

# The Problem of Temporality in the Literary Framework of Nicholas of Cusa's *De pace fidei*

Jason Aleksander<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper explores Nicholas of Cusa's framing of the *De pace fidei* as a dialogue taking place *in caelo rationis*. On the one hand, this framing allows Nicholas of Cusa to argue that all religious rites presuppose the truth of a single, unified faith and so temporally manifest divine logos in a way accommodated to the historically unique conventions of different political communities. On the other hand, at the end of the *De pace fidei*, the interlocutors in the heavenly dialogue are enjoined to return to earth and lead their countrymen in a gradual conversion to the acceptance of rites which would explicitly acknowledge the metaphysically presupposed transcendent unity of all true faiths. In light of these two aspects of the literary framing of the *De pace fidei*, the question that motivates this paper concerns the extent to which the understanding of history subtending Cusanus' temporal political aims is consistent with the understanding of history grounded in his metaphysical presupposition that there is *una religio in omni diversitate rituum*. In addressing this question, I shall argue that the literary strategy of the *De pace fidei* sacrifices Nicholas of Cusa's apologetic doctrinal aims insofar as the text creates an allegorical space in which the tension between its literal and figurative dimensions assigns to its readers the task of choosing their own orientations to the significance of history as a foundation for future action.

**Keywords:** Nicholas of Cusa, Cusanus, *De pace fidei*, interreligious dialogue, religious diversity

Nicholas of Cusa's explicit aim in the *De pace fidei* is to argue for the thesis that, by means of interreligious dialogue, "a single easy harmony could be found and through it a lasting peace established by appropriate and true means" between the diverse religions of the world.<sup>2</sup> However, the "appropriate and true means"

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<sup>2</sup> § 1.1. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *De pace fidei* are from the text provided in Biechler and Bond 1990. Latin references are to *Nicolai de Cusa Opera omnia iussu et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Heigelbergensis ad codicum fidem edita* as reproduced by the Cusanus Portal of the Institute for Cusanus Research at the University of Trier (<http://www.cusanus-portal.de/>). Chapter and section references for all works follow those of the *Opera omnia*. In this case, Biechler and Bond's translation is derived from the last two clauses of the following sentence: *Accidit ut post dies aliquot, forte ex diuturna continuata mediatione, visio quaedam eidem zeloso manifestaretur, ex qua elicuit quod paucorum*

that Nicholas has in mind seem to be qualified by his explicit admission that only those who are “vigorous in intellect” would be able to understand that “there is one religion and worship, which is presupposed in all the diversity of rites.” (§ 6.16)<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Nicholas also seems to admit that the “single easy harmony” can be achieved only under the condition that there are, among the diverse religions of the world, enlightened rulers or prophets who recognize, encourage, and participate in dialogue. And, moreover, it would only be under the peaceful conditions established by these enlightened rulers and prophets that there would also be good reason for the hope that reason might (eventually) win out such that “all diversity of religions will be led to one orthodox faith.” (§ 3.8)<sup>4</sup>

Despite the fact that Nicholas explicitly articulates these qualifications regarding the potential practical benefits of interreligious dialogue, a good deal of recent attention on the *De pace fidei* nevertheless focuses either on assessing Nicholas’ understanding of the practicality of achieving peace through an appeal to the fundamental unity of faith underlying all religions or on the coherence between his apparent ecumenism and the text’s apologetic ambitions on behalf of Christian theology.<sup>5</sup> Taken in aggregate, then, it would be fair to say that these recent studies tend to be focused on the ramifications of Nicholas’ explicit attempts to reconcile his own presuppositions that, on the one hand, all temporal religious rites are equally accurate (or equally inaccurate) manifestations of the one true faith underlying them all and his insistence that, on the other hand, some specific rites – e.g., baptism and communion – are so intimately associated with the one transcendently unified faith that these specific rites are not merely optional but are, rather, required for entrance into the one true faith.

