

THE "GHOST" OF PELAGIUS IN SEMINARY HANDBOOKS IN THE NETHERLANDS, || from the middle of the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century.

1. Introduction and definition of the problem

After the previous treatises on Pelagius and his great opponent Augustine, and after the contributions on the effects of their debate in later centuries, we arrive as it were from the highlands to the lowlands. For it is lowlands when one leaves the great theologians and university theology and enters the domain of the seminaries. These institutions, erected all over the Catholic world since the Council of Trent, were intended to elevate the formation of the Church to a higher level. Their importance for the Catholic variant of Latin Christianity can hardly be overestimated. Even so, these institutions are lowlands, after and besides the great Fathers and theologians from university circles. Certainly until the end of the Ancien Regime, someone who was talented and /or had money and yearned for more than a role within the regular pastoral work would not go to a seminary.¹ It is true that in the nineteenth century, an end came to this second-rate status, for after the closure of the old university of Louvain virtually everyone had to go to the seminary. However, seminaries therefore did not become highlands in the landscape of theological practice. It took a while before these institutions became more than simple, and especially practical, vocational training centres.²

This contribution also leads to lowlands, because it discusses seminaries in the Netherlands. It is, first of all, related to the seminary of the archdiocese of Mechelen, and then to the seminary which, until 1967, trained the secular clergy, first of the archpriesthood of Holland, Zeeland, and West-Friesland, and, since 1853 also of the diocese of

¹ See, e.g. J. LAENEN, *Geschiedenis van het seminarie van Mechelen* (Mechelen, 1930), pp. 106, 126, 162, 165; J. ROEGIERS, *De Leuvense theologen en de Verlichting. Onderwijs, wetenschap, polemieken en politiek van 1730 tot 1797* (Leuven, 1979), pp. 257-258. N. VON TRIPPEN (ed.), *Das Kölner Priesterseminar im XIX. Jahrhundert. Festschrift zur Feier des 250jährigen Bestehens am 29. Juni 1988* (Siegburg, 1988), p. 27; J.M. WHITE, *The diocesan seminary in the United States. A history from the 1780s to the present* (Notre Dame (Ind.), 1989), pp. 5-7.

² M. CLOET (ed.), *Het bisdom Gent (1559-1991): vier eeuwen geschiedenis* (Gent, 1991), p. 382-382; White, *Diocesan seminary*, p. 159 and 264.

Haarlem. Otherwise, looking at the research from which this contribution evolves, the seminary at Warmond must be named before the institution at Mechelen. Only by agreeing to write a history of Warmond and its theological education, Mechelen appeared on the horizon.³

Founded in 1799, Warmond lacked a theological tradition of its own and was obliged to borrow from other, older institutions. During the first four decades of its existence it used a printed course of theology which originated from Mechelen.⁴ After a closer look it soon became clear that this course, too, had a history. It appeared to be an 'update' of a handbook from a hundred years earlier, also from Mechelen. This previous history clamoured for attention. For if these seventeenth and eighteenth century handbooks were placed side by side, and then added to by the first Warmond edition of 1892, then it would be possible to place the developments in theological education in a historical perspective. Thus, the investigation into the treatment of the Pelagian debate can also be seen as an investigation into the possibilities that such a coherent group of sources can offer.

This investigation applies to more than 1.100 double-columned folio pages from the seventeenth century, approximately 3.500 pages in octavo from the eighteenth century, and nearly 900 pages of the nineteenth century handbook. The maximum effort would be to read all of this; however, it was impossible and unnecessary to do so. The indices with which, at least the handbooks from Mechelen, ended, offered a faster and more specific approach. However, I found that they were not designed for questions concerning Pelagius and semi-pelagianism. These, Augustine's opponents, have, as far as the indices are concerned, the status of ghosts. As far as there were any directly useful headings, the passages referred to were far from complete. Pelagius and his followers are, therefore, like ghosts: virtually invisible yet omnipresent. In order to discern them, a technique was devised, using catchwords borrowed from Pelagius-related issues. Then, using the table of contents, the search was pointed at possibly relevant treatises, *quaestiones* and other text units. Here, especially treatises on grace, justification and merit were used. Furthermore, attention was paid to sections from treatises on God, Creation, and the

³ See also Th. CLEMENS, J. JACOBS, *Bouwstenen voor de geschiedenis van een seminarie: Warmond 1799-1967*, in: *Trajecta: tijdschrift voor de geschiedenis van het katholiek leven in de Nederlanden*, 9 (2000), pp. 97-111.

⁴ L. WINKELER, *Het onderwijs op Warmond, 1799-1967*, in: *Trajecta*, 9 (2000), pp. 134-167, esp. 136-137.

Fall and useful touchstones such as the question of the fate of deceased non-baptized children.

The order of the presentation of the research results is based on the succession of the three handbooks. An attempt to evaluate these results concludes this contribution.

