

SVEN K. KNEBEL, *JESUIT UND NEUZEIT: DISKURSARCHÄOLOGISCHE STREIFZÜGE IN DIE PHILOSOPHIEGESCHICHTE*, BRILL – FINK, LEIDEN 2024, X, 492 PP., ISBN: 9783770569168 (HARDBACK), 9783846769164 (E-BOOK).

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The present book is a collection of eight papers, each ranging from 30 to 150 pages, plus an introduction of 81 pages. Two of these papers, on Vázquez and Arriaga, are published here for the first time (along with the introduction), while the others are re-editions of publications from 1991 to 2018.

Chapter 1 addresses the coordination or cooperation of will and intellect. The technical term is « doxastischer Voluntarismus » (doxastic voluntarism). This epistemological approach is connected with Robert Holcot (1290–1349) and discusses the question of to what extent the will is involved in assenting to truth. « Voluntas vult, ut intellectus credat » (Diego Granado, 1629, quoted at p. 93, note 46). This problem was present in the famous early modern probabilism, but more generally, it is evident in questions that cannot be answered with yes/no or undecided.

Chapter 2 interprets the Jesuit Gabriel Vázquez (d. 1604) as the origin of the « Perception Theory of Judgment » (throughout labeled as such in English). The thesis is: A judgment is the knowledge of the convenience or inconvenience and repugnance of one thing with another in a proposition (p. 131). The problem with that thesis is the involvement of perception/representation/cognition in judgment. For, a judgment is the commitment to connect subject and predicate and thus an act of cognition (p. 142). Knebel follows the early modern debate about this question that eventually made the fusion of logic with epistemology possible insofar as the connection between judgment as an intellectual performance and the logical convenience vs. contradiction becomes a feature of the intellect (p. 205).

Chapter 3 investigates the interpretation of « reflection » in school-philosophy with emphasis on Suárez. It opens with twenty propositions from « knowledge of knowing to know » (p. 209) via the relation of « first » and « second intentions » (p. 212) to the problem of infinite progress in the reflection on reflections, which touches upon the acts of knowledge in God who should have no distinction between « direct » and « reflexive » knowledge; but supposed God does know

about his direct knowledge by means of reflexive knowledge then this reflection goes on *ad infinitum* (p. 215). Obviously, this goes back to Aristotle who even in sense perception admits self-reference (*De anima* III.2, 425b11; cf. III.4, 429b10). In the sources discussed by Knebel it is pondered as implicit reflection (p. 224) together with all of its semantic, epistemic, volitive, and vital implications, which amounts to « virtual reflection » (p. 229). The heading of the chapter indicates its direction: « Suárez, or: the Cogito » and the point is that the Cartesian *cogito* is precisely this sort of reflection that does not have to be a separate act of thinking but is a virtual or implicit awareness of thinking (p. 241). The chapter closes with Latin/German excerpts from the Jesuit Jean Bagot (1591–1664) who defended the virtual reflection in his *Apologeticus Fidei*, Paris 1645 (p. 257).

Chapter 4 shows that Sebastian Izquierdo, SJ, (1601–1681) studied the temporal dimension of thinking as it is important in Christian theology of the afterlife and of divine knowledge. He proposed that the blessed (*beatus*) has to be conscious and sure of the eternity of his state (p. 257). Hence follows that even beatitude is a reflective act and transports the temporality of human thinking (as we know it from Augustine's *Confessions*) into eternity (p. 258). Knebel then discusses several theories of time, especially those that view time as past-present-future versus time that is comprehensive, valid in theology. The comprehensive eternity is that of God's way of 'being in time' and is systematically connected with God's relation to his finite creation. This 'eternity' is an infinite source of heresies.

