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THE LOUVAIN FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND THE MODERN(IST) HERITAGE RECONCILING HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

Introduction

In his 1992 study on the *vota* prepared by the Louvain theological faculty in view of the Second Vatican Council, Mathijs Lamberigts has shown that these preconciliar *vota* deal with a significant variety of themes.¹ In them one finds issues related to questions of ecclesiological nature, or issues concerning the theology of revelation, running from subjects relevant to the domain of fundamental dogmatics (such as the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, the inspiration of the Scriptures and their infallibility, the *analogia fidei*² and the possibility of natural theology) to subjects more at home in the domain of exegetical methodology (such as the discussion surrounding the *sensus litteralis*, the place of historical-critical research in theology, the establishment of criteria or norms for the interpretation of Scripture, the value of the *formgeschichtliche* research methodology, the relationship between the Old Testament and the New). As far as the topic of revelation was concerned, the themes mentioned and developed in the faculty *vota* appear to have been elaborated by a small group of Louvain professors of Biblical exegesis, some of whom would become quite influential in the upcoming council.³ In the present article, we will not focus on the council, rather we wish to study the way in which the Louvain Faculty, and in particular its exegetes, sought to integrate historical criticism and theology during

¹ Mathijs LAMBERIGTS, *The vota antepreparatoria of the Faculties of Theology of Louvain and Lovanium (Zaire)*, in LAMBERIGTS and Claude SOETENS (ed.), *À la veille du concile Vatican II. Vota et réactions en Europe et dans le catholicisme oriental* (Instrumenta Theologica, 9), Leuven, 1992, p. 169-184.

² By the “analogy of faith” we mean the necessity for theology to remain in accordance with the catholic faith as it gained form in the Scriptures and the Apostolic Tradition.

³ See Doris DONNELLY, Joseph FAMERÉE, Mathijs LAMBERIGTS, Karim SCHELKENS (ed.), *The Belgian Contribution to the Second Vatican Council* (BETL, 216), Leuven, 2008.

the decades before Vatican II. We will concentrate on the way in which a generation of exegetes that only took the lead *after* the modernist crisis was still deeply involved in trying to tackle a problem rooted in the heart of the modernist crisis, *i.e.* the reconciliation of historical-critical methodology with catholic theology. The main protagonists of our story will be Lucien Cerfaux,⁴ Joseph Coppens,⁵ and Albert Descamps.⁶

But the aim of our present study is twofold. First, it endeavours to explain and to uncover the relationship between the aforementioned themes by locating them within the framework of the theological and exegetical trends of their time, and pointing to their roots in the modernist crisis. Second, at various instants we will show that the issue of an (in)compatibility of historical and theological reasoning is not limited to the so-called biblical movement and its Louvain exponents, such as Cerfaux, Coppens and Descamps. Our study will make clear that precisely the issue of reconciling history and theology links the development of catholic exegesis in this era with the developments in dogmatic theology and church history, installing a reciprocal relationship and interaction between fundamental dogmatics and exegesis. Therefore, reference will also be made to the way in which the Louvain faculty keeps track with other, more dogmatically and/or church historically focussed movements in the preconciliar era, such as the so-called *nouvelle théologie*-movement.⁷ In this juncture, we will briefly

⁴ Lucien Cerfaux (1883-1968), priest of the diocese of Tournai. Cerfaux obtains doctorates in Philosophy and Theology at the Gregorian University, and studies for one year at the Pontifical biblical Institute. From 1930 to 1955 he is professor of Biblical Exegesis at Louvain. In 1941 he is appointed a consultant to the Pontifical Biblical Commission. See Joseph COPPENS, *La carrière et l'œuvre scientifique de Mgr. Cerfaux*, in: *ETL*, 45 (1969), p. 8-44.

⁵ Joseph Coppens (1896-1981), priest of the diocese of Ghent, professor of Biblical Exegesis at the Louvain Theological Faculty and dean of the Faculty. See Gustave THILS et al., *In Memoriam Monseigneur J. Coppens, 1896-1981*, in: *ETL*, 57 (1981), p. 227-340.

⁶ Albert Descamps (1916-1980), priest of the diocese of Tournai. Professor of New Testament Exegesis at Louvain from 1955 to 1960. He is appointed auxiliary bishop of Tournai in 1960, and becomes rector of the Louvain University in 1962. Joseph COPPENS, *Son Excellence Mgr. Albert Descamps. In Memoriam*, in: *ETL*, 56 (1980), p. 253-281.

⁷ The interconnectedness of several preconciliar movements has been studied a.o. by Étienne FOULLOUX, *'Mouvements' théologico-spirituels et concile (1959-1962)*, in LAMBERIGTS and SOETENS (ed.), *À la veille ...*, p. 185-199. The use of

study the role played by Louvain professors such as Gustave Thils⁸ and Roger Aubert.⁹

A History of Collision: Method versus Dogma, 1893–1939

The preconiliar debate can hardly be addressed as a case of *creatio ex nihilo*. Almost all of the topics to which it refers are traceable to a broad debate that continued to rage within the Catholic Church, a debate with its roots in the modernist crisis at the beginning of the 20th century¹⁰ and its continuation in the crisis surrounding the *nouvelle théologie* and the neo-modernist controversy of the early 1960's.¹¹

the term “nouvelle théologie” was not coined by the French authors (such as Congar, Chenu, and de Lubac) whom it concerns, but rather by their opponents, and is even used by Pius XII in his discourse held to the Jesuit general congregation in Rome in 1946. See « Audientia a summo pontifico », in: *ARSJ* 11 (1946-1950), 57-58.

⁸ Gustave Thils (1909-2000), priest of the archdiocese of Mechelen. Obtains a doctorate in 1935 and the Magister's Degree in 1937 (with René Draguet). After a period as Exegesis professor in Mechelen he becomes professor of Dogmatics at the Higher Institute for Religious Sciences at Louvain. In 1960 he becomes a member of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. See Roger AUBERT, *La carrière théologique de Mgr. Thils*, in Albert HOUSSIAU (ed.), *Voies vers l'unité: Colloque organisé à l'occasion de l'éméritat de Mgr. G. Thils, Louvain-la-Neuve, 27-28 avril 1979* (Cahiers de la Revue théologique de Louvain, 3), Louvain-la-Neuve, 1981.

⁹ Roger Aubert (°1914), priest of the archdiocese of Mechelen. Professor of Church History. From 1952 to 1962 he taught History of Canon Law classes, which explains his occurrence here. See Jean PIROTTE, *Le sens d'un hommage. Roger Aubert, l'histoire et le métier d'historien*, in Jean Paul HENDRICKX, Jean PIROTTE and Luc COURTOIS (ed.), *Le cardinal Mercier (1851-1926): Un prélat d'avant-garde. Publications du Professeur Roger Aubert rassemblées à l'occasion de ses 80 ans*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1994, p. 14-29.

¹⁰ Amidst the abundant literature available, we wish to point to some crucial studies by Émile POULAT, such as *Histoire, dogme et critique dans la crise moderniste* (Bibliothèque de l'Évolution de l'humanité, 18), Paris, 1996³ and the aforementioned one by FOUILLOUX, *Une Église en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II (1914-1962)*, Paris, 2006; more attention to the Anglo-Saxon side of the modernist problematic is found in Thomas M. LOOME, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism: A Contribution to a New Orientation in Modernist Research* (Tübinger theologische Studien, 14) Mainz, 1979.

¹¹ On this crisis, and on the role of Louvain professors such as Cerfaux in it, see Anthony DUPONT and Karim SCHELKENS, *Scopuli Vitandi. The Controversy Concerning Historico-critical Exegesis Between the Lateran University and the Pon-*

Our review of the said debate begins in 1893 with the promulgation of Leo XIII's encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*.¹² The goal of the encyclical was the promotion of biblical studies and the provision of a response to pressing questions surrounding the value of historical-critical research methods. At the same time, the encyclical addressed a number of dogmatic questions, including the inspiration of the Scriptures, their divine authorship and their infallibility.¹³ The relationship between theologians and the magisterium also constituted a point of discussion. While the interwovenness of all these factors may seem strange, it remains crucial nevertheless, since the entire debate on the question of modernism tended to circle around these clusters. The core question *a fortiori* has to do with the (in)compatibility of the historical-critical (read: exegetical-scientific) approach to the Bible on the one hand, and the “theological” (read: traditional-dogmatic) interpretation of the Scriptures on the other.¹⁴ The emergence of historical-critical research in the course of the 19th century¹⁵ obliged the Roman Catholic Church to determine its position in the dispute, especially since it turned around a disagreement that — given the central role of the Scriptures within theology¹⁶ — had consequences for theo-

tifical Biblical Institute, in: *Bijdragen. International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 69 (2008), p. 18-51.

¹² *Enchiridion Biblicum: Documenti della Chiesa sulla Sacra Scrittura*, ed. Alfio FILIPPI and Erminio LORA [Strumenti] (Bologna, 1994²) (henceforth EB), § 81-134. More background is found in A.J. COTTER, *The Antecedents of the Encyclical Providentissimus Deus*, in: *CBQ*, 5 (1943), p. 117-124. See also John HAYES (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, Vol. I, p. 324.

¹³ C. THEOBALD, *L'exégèse catholique au moment de la crise moderniste*, in Claude SAVART and Jacques-Noël ALETTI (ed.) *Le monde contemporain et la Bible* (Bible de tous les temps, 8), Paris, 1985, p. 387-439, there 389-390.

¹⁴ It is hardly surprising that M.J. LAGRANGE, *La méthode historique*, Paris, 1904, from the first page onward talks about the reconciliation of “l'exégèse critique et le dogme ecclésiastique”.

¹⁵ Cf. E. HOCEDEZ, *Histoire de la théologie au XIX^e siècle*, 3 vols. (Museum Lessianum. Section théologique 43-45), Brussels, 1947-1952, Vol. 3, p. 63-93; P.M. McDONALD, *Biblical Scholarship: When Tradition Met Method*, in John DEEDY (ed.), *The Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century: Renewing and Reimagining the City of God*, Colleagueville MA, 2000, p. 113-130.

¹⁶ Cf. C. THEOBALD, *La Question biblique. De la doctrine de Providentissimus Deus à la réception de l'exégèse historico-critique par Divino afflante Spiritu*, in Bernard SESBOUÉ and Christoph THEOBALD (ed.), *La parole du salut* (Histoire des dogmes, 4), Paris, 1996, p. 345-82.

gy's very foundations. The Catholic Church's response at the time was grafted to the principles of neo-scholasticism.¹⁷ As *Leitprinzip*, it was presupposed that the Scriptures were (a) inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus (b) infallible. This was then adjoined to (c) the doctrine that refers to God as the original author of the Scriptures,¹⁸ whereby (d) (in line with the scholastic understanding of instrumental causality) the role of the human authors was reduced to that of technical executors. The concepts of inspiration, infallibility and the principle of a *Deus auctor* were thus combined as panels in a triptych. The Roman Catholic Church — and in particular the magisterium — had evidently understood the emergence the historical-critical method as a threat to its dogmatic certitude and had decided to strike back.

The interpretation of the doctrine of revelation was central to the debate and was to play an important role at the Council.¹⁹ At the same time, however, the neo-scholastic understanding of Scripture and Tradition upheld by the Roman Catholic Church in this period was also problematic. Scripture and Tradition were taken to be theological 'sources', collections of revealed truth rather than revelation's modes of transmission. This resulted in a concept of revelation that can be characterised as propositional (as the enumeration of truths in the form of propositions), conceptual²⁰ (as a compilation of abstract concepts) and a-historical (as immune to contingency). While the Scriptures were also seen as a collection of inviolable truths, an apologetic — often anti-Protestant — ten-

¹⁷ Neoscholasticism gained a powerful influx by Leo XIII through the 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. See FRANCIS COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*, 11 vols., New York, 1994, vol. 9, p. 250, and HOCEDEZ, *Histoire de la théologie...* [see n. 15], Vol. 3., p. 351sv.

¹⁸ R.B. ROBINSON, *Roman Catholic Exegesis Since Divino Afflante Spiritu: Hermeneutical Implications* (SBL-Dissertation Series, 111), Atlanta GA, 1982, p. 11.

