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Nicholas of Cusa in Italy

The purpose of my Essay is to briefly reconstruct the history of Cusanus' presence in Italy, or, more precisely, the history of how his ideas were perceived in Italian culture of the 20th Century. My reconstruction is divided into two parts: the first part («Germanus») is dedicated to examining the image of Cusanus as it has been repeatedly supported and authoritatively spread by the Italian philosophical historiography of the Renaissance from the early decades of the twentieth century. In the second part («Philosophus antinomiarum») I will deal with the complex and difficult relationship that Italian Catholic culture has had with Cusanus; in this context, I will examine, in particular, the different interpretations of Cusanus' philosophical and theological thought as proposed by Italian Neoscholasticism. These two «steps» of my short «iter italicum» are preceded by a first analysis, entitled, for the reasons I shall indicate, «labor maximum». In this section I will propose a brief interpretation of Cusanus' thought which, from my point of view, can offer a key to interpret the historiographical account I will try to give in the second part of my Essay.

I. Labor maximum

1. Homo viator

With the expression «homo viator» I refer to a simple biographical fact: Cusanus spent a considerable part of his life travelling. This aspect of Cusanus' biography has often been investigated: We know the itineraries followed by Cusanus during his travels as a papal legate, the distance he covered on horseback; Honecker has also calculated the rest periods between the different journeys that could have allowed Cusanus to write his first philosophical works¹. The question I would like to ask is, however, a different one: I wonder whether there is a relationship between Cusanus' philosophy, his peculiar way of thinking, and the extent of his travels. This question arises from a first consideration: it is Cusanus himself who, at the conclusion of *De docta ignorantia*, explains the genesis of his first great

¹ Cf. Meuthen: *Das Itinerar*, 473-502; Watanabe: *Nicholas of Cusa*, 29-34; Honecker: *Die Entstehungszeit*, 138.

philosophical work attributing it to a journey². Of course, as the story of the sudden «enlightenment» he received during his return from Constantinople³, the image of «journey» is also a literary «topos» frequently recurring in the philosophical tradition. Starting from Plotinus, for example, Neoplatonism had repeatedly compared the philosophical road to the One in the journey of Ulysses who returns to his «homeland»⁴. The Patristic tradition had adopted this image and transformed it into that of a «Christian Ulysses», according to Jean Pépin's expression⁵.

The metaphor of journey introduced by Cusanus at the end of *De docta ignorantia* differs, however, from this long tradition in two respects. First, Cusanus uses the image of journey to describe the discovery of a new «pathway» that had not been explored until then⁶. From this point of view, the journey of which Cusanus speaks is more similar to that of Virgil's Aeneas, who founds a new city, than to that of Homer's Ulysses, who returns home. Secondly, this journey of discovery of a new «route» of thought is not only an inner journey, a journey of the soul within itself. The journey Cusanus refers to in order to describe the birth of his philosophy is also a journey to foreign lands and countries, like his journey to Constantinople: it is a journey through the world, with all its geographical and, therefore, also ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences. In this sense, we could perhaps also speak of a Cusanian «geo-philosophy», of a philosophy of «space» (and not only of «time», situated between the Medieval and the Modern Age). Cusanus, in fact, often speaks of the «varietas» of «places» and «regions», which «impose their character upon them who live there *in moribus atque consuetudinibus rationabilibusque doctrinis*»⁷. At the beginning of the third book of *De docta ignorantia* (III 1, 189) Cusanus refers to this «varietas locorum et regionum» to explain the multiplicity of individual differences, which cannot be classified within a logical scheme of genera and species. In *De coniecturis*, as later in *De staticis*, Cusanus takes up this theme and develops a series of comments on human geography and ethnology, without which, in his opinion, we cannot reach a proper understanding of the «conditio humana»⁸. For, there is no «met-

² Cf. *De docta ign.*, Epistula auct., 263-2-9.

³ Cf. O'Rourke Boyle: Cusanus at Sea, 180-201.

⁴ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.*: I 6, 8, 16 ff.; V 9, 1, 20-22.

⁵ Pépin: The Platonic and Christian Ulysses, 5 ff.; see also O'Connel: Soundings, 174-179.

⁶ Cf. *De docta ign.*, Epistula auct., 263, 3; 264, 4-5.

⁷ Cf. *De con.*, II 116, 12-16.

⁸ Cf. *De con.*, II 15, 146-154; *De stat.*, 167, 1 ff. See Bormann, Übereinstimmung, 88-104, and our Commentary on *De coniecturis*, in: Niccolò Cusano, Opere filosofiche, teologiche e matematiche, 2444-2445.

aphysica generalis» of the essence of man by itself; rather, we must take into account the «positive» differences, thanks to which men realize their common human nature in correlation also with the geographical and environmental conditions in which they live. For this reason, at the beginning of *De mente*, Cusanus allows the «Philosopher» to say: to try to know the «mens humana», «I continually travel throughout the world»; and it is precisely in this way, explains the «Peripatetic» Philosopher, that I try to fulfill the «call» of God, who in Delphi ordered man to know himself⁹. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that Cusanus' philosophical and theological work, which opened with the metaphor of a journey, ends with the image of «homo cosmographus»¹⁰. Unlike any «itinerarium mentis in deum» undertaken «in interiore homine», unlike any reflexive relationship of the subject with himself, the «travelling», in fact, requires a form of thought that, as in a map, is able to discover avenues of communication between different places; a form of thought that, both in speculative and in political philosophy, is able to articulate the world of differences — geographical, ethnic, cultural, linguistic — without claiming to reduce them to uniformity: «omnis autem concordantia differentiarum est» (*De conc. cath.*, I 1, 6).

2. *Homo duplex*

This is the «labor maximum» which, throughout the turbulent existence of Cusanus, has never stopped «doing violence to the resistance of nature». This is how, in the Preface to *De concordantia catholica*, Cusanus speaks of himself, or rather of his relationship with Italy as a German¹¹. If the metaphor of «journey» points out how Cusanus' thought can also be regarded as a philosophy of space, then the «North» and the «South» — the «semi-darkness» of northern Germany and the «southern light» of Italian humanism, according to Flasch's words¹² — were the main geographical coordinates of his life: the coordinates where his intellectual education developed, with the variety of interests (philosophical, scientific, literary) connected to the different academic geography (Heidelberg, Padua, Co-

⁹ *De mente*, I 52, 8-10: «Ego enim omni tempore mundum peragrando sapientes adii, ut de mentis immortalitate certior fierem, cum apud Delphos praecepta sit cognitio, ut ipsa se mens cognoscat coniunctamque cum divina mente se sentiat».

