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Ad lectores

When structuralism was in its heyday, in the second half of last century, Umberto Eco in 1968 published his lecture notes on visual semiotics as *La struttura assente* (*The Absent Structure – Semiotic Research and Structural Method*). Precisely in that philosophical era, there still was the tendency to identify the "science of signs" with structural method. That was so because – most of all in France - semiotic research was done within the fold of structuralist linguistics. With his characteristic taste for the irreverent and the provocative, already expressed in the very title of his first essay on semiotics theory, Eco pointed out the risk of hiding from view the fact that structuralism was a most fruitful *method* by presenting it as a philosophy and a worldview: structuralist ontology.

The "ontological temptation" of structuralism was promoted by a view and a preconception, which could be termed its proximate temptations. It was a matter of conceiving of, and searching for, a "code of codes", an *Ur-System* or an "ultimate structure" (and Eco did not hesitate to posit a metasemiotics next to it also), as an axiomatized meeting place of all possible forms of knowledge, including the arts and the sciences. Eco explained it thus: «This entire axiomatic programme recalls semiology to Leibniz's *characteristica universalis*, and from Leibnitz all the way back to the late mediaeval *artes combinatoriae*, and to Llull». Indeed, while on the one hand, Eco appeared - with a typical pinch of sarcasm – as «the patronizing philosopher who delights in unmasking the "great returns"», on the other hand, he insistently called attention «to an historical inheritance that semiological studies must consciously take on board if they are to avoid useless efforts and to acquire valuable experience».

The reader, if he were to turn the first pages of this latest issue of *Antonianum* – and do so even before actually reading – will, by getting a glimpse of the anagrams and the figures, easily gain an impression of the heights reached by the *ars combinatoria* and the nascent formal logic, in the works of the Catalan Ramon Llull.

Pere Villalba i Varneda opens this issue with an article in Catalan: *Ars inveniendi: Ramon Llull*. The title both expresses how indissolubly linked to Llull's name are combinatorial logic and the *characteristica universalis*, and speaks to the value of the search for formalization in the

Ars: a heuristic tool, a device for gaining access to further knowledge and ever new discoveries. Animated by a Franciscan spirit Llull is far from any attempt at domination, and at technical-scientific manipulation, of the world through a *clavis universalis*, which has rather been the case in the modern and contemporary periods. Firmly anchored in an exemplarist metaphysics which translates into universal symbolism (Gilson; Bäumker), Llull sees in his *Ars*, not a contraption enabling us to calculate and then to produce truths useful to domination of the world, like a "philosopher's stone", but rather a formidable means for the discovery of the Truth that speaks itself and spreads itself throughout the universe, precisely an *ars inveniendi*.

This study represents a crowning achievement, among others, of Villalba i Varneda's life of academic research into Llullism. It is a wholly special crowning achievement, of which he may be particularly proud inasmuch as it is a highly specific contribution to all that may be knowable about Llull. Availing himself of the expertise of Roman Jorge Adillon Boladeres, Associate Professor at the *Universitat de Barcelona* and a Doctor in the Science of Mathematics, the Author succeeds at long last in explaining and "proving" the [pseudo]automatism of Figure IV, left unexplored by Platzek, who speaks only of a mathematical system, yet intuited by Colomer. Villalba i Varneda's study enriches, in such a way that if it were an external chapter of it would make a valuable addition to his own very valuable work: *Ramon Llull: vida i obres: Volum: 1. Anys: 1232-1287/1288: obres 1-37* (Barcelona 2015). On the inside front cover of that book, the celebrated Catalan Llullist thanks Umberto Eco and Federico Faggin, among other scholars, who were for him «the two masters who more than any others opened up for me the imaginative horizon of Ramon Llull» (*representen els dos mestres que més han expandit l'horitzó imaginatiu de Ramon Llull*).