Consequently, the manductive process by which the representatives of other communities (especially those representing Islam and Judaism) are led to agreement with the Word and its apostolic representatives provokes suspicion. For instance, even leaving aside Nicholas’ record as a papal legate,<sup>6</sup> it is difficult to square Nicholas’ apparent ecumenism with the fact that the imagined discourse of the *De pace fidei* denies the representative of Judaism the one thing that every other participant achieves. For, when the Jewish interlocutor is depicted as reluctant to acknowledge and accept the mystery of Incarnation, the

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*sapientum omnium talium ediversitatum quae in religionibus per orbem observantur peritia pollentium unam posse facilem quondam concordantiam reperiri, ac per eam in religione perpetuam pacem convenienti ac veraci medio constitui.*

<sup>3</sup> *Una est igitur religio et cultus omnium intellectu vigentium, quae in omni diversitate rituum praesupponitur.*

<sup>4</sup> *...perducetur omnis religionum diversitas in unam fidem orthodoxam.* In relation to the rhetorical strategies of the *De pace fidei* and other works, see especially the discussions of Nicholas’ reliance on a conception of the ecumenical methods of “manuduction” (leading by the hand) and *interpretatio pia* in Biechler 1991, Biechler 2004, and Bakos 2011.

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Bakos 2011, Costigliolo 2012, Euler 1990, Helander 1993, and Levy et al. 2014.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Nicholas’ legatine decrees against Jews, see Izbicki 2004.

Persian points out that "it will be more difficult to bring the Jews than others to this belief for they admit nothing expressly about Christ." Even more telling, to this remark, Peter simply responds:

[T]hey have all these things in their scriptures about Christ; but following the literal sense they [refuse] to understand (*intelligere nolunt*). Nevertheless, this resistance of the Jews will not impede concord. For they are few and will not be able by arms to disturb the whole world. (§ 12.41, my emendation)<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, it is precisely problematic passages such as this that make the dialogue seem so relevant to contemporary interests in the possibilities for and obstacles to interreligious dialogue. Therefore, even though Nicholas' own reflections on the potential practical efficacy of interreligious dialogue for bringing about peace are explicitly qualified in the ways I have identified above, I do believe that the recent scholarly attention on these troubling dimensions of the dialogue is merited. Nevertheless, attending to the qualifications that Nicholas offers in his own text suggests that there are other avenues that are worth exploring in the study of the *De pace fidei*.

To be specific, in this essay, I do not intend to focus on either the extrinsic arguments of the *De pace fidei*, nor even why I think a reasonable person can only conclude that Nicholas' insistence – assuming that it is even correct to interpret him as insisting on this – that peace can be achieved through a kind of manuductive interreligious dialogue modeled on the *De pace fidei* should provoke suspicion. Instead, I intend to call attention to the philosophical significance of the literary framework of the dialogue. That is, rather than treat the text as if its most important philosophical insights can be located in its recommendations for producing peace between religions in the temporal world or in its apologetic intentions on behalf of Christian theology, I intend to focus on the philosophical significance of Nicholas' literary framework – a framework that itself seems to presuppose only that "faith" is the product of a tension between the extrinsic meaning of revealed doctrine(s) and the human being's imaginative capacity to unfold meaning from mere doctrine.

In this vein, it is important to note at the outset that the opening sentences of Nicholas of Cusa's *De pace fidei* frame the entire text by indicating that it was occasioned by a particular event in human history, the fall of Constantinople in 1453:

After the brutal deeds recently committed by the Turkish ruler at Constantinople were reported to a certain man, who had once seen the sites of

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<sup>7</sup> PERSA: "...Erit tamen difficilius Iudaeos ad huius credulitatem conducere quam alios, quoniam ipsi de Christo nihil per expressum admittunt." PETRUS: "Habent in suis scripturis de Christo illa omnia; sed litteralem sensum sequentes intelligere nolunt. Haec tamen Iudaeorum resistentia non impedit concordiam. Pauci enim sunt et turbare universum mundum armis non poterunt." It is in light of this comment in particular that I have argued in other contexts (Aikin and Aleksander 2013 and Aleksander 2014) that Nicholas' anti-Jewish sentiments constitute a betrayal of his own apologetic strategy in the *De pace fidei*.

those regions, he was inflamed by a zeal for God; with many sighs he implored the Creator of all things that in his mercy he restrain the persecution, raging more than ever because of different religious rites. (§ 1.1)<sup>8</sup>