¹⁹ See R. BURIGANA, *La Bibbia nel Concilio. La redazione della costituzione 'Dei Verbum' del Vaticano II* (TRSR. Nuova Serie, 21), Bologna, 1998; H. SAUER, *Erfahrung und Glaube. Die Begründung des pastoralen Prinzips durch die Offenbarungskonstitution des II. Vatikanischen Konzils* (Würzburger Studien zur Fundamentaltheologie, 12), Frankfurt am Main – Berlin – Bern – New York – Paris – Wenen, 1993; and our *Catholic Revelation Theology on the Eve of the Second Vatican Council (1958-1962)* (Brill's Series in Church History), Leiden – Boston, 2009, in print.

²⁰ Cf. Tarcisse TSHIBANGU, *Théologie comme science au XX^{ème} siècle*, Kinshasa, 1980, p. 163.

dency lead the Church to consider them materially insufficient with respect to the Tradition. While we will return to the nuances of the debate in question below, one can observe for the time being that such a theology clearly deduced everything on the basis of transcendence. The consequences for biblical research are evident. Where exegesis was unable to deal with the contradictions it found in an infallible corpus of Scripture, it could only resort to a harmonising concordism,²¹ and an exegesis that understood the *sensus literalis* of Scripture as conveying the meaning of the scriptural text as it was intended by its divine author.²² *Providentissimus* remained on the surface on all these domains, it reconfirmed a few traditional standpoints and associated itself relatively closely with the doctrinal stipulations of Vatican I and Trent.²³ Although Leo XIII reacted to a notorious article by the Parisian Maurice d'Hulst,²⁴ the modernist crisis only came into its own in the first decade of the 20th century. Where Leo XIII had continued to speak of rationalism, Pius X introduced the new term "modernism" in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* of 1907²⁵ and in the earlier decree *Lamentabili*,²⁶ which had already condemned no less than 65 propositions as mod-

²¹ Cf. Jean-Noël ALETTI, *Conclusions*, in SAVART and ALETTI (ed.), *Le monde contemporain*, p. 517-522.

²² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 1, 10: Quia vero sensus literalis est quem auctor intendit, auctor autem Sacrae Scripturae Deus est.

²³ *EB*, p. 180, § 124: Etenim libri omnes atque integri, quos Ecclesia tamquam sacros et canonicos recipit, cum omnibus suis partibus Spiritu Sancto dic-tante conscripti sunt; tantum vero abest ut divinae inspirationi error ullus subesse possit, ut ea per se ipsa, non modo errorem excludat omnem, sed tam necessario excludat et respuat, quam necessarium est, Deum, summam Veritatem, nullius omnino erroris auctorem esse.

²⁴ As regards the article of Msgr Maurice d'Hulst (1841-1896), then rector at the Institut Catholique de Paris, see M. d'HULST, *La question biblique*, in: *Le Correspondant*, 134 (1893), p. 201-251. Also see Francesco BERETTA, *Monsieur d'Hulst et la science chrétienne: Portrait d'un intellectuel* (Textes dossiers documents, 16), Paris, 1996, p. 99-123 (121): Elle [Providentissimus Deus] contient un encouragement généreux à l'étude de l'Écriture sainte, et des indications développées à ce sujet, mais elle réaffirme en même temps avec insistance la vérité absolue de la Bible et repousse explicitement la notion d'inerrance restreinte formulée par Mgr. d'Hulst.

²⁵ Pius X, *Litterae encyclicae Pascendi de modernistarum doctrinis*, in: ASS, 40 (1907), p. 622-639.

²⁶ S. Congregatio Sacrae Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis, *Decretum Lamentabili quo sub 65 propositionibus reprobantur et proscribuntur praecipui errores reformismi seu modernismi*, in: ASS, 40 (1907), p. 470-478.

ernist. During the latter's pontificate we can observe a hardening of positions, giving rise to a series of excommunications and the inclusion of several publications on the Index.

In 1902, Leo XIII established the Pontifical Biblical Commission,²⁷ which gradually came to function as the magisterium's control apparatus.²⁸ The *motu proprio Praeantia Scripturae*²⁹ followed in 1907 and from 1910 onwards, the magisterium imposed the anti-modernist oath on all Catholic theologians. A full two years earlier, Alfred Loisy, one of the crisis' leading figures, had been condemned. Loisy was only one of the protagonists³⁰ who had called the *Deus auctor* into question and thus placed the entire doctrinal construction under threat. While the majority of modernists did not want to harm the Catholic faith³¹, their attempts to introduce historical-critical thinking into the domain of theology could not be interpreted otherwise, at least from the perspective of the magisterium.

In the midst of this crisis, Belgian theologians appear to have encountered little opposition. Indeed, modernism was only of limited concern to the Belgian theological establishment, and thanks to the diplomatic qualities of Cardinal Mercier³² Louvain exegetes

²⁷ On the establishing of the Commission in 1902 and its further history, see Albert VANHOYE, *Passé et présent de la Commission biblique*, in: *Gregorianum*, 74 (1993), p. 261-75.

²⁸ In 1905 Pius X replaced the then secretary of the Biblical Commission by the more traditional-minded Belgian benedictine Laurent Janssens (1855-1925). See Olivier ROUSSEAU, *Sa grandeur Mgr. Janssens O.S.B.*, in: *Revue liturgique et monastique*, 10 (1925), p. 285-289.

²⁹ *EB*, p. 272-279 (276): tum vero maxime quum modernistarum errores, id est omnium haereseon collectum.

³⁰ On Loisy's (1857-1940) life and work, see Albert HOUTIN and Félix SARTIAUX, *Alfred Loisy: Sa vie, son œuvre*. Manuscrit annoté et publié avec une bibliographie de Loisy et un index bio-bibliographique par Émile POULAT, Paris, 1960; Christophe THEOBALD, *Loisy, Alfred*, in François Laplanche (ed.), *Les sciences religieuses: Le XIX^e siècle. 1800-1914* (Dictionnaire du monde religieux dans la France contemporaine, 9), Paris, 1996, p. 426-431. Other protagonists would be Joseph Turmel (1859-1943), George Tyrrell (1861-1909), Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938), and Ernesto Buonaiuti (1881-1946). See Rosino GIBELINI, *La teologia del xx secolo* (Biblioteca di teologia contemporanea, 69), Brescia, 2004⁵, p. 166-167.

³¹ POULAT, *Alfred Loisy...* [see n. 30], p. 30.

³² Joseph-Désiré Mercier (1851-1926), priest of the archdiocese of Mechelen. After his studies in philosophy and a professorship at Mechelen he obtains the doctorate in theology in 1882. From 1882 to 1905 he teaches philosophy at the

such as Hoonacker³³ and Ladeuze³⁴ were spared condemnation for the most part. We will not, however, study this in detail, given the fact that our interest lies in the generation following these theologians. For now, we will suffice by referring to other studies on the issue. Nevertheless, the Belgian theologians of this period too were forced to cope with the conflict between traditional pre-critical reading of the bible and historical thinking. According to Joseph Coppens — who considered himself one of their successors³⁵ — both men espoused an anti-modernist midway position in line, more or less, with the opinions of M.J. Lagrange.³⁶ Outside Louvain's faculty of theology, one of the most striking Belgian contributions to the debate came from Henri Merkelbach.³⁷ Between 1910 and 1911, Merkelbach published two articles on the inspira-

Louvain University, and from 1906 to 1926 he is cardinal-archbishop of Mechelen. See D.A. BOILEAU, *Cardinal Mercier. A Memoir*, Leuven, 1996.

³³ Albin Van Hoonacker (1857-1933), priest of the diocese of Bruges. Obtains a doctorate in theology at Louvain in 1886 and then specializes in Semitic languages. In 1889 he becomes professor of Old Testament Exegesis, and in 1902 he is appointed among the first group of members of the Biblical Commission. See Karim SCHELKENS, *Albin Van Hoonacker*, in: *Bio-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Nordhausen, 2008, vol. 29, cols 1485-1491.

³⁴ Paulin Ladeuze (1870-1940), priest of the diocese of Tournai. After his studies in philosophy at the Seminary of Bonne-Espérance he obtains a doctorate in theology at Louvain in 1898. He then becomes professor at Louvain and in 1909 he is elected rector magnificus. Joseph COPPENS, *Paulin Ladeuze, orientalist en exegeet. 1870-1940: Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de bijbelwetenschap in het begin van de XXe eeuw* (Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie. Klasse der Letteren en der Morele en Staatkundige Wetenschappen, 3/1), Brussels, 1941. On Ladeuze see Luc COURTOIS, *Paulin Ladeuze*, in Roger AUBERT (ed.) *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, fasc. XXVIII, Paris, 2001 and ID., *Paulin Ladeuze et l'introduction de la méthode critique dans l'exégèse à l'UCL*, in Patricia RADELET and Brigitte VAN TIGGELEN (ed.), *Sedes Scientiae: l'émergence de la recherche à l'Université* (Réminiscences, 6), Louvain-la-Neuve, Turnhout, 2003.

³⁵ COPPENS, *Paulin Ladeuze...* [se n. 34], p. 30 and 74.

³⁶ Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938), French Dominican friar of the Toulouse province in 1879. He studies theology and oriental linguistics, exegesis and philosophy at Toulouse and Vienna. In 1890 Lagrange founds the *École pratique d'études bibliques* in Jerusalem, training several generations of exegetes there. See Bernard MONTAGNES, *Le père Lagrange, 1855-1938: L'exégèse catholique dans la crise moderniste* (Histoire), Paris, 1995.

³⁷ Henri Merkelbach (1871-1942), priest of the diocese of Liège. Professor at the Liège Seminary in 1902, he enters the dominican order at La Sarte in 1917. As of 1929 he teaches at the Angelicum in Rome. P.J.A. NUYNENS, *Henricus*

tion of Scripture in which he seriously questioned the idea of inerrancy without dismissing it completely.³⁸ In so doing, he disputed the instrumentalist approach maintained by the Jesuits since Franzelin³⁹ and sought alliance with the position of Lagrange by appealing for a modern Thomism.

The discussion waned to a certain extent under Benedict XV⁴⁰, only to flare up again in the 1920's under his successor Pius XI.⁴¹ The absence of negotiations and a general climate of fear brought an uneasy calm to the situation,⁴² but the continued ambivalence was far from satisfactory. In exegetical circles, the pioneering work of Rudolf Bultmann and his *formgeschichtliche* method quickly spread. The idea that the image of Christ proclaimed by the New Testament did not completely coincide with the historical Jesus, but had its roots rather in the faith context of the early Christian communities and the context in which the said image was transmitted⁴³ lead Bultmann to a number of radical conclusions in his later work. In his *Theologie des neuen Testaments* of 1948⁴⁴, for example, he emerges as the defender of a demythologisation of the language of the New Testament, in an effort to understand the

Guillelmus Nicolaus Merkelbach, in: *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, 9, p. 510-514.

³⁸ Henri MERKELBACH, *L'inspiration des divines écritures*, in: *Revue ecclésiastique de Liège*, 6-7 (1910-1912), p. 221-243 and p. 12-33. Both articles were edited in 1913 as MERKELBACH, *L'inspiration des divines écritures: Questions de principe et questions d'application*, Arras, 1913.

³⁹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Introduction to the New Testament*, London, 1983, p. 337. On Franzelin's (1816-1886) life and work, see Peter WALTER, *Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816-1886). Jesuit, Theologe, Kardinal. Ein Lebensbild*, Bosen, 1987.

⁴⁰ FOUILLOUX, *Une Église...* [see n. 10], p. 16-20, talks about a "détente".

⁴¹ The famous *Manuel Biblique*, which had known several reprints since 1878, was put on the Index in 1923. One year later, Pius XI's *Motu proprio Bibliorum scientiam* forces all students in exegesis to obtain their license or doctoral degree with the Pontifical Biblical Commission or at the Biblicum, which explains why professors such as Cerfaux had spent a year of study there. *EB*, p. 510-515, there 512, § 509.

⁴² A crucial step in that direction is the abolishing of the *Sodalitium Pianum* in 1921. See Émile Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral: Un réseau secret international antimoderniste, la Sapinière 1909-1921* (Religion et sociétés), Tournai, 1969.

⁴³ Rudolf BULTMANN, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Göttingen, 1921.

