

theory of perception is to provide a convincing alternative to other contemporary theories.

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PERFECTION IN DEATH: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF COURAGE IN AQUINAS by Patrick M. Clark, *Catholic University of America Press*, Washington, DC, 2015, pp. xxi + 317, £59.95

With this book, Patrick M. Clark brings readers into a discussion about courage and the meaning of death, a discussion that has spanned millennia and engaged some of the West's greatest thinkers and remains alive for contemporary scholars. *Perfection in Death* is constructed in a broadly chronological order, with Aquinas's thought bookended by discussions of ancient and contemporary thinkers.

Chapter One, considers the contributions of Homer, Plato, and Aristotle to a philosophy of courage and death. Homer's Achilles possesses martial courage, which centers around public honour for having faced physical death. Plato's Socrates exemplifies cool-headed philosophical courage. Aristotle's generic 'virtuous man' pursues contemplation in the context of political realities that call for courage on the battlefield and off of it. Clark argues that Aristotle would reject Plato's understanding of philosophical courage and would see Socrates's suicide, not as 'happy' or noble, but as an unfortunate frustration of life (pp.65-66).

Chapter Two provides the Thomistic metaphysics and anthropology that serve as a foundation for a theological understanding of courage. Significantly, Clark claims that 'courage is perfective of the human person chiefly because it defends and sustains the created intellect's ability to know the truth about the world' (p.88). Without citing Oliva Blanchette's significant work, *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology* (1992), Clark introduces the often-neglected issue of how the individual good relates to the common good, especially how courage fits into the universe's providential order (pp.89-93). Clark contends that Aquinas, unlike the Stoics, 'accepts that the authentic exercise of virtue may in fact fail to make its possessor good and ultimately happy on account of chance factors entirely beyond an agent's control' (p.103). Perhaps Clark envisages an imperfectly virtuous pagan who fails to receive faith and baptism because of 'chance factors'. But Clark voices support for Christine Swanton's anti-demonistic virtue theory, and Jean Porter's pluralistic understanding of human fulfillment (p.121 n. 18). It seems he rejects Aquinas's view that virtue makes its possessor good and his work good (see *ST* I-II, q. 55, a. 3, sc).

Chapter Three discusses how the ‘immanent context of death’ influences Thomas’s understanding of virtue in comparison to Aristotelian and Stoic conceptions (p.107). According to Clark, Aquinas adopts ancient themes, but offers a radically new understanding of human perfection in light of infused, supernatural virtue and the ‘self-surpassing teleology of human perfection’(pp.124-36). According to Aquinas, divine revelation shows that death is a punishment for sin, and the consequence of the removal of original justice whereby the human body was prevented from dissolution. In Chapter Four, Clark maintains that Thomas’s account of virtue, particularly that of courage, decisively alters Aristotle’s and leans towards a neo-Platonic version. For Thomas, courage consists primarily in enduring aggression, above all, that which threatens death. Hence, the Christian paradigm of courage is Christ and his followers, the martyrs and other saints—whose courage is defined by the object (end) for which they endured difficulty (p.173 and pp.210-11). For Aristotle, courage is more of an active virtue that restrains the passions so that one can remain steadfast in the good of reason while faced with danger and death. In this context, Clark argues that Aquinas’s account of courage strongly resembles Kant’s understanding of virtue in general (p.170, p.179). For Aquinas, courage works against a particular natural inclination (toward self-preservation); for Kant, authentic virtue works against all of one’s natural inclinations.

Chapter Five returns to the notion of the common good in relation to courage and martyrdom. Following Thomas Osborne’s account in *Self-Love and Love of God in Thirteenth Century Ethics* (2005), Clark discusses in detail how one’s inclination toward the created common good—and to the uncreated God as the most common good—is natural to each person. Clark maintains that courageous acts cannot exist in a sinless world, for Adam’s fall inaugurated death; but courage is the virtue that overcomes self-love and fear of death, directing a person toward the good of the universe, namely, God (p.208). This perspective needs to be integrated with Aquinas’s argument that the moral virtues, including courage, remain in heaven without evil (*ST* I-II, q. 67, a. 1). Clark rightly emphasizes that the courage of martyrs is tied to their union with God and their belief in divine Providence. Christ therefore exemplifies courage, for his union with the Father is ‘at once the cause, the form, and the object’ of a martyr’s happiness (p.244).

The final two chapters put Clark’s view of courage into dialogue with contemporary thought. Chapter Six discusses the exemplarist virtue theory of Linda Zagzebski, who theorizes that virtuous persons serve as ‘exemplars’ of moral goodness and the motives of these exemplars constitute the essence of moral goodness (p.249). In Clark’s view, this exemplarity recommends Zagzebski’s position over that of Philippa Foot and Rosalind Hurthhouse, who do not account for the practical rationality of self-sacrifice for the sake of truth (p.261). Chapter Seven acknowledges disjunctions between Zagzebski’s philosophy and Aquinas’s, but argues

that the modern Catholic magisterium's Christocentrism—as represented by elements found in documents from the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor*—are congruent with her emphasis on exemplarity. Livio Melina's position is discussed as a way forward to a 'Thomistic Moral Exemplarism' (pp.292-300). In Clark's assessment, although Aquinas does not develop the theme, the Angelic Doctor's 'moral theory is suffused with the exemplarity of Christ' (p.303).

Although the subtitle seems to promise more discussion of Christ's courage than is found in the text, Clark's work will prove to be a handy resource for understanding Aquinas's account of the virtue as it is contextualized by ancient and contemporary discussions. It also serves as a companion volume to Servais Pinckaers's *The Spirituality of Martyrdom* (2016), translated by Patrick Clark and Annie Hounsokou.

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DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE IN BYZANTIUM: THE FATE OF THE SOUL IN THEOLOGY, LITURGY, AND ART by Vasileios Marinis, *Cambridge University Press, New York, 2017, pp. xv + 202, £75.00, hbk*

Augustine exclaimed that would we had ensured, by living rightly in paradise, that there really was no death. But, as it is, death is a reality; and so troublesome a reality that it cannot be explained by any verbal formula nor got rid of by any rational argument. Even as aided by revelation, the Christian does well to remember the irreducible obscurity of aspects of eschatology, and the history of doctrine and spirituality testifies to the varying interplay of faith and reason. At one stage of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-9), Eastern delegates voiced a revealing exasperation when they complained that if they said anything the Latins were never at a loss for a lengthy answer. What the delegates held to was the faith their fathers had taught them, the faith of the seven Councils, and for them that was enough. In its recent document on the afterlife of infants who die unbaptised, the Catholic International Theological Commission recognises that concerning this the Greek Fathers show their characteristic apophatic sensibility.

Professor Vasileios Marinis (Yale University) has now published a short but densely documented and finely argued study of several aspects of death and the afterlife in Byzantium. He deliberately excludes the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment and related events. The subjects covered inevitably brought the Orthodox into debate with Latin Catholics, especially as Marinis's focus is on the evidence between the ninth century and the fall of Constantinople in 1453, whilst not neglecting earlier and some later material. Some readers, perhaps fearing the excessively polemical tone that can mar approaches to