

More than Luther: The Reformation and the Rise of Pluralism in Europe



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Introduction

The Seventh Annual RefoRC conference, which was held May 10–12th 2017 in Wittenberg, focused on the topic *More than Luther: The Reformation and the Rise of Pluralism in Europe*. Close to ninety papers on this topic were presented and a selection of these is presented in this volume. Yet this selection reflects the broadness of the conference as well as the interdisciplinarity and inter-confessionality that characterizes the Reformation Research Consortium. The conference underlined, once again, the fact that research on the reformations of the sixteenth century has not come to a conclusion in 2017. Quite the contrary, the 500th anniversary of Luther's decisive action has demonstrated how wide a field of research is still open. The papers in this conference volume point to lacunae and will certainly stimulate further research.

The papers are ordered chronologically as well as thematically, starting with three of the plenary papers. We want to thank the authors for their cooperation and William de Hek (Theological University Apeldoorn) for his assistance in the process of editing. Special thanks goes to the LEUCOREA Foundation for hosting the conference in such a pleasant way.

Karla Boersma
Herman J. Selderhuis

List of Abbreviations

- ADB Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Historische Kommission bei der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), 56 vol., München, reprint, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1981.
- ADSND DONALD SINNEMA/CHRISTIAN MOSER/HERMAN J. SELDERHUIS (ed.) (2015 ff), *Acta et Documenta Synodi Nationalis Dordrechtanae (1618–1619)*, vol. 1, vol. 2.2, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- AELKZ Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Leipzig 50, 1917, coll. 437–439.
- AL Annotated Luther, 6 vol., Timothy J. Wengert/Kirsi I. Stjerna/Paul W. Robinson/Mary Jane/Hans J. Hillerbrand/Euan K. Cameron (ed.), Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015–2017.
- ARG Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1903 ff.
- BBKL Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz/Traugott Bautz (ed.), 38 vol., Hamm/Herzberg: Bautz, 1970 ff.
- CO CALVIN, JOHN (1863–1900), *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, *Corpus Reformatorum* vol. 29–87, Guilielmus Baum/August E. Cunitz/Eduard W.E. Reuss (ed.), 59 vol., Brunswick: C.A. Schwetschke.
- COR 2 *Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia: Denuo Recognita et Adnotatione Critica Instructa Notisque Illustrata*, series 2: *opera exegetica*, Genève: Droz.
- CTS PRINGLE, WILLIAM (ed.) (2009), *Biblical Commentaries of John Calvin*, 22 vol., Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- GBSLM *Geschichts-Blätter für Stadt und Land Magdeburg*, Geschichtsverein für Magdeburg und Umland e.V (ed.), Magdeburg, 1866 ff.
- LuthQ *Lutheran Quarterly*, Gettysburg: 1878–.
- LW LUTHER, MARTIN, *Luther's Works*, J.J. Pelikan/H.C. Oswald/H.T. Lehmann (ed.), 55 vol., Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1900–1986.
- MBW SCHEIBLE, H./MUNDHENK, C. (ed.) (1977), *Melanchthons Briefwechsel*, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.
- NDB *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Historische Kommission der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), 26 vol., Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1953 ff.
- NKZ *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1890 ff.

- NPNF 1 A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. First Series, Philip Schaff et al. (ed.), Buffalo: Christian Literature Company, 1886–1897, reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952–1956.
- OS JOHN CALVIN (1926–1936), *Joannis Calvini Opera selecta*, P. Barth/G. Niesel (ed.), Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag.
- OSA Oud-Synodaal Archief, in: *Het Utrechts Archief*.
- PG *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, J.P. Migne (ed.), Paris: 1857–1912.
- SAK Stadsarchief Kampen.
- SC RÜCKERT, HANNS et al. (ed.) (1936–2000), *Supplementa Calviniana*, 1–11.2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.
- STD *Studia teologicznodogmatyczne*, Warsaw 1, 1974–.
- VD16 Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts, www.vd16.de.
- WA D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimarer Ausgabe), Schriften, Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1983–2009.
- WA Br D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimarer Ausgabe), Briefwechsel, Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1983–2009.
- WA DB D. Martin Luthers Werke. Die Deutsche Bibel, 12 vol., Weimar: Böhlau, 1906–1961.
- Zwing. *Zwingliana. Mitteilungen/Beiträge zur Geschichte Zwinglis, der Reformation und des Protestantismus in der Schweiz*, Zürich: 1897/1904–.