Yet while the reader of the *De pace fidei* is initially encouraged to think of the work as a response to that specific historical event, Nicholas quickly moves on to reframe the rest of the dialogue by taking it out of the temporal realm altogether. Immediately following the lamentation we have just read, Nicholas begins to construct a literary space in which he offers an imagined discussion that takes place at an “intellectual height” (*intellectualem altitudinem*, § 1.2) – or, as he puts it later, in “the heaven of reason” (*in caelo rationis*, § 19.68) – between the Incarnate Word (*Verbum / Logos*<sup>9</sup>) or Peter or Paul and seventeen (identified) “eminent men of this world” (*virii graviores mundi huius*, § 3.9) representing diverse provincial customs. In all, the seventeen representatives with speaking parts include: a Greek, an Italian, an Arab, an Indian, a Chaldean, a Jew, a Scythian, a Frenchman, a Persian, a Syrian, a Spaniard, a German, a Tartar, an Armenian, a Bohemian, an Englishman, and, although he is only given one sentence in the entire *De pace fidei*, a Turk (see § 4.47). Moreover, just as the opening of the dialogue emphasizes this literary framework, so, too, does the abrupt ending to the dialogue; for, at the end of the dialogue, these seventeen representatives of the world’s diverse religions are commanded by the King of kings to return to the temporal world “and lead the nations to the unity of true worship” and to “come together in Jerusalem as to a common center and accept one faith in the name of all.” (§ 19.68)<sup>10</sup>

To see why this literary framing of the *De pace fidei* is worth our attention, let me begin, then, with a few questions to help highlight its peculiarity. In the first place, I think we should wonder: to what point or points in history are these interlocutors commanded to return at the end of the dialogue? While the text is clear enough about the *geographic* locations from which each interlocutor is drawn and to which each is therefore returned, the question of the *historical* periods from whence they come is curiously and conspicuously ambiguous. Indeed, the first human interlocutor identified in the *De pace fidei* is described as

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<sup>8</sup> *Fuit ex hiis, quae apud Constantinopolim proxime saevissime acta per Turkorum regem divulgabantur, quidam vir zelo Dei accensus, qui loca illarum regionum aliquando viderat, ut pluribus gemitibus oraret omnium creatorem quod persecutionem, quae ob diversum ritum religionum plus solito saevit, sua pietate moderaretur.*

<sup>9</sup> In *De pace fidei*, Nicholas typically signifies Christ with *Verbum*. But in § 10.27, for instance, Nicholas makes explicit the notion that, in this sense, *Verbum* should be understood as identical to *Logos*: “Reason, which is the *Logos* or Word, emanates from that which speaks it so that when the Omnipotent speaks the Word, those things which are enfolded in the Word are made in reality...” (*ratio autem quae <logos> seo verbum, a proferente emanate ut, cum Omnipotens Verbum profert, facta sint ea in re quae in Verbo complicantur*).

<sup>10</sup> *Et mandatum est per Regem regum ut sapientes redeant et ad unitatem veri cultus nationes inducant... et deinde cum plena omnium potestate in Iherusalem quasi ad centrum commune confluent et omnium nominicus unam fidem acceptant.*

being "older than the others and apparently a Greek" (*prae ceteris senior et, ut apparuit, Graecus*, § 4.10). Is it not tempting to assume that this Greek is raptured from ancient Athens, led to the conclusion that wisdom is one and whole, and then returned, not to Constantinople of 1453, but to the Athens of some ancient past? In fact, if the reference to Eusebius near the end of the dialogue (§ 19.68) can be taken as any indication, perhaps we are even encouraged to imagine – almost as if in a science fiction movie involving some form of time travel – that what *was* responsible for the historical introduction of a *prisca theologica* in ancient Orphic and Platonic sources – i.e., of a *preperatio evangelica* – is this very conversation that is occasioned by the response of the King of kings to the lamentations of both Nicholas of Cusa himself in 1453 as well as those expressed by the archangel whom Nicholas' pilgrim saw in a vision occasioned by his zealous meditation – and, perhaps occasioned, too, by our own lamentations today (and those of indefinitely many who are still to come in this world). In other words, the ambiguity of the historical origins of the text's interlocutors suggest that it should be possible to imagine them to be representatives from various diverse times and places such that they are as equally likely to include a Jewish representative from Jerusalem of either 70 CE or 1453 CE (when, as Nicholas' depiction of Peter would have it, "Jews [were] few and unable to trouble the world by force of arms") as an Arab (whether Christian or Muslim) from Gaza of 2014.

