

The author says at the outset that he has tried to give the whole debate a 'fresh perspective' by locating humanism and scholasticism 'within a new frame of reference suggested by' Umberto Eco's *The Search for the perfect language*. The introduction then goes on to consider the *status quaestionis* mainly in terms of the debates of a number of other modern writers.

The first chapter sets out a (but as it emerges not the only) central question. Was there once, before the Fall and before the fragmentation of human language in the episode of the Tower of Babel, an original 'perfect' language? If so, can it be recovered? Dante in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Raymond Lull and Leibnitz are considered. The chapter ends by proposing to take Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae linguae latinae* as representing the late medieval 'humanist' approach to this question and Paul of Venice's *Logica Parva* to speak for the scholastics, though other protagonists enter the fray as the book progresses. Much of what follows is concerned not only with Valla (*Dialectical Disputations*) but also with Vives (*Adversus Pseudodialecticos*), and rather less with Paul of Venice, whose views on truth get a final chapter.

In the body of the book the author engages with a complex of emerging questions, a number of which he might seem to a medieval author to beg. This tendency is perhaps encouraged by his continuing reliance on the views of key figures in the modern scholarly debate rather than the original texts in identifying the points and concepts to be discussed. A sentence may give the flavour: 'Although linguistic determinism is a modern hypothesis about language, several scholars have adopted it for study of the Renaissance'.

This approach seems to presume that there were two profoundly distinct approaches, the scholastic and the humanist. There were certainly 'camps' and active hostilities between them. Yet is not always obvious where the reader is being led in relation to the assumption that two ways of thinking and schools of thought were at war and humanism and scholasticism fought it out at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance.

It is hard to be sure that if this book had been put into the hands of any of these medieval and early Renaissance authors he would have found his place in it with ease or recognised himself. This reader longed for more Latin, closer engagement with the problems as the late medieval world put them, and wanted to spend more time with the views of the medieval thinkers themselves. It was startling to find neither 'nominalism' nor 'realism' in the index.

This is an ambitious book, but perhaps too much so, and too loath to leave the meta-level of modern scholarship for the solid ground of the sources in their original language.

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VATICAN II: CATHOLIC DOCTRINES ON JEWS AND MUSLIMS by Gavin D'Costa, *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp. xii + 252, £55.00, hbk*

The fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council has highlighted the contested nature of accounts of the Council's teaching and there is perhaps no more contentious area than that of the Church's relations with other religions. Did the Council intend a radical break with the doctrines and attitudes of the past, as many have claimed either in praise or dismay? In his address to the Roman Curia in 2005 Pope Benedict XVI brought clarity and focus to such debates by identifying two competing and conflicting approaches at work: a hermeneutic of 'discontinuity and rupture' and a hermeneutic of 'reform and renewal.' The Pope

pointed to the latter as the authentic interpretation of the Council's texts. But can the documents dealing with other religions really be understood within this second hermeneutic?

Over the course of decades Professor Gavin D'Costa has articulated a Catholic theology of religions that is firmly anchored in fidelity to magisterial teaching. His welcome and timely study of the teaching of the Vatican Council about other religions, especially about Judaism and Islam, must become standard reading for anyone who wants to consider what the texts of the Council say and how this relates to the debate over discontinuity and continuity. With a wealth of background information and with great clarity and rigour, he enables us to get a close reading of the texts themselves and to move beyond the confusion and rhetoric that have so often surrounded them.

The first chapter focuses on the general types of modern interpreters and shows that an adequate hermeneutic of the texts has to combine both historical and theological readings. D'Costa argues that any reading has to recognize that there are different 'theological notes' or authoritative grades of doctrinal teaching, which affect both the status of the teaching and the scope for legitimate development or discontinuity. These levels are often confused in the debates over the Council. Those modern interpreters of Vatican II who have taken only a historical approach have tended to emphasise and praise radical discontinuity, seeing doctrines as historically contingent and hence subject to revision. Yet this ignores the fact that it is fundamental to the Church's theological self-understanding that there is doctrinal continuity, which is rooted in God's self-revelation of Himself to human beings. On the other hand, those modern interpreters who appraise the documents according to a view of theological continuity in which any form of change is excluded have lamented what they also see as discontinuity, with the result that they either label the Council as non-doctrinal and purely pastoral in character, or deem the Council heretical. D'Costa argues that instead we should recognise the necessity of the theological without neglecting the historical. Looking back to Newman and Congar, he identifies a legitimate place for development within continuity, as deeper understandings, as well as changed expressions, of doctrine are sought to meet the needs of new questions that arise over time. There can, of course, also be non-doctrinal discontinuity even of a radical kind.