¹⁰ Cf. *Comp.*, VIII 22, 2 ff.

¹¹ *De conc. cath.*, Praef., 2, 13-17.

¹² Cf. Flasch: Nikolaus von Kues, 19 ff. («Erste Einsichten – “Eher im Dunklen” 1430 bis 1449»); 249 ff. («Südliches Licht – “Die Wahrheit schreit auf den Straßen”»).

logne), his thought developed and his writings were born. From this point of view, Bressanone can be regarded as the symbol of this intellectual geography: Bressanone or Brixen, half German, half Italian, on the border between two worlds, and thus theatre, even in recent Italian history, of repeated conflicts but also of farsighted policies of reconciliation, and now a province «with special status».

We have many examples of this «intellectual geography» of Cusanus in his writings and in the testimonies of his contemporaries (such as that of Vespasiano da Bisticci, for example, or Andrea Bussi)¹³. The most significant testimony, however, comes from Cusanus himself, and it is contained in the Preface to *De concordantia catholica*, which I referred to above. Cusanus begins here by highlighting the «new cultural atmosphere» of nascent Italian humanism that he had been able to experience during his years in Padua: «Now, the atmosphere has changed. Now all the most learned minds are searching for ancient works concerning all the liberal and mechanical arts [...]. This is especially true of Italians, who, not satisfied with the literary excellence that is appropriate to their nature as Latins, devote a great effort, following in the footsteps of their ancestors, to the writings of Greek»¹⁴. In this Preface to a book devoted to the political conditions of a Catholic concord, and thus to the institutions that would permit a universal «populus», Cusanus, however, speaks of himself as a German: in fact, he explains that he wanted to contribute as a German to the Italian rediscovery of ancient culture in the liberal and mechanical arts through the rediscovery and critical study of ancient legal sources. For this reason, he says that, to write his work, he did not rely on some traditional compendium of canon law, but he travelled around Europe «to collect many original sources that have long been lost in the amatories of ancient closters»¹⁵.

Cusanus, who in the *De concordantia catholica* referred to Hugo of Saint Victor as «our eminent Saxon», (III 39; cf. II 29), again refers to his German origins both in *De docta ignorantia* and in *De coniecturis*. In the *Prologus* of *De docta ignorantia*, he apologizes to Cesarini for his «style» quite distant from the elegance of the Latin of the Italian humanist and he presents his book to him as a text written by a «foreigner» («barbaras ineptias»)¹⁶. Ever since his years in Padua, Cusanus realized that this was how Italian Humanists used to define Germans: «barbari enim sunt et suspiciosi», as Poggio Bracciolini wrote, with whom Cusanus had long

¹³ Cf. Vespasiano da Bisticci: *Vite*, I 185; Miglio (ed.), Giovanni Andrea Bussi: *Prefazioni*, 4; 17-18.

¹⁴ *De conc. cath.*, Praef., 2, 5-13.

¹⁵ *De conc. cath.*, Praef., 2, 17-22.

¹⁶ *De docta ign.*, I Prol., 1, 6-15.

corresponded¹⁷. Despite this, in the final lines of the Prologus Cusanus invites the humanist Cesarini to accept his work as a new way of proposing theology by a German («ex Germano»)¹⁸. The meaning of these remarks becomes evident in *De coniecturis*: addressing again Cesarini, here Cusanus speaks of German immigrants who arrive in Italy and have to use a foreign language: they «germanize», says Cusanus («Almannus in Italia almanizzat»: II 8, 116, 11-12). And indeed, Cusanus' Latin is full of «Germanisms». Such a remark is introduced by Cusanus in the second part of the book, in which he wants to explain the «practical applications» of his new «ars coniecturalis». The main principle underlying this «new method of research» consists in understanding that the relationship we can have with the truth is always characterized by a dynamic «nexus» of «unitas» and «alteritas», whose difference can be completely overcome only in the ultimate horizon of the absolute truth or the divine unity, which, however, remains for us an unattainable ideal¹⁹. In this sense, behind the irony of the emigrant who has to use a foreign language, lies the idea that we are all emigrants in our relationship with the truth. Italian Humanists wanted to make Latin – the medieval language of the Church and Universities – conform to the ancient «eloquium» and so they wanted to make it a «universal» language. But actually, even Latin, which the Humanists referred to, was a particular, historical and cultural model inherited from the past. A «universal» language, which can displace the geographical diversity of languages, does not exist. In fact, we can only try to approach the «universal» through the different languages of our own traditions. For this reason, Cusanus' Latin, so full of «Germanisms», should not only be regarded as an «incultus stilus»²⁰ far removed from the elegance of the Italian Humanists; as Michel de Certeau pointed out, Cusanus' Latin also contains a philosophical project: to put together what allows intellectual communication (Latin) with what specifies geographical diversity²¹. In this sense, Cusanus' Latin words – which are frequently used in accordance with German grammar rules, or constructed in accordance with German lexical models or conceived in terms of analogous German words – are «exercises» of coexistence between different entities, but exercises that do not obliterate the terms of this difference. For this reason, Cusanus' emigrant language means what it does: it expresses a form of thought that, as I pointed out,

¹⁷ Cf. Poggio Bracciolini: *Epistulae*, III, ep. 12, 208.

¹⁸ *De docta ign.* I Prol., 1, 25-29.

¹⁹ Cf. Bocken: *L'art de la collection*, 113 ff.

²⁰ Cf. *De conc. cath.*, Praef., 2, 23.

²¹ De Certeau: *The Gaze*, 5 ff.

tries to establish dialogic relationships within the world of differences, without reducing them to uniformity.

Compared to such a form of language, the claimed universality of Latin, which Italian Humanists referred to, and its supposed superiority over any barbarian «jargon» (like that of the Germans) was actually only the hierarchical privilege of a language of the elite. According to Cusanus, on the contrary, if there is a universal language, this is the language of «Adam», that is, of «man», from which «all human languages are derived»²². This «first» language, this original anti-Babelian «Logos» is what makes the multiplicity of languages and their mutual understanding and communication possible²³; all languages take part in this «Logos», each one in a different way, but none of them possesses it in a private and exclusive way. For this reason, every linguistic and cultural world remains faithful to its origins, and, therefore, to its «identity», precisely through the «praxis» of dialogue that it tries to establish with the other «worlds»; this is how it bears witness (*meliori modo*) to its bond with the only «Logos» from which it derives, and, therefore, preserves within the language of its own tradition – historically limited or «contracted» – what transcends any language.