More than Luther

Wim François/Antonio Gerace*

The Doctrine of Justification and the Rise of Pluralism in the Post-Tridentine Catholic Church

Introduction: Trent and Post-Tridentine Pluralism Regarding Grace, Free Will and Predestination

Soon after beginning deliberations in the winter of 1545–1546, the Council of Trent agreed to give priority to those issues that were immediately at stake in the controversy with the Protestants, more specifically the question of Scripture and tradition (especially dealt with in Session 4) and the question of original sin and justification (Sessions 5 and 6). It may be helpful first to recapitulate the main lines of the Council’s ideas on these matters. On original sin, the Council argued that, due to the Fall, Adam lost both his sanctity and the justice “in which he was constituted” (“*in qua constitutus fuerat*”). As a consequence, he was subject to the concupiscence of the flesh, bodily corruption and death. Adam’s sin and its consequences were transmitted by sexual propagation from one generation to the next, affecting all members of the human race, in their body and soul (cf. O’Malley: 2013, 103). Man in the state of original sin, strictly speaking, cannot do a single work on his own to earn salvation, although, – and this is important –, *de iure* he is still able to act well. After the Fall, man’s capacities are weakened and sapped of their strength, but are in no way annihilated. Regarding the process of justification, the Council fathers emphasized the primacy of grace in all stages. In baptism, man receives the grace of God, through the merits of Christ, by which his sins are forgiven, both original sin and personal sins, and his soul is regenerated so that there is nothing left in the reborn that God would detest. The Council reconfirmed the theological idea of the *gratia inhaerens*, which implies that God’s “grace and charity that is poured forth into men’s hearts by the Holy Spirit”, changes, from within, the soul of the individual for the better (“*renovatio interioris hominis*”). Justification, in other words, is not simply imputed to the person, a clear statement not only in the light of the controversy with the Lu-

* We wish to thank drs. Jeremy Hovda, for having checked the English in the final version of this essay.

therans, but also in the light of future debates among Catholic theologians (cf. O'Malley: 2013, 115). However, the Council fathers also declared that man has to consent freely to the "movement of grace", which is expressed in his doing good works, earning him further merits with a view to eternal salvation. The Council had to admit that concupiscence remains in the reborn, but against the Lutherans it emphasized that it is not a sin in the true and proper sense of the word, but rather the consequence of sin and an inclination to actual sin. It only becomes an actual sin when man gives in to the allurements of sin with the free consent of his will. Therefore, the Council stressed that man's struggling against sin and his willing and performing the good that God wishes, can only happen under the stimulus from, and with the help of, God's grace. On predestination the Council was short, warning against a rash presumption of being among the predestined (Tanner/Alberigo: 1990, 2.671–681; O'Malley: 2013, 102–116; also Leppin: 2013, 167–183; McGrath: 1998², 255–273; Duffy: 1993, 221–260; Lehmann: 1989, 368–372).

The decree on justification, which was the result of seven months of intensive debate, draft documents and reworked texts, has been praised for its balanced content and measured language by many, including John O'Malley in his 2013 book on the Council of Trent (115 and especially 253–255). However, the decree was unable to bring forth the desired reconciliation with the Protestants – not a single decree was able to do that – but it was also at the basis of heated debates among Catholic theologians of various schools and religious orders, something that O'Malley also recognized. Within a few years after the promulgation of the justification decree, the topics of grace, free will and predestination proved to be the most important bone of contention between the diverse theological schools in post-Tridentine Catholicism. What in an optimistic view may be characterized as theological pluralism, was at times a harsh controversy, the most important episodes of which we will now recall to the mind. We will first focus upon the situation in Louvain, where the positions of Michael Baius caused unrest as early as the 1550s and 1560s. The conflict eventually affected a large part of the Catholic theological world and was acerbated when the Jesuit Leonard Lessius voiced opposing views. Similar positions taken by the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina caused a bitter controversy with the Dominican Domingo Bañez and a group of Spanish Thomist theologians. Rome's decision to reserve the question to its own discretion did not, however, prevent the so-called 'Jansenist' controversy from breaking out in the first part of the seventeenth century, a controversy that would haunt the Catholic Church in the following decades and even centuries to come.