⁴⁴ Rudolf BULTMANN, *Theologie des neuen Testaments*, Tübingen, 1948.

message of the biblical narratives at an existential level and to come closer to the primitive experience of early Christianity. This existential interpretation was so far removed from the exegetical methods prescribed by the Catholic magisterium that Catholic theologians were only able to assimilate Bultmann's ideas in silence and only little by little. Another discussion within the Catholic church demands our attention at this juncture, however. The question of the compatibility of traditional dogmatics and the historical-critical method reappeared on the agenda, albeit in a different form: the so-called *nouvelle théologie*.⁴⁵

A study house run by the French Dominicans had established itself in the French-Belgian village of *Le Saulchoir* in 1904.⁴⁶ From the first years of the 20th century, the Dominicans of *Le Saulchoir* had developed a *via mediâ*, which was only committed to writing in 1937⁴⁷ by Marie-Dominique Chenu.⁴⁸ A first and important constatation for our purposes is that Chenu proved to be deeply inspired by the work of the dominican exegete Lagrange.⁴⁹ Still, the school's point of departure differed from that of the "modernists".

⁴⁵ FOUILLOUX, *Une Église...* [see n. 10]; and TSHIBANGU, *Théologie...* [see n. 20]. Also see GIBELLINI, *La teologia...* [see n. 30], p. 173-225.

⁴⁶ The French dominicans had been forced to leave France, due to anti-catholic legislation under Prime Minister Émile Combes in 1904. Antoine DANSETTE, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine. Sous la troisième république* (L'histoire), Paris, 1951, vol. 2, p. 300ff. More recent background information is found in Jean-Pierre SCOT, *Genèse de la loi de 1905*, in Yves Charles ZARCA (ed.) *Faut-il réviser la loi de 1905*, Paris, 2005, p. 7-56.

⁴⁷ Much of Chenu's terminology was owed to the founder of *Le Saulchoir*, and his book Ambroise Gardeil, *Le donné révélé et la théologie*, Paris, 1910. See Étienne FOUILLOUX, *Le Saulchoir en procès (1937-1942)*, in Giuseppe ALBERIGO et al. (ed.), *Une école de théologie. Le Saulchoir* (Théologies), Paris, 1985, p. 37-59, there 42-43.

⁴⁸ Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990), French dominican friar. Professor of Church History and regent of *Le Saulchoir* from 1920 to 1942. Later also professor at the Sorbonne and the Institut Catholique de Paris. On Chenu, see Jean JOLIVET, *M.D. Chenu: Médiéviste et théologien*, in: *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 81 (1997), p. 381-94.

⁴⁹ For the sake of completeness we mention the influence of humanism inspired neo-thomists such as Jacques Maritain (1882-1971) and Étienne Gilson (1884-1978). See Jacques MARITAIN, *Humanisme intégral. Problèmes temporels et spirituels d'une nouvelle chrétienté*, Paris, 1936; and Étienne GILSON, *Christianisme et philosophie*, Paris, 1936. Cf. FOUILLOUX, *Le Saulchoir...* [see n. 47], p. 44-45. More background in Andrea RICCARDI, "Une école de théologie" fra la Francia e Roma, in: *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 5 (1984), p. 11-28 and Gerald A.

Chenu did not base himself on a meticulous historical-critical dissection of the Scriptures, but preferred to present his *Saulchoir* as a school that aimed to create a synthesis of neo-Thomistic speculation and positive theology. By taking dogmatic theology as his starting point and by placing the dogma of the incarnation at the centre of the theology of revelation, he hoped to emerge from the impasse that the theology of his day had hitherto been unable to escape. A theology that took the incarnation as its key also had to recognise its profoundly historical roots: *le donné révélé* appeared to be radically historical. Instead of understanding the incarnation as an idea or a concept, it was considered an historical event.⁵⁰ God revealed Godself in a concrete human being, in history. On the one hand such ideas come very close to the modernist discourse. On the other hand, they take a different point of departure, beginning at the opposite end of the continuum, with revelation perceived in terms of incarnation. This theological premise only generated an appreciation and legitimation of historical-critical thinking *a posteriori*, something that the modernists maintained from the outset.⁵¹

Roughly a year after Chenu's publication his Belgian confrere Louis Charlier⁵² ran into difficulties with his *Essai sur le problème*

McCOOL, *The Neo-Thomists* (Marquette Studies in Philosophy, 3), Milwaukee WI, 1994.

⁵⁰ TSHIBANGU, *Théologie...* [see n. 20], p. 165: Le donné révélé, avons-nous dit, doit jouir en théologie d'une primauté totale. [...] Le rôle premier de la théologie est d'en déterminer la teneur, quelle que soit la modalité sous laquelle il se manifeste. Elle réalise cette tâche en étudiant ce donné dans l'Écriture et la Tradition.

⁵¹ ALBERIGO et al. (ed.), *Une école de théologie...* [see n. 47], p. 134-135: Si la révélation s'insère ainsi dans le temps, au cours d'une histoire, histoire sainte, mais histoire, centrée sur le fait historique de l'Incarnation, si dès lors le donné révélé s'inscrit et se présente dans des faits et des textes historiques, nous voici directement et brutalement devant cette question: la théologie, comme la foi qui l'inspire, ne sont-elles pas alors justiciables d'une critique historique? Ce qui, en principe, semble devoir jeter la foi au relativisme, et en conséquence, engager le travail théologique dans un cercle à l'intérieur duquel on ne pourra rejoindre la 'parole de Dieu'.

⁵² Louis Charlier (1898-1981), Belgian dominican friar. He studies history at Louvain and theology at the Dominican study house of La Sarte, where he becomes professor in 1927. In 1942 he is condemned by the H. Office, and only in 1953 can he resume his teaching activities. Cornelis E.M. STRUYKER BOU-DIER, *Wijsgurig leven in Nederland en België 1880-1980: De dominicanen*, Nijmegen, 1986, vol. 2, p. 208-210.

théologique.⁵³ Charlier's essay followed the method proposed by Chenu in an endeavour to deal with the relationship between theology and the revealed (I),⁵⁴ the relationship between theology and rationality (II), and the methods of theology (III). Taking Thomas as his foundation, he developed a positive theology that was open to historical-critical thinking. Attempts by Gardeil, Chenu and Charlier to develop a contemporary neo-Thomism thus support Brian Shanley's claim that 20th century Thomism should not be approached as monolithic. While it includes the perspective of Leo XIII and his successors, it also embraces a considerable amount of innovation introduced by the Dominicans themselves.⁵⁵ This insight becomes all the more painful when one realises that the works of Chenu and Charlier were placed on the Index in 1942.⁵⁶ Louvain's faculty of theology also ran into difficulties in the same year. In the aftermath of Charlier's condemnation, the Holy Office discovered that his work was based in large part on class notes taken by a student of René Draguet.⁵⁷ The Louvain professor fell into discredit from February 1942 and saw his license to teach withdrawn. After consulting the Belgian episcopate, rector van Waeyenbergh was then forced to "transfer" Draguet to the faculty of arts.⁵⁸

⁵³ Louis CHARLIER, *Essai sur le problème théologique* (Bibliothèque orientations. Section scientifique 1), Thuillies, 1938. An elaborate analysis of this work is found in Jürgen METTEPENNINGEN, *L'essai de Louis Charlier (1938): Une contribution à la nouvelle théologie*, in: *RTL*, 39 (2008), p. 211-231.

⁵⁴ As did Chenu Charlier installs revelation (une réalité donnée) as the starting point of theology. See CHARLIER, *Essai sur le problème...* [see n. 53], p. 66ff.

⁵⁵ Brian J. SHANLEY, *The Thomist Tradition* (Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion, 2), Boston, 2002, p. 2-36.

⁵⁶ Jesus MARTÍNEZ DE BUJANDA, *Index librorum prohibitorum 1600-1966* (Index des livres interdits, 11), Montréal, 2002. This was instigated by Pietro Parente (1891-1986) who had spread a note asking for a condemnation of these works. See TSHIBANGU, *Théologie...* [see n. 20], p. 80.

⁵⁷ René Draguet (1896-1980), priest of the diocese of Tournai. He obtains the doctoral and magisterial title in theology at Louvain. From 1925 to 1942 he taught Theology of the Oriental Churches. After his condemnation in 1942 van Waeyenbergh transfers him to the Arts Faculty at Louvain, and after a partial rehabilitation in 1948 he resumes teaching activities at the theological faculty.

⁵⁸ On the entire episode, see the article by Roger GUELLEY, *Les antécédents de l'encyclique 'Humani generis' dans les sanctions romaines de 1942: Chenu, Charlier, Draguet*, in: *RHE*, 81 (1986), p. 421-497.

Renewed exegetical perspectives, 1939–1959

When Pius XII assumed control of the Roman Catholic Church in 1939, his choice of name appeared to underline continuity with his predecessor. While the condemnations of 1942 seemed to confirm this presupposition, further developments revealed an altogether different pope. On September 30th 1943, Pacelli promulgated his first encyclical on the bible and biblical studies, *Divino afflante Spiritu*. The reaction of an otherwise sedate figure such as André-Marie Charue, bishop of Namur, speaks volumes:

Un souffle d'air frais, d'ozone après l'orage! Une belle réussite d'une œuvre longue et ardue, qui vous donne un sentiment d'euphorie et de joie reconnaissante, telle est l'encyclique *Divino afflante Spiritu* que le souverain Pontife Pie XII vient de consacrer aux études bibliques.⁵⁹

Why such a tangible sense of relief? *Divino afflante Spiritu* opens with a confirmation of the stipulations of Vatican I and *Providentissimus Deus* concerning the infallibility of the Scriptures. As a matter of fact, Pius XII⁶⁰ even devotes a surprising amount of attention to the issues surrounding the concept of *Deus auctor*, inspiration and infallibility. Yet it is here that a number of new perspectives are revealed. Where Leo XIII's doctrine of inspiration firmly emphasised the role of the divine author, Pius XII shifts to a clear appreciation of the human author and introduces the notion of cooperation between the human and the divine. While a complete revision of the traditional standpoint is not evident in *Divino afflante*,⁶¹ nevertheless the instrumentalist vision of human authorship is further nuanced in the encyclical, based on the realisation that instrumental causality cannot reach its final goal — the communication of God's truth to humanity — without the mediation of the human author whose person and words are linked inseparably. Human authors are not to be reduced to supportive instruments.

⁵⁹ Pius XII, *Encyclique sur les études bibliques. Préface de S.E. Mgr. A.M. Charue. Introduction et commentaires de L. Cerfaux* (Chrétienté nouvelle, 6), Brussels, 1945, p. 7.

⁶⁰ Joseph G. PRIOR, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis* (Tesi Gregoriana. Serie Teologia 50), Rome, 1999, p. 118-120.

⁶¹ See an article by cardinal Augustin BEA, *Pio XII e le scienze bibliche*, in *Pio XII Pont. Max. Postridie kalendas martias mdccclxxvi bis mdcccclvi* (Rome, 1965), p. 71. Bea's opinion is relevant given his role as "Ghost-writer" of the encyclical. Cf. Stjepan SCHMIDT, *Augustin Bea: Der Kardinal der Einheit*, Graz, 1989, p. 117-122.

Divine authorship, rather, is dependent on human authorship and is formed thereby and *vice versa*.