2. Comparing the handbooks

In his extensive entry on the history of theology in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, M.-J. Congar calls the end of the seventeenth century the period in which universities are no longer centres of original thought. He sees the cause in the absorptive action of the Gallican and Jansenist strife and the domestication of university theology through Josephinism. Despite this loss of originality, the teaching of theology continued, both at the universities and in the seminaries of the secular and regular clergy. According to Congar, this explains why theological courses and handbooks along systematic lines replaced commentaries on Thomas and the *Liber Sententiarum*. This also explains the success since then of the seminary handbook.⁵

2.1 The handbook by Laurentius Neesen

The first specimen to be discussed fits, as far as the date of publication is concerned, almost perfectly within Congar's chronology. It is the *Universa Theologia in tomos duos divisa* by Laurentius Neesen. He was born in 1612 in St. Truiden. According to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, he was solely educated at Louvain and even reached the licentiate in theology.⁶ According to J. Laenen, the former archivist of the archdiocese of Mechelen, he studied at the seminary.⁷ Be this as it may, both informants agree that Neesen, in the year of his ordination in 1638, was appointed praeses and professor of theology at the seminary of Mechelen. For this contribution it is important to notice that Neesen finished his theological education before the publication of Jansenius' book on *Augustine*, while his own handbook, published since 1675, may be considered the result of a long period of involvement in the education at the Mechelen seminary.

⁵ M.J. CONGAR, *Théologie*, in: *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (DTC), 15 (Paris, 1946), c. 432.

⁶ DTC, 11(1931), c. 60.

⁷ Laenen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 73.

The publication of the printed reflection of Neesen's educational work was nearly done when he died in 1679. In 1684 three treatises on the cardinal virtue of justice were published, and in 1687 the different parts of the course were combined under the title *Universa theologia in tomos duos divisa ad mentem SS. Augustini et Thomae exposita*. It seems that the absence of the other cardinal virtues were thus accepted. Reprints of this combination or of separate parts date from 1693, 1707, and 1715 and, according to Laenen, even 1730.⁸

The distinguishing mark for Neesen's *Universa Theologia*, is that the order follows that of the *Summa Theologia*.⁹ Corresponding to Thomas Aquinas' tripartite division, the first section is on God, then the acts of humankind, and in the end on the Sacraments as the way to achieve salvation. This deserves our attention, for in it we receive an insight into the 'architecture' of seventeenth-century theology at Mechelen. The master builder has made it clear, even in the titles of the sections, that he has wished to work in the spirit of Augustine and Thomas, but he especially follows the latter where it concerns the major composition. The result is a central section, which is formed by the treatises *De Deo Uno*, up to the redemption by Christ. This 'main building', only one-ninth of the 'surface area', may be considered small, compared to the volume of the two 'outbuildings'. One of them covers roughly five-ninth of the 'surface area'¹⁰ and is made up of three interconnecting parts which house the discussions on the importance of human acts, the three divine virtues, and the cardinal virtue of justice. The second outbuilding covers approximately three-ninth of the 'surface area' and houses the discussion on the sacraments. This part of the structure is in fact a composite building with, in the centre, a hall for the sacraments in general, surrounded by a large room for confession, and smaller rooms for the Eucharist and marriage, baptism and ordination, and a few backrooms for Confirmation and the Extreme Unction.

This whole structure was not only the result of the theological education at Mechelen, but, according to the title pages of the oldest

⁸ *Colonia Agrippina*, apud *Hermannum Demen*, 1687. The ecclesiastical imprimatur in this edition gives a nice idea of the publication history of the separate parts. See also Laenen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 77, although, due to many misprints and mistakes this work cannot be considered as an always trustworthy source.

⁹ See addenda 1.

¹⁰ The calculation of the 'surface area' is based on the number of pages.

prints, also explicitly meant for this seminary.¹¹ This destination matches the style of teaching. The student is addressed directly and, through questions and counter-arguments, led through the material. It is interesting to note that, on the one hand, a precise knowledge of theological reasoning is required, while on the other hand not science but devotion is important. It is therefore not surprising that the first part carries the title *theologia christiana affectiva*.¹² Laenen is in that respect correct when he remarks that Neesen's work is more adequate for devotional reflection than a treatise for dry study.¹³ There are indeed many quaestiones and dubia, but these are flanked by *recollektiones affectivae* and, especially in the first part, result in prayer.

Furthermore, it is distinguishing that the discussion of the *theologia moralis* is directed on purpose towards pastors and confessors, and wishes to be practical.¹⁴ Especially in this part of his theology course Neesen takes part in the current debate between Probabilism and Probabiliorism. Referring to Augustine, he assumes that someone who, in matters of redemption, places the uncertain above the certain, sins greatly. He prefers what is *securior* and *tutior* and mentions this on the title pages of those parts covering the contents of the second and third sections of the *Summa*.¹⁵ Where the design of the exterior is borrowed from Thomas, the spirit of bishop of Hippo rules in the interior.

In this 'building', Pelagius, his students and semi-pelagians are, by excellence, the house ghosts. Even if not explicitly named, they are

¹¹ See L. NEESEN, *Theologia moralis christiana de actibus humanis ad mentem SS. Augustini, & Thomæ. Continens tutiores, & securiores regulas dirigendi conscientias pastoribus, confessariis, & omnibus sacrae theologiae studiosis perutilis. / Authore rever. Admod. domino Laurentio Neesen canonico theol. metropol. ecclesiae Mechliniensis, nec non seminarii praeside. Ad usum theologorum seminarii archi-episcopalis. Mechliniae; typis Gisberti Lintsii, 1675. See also the titles in footnote 11 and 14.*

¹² L. NEESEN, *Theologia christiana affectiva de Deo uno in essentia, trino in personis, et verbo incarnato ad mentem SS. Augustini et Thomæ, omnibus pastoribus, confessariis, theologis ad perfectionem vitae christianae aspirantibus summe utilis. Ad usum theologorum seminarii archi-episcopalis. Coloniae Agrippinae: Sumptibus Balth. ab Egmont & sociorum, 1678.*

¹³ Laenen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁴ See the appropriate title words in footnote 10, 11 and 14.

