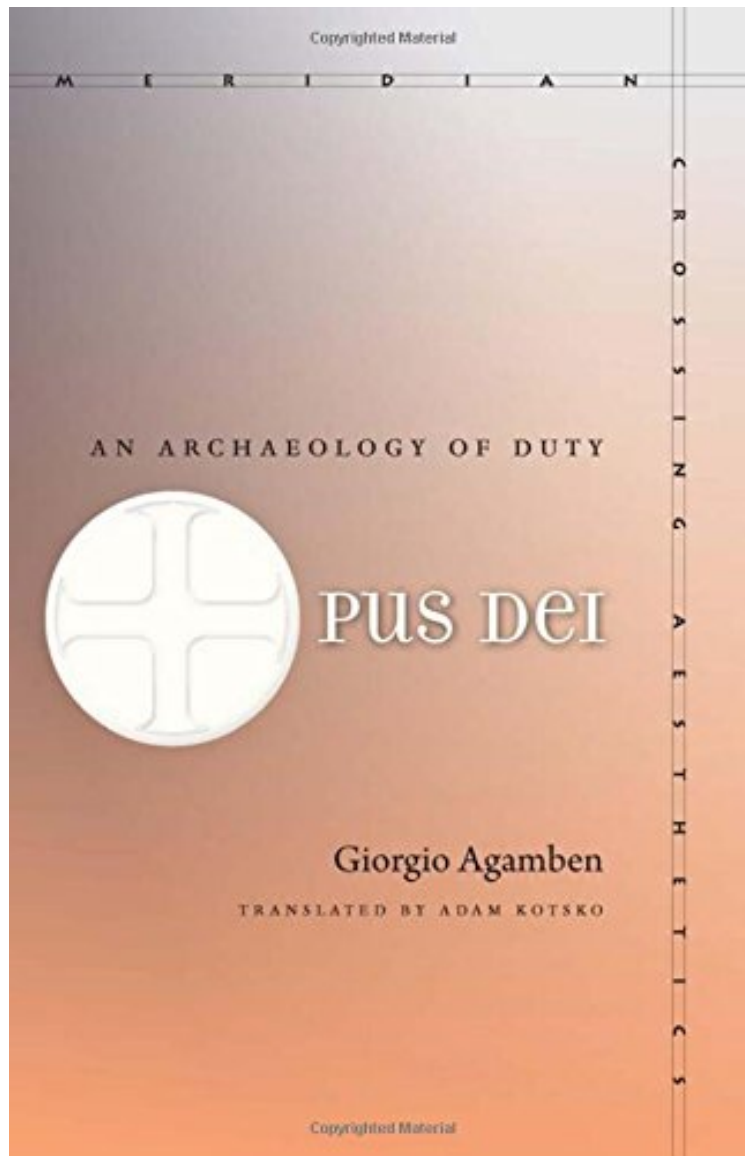


[Ebook free] Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)

Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)

Giorgio Agamben

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#1102822 in Books Giorgio Agamben 2013-09-18 2013-09-18 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .70 x 5.50l, .50 #File Name: 0804784043176 pages Opus Dei | File size: 51.Mb

Giorgio Agamben : Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Great work! 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. On the Malignant Ethics of Operativity By Streetlight Reader Continuing his recent engagement with the rich and labyrinthine inheritance of the Christian tradition, in Opus Dei (work of God), Giorgio Agamben traces the

