

Schade ist es, dass der reichhaltige Band nicht durch ein Sach- oder Stellenregister erschlossen wird. Das würde es dem Leser erleichtern, die sich ergänzenden, sich teilweise aber auch überschneidenden Deutungen in den verschiedenen Beiträgen zusammenzuführen. Auch die Autoren hätten am Ende zumindest ein paar Sätze zu ihrer Vorstellung verdient, und eine letzte Bitte richtet sich an den Verlag: Die Bindung sollte zumindest so fest sein, dass die Blätter zusammenhalten, bis das Buch zu Ende gelesen ist; immerhin stellt der Band eine Fundgrube für die weitere Cusanusforschung dar, die vielleicht nicht auf alle, aber doch auf die Mehrzahl der Aufsätze in Zukunft zurückgreifen wird.

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JOVINO DE GUZMAN MIROY, *Tracing Nicholas of Cusa's Early Development: The Relationship between De concordantia catholica and De docta ignorantia* (Philosophes Médiévaux 49), Louvain-la-Neuve: Éditions Peeters, 2009, X+314 S., ISBN 978-90-429-2039-2

When Nicholas of Cusa sailed from Constantinople in 1437, he crossed what appears to many as a "great gulf fixed." From a champion of the Council of Basel he became the "Hercules of the Eugenians." And as his shipboard experience with the Father of Lights might suggest, he turned his back on political theory in favor of metaphysics.

This welcome volume is important on several fronts, of which three stand out. First, Miroy fearlessly enters the gulf in an attempt to find a bridge between Constantinople and the opposite shore, between *De concordantia catholica* (DCC) and *De docta ignorantia* (DDI). Second, the author who teaches at Ateneo de Manila University represents another encouraging sign that Cusanus studies has found practitioners in a younger generation and in ever new parts of the world. Not least important, he takes seriously the growing body of Anglo-American studies of the young Cusanus as few have done before.

This attention may not be so surprising when one considers a sense of kinship with the constitutional ideals of the DCC and the conciliar movement. The growth of these studies was assisted by the pioneering work in canon law by Stephan Kuttner and Brian Tierney, both émigrés from Europe, and by the stimulation provided by the fledgling American Cusanus Society.

Yet, the idea of a gulf in Cusanus' career has often come from this very quarter with the unintentional result that we see two separate and distinct persons: one political, the other speculative. On the other hand, these same authors would agree that Church government in Cusanus is based not only on canon law but also on general principles. But few have ventured as far as Miroy into the largely uncharted waters between DCC and DDI to find answers, or at least clarify a question that has rarely been asked: "whether the DDI, as well as Cusanus' other religious and speculative writings, can be read politically" (p. 35).

To bridge the gap, the early chapters of the book show how a comparison of the two texts is possible. The first chapter reminds us that the conciliarists were

not only canonists but also theologians who used traditional material such as scriptures and the Fathers to ground their political theory. Similarly, Chapters II and III demonstrate that DCC is also political theory, but one based on a philosophy of religion centered on *concordantia*.

Chapter IV shows the political implications of this metaphysics and how it expresses not only a mature religious thought but also a moderate papalism. He questions Paul Sigmund's emphasis on equality as the basis for Cusanus' political philosophy since Cusanus had a high regard for hierarchy, although he subsumes hierarchy under the ideal of unity. This chapter also finds Cusanus deeply involved in the Council of Basel. In opposition to Antony Black, Miroy argues that, rather than standing at the margins of the council, DCC shared most of the council's assumptions, such as communal sovereignty and corporation theory, although Nicholas disagreed on two other points: conciliar infallibility and permanency.

The author astutely observes that, since DCC apparently wished to discern the divine presence, Cusanus perhaps left Basel when the Fathers, wrangling their way toward a new schism, made him think that God no longer dwelt among them. Nevertheless, because of the general affinity of DCC with the council's program, Miroy holds that Cusanus' shift in 1437 was "a mere transfer of allegiance rather (than) a change in political conviction" (p. 194).

In Chapters V and VI we finally arrive on the other shore. These chapters maintain that DDI is a metaphysical text with a religious basis and political implications. Echoing Thomas Izbicki's interpretation of the Letter to Rodrigo de Arévalo, Miroy's political reading of DDI suggests that although Cusanus wrote it to recast himself as a papalist, its principles shaped all of his later political philosophy.

If earlier he had emphasized community and consent, Nicholas now expounds a metaphysic of participation in which God, as Maximum, makes possible the existence of other beings that share in his infinity, and describes this with the couplet *complicatio—explicatio*. Still, this transitional work is a response to a religious experience on board a tossing ship in a vast ocean, so Cusanus does more than search for unity. He combines this search with the desire for union with the divine.

The book's Epilogue describes the later use of *concordantia* especially in *De pace fidei* and argues that while the older Cusanus remained silent about DCC, he never abandoned the metaphysics of concordance. Now, however, he couples it with *differentias*, which means that unity is not uniformity, but a coming together of differences that one discovers primarily in the Maximum rather than the universe.

Thanks to Miroy, one begins to get a better glimpse of how DCC and DDI are related, and how our perception of a gulf, decisive as it was, can be clarified, if not overcome. If two searches mark Cusanus' career—a search for unity in the universe and a search for union with God—at the heart of both was an expansive mind that cannot be contained in simple dichotomies between philosopher-theologian and political theorist.

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