¹⁵ See besides the title in footnote 10 also L. NEESEN, *Theologia moralis christiana de sacramentis ad mentem ss. Augustini & Thomæ continens securiores & tutiores regulas ea administrandi & suscipiendi (= suscipiendi). Pastoribus, confessariis, & omnibus sacrae theologiae studiosis perutilis. Ad usum theologorum seminarii archi-episcopalis. Coloniae Agrippinae: sumptibus Balth. ab Egmont & sociorum, 1677. The position is also clearly discernible in the dedication and the preface of the book.*

always and everywhere present. Answering the question whether it is God's absolute will that all men are to be saved, Neesen denies this.¹⁶ He agrees that it is *de fide* to teach that Christ has died for all, but he definitely does not agree with Pelagius that the many who in fact have died or will die in sin, have done or will do so because they did not wish to be saved.¹⁷ When predestination is treated and relevant heresies are discussed, Pelagius is reproached that he has taught that human nature is not tainted by the original sin and that man, even without the extra grace, is still capable through the good works of the free will, to receive the grace of predestination. When Pelagius, in the debate, assents, and leaves some room for grace, he is reproached for inferring external grace. This is the grace of law and teaching and Christ's example. Even the Pelagius who, through fear of conviction, eventually agrees that internal grace is needed and that this must be distinguished from free will, still, according to Neesen, holds on to the conviction that the free will in man is sufficient to lead a good and holy life. He also claims that God thus predestines the adult to grace, based on the good works of the free will.¹⁸

Following this, the heresies of the semi-pelagians are summed up. Mentioned in particular is the freedom they leave for human beings to earn grace themselves; the first step on the road to redemption. Furthermore, their idea is countered that God destined children who died too early, to grace due to the foreknowledge God has of the good works they would have done, had they lived longer.¹⁹

After all this, it is clear that Neesen does not agree with Pelagius' assumption that there had been a state of nature in which man would have lived without sin and without grace, but with unbridled passions and longings and subjected to death and suffering. According to Neesen, the first man was created with supernatural gifts. That is why Adam's fall was so radical and man needs grace so much.²⁰

This need for grace is central in the treatises on grace, justice and merit. Neesen walks the middle road between the opinions of Pelagius and the Reformation. To this end, a teaching on grace is worked out in several *divisiones*. Opposite the *gratia habitualis prima*

¹⁶ L. NEESEN, *Vniversa theologia in tomos duos divisa ad mentem SS. Augustini et Thomæ exposita. Hæc editio correctæ a pluribus erroribus, in aliâ impressione commissis* (Coloniæ Agrippinæ: apud Hermannum Demen, 1687), I.1, p. 61-62.

¹⁷ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.1, p. 63.

¹⁸ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.1, pp. 73-74

¹⁹ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.1, p. 74.

²⁰ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.1, pp. 107-109.

and *secunda* is the *gratia actualis*, which can be subdivided into the *operans* and *cooperans*, *excitans* and *adjuvans*, *praeveniens* and *subsequens* or *antecedens*, *concomitans* and *subsequens*, and of course the problematical twins *sufficiens* and *efficax*.²¹

Especially the treatise on grace is filled with evidence and counterevidence against Pelagius. To the question whether man in the state of fallen nature can do good without grace, the (negative) answer is made up of eight pieces of evidence and five objections.²² According to Neesen, in depraved nature man, without grace, cannot love God above all, resist temptation and persist until the end.²³ The necessity of grace is, according to Neesen, so great that even a redeemed man, who has been given the *gratia habitualis*, still needs the *gratia actualis* for every single act.²⁴ Man without grace cannot fully keep natural law²⁵ or even prepare him self to receive grace.²⁶ Nevertheless, in the treatise on merit, Neesen upholds that it is *de fide* to learn that man can receive from God in two ways: as something he earns (*de condigno*) and as something God gives him without any obligation (*de congruo*).²⁷ However, the possibility to earn is limited. Man cannot oblige God to admit him to salvation. Moreover, in strict sense the grace of justification or perseverance cannot be received as wages.

To conclude, it appears that Neesen has become embroiled in the debate between Augustine and Pelagius. The liveliness of his involvement can best be understood by his arduous adherence to the Catholic Reformation. In defence thereof, he had to work against Reformation but also against Molinism. In these debates, he chooses, without hesitation, the side of Augustine. That he, here and there, gives positive explanations of Baius' ideas²⁸, is again an argument in favour of the fact that the interior of his theological 'building' is indeed arranged and coloured *ad mentem S. Augustini*. Even more surprising is that Neesen has been able to keep his seminary outside the Jansenist strife.²⁹

²¹ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, pp. 215-224.

²² Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, pp. 227-229.

²³ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, pp. 229-233.

²⁴ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, pp. 232 and 235.

²⁵ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, p. 236.

²⁶ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, p. 238.

²⁷ Neesen, *Vniversa theologia*, I.2, pp. 250-251.

²⁸ DTC, 11(1931), c. 61.

²⁹ Laenen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 94.

