

# IV

## INTERNATIONAL CUSANUS CONGRESS OF LATIN AMERICA

### *Nicholas of Cusa: Unity in Plurality*

BUENOS AIRES, JULY 24<sup>TH</sup> - 27<sup>TH</sup> 2018



### Symposia

#### I. METAPHYSICS, THEOLOGY AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP IN CUSANUS THOUGHT

**Coordinator: Jorge Mario Machetta – jorgemachetta@yahoo.com.ar**

The relationship between Metaphysics and Theology may appear as a commonplace problem already solved by the late 13th century Scholasticism. However, Cusanus's proposal, clearly synthesized by R. Haubst "*Denkender Glaube und gläubiges Denken*" (*Streifzüge in die cusanische Theologie*, S. 1), introduces a novelty: in the formula "a faith that thinks and a thought that believes", faith and thought not only maintain their peculiar identity but also constitute a philosophical unity.

Still, Cusanus proposal is susceptible of being questioned. Both the philosophical and theological basis of the afore quoted formula can be examined. At this point, the following list of topics are submitted as a suggestion to the scholars interested in participating of this Symposium:

- The metaphysical and theological premises on which Cusanus bases the afore quoted union.
- Scope and meaning of these Cusanus' formulas: "Intellect is the unfolding of faith" and "Faith is the beginning of intellect" (D.I. III, chapter 11).
- The possibility of metaphysics and the primacy of negative over affirmative discourse (*De principio*, *De aequalitate*); Cusanus' surpassing of the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction (*De beryllo*).
- Different interpretations of the metaphysical question: Metaphysics of the Spirit; Metaphysics of Unity; Metaphysics of Being; Sliding from Theology to Philosophy.



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## II. EPISTEMOLOGY AND THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE IN NICHOLAS OF CUSA

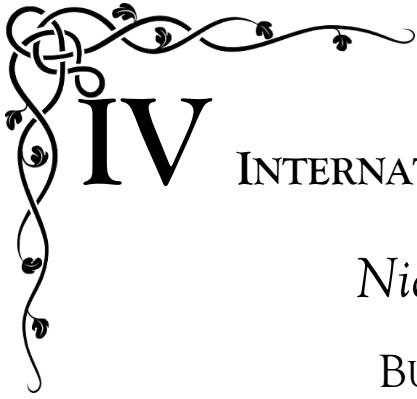
**Coordinator: Cecilia Rusconi – [ceciliarusconi@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:ceciliarusconi@yahoo.com.ar)**

Cusanus' theory of knowledge is based on a fundamental premise: the emanation of reality from a single principle that is both the principle of being and of knowing. While the metaphysical plurality of what is knowable unfolds from a single metaphysical principle, the conjectural plurality that forms the body of all science unfolds from the single principle of the human mind, which is the image of that metaphysical principle.

The unity-plurality binomial also applies to the hermeneutics of Cusanus work. In fact, the idea of knowledge as an unfolding from a single principle is found in different works in a variety of versions. This can be read either as an evolution throughout his work, or as an approach to the same problem from different perspectives. Although his objective is always the methodology and scope of theological knowledge, his approach sometimes appears to veer towards the senses and empirical knowledge, to reason and knowledge linked to mathematics or to intellect and properly theological knowledge.

We therefore suggest the following approaches to the problem of Cusan knowledge and epistemology:

- Empirical knowledge: The conjectures of the senses and the imagination.
- Rational knowledge: Cusan mathematical conjectures.
- Intellectual knowledge: The conjectures of theological knowledge and enigmatic science.



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#### III. CUSANUS IN THE HORIZON OF CONCILIARISM

**Coordinator: Martín D'Ascenzo - [martindascenzo@gmail.com](mailto:martindascenzo@gmail.com)**

Conciliarism was a unique historical experience regarding the development of European political and religious institutions in the 15th century. The deep crisis in the Catholic Church, the Empire and various Western kingdoms provided the opportunity for the development of original responses that helped to forge the modern world. In this context, Cusanus appears as an outstanding protagonist. In his ecclesiological and political speculations he integrates the conciliar practices of Christianity's first centuries together with the developments characteristic of the 15th century.

The followings are some of the suggested topics for this Symposium:

- The role of consensus and representation in the legitimacy of human authority and law.
- The reception of both ancient and medieval conciliarism.
- The projection of Cusanus' proposals in the conciliar discussion of the 15th and 16th centuries.
- The *potestas* of the Council and its problems.