But, especially since this reading does seem to treat the *De pace fidei* as a science fiction novel, I feel that I owe a justification that can establish that I am not practicing a form of interpretive alchemy. It is therefore worth reflecting on the first three chapters of the dialogue in a little more detail. As I have already noted, the *De pace fidei* begins by describing a man who, having heard reports of the fall of Constantinople, beseeches God to intervene in the conflict. We are told that this man, over the course of prolonged meditation, came to recognize that, by attending to what is held in common by the wise men who exemplify devotion to the rites of specific communities, an underlying harmony can be found through which can be made possible a perpetual peace in the temporal world. Thus, the narrator says that he decided to set down the vision that led to this conclusion so that this insight could be shared with others.

It is here that Nicholas indicates that his pilgrim had been taken up to an intellectual height where he witnessed a conversation between the King of heaven and earth and angelic messengers bearing laments from every part of the world before the full assembly of saints. Perhaps we are also encouraged to think that the pilgrim who was carried up to this heaven was even included as a participant in the dialogue, for, like the pilgrim himself, the other participants in the dialogue are described as existing in this heaven *quasi in extasim rapti* – that is, *as if* raptured into ecstasy (§ 3.9). In any case, as I have already suggested, the identification of distinct geographical locations might also function as temporal markers in the literary framework of the *De pace fidei*. Accordingly, it seems

tempting to suppose that the angels, at this juncture in the text, are delivering laments from *various* specific places *and* times in the world to a heavenly court in which the conversation must unfold through an *intemporale tempus* – to borrow an expression that Nicholas frequently uses in his later work, the *De aequalitate* of 1459.

There are several points that compel this interpretation. First, it seems safe to assume that the fact that the angels deliver their laments before the full assembly of saints acknowledges that this heaven of reason is one that enfolds within itself the completion or fulfillment of the temporal world (I will offer a justification for this point below). Second, we are told that these angels – or intellectual powers – had been established by the King of the universe *from the beginning* over each of the worldly provinces and over each of the religious sects. Third, when we turn to the supplication of the archangel, Nicholas seems to be suggesting that the lament that is offered for the fall of Constantinople can be treated as a single specific expression of the same generic lament for human fallenness that the archangel offers, for the archangel does not refer to the specific event of the fall of Constantinople – or to any specific event – but instead points out that “it is a characteristic of the earthly human condition that a longstanding custom which is taken as having become nature is defended as truth. Thus not insignificant dissensions occur when each community prefers its faith to another.” (§ 1.4)<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the King of heaven’s response to this lamentation is similarly generalizable rather than tied in any specific way to the events of 1453. In fact, the reply is brief as well as general; the King of kings simply reminds the heavenly company that because human beings “walk in accordance with the conditions of the sensible life... and not in accordance with the intellectual inner man” (§ 2.7)<sup>12</sup> it was necessary to provide prophets to help rectify human will but that, when these failed, it was also necessary to send into the world the Word through which he had also created the world. This Word, we are told, was “clothed with humanity so that at least in this way he might illuminate the docile man having a most free choice and so that he might see that he should walk not according to the outward man but according to the inner man.” (§ 2.7)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Habet autem hoc humana terrena condicio quod longa consuetudo, quae in naturam transisse accipitur, pro veritate defenditur. Sic eveniunt non parvae dissensiones, quando quaelibet communitas suam fidem alteri praefert.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ambulans secundum condiciones vitae sensibilis... et non secundum intellectualem interiorem hominem.*

<sup>13</sup> *Quod induit humanitate, ut sic saltem hominem docilem liberrimi arbitrii illuminaret, et videret non secundum exteriorem sed interiorem hominem ambulandum, si aliquando reverti speraret ad immortalis vitae dulcedinem.* Strangely, this doesn’t answer the archangel’s request for clarification about why human beings are misled. Recall that the archangel has pointed out that human beings are misled by taking mere signs of the truth for the real thing. The King of heaven’s response is that he sent prophets and the Incarnate Word to rectify this failure. But of course, this is somewhat circular since it is only by mistaking belief in the mere extrinsic