Chapter 5 continues the problem of subject/object relations in cognition with the question whether « in school-philosophy, the division of labor between logic and metaphysics prevented Jesuit scholasticism from lapsing into psychologism » (p. 299–300). In the background of this question is modern psychologism as in authors like John Locke and Bernard Bolzano and the notions of 'formal' truth versus 'transcendental' truth in Thomism. Broadly speaking, psychologism resulted from anthropocentric gnoseology (p. 311). As such it is an outcome of Suárezism that discussed the ontological status of cognition, and the main player was Arriaga. Idealism and realism plus a number of other '-isms' are the competing options. In the end, Bolzano appears as the legitimate heir to his « Prague predecessor Arriaga » (p. 342).

Chapter 6 investigates a predecessor of Leibniz and his 'best of all possible worlds'. Components are the notions of moral commitment to the 'choice of the best', probabilism, and the *mundus optimus*. The heroes are Diego Ruiz de Montoya and his pupil Diego Granado in Sevilla. The doctrine is that once God decided to create one out of possible things he also decided against creating any other such thing (p. 360–361). In that view, Leibniz was a latecomer (*Nachzügler*, p. 370), which seems to explain the contemporary critique of his *Theodicee* by the French Jesuits. Finally, Knebel publishes by way of extensive quotations in footnotes a lecture by

another Sevilla Jesuit, Jorge Hemelman (1574–1637) on divine providence and will and the necessity to create the *optimum* (p. 372–390).

The seventh chapter of this book deals with Friedrich von Spee's famous *Cautio criminalis*. Whereas this work is commonly known for having denounced the witch trials as juridically invalid because torture extorted from the victims such confessions that were no valid proofs of sorcery, Knebel discusses the implications for natural law and especially for the individual's freedom of acting against the interest of self-preservation. The dilemma of witch trials was that the outcome was always the death of the suspect: either through torture or execution, and not only that, but the victim would inevitably end up in hell. So, the question is (p. 400): is it at all possible to incriminate oneself for the sake of evading torture? Humans are masters of their bodies and lives and also of their reputation (p. 402). These were the considerations that led to the abolition of extorted confessions (p. 431).

The last chapter discusses the theorem « *puella est domina sui corporis* » in the context of rape and defloration. The problem was that an unmarried young woman 'owed' her virginity to her parents, who would lose their dowry if the daughter lost her virginity. Against that, one considered the right of the woman to consensual sexual engagement and also the right to remain unmarried. In this chapter, the hero is Étienne Bauny (d. 1649), the preferred Jesuit targeted by Blaise Pascal in his *Lettres provinciales*, and the overall context is Jesuit probabilism.

Now a discussion of the title of the book and the introduction is in order. The title does not promise a discussion of what Jesuits might have contributed to modernity, rather, it opposes two concepts: that of 'Jesuit' and that of 'Neuzeit'. Once, these concepts were mutually exclusive because modernity neglected Jesuit philosophy; in addition to that, 'modernity' does not actually exist because *Mittelalter* and *Neuzeit* are nothing but « *Idola fori!* » (popular prejudices – p. 79; cf. p. 25 on Protestant anti-Jesuit activism). Consequently, the pretended introduction reads as a polemical complaint about the disregard of early modern scholasticism by the leading philosophers and historians of philosophy. Just one example: Ernst Cassirer's four-volume *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit* (1906) is insulted – without further information – as « *Geschichtsklitterung* » (fake history) for missing any treatment of Jesuit philosophy (p. 31). The otherwise innovative achievement of this work, namely, to integrate Renaissance philosophy into the neo-Kantian concept of philosophy, and the further development of Cassirer's philosophy towards anthropology (*Individuum und Kosmos*) and philosophy of history (*Philosophie der symbolischen Formen; An Essay on Man*), all this is eclipsed in Knebel's polemic. The fact that neo-Kantianism was overcome by Cassirer and thus made a fresh look into early modern philosophy, including scholasticism, at all possible could have informed the research.