Baius, Lessius and the Theological Faculties of Louvain and Douai

The Louvain theologian Michel de Bay or Baius (1513–1589) is one of the first, if not the first, figure whose theological standpoints gave rise to major controversies, to the point that Rome was urged to intervene. Baius, from the French-speaking south of the Low Countries, was from 1551 holder-ad-interim and from 1552 titular of the royal chair of Sacred Scriptures at the theological Faculty of Louvain, a position he would occupy for the next 37 years. In this capacity, Baius developed a new line within Louvain theology for which he found an ally in his friend and likeminded colleague John Hessels (1522–1566), as well as an eager audience among several students at the Louvain Faculty. Without dismissing scholastic theology as such, Baius and Hessels aimed at basing theology primarily upon the Bible and the Church fathers, with Augustine taking pride of place, for these were the sole authorities on which the Protestants wanted to base the debates – a method Baius explains in a famous letter he wrote to the Cardinal Lodovico Simonete in 1568 (Baius: 1696, 124–125). Living at the border of Europe’s Protestant regions, he considered this theological method to be the most appropriate for entering into a debate with the Calvinists, in the hope of bringing them back into the Catholic fold. Apart from his outspoken opinions on the sources of theology, Baius developed views with regard to the state of man before the Fall, man in his fallen nature, and man under grace, which challenged the norm set by the Council of Trent and which experimented with alternative language and approaches (Quilliet: 2007, 315–318; McGrath: 1998², 277–279; also Soen: 2007 and Grossi: 1968).¹

Baius first argued that God created man with a “*natura integra*”, that is an “integer” or “innocent” nature, so that man was perfectly happy, was able to master, by his will, his physical instincts, more specifically the “*concupiscentia carnis*”, and, hence, was perfectly able to execute God’s commandments. It is important to notice that Baius was convinced that this “integer” or “innocent” nature was by no means the result of an additional supernatural grace, but that man was “*naturaliter*” created to obey God’s Law and to receive, as a reward, eternal beatitude (while at the same time recognizing that the Spirit dwells in the just man). Baius deviated manifestly from traditional theological reasoning, but he saw it as a necessary implication of the conviction that the Fall not only caused forfeiture of some additional supernatural grace, but thoroughly affected man’s nature itself. And this brings us to Baius’ second important theological intuition: man’s nature is profoundly corrupted after the Fall with the result that he is incapable of resisting the allurements of the flesh and obeying God’s com-

1 Quilliet’s book unfortunately lacks a decent apparatus of footnotes, although his account of the *causa Bii* and his representation of Baius’ theology is generally accurate.

mandments, viz. doing good works. Disordered concupiscence, which is the main characteristic of original sin, should be considered as an actual sin, even before man's consent, argued Baius. Postlapsarian man, delivered to himself and without the help of grace, cannot do otherwise than sin. The so-called virtues of the pagans are vices and worth only eternal damnation. With his views on the complete corruption of human nature, Baius had come quite close to the teachings of the mainstream reformers, and had distanced himself from the Council of Trent, which had emphasized that man's free will "had been weakened and sapped in its strength, [but] was in no way extinct" (Tanner/Alberigo: 1990, 2.671). There is a third element of Baius' views that we should elaborate on, viz. that fallen nature has been restored to its original integrity through the redemptory work of Christ and the merits that issued from it. By virtue of Christ's merits and through the gift of grace, God makes man just and this justice consists, according to Baius, in man's ability to observe effectively God's commandments, which are meritorious for eternal life. Baius did see a manifest link between justice and charity considered as the integral observance of God's Law. He did not align himself with scholastic theology – reconfirmed at Trent – that considered justification as a *gratia inhaerens* or inherent grace instilled in man and renewing him ontologically from within. He limited himself to considering an "*animi motus*" or "movement of the soul". He nevertheless accepted that this was an intrinsic justification – "*Restauratur quod per peccatum in nobis perit*" (Baius: 1565, 1. I, c. IX) – also taking his distance from the Protestant view which tended to see justification extrinsically as the non-imputation of sins. But for every concrete good act, man needed the help of God's grace: "[...] *in singulis actibus [...] auxilio Dei indigent*" (Baius: 1563, c. X) (Vanneste: 1994, 123–166; Vanneste: 1977, 327–350; also Quilliet: 2007, 321–324; Schelkens/Gielis: 2007, 436–443).