way in which, from its obscure origins in the early institutionalization of the Church, the concept of duty was incorporated into the sphere of modern ethics. While it's clear that Agamben is no fan of duty (referring to its appropriation in Kant as an aberrant idea), his antipathy towards the notion doesn't hamper the sensitivity and subtlety with which he explores its modulations from Aristotle to Kant via doctrinal teachings of the Church. Indeed, although Kant marks the zenith point at which duty and ethics become inseparably bound, Agamben argues that it's only thanks to a centuries-long praxis and theorisation on the part of the Church that Kant was able to get his ethical project off the ground to begin with. And it's just to this historically extended elaboration that *Opus Dei* investigates. Specifically, Agamben traces the germinal seeds of ethical duty to the way in which the priesthood of Jesus in whom the work of salvation coincided with his deific person was slowly but surely transformed by the Church in order to define the function of the clergy whose priestly office, by contrast, remained utterly indifferent to his individual character or person. In this way, the priest becomes something like an instrument of God, in whom and through which God works. As a result, the office of the priest in turn becomes conceived of in terms of duty: the priest is the one who, occupying the office of the priest, carries out his duty as a priest (Christ, in comparison, was anything but duty-bound: as Word made flesh, his very being coincided without remainder to his salvific action - a coincidence of which the monastic orders attempted to emulate, as charted in meticulous detail by Agamben's previous offering, *The Highest Poverty*). Key for Agamben here is the circular structure that defines the function of the priest; obligated to carry out his office as a priest, he is nonetheless a priest only insofar as he carries out his office. This circularity - between 'being' (a priest) on the one hand, and 'acting' (as a priest) on the other - is paradigmatic of what Agamben understands to be the defining ontology of modernity, an ontology of 'effectivity'. Such an ontology - the introduction of which is tracked by Agamben (in a move very reminiscent of Heidegger) to the fickle translation of key Greek philosophical terms into the Latin vocabulary - is one in which being (ontology) and praxis (action) slowly resolve themselves into indistinguishability. Placed beside Agamben's analysis of power in *The Kingdom and the Glory* (in which power analogously shuttles endlessly and circuitously between the 'being' of the divine Kingdom and the praxis of the sublunary 'government'), *Opus Dei*'s full import can be seen to lie in its isolation of the sort of 'ethical fall out' that results from just such an articulation of power and being. If it isn't clear by now, there is simply a massive deal of philosophical work that *Opus Dei* juggles with in its slim 130 or so pages. And indeed, it's easily - in my opinion - one of the most challenging of Agamben's recent books. Not only because of its cross-fertilisation of ideas with Agamben's other works (anyone looking for clarification on his frequent but enigmatic use of the term 'operativity' absolutely needs to read this book), but also because of its rather strange structure, which shuffles between reflections on the Christian liturgy, scholastic interpretations of Aristotle's doctrines of potentiality and virtue, a genealogy of 'office', and a reading of Kant's ethics, in a way that can be frankly bewildering to anyone without a prior background into Agamben's general project. Still, insofar as it constitutes an extension and deepening of the *Homo Sacer* series, *Opus Dei* does its job admirably, and is a welcome addition to the Agambinian reserve. 1 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Carlaperfect

In this follow-up to *The Kingdom and the Glory* and *The Highest Poverty*, Agamben investigates the roots of our moral concept of duty in the theory and practice of Christian liturgy. Beginning with the New Testament and working through to late scholasticism and modern papal encyclicals, Agamben traces the Church's attempts to repeat Christ's unrepeatable sacrifice. Crucial here is the paradoxical figure of the priest, who becomes more and more a pure instrument of God's power, so that his own motives and character are entirely indifferent as long as he carries out his priestly duties. In modernity, Agamben argues, the Christian priest has become the model ethical subject. We see this above all in Kantian ethics. Contrasting the Christian and modern ontology of duty with the classical ontology of being, Agamben contends that Western philosophy has unfolded in the tension between the two. This latest installment in the study of Western political structures begun in *Homo Sacer* is a contribution to the study of liturgy, an extension of Nietzsche's genealogy of morals, and a reworking of Heidegger's history of Being.

"*Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty* is a bold and engaging book, opening up much fertile ground for future work. I find it to be both insightful and admirable, and a masterly success." (Analysis Metaphysics) About the Author Giorgio Agamben, an Italian philosopher and political theorist, teaches at the IUAV University in Venice and holds the Baruch Spinoza Chair at the European Graduate School. Stanford University Press has published a number of his books in English, most recently, *The Highest Poverty* (2013).