Based on this difference in nuance, the principle of infallibility is redefined in terms of the *sensus literalis*. The latter is still understood as the meaning intended by the author, albeit coupled with the background notion of cooperation between God and the acting, co-creating human person. From this point onwards the idea of dual authorship comes to the fore. The consciousness, intention and historical locatedness of the human authors became relevant information in establishing a clear theological understanding of the Scriptures.⁶² A positive attitude with respect to the various exegetical tools also emerges here, although the encyclical continues to insist on the importance of the *analogia fidei* and fidelity to the teaching authority of the Catholic church.⁶³ This insistence is linked first and foremost to the desire to salvage exegesis as a “theological” discipline. The one-sided interpretation of scriptural exegesis as a purely philological question, however, remains out of the question. The aforementioned analogy of faith is also a hermeneutical analogy. According to *Divino afflante*, Catholic scholarly and traditional hermeneutics support one another. In this sense, the encyclical can be said to be an ill-disguised canonisation of Lagrange’s search for a balance between historical-critical exegesis and theology.⁶⁴ The results of *Divino afflante* can be summarised as follows: exegetes are again permitted to engage in the public confron-

⁶² See *EB*, § 560: Quapropter catholicus exegeta, ut hodiernis rei biblicae necessitatibus rite satisfaciat, in exponenda Scriptura Sacra, in eademque ab omni errore immuni ostendenda et comprobanda, eo quoque prudenter subsidio utatur, ut perquirat quid dicendi forma seu litterarum genus, ab hagiographo adhibitum, ad veram et genuinam conferat interpretationem; ac sibi persuadeat hanc officii sui partem sine magno catholicae exegeseos detrimento neglegi non posse. Non raro enim — ut hoc solummodo attingamus — cum Sacros Auctores ab historiae fide aberrasse, aut res minus accurate rettulisse obiurgando nonnulli iactant, nulla alia de re agi comperitur, nisi de suetis illis nativis antiquorum dicendi narrandique modis, qui in mutuo hominum inter se commercio passim adhiberi solebant, ac reapse licito communique more adhibebantur. Iusta igitur mentis aequitas postulat, ut haec, cum in divino eloquio, quod pro hominibus verbis humanis exprimitur, inveniantur, non magis erroris arguantur, quam cum eadem in cotidiano vitae usu habeantur.

⁶³ *EB*, § 551.

⁶⁴ More info in Enrico GALBIATI, *I generi letterari secondo il P. Lagrange e la Divino afflante Spirito*, in: *La Scuola Cattolica*, 75 (1947), p. 177-186, see p. 282-292.

tation of the historical-critical method *and* dogma, as long as they remain loyal to the faith of the Church. They are reminded in this regard that the scholarly and the ‘religious’ reading of the Scriptures are not mutually exclusive, rather they support and enrich one another.

The “Louvain school” was at the centre of developments during this period in the history of Catholic exegesis. Around the time of *Divino afflante*, Van Hoonacker’s generation made way for that of Joseph Coppens. Lucien Cerfaux succeeded Édouard Tobac⁶⁵ on his premature demise, the latter having been the successor of Paulin Ladeuze⁶⁶. Cerfaux, appointed consulter to the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1941⁶⁷, published his *magnum opus* a year later on Pauline ecclesiology — in *Unam Sanctam*, a series directed by Yves Congar, one of the main protagonists of the *nouvelle théologie* movement.⁶⁸ Cerfaux’ work attracted attention in exegetical circles, in part because it demonstrated development in Pauline thought.⁶⁹ In line with his predecessors, he was not afraid to employ the

⁶⁵ Édouard Tobac (1877-1930), professor of Exegesis at the Mechelen seminary as of 1906. He obtains the doctoral and magisterial degrees in Theology, and becomes professor of Exegesis at Louvain in 1921. JOSEPH COPPENS, *Éloge académique de M. le chanoine Édouard Tobac: Professeur à la faculté de théologie*, in: *Annuaire de l’Université catholique de Louvain*, 82 (1930-33), p. LXXVIII-XCV.

⁶⁶ On this generational shift at Louvain, see André WÉNIN, *L’exégèse biblique à Louvain au cours du 20^e siècle*, in Jean-Marie SEVRIN and André HAQUIN (ed.), *La théologie entre deux siècles: Bilan et Perspectives. Actes du colloque organisé à l’occasion du 575^e anniversaire de l’Université catholique de Louvain* (Cahiers de la Revue théologique de Louvain, 34), Louvain-la-Neuve, 2002, p. 37-56.

⁶⁷ COPPENS, *La carrière et l’œuvre scientifique...* [see n. 4], p. 15, puts Cerfaux’s nomination in March 1941 (though referring to the *Oss. Rom.* of 1951) whereas Dirk CLAES, *Theologie in tijden van verandering. De theologische faculteit te Leuven in de twintigste eeuw, 1900-1968* [unpublished doctoral dissertation, KULeuven], 2004, put it in 1942. Both appear to be mistaken. AAS, 33 (1941), 96, reads: Con biglietti della Segretaria di Stato, il Santo Padre Pio XII, felicemente regnante, si è degnato di nominare: 13 febbraio 1941 — L’Ill.mo e Rev.mo Monsig. Arturo Allgeier, i Revmi Sacerdoti Alberto Clamer e Luciano Cerfaux [...] consultori della Commissione Pontificia per gli Studi Biblici.

⁶⁸ LUCIEN CERFAUX, *La théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul* (*Unam sanctam*, 10), Paris, 1942.

⁶⁹ E.g., CERFAUX, *La théologie de l’Église...* [see n. 68], p. 231: On remarque, en abordant les épîtres de la captivité, un changement de perspective dans la pensée et le vocabulaire de saint Paul. Des faits nouveaux sont advenus: le contact du christianisme avec le milieu d’Éphèse d’un côté; l’issue du voyage de la collecte d’autre part ...

scholarly-historiographical *instrumentarium* he had at his disposal and to introduce his knowledge of the Paul's Hellenistic world into his arguments. The study of language and context were likewise granted a prominent role. This brings us back to *Divino afflante Spiritu* and to the commentary on the encyclical offered by Cerfaux and Charue.⁷⁰

The commentary in question is worth more detailed examination because it provides a concise reflection of the *Auseinandersetzung* between exegesis and the question of revelation, and because the same theological tendencies can be read in the *votum* of Louvain's theology faculty and later in the schema *De fontibus*. For Cerfaux, *Divino afflante* was crystal clear: the Church supports the application of the historical-critical method in exegetical research rooted in the conviction that a more profound understanding of the text can only enrich our understanding of revelation. More succinctly: the Church recognises the methodological primacy of the *sensus literalis*, the "literal sense" being understood at this juncture as the historical sense, which can be retrieved by the study of language and context. Method is thus given priority. On the question of the doctrine of inspiration, Cerfaux appreciates Pius XII's presentation of the human author as an instrument, albeit one whose personal characteristics can be perceived and read in his work. The encyclical thus encourages historical-critical exegesis⁷¹ and invites exegetes to employ genre criticism as a legitimate tool.⁷² For Cerfaux, exegetes who apply this method earnestly have no reason to object

⁷⁰ Charue had been trained in exegesis at Louvain and appears to have been one of the candidates for the succession of Tobac. Wladimir PLAVSIC, *Monseigneur Charue. Évêque de Namur*, Ottignies, 1996, p. 9-11.

⁷¹ Lucien CERFAUX, *Commentaire*, in Pius XII, *Encyclique sur les études bibliques*, p. 95: Le dogme de l'inspiration d'abord. L'écrivain sacré, selon la doctrine des Pères, reprise par saint Thomas, est l'instrument de l'Esprit-Saint. C'est un instrument 'vivant et doué de raison', agissant et réagissant de toutes ses facultés; son œuvre portera donc l'empreinte de sa personnalité. C'est dire que notre connaissance de l'œuvre — donc du sens littéral — croitra dans la mesure où nous connaissons mieux l'écrivain et toute son époque. [...] Ici intervient la méthode des genres littéraires [...] désormais, elle est plus que recommandée, elle est commandée.

⁷² Jean-Louis JADOULE, *Les intellectuels catholiques: De la libération au concile Vatican II*, in Jean PIROTTE and Guy ZÉLIS (ed.), *Pour une histoire du monde catholique au 20^e siècle. Wallonie — Bruxelles. Guide du chercheur* (Sillages, 6), Louvain-la-Neuve, 2003, p. 467-486, see p. 470.

to the Catholic *doctrina infallibilitatis*. In the last analysis, it is the lack of historical knowledge that introduces doubt on the truth content of certain passages of Scripture. One question remained: To what extent can one and is one permitted to reduce Catholic exegesis to philology? Cerfaux speaks at this juncture of a “mystical counter reaction”⁷³ on the part of the faithful and warns that overly one-sided approaches to the Scriptures should rightly expect to be rebuffed by the community. The Church, after all, had combined the allegorical and typological sense of Scripture from of old. In other words, the otherwise legitimate primacy of the *sensus literalis* ought not to occasion the neglect of traditional interpretational frameworks. Scholarly methods appear to be instruments⁷⁴ rather than goals in themselves. *Beyond* rather than counter to the primacy of the literal sense, Cerfaux appeals for a “dogmatic” or “theological” exegesis.⁷⁵ What he intends by this is a hermeneutic of faith that subscribes to the ecclesial Tradition and demonstrates that the gulf between a religious and a scholarly reading of the Scriptures can be bridged. This respects Pius XII’s notion of the analogy of faith and leads back to a *Grundanliegen* of the entire modernist crisis:⁷⁶ a synthesis of dogma and history. Cerfaux thus solves the compatibility problem by establishing a tentative link between historical-critical exegesis and dogmatic exegesis.

This option was further developed from September 1949 onwards, when Coppens, Cerfaux and the Benedictine monk Jean Gribomont organised the first *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense*. The subject of the two-day symposium was the *Sensus plenarius Scrip-*

⁷³ L. CERFAUX, *Commentaire...* [see n. 71], p. 98: Faut-il nous étonner que la réaction atteigne la théologie et se marque, en matière biblique, par un mépris ou du moins une défiance vis-à-vis de l’exégèse scientifique, ‘les maigres mamelles du sens littéral’, comme dit Claudel?

⁷⁴ L. CERFAUX, *Commentaire...* [see n. 71], p. 105: La science, aux mains de l’exégète, est un instrument nécessaire.

⁷⁵ L. CERFAUX, *Commentaire...* [see n. 71], p. 108: C’est par cette exégèse ‘théologique’ ou ‘dogmatique’ que nous donnerons satisfaction à la saine réaction du monde chrétien.

⁷⁶ In his introduction to the encyclical Cerfaux offers a lengthy overview of the modernist debates, thereby remaining quite friendly toward Loisy. L. CERFAUX, *Commentaire...* [see n. 71], p. 11-20, there p. 15: Mieux au courant des exigences dogmatiques, Loisy et le P. Lagrange, à ce moment, avaient déjà esquissé les grandes lignes d’une méthode qui refusait de dissocier l’inspiration et inerrance.

turae Sacrae.⁷⁷ According to Neiryneck⁷⁸, the immediate occasion of the event in question was the publication in 1948 of Coppens' *Les harmonies des deux Testaments. Essai sur les divers sens des Écritures et sur l'Unité de la Révélation*.⁷⁹ The book's subtitle says enough. Although Lagrange had already endeavoured to solve modernism's compatibility problem by focusing on the question of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, Joseph Coppens was the first to devote a wide-ranging study to the topic.

With greater precision and detail than Cerfaux's commentary, Coppens focuses on the polysemic character of the Scriptures, distinguishing three rudimentary levels of meaning: *sensus literalis*, *sensus plenior* and other secondary denotations. While the first level (*sensus literalis*) was already familiar, Coppens' analysis argues nevertheless that the literal meaning is not enough to solve the problem and that this approach only demonstrates a minimum of unity between the Old and New Testaments. He then turns his attention to the *sensus plenior*. The terminology employed here may not be new,⁸⁰ but Coppens was among the first to point out

⁷⁷ Frans NEIRYNCK, *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense. Journées Bibliques de Louvain. Bijbelse studiedagen te Leuven, 1949-2001* (Studiorum novi testamenti auxilia, 19), Leuven, 2001, p. 9-11. Next to Coppens's, presentations were given by Cerfaux and church historian Jean Gribomont (1920-1986). See Jean GRIBOMONT, *Le lien des deux Testaments, selon la théologie de S. Thomas. Notes sur le sens spirituel et implicite des Saintes Écritures*, in: *ETL*, 22 (1946), p. 70-89. On Gribomont see Henri DE SAINTE-MARIE, *Dom Gribomont directeur de l'édition romaine de la Vulgate*, in *Mémorial dom Jean Gribomont (1920-1986)* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum, 27), Rome, 1988, p. 7-10.

⁷⁸ Frans NEIRYNCK, *J. Coppens, fondateur des Journées bibliques de Louvain. Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense 1949-1981*, in: *ETL*, 57 (1981), p. 274-292.