Baius' ideas led, very soon, to suspicion in theological and ecclesiastical circles in Louvain (and abroad) that he disregarded the scholastic tradition, consecrated at Trent, and came dangerously close to the theological viewpoints of Luther and Calvin. When one of Baius' Franciscan students, namely Antonius Sablonius (Sablon) proved to be 'affected' by his teachings, the Roman instances entrusted Petrus Regis, former Provincial Minister and lecturer, to examine the question. Regis consulted the Louvain theologians as well as their Paris colleagues, and the latter declared in the course of 1560 fourteen propositions ascribed to Baius to be obviously "*haereticae*" or "*falseae*", while also expressing serious doubts regarding four others. Baius opposed the validity and content of the Paris condemnation, and the ensuing controversy led to a deep and years-long division within the Franciscan Order in the (southern part of the) Low Countries (van Eijl: 1958, 227–238 and 273–293).

Baius published in 1563, with the Louvain printer Petrus Zangrius Tiletanus, a collection of short treatises with telling titles, such as *De libero hominis arbitrio*

eiusque potestate, the *De justitia et justificatione*, and *De sacrificio*. The works were published with the approval of the official book censors, who were Louvain colleagues of Baius (including Francis Sonnius, Bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch since 1561). A new series of treatises was published in 1564–1565, containing *De meritis operum*, the *De prima hominis justitia et virtutibus impiorum*, the *De sacramentis in genere contra Calvinum*, and the *De verbis sine quibus non perficitur sacramentum baptismi* (all with the Louvain printer Johannes Bogardus). With the publication of these works, criticism within the Louvain Faculty of Theology grew stronger. Baius' denouncers were led by Josse Ravesteijn 'of Tielt', called Tiletanus (1506–1570), who was a disciple of Ruard Tapper (1487–1559) and was, thus, a representative of the 'old' Louvain school of Augustino-Thomism. Ravesteijn and his like-minded colleagues contacted King Philip II himself, so that Baius' works were subject to examination by the theological faculties of Alcalá and Salamanca, which censured several of his propositions in 1565, especially taken from the second book including *De meritis operum*, *De prima hominis justitia et virtutibus impiorum*. King Philip was, however, quite slow in sending the censure to Louvain. As a reaction, Baius published in 1566 a new edition of his first (non-condemned) works, the *Opuscula omnia*, to which he added new treatises, such as *De peccato originis*, *De charitate*, *De indulgentiis* and *De oratione pro defunctis* (published with Johannes Bogardus). The Spanish universities were again alarmed, and in June 1567 the University of Alcalá issued a condemnation, targeting the treatises included in the *Opuscula omnia*. In the meantime, Ravesteijn and other theologians had, in concertation with the Cardinal-Archbishop of Malines, Granvelle, convinced King Philip II to intervene so that Rome would speak out. Subsequently, Pope Pius V issued a bull entitled *Ex omnibus afflictionibus* (1 October 1567), which condemned 76 or 79 propositions – depending on the edition – taken from the work of Baius, Hessels and others, without naming the authors. The bull was not published, but was sent to Granvelle's vicar general Maximilian Morillon, who discretely presented the document, first to Baius personally and then in the closed college of Louvain doctors. All theologians, including Baius, attested their submission to the papal pronouncement (van Eijl: 1953, 719–776; also Quilliet: 2007, 324–328).

Baius, who understood that his viewpoints were being targeted, wrote in early 1569 a personal letter to the Pope, in which he asked for a re-evaluation of his views. The Pope, however, replied to Baius that he maintained his earlier conclusions and that the propositions included in the bull were condemned. Although Baius was not immediately prepared to align himself by a written submission to the papal pronouncement, the Holy See choose to deal with the case patiently, because any disagreement within the Church would give further arguments to the Protestant adversaries. Only after a few months, and at the instigation of the Duke of Alba, the Governor of the Low Countries, did Baius'

Louvain colleagues manage to convince him to align himself in writing with the Pope's view as expressed in *Ex omnibus afflictionibus*. In any case, the controversy did not harm Baius' career: in 1575, he became dean of the collegial church of Saint-Peter and vice-chancellor of the University of Louvain, which might be regarded as the most important position an academic could obtain (Quilliet: 2007, 328–330).