II. *Iter Italicum*

1. *Germanus*

If what I have said has any plausibility, it is not then surprising that, in the culture of the first half of the 20th century, in the Europe of hostile nationalisms, this dimension of Cusanus' thought has not been recognized. The «rediscovery» of Cusanus, in fact, was soon characterized by a nationalistic or ethnic «appropriation» of his thought. In this sense, Cusanus was used to celebrate the superiority of the German spirit and to argue in this way that, with Cusanus, modern philosophy would have had its «origin

²² De Gen. II 159, 14-17; IV 172, 6-10; De ven. sap. XXIII 98, 6 ff.; Comp. III 6, 11-16.

²³ Cf. Stadler: *Rekonstruktion*, 41: «Die Annahme einer Ursprache Adams, mit der die Sprachvielfalt erklärt werden soll, stellt eben gerade nicht eine historio-genetische Erklärung der Vielsprachigkeit dar, sondern bedeutet einen Aufweis apriorischer Sprachformen [...]. Die Ursprache ist jenes Sprachvermögen, das es dem Menschen – Adam – ermöglicht, jede der vielfältigen Sprachen zu verstehen. In der Ursprache sind gewissermaßen alle Ausformungen menschlichen Sprechens «enthalten». Sie ist die apriorische Sprachform, die sich variiert in allen gesprochenen Sprachen findet und so das grundsätzliche Verstehen verschiedener Sprachen gewährleistet». See also Hennigfeld: *Geschichte*, 297 ff., and Schwarz: *Das Problem*, 241 ff.

from the creative basis of German life», rather than from the culture of the Italian Renaissance²⁴.

In those same years Italian philosophical historiography was moving in a similar direction, which, however, led to a symmetrically opposed interpretation of Cusanus' thought. This was pointed out by Cassirer in 1927. In the second chapter of his book *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Cassirer, in fact, criticized «the nationalistic tone that is manifested more and more clearly in Italian philosophical literature, especially in recent years» and complained that «a scholar like Gentile, in his studies on Giordano Bruno and in the chapter on “the concept of man in the Renaissance”» did not devote «any word on Cusanus' doctrine». In the book, which Cassirer referred to (*Giordano Bruno e il pensiero del Rinascimento*, Firenze 1923), Giovanni Gentile, the famous philosopher of Italian idealism, regarded Bruno's philosophy as the culmination of «Italian thought of the Renaissance», which would then be taken up and developed in a complete and systematic way by idealistic immanentism: «This is the Italy of the Renaissance, which dies with Bruno and then is truly re-born [with Italian idealism]» (301). A few years earlier, in his *Storia della filosofia italiana* (1902-1915), Gentile had interpreted the philosophy of humanism as an autonomous creation of the Italian spirit, thanks to which the spiritual freedom of modern man, that «only Italy, after the long education of humanism, possessed», was born for the first time (vol. I, 159-60). In this way, Gentile reconstructed the «catena aurea» of Italian national thought, tracing the genesis of humanism, and with it of modern culture, back to Dante's *De monarchia*, to Marsilio da Padova and to Petrarca, regarded by Gentile as «the true destroyer of Scholasticism and the

²⁴ In this sense, to cite just one example, Heinz Heimsoeth, wrote in the Introduction to his 1922 book *Die sechs grossen Themen der abendländischen Metaphysik*: «Is it not unusual that German thought had to contribute so little to the philosophical development of our modern age, and Italian thought so much? Are not the talents of nations clearly uniform throughout all times? Where was in those times the speculative force of the German spirit, later not equaled by any other people?». And referring to the rediscovery of Cusanus from the mid-nineteenth century, Heimsoeth responded by arguing that, in fact, the most important speculative motives of Renaissance philosophy came from Cusanus «as it has emerged in full light for several decades, since we have again paid due attention to one of the greatest philosophical spirits in German history». Heimsoeth's position was not isolated; it was taken up several times also later; a nationalisation of Cusanus, for example, was supported in 1942 by Joachim Ritter, for whom, as I have already mentioned in text, modern philosophy had with Cusanus its «origin from the creative basis of German life» (Nikolaus von Kues, 86).

creator of the modern spirit» (I, 132)²⁵. Such an interpretation led to exclude Cusanus' thought from any reconstruction of the history of Italian humanism. Within this cultural context, the image of Cusanus was born as an isolated intellectual in fifteenth century culture, unconnected to the ideas of Italian Humanism, whose thought was deeply rooted in the «semi-darkness» (quoting Flasch), mostly «mystical», of medieval Germany.

This image of Cusanus was coined and repeatedly sustained in an authoritative and influential manner by Eugenio Garin (1909-2004), the most famous and important Italian scholar of the Renaissance. Garin was to expound his thesis in a 1962 essay entitled *Cusano e i Platonici italiani del Quattrocento* («Cusanus and Italian Platonists of the Fifteenth Century»). Garin's thesis, however, dates back twenty years. For in 1942, Garin had published a large volume in which he presented and commented on the most significant writings of Italian philosophers of the fifteenth century. In his extensive Introduction, Garin set forth an overall image of Humanism that intended to free it from too one-sided interpretations. Whoever had read Cusanus' writings at least once could not fail to recognize wide similarities among many of the themes expounded by Garin and some Cusanian doctrines. However, Cusanus never gets mentioned in this book of 1942 and no page of his writings is included in Garin's broad anthology of fifteenth-century philosophers. The absence is rather surprising, so much so that Garin himself feels compelled to provide an explanation. «The choice of the authors includes only those who conducted their activity in the fifteenth century and it is restricted to Italian philosophers only. Both criteria, chronological and national, are questionable, and certain exclusions are highly questionable, especially that of Cusanus. However, more profound reasons lie behind these extrinsic criteria. In fact, the development of Italian thought of the fifteenth century was – as a matter of fact – completely independent of Cusanus»²⁶. In this Introduction Garin briefly explained what, in his opinion, separated Cusanus from the Italian philosophers of the fifteenth century. Speaking of the «concord» between Plato and Aristotle pursued by many authors of the fifteenth century, Garin stressed that they were looking for the unity of the spirit that manifests itself in the multiplicity of its historical and cultural forms and expressions. Cusanus targets this spiritual unity as well; but in his thought the life and the dynamic of the spirit are compressed into the ontological categories of medieval Neoplatonism: «The divine dialectic of Cusanus fixes the essen-

²⁵ On the interpretation of the Renaissance by Gentile, cf. Vasoli: Gentile, 267-308; Scazzola: Giovanni Gentile; Bigalli: Giovanni Gentile, 31-40.