⁷⁹ Joseph COPPENS, *Les harmonies des deux Testaments. Essai sur les divers sens des Écritures et sur l'unité de la Révélation* (CNRT, 6), Tournai, 1949. The book is a joint edition of three aforepublished articles: Joseph COPPENS, *Les harmonies des deux Testaments: En étudiant les divers sens des Saintes Écritures. Premier article*, in: *NRT*, 70 (1948), p. 794-810; *Les harmonies des deux Testaments, II. Les apports du sens plénier*, in: *NRT*, 71 (1949), p. 3-38; *Les harmonies des deux Testaments, III. Les apports du sens littéral. Essai de synthèse*, in: *NRT*, 71 (1949), p. 477-496.

⁸⁰ See Raymond E. BROWN, *The History and Development of the Theory of a Sensus Plenior*, in: *CBQ*, 15 (1953), p. 141-162, and also his dissertation: *The Sensus plenior of Sacred Scripture*, Baltimore MD, 1955, which offers a splendid historical overview of the terminology and a good introduction into the entire problematic. A more recent account of the theory is found in Michelangelo TÁBET, *Il senso letterale ed il senso spirituale della Sacra Scrittura: Un tentativo*

that *sensus plenior* theories had contributed to endeavours to bridge the gulf between traditional and historical-critical hermeneutics during the modernist crisis.⁸¹ His own synthesis continues along such lines,⁸² building on Cerfaux's earlier initiatives.⁸³

Coppens then goes on to explore the precise meaning and role of the *sensus plenior*.⁸⁴ After a bibliographical-chronological survey of the use of the expression, he offers his own definition of the 'fuller meaning' as "the meaning of the text that constitutes an elaboration or completion of the literal meaning without thereby abandoning continuity and homogeneity with the latter".⁸⁵ The *sensus plenior* is thus a complementary significance, introducing a faith perspective that does not contradict the historical-critical meaning of the text. Cerfaux's initial idea is transformed at this juncture into an expansion of meaning in the theological direction. This additional assignation of meaning takes place on the basis of the unity of revelation, which likewise establishes a unity between the Old and New Testaments. Given Coppens' association of the unity of revelation with the Scriptures' unity of authorship — i.e. the hypothesis that a single author lay behind the Old and New Testaments — this same unity of revelation brings us close to the question of inspiration.⁸⁶ The pattern is familiar: Coppens takes the

di chiarimento terminologico e concettuale, in: *Annales Theologici*, 9 (1995), p. 2-54.

⁸¹ ROBINSON, *Roman Catholic Exegesis...* [see n. 18], p. 30-31. JOSEPH COPPENS, *Pour une meilleure intelligence des Saintes Écritures. Un nouvel essai d'herméneutique biblique*, in: *ETL*, 27 (1951), p. 500-508, on p. 508 reads: Nous vivons à une époque où la science biblique fleurit. Un des aspects les plus réconfortants de ce renouveau me paraît être la tentative de réconcilier en matière d'exégèse les méthodes et les points de vue à première vue opposés de la philologie et de la théologie.

⁸² RAYMOND E. BROWN, *The Problems of the Sensus Plenior*, in Gustave THILS et al. (ed.) *Exégèse et théologie: Les Saintes Écritures et leur interprétation théologique* (BETL, 26), Gembloux, 1968, p. 72-81, there p. 72. The earliest 20th century formulation of the theory was offered by FERNÁNDEZ, *Hermeneutica*, in Alberto VACCARI (ed.), *Institutiones Biblicae scholis accomodatae*, vol. 2, p. 381: Deus per hagiographi verba intendat aliquando sensum abundantiorum, pleniorum, quem ipse hagiographus intellexit et exprimere voluit.

⁸³ Next to Cerfaux' commentary, GRIBOMONT, *Le lien des deux testaments*, p. 70-89, also was an instigation.

⁸⁴ COPPENS, *Les harmonies...* [see n. 79], p. 30.

⁸⁵ COPPENS, *Les harmonies...* [see n. 79], p. 36.

⁸⁶ COPPENS, *Les harmonies...* [see n. 79], p. 41.

question of methodology as his point of departure and finds himself by degrees in the domain of dogmatics.

Coppens argues that the human author of the Scriptures — the instrument of God's will — is not always aware of the deeper meaning of what he alludes to in his writing, although he never instrumentalises the human author completely.⁸⁷ He endeavours rather to establish a balance, to avoid a conception of inspiration that only pays attention to the human author by focusing on the divine author — without at the same time getting bogged down in unilateralism. He insists on the necessity of a theological exegesis in which the *sensus plenior* offers new possibilities, bearing in mind that the debate surrounding the *intentio auctoris* includes the intention of the divine and the human author in the hermeneutical discourse. A discussion of Coppens' extensive analysis of the intention and awareness of the scriptural authors would take us beyond the limits of the present study.⁸⁸ His importance for us lies rather in his support of the *sensus plenior* theory. Coppens further elaborates his position in the course of the 1950's.⁸⁹ In the proceedings of the first *Colloquium Biblicum*, for example, we find an article in which he pursues the question further,⁹⁰ summing up the three founda-

⁸⁷ According to Johan LUST, *Mmgr. J. Coppens the Old Testament Scholar*, in: *ETL*, 57 (1981), p. 241-265, there 244, the theory of the *sensus plenior* was formulated over against the background of a scholastic notion of inspiration, as given in *Providentissimus Deus*.

⁸⁸ Coppens's analyses of the authors's (self)conscience led him to establish a threefold distinction within the *sensus plenior*: a) a perichoretic *sensus plenior*, b) an historico-typological *sensus plenior* and c) a profetico-typological *sensus plenior*. Such distinctions raise questions as to what extent the biblical authors were aware of the divine intention that runs through their own writings. A good introduction in the problematic has been offered by Antoon Schoors, *Hel wetenschappelijk werk van Monseigneur Coppens*, in *La carrière et l'œuvre...* [see n. 4], p. 9-28.

⁸⁹ COPPENS, *Pour une meilleure intelligence...* [see n. 81], p. 500-508; *Nouvelles réflexions sur les divers sens des Saintes Écritures*, in: *NRT*, 74 (1952), p. 3-20; *Vom christlichen Verständnis des Alten Testaments: Les Harmonies des deux Testaments. Supplément bibliographique. Bibliographie J. Coppens*, Paris, 1952; *L'inspiration et l'inerrance biblique*, in: *ETL*, 33 (1957), p. 5-35; *Le problème du sens plénier*, in: *ETL*, 34 (1958), p. 5-21.

⁹⁰ Lucien CERFAUX et al. (ed.), *Problèmes et méthode d'exégèse théologique* (Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia. Series II/16), Bruges, 1950. Jean GRIBOMONT, *Sens plénier, typique et littéral*, p. 21-31, looks into the relationship between these three directions of meaning with special attention to the (self)awareness of the authors. Lucien CERFAUX, *Simple réflexions à propos de l'exégèse*

tions of the *sensus plenior* with greater clarity than in his original essay:

Rappelons que le sens en question, que nous avons appelé plénier, se dégage surtout à la lumière de deux faits: l'unité de la Révélation et son progrès continu. Ils sont en outre corroborés par une troisième donnée: l'inclination de l'Église à référer sa doctrine actuelle à des textes bibliques où il est parfois bien difficile de la retrouver à l'aide de la seule méthode philologique.⁹¹

It should be clear that the quotation does not support the pre-eminence of the *sensus plenior*, certainly when one is aware that Coppens is a tireless defender of the primacy of the *sensus literalis* in his other writings. The notion of the continuity of revelation, however, introduces the Church's doctrine and its interpretation through time into the exegetical endeavour. Coppens and Cerfaux⁹² thus develop a theological exegesis that endorses the analogy of faith. Both exegetes take the problem of revelation seriously in line with which they envisage Catholic exegesis as a theological discipline, capable of relating to Catholic doctrine in a positive way without thereby shying away from an *Auseinandersetzung*. At the same time, they are determined to take history seriously. When the encyclical *Humani generis*⁹³ was promulgated in 1950, it is hardly surprising that neither professor felt himself under attack. Cerfaux even found support for his own position in the encyclical,⁹⁴ thereby

apostolique, p. 33-44, reflects upon the dealings of apostolic exegesis with the notion of inspiration.

⁹¹ Joseph COPPENS, *Le problème d'un sens biblique plénier*, in CERFAUX et al. (ed.), *Problèmes et méthode...* [see n. 90], p. 12-13.

⁹² The parallels between the positions of both exegetes become even more tangible through looking at their unison rejection of John Henry Newman's doctrine of the *obiter dicta* in the Scriptures, which implies a selective doctrine of inerrancy.

⁹³ PIUS XII, *Litt. Enc. Humani generis de nonnullis falsis opinionibus quae catholicae doctrinae fundamenta subruere minantur*, in: *AAS*, 42 (1950), p. 568-570; 575-578. The encyclical consists of two main parts. The first part of the encyclical the pope appeals to theologians to return to the sources of divine revelation, i.e. the Scriptures and the Tradition. In so doing, Pius XII condemns two 'false opinions', namely the argument that the infallible divine significance of the Scriptures is completely masked by their (fallible) human significance, and the idea of symbolic exegesis.

⁹⁴ Lucien CERFAUX, *Révélation et histoire*, in: *NRT*, 13 (1951), p. 582-93, there 593: Ce mariage selon les règles, cette saine et robuste alliance de la foi et de la raison, de la révélation et de l'histoire, c'est l'honneur de la tradition

illustrating that Louvain's exegetes considered it a justifiable rebuke of the excesses⁹⁵ related to the *nouvelle théologie*. They continued unperturbed⁹⁶ and only months before John XXIII announced his Council, they organised an international exegesis colloquium in Louvain on the occasion of the world exhibition in Brussels.⁹⁷ Their intuitions were confirmed when Cardinal Van Roey opened the colloquium with a message from Pius XII, destined to be his last words on the topic of exegesis, words in perfect keeping with *Divino afflante Spiritu* from fifteen years earlier.⁹⁸

Albert Descamps, Cerfaux's successor in Louvain, delivered a paper at a congress around this time that deserves further investigation. While Descamps likewise sought to establish a synthesis between the historical and the dogmatic, he differed from Coppens and his analysis of hermeneutical options⁹⁹ in that he preferred to

chrétienne, maintenue intacte dans notre Église et défendue une fois encore par l'encyclique *Humani generis*.

⁹⁵ Also see the report on the second *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense* by Joseph COPPENS, *Journées Bibliques de Louvain*, in: *ETL*, 26 (1950), p. 552-554, and his *De Jongste Bijbelencycliek*, in: *Ons geloof*, 27 (1945), p. 145-164.

⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Cerfaux himself was struggling with the fact that cardinal Marchetti-Selvaggiani of the H. Office had requested that Van Roey of Mechelen retract Cerfaux's contribution to a Festschrift offered to the protestant exegete Goguel, request eventually to be denied by Cardinal Van Roey. See CLAES, *Theologie in tijden van verandering...* [see n. 67].

⁹⁷ The proceedings of the conference have been published by Joseph COPPENS, Albert DESCAMPS and Édouard MASSAUX (ed.), *Sacra Pagina: Miscellanea biblica Congressus internationalis catholici de re biblica* (BETL, 12-13), Paris, 1959. Between August 25 and 30, 1958 — not long before the council consultations began — themes such as scriptural inspiration and inerrancy, *sensus plenior* and *sensus literalis*, the value of the historical critical method and the reconciliation of a theological and a historical reading of the Bible, etc. were all discussed thoroughly in Brussels. An overview of the discussion topics is found in the pamphlet *Expositio universalis Bruxellensis, Civitas Dei: Congressus internationalis catholicus de re biblica* (Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia. Series III, 10), Bruges, 1958.

⁹⁸ *Allocution de Son Éminence le Cardinal Van Roey et Message de Sa Sainteté le Pape Pie XII*, in COPPENS, DESCAMPS and MASSAUX (ed.), *Sacra Pagina...* [see n. 97], vol 1, p. 14-16 (16).