Meanwhile, Pope Pius' bull of 1567 was subject to divergent interpretations. Depending on where a certain comma was placed in the conclusion of the bull, it could be read either as a full-fledged condemnation or as a soft warning. The discussion about the *comma pianum* caused Pope Gregory XIII to issue a new bull *Provisionis Nostrae* in 1580, which removed any doubt about Pope Pius' bull and the condemnations it contained. During a solemn reunion at the Faculty, Baius recognized that the papal condemnation related effectively to what was included in his writings; he aligned himself with the papal pronouncements, and wrote, at the explicit demand of the envoy of the Pope, the Jesuit Cardinal Francis Toletus, a confession, which has since become notorious in the Catholic Church (van Eijl: 1955, 499–542; Quaghebeur: 2003, 61–79; Quilliet: 2007, 331–333).

One of the most determined adversaries of Baius was Robert Bellarmine, who in that period held lectures in Louvain's Jesuit college, refuting the teachings of Baius.² Later in the essay, we will return to Bellarmine's work, but first we will turn to the so-called *Formula doctrinae*, the 'official doctrine' drawn up by the royal professor of scholastic theology Johannes Lensaeus (Jean de Lens [1541–1593]) in 1586, on behalf of the Louvain Faculty of Theology and in reaction to Baius' positions (Steyaert: 1742, 1.193–225). Given the topics at stake in the controversy, the *Formula doctrinae* concentrates on original sin and its consequences, arguing: (1) man's original justice should be considered as a supernatural gift of grace; (2) through the Fall, man forfeited original justice, his natural capacities to do good were weakened but not entirely annihilated; (3) justification should be seen as an interior renovation of man's soul by inherent grace so that man, subsequently, can observe God's precepts. Lensaeus, in particular, invoked the authority of Paul and Augustine, claiming above all to provide a correct interpretation of the Church father, which was one of the main points of contention of the controversy. The *Formula doctrinae* was regarded as an important codification of the 'official' Louvain doctrine in the years to come, and was applauded by the Roman authorities (Roegiers: 2003, 5–6; van Eijl: 1994, 215).

2 "Around the end of 1579, Bellarmine reviewed the manuscripts of his Louvain lectures and selected the passages relating to his refutation of Baius' teachings. These selected texts were then edited as: *Refutatio Baii excerpta ex commentariis P. Bellarmini in Summa Divini Thomae*. It is a work intended to be circulated within the Society of Jesus" (Cai: 2014, 47). *De gratia primi hominis* (1593) was the most important anti-baianist writing that issued from the controversy between Bellarmine and the Louvain professor.

A year later, in 1587, the Louvain Faculty of Theology felt obliged to proceed against an adversary on another flank. The Jesuits, who had become established in Louvain in 1542 at the behest of Ruard Tapper, strove, from 1583, to open up their philosophical and theological courses to all students from the University, with the concomitant ambition of granting academic degrees, as they did at Louvain's French-speaking sister-university in Douai. Apart from the fact that the University felt its monopoly on education threatened, the Faculty also took offense at the theological views that some young Jesuit professors propagated in their Louvain College, views that differed from the *Formula doctrinae*. Possibly at the instigation of Michael Baius himself (van Eijl: 1994, 216; Bernard: 1926, 453), the Faculty issued a censure on 12 September 1587 on 34 propositions which had been defended by the Jesuits Leonard Lessius (1554–1623) – in his famous *Theses theologicae* (1586) – and John Hamelius (1554–1589). The condemnation was followed on 20 February 1588 by another, and even more developed and outspoken censure from the Douai Faculty of Theology, of which William Hessels van Est (Estius [1542–1613]) was the principal author (*Censurae facultatum*: 1641, 3–40 [censura lovaniensis]), 41–118 [censura duacensis]; Stucco: 2014, 279–283; van Eijl: 1994, 217–223; also Roegiers: 2012, 159–161; Rai: 2016, 89–93, esp. 92; Roegiers: 2003, 6, and Boute: 2010, 268–311). All points of criticism concerned Lessius' daring emphasis on man's cooperation in the economy of salvation, which the Louvain and Douai theologians considered to be a deviation from Augustine's theology and highly suspect of "semi-Pelagianism" (Backus/Goudriaan: 2014, 25–46). The Louvain theologians took offense, for example, at Lessius' view that after the Fall, God gave Adam and his posterity the sufficient means against sin and the aids to pursue eternal life, in entire other words, He gave them sufficient help so that they were able to return to Him ("*possint reverti*"). This was one point on which Lessius was very insistent. And although the theologians had to admit that "in a certain sense" ("*aliquot sensu*") one could speak of sufficient aids, since God's benefices would never be absent from this world, so that adults who used them in good way could come to salvation, they emphasized that "in a proper and exact way of speaking" it could not be said that God gives sufficient aids to salvation to all of mankind. In this regard they pointed to God's Law, which was given to the Jewish people, some of whom made a good use of it, but it was absolutely not "sufficient" for the salvation of the Jews and even contributed to their rejection (Assertio II, in *Censurae facultatum*: 1641, 24–25; expressly on sufficient grace, see also Assertio III, 25–26; VII, 30–31; XVI, 42–43; XVIII, 47–48; XIX, 48–49 etc.).³ Further: although Lessius suggested that sufficient grace was given to all men, he stressed that grace was only made