²⁶ Garin: *Filosofi italiani del Quattrocento*, V.

tial articulations of the first concepts [...]. The Italian philosophers of the fifteenth century immerse this process in the human world and capture the rhythm of one and many in the life of thought, in culture, in philosophy, in religion, in the various fruits of the single activity of the spirit»²⁷.

In the 1962 essay, *Cusano e i Platonici italiani del Quattrocento*, Garin's interpretation had not changed; however, it was supported not on the basis of the rather general and questionable statements we have read, but on the basis of a series of historical and philological comments. These comments were directed against the interpretation that had been proposed in 1927 by Cassirer in the book *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*. The second chapter of Cassirer's book, focused on «Cusanus and Italy», was the reference point of Garin's criticism.

As it is well-known, in *Individuum und Kosmos* Cassirer had taken up and further expanded the interpretation of Cusanus he had proposed twenty years earlier²⁸. In doing so, Cassirer was inspired by a hermeneutic principle that he had quoted in the *Introduction* of his 1927 book: the principle, coined by Hegel, according to which the philosophical spirit of an era finds its complete and systematic expression in an exemplary figure. On the basis of such a principle, Cusanus was regarded as the essential starting point for any overall or «systematic» vision of Renaissance philosophy; and this not only because of his doctrine of knowledge and his scientific vision of reality, as was the case in 1906: Cassirer now also considered Cusanus as the theorist of the productivity of the human spirit, of art and culture, the thinker of a new form of secular knowledge, the one who had elaborated a new image of man and the world founded on the esteem of the multiplicity, the individual and the particular – which made Cusanus also the pioneer of the modern idea of tolerance. On the basis of this interpretation, in the second chapter of *Individuum und Kosmos* Cassirer argued that Cusanus had played a decisive role in Italian culture of the second half of the fifteenth century. As for this thesis, Cassirer could rely on the previous works of Francesco Fiorentino and Pierre Duhem. Cassirer quotes them both. In 1885 Francesco Fiorentino published *Il risorgimento filosofico nel Quattrocento*, «das beste philosophische Buch – according to Kurt Flasch – das je über Cusanus geschrieben worden ist»²⁹. Fiorentino put Cusanus' thought in the context of Italian Humanism, and this because of his theological doctrine: according to Fiorentino, in fact, the doctrine of the Incarnation, understood as the presence of God in the reality of

²⁷ Garin: *Filosofi italiani del Quattrocento*, 15-16.

²⁸ Cf. Zeyer: *Cusanus in Marburg*, 237 ff.

²⁹ Flasch: *Nicolaus Cusanus*, 166.

the world, had led Cusanus to reevaluate the centrality of man and his dignity, thus making him a philosopher of humanism in his own right.³⁰ In 1909 Pierre Duhem had instead supported the thesis – weak from the point of view of historical documentation – according to which in the second half of the fifteenth century there would have been a «*pétit école cusienne*»³¹ in Italy, centered around the mathematician Luca Pacioli, which could have influenced Leonardo da Vinci³². In the second chapter of his 1927 book Cassirer took up and expanded Duhem's thesis: in his opinion, not only Leonardo, but also Ficino and Pico would have found in Cusanus a decisive author for them.

Cassirer returned to these theses some years later, in an essay on Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1942)³³ and then in the book *Dall'Umanesimo all'Illuminismo* (1967) in which he responded to the criticism that Garin had advanced in the essay *Cusano e i Platonici italiani del Quattrocento*³⁴. In his 1962 essay, Garin had criticized Cassirer's thesis from a strictly historiographical point of view: he had argued that there was a great gap between the mostly «mystical» philosophy of Cusanus and the cultural world of Italian humanism. Even when it is possible to demonstrate the existence of personal relationships between Cusanus and members of Italian culture of the fifteenth century, it was still a matter of two incommunicable worlds: Enea Silvio Piccolomini had no use for the medieval Platonism of his Vicar General, just as Cusanus was completely alien to the humanistic language of Pius II. Moreover, Garin had drawn attention to the fact that, with the exception of *De beryllo*, there were no manuscripts of Cusanus' texts in Italy, and that he was almost unknown among Italian Platonists. Cusanus could, therefore, in no way be regarded as an important author for the development of Ficino's thought (who mentions him only once) and of Pico's. The similarities that could be found between these authors had to be explained by the fact that Ficino and Pico had had autonomous access to the Greek sources of Neoplatonism, which, moreover, they had dealt with in a very different way from Cusanus. It would only be in the second half of the 16th century, in a cultural climate of interest for Lullism, for Pythagorism and Hermetism, that Cusanus would be introduced in Italy by the French humanists, and it would be in this context (and therefore as a product of humanism and not as a source of it) that he would be discovered by Bruno.

³⁰ Cf. Fiorentino: *Il Risorgimento Filosofico nel Quattrocento*, 83-176)

³¹ Cf. Vansteenberghe: *Le Cardinal Nicolas de Cues*, 448 ff.

³² Cf. Duhem: *Études*, 97 ff.

³³ Cassirer: *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*, 123-144 and 319-346.

³⁴ Cf. Cassirer: *Dall'Umanesimo*, 68 ff.

Garin would repeat these theses also in the following decades, greatly influencing Italian philosophical historiography thanks to his authoritativeness. In the meantime, however, the progress of the «Cusanus-Forschung» was reconstructing a more differentiated picture of the «Wirkungsgeschichte» of Cusanus and his works. For instance, the examination of the manuscript tradition set forth in the «Prefationes» to the single works of the critical edition showed how the spread of his writings in Italy was more extensive than previously thought. The publication of the *Acta Cusana* documented, in a historically concrete way, the existence of a network of relationships, exchanges, even deep personal ties between Cusanus and Italian intellectuals³⁵. The book by Stephan Meier-Oeser pointed out, in a broad and documented way, Cusanus' presence in Italy also in the period between the mid-fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth century³⁶. Subsequently, Maïke Rotzoll's research showed that in the library of Pierleone da Spoleto, a friend of Ficino as well as doctor of the Medici, there were several works by Cusanus³⁷. Adolfo Tura has proved that Giovanni Pico della Mirandola owned a copy of *De coniecturis*³⁸, and hence offered further confirmation to Flasch's thesis, that, in 1980, had pointed out Pico's knowledge of the Cusanian doctrine of coincidence³⁹, etc.