In light of these observations, the explicit temporal markers in the dialogue should rightly seem more puzzling than they might otherwise. From the reader's perspective, God's response to the lamentation seems to stand at the present moment looking back upon the past and in preparation for the unfolding of a future. But, as I have already noted, there does not seem to be any compelling reason to assume that it is, in fact, 1453 in the dialogue's imagined discourse in the heaven of reason. Or, rather, perhaps it is more accurate to say that it would not seem to violate the spirit of the text to allow that it might be, simultaneously, 399 BCE, 1453 CE, and 2014 CE in the heaven of reason. Indeed, since the temporal world is, for Nicholas, the image of the eternal, and since all things, both temporal and eternal, are enfolded *in* and unfolded *through* the Incarnate Word, each place and event in the temporal world is present in the eternal from which it is unfolded. Hence the past, present, and future are images through which the Word manifests itself to the human intellect – they are, as Nicholas puts it in the *De ludo globi*, measuring instruments created by the rational soul for the purposes of describing and understanding the world.<sup>14</sup> But that these events unfold through the immutable divine intellect and can each also be measured by an *arche* and an *eschaton* of their own unique unfoldings is emphasized by the King of king's final response to the archangel's lament: "Since these things have been done, what is it that could have been done and was not?" (§ 2.7)

In other words, unless we imagine that the answer to the King of king's apparently rhetorical question is that something else should have been done that was not done, then we are led, I think, to the conclusion that the dialogue that subsequently transpires between the Word and the raptured representatives of specific communities is offered as an imagined conversation between representatives of *both* different regions and times in whom a single wisdom is contracted and hidden from view by the very diversity of rites that distinguish them *as* representatives of these different times and places. If so, however, then far from suggesting that this interreligious dialogue in the heaven of reason will help resolve the specific crisis of 1453, the *De pace fidei* occasions mainly the recognition that the distortion of human will that occurs when longstanding custom is taken as having become nature and is defended as truth is a pervasive, probably ineliminable feature of human existence, for it is through signs that we identify meaning, but it is also our attachment to these signs that distorts our will in making use of the meanings that we find.

The forgoing literary analysis ought to be enough to raise the question about the philosophical significance of the literary framework of the *De pace*

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*signs* of the one true faith as faith itself that people seem to go wrong, so how is it that supplying prophets is supposed to prevent this from happening?

<sup>14</sup> See especially *De ludo globi* II, § 94. For a discussion of the *De ludo globi*'s philosophy of time, see Duclow and Wikström 2011 and Duclow's forthcoming "Tempus – Aeternitas – Perpetuum 'Eternal Time': Nicholas of Cusa on World, Time and Eternity."

*fidei*. However, before I offer my own conclusion about the possible philosophical ramifications of this analysis, I would like to offer a caveat of sorts. I hope I have not given the impression that I believe Nicholas was not deeply troubled by the events of 1453. And I certainly do not intend to argue that the literary aspects of the *De pace fidei* indicate that Nicholas was entirely unconcerned with practical questions about how to bring about peace between parties thrown into conflicts with each other that are occasioned by or, at least, catalyzed by each party's investment in its own unique rites and beliefs. In fact, I happen to believe that Nicholas *did* intend for the *De pace fidei* to persuade its Christian readers to take a more moderate tone and different approach to the problem raised by what most of his European contemporaries regarded as a grave threat to their particular way of life. We have, for instance, the evidence of Nicholas' epistolary communication with Juan de Segovia in which it seems fairly clear that Nicholas did believe that a method of manuduction could serve as a *practical* and *expedient* means of achieving peace – even though we must acknowledge, I think, that Nicholas in no way suggests that the specific methods one should employ ought to be modeled on the conversation that is depicted in the *De pace fidei*.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, I think I have made a case for the claim that the question of how to create and sustain interreligious dialogue is not, after all, the most philosophically significant question raised by the *De pace fidei*. Indeed, even were I to grant that Nicholas *did* intend a practical political outcome in writing the *De pace fidei*, it seems to me that any such intention is constantly subverted by the ambiguities and paradoxes introduced by the literary framework in which the text offers itself for interpretation. In short, even if these literary puzzles do not undermine one's confidence in overt claims of the text about the practical efficacy of interreligious dialogue, they do, I contend, make possible a different kind of practical outcome – one that is more fundamental to Nicholas' philosophy and theology than even the concern for temporal peace. This other practical aim, I would argue, is to accomplish the activation of human will by placing the reader's intellect in a state of suspension. By abducting the reader from a state of present belief and carrying the reader as a fellow pilgrim into an allegorical space in which there is a tension between the literal and figurative dimensions of