3 It must be noted that the Assertio II reported in the Louvain *censura* "Deus post *praevisum* peccatum originale habuit", has another *lectio* in the Douai *censura*, "Deus post *primum* peccatum originale habuit", 82. The latter reading may be the original one.

efficacious when man accepted this graceful offer through a free decision of his own will and the performance of good acts (“*velle*” and “*perficere*” or “*exsequi*”), which implied that man could also refuse God’s offer. The Louvain theologians for their part emphasized that “God’s grace was intrinsically and from itself efficacious” (“*gratia divina ex se ab intrinseco efficax*”) in those people who were predestined to receive its benefits, so that they came quite close to holding the irresistibility of God’s grace (e.g. Assertio X, in *Censvræ facultatum*: 1641, 34–36; also Assertio XII, 37–38). According to the Louvain and Douai theologians, God efficaciously foreordained the number of the predestined from all eternity, on the basis of his absolute sovereign will. Their views about a “*predestinatio ‘ante’ previsa merita*” were a reply to Lessius’ suggestion that not everything was established in God’s eternal decree, that there was room for man’s free will and consequent contingencies, and that God made his predestinatory decrees on the basis of a foreknowledge of man’s cooperation with his grace. Lessius’ view about a “*predestinatio ‘ex’ praevisis meritis*” was among the most semi-Pelagian expressions to be found in early modern Catholic theology (Assertio XXX, in *Censvræ facultatum*: 1641, 59; 111–113).⁴

Lessius replied to the censure by the Louvain and Douai theologians by affirming that the 34 propositions were taken out of their original context and distorted in their meaning. To clarify his position, he wrote a *Responsio*, trying to bring his views closer to those of Augustine. He sent this document to Claudio Acquaviva, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, who, in his turn, asked the advice of some prominent theologians of the Order, among whom Robert Bellarmine and Jean Azor (van Eijl: 1994, 224–255). Although Bellarmine held mainstream ideas regarding the relation between sufficient and efficacious grace, he was initially prepared to defend his confrere before the Roman instances. Lessius’ sustained acceptance of the view that predestination is ordained on the basis of foreseen merits (“*ex praevisis meritis*”),⁵ as well as politics within the Jesuit Order in the wake of the congregations *de auxiliis* (cf. *intra*), drove Bellarmine to take more distance (Rai: 2016, 99–101). Actually, Bellarmine’s position was closer to the Augustinian tradition, and modern scholarship speaks about a ‘Bellarmine Augustinism’. In any case, even though Louvain and Douai condemned Lessius’

4 Van Eijl somewhat inaccurately writes about a “*praedestinatio propter praevisa merita*”, whereas the Latin reads “*praedestinationem ad gloriam pendere ex operibus praevisis*” (1994, 214).