Due to this reason, Flasch himself could entitle the final chapter of his latest book on Cusanus «Die Legende der Vergessenheit». In this chapter, Flasch also relates a meeting with his friend Garin at the end of the Nineteen-seventies:

«Ich habe in den siebziger Jahren, aber auch später doch, eng mit Eugenio Garin zummanegearbeitet, in Florenz und an der Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. Ich glaubte damals entdeckt zu haben, daß sich durch genauen Textvergleich nachweisen lasse, daß Pico della Mirandola Cusanus studiert habe. Ich wußte, daß ich damit dem gelehrten älteren Freund widersprechen mußte. Um ihm Gelegenheit zur Äußerung zu geben, wollte ich ihm meinen kleinen Aufsatz vor der Drucklegung zum Lesen zuschicken. Aber lachend antwortete er mir: "Drucken Sie nur ruhig. Ich habe inzwischen meine Meinung aufgrund anderer Argumente geändert".»⁴⁰

³⁵ Cf. Flasch: Cusano e gli intellettuali italiani, 175-192; Schnarr: Frühe Beziehungen, 187-213; Vasoli: Cusano, 75-89; Blum: Nikolaus von Kues, 13 ff.

³⁶ Cf. Meier-Oeser: Die Präsenz des Vergessenen, 20 ff.

³⁷ Cf. Rotzoll: Pierleone da Spoleto, 36 ff.; Id., «Un certo vescovo da quelle parti», 289-303.

³⁸ Cf. Tura: Un incunabolo Grimani, 181-189.

³⁹ Flasch: Nikolaus von Kues und Pico della Mirandola, 113-120.

⁴⁰ Flasch: Nicolaus Cusanus, 151.

I do not know if, in his reply to Flasch, the great Italian scholar of Machiavelli exploited the art of dissimulation. In any case, from an examination of Garin's writings, no change of his interpretation of Cusanus emerges from the late Nineteen-seventies on. Garin repeats his theses both in the book *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* and, for example, in the book *Rinascite e Rivoluzioni*. In the first book Garin criticizes all those historians who, «with unwavering faith», continue to support the role played by Cusanus in Italian humanism, despite the fact that «today we know» on the basis of «reliable and precise documents», that in the fifteenth century Cusanus was substantially unknown: Vespasiano da Bisticci's biography certifies that Cusanus was known «only for his activity within the Church»; there is no direct relationship with Ficino and when Pico, in the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam*, mentions the theory of the coincidence of opposites he does so in an ironic way. Garin repeats his thesis, according to which Cusanus would reach Bruno through the mediation of the French sixteenth century humanists, and once more criticizes the interpretations of Klibansky, Kristeller and especially that of Cassirer and his school:

«Cusanus was Duhem's fixation and it remained a fixation also for a historian such as Cassirer. This is a curious misunderstanding that is rooted in the philosophical historiography of the last century, often with a German approach»; a misunderstanding «to which the school of Cassirer remained faithful»⁴¹.

In this book we also find a judgment on Cusanus that seems to show what the basis for Garin's interpretation was, behind the often claimed «neutrality» or «objectivity» of historical data. Cusanus – Garin writes – is by no means a forerunner of the new world of Italian humanism; «with his mystical ruminations», Cusanus belongs to a world now in ruins and that

«[...] had to die so that a new one could come to life. But it takes time burying the dead; and the old heritage beneath the ruins hindered the new knowledge for a long time, even if some critics do not notice it: they are celebrating certain metaphysical “reasons” disguised in mathematical guises as progressive conquests of the new thought: the old Germanic theological mysticism, disguised as mathematics in some northern episcopal palace, which would have generated, in those who knows what illicit loves, the new conception of the world and of man»⁴².

⁴¹ Garin: *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano*, 393-394.

⁴² Garin: *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano*, 394.

2. *Philosophus antinomiarum.*

Eugenio Garin was a very important intellectual in Italian philosophical culture of the twentieth century⁴³. The image of Cusanus that he coined and authoritatively supported with his reputation as a prominent Renaissance scholar has exerted a notable influence on the following generations of Italian scholars. Martin Thurner rightly observed this fact a few years ago, comparing the Italian school of Garin with the American school of Paul Oskar Kristeller, who, in 1964, had put forward a genuine refutation of Garin's thesis⁴⁴:

«Die gegenteiligen Positionen dieser beiden Altmeister der Renaissance-Forschung wirkte sich auf die Schülergeneration aus. Während in Italien die Cusanus-Forschung insgesamt etwas stagnierte und auf den Paduaner Kreis um Giovanni Santinello konzentriert blieb, erwachte im amerikanischen Schülerkreis Kristellers das Interesse für die Bezüge des Cusanus zur italienischen Renaissance... und begegnet uns ein Cusanus, der seine Originalität ganz im Horizont der italienischen Renaissancewelt gewinnt»⁴⁵.

The history of Cusanus' reception in Italy cannot, however, be limited to Renaissance historiography. A second «chapter» of this story was written by Italian Catholic culture, which had a very difficult relationship with Cusanus right from the beginning. It is well known that, in 1502 the second edition of Cusanus' works had been printed in Cortemaggiore, near Milan. The edition was promoted by Rolando Pallavicini, at the suggestion of Girolamo Tornielli. Tornielli was the Vicar of the Minor Friars of Observance, who were among the first supporters of Cusanus' philosophy. Senger, for example, pinpointed how the works of Cusanus were present in

⁴³ Cfr. Ciliberto: Eugenio Garin.