Chapter two moves on to consider conciliar teaching about other religions in general. Contrary to the views of many, the Council does not give up on the doctrine of the necessity of the Church as the means of salvation, which is *de fide*, the highest level of teaching, while also affirming the longstanding concept of invincible ignorance as open to all. Likewise, the Church continues to teach universal mission and the reality of sin and Satan in other religions. The Council is not teaching that other religions are *per se* ways of salvation apart from the Church. Where newness is present is rather insofar as the Council picks up on suggestions already made in earlier Catholic tradition, though now for the first time locating them within magisterial teaching. Thus, it takes up Aquinas's distinction between those who are actually members of the Church and those who are potentially members, who are 'ordered' (*ordinantur*) to the Church, as applicable to non-Christians, while the idea of *praeparatio evangelica*, applied by Eusebius to Israel, is extended to whatever might be deemed good, true and holy in other religions.

Chapter three deals with Judaism. A number of interpreters have claimed that the Council does mark a radical discontinuity, a 'dramatic change,' in doctrine (O'Collins). Here we come to what will be the most controversial part of the book, especially for those who argue that the Council teaches that the Judaism constitutes a separate way of salvation for the Jews and that mission to the Jews is now deemed illegitimate. Again what is new is somewhat less dramatic. The Council does reject the charge that the Jews are guilty of deicide, but the

magisterium previously never taught that the gospels should be read as affirming otherwise. The Council also affirms *Romans* as teaching that God remains faithful to the covenants and promises made to the ancestors of Israel and hence that God has not rejected the Jewish people who are their descendants, while also affirming that the members of the Church, having received the New Covenant, are likewise their descendants. Yet, the Council remains silent about whether the Jews are themselves faithful to the covenant and about whether the covenant is abrogated, superseded or fulfilled, though the *relatio* on this passage suggests that fulfillment is meant to be the way the text is read. It cannot be argued that the Council itself teaches Judaism is *per se* a way of salvation. Moreover, the documents implicitly teach that mission to the Jews is still legitimate, since it explicitly teaches mission to all non-Christians. Thus, there is a continuity of the deposit of faith, but what is new is that a certain interpretation of the gospels and a new emphasis on *Romans* is raised to level of doctrinal teaching in magisterial teaching.

Chapter four then deals with Islam. Again, some labelled the teaching as revolutionary, as a 'radical change in the Copernican sense' (Caspar). D'Costa focuses on two important aspects: the affirmation that Muslims worship with Catholics the one God and the linking of Islam to Abraham. Looking back to earlier Catholic teaching, D'Costa points out that, though Islam was severely criticised and deemed a heretical form of Christianity, it was never denied that Muslims were monotheists or said that they worshipped a false god. D'Costa argues that it would also be reasonable as a probable theological opinion (the fifth and lowest level of doctrinal teaching) to infer from the link with Abraham that Islam has an 'in-between' status between having access to general revelation and the particular supernatural revelation of the religion of Israel and the Church, since Islam does have access and does affirm in its own way elements of the supernatural religion found in the latter. Again, there is a history going back to the sixteenth century of identifying a link between the religion of Islam and the faith of Abraham. However, Islam is not said to be a supernatural religion in its own right on a level with that of Israel. There is no basis within these documents for asserting that Islam is *per se* an Abrahamic faith like the religion of Israel. No radical break in doctrine is present in the documents, only the novelty of including the mention of worshipping the same God and the link with Abraham in an official document.

D'Costa's account is measured and convincing. He does recognise the immensely important changes that were brought about by the Council. It is just that this is not the manifestation of radical discontinuity with earlier doctrinal teaching, but rather of legitimate development and newness within continuity, along with a genuine break with earlier non-magisterial theological traditions and attitudes, where change was necessary and legitimate. He concludes with these pertinent words: 'from these building blocks and others at the Council, Catholic theology of religion must advance, both cautiously with an eye to scripture, tradition, and the magisterium; and adventurously and imaginatively, with an eye to God's actions in the world' (p.217).

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BALTHASAR ON THE SPIRITUAL SENSES. PERCEIVING SPLENDOUR by Mark McInroy, (*Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology*), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp. xii + 217, £ 50,00, hbk

If one were looking for a clear and rigorous book dealing with the topic of the 'spiritual senses', this accurate volume by Mark McInroy is the appropriate