

JEAN GERSON – APOSTLE OF UNITY

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

EDITED BY
HEIKO A. OBERMAN, Tucson, Arizona

IN COOPERATION WITH
ROBERT BAST, Knoxville, Tennessee
HENRY CHADWICK, Cambridge
BRIAN TIERNEY, Ithaca, New York
ARJO VANDERJAGT, Groningen

VOLUME XCIV

G.H.M. POSTHUMUS MEYJES
JEAN GERSON – APOSTLE OF UNITY





Gerson as ecclesiastical doctor (*pulpit in the Convent-Church at Urach, Germany*)

JEAN GERSON APOSTLE OF UNITY

HIS CHURCH POLITICS AND ECCLESIOLOGY

BY

G. H. M. POSTHUMUS MEYJES

TRANSLATED BY

J. C. GRAYSON



BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN
1999

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Posthumus Meyjes, G. H. M. (Guillaume Henri Marie)
Jean Gerson – apostle of unity : his church politics and ecclesiology
/ by G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes.
p. cm. — (Studies in the history of Christian thought, ISSN
0081-8607 ; v. 94)
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
ISBN 9004112960 (alk. paper)
1. Gerson, Jean, 1363-1429. 2. Church—History of doctrines—
—Middle Ages, 600-1500. I. Title. II. Series.
BX4705.G45P57 1999
262'.02'092—dc21 99-29699
CIP

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Posthumus Meyjes, Guillaume H. M.:

Jean Gerson – Apostle of Unity : his church politics and ecclesiology
/ by G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes. – Leiden ; Boston ; Köln : Brill,
1999
(Studies in the history of Christian thought ; Vol. 94)
ISBN 90-04-11296-0

ISSN 0081-8607
ISBN 90 04 11296 0

© Copyright 1999 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic,
mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written
permission from the publisher.*

*Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal
use is granted by Brill provided that
the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright
Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910
Danvers MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.*

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

To Engelen

CONTENTS

Preface	xi
List of illustrations	xv
Introduction	I

PART ONE

GERSON'S CHURCH POLITICS

Chapter One Gerson and the ecclesiastical policy of the University of Paris until 1395	11
Chapter Two First years as Chancellor of the University, 1395-1398	49
Chapter Three On the basis of subtraction, 1398-1403	71
Chapter Four Obedience restored, 1403-1406	98
Chapter Five On the way to the Council of Pisa, 1406-1408	122
Chapter Six Gerson and the Council of Pisa, 1409	146
Chapter Seven From Pisa to the Council of Constance, 1409-1418	177

PART TWO

GERSON'S ECCLESIOLOGY

Chapter Eight Church and Law	207
1. Theology and Canon law	210
2. <i>Lex divina—lex naturalis—lex humana</i>	232
3. The concept of epikie	242

Chapter Nine	Church, Hierarchy, and General Council I:	
	The treatise <i>De potestate ecclesiastica et de origine iuris et legum</i>	247
1.	Ecclesiastical power A	252
1.	Power of order	253
a.	<i>super corpus Christi verum</i>	253
b.	<i>super corpus Christi mysticum</i>	253
2.	Power of jurisdiction	255
a.	<i>in foro interiori</i>	255
b.	<i>in foro exteriori</i>	257
2.	Ecclesiastical power B	259
1.	Ecclesiastical power in the absolute sense	261
2.	Ecclesiastical power in the material sense	264
3.	Ecclesiastical power in the executive sense	266
3.	Plenitude of ecclesiastical power	268
1.	<i>Plenitudo potestatis</i> in respect to the papal office	269
2.	<i>Plenitudo potestatis</i> in respect to the Church	273
3.	<i>Plenitudo potestatis</i> in respect to the State and the temporal possessions of the Church	278
Chapter Ten	Church, Hierarchy, and General Council II:	
	The essentials of Gerson's ecclesiology	287
1.	The hierarchy of the Church as totality	289
2.	The Cosmos and the State as mystical bodies	298
3.	The Church as a mystical body	302
4.	General Council and infallibility	309
Chapter Eleven	Church, Scriptures, and Tradition	314
1.	The general interpretation of the Scriptures	316
2.	Church, Scriptures, and Tradition in the anti-heretical treatises	317
3.	Church, Scriptures, and Tradition in the catalogue of the faith	327
4.	The Church and the Doctors	330
5.	Scriptures and Theology	335
Chapter Twelve	The Sources of Gerson's ecclesiology	340
1.	Marsilius of Padua and Dietrich of Niem	342
2.	Ockham	348
3.	Ockhamists	352
a.	Pierre d'Ailly	352
b.	Conrad of Gelnhausen and Henry of Langenstein	353

CONTENTS

ix

4. John of Paris	359
5. Bonaventure	364
6. Durand of St Pourçain	367
7. Henry of Ghent	373
8. The Curialists	377
Conclusion	381
Appendices	
I. The author of the treatise <i>De concilio unius oboedientiae</i>	389
II. The dating of the <i>Liber de vita spirituali animae</i>	392
III. Whom did Gerson hold up to Benedict XIII as a warning example in his sermon <i>Apparuit gratia Dei</i>	394
IV. The dating of the sermon <i>Vade in pace</i>	397
Abbreviations	401
Bibliography	403
Indexes	
Index of Biblical texts	417
Index of legal texts	419
Index of works of Gerson	420
Index of persons	426
Index of subjects, terms, and expressions	432