⁴⁴ Cf. Kristeller: A Latin Translation, 195-209 (201-202: «It seems equally obvious to me that Cusanus was deeply imbued with the humanist culture of his time, and that this culture represents an important ingredient in his work and thought. A famous sentence in the preface to his *De concordantia catholica* is an early testimony of his admiration for the classical enthusiasm of his age ... Typically humanist is Cusanus' lifelong concern with textual and historical criticism, which is attested by his own words, by those of his contemporaries, and by the marginal notes in his manuscripts. Although his Latin style is anything but humanistic, his frequent use of the dialogue form may be influenced by the literary fashion of his time, as well by the model of Plato and other ancient authors known to him. Yet the strongest evidence of Cusanus' connection with Italian humanism is supplied by his personal relations and by the content of his library»).

⁴⁵ Thurner: "Tedesco di nazione, ma non di costumi"?, 21.

German cloisters of the Minor Friars in the sixteenth century⁴⁶. Something similar can also be said for Italy, as shown by the role played by Cusanus in Bernardino Ochino's thought, the famous observant preacher of the sixteenth century⁴⁷. Vicar General of the Capuchins from 1538 to 1541, theologian and repeatedly accused of heresy, Ochino (1487-1564) fled Italy and sought refuge in Switzerland, where he embraced the Protestant religion. Ochino's biography is, to a certain extent, an example of the destiny of Cusanus' thought, on which, after the Council of Trent, the suspicion of a dangerous proximity to Lutheran theology soon became attached. After the encyclical «Aeternis Patris» (1878) and with the birth in Italy of the «Neoscholastic» movement (which had its center in the Catholic University of Milan), another suspicion was then added, that of «immanentism».

In this sense, a significant example of the interpretation of Cusanus by the Italian Neo-Scholasticism can be found in a book by Gustavo Bontadini, who was the philosophical «leader» of the «Milanese school» for decades. In 1938 Bontadini (1903-1990) published *Saggio di una metafisica dell'esperienza*, a book that has long been the reference point of Italian Neoscholastic philosophy: republished in 1978, in the early Nineties it was still the fundamental text that students of the Catholic University had to follow for the course of «Theoretical Philosophy». Bontadini saw in Cusanus' «immanentism» the logical conclusion of Neoplatonic thought and the beginning of the different forms of immanentism of modern thought, from Spinoza to Hegel. More precisely, in *Saggio di una metafisica dell'esperienza*, Bontadini placed Cusanus in the context of an overall interpretation of Platonism, which in his view culminated in Neoplatonic philosophy – according to a secular scheme which, however, as early as the mid-nineteenth century the historiography on Plato and Platonism had profoundly undermined. Moving within this scheme, according to Bontadini the Platonic doctrine of Ideas had found its consequent development in the Neoplatonic metaphysics of the One, which, in turn, could not be understood, except in accordance with the doctrine of the coincidence of opposites developed by Cusanus. The natural and unavoidable outcome of the latter, however, was immanentism: in fact, if one does not want to fall into the absurd, that is, into the mere elimination of the principle of non-contradiction, the coincidence of the opposites must be understood in the sense that the individual determinations – multiple, opposite or contrary – are unified in the One as they are eliminated in their mutual opposition. Hence, the One is nothing but the pure absolutely indeterminate begin-

⁴⁶ Cf. Senger: *Ludus sapientiae*, 291-310.

⁴⁷ Cf. Bietenholz: *Der italienische Humanismus*, 31.

ning of the process of reality, while it is precisely in the cosmic process that the true and proper reconciliation of the opposites takes place⁴⁸.

Such an interpretation (and further examples could be provided) also explains the complexities the extremely rare Neoscholastic interpreters of Cusanus had to confront in Italy. The most significant example is that of Paolo Rotta (1873-1962) like Bontadini a professor at the Catholic University of Milan. In 1923 Rotta published the first Italian translation of *De docta ignorantia*; in 1942, he issued an extensive monograph on Cusanus, in which he summarized all of his previous research. The book was released in the same year that Garin published *I Filosofi italiani del Quattrocento*. But, while in Garin's anthology of Italian philosophers Cusanus was not included, Rotta intended to place Cusanus in the context of the Italian culture. Cusanus' «Italianness» claimed by Rotta did not, however, have a «nationalistic» tone, but a confessional meaning (and thus intended to eliminate any undue juxtaposition of Cusanus' thought with Protestant theology): it referred to the fact that «the decisive principle for each and every action of Cusanus was Rome, that Rome, thereby Christ can be considered Roman as well»⁴⁹. In his 1942 book, Rotta expounded Cusanus' thought not only in a clear and intelligible way, but often also with great interpretive insight. Whoever picks this volume up, however, cannot fail to notice that almost 2/3 of it are dedicated to the life of Cusanus. Those browsing the pages would easily realize, however, that this disproportion does not depend on a faulty organization of the subject matter, something that would have been easy to fix by rewriting the Book Index. The large space dedicated to the life of Cusanus had an apologetic function: it had to certify Cusanus' faithfulness to the ecclesial orthodoxy. Thus, throughout the book, Rotta repeatedly referred to the life of Cusanus (and to his service on behalf of the church in Rome) precisely in those points where the explanation of Cusanian thought led him to show its distance from the scholastic orthodoxy. Just a brief example: in the second part of his book, Rotta is commenting on a passage from the *De docta ignorantia*, in which Cusanus characterizes God as «absoluta necessitas» (II 7, 130). As far as we know, Cusanus is simply referring to the Chartrian doctrine of the four «modi essendi». Rotta is instead concerned about the fact that the «absoluta necessitas» mentioned by Cusanus may contradict the Christian doctrine of God's creative freedom. He then comments:

«Taking those words literally, it seems that freedom is excluded in God, because there where there is necessity, freedom does not seem

⁴⁸ Bontadini: Saggio di una metafisica dell'esperienza, 82 ff.

⁴⁹ Rotta: Nicolò Cusano, 319.

to be conceivable, with the consequence that one cannot even think of God as a person, thus narrowing it all down to the classical conception of a God as a pure metaphysical principle [...]. One can, however, also presume that Cusanus had already had the intuition of that new concept of freedom identifying with the necessity which would then become essential in Spinoza's metaphysics. [...] Be that as it may, however, it is certain that the expression of Cusanus which we speak of ["*absoluta necessitas*"], could seem ambiguous and, therefore, dangerous. It is, therefore, not surprising that the two best-known Cusanus admirers of the sixteenth century, Giacomo Böhme in Germany and Giordano Bruno in Italy, spoke of necessity in order to validate the concept. However, as we have already seen, the whole purpose of Cusanus was not directed at anything other than an apology of the Catholic faith, all of his life guarantees that he had no intention of reducing God to a pure principle only acting out of intrinsic necessity»⁵⁰.