Sławomir Oder, the Vicar Judicial of the Ordinary Court of the Diocese of Rome, presents the towering figure of St. John Paul II under a particular aspect, that of a "witness to hope". There is no shortage of hagiographies of the Pope from Wadowice that make fruitful use of this paradigm; yet Oder's article has the advantage of a specific angle on it: it starts from the Address the Pope delivered at the Antonianum during his Visit of 1982, considering with it speeches the same Pope gave at other Universities. The Author has the benefit, too, of an intimate knowledge

of Karol Wojtyła's, Pope John Paul II's, words and deeds, acquired or confirmed through his painstaking work as the Postulator of the Cause.

Yongho Francis Lee offers a reading of St. Bonaventure's *Le Cinque feste di Gesù Bambino* whereby he highlights the importance of the figure of St. Francis as "Forthbringer of God" and *altera Maria*. With Massimo Pasquale Cogliandro we are once more brought face to face with the philosophical theorizing and Scotian origins of the Rosminian system of thought; and have our attention turned to the reasoning of the Blessed Rosmini "on the question whether being may be predicated univocally of God and creatures", raised in the 16 March 1846 Letter to Pestalozza, in which he concluded: «You see now that when the Scotists maintain that being is predicated univocally of both God and creatures, they are right ... as long as they intend "being" in the sense of pure existence, as we intend it». Finally, Pietro Messa offers us his *Bibliography of Umberto Betti*, filling a gap in studies on this remarkable Franciscan theologian, who died a decade ago, on 1 April 2009. Just how significant was Betti's expert contribution to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council is strikingly suggested by the words addressed to him, in a letter of 14 November 2005, by none other than the then reigning Roman Pontiff, who, as Father Joseph Ratzinger, had been a fellow expert contributor to the work of the Council. Thus Pope Benedict XVI addressed Father Umberto Betti, with reference to one of the latter's best known works: «*My own contribution – I have to admit – was a modest one in comparison with yours. The depth and intensity of your contribution are evidenced by your book which has been, and remains, the classic and irreplaceable book on Chapter III of* Lumen Gentium. *Thank you for delivery of this opus magnum*!» (cf. *Antonianum*, LXXXII [2007] 634-635).

Among the *Essais*, in this issue, is first of all is Pietro Maurizio Faggioni's updated study on transhumanism as a challenge to the *humanum*, in the context of exponential developments in certain fields of knowledge that have fed that movement. Often indicated simply as *h*+; bioethics, and ethics generally, one must remain engaged in this area. Faggioni, is a trusted adviser to several departments of the Roman Curia. By training, a physican and surgeon, he specialized in endocrinology and is a full Professor of Systematic Moral Theology at the Alphonsian Academy, the celebrated Institute of Moral Theology, now marking its 70th anniversary.

The other two *Essais* represent speeches by two Professors of the Antonianum at two academic institutions. Both are much respected by our University, with which they are both connected in some way. They are Andrea Bizzozero's 8 November 2018 address (*on caring philosophy*), inaugurating the academic year at the Friars Minor Capuchin's "Sacro Cuore" Institute of Philosophical Studies, in Campobasso, and Giuseppe Buffon's paper (*on integral mission*) delivered on 9 November 2018 at the St. Bonaventure Pontifical Faculty of Theology, the Seraphicum.

This issue of *Antonianum* is further enriched by the *Acta* of the feast day of Blessed John Duns Scotus. There you will find, as always, the greetings by the Chancellor and by the Rector, and the annual report on the scholarly labours and publications of the Scotist Commission, given by its President, Josip Percan. At the centre of this academic event, and of the *Acta*, is the keynote address by Professor Carmela Bianco, on "*Ultimate Solitude*". *The "Communional Incommunicability" of the Person in John Duns Scotus*. Coming from the St. Thomas Aquinas Section, in Naples, of the Pontifical Theology Faculty of Southern Italy, Professor Bianco calls us to consider that which is now especially relevant in Scotus's thought, the concept of the "person". In this regard, too, the Subtle Doctor is shown to have been especially farsighted, conceiving personalism *ante litteram*, and proposing a vision of the human being in all its complexity. This vision is particularly enlightening in the context of that which Pope Francis describes as today's «deep anthropological crisis: the denial of the primacy of the human being!» (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 55).

Stéphane Oppes