2.2 Petrus Dens' handbook

The second handbook under discussion is that of Petrus Dens.³⁰ He was born in 1690 in Boom, near Antwerp, and did his *humaniora* with the Oratorians in Mechelen. His study of the Artes led him in 1709 to Louvain, where he also studied theology from 1711 to 1715. He eventually received his licentiate in theology as well.³¹ Soon after his ordination in 1715, he was employed as professor in theology, first at the Abbey of Affligem (1717) and shortly afterwards at the seminary of Mechelen (1721). In 1729 he left the seminary, after he had succeeded through the 'via concursus' to become prebendary of the metropolitan church of St. Rombouts. He returned in 1735, this time as president, and kept this function until his death on February 15, 1775. Just as Neesen, he as well led the seminary of the archdiocese for approximately forty years.

Being responsible for theological education, he must have reached the conclusion that the handbook of his illustrious predecessor was in need of revision. In 1758, this conclusion led to the publication of two parts, which, according to the title, were an addition to Neesen's handbook.³² Dens gave, as a reason for the publication of his *Supplementum* that in Neesen's work the discussion on the *virtus religionis* was absent. From the beginning, he wanted to do more than just provide an addition. If his initiative would be well accepted, more treatises of the theological course would be published. As an advance, a second treatise appeared within six months. This became part two of the *Supplementum*, and carried the title *Dictata de poenitentia*. Thus, it was not directly clear that this was a substitution.

The intervention of the governor of the Austrian Netherlands by decree on May 2nd, 1759, meant that this course of action could not be continued. Part of the contents of the course, would contain principles considered by the state to be against the '*maximes inviolables*' of the land, and against the rights of His Majesty. This was because they removed the church and clergy from his control. Only after Dens'

³⁰ See for his life and work, the entry by J. FORGET in DTC, 4 (1920), c. 422-423 and the details given by K. SWENDEN in *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek* (NBW), 13 (1990), c. 202-205.

³¹ According to DTC, 4 (1920), c. 421, Dens only received his licentiate on Oct. 5th, 1733. In NBW, 13 (1990), c. 203, this is corrected into Oct. 5, 1723.

³² P. DENS, *Supplementum Theologiae Rev. Adm. D. Laur. Neesen. De virtute religionis reliquisque virtutibus iustitiae annexis, et de virtute temperantiae. Secunda pars continet ejusdem Dictata de sacramento poenitentiae*. Mechelen: J.F. Vander Elst, 1758, 2 vols.

death in 1775 would the complete course be published, including the two treatises forbidden earlier.

Because the theology of Mechelen was at first published as loose treatises, each with its own title, the structure is not immediately clear. After some time, all these treatises received one title, and Petrus Dens appeared, posthumously but correctly, as the author of the *Theologia ad usum seminariorum et sacrae theologiae alumnorum*.³³

Thomas and Augustine are no longer part of the title of these two theology courses in Mechelen. However, as far as Thomas is concerned, the structure of the *Summa* is maintained.³⁴ Again, the treatises on the One and Triune God are the central part. This time, the main 'building' is much smaller than a hundred years previous with Neesen. Not one-tenth, but one-twentieth of the surface area is dedicated to the contents of *Pars prima* of the *Summa*. This loss is virtually completely compensated by the *Pars tertia*. It is striking that especially the cohesion between the two wings appears to have disappeared, seeing the order in which it was published and the abundance of the individual parts.³⁵ For the rest, the relation with Thomas is enforced by references per section to *pars*, *quaestio*, and *articulus* in the *Summa*.

Less obvious is whether the spirit of Augustine still influences the interior. An exterior reference would make it appear otherwise. The doubts voiced by the Jansenist *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* in 1759 on the prohibition of publication almost seems like the banishment of the church father. Dens is related to the Jesuits and his new theology would distance itself from the teachings of the Church. It was feared that Dens' opinions on grace and morals would instead appear in the theology taught at seminaries previously, that is, in the time of Neesen. This theology was still kept in honour at Louvain.

This type of information predicts a large swing in the theology at Mechelen. In the first instance, the evidence from the indices corroborates this change. With the names of Baius, Jansenius, and Ques-

³³ See for further developments on the publication of Dens' handbook in 1758-1759 and 1775-1779, Theo CLEMENS, *Petrus Dens en de Mechelse theologie. Rond de uitgavegeschiedenis van een befaamd seminariehandboek* in: Jan JACOBS (ed.), *Boeken als bron: opstellen aangeboden aan dr. Marcel Gielis bij gelegenheid van zijn vijftienvigste dienstjubiläum aan de Theologische Faculteit Tilburg 1976-2001* (Tilburg, 2001), pp. 69-90.

³⁴ See addendum 2. The Mechelen edition of 1819 is used to compare Dens' handbook with the others. This edition is a fairly trustworthy reproduction of the original text and is the first edition since Warmond was founded.