⁹⁹ Still in 1958 we find Coppens defending his threefold approach of the scriptures as valuable (in a discussion with Pierre Benoit from the *École Biblique de Jérusalem*, who delivered a talk on *Les analogies de l'inspiration*, in: *Sacra Pagina...* [see n. 97], vol. 1, p. 86-99. Through his own research on inspiration and instrumentality Benoit had gained an interest in the *sensus plenior* theory, which allowed for his development of an 'instrumental analogy'. On the dispute

begin with a thorough investigation of the methodological issues at stake before approaching issues of theology. Descamps dismissed what he called Henri Irénée Marrou's historiographical subjectivism,¹⁰⁰ and sung the praises of the historical-critical method as a rational means to achieve a degree of objectivity in one's research. He goes on to insist that the said method deserved a significant degree of autonomy, grounded in his conviction that God's interventions in history did not, as a rule, tend to jettison the rules of nature or humanity.¹⁰¹ For the historian, therefore, the testimony of a hagiographer is primarily a *human* testimony, *ergo*: a historical fact that can be studied. Descamps thus agrees with Coppens and Cerfaux in their emphasis on the primacy of the *sensus litteralis*¹⁰², but he goes further by suggesting that the study of biblical theology as a component of exegesis remains, in principle, an exclusively historiographical matter. Neither Coppens nor Cerfaux understood biblical theology in such far reaching terms, preferring as they did to see it as an extension, as secondary...

Descamps thus insisted on the autonomy of scholarly exegesis. To this end, he distinguished between 'judgements of essence' in the Scriptures (passages that reflect the religious significance ascribed to the facts by the hagiographer) and 'judgements of existence' (passages that endeavour to render historical facts).¹⁰³ Both are the object of exegetical research, he argued, and analysis by religious and atheistic historians alike will produce the same results. Descamps' contribution clearly grants a great deal of autonomy to critical research and at the same time appears to be critical of Coppens' understanding of the *sensus plenior* as a sort of added meaning.¹⁰⁴

between these two, see James Tunstead BURCHAEEL, *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration Since 1810. A Review and Critique*, London, 1969, p. 242-245.

¹⁰⁰ Henri Irénée MARROU, *De la connaissance historique* (Esprit. La condition humaine), Paris, 1954.

¹⁰¹ Albert DESCAMPS, *La méthode en théologie biblique*, in COPPENS, DESCAMPS and MASSAUX (ed.), *Sacra Pagina...* [see n. 97], vol. 1, p. 132-157, see p. 139-40: l'autonomie de l'approche expérimentale des faits religieux.

¹⁰² Cf. COPPENS, *Son Excellence Mgr. Descamps...* [see n. 6], p. 260-261.

¹⁰³ On judgements *quoad essentiam et quoad existentiam*, DESCAMPS, *La méthode en théologie biblique...* [see n. 101], p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ DESCAMPS, *La méthode en théologie biblique...* [see n. 101], p. 137-138: À en juger d'après certains travaux de théologie biblique, il semble que leurs auteurs éprouvent une sorte de crainte à appliquer jusqu'au bout les principes

Nevertheless, Descamps was also interested in the 'religious' significance of the Scriptures. In an attempt to deal with the issue, he insisted that the faith did not contradict the results of scholarly research nor did it add to them. The religious and the scholarly reading had no point of contact with one another for the simple reason that they did not share the same formal object. Descamps thus implied that the religious reader is interested in the meaning of the text for *today*, the 'living' meaning of the text, whereas the historian/exegete is in search of the *historical* meaning, in relation to both the factual narrative and the theology of the hagiographer. Both belong to the domain of the historical meaning. Questions such as: what did the author want to say? what style features did he use? to whom did he address his words? are historical questions and not questions of faith. The interests of the exegete and those of the believer have nothing in common nor do they contradict one another, but they remain structurally associated on account of their common material object: the scriptural text itself. There is no opposition, no com-position, but a juxtaposition of both. For Descamps, the theological meaning of the Scriptures had to be sought time and again on the basis of contemporary experience. As such, it did not require the purely historical-exegetical labour essential to the search for the historical meaning. Once again, Descamps differs in this regard from Coppens, whose *sensus plenior* functioned in terms of content as a surplus to the literal sense.

Descamps' vision requires a more nuanced analysis at this juncture, particularly with respect to the aforementioned triptych: infallibility, inspiration and divine authorship. For Descamps these are questions of faith. When he speaks of God's activity in the world, he insists at the same time on the importance of the laws of nature. Since God's interventions respect these laws, inspiration can never be anything less than a 'cooperation' between the human and the divine author. In the light of faith, the divine authorship of the Scriptures has never been disputed, Descamps maintains, given that the nature of the Scriptures is such that it does not exclude a religious interpretation, "*puisque Dieu ne subordonne pas l'octroi de*

de la méthode historique; ils considèrent plutôt, au moins confusément, que l'enquête critique doit être arrêtée à un point donné, de peur qu'elle aboutisse à des conclusions contraires à la foi; à ce moment, une herméneutique spécifiquement théologique vient, en quelque sorte, relayer la critique historique [...] pour permettre de découvrir dans les textes ce que l'historien n'y trouve pas.

*son assistance et de sa grâce à la présence de toutes les qualités humaines, puisque Dieu, non seulement 'respecte' notre liberté, mais peut 's'accomoder' aussi de nos déficiences".*¹⁰⁵

The supernatural is thus partly determined by the human as the only form of expression. This implies that it is necessary to grasp the human content of the Scriptures in all its nuances in order to be able grasp its divine scope. There is thus a need for both the historiographical study of the Scriptures and the religious reading thereof.

While the solution to the compatibility problem continued to be an issue of concern in post-war Belgium, this concern was, again, not confined to Louvain's faculty of theology. Two additional theological centres of study deserve specific mention in this regard: La Sarte and Egenhoven. The Dominicans of La Sarte¹⁰⁶ included Charlier among their ranks, a figure we associated with the historical-dogmatic orientation of the *nouvelle théologie*. For the moment, however, we remain attentive to exegetical circles, in the first instance the Jesuit scholasticate in Egenhoven¹⁰⁷ near Louvain. In addition to historical-critical questions, Egenhoven professor Jean Levie¹⁰⁸ was interested in the so-called *quaestiones introductoriae* and in the theological meaning of the Scriptures.¹⁰⁹ In line with his Louvain associates Coppens and Cerfaux,¹¹⁰ Jesuit Levie was also in search of a synthesis. His approach is clearly delineated in his

¹⁰⁵ DESCAMPS, *La méthode en théologie biblique...* [see n. 101], p. 151.

¹⁰⁶ Beaudouin GROESSENS and Thierry SCAILLET, *La pensée théologique*, in PIROTTE and ZÉLIS (ed.), *Pour une histoire...* [see n. 72], p. 65-67.

¹⁰⁷ Christophe DUMONT, *L'enseignement théologique au Collège jésuite de Louvain. Louvain 1838 — Bruxelles 1988*, in: *NRT*, 111 (1989), p. 556-576.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Levie (1885-1966), Belgian Jesuit. Obtains a doctorate in Classic Philology at Louvain. After studies in Brussels, Louvain and Paris he becomes professor of New Testament Exegesis at the Jesuit Scholasticate of Louvain in 1921. See Charles MATAGNE, *Le révérend père Jean Levie s.j., directeur de la Nouvelle revue théologique (1926-1951)*, in: *NRT*, 88 (1966), p. 897-906, and Guido MEESSEN, *Jean Levie*, in Charles E. O'NEILL and Juan M. DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.), *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús: Biográfico-temático*, Rome, 2001, vol. 3, cols. 2343-2344.

¹⁰⁹ Compare JADOLLE, *Les intellectuels catholiques...* [see n. 72], p. 467-486.

¹¹⁰ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Msgr. Lucien Cerfaux (1883-1968)*, in: *Louvain Studies*, 5 (1975), p. 298-305; see also Édouard MASSAUX, *Pour l'université catholique de Louvain. Le 'recteur' de fer. Dialogue avec Omer Marchal* (Grands documents), Brussels, 1987, p. 117.

1958 book *La Bible: Parole humaine et message de Dieu*,¹¹¹ which is divided into two parts. In the first part, Levie presents a broad historical survey of Catholic exegesis and theology dating back to 1850, showing ample evidence of the compatibility problem. In the second part of his book he develops his own position in the debate on inspiration and endeavours to grasp the specificity of Catholic theological exegesis. Levie's thoughts and ideas are close in many ways to those of his university colleagues. He supports Coppens' study of the *sensus plenior*,¹¹² for example, as a solution to the problem of establishing a coherent theological interpretation of the Old and the New Testaments.

Levie's point of departure is the conviction that the exegete's task is twofold: the study of the Scriptures as God's word and as the word of human persons. Both perspectives are intertwined, leaving Levie to conclude that the authorship of the Scriptures is likewise a question of cooperation. Word of the creator is word of the created and *vice versa*. The exegete is thus obliged to engage in careful historiographical analyses on the one hand, while being bound to the ecclesial reading of the Scriptures on the other. Ecclesial Tradition, after all, is the only suitable instance that can offer the necessary background for a correct theological understanding of the doctrine of the Scriptures.¹¹³ This ecclesial dimension is a characteristic feature of Levie's exegesis and doctrine of inspiration,¹¹⁴ as is evident from his contribution to the 1958 Congress.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Jean LEVIE, *La Bible: Parole humaine et message de Dieu* (Museum Lesianum. Section Biblique, 1), Paris, 1958.

¹¹² LEVIE, *La Bible...* [see n. 111], p. 300-302, where he carefully distinguishes philological and theological exegesis.

¹¹³ Joseph COPPENS, *In Memoriam J. Levie s.j.*, in: *ETL*, 42 (1966), p. 681-682.

¹¹⁴ See LEVIE, *La Bible...* [see n. 111], p. 336: L'Écriture sainte, qui doit accompagner l'humanité à travers les siècles, ne se suffit pas à elle-même; elle ne peut se comprendre selon Dieu que si elle est sans cesse interprétée dans l'Église.

¹¹⁵ Jean LEVIE, *L'interprétation scripturaire en exégèse — en théologie*, in COPPENS, DESCAMPS and MASSAUX (ed.), *Sacra Pagina...* [see n. 97], vol. 1, cols. 100-118.

A History of Collision: Dogma versus History, 1942–1958

As we have sufficiently indicated, the reappraisal of historical reasoning in the first half of the 20th century is in effect a *question-frontière*. Biblical exegetes with their methodological concerns, found themselves faced with fundamental dogmatic questions, while dogmaticians were similarly confronted with historical issues at the core of their dogmatic reflections. The various endeavours to achieve a synthesis outlined in the preceding pages tended to get drawn into modernist-related issues, an originally exegetical-methodological playing field. In what follows we will focus attention on a number of dogmatic theologians and historians whose work places them in line with the aforementioned *nouvelle théologie*. This France based movement appeared to have more or less petered out with the condemnations of 1942. Four years later, however, it acquired renewed impetus at the hands of the French Jesuits¹¹⁶ who called the neo-scholastic tendency to conceptualism into question. A characteristic feature of this second phase of the *nouvelle théologie* was its interest in the context in which dogmatic propositions and truths of faith emerged. In 1946, Henri de Lubac,¹¹⁷ a Jesuit teaching at Lyon-Fourvière, published his notorious book *Surnaturel*.¹¹⁸ In line with Chenu and Charlier, he argued that revelation — *a fortiori* the revelation of Christ — ultimately had a historical context¹¹⁹ and that dogmatic formulations thus bore

¹¹⁶ Our division of two phases for the *nouvelle théologie* draws upon the work of TSHIBANGU, *Théologie...* [see n. 20], p. 79-110 and GIBELLINI, *La teologia...* [see n. 30], p. 178.

¹¹⁷ Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), French Jesuit. Enters his order in 1913 at Lyon, and studies Philosophy and Theology at Jersey, Hastings and Lyon-Fourvière, where he resides as of 1934. Since 1929 he is professor of Dogmatique at the Theological Faculty of Lyon, but in 1950 the distribution of his *Surnaturel* is prohibited by the Jesuit General and De Lubac is prohibited from teaching. In 1960 he is appointed consultor to the Preparatory Theological Commission, and in 1983 he is created cardinal. See Antonio Russo, *Henri de Lubac. Biographie*, Paris, 1994; Jean-Pierre WAGNER, *La théologie fondamentale selon Henri de Lubac* (Cogitatio Fidei, 199), Paris, 1997; ID., *Henri de Lubac* (Initiations aux théologiens), Paris, 2001.