5 Still in 1610 Lessius maintained, with reference to Augustine, that predestination is “*ex praevisis meritis*” (Lessius: 1610, 258; the reference is to Augustine, *Div. quaest. Simpl.*, I, q. 2, 4 [CCSL 44], 28).

ideas, other faculties of theology, such as that of Paris, and even some bishops sided with Lessius' positions against those of Baius (Broggio: 2009, 55–56).⁶

Molina and Bañez in Spain

While this controversy raged in the Low Countries at the Universities of Louvain and Douai, another theological controversy arose in Spain where Dominican theologians and Jesuits became engaged in a bitter theological debate on the role of human free will in the economy of salvation. In Salamanca in the years 1582–1584 an “open scholarly engagement” took place between the Dominican Domingo Bañez (1528–1604) and the Jesuits Prudencio de Montemayor (d. 1599) and Luis de León (1527–1591). The debate led the Inquisitor Juan de Arrende to proceed against the two Jesuits, and on 3 February 1584, after two years of debate, the Cardinal Gaspar de Quiroga forbade Luis de León from teaching, even privately, and deprived Montemayor of his lectureship for seven years.

The controversy seriously escalated in 1588, when the Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600) published his book, commonly called the *Concordia*, whose full title is *De liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione Concordia* [“On the Concord of the Free Will with the Gifts of Grace, Divine Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination and Reprobation”] (e.g. Matava: 2016, 16–36; Broggio: 2009; McGrath: 1998², 279–281; Beltran de Heredia: 1968; also Stucco: 2014, 79–140; Quilliet: 2007, 335–352). The book had received approval from the official book censor, the Dominican friar Bartolomeo Ferreira, although other Dominicans, including Domingo Bañez, were already growing concerned with what they considered to be statements of doubtful orthodoxy. According to Molina, God wants all men to be saved and, to that aim, gives the sufficient means, but it is up to man to make these opportunities efficacious through the free consent of his will, a situation which includes the possibility of not accepting God's gracious offer. In effect, according to Molina, “it may happen that, between two persons whom God calls more inwardly with equal aid, one would convert himself, according to the freedom of his own free will, and the other would persist in his infidelity. It also often happens that, with the same aid, one does not convert himself, another does” (Molina: 1588, q. 14, ar. 13, d. 12, p. 52–53). These ideas were similar to those defended by Lessius in Louvain, but they were in clear contraposition with the views of Bañez, as we will see. In any case, for Molina the consent of free will was crucial, a freedom which was believed to consist in a preceding independent judgement of the reason. Molina self-evidently accepted

6 Bishops such as Joannes Hauchin (Malines), Lindanus (Roermond), Pierre Simons (Ypres), defended Lessius' position against Baius.

that man remains incapable of doing works that lead to his salvation, without the aid of God's grace ("*concursum Dei generalis*"; Molina: 1588, q. 14, ar. 13, d. 7, p. 22). God's help, however does not operate 'on' the *secundae causae*, as the Thomists thought the *praemotio physica* does, but it acts 'with' the *secundae causae*, like a simultaneous help that safeguards man's free action. Molina maintained that "all the effect and all the action, totally called *effect*, are both by God and by our free will, like two parts of one integral cause, of the action as well as of the effect" (Molina: 1588, q. 14, ar. 13, d. 12, p. 61).⁷

One of the main challenges to the Molinist system was the reconciliation of man's freedom with God's foreknowledge, providence, and predestination. To answer this question, Molina developed his famous theory of the three logical levels of knowledge in God. First, there is the knowledge of simple intelligence ("*scientia simplicis intelligentiae*"), through which God knows all possible things. Second, there is the famous middle knowledge ("*scientia media*"), which is in the core of the Molinist system, but which in fact goes back to Pedro de Fonseca (1528–1599), who may have been the first to use that term (Perszyk: 2011, 1, fn. 1). By means of this middle knowledge, God has certain foreknowledge of what any person would do in any given circumstance, 'before' those circumstances are actualized. On this level, there remains at least the logical possibility that the opposite will happen, for this logical possibility guarantees human free will. Third is the knowledge of vision ("*scientia visionis*"), by which God sees everything that He will actually create (Gerace: 2016, 114–115; Cruz Cruz: 2014; Freddoso: 1988, 46–47; Gaskin: 1950, 412–430). The knowledge of simple intelligence and middle knowledge are both prior to any intervention on the part of God's will, but if the first level is addressed to all potencies, including those that will not be actualized, the second has a restricted focus since it is addressed only to those potencies that would be actualized. "Would" but not "will", since the future actualization of those potencies is – at least on this level – not necessary, since there is still the logical possibility of their opposite occurring.⁸ This means that, although God has certain foreknowledge of human actions, they are free because antecedent to the intervention of God's will. Therefore, at least logically, a person could do the opposite of what God has foreknown. It also means that