In the context of Italian Neoscholasticism, the attempt at «conciliation» made by Rotta remained isolated. In Italy, in fact, the Neoscholastic interpretation was moving in a quite different direction from the one followed by some members of the «Cusanus-Forschung» in the decades following the end of the Second World War. The latter intended to unshackle the image of Cusanus from the unilateral misrepresentations advanced by the Neokantian school of thought. By doing so, it aimed to restore Cusanus' thought to its true form, e.g. to its eminently theological form, also aiming at highlighting that connection with Scholasticism which had fallen into obscurity since the second half of the nineteenth century. The most significant instance of the different approach of the Italian Neoscholasticism is likely to be found in an influential book by Cornelio Fabro (1911-1995), one of the leading twentieth-century interpreters of Thomas Aquinas' thought.

In 1954 Fabro was invited by the «Institut Supérieur de Philosophie» of the University of Louvain to hold the annual course of «Chaire Cardinal Mercier». The book *Partecipazione e causalità secondo Tommaso d'Aquino* was a direct result of that course. It was published simultaneously in Italy and in Louvain in 1960. The main purpose of Fabro's book was to offer an interpretation of the Thomist metaphysics of *esse*, understood as an overcoming of the conflict between «Platonism» and «Aristotelianism». In the second part of his book, Fabro also aims to show the relevance of Thomist metaphysics by presenting an overall interpretation of Western ontology, from Renaissance philosophy to Heidegger (527-655). In this

⁵⁰ Rotta: Nicolò Cusano, 230-231.

context, Fabro dedicated an extensive chapter to Cusanus, which stands out for its rather precise knowledge of Cusanian writings. Fabro quotes and comments texts from *De docta ignorantia*, *Apologia*, *De visione dei*, *De non-aliud* and *De posset*; refers to the *Dies sanctificatus* and cites the «Eckhartian Sermons». Fabro also proves to have a fairly precise knowledge of historiographical research on Cusanus dating back to the early twentieth century: he widely quotes books by Vansteenberghe, De Gandillac and Volkmann-Schluck, the papers by Hoffmann and Klibansky and above all studies by Paul Wilpert, Joseph Koch and Rudolph Haubst. Yet, from the very first pages of his discussion Fabro clearly distances himself from the recent interpretations of the «Cusanus-Forschung»: «Cusanus' thought unfolds completely outside of Thomism» (553); thus, «it is vain to try to lead back Cusanus' thought to Thomism, from which he would have drawn the main themes of his doctrine, as the critics had been trying to do for more than half a century» (561).

Fabro maintains that ontology is what clearly separates Cusanus from Thomas, that is how the metaphysical structure of the creature is viewed. The central nucleus of Thomas' metaphysics, which separates his thought from the tradition of Christian Avicennism, is the real distinction in the creature between *essentia* and *esse* (or *actus essendi*). Following the Albertist School, Cusanus, on the contrary, denies this distinction, without which, according to Fabro, no adequate explanation of the structure of creatures is possible. Since the *De docta ignorantia*, Cusanus, in fact, maintains that the *actus essendi* is unique and it is God himself (555). God, in fact, is *omnium actus*, that is he is the being in whose fullness and actuality all subsisting things exist.

With this doctrine Cusanus abandons the central nucleus (the «punctum discriminantionis») of the metaphysics of Thomas, that is the idea that the creature is a compound of *form/essentia* and *esse/actus essendi*. According to Thomas, in fact, the form «dat esse formale vel specificum», as it determines a thing in its essential identity, distinguishing it from the others. The form, however, is not «esse» and not «dat esse rei», in accordance with the concept of the Boethian tradition, adopted from the School of Chartres. The form, instead, «enables the subject to receive "esse"» (J. De Finance), thanks to which the form exists and is «in actu». This «esse» or «actus essendi» is distinct, however, from the «esse» of God, who, for Thomas, cannot be understood as the only «actus essendi» of all that actually exists. Each creature, rather, has its own «actus essendi», which God creates and attributes to the creature as an «esse» proper to it, «commensurate» to its specific form. This «actus essendi», therefore, depends on God, since God is its principle and the cause, but once

created and «until it is annihilated» it subsists in itself, as an immanent principle to the creature (645).

In this way, «according to Thomas – as Fabro writes – the divine creation has a “terminus” that is external to the divine *esse*, i.e. the *esse* or the *actus essendi* of the creature, which is coupled with the concrete essence». Cusanus argues that, on the contrary, creation cannot have a «terminus» external to the divine «esse»; for this reason, according to the Neoplatonic and Avicennian conception, borrowed again from the Albertist School, creation is conceived as a «fluxus» of the being of God, as a communication to creatures of the same Divine being, which is received by the creatures respectively in a determined or «contract» way, that is to say, according to the specific forms that characterize them. In this way, according to Cusanus «the creature's *esse* is the divine *esse*, though not in a divine way, but in the manner of one's own essence» (559). The fundamental philosophical question, which lies beneath this conception, does not, therefore, concern the transcendence of God, which in Cusanus' thought is adequately maintained, contrary to the criticisms put forward by Wenck in his *De ignota Litteratura*. According to Fabro, Wenck was instead quite right in claiming that Cusanus' doctrine cancelled the autonomous subsistence of things in their own kind. Considering the Divine as the «actus essendi» of all things and denying the real distinction in the creature between «forma» and «esse», Cusanus, in fact, fails to metaphysically establish the reality of creatures in their finiteness and autonomy: unlike the Thomist doctrine, the creature does not subsist and does not operate in its own ontological order, but «it exists, operates, understands and wants as “in umbra Dei”» (558).

It is precisely for this reason that not only can Cusanus not be linked to Thomism but he «cannot also even be regarded as a forerunner of modern thought», as the critics had considered him «for more than half a century» (561). So, following a very different path, with Fabro the Italian Neoscholasticism came to the same conclusions to which Garin had led the Italian scholars of the Renaissance: Cusanus is a thinker who does not look to the future, but to the past; he is tied to an orientation of medieval Scholasticism that Thomas had intended to transform and renew and that Cusanus wants instead to restore and keep. Thus, on the basis of profoundly different arguments from those of Garin, Fabro believes that the ground on which Cusanus' thought develops is not the Italy of the new humanistic thought (which begins philosophically with Ficino: 567-586) but the Germany of the old Albertist School of Cologne (567).