¹¹⁸ Henri DE LUBAC, *Surnaturel: Études historiques*, Paris, 1946.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Russo, *Henri de Lubac...* [see n. 117], p. 12: La Révélation chrétienne est surtout la manifestation d'une Personne, de la vérité qui s'incarne et se fait Personne. La parole de Dieu est le Verbe qui s'est fait chair. On ne veut pas dire, par là, que la Révélation ne doit pas s'exprimer en concepts. Mais la vérité

traces of their context. The study of dogma from a historical perspective was simply unavoidable. *Surnaturel* can be described today as a theological anthropology, integrating the patristic/scholastic understanding of the human person with more recent scholarly insights. The historically situated human person and his/her relationship with nature and the supernatural is central to the book.¹²⁰ To avoid getting bogged down in extrinsicism,¹²¹ de Lubac argued, theological reflection should take immanence as its point of departure: “*la réalité du christianisme concerne un mystère qui doit s’accomplir historiquement et socialement*”.¹²² At the same time, by insisting in the mystery of Christianity, he was able to avoid Loisy’s historicism. By placing anthropology, historical insight, and awareness of mystery at the centre of Catholic dogmatic theology, his approach emerged as a critique of every theology that saw itself as an a-historical, conceptual and *instruktionstheoretisches* stronghold.¹²³ Such positive theology was also reflected in the work of Jean Daniélou,¹²⁴ de Lubac’s confrere and a professor at the *Insti-*

catholique, en fait, transcende toujours la formulation et a fortiori sa sédimentation dans un système conceptuel scientifiquement structuré. Similar thoughts had already been expressed — upon instigation of Yves Congar in DE LUBAC’S, *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme*, Paris, 1938.

¹²⁰ Core issue is de Lubac’s elaborate research into 16th century theories of grace, and the way in which the hypothetical concept of ‘pure nature’ functions there. See my article with Marcel GIELIS, *From Driedo to Bellarmine. The Genesis of the Concept of Natura Pura in the Sixteenth Century*, in: *Augustiniana*, 57 (2007), p. 185-209.

¹²¹ GIBELINI, *La teologia...* [see n. 30], p. 197-198.

¹²² RUSSO, *Henri de Lubac...* [see n. 117], p. 73.

¹²³ More information on instruction theoretical views of revelation is offered by MAX SECKLER, *Der Begriff der Offenbarung*, in Hermann Joseph POTTMEYER (ed.), *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie*, 4 vols, Tübingen, 2000, p. 41-61, there 45-47.

¹²⁴ Jean Daniélou (1905-1974), French Jesuit. Studies at the Jesuit houses at Jersey and Lyon-Fourvière — attending de Lubac’s classes. In 1943 he obtains the doctorate in Theology at the Institut Catholique de Paris, where he later becomes professor. In 1961 he is elected dean of the Theological Faculty, and he is appointed Council peritus in 1962. In 1969 he is appointed cardinal. See Paul LEBEAU, *Jean Daniélou* (Théologiens et spirituels contemporains, 4), Paris, 1967; more recently see Xavier TILLIETTE, *Le père Daniélou à l’époque des ‘Carnets spirituels’*, in D. DANIELOU, p. 11-34; Pierre DUCLOS, *Jean Daniélou*, in O’NEILL and DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.), *Diccionario historico...* [see n. 108], vol. 2, cols. 1044-1046.

tut Catholique de Paris.¹²⁵ As co-founders of the renowned *Sources chrétiennes* both men shared a vision of academic theology¹²⁶ that did not square with that of traditional neo-Thomism and with the vision of some of their fellow Jesuits. Daniélou's article *Les orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse* published in 1946¹²⁷ had not gone unnoticed. He accused the strict neo-Thomists of lacking every form of historical awareness, in contrast to the church fathers for whom Christianity was a historical, evolving event rather than a conceptual doctrine. Daniélou's study of the church fathers lead him to reassess the mystery of God as an inner-historical event, thereby establishing history as the primary locus of revelation (he was later to introduce the concept *histoire sainte* in this regard). His theology of revelation focuses on the figure of Christ as the climax of God's intervention in history, although he immediately underlines the continuity of revelation. He insist on God's mysterious alterity, God's irreducible otherness, implying that human knowledge of the divine is always provisional, always in development. This human shortcoming initiated a critical eschatology in Daniélou's theology.¹²⁸ The fact that human beings must remain incomplete and imperfect until the eschaton likewise implies that the mystery of God cannot be grasped exhaustively in concepts and definitions. Daniélou's *Orientations* provoked immediate reactions from Dominicans such as Labourdette¹²⁹ and Garri-

¹²⁵ Historical background on the institute is offered in J. DORÉ (ed.), *Les cent ans de la faculté de théologie* (Sciences théologiques et religieuses, 1), Paris, 1992.

¹²⁶ Pietro PIZZUTO, *La teologia della Rivelazione di Jean Daniélou: Influsso su Dei Verbum e valore attuale* (Tesi Gregoriana. Serie teologia, 96), Rome, 2002, p. 107. Here too an important stress is laid on the connection between exegetical movement and *nouvelle théologie* in the first half of the 20th century.

¹²⁷ Jean DANIELOU, *Les orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse*, in: *Études*, 249 (1946), p. 5-21.

¹²⁸ On the interconnectedness of Christ-centred revelation, ecclesiology and eschatology, see PIZZUTO, *La teologia della Rivelazione...* [see n. 126], p. 121-122.

¹²⁹ Marie-Michel Labourdette (1908-1990), French Dominican from the Toulouse province. Obtains a doctorate in Theology at the Angelicum in 1935 with Garrigou-Lagrange. He is professor of Philosophy and Moral Theology at the Saint-Maximin's College, and in 1960 he is appointed consultant the the Preparatory Theological Commission. See Henri DONNEAUD, *Une vie au service de la théologie*, in: *Revue Thomiste*, 92 (1992), p. 17-51; a good introduction into revelation theology is offered by Marc LARIVÉ, *Quaedam impressio divinae scientiae: La théologie selon le P. Labourdette*, in: *Revue Thomiste*, 92 (1992), p. 59-87. The article by Labourdette referred to is *La théologie et ses sources*, in: *Revue Thomiste*, 46 (1946), p. 353-371.

gou-Lagrange.¹³⁰ The latter's forthright response¹³¹ quickly cut to the chase and reduced the dispute to the issue of theological truth.¹³² Garrigou-Lagrange was convinced that the theological discourse of de Lubac, Daniélou and Bouillard could only lead to dogmatic relativism, whereby no single dogmatic formulation would still be able to claim an adequate and exhaustive comprehension of the reality it expressed. For Garrigou-Lagrange, the fault line established by the *nouvelle théologie* between proposition and reality was the final step in the direction of relativism and would ultimately lead to the destruction of dogma as such,¹³³ depriving it of its eternal value. By contrast, Garrigou-Lagrange's neo-Thomism represented a philosophical realism¹³⁴ in which dogmatic propositions coincided with their referent. The modernists, it was claimed, had undermined the infallibility of the Scriptures and were now determined to do the same with the church's Tradition. Garrigou-Lagrange thus sensed that both sources of revelation were under threat and considered himself obliged to react.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Réginald GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE (1877-1964), French Dominican. After having studies with Gardeil and a short-termed professorship at Le Saulchoir he is professor of Dogmatics at the Angelicum from 1909 to 1960. In 1960 he is appointed consultant to the Preparatory Central Commission of Vatican II. For an introduction into his life and thought, see Marie-Rosaire GAGNEBET, *L'œuvre du P. Garrigou-Lagrange. Itinéraire intellectuel et spirituel vers Dieu*, in: *Angelicum*, 42 (1965), p. 7-31. Particularly relevant for our study is his course in revelation theology, dubbed *De Revelatione, per Ecclesiam Catholicam proposita*, Rome, 1921².

¹³¹ Réginald GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?*, in: *Angelicum* 23 (1946), p. 126-147.

¹³² Next to de Lubac and Daniélou the attacks are also aimed at Henri Bouillard (1908-1981). He was a French Jesuit. After studies at the Institut Catholique de Paris and the Sorbonne, at Fourvière and the Gregorian University he obtains a doctorate in Theology in 1941. He then becomes professor at Lyon. See Joseph DORÉ, *Théologie et philosophie chez Henri Bouillard*, in: *NRT*, 117 (1995), p. 801-20.

¹³³ GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *La nouvelle théologie...* [see n. 131], p. 143 and 145.

¹³⁴ This is strongly felt in the second chapter of Réginald GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE'S, *Le sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques suivi d'une étude sur la valeur de la critique moderniste des preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu*, Paris, 1909, which defends a conceptual-realist orientated philosophy.

¹³⁵ A concise overview of Garrigou-Lagrange's theological enterprises is offered by Richard A. PEDDICORD, *Another Look at the Theological Enterprise of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange*, in: *Angelicum*, 82 (2005), p. 835-848.

Two Jesuits from Egenhoven, Édouard Dhanis¹³⁶ and the Jesuit general Jean-Baptiste Janssens¹³⁷, wasted little time in entering the fray. A former rector of the theologate at Egenhoven, Janssens appointed his former colleague Dhanis in 1949 as visitor to a number of French scholasticates. Dhanis's visitation report¹³⁸ had serious consequences for Lyon-Fourvière.¹³⁹ Presuming that a Roman reaction to the work of the French authors was imminent, Janssens felt forced to take draconic measures: de Lubac and Bouillard were barred from teaching and several publications — among them a number by Daniélou¹⁴⁰ — were removed by order from Jesuit libraries.¹⁴¹ Dhanis and Janssens, however, were not the only Belgian Jesuits involved in the polemics of the period. Leopold Malevez¹⁴², likewise a professor at Egenhoven, entered the debate with the suggestion that the 'new' historical theologues should be divided into those with an incarnational orientation and

¹³⁶ Édouard Dhanis (1902-1978), Belgian Jesuit. Obtains a doctorate in Theology at the Gregorian University in 1933, and then becomes professor of Dogmatics at Egenhoven. In 1949 he is promoted rector of the Collegio Bellarmino in Rome and shortly thereafter becomes prefect of studies at the Gregoriana. As of 1956 he teaches Dogmatics there, and from 1963 to 1966 he is rector. Albert DOCKX, *Edouard Dhanis*, in O'NEILL and DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.) *Diccionario histórico...* [see n. 108], Vol 2, col. 1110. STRUYKER BOUDIER, *Wijserig leven...* [see n. 52], vol. 1, p. 123.

¹³⁷ Maurice DE TOLLENAERE, *Juan Bautista Janssens*, in O'NEILL and DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.), *Diccionario histórico...* [see n. 108], vol. 2, cols. 1690-1696.

¹³⁸ At that time it would have been hard for the French Jesuits to get a clear picture of Dhanis's personal views on revelation, since his only publication dealing with the problematic was published much later, see Édouard DHANIS, *Révélation explicite et révélation implicite*, in: *Gregorianum* 34 (1953), p. 187-237. On the dealings of Janssens and Dhanis with Lyon, see Jürgen METTEPENNINGEN and Karim SCHELKENS, *Quod immutabile est nemo turbet et moveat. Les rapports entre le P. H. de Lubac et le Général J.B. Janssens en 1946-1948 à propos de documents inédits*, in: *Cristianesimo nella Storia* (2008), p. 139-172.

¹³⁹ FOUILLOUX, *Une Église...* [see n. 10], p. 290-291.

¹⁴⁰ The list is found in Jean-Baptiste JANSSENS, *Libri vel articuli quidam a bibliothecis removendi*, in: *ARSI*, 11 (1946-50), p. 882-883.

¹⁴¹ DE TOLLENAERE, *Juan Bautista Janssens...* [see n. 137], cols. 1692-1693.

¹⁴² Léopold Malevez (1900-1973), Belgian Jesuit. After studies at Munich and the Institut Catholique he becomes professor of Dogmatics in Egenhoven in 1931. He is dean there from 1952 to 1961, and during Vatican II he teaches at the Gregorian University. Christophe DUMONT, *In Memoriam P. Léopold Malevez*, in: *RTL*, 5 (1974), p. 128-131. See Leopold MALEVEZ, *Deux théologies catholiques de l'histoire*, in: *Bijdragen*, 10 (1949), p. 225-240.

those with an eschatological orientation¹⁴³. Malevez betrayed his own inclination towards the incarnational orientation by quoting the Belgian Gustave Thils, one of its most important representatives. After having looked at the way the (in)compatibility issue was dealt with by exegetes and dogmaticians, we now return to Louvain and the university's faculty of theology for one last time, before offering some final observations.