7 Apart from this *gratia cooperans*, Molina also accepts a *gratia praeveniens* as an "*auxilium Dei particulare*" by means of which God helps our will in the accomplishment of its supernatural aims, including the intellectual scrutiny of revealed truths. Both aspects of grace constitute the vocation to the faith, leaving to man the liberty to believe or not to believe (Molina: 1588, q. 14, ar. 13, d. 14, m. 2, p. 66).

8 As Molina further explains in the edition of 1595, where he added the *disputatio* 51, 52, 53, it could happen that one who had been predestined would be condemned and one who had been rejected would be saved (Molina: 1595, q. 14, ar. 13, d. 51, p. 219). Molina's *scientia media* was influenced by John Duns Scotus (cf. amongst others Dekker: 1993 and Anfray: 2014).

God's predestination and providence, being acts of his will, come logically after middle knowledge. These acts of God's will, however, do not depend on God's middle knowledge; in other words, God does not make his decision on the basis of his foreknowledge, lest his will be conditioned by human free will. It is only according to his own sovereign decision ("*pro suo solo beneplacito*") that God predestines people, bestowing on them his divine aids. On the other hand, predestination also comes through the faithful's own merits, considered as an instrumental cause of salvation ("*praedestinatio per propria merita*" and not, as Lessius holds, "*praedestinatio ex praevisis meritis*").⁹ Similarly, reprobation is also subject to God's will, a will that permits man to sin if man so wishes (Molina: 1588, q. 23, ar. 3, p. 398). In sum, although it is God who eventually and sovereignly decides whether to save a person or not, a person's works play an evident role, according to Molina. It may seem contradictory, but *scientia media* is the 'theological device' intended to solve this inconsistency.

Molina and his theology were countered by an array of Dominican theologians, the most famous of whom was Domingo Bañez, but which also included confreres such as Thomas de Lemos and Didace Alvarez. Bañez, more so than in earlier theological systems, distinguished between sufficient and efficacious grace, a distinction that gained increased importance in the theological discussions of the time. Though the distinction is present in some form in the writings of Augustine and Thomas, it is not developed there at length. Sufficient grace implies that Christ, through his death and resurrection, and the merits they entail, gave all men the possibility of being saved ("*posse*"). "Nevertheless, God does not always intend his *auxilium* to efficaciously result in a salutary act of free choice", as Robert Matava argues in his recent book on Bañez. Efficacious grace means that God's grace becomes efficient solely in those whose will is brought in line with His will ("*velle*") and who are, subsequently, able to do good works ("*exsequi*" or "*perficere*"). They are those whom God has from all eternity chosen, irrespective of any contribution on their part, to receive the efficacious *auxilium* to long for the good and to be able to do what they long for. This way, they increase merits with a view to salvation. It should however be emphasized that, according to Bañez, and seen from God's point of view, "all grace is 'effi-

9 Molina never uses the expression "*post praevisa merita*", and it cannot be accepted since it means that a person's action influences God's decision: in such a case, only after having seen the person's behavior, would God decide to save or damn her/him, but this is an evident limitation of God's absolute power. On the contrary, God is completely free in his decision, but a person can contribute to her/his salvation through her/his own merits ("*praedestinatio per propria merita*"). See Molina: 1595 q. 53, ar. 13, d. 14, m. 3, p. 262 and Molina: 1588, q. 23, ar. 4 & 5, d. 1, m. 8, p. 448. On God's beneplacit will, see Molina: 1588, q. 23, ar. 4 & 5, d. 1, m. 9, p. 466. Also Cruz Cruz: 2014, 102, n. 42. At p. 100, n. 37 Cruz affirms he based his analysis on Le Bachelet: 1931, I, xi–xiii. Comp. Gerace: 2016, 118–119.