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Estudio sobre teología y filosofía en la obra de Miguel Servet**

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**Bermudo del Pino, Rafael.*****Un Dios presente en la naturaleza. Estudio sobre teología y filosofía en la obra de Miguel Servet.***

Zaragoza: Institución “Fernando el Católico,” 2011. Pp. 228. ISBN 978-84-9911-142-1 (paperback) n.p.

The improbable life of the scholar, physician, and humanist gadfly named Miguel Servet (1511–1553) is surely one of the most exciting chapters in the history of the early Reformation. Servet was in Bologna for the imperial coronation of Charles V in 1530, studied medicine in Paris with Vesalius, discussed theology in Basil with Oecolampadius and in Strasbourg with Martin Bucer, corresponded with Melanchthon, and was executed in Geneva after a bizarre epistolary duel with Calvin that lasted three days. Servet was in so many places at precisely the right time, enjoying the conversation of such famous interlocutors, that his life can almost seem a Renaissance pastiche, more legend than fact. While Servet may be familiar to some readers today for his ideas concerning pulmonary circulation, his theological ideas have generally escaped wider notice. Bermudo del Pino’s systematic and comprehensible study of Servet’s major theological writings is a welcome addition to the efforts to correct this oversight recently taken up by scholars such as Ángel Alcalá, José Luis Nieto Amada, Jaume de Marcos Andreu, Daniel Moreno Moreno, and others. Bermudo del Pino’s project is deceptively simple: to explain Servet’s theology and trace its antecedents. Few of Servet’s ideas are entirely new; his theology cobbles together ideas that are central to such disparate writers as Irenaeus, Maimonides, and Ficino. But, as this book demonstrates, Servet presents his frequently startling syntheses in a particularly pugnacious and engaging manner. Bermudo del Pino carefully sidesteps Servet’s possible contributions to the history of science to focus primarily on his decidedly heterodox Trinitarianism, a peculiar alloy of ante-Nicene, Hermetic, and Neo-Platonic ideas.

Servet begins with the notion that Christ’s incarnation as Word made flesh is representative of the divine presence in every aspect of the universe. For Servet, it is not at all the case that Word is added to flesh as form is given to matter nor is it true that Christ is uniquely Word made flesh; instead, the universe itself and everything in it is a mode of divine substance. That is, God’s creation is a dispensation of divine nature and the Word inheres materially in all things. As it was for Christ, so too is it for all creation.

In one sense, Servet simply defends Patristic theology from subsequent Church teachings, rendering Tertullian in the language of Hermes Trismegistus: because God is all, visible and invisible, there is nothing which is not God. In this way, all things—corruptible or not—are composed of and animated by divinity. It was this notion in particular that would lead to vehement disagreement with Calvin (113).

The book is divided into three sections that consider Servet's Trinitarian theology; the nature and essence of creation; and the nature and composition of the soul. Bermudo del Pino begins with Servet's polemical ideas about the Trinity and the Incarnation. According to Servet, the Trinity is neither composed of three persons nor three entities, but three modes of a single divinity. Christ is the "person"—etymologically the perceptible manifestation or face—of an invisible God. By this logic, all visible manifestations of God in the Old Testament were Christ (24). Christ was not the "son" of God, but a substantial mode of his being; in fact, Servet's most polemical claim was that Christ, when narrowly understood as the son of God and as an entity distinct from God, never existed.

The second section considers Servet's cosmogony. Light gives being and form to all things, and Christ, as light of the world, is the cause of creation. Servet divides light into three sometimes messy levels; uncreated light is the nature of the divine Word; created light is the archetypal element; and the light of the sun sustains all life (121). Even in the creation of rocks and minerals there is an imitation of Christ and all things are, therefore, a mode of divine being (139). Servet's elemental philosophy in which the four Aristotelian elements are distinguished by their luminousness and animating qualities is particularly original (122–27).

If God constitutes and animates all things—if God is the "rock in the rock," the "gold in the gold" (141)—what, then, is the soul? Servet's answer is as much medical and philosophical as theological, following his teacher Jean Fernel in a number of instances and striking a middle path between Aristotle and Galen. His emphasis on the Word and on the literal meaning of the words of the Bible leads him to consider the relationship between spirit and respiration particularly significant. This gives way to a number of physiological speculations about the nature of breathing, tinged with Galenism but often highly original. Blood, according to Servet, is produced in the liver and unperfected blood is the raw material of the soul. This blood is converted into vital spirit in the heart when mixed with air from the lungs. Pulmonary circulation is central

to Servet's theory of a soul that is constituted by sanguineous spirit. The soul itself resides neither in the head nor in the heart, but in the movement of blood throughout the body.

Especially valuable to early modern scholars is Bermudo del Pino's study of Servet's reliance on the *Corpus Hermeticum*; he shows that Servet explains the indwelling of divine essence in all things in terms borrowed nearly verbatim from Trismegistus. In general, the analysis of Servet's sources is satisfying and illuminating. But despite Bermudo del Pino's occasional attempts to draw parallels between the thinking of Servet and that of Spinoza, it is still difficult to know exactly what Servet's importance or influence might have been. This book is characterized by lucid explanations of difficult theological concepts, but Bermudo del Pino is sometimes unwilling to go beyond a close reading of Servet's texts. The bibliography is scant and there is, unfortunately, no index. Despite these limitations, Bermudo del Pino has made a helpful contribution to our understanding of a fascinating figure and his thought.

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**Biet, Christian et Marie-Madeleine Fragonard (éds.).**

*Tragédies et récits de martyres en France (fin XVI<sup>e</sup>–début XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle).*

Bibliothèque du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle 1. Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2009. 1404 p. ISBN 978-2-8124-0051-3 (broché) 98 €

**Bouteille-Meister, Charlotte et Kjerstin Aukrust (éds.).**

*Corps sanglants, souffrants et macabres (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle).*

Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2010. 380 p. ISBN 978-2-8785-4489-3 (broché) 29 €

Les *Tragédies et récits de martyres* offerts aux lecteurs constituent l'illustration de la riche introduction rédigée par les coordinateurs du volume avec la collaboration de Pierre Pasquier. Ce projet éditorial entend s'inscrire dans une optique large qui, si elle s'attache avant tout à la fin de la Renaissance française, est aussi une sorte d'histoire de la notion de martyr et des formes de sa représentation.