Historic Dogmatics and the History of Dogma

Before we examine the theology of Thils — a student of Draguet — it is important to remember that Charlier and Draguet had been condemned by the Holy Office in 1942¹⁴⁴ and that Coppens¹⁴⁵ had described Draguet's work¹⁴⁶ as a positive theology that accounted for the historical contingency of dogma while retaining its regard for the Catholic magisterium. Thils developed a particularly contemporary approach to the question of revelation, taking the idea of incarnation as his theology's point of departure. For Thils, the very idea of incarnation symbolised the end of every form of division between concepts such as transcendence and incarnation. The idea itself, which he later thematised in *Transcendence ou incarnation? Essai sur la conception du christianisme*,¹⁴⁷ is already present in his earlier publications. In his renowned *Théologie des réalités terrestres*, for example, he makes a balanced appeal for a theology that dares to approach both history and present day reality in all its complexity as the location of God's activity. Thils defines his

¹⁴³ PIZZUTO, *La teologia di Rivelazione...* [see n. 126], p. 217-218, wrongly ascribes this approach to M. FLICK and Z. ALSZEGHY, *Teologia della storia*, in: *Gregorianum*, 35 (1954), p. 256-298.

¹⁴⁴ STRUYKER BOUDIER, *Wijsgerig leven...* [see n. 52], p. 209-210.

¹⁴⁵ By means of underlining, once again, the link between *nouveaux théologiens* and historical critical exegetes in this period: Coppens explicitly thanked de Lubac for his interest and comments in the second print of *Les Harmonies des deux Testaments: le R.P. de Lubac et monsieur le chanoine Thils, qui se sont intéressés à certains passages, ont eux aussi droit à ma reconnaissance*.

¹⁴⁶ J. COPPENS, *In Memoriam R. Draguet (1896-1980)*, in *ETL*, 57 (1981), p. 198.

¹⁴⁷ Significant is the closing passus of the book: Gustave THILS, *Transcendence ou incarnation: Essai sur la conception du christianisme*, Leuven, 1950, p. 97: l'un et l'autre. Pas l'un ou l'autre. Le vrai christianisme, — l'unique christianisme du Christ et de l'Esprit, de la Bible et de l'Église, comporte les deux mouvements, les deux comportements, les deux idéaux.

position in constant dialogue with Daniélou, arguing that the latter's eschatological horizon did not ascribe enough theological value¹⁴⁸ to the every-day social existence¹⁴⁹ of modern men and women.

For Thils, liberal Christians were in danger of losing themselves in a complete adaptation to the present world, while Christians who focused on transcendence ran the risk of ignoring the value of earthly reality. Between both extremes, incarnation offered a unique opportunity as a point of departure to establish a genuine synthesis between the various options. Antithesis would thus be succeeded by synthesis. Thils focuses on the "universalism" of biblical revelation, insisting time and again on the importance of the creation perspective.¹⁵⁰ The link with the question of revelation is clear. Such passages characterise Thils' understanding thereof together with his conviction that a theology capable of integrating the perspective of creation with the eschatological perspective¹⁵¹ would be obliged to recognise that revelation (passed on to us in both Scripture and Tradition) implies a formal recognition and appreciation of what preoccupies men and women today:

Si Dieu nous a fait connaître sa pensée concernant l'homme concret et total, s'il nous a dit par la voix des auteurs inspirés comment il désirait que l'homme ordonne sa pensée, ses affections, son cœur et son corps pour répondre au type humain qu'il attend, comment n'aurait-il pas, en même temps, indiqué la signification et le sens des réalités temporelles qui prolongent l'homme: culture, pensée, mystiques, ou qui épanouissent sa nature sociale: famille, cité, profession? S'il existe une révélation formelle, implicite peut-être et obscure, mais réelle, concernant toutes les valeurs terrestres qui ont rapport avec lui. Les prolongements homogènes de la révélation, les applications directes et immédiates qu'on en fait, ne lui enlèvent pas son caractère 'formel'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Gustave THILS, *Théologie des réalités terrestres*. Vol. 2: *Théologie de l'histoire*, Bruges, 1949, p. 40: La réponse, croyons-nous, est cette fois typique de ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler la tendance 'eschatologique' [referring to Malevez], ce terme représentant, en l'occurrence, avec 'terrestre' et 'temporel' une valeur d'antithèse, partiellement inadéquate, ainsi que nous le verrons.

¹⁴⁹ This stress on the social aspect is strongly underlined by GIBELLINI, *La teologia...* [see n. 30], p. 284.

¹⁵⁰ THILS, *Théologie des réalités terrestres...* [see n. 148], p. 106sv.

¹⁵¹ Similar ideas are expressed in Gustave THILS, *Orientations de la théologie*, Leuven, 1958, p. 156-162.

¹⁵² Gustave THILS, *Théologie des réalités terrestres*. Vol. 1: *Préludes*, Bruges, 1946, p. 64.

If Thils was a textbook example of a dogmatician who had developed a positive theology, then Roger Aubert should likewise be mentioned¹⁵³ as the historian who drew attention to and described the historical contingency and evolution of dogma on the basis of historical-critical reconstructions. Such studies are to be found in his *Le problème de l'acte de foi*,¹⁵⁴ where he combines an erudite historiographical survey of theological thought on the act of faith with a critical discussion of the authors of the *nouvelle théologie* together with their opponents. Aubert's work from this period is very much in line with the ambitions of the *nouvelle théologie* and functions — by insisting on the continuous reformulation of the meaning of a given dogma as something positive, a stance he himself indicates as characteristic of the *nouvelle théologie*¹⁵⁵ — in a certain sense as its practical reinforcement. Furthermore, as a leading scholar of the church history of the 19th and 20th centuries, he was able to gain considerable knowledge of and insight into many of the topics outlined above. The reader will not be surprised to learn that Aubert's publication of a series of lectures in 1954 under the title *La théologie au milieu du XX^e siècle*¹⁵⁶ caused something of a stir at the Holy Office. The collection's positive stance towards recent theological developments ultimately earned Aubert a Roman *monitum*¹⁵⁷ and brings us to some closing considerations.

Concluding remarks

In the above we have made an effort to illuminate issues surrounding the question of revelation current during the first half of the 20th century. Doctrinal themes such as the relationship between

¹⁵³ André TIHON, *La Belgique*, in Jean-Marie MAYEUR et al. (ed.), *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*. 15 vols., Paris, 1990, vol. 12, p. 538-566, there 550-551.

¹⁵⁴ Roger AUBERT, *Le problème de l'acte de foi: Données traditionnelles et résultats des controverses récentes* (Dissertationes ad gradum magistri in Facultate Theologica vel in Facultate Iuris Canonici consequendum conscriptae. Series II, 36), Leuven, 1945.

¹⁵⁵ Roger AUBERT, *Humani Generis*, in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, 144-145, col. 334-9. Already early on Aubert was rather positive on the upcoming of positive theology, see Roger AUBERT, *Les grandes tendances théologiques entre les deux guerres*, in: *Collationes mechlinienses*, 16 (1946), p. 17-36.

¹⁵⁶ Roger AUBERT, *La théologie catholique au milieu du XX^e siècle*.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. CLAES, *Theologie in tijden van verandering...* [see n. 67], p.177-180.

Scripture and Tradition, the doctrinal triptych: inspiration, divine authorship of the Scripture and the infallibility have been included, together with questions related to the acceptance of historical-critical research in Catholic biblical exegesis, the historical value of biblical texts, etc. We have endeavoured to locate the discussion in an international theological context, in an effort to provide an inclusive sketch of the background against which the Louvain theologians developed their theologies. A brief discussion of modernism and *nouvelle théologie* provided a necessary supplement to the discussion, bearing in mind the constant references to the modernist controversy in both the biblical movement and the *nouvelle théologie*. We hope to have shown that both movements have had their protagonists at the Louvain faculty, and that — notwithstanding each's methodological peculiarities — they were united by their common roots in the modernist problematic. Key to the developments in various theological disciplines was their shared grappling with the complex issue of the (in)compatibility of history and theology. Evidently, the involvement of both Louvain exegetes, dogmaticians and church historians in the rise of a positive theology on the eve of Vatican II requires further study? It does certainly not end with Aubert's 1954 aforementioned publication, on the contrary. Nevertheless, by means of conclusion to our survey, we can cite the introductory words of Aubert's overview, which so eloquently ties together the various pieces we have presented in our own study:

Deux préoccupations majeures caractérisent la théologie actuelle: désir d'un contact plus étroit avec la Tradition et souci d'une meilleure adaptation au monde moderne. Nous examinerons successivement ces deux aspects. Le premier, ce désir d'un "ressourcement" de la théologie au contact de la Source toujours jaillissante qu'est la Parole de Dieu, proclamée et commentée dans l'Église, se manifeste par un triple renouveau: biblique, liturgique et patristique. Quant à l'effort des théologiens pour apporter une réponse inédite et cependant conforme aux principes éternels, aux questions nouvelles posées par les courants d'idées contemporains, il se traduit par l'élaboration de nouveaux chapitres d'une science longtemps considérée comme immobile: théologie du laïc, théologie des réalités terrestres, théologie de l'histoire.

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Summary. — The present article offers a study of the way in which a generation of theologians at the Louvain Faculty of Theology — in particular exegetes such as Lucien Cerfaux, Joseph Coppens, and Albert Descamps — have dealt with the aftermath of the modernist crisis. Focussing on the period between the early 20th century tensions that paralyzed catholic theology and exegesis, and the era of *aggiornamento* set of by Vatican II, we focus upon the way in which these *Lovanienses* sought to integrate historical criticism and theology. While our main focus lies with the exegetes tackling the (in)compatibility problem, reference will sideways be made to the way in which the faculty kept track with more dogmatically and/or church historically focussed movements in the preconiliar era, such as the so-called *nouvelle théologie*-movement. In this juncture, the role played by Louvain professors such as Gustave Thils and Roger Aubert cannot remain unmentioned.

Résumé. — Cet article offre une étude de la manière avec laquelle une génération de théologiens de la faculté de théologie de Louvain — en particulier des exégètes tels que Lucien Cerfaux, Joseph Coppens, et Albert Descamps — a traité des suites de la crise moderniste. Nous concentrant sur la période comprise entre les tensions du début du 20^e s. qui ont paralysé la théologie et l'exégèse catholiques, et l'ère de l'*aggiornamento* produit par Vatican II, nous focalisons sur la manière avec laquelle ces louvanistes ont cherché à intégrer la critique et la théologie historiques. Si notre objectif principal concerne les exégètes abordant le problème de l'(in-)compatibilité avec la théologie, nous ferons référence en passant à la manière avec laquelle la faculté est restée en contact avec des mouvements orientés davantage sur la dogmatique ou l'histoire de l'église, durant l'époque préconciliaire, comme ce qu'on appelle le mouvement de la *nouvelle théologie*. Dans ce contexte, le rôle joué par des professeurs de Louvain tels que Gustave Thils et Roger Aubert ne peut pas être passé sous silence.

Zusammenfassung. — Dieser Artikel behandelt die Art und Weise, wie eine Generation von Theologen der theologischen Fakultät Löwen — insbesondere Exegeten wie Lucien Cerfaux, Joseph Coppens und Albert Descamps — mit den Folgen der modernistischen Krise umgegangen sind. Wir konzentrieren uns auf die Periode zwischen den Spannungen zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts, die die katholische Theologie und Exegese gelähmt haben, und der Zeit des „Aggiornamentos“ im Rahmen des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils und fragen insbesondere nach der Art und Weise, wie diese Löwener Professoren versucht haben, historische Kritik und Theologie zu verarbeiten. Zwar betrifft unser Hauptziel die Exegeten, die das Problem der (Un-)Vereinbarkeit mit der Theologie behandelt haben, doch erwähnen wir ebenfalls, wie die Fakultät während der Zeit vor dem Konzil mit den Bewegungen in Kontakt geblieben ist, die sich mehr an der Dogmatik oder der Kirchengeschichte orientierten, wie die sogenannte „Bewegung der neuen Theologie“. In diesem Zusammenhang darf die Rolle, die Löwener Professoren wie Gustave Thils und Roger Aubert gespielt haben, nicht verschwiegen werden.