³⁵ Clemens, *Petrus Dens en de Mechelse theologie*, pp. 73-76.

nel, one finds references to the places where their heresies were investigated. On the contrary, Pelagius' name is absent. However, it is too fast a move to assume that he has moved out or has graduated from house ghost to respectable inhabitant. Leafing through the same treatises as with Neesen, Pelagius and the semi-pelagians are still there and fought against. Above all, after the conviction of Jansenius and Quesnel, Dens shows himself more cautious. He criticises for example, both Molinists as Thomists, and the schools of Augustinians and Lovanienses in his discussion of the *scientia media*. Furthermore, he refers to the heresy of the semi-pelagians on this point.³⁶ As far as God's will for redemption is concerned, he confirms that God, previewing the fall of Adam, still wishes everyone to reach redemption, even those rejected. Criticising even Augustine, he searches for the solution in the distinction between the *voluntas antecedens* and the *voluntas consequens*. Here, he encourages his readers to be careful in reading Estius, Sylvius and Neesen. In favour of Augustine, Dens remarks that the church father had to formulate his points of view in his struggle against the Pelagians and the semi-pelagians and that he, in other works, does agree with the better solution.³⁷

A remarkable difference between Dens and Neesen appears when both discuss predestination and a catalogue of heresies on this issue is given. Dens gives a summary of his predecessor without showing his passion.³⁸ He appears scholastic and practical. In the dedication of 1758, he says that he does not wish to dwell on speculation but wishes to provide something that is useful for the pastor, confessor and spiritual director. His own passion is practice and in this, he, just like his predecessor, chooses the safer road. This is clear in the treatises on the virtue of religiosity and confession, which he had already published in 1758. These are the only ones which can, with certainty, be ascribed to him. As far as his own opinion is concerned, it is characteristic that he closes an overview of the discussion on the number of damned with, as *conclusio practica*, that the proposed solutions are uncertain. For those who search certainty, it is better to choose the narrow road. In his opinion, those who live the good life will also die a good death. However, the way most people live, arouses the qualm of their damnation.³⁹

³⁶ Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract. 1-4, nr. 31.

³⁷ Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract 1-4, nr. 39.

³⁸ Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract 1-4, nr. 47.

³⁹ Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract 1-4, nr. 50.

When we continue reading, it appears in the treatise on the creation of man, that Dens considers the *natura pura* a possibility. In this, he differs from Neesen. He can only do so, without the danger of getting too close to the Pelagian points of view, by consequently pointing out the differences between the state of *natura pura* and the state of man after the Fall.⁴⁰

In the treatise on faults and sins, the Pelagians again appear in their denial of the original sin. On this particular point, it is especially interesting that Dens characterises the Anabaptists and Socinians as modern Pelagians, but does not yet take notice of the optimistic, enlightened views on human nature.⁴¹ Also interesting, in comparison to Neesen's *Vniversa theologia*, is the insertion of a digression on the Immaculate Conception of Mary. For a while, this was a touchstone in deciding to which camp one belonged. The defence of the Immaculate Conception was reserved for anti-Jansenists. Dens does not yet call this *de fide*, but does accept it because of the devout convictions of devout people and the celebration of the feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception by the universal church.⁴²

Pièce de résistance is of course the treatise on grace. Here, we find subtle divisions of different types of grace. Here, Dens shows his detachment regarding the discussions on the grace issue between Thomists, Molinists and Congruists. In deciding his own position, he had to rely on escape routes, for example by defining works moraliter 'good' but not good enough to entail redemption. To claim that they were redemptive was Pelagian. On the other hand, it was Baian to say that they were sinful.⁴³ To avoid any misconception, the treatise on grace ends with an overview of all condemned heresies. In the *dicta* 23, 24 and 25, Pelagius and the semi-pelagians head the list with Luther, Calvin and Baius as their more recent companions. Jansenius and Quesnel have the dubious honour of closing the list.

In closing the discussion on the eighteenth-century revision of the theology of Mechelen, we can conclude that Dens, in his Pelagian debate, eventually chooses for Augustine and against Pelagius. For him, human nature after the Fall is not completely ruined, but is nonetheless damaged. To reach redemption, God's grace is always needed. He is much more careful in this than was Neesen. This is not strange. During his theology studies, the papal bull *Unigenitus* had appeared.

⁴⁰ Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract 1-4, nr. 99-100.

⁴¹ Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract 5-7, nr. 132.

⁴² Dens, *Theologia*, I, tract 5-7, nr. 137.

⁴³ Dens, *Theologia*, II, tract 3, nr. 5.

This document has been of use as a watershed in the landscape of Catholic theology. The theological 'building complex' of Dens knows increasingly different ghosts than Neesen's. In defence of his Augustinianism, Dens had to keep in mind the condemnations of Baius, Jansenius and Quesnel. Besides, he was more interested in the promotion of a very serious religious life than in theoretical exercises around dogmatic problems. It is of interest that his treatise on the virtue of religiosity was presented as a supplement to Neesen's handbook, while his own handbook lost that religious vitality which marked the theology of his predecessor.

2.3 The *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium* of Jan De Bruijn, dating to 1892

When the university of Louvain was closed in 1797, and the French Revolutionaries also seized the northern Netherlands colleges in 1798, measures had to be taken to ensure the continuation of the education of priests. Even though other options were available, the different church districts chose to set up seminaries themselves, or in combination with other areas.⁴⁴ In these institutions, just as in the seminaries of the southern Netherlands, the *Theologia* of Dens was used for the contents of the theology course.⁴⁵ Editions appeared until 1880-1881.

This piece of information by itself already deserves attention. The same is true for the changes made in the editions of 1819 and 1828-1830, and especially, for the new update which began to appear in 1850. Within this discussion, it suffices to say that the theology of Mechelen was in use until at least 1839 in the Dutch seminary at Warmond. In that year, its old president J.M. Chedeville and its old handbook were put aside as being too Jansenist and too Gallican.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Th. CLEMENS, *Een onbedoeld kind van de revolutie. Veranderingen in de opleiding van priesters voor de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk van de Noordelijke Nederlanden na 1795*, in *Trajecta*, 3 (1994), pp. 307-327.

