

The poetry of Vergil in Hans Urs von Balthasar. A theological interpretation against a pessimistic view of the culture in the Occident

Abstract

In the various studies about Vergil's reception in the 20th century the philosophic-theological interpretation by Hans Urs von Balthasar has been ignored so far. The Swiss theologian locates Vergil's poetry in the openness of the ontological difference between the Sein (existence/be) and the Seiendes (entity/being). Thereby his Trinitarian-dialogical theology of the gift by God manifesting himself in his sovereign freedom and love offers the key for the transcendental interpretation of the Roman poet. Thus the epiphany of the logos and its magnificence in history accomplish themselves in the kairos of the guise of the poem and of the Pax Augusta. In the light of the *Exercitia spiritualia* by Ignatius of Loyola, Aeneas fulfils – in von Balthasar's interpretation – his mission, commanded by the deity and determined by the *fatum*, in humility, obedience and renunciation on condition of the Ignatian *indifferencia*, so that the Seiendes (entity/being) must let the Sein (existence/be) be in imperturbability.