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<sup>15</sup> In response to a letter from Juan de Segovia in 1454 laying out both *practical* and theological reasons why dialogue rather than force would be the most effective way of dealing with the reality of contemporary conflicts with Muslims (especially Turks), Nicholas replied telling his interlocutor about his own *De pace fidei*, and, as James Biechler has pointed out, also offered "enthusiastic support" and suggested "a practical addition to Segovia's proposal" that recommended that the Christian side of any interreligious conferences "be placed in the hands of influential laymen rather than priests because, he said, the Turks would prefer these." (Biechler 1991, p. 200) Excerpts from Juan de Segovia's letter and Nicholas' full response can be found in *De pace fidei cum epistula ad Ioannem de Segobia*, vol. 7 of the *Opera omnia* of Nicholas of Cusa. For a summary of the chapter headings of his letter to Nicholas of Cusa, see also Housley 1996, 144-47. For further discussion of Juan de Segovia's part in this, see Wolf 2014.



the text, Nicholas renders the reader's intellect over to the need to *choose* a future direction for its attention. In this respect, the imaginative space of the *De pace fidei* converts mere belief in doctrine – nothing but a present and contracted manifestation of truth – into an active *experience* as an occasion for the exercise of free choice.<sup>16</sup> Or, put differently, the imaginative space of the *De pace fidei* sacrifices the certainty of revealed doctrines in order to make possible a turning – a conversion – of will and intellect together toward a faith that might best be described as a variety of learned ignorance. Indeed, it is in this respect that Nicholas' text might be better understood as offering a rich philosophical reason for its readers to be modest and moderate in their ecumenical ambitions, for the text does not so much give us a model for how to have conversations with others as it does offer us a reason to be wary of the veracity of our own doctrines (and so, too, to be wary of the text's own apologetic bent). Thus an interpretation of the *intemporale tempus* in which the conversation of the *De pace fidei* is imagined to occur gives an occasion for its readers to practice the kind of self-mastery that is recommended in one of Nicholas' earlier works, *De filiatione Dei* (1445) – and so I will close with this quotation from that work:

We who aspire unto being God's sons are admonished not to cling to sensible objects, which are symbolic signs of the true, but rather, because of our infirmity, to use these objects – without any polluting adherence thereto – in the following manner: as if through them the Teacher-of-truth were speaking to us and as if they were books containing the expression of His mind. And, in that case, we will contemplate intellectual things in and through sensible things; and we will ascend [contemplatively], by means of a certain disproportional parallelism, from transitory and insubstantial temporal things, whose being is in constant flux, unto eternal things, where all succession is caught up into the abiding permanency of rest. And we will have leisure for the contemplation of that true, just, and joyous life. We will be free from all pollution (which draws us downward), so that with ardent desire for learning more of God, and being free from this world, we can enter into that life by attaining mastery.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Indeed, although it does not mitigate Nicholas' anti-Judaism, it does explain the presence of the "villain" in the text – the Jew, Peter says, refuses to give up the literal meaning (see § 15.53). Thus, the figure of the Jew within the *De pace fidei* refuses to practice the right form of reading and therefore mimics the fall of man by relinquishing the opportunity to exercise free will in response to the interpretive demands required for faith. (Ironically, Nicholas adduces from his own characterization of Jewish stubbornness – evinced, one supposes, by reports of Jewish acts of *Kiddush HaShem* – the conclusion that Jews at least implicitly believe in the possibility of individual immortality.)

<sup>17</sup> *Admonemur nos, qui ad filiationem dei aspiramus, non inhaerere sensibilibus, quae sunt aenigmatica signa veri, sed ipsis ob infirmitatem nostram absque adhaesione coinquinationis ita uti, quasi per ipsa nobis loquatur magister veritatis et libri sint mentis eius expressionem continentes. Et tunc in sensibilibus contemplabimur intellectualia et ascendemus quadam improportionali comparatione de transitoriis et fluidis temporalibus, quorum esse est in instabili fluxu, ad aeterna, ubi rapta est omnis successio in fixam quietis permanentiam, et vacabimus circa speculationem verae, iustae et gaudiosae vitae separantes nos ab omni inquinamento deorsum se trahente, ut possimus cum ardenti desiderio studii circa ipsum eam ipsam vitam*

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*magistrali adeptione hinc absoluti introire (De fliatione Dei II, § 61)*. The translation is that of Jasper Hopkins in Nicholas of Cusa 2001.

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