⁴⁵ Lodewijk WINKELER, 'Ten dienste der seminaristen: handboeken op de Nederlandse priesteropleidingen, 1800-1967', in: *Jaarboek Katholiek Documentatie Centrum* 1987, pp. 18 and 45-45; Laenen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 243; J. ART, *Kerkelijke structuur en pastorale werking in het bisdom Gent tussen 1830 en 1914* (Kortrijk-Heule, 1977), pp. 92 and 94.

⁴⁶ J.C. VAN DER LOOS, *Geschiedenis van het seminarie-Warmond tot 1853* in: *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van het Bisdom Haarlem*, 48(1932), pp. 452-460. Winkeler, *Het onderwijs op Warmond*, pp. 140-141.

Apparently, things can take a turn! Which handbook then took the place of the Mechelen *Theologia* is not known, but the first two teachers since 1839 had been educated in Rome⁴⁷ and the third studied at Munich for a few years.⁴⁸ Thus, we at least know that these three professors came across a different theological tradition than that of the old Louvain university and Mechelen seminary.

All of this serves as an introduction to the third handbook, the *Theologiae Dogmaticae Compendium* by Jan De Bruijn. He was teacher of dogmatic theology from 1864 to 1893. As Neesen and Dens, by the end of his career he has printed his course. De Bruijn had no other education than that of his own seminary, in the years 1848-1852. However, because of that, he can be considered a product and representative of the renewal after 1839. If this assumption is correct, De Bruijn must have been formed by the theology of Franz Leopold Liebermann.

This Alsatian theologian lived from 1759 to 1844 and, as president of the seminary founded in Mainz in 1805, belonged to the circle of anti-Enlightenment and anti-state church followers.⁴⁹ His *Institutiones theologicae*, which first appeared in 1819-1821, were recommended in a Mechelen catalogue as already a classic in various German seminaries. It was also recommended due to its pure Latin, good methods, certain teaching and sublime philosophy. Of the author, it was said that he knew the best methods to combat the current bad tenets. He was also praised in a letter dated to Aug. 13, 1828, by Pope Leo XII.⁵⁰ Well, this handbook, which was rewritten in 1831 in an even more Ultramontane spirit⁵¹, was available from 1832-1833 in the Netherlands, in the fourth edition, put into circulation by the Louvain publishers Vanlinthout and Vandenzande.

The use of Liebermann at Warmond is not proven. That De Bruijn had this theologian as director, in the double sense of the word, is suggested through the subtitle of his own handbook. There, it says that the *compendium* is collected from Liebermann and other theo-

⁴⁷ It concerns M.T. Timmermans (1839-1842) en W. Steenhoff (1842-1851). Cf. Van der Loos, *Geschiedenis van het seminarie*, pp. 574-578 and 584-585.

⁴⁸ It concerns O.A. Spitzen (1851-1858). Cf. Van der Loos, *Geschiedenis van het seminarie*, p. 590-592.

⁴⁹ H. JEDIN (ed.), *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, VI.1 (Sonderausgabe, Freiburg etc., 1985), pp. 268-269.

⁵⁰ See the catalogue by HANICQ in the Mechelen *Directorium* of 1830.

⁵¹ J.-M. MAYEUR etc. (ed.), *Geschichte des Christentums*, 11(Freiburg, 1997), p. 108.

logians.⁵² This still leaves much room for different influences. However, the order of the list of abbreviations affirms the especial interest of Liebermann amongst other theologians. His name and his *Institutiones theologicae* precede the otherwise alphabetical list. Further doubt may be removed by continuous references in the text. This dependence on another theological tradition than the Louvain-/Mechelen one gives rise to the question what the results were for the reorientation at Warmond after 1839.

When comparing De Bruijn's *Compendium* to the two previously discussed handbooks, it is immediately clear that a completely new structure is used.⁵³ No longer is the treatise on the One and Triune God at the beginning. It is still present, but now hides behind the double wall of the *demonstratio christiana* and the *demonstratio catholica*. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the contents of the second part of the *Summa* are absent. These changes are partly due to the disintegration of the one, all-inclusive, theological course. This one course made it possible, until within the nineteenth century, for only one teacher to run a whole seminary. At Warmond, this unity disappeared after 1832 due to the growing differentiation in the field of theological education. In that year, moral theology became a separate course. In 1833, a teacher for liturgy appeared, and in 1837/1838 respectively, pastoral theology and church history were set apart. De Bruijn therefore, being responsible for dogmatic theology, had a more restricted working area than Neesen and Dens. This does not alter the fact that as far as the other, more defensive part of the book, is concerned, a considerable change has taken place in comparison with Neesen and Dens. There are new ghosts and this time they appear especially from outside!

The question, which in this discussion must be asked immediately, is whether the interior has also been changed. In addition, whether the old ghosts have disappeared. That something has changed is evident because De Bruijn's *Compendium* is made up of only two parts, and thus has less room for digressions than his predecessors. That is exactly why it is all the more obvious that a relatively large number of pages is dedicated, for example, to the discussion of new ways of thinking about the origin of the world and mankind.⁵⁴ Here, Darwin appears as the ghost in the theological

⁵² The complete title reads: J. DE BRUIJN, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium, quod ex Liebermann aliisque theologis conscripsit et cursui quatuor annorum adaptavit*. Leiden: J.W. van Leeuwen, 1892.