The introduction claims that Jesuits are quasi synonymous with second scholasticism or Baroque scholasticism, although Knebel constantly cites Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans, etc. He also claims that Spain is the home of this school philosophy, if not of all philosophy (p. 80), and neglects that the Jesuits designed their teaching so that it could be continued everywhere. When he names them a « Bildungskonzern » (educational corporation – p. 1 and *passim*) he touches upon their main intentions. Furthermore, Knebel quotes next to Spaniards also French and Italian scholastics. Names that are missing in an overview of Jesuits in modernity are, for instance, Christoph Clavius, Athanasius Kircher, and Christoph Scheiner from Germany. When explaining the neglect of Jesuit philosophy in the world of Enlightenment and Protestantism, he identifies its cause with the political fight of the national powers against the Jesuits. But it should be noted that this had clearly motives in power politics because the Jesuits as confessors influenced the catholic princes; and that had nothing to do with Jesuit metaphysics.

The subtitle of the book: « Diskursarchäologische Streifzüge in die Philosophiegeschichte » is a combination of pretension and feigned modesty. Forays or excursions tend to be unplanned, incidental, and without preestablished results; something one may well leave out. « Discourse archeology » is, on the other hand, a highly loaded ambition. Knebel frequently labels his research with this term from Michel Foucault's *Les mots et les choses*. In pursuing the history of philosophy in terms of archeology, one directs the attention to the local and temporal context of a philosophy, its 'discourse' in the sense of commonly agreed interest, terminology, and patterns of argument. Most importantly, this type of research does not aim at extolling the big names; rather, it aims at understanding what the temporally and culturally remote thinkers intended themselves. Archeology does neither destroy nor appropriate ruins, it reconstructs them by understanding their own world. Archeology is, evidently, the opposite of Whiggish history of philosophy which reads past authors only for the sake of praising the progress made by the successors and the successful. Yet, this last feature is a characteristic of Knebel's research in that he appropriates Jesuits for the later ones. Except for the first and the eighth chapter, all chapter headings identify one author as the leader: Vázquez, Suárez, Izquierdo, Arriaga, Ruiz de Montoya, Spee. This is done in spite of the body of each chapter that abounds with references to countless other authors. In most cases, the thrust of the argument is to show that one Jesuit author is, indeed, a precursor of the more famous ones.

After these remarks, some comments are in order on the complaint about the forgetfulness of modern historiography with regard to Jesuit and other scholastic philosophy. Of the researchers who have contributed to this in recent decades, the following are not mentioned by Knebel: Ugo Baldini, Robert Bireley, Gianpaolo Brizzi, Daniel Haider, Karl Hengst, Ulrich Lehner, Riccardo Quinto, and Wilhelm

Schmidt-Biggemann, just to name a few. Schmidt-Biggemann is missing in the index of names, but he is cited on pages 10 and 395 as editor of books. The first case is the most conspicuous because it refers to *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie: Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (4 in 8 vols.). Correctly Knebel criticizes that its volume 1/1 (Basel 1998) has little to say about scholasticism and Jesuits in Spain. But he does not mention volume 4/1 (2001) that contains about 90 pages on Catholic school-philosophy in Germany, plus about 80 pages on school-philosophy in Reformed areas and about 100 pages on the Lutheran schools. Furthermore, Knebel polemicizes repeatedly against the old history of philosophy by Friedrich Ueberweg (since 1862); for instance: « Im *Überweg* hatten die Jesuiten nichts verloren » (The Jesuits had no business in the *Überweg*; p. 32). Only the 1907 edition added some remarks. What is strange is the fact that Knebel misspells Ueberweg as Überweg (except in the index of names); perhaps it was meant as a joke (Überweg as « super-way »?); possible, as the book is full of willful puns. What is more important, however, is the fact that the mentioned *Grundriss*, co-edited by Schmidt-Biggemann, was expressly published as the new edition of the old Ueberweg, *Grundriss*. Knebel cannot have been uninformed about that because both Schmidt-Biggemann and the author of the section on Catholic school-philosophy at the time of its production worked at the same Berlin university as Knebel.

The author claims what is timelessly valid (*zeitlos Gültigen*) is not the main focus of the book, and only uncharted territory (*Neuland*) has been broken, since there has not been enough time to cultivate what is already known (p. 80). With *Jesuit und Neuzeit* the reader has a comprehensive testimony of Knebel's scholarship and of epistemology, ontology, ethics, and law of early modern Jesuits.