Fabro's philosophically penetrating, historiographically and philologically well-supported interpretation, had its effects, surely less extensive than those of Garin, but significant. Ten years after the release of *Partecipazione*

e Causalità, Fabro's interpretation is taken up again by another exponent of the «Milanese Neoscholastic», Aldo Bonetti. In 1973 Bonetti published an excellent overall exposition of Cusanus' thought, which he arrived at as a result of an examination of Cusanian writings. Being an expert of the Neoplatonic tradition, which he had written several essays about, Bonetti examines the works of Cusanus with historiographic competence and often with philosophical acumen. However, his perspective remains that of Fabro, that is to «relate» Cusanus' thought to the «truth» of Thomas's metaphysical theses. Also in accordance with Bonetti's view, in fact, by abandoning the Thomist doctrine of «actus essendi», Cusanus cancelled the authentic meaning of the Christian concept of creation and did not succeed in justifying the reality of creatures in their finiteness and multiplicity⁵¹.

The Neoscholastic interpretation, which I briefly outlined, was one of the reasons why Cusanus was not given due consideration by Italian philosophical culture of the twentieth century. In the context of Neoscholastic interpretation, in fact, what remained «viable» of Cusanus' thought was basically only the sphere of «mysticism» (to which Bontadini already had made reference) – a sphere that might lose some of its form and some of its meaning once separated from the basic doctrines of Cusanus that were considered incompatible with the scholastic tradition. This is the direction in which a part of the Paduan Neoscholasticism has headed. More precisely, it has put forward an interpretation according to which in Cusanus' thought two levels should be distinguished: an «experiential» or «mystical», and a «conceptual» one. The first being inner and essential, the second being external, a sort of «color philosophicus», of expressive encasement, which can reveal its authentic meaning only if interpreted in the light of the former. This, for instance, is the interpretation by Carlo Giacon (who has been the philosophical «leader» of the Paduan school for decades). In an 1962 essay Giacon (1900-1984), in fact, reduced the comparison between Cusanus and Wenck to the antithesis between a demonstrative rationality (that of Scholasticism) and a mystical intuition of the truth, which Wenck would not have been able to grasp: «Cusanus was a genuine anti-intellectual; and in the face of the ruminations of the philosophers and theologians of his time, he had a very vivid sense of the mystery of things and of the transcendence of the absolute. Cusanus had the soul of a mystic who, as such, understands and does not reason. [...]. Hence the “learned ignorance” which was by no means fathomed and understood by

⁵¹ Cf. Bonetti: *La ricerca metafisica nel pensiero di Nicolò Cusano*, 38-45; 58-59; 93-97; 120-121; 133-135; 140-142; 144-146; 180-182.

the author of the “unknown litteratura”»⁵². A few years later, in 1965, something similar was also proposed by Giovanni Santinello (1922-2003), although in the context of a historiographic competence and knowledge of Cusanus' work of a very different depth. In the *Introduction* to the first volume of his translation of Cusanus' philosophical writings, Santinello put forward an overall exposition of Cusanus' philosophy, which he believed could be well understood only by bearing in mind the two fundamental levels that characterize it: «In order to grasp the meaning of Cusanus' thought as a whole one must rely on neither a single thesis nor a doctrine as a systematic body of many theses. Of course, a doctrinal corpus is traceable, but it is consciously considered by Cusanus as the rational expression (variously formulated)» of an original experience: of an original experience of the divine, inner to the soul of Cusanus and that then Cusanus tried to formulate rationally in various ways⁵³.

Such an interpretation can be regarded as an attempt to rehabilitate Cusanus' thought in the context of Neoscholastic interpretation. Something similar had been done in the Nineteen-twenties in Germany in the books by Joseph Lenz and especially by Joseph Ranft: in this case too, the doctrines of Cusanus, which were not deemed compatible with the Thomist theses, were explained by referring to a mystical «Übergeisterung». If we consider this kind of interpretation from a certain historical distance, we can recognize the revival of an interpretative model that, during the first half of the twentieth century, has often been used in other areas, for example in reference to the Patristic tradition: in the case, for instance, of Clements of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa this interpretative model has been used to solve, in perhaps a too simplistic way, the complex problem of the relationship between philosophical thought and Christian doctrine (the issue of the so-called «Hellenisierung des Christentums»)⁵⁴.

In any case, as far as Cusanus is concerned, the Neoscholastic interpretative scheme (in whichever way it was used) soon waned. This was due to the fact that, for a number of reasons (of a historical, philosophical and even political nature), since the late Nineteen-Seventies Neoscholasticism has lost the role it had previously played in Italian culture of the twentieth century. The image of Cusanus which, as we have seen, had been coined and authoritatively supported by Garin continued instead to exercise its powerful influence on the Italian philosophical historiography. It is suffi-

⁵² Giacom: Il «De ignota Litteratura» di Giovanni Wenck, 72; see also Giacom, Il «Possest» del Cusano, 375-384.

⁵³ Santinello: Introduction to: Niccolò Cusano, Scritti Filosofici, vol. I, 10 ff.

⁵⁴ Cf. Peroli: La trasparenza, 31-51.

cient to glance at the hundreds of volumes published by the «Italian Institute for Renaissance Studies» to see that there is not a single book dedicated to Cusanus, whose name rarely appears in the various Italian Journals specifically focused on Renaissance studies. It is, therefore, no coincidence that our short «Iter italicum» had to end where we started it. In 2016 two well-known Italian philosophers published, with two well-respected Italian publishing houses, two books concerned with Italian humanism⁵⁵. They have the same structure as Garin's 1942 book: they contain an overall reconstruction of the thought of Humanism and an extensive anthology of the most significant writings of the philosophers of Humanism. Also in this case, as in 1942, Cusanus is hardly ever mentioned and not a single page of his writings is included in the two anthologies. However, the seventy years that separate these two recent books from Garin's *I filosofi italiani del Quattrocento* have not passed in vain. In fact, while in his Introduction Garin felt obliged to give an explanation of the «discutibilissima esclusione» («the highly questionable exclusion») of Cusanus, now in the two books of 2016 such a remark no longer appears: after seventy years of Italian philosophical historiography, the exclusion of Cusanus has become a fact hardly worth-mentioning.

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