⁵³ See addendum 3.

⁵⁴ De Bruijn, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, II, pp. 11-33 and 48-62.

stronghold. As far as the old debates are concerned, much attention is paid to human nature and original sin. The Fall is presented as an especially crucial moment in salvation history.⁵⁵ That the battle with Jansenism has been fought is clear from the teaching that un-baptised children miss the *visio beatifica* but need not suffer sensorily. Rather, they rejoice in being part of much of God's goodness and in natural perfection. Furthermore, the victory of the anti-Jansenists can be seen in more than ten pages' affirmation of Mary's Immaculate Conception.⁵⁶

In the discussion of the teaching of redemption, it is clear that Augustine is continuously cited, this time however to defend conclusions which had not been made by the Augustinians in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. In details, De Bruijn hardly differs from Dens, where he picks a path between the heresies of the Pelagians and opponents, whom he indicates as 'predestinationists'. In his conclusions he goes further, especially where the general offer of grace is concerned. In his handbook, the *gratia sufficiens* is a bit more *efficax* than in the handbooks of his predecessors. Besides, in the thorny issue of the case of un-baptised children, he retreats even further by declaring the difficult reconciliation of the general will for salvation and the absence of baptism as an impenetrable mystery.⁵⁷ In conclusion, the recommendation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart should be pointed out in connection with the teaching of redemption. Man is sinful and in need of mercy, and through this symbol of a loving and pitying God, he received a better insight into his own prospects of final joy than the complex teaching of grace could have offered.⁵⁸

3. Conclusions

An initial remark in conclusion to this discourse concerns the somewhat surprising role played by seminaries as producers of theology, where the low status of seminary education, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, would have suggested a more consuming role.

A second point requesting attention is the strange continuity that the handbooks indicate. With only few handbooks, centuries can be spanned. This opens new perspectives for comparative research in more than just the Pelagian question.

⁵⁵ De Bruijn, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, II, pp. 71-94.

⁵⁶ De Bruijn, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, II, pp. 93-94 and 95-106.

⁵⁷ De Bruijn, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, II, p. 188.

⁵⁸ De Bruijn, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, II, pp. 131-134.

Furthermore, it can be established that the realization of the mutual relations between the theological handbooks can offer good possibilities over a longer period of time in studying the continuity and discontinuity of theological education, and its dating.

As far as the Pelagian debate is concerned, the comparison of the handbooks shows that changes in theology are as slow as movements in tectonic plates. However, they do move and can be studied in detail. In the long run, Roman Catholic theology does go through transformations slowly but surely. These changes do not only apply to the architecture of the whole but also the individual chambers. Applied to the problem of grace, the comparison of the handbooks shows that an initial disconcerting movement of update-to-update is actually technically perfectly balanced and harmless material. The seventeenth century ghost is as it were transformed into a mantle-piece figurine.

The architectural metaphors lead to the remark that, according to the building plans, what was the main building is of no priority in the actual building history. With Neesen and Dens, the wings existed before the main building. This is food for thought and emphasises the need for research on the genesis of theological handbooks.

The slowness of long-term movements agrees with the many complications in the short term, such as those surrounding the publication of the handbook by Dens. Here as well, there remains much to be done.

In conclusion, because of all the changes and vicissitudes, the spirit in which theology is used does change and new ghosts appear. However, much also remains the same and the question arises whether the real ghosts ever disappear completely, and whether we should strive to do so.

Theo CLEMENS

Addenda 1

L. NEESEN, *Universa Theologia in tomos duos divisa ad mentem SS. Augustini et Thomae exposita*

(ed. Keulen: H. Demen, 1687, 2 vols. in 1 bd., fo)

I.1: Theologia christiana affectiva (Oldest approbation: May 6, 1678; total paged leafs: 138).

0.	De theologia et locis theologicis	1
1.	De Deo Uno	8
2.	De Deo Trino	87
3.	De statu primi hominis and De reparatio per Verbi Incarnatione	107

I.2: Theologia moralis pars prima complectens generalia principia & universales regulas actuum humanorum (Oldest approbation: Nov. 3, 1675; total paged leafs: 256).

1.	De actu humano	1
2.	De beatitudine an anima illius sit capax	11
3.	De passionibus animae	21
4.	De voluntario	27
5.	De libero arbitrio	34
6.	De causis impedimentibus	39
7.	De circumstantibus actuum	56
8.	De objecto voluntatis	64
9.	De actibus voluntatis tam elicitis quam imeratis	75
10.	De esse morali actus humani	91
11.	De conscientia	105
12.	De voluntate Dei, tamquam regula remota	123
13.	De virtutibus (in het algemeen)	127
14.	De peccatis	132
15.	De praxi confessoriorum circa peccatores consuetudinarios	155
16.	De peccato originali	166
17.	De legibus	179
18.	De gratia	214
19.	De justificatione	243
20.	De merito	250

II.1: Theologia moralis (pars secunda) de virtutibus (Oldest approbation: Nov. 1, 1678; total paged leafs: 137).