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### IV. ETHICS AND AESTHETICS IN CUSANUS' PHILOSOPHY

**Coordinator: Paula Pico Estrada – paulapicoestrada@gmail.com**

Cusanus builds his idea of the human mind as an image of God through comparisons between the divine creative force, which produces being, and human creative force, which produces notions. The creation of notions, which is called by Nicholas of Cusa *ars*, is not limited to the field of knowledge. Since Cusanus identifies truth with God, the path of the human mind towards its final goal engages all of its dimensions, including the ethical and aesthetic ones.

Some of the topics suggested for this Symposium are:

- The human mind and its ultimate goal in Cusanus' philosophy: desire of truth, *praegustatio*, features of the journey towards the Good, theory of virtues.
- The human community in Cusanus' philosophy: unity in plurality, one faith and multiple rites, dialogue and truth, *dilectio proximi* and *caritas Dei*.
- Human production in Cusanus' philosophy: divine art and human art, art and nature, art and *aenigma*: pictorial, architectural, literary and linguistic production.



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#### V. MYSTICISM AND INTERIORITY IN CUSANUS

Coordinator: Alexia Schmitt – [alexiaschmitt80@hotmail.com](mailto:alexiaschmitt80@hotmail.com)

Learned ignorance can be considered one of the main threads in Cusanus' work. This "peculiar way of reasoning about divine things" is related to Neoplatonic mysticism, following its way of negative theology, and also to the Augustinian tradition. Human mind can only get nearer to the unity of truth through a gradual ascent from and through the diversity of otherness. Such an ascent presupposes the mind's return to itself, because the living *imago Dei* can only be found there, in its interiority. Therefore, the human mind's path towards truth implies its assimilation to truth, by which it realizes its true identity.

We invite both Cusanus' scholars and researchers of the Augustinian tradition to participate in this Symposium, suggesting the following topics:

- Sources and originality of Cusanus' interiority.
- Unity and otherness in Cusanus' negative theology.
- Cusanus' interiority in relation to the metaphysical and gnoseological question of unity and otherness.
- *Sis tu tuus, et Ego ero tuus*: identity and difference of Cusanus' interiority when reaching its final goal.



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#### VI. THE SOURCES OF CUSANUS' PHILOSOPHY

**Coordinator: Claudia D'Amico – [claudiadamico@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:claudiadamico@yahoo.com.ar)**

If no philosophic conception is completely independent of others, this is specially shown in Cusanus' philosophy. Cusanus' thought is in a dialogue not only with his contemporaries but also with tradition. In order for this dialogue to be reestablished, the various stages of his academic studies, his traveling – which reveals his passion for manuscripts–, his large personal library and the implicit or explicit presence of ancient and medieval authors in his work should be examined.

In each case, it is possible to inquiry what his intention was when approaching a text, which question guided his search and whether a key that would allow us to discover Cusanus as a reader might be found. If – as H.G. Gadamer, who was himself a reader of Nicholas of Cusa, says – “understanding and interpreting texts belongs (...) to the human experience of the world” (*W. und M.*, Tübingen, 1975: Einleitung), then the study of sources should give us more than a sheer reconstruction of arguments or terminology in the search of similarities or divergences.

This Symposium invites Cusanus' scholars to approach this question taking into account some of these axes:

- Cusanus and his contact with sources during his formation.
- Cusanus and texts. The manuscripts to which he had access, his marginal notes, his library, the new translations that were available in his time.
- Cusanus and philosophical traditions. Reception, evaluation and reappropriation. Controversies of his time.
- Possibility of a methodological reflection on Cusanus as a reader.



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#### VII. PROJECTION OF CUSANUS' THOUGHT IN THE RENAISSANCE AND IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

**Coordinator: José González Ríos – [josegonzalezrios@gmail.com](mailto:josegonzalezrios@gmail.com)**

Nicholas of Cusa founded neither an Academy nor a School. Nor did he inaugurate a tradition, such as Augustinianism, Thomism, Cartesianism or Hegelianism. This allowed his work to be freely assimilated in very diverse and productive ways by thinkers who found in it a valuable source for the development of their own thinking. In the Renaissance, his work was explicitly recovered by Leonardo da Vinci, Flemish painters, Pico della Mirandola, Erasmo de Rotterdam and Giordano Bruno, among others. His influence not only reached modern times, but continues to show itself in contemporary philosophy. We therefore invite colleagues to present their work on the effects that Cusanus' work had on posterity.

Among the possible topics of communications and panels for this Symposium we suggest:

- The presence of Cusanus' work in Renaissance culture.
- Cusanus in the history of pre-critical philosophy.
- The recovery of Nicholas of Cusa in Romanticism and German Idealism.
- The modernities of Cusano. From the Marburg School to the debate on the legitimacy of Modernity by Hans Blumemberg.
- Cusanic writing in hermeneutics, deconstruction and the phenomenology of donation.