

Philosophie der Reformierten. (*Philosophy of the Reformed.*) Melancthon-Schriften der Stadt Bretten 12. frommann-holzboog, Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt 2012, 439 pp.

The present volume – arisen out of a conference held in Bretten 2009 in regard of Jean Calvin's 500th birthday – deals with a question hitherto scarcely asked: the topic of a (specific) philosophy in the Reformed tradition. Therefore, many of the fifteen articles (seven of which in English) cover new ground by asking if and in which way Reformed thinkers have referred to and transformed the philosophical tradition. They restrict themselves not only to the work of Jean Calvin and his tradition but cover the whole spectre of the Reformed tradition in Europe and treat authors like Petrus Ramus, Wolfgang Musculus, Rudolph Goclenius, John Weemes, Simon Oomius, Bartholomäus Keckermann, Claus Timpler, Adam Goslav or Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Thus, they regard the Reformed Orthodoxy as well as rather pietistic thinkers. Furthermore, this volume covers a broad range of topics – beginning with an introductory article on Calvinism as norm and probing stone of philosophy, including articles on metaphysics at Reformed universities, the reformulation of the Iconoclastic Controversy, the relationship of Calvin and stoicism or his writings on practical philosophy or contributions on specific positions of some of the authors mentioned above. The contributors include "old hands" in the field as well as promising young scholars.

Although most of the contributions stress or demonstrate that it would be rather inadequate to speak of a specific "Reformed philosophy", they nevertheless show the debt of many Reformed theologians and philosophers to the philosophical tradition, their attempts to draw on e.g. Aristotelism for discussing philosophical-theological questions like Person, Free Choice, original sin etc. and thus also the importance of knowing this tradition for discussing their work. Thereby, they show an interesting difference of the treated authors of the Reformed tradition to Luther's harsh critique of human reason and philosophy. Whereas all of them – more or less – regard philosophy as *ancilla theologiae*, there exist important differences concerning the autonomy of philosophy and her limits: E.g., an author like Bartholomäus Keckermann tries to explain the mystery of Trinity by philosophical means which is severely criticized by the Sozinian Adam Goslav; an author like Rudolph Cloenius is able to recur to the Reformed tradition in his attempt to refute philosophically the doctrine of original sin and thus demonstrates the possible interaction of Reformed theology and school philosophy in this epoch.

This highly recommendable volume, thus, offers not only many valuable and interesting insights into the thought of some well-known and other lesser known but nevertheless important Reformed thinkers but also shows how promising further research concerning the question of a "philosophy in the Reformed tradition" will be.

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