1.	De virtute fidei (with paragraphs: De ecclesia (p. 18); De autoritate concilii (p. 28); De scriptura canonica (p. 32); De traditionibus	1
2.	De virtute spei	69
3.	De virtute charitatis	84

II.2: Tractatus tres de iustitia et jure (Oldest approbation: Oct. 26, 1683; total paged leafs: 247).

1.	De iustitia et jure generatim	1
2.	De contractibus	41
3.	De injuriis & damnis & restitutione	150

II.3: Tractatus moralis christiana de sacramentis (Oldest approbation: Aug. 4, 1676; total paged leafs: 360).

1.	De sacramentis in genere	1
2.	De baptismo	35
3.	De confirmatione	53
4.	De sacramento eucharistiae et de sacrificio missae	60
5.	De poenitentia (also: irregularitates, indulgentiae and purgatorium)	138
6.	De extrema unctione	263
7.	De ordine	274
8.	De sponsalibus et matrimonio	295

ADDENDA 2

P. DENS, *Theologia*: order and scope of the treatises in the Mechelen edition of P.J. Hanicq, 1819, 7 vols.

Bd N°	Title	Numbering of the <i>dicta</i>	Paging	Number of pages
***	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa</i>, I	***		***
1.1	Tractatus de Deo et attributis divinis	1-55	1- 91	91
1.2	Tractatus de SS. Trinitatis mysterio	56-76	92-124	33
1.3	Tractatus de angelis	77-87	125-141	17
1.4	Tractatus de creatione mundi	88-105	142-165	24
	Subtotal			165
***	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa</i>, II	***		***
1.5	Tractatus de actibus humanis	1- 85	166-303	138
1.6	Tractatus de vitiis et peccatis	86-173	304-448	145
1.7	Tractatus de conscientia	174-194	448-496	49
2.1	Tractatus de virtutibus	1-154	1-291	291
2.2	Tractatus de legibus	1- 97	292-475	184
2.3	Tractatus de gratia	1- 25	476-528	53
2.4	Tractatus de justificatione	26- 34	529-542	14
2.5	Tractatus de merito	35- 41	543-556	14
3.1	Tractatus de jure et justitia	1-151	1-307	307
3.2	Tractatus de contractibus	1- 78	308-512	205
4.1	Tractatus de virtute religionis	1-305	1-439	439
	Subtotal			1839
***	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa</i>, III	***		***
5.1	Tractatus de incarnatione	1-42	1-67	67
5.2	Tractatus de sacramentis in genere	1-49	68-155	88
5.3	Tractatus de baptismo + dissertatio	1-43	156-246	91
5.4	Tractatus de confirmatione	1-13	247-266	20
5.5	Tract. de venerabili sacram. euchar.	1-66	267-375	109
5.6	Tractatus de sacrificio missae	1-21	376-442	67
5.7	Tractatus de censuris	1-19	443-487	45
5.8	Tractatus de irregularitate	1-29	488-512	25

6.1	Tractatus de sacram. poenitentiae	1-285	3-444	442
6.2	Tractatus de indulgentiis	286-300	445-488	44
7.1	Tractatus de extrema unctione	1- 20	5- 48	44
7.2	Tractatus de ordine	1- 15	49- 91	19
7.3	Tractatus de sponsalibus	1- 24	92-145	20
7.4	Tractatus de matrimonio	25-136	146-378	233
7.5	Tractatus de quatuor novissimis	1- 32	379-427	49
	Subtotal			1363
	Total			3367

Explanation

1. The order of treatises generally depends on the order of the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas.
2. The numbering of the *dicta* (dictate numbering) in all editions from 1758 is virtually unchanged and is thus not only useful for references but also for distinguishing other entities than the treatise.

Addenda 3

J. DE BRUIJN, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium, quod ex Liebermann aliisque theologis conscripsit et cursui quatuor annorum adaptavit*. Leiden: J.W. van Leeuwen, 1892, viii-435-vii + viii-434-viii pp.

<i>Jaar 1</i>	<i>Theologia dogmatica generalis (225 p.)</i>	<i>1</i>
0	Prolegomena in theologiam dogmaticam	3
1	Demonstratio christiana	6
1.1	Revelationis theoria	10
1.2	Revelationis existentia	32
2.	Demonstratio catholica	107
2.1	Demonstratio historica	109
2.2	Demonstratio immediata	141
3.	Regula fidei (with among other things 'rationis usus in theologia')	185
<i>jaar 2</i>	<i>Theologia dogmatica specialis (204 p.)</i>	<i>229</i>
1.	Introductio in theologiam specialis	232
2.	De ecclesia	254
3.	De Deo Uno et Trino	345
<i>jaar 3</i>	<i>Theologia dogmatica specialis (207 p.)</i>	<i>1</i>
1.	De Deo creatore (here also: the Immaculate Conception)	4
2.	De humani generis redemptione (here also: Sacred Heart)	107
3.	De gratia Christi	152
<i>jaar 4</i>	<i>Theologia dogmatica specialis (219 p.)</i>	<i>213</i>
1.	De sacramentis	215
1.1.	Baptismus	262
1.2.	Confirmatio	284

1.3.	Eucharistia	296
1.3.1	Realis presentia	296
1.3.2	Missae sacrificium	319
1.3.3	Eucharistiae sacramentum	345
1.4.	Poenitentia	361
1.5.	De indulgentiis	380
1.6.	Extrema unctio	389
1.7.	Ordo	393
1.8.	Matrimonium	403
2.	Status hominis post mortem	415