

FROM DRIEDO TO BELLARMINE, (THE CONCEPT OF PURE NATURE IN THE 16TH CENTURY

1. Introduction

In his celebrated collection of historical-critical studies entitled *Augustinisme et théologie moderne*, Henri de Lubac argues that the attentive historian of theology should be able to detect the contours of the theology of the modern period – i.e. the period from the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council – in Leuven's theology faculty and its surroundings prior to the Baius affair¹. One of the most important features of this modern Catholic theology is its recognition of the existence of the possibility of a state of pure nature. The present article will sketch the genesis and evolution of the theory of 'pure nature' in Leuven².

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, it was generally accepted that the theory of 'pure nature' was first formulated by Robert Bellarmine (in his polemic against Michael Baius), from which fact the theory borrows its authority. In the context of the discussion surrounding Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946) and the 'nouvelle théologie', Pieter Smulders published an article in which he demonstrated that the concept of 'pure nature' was already to be found among Leuven theologians before Baius and likewise before Bellarmine. Smulders

¹ H. DE LUBAC, *Augustinisme et théologie moderne* (Théologie, 63), Paris, Aubier, 1965, p. 183: "Dès avant l'affaire baianiste, et dans ce milieu même de Louvain qui en fut le théâtre, l'historien averti discerne comme les premiers linéaments de la théologie qui devait, jointe à celle de Cajetan et de son école, s'épanouir vers la fin du siècle chez Molina, Bañez et Suarez. Avec Jean Driedo, avec Ruard Tapper, une orientation se dessine".

² For the history of the Faculty of Theology in Leuven see the bibliography included in: E.J.M. VAN EIJL (ed.), *Facultas S. Theologiae Lovaniensis 1432-1797. Contributions à son histoire* (BETL, 45), Leuven, University Press, 1977, supplemented more recently by L. KENIS & M. LAMBERIGTS (eds.), *L'Ancienne faculté de théologie de Louvain 1432-1797. Bibliographie des années 1977-1992*, in M. LAMBERIGTS (ed.), *L'augustinisme à l'ancienne faculté de théologie de Louvain* (BETL, 111), Leuven, University Press, 1994, pp. 419-442. A recent overview of the history of the Faculty of Theology up to the eve of the Council of Trent is also found in M. GIELIS, *Leuven theologians as opponents of Erasmus and of humanistic theology*, in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, ed. by Erika Rummel, Leiden, Brill (expected winter 2007). Further literature can be found in the bibliographies of these documents. For a clear presentation of the various levels of appointment as professor at the Faculty of Theology see E.J.M. VAN EIJL, *De theologische faculteit te Leuven in de XVe en XVIe eeuw. Organisatie en opleiding*, in VAN EIJL (ed.), *Facultas S. Theologiae*, pp. 84-102.

points out, nevertheless, that the Leuven theologians in question maintained a different understanding of the concept than that of Cajetan, for example. This leads him to a number of theological conclusions, among them the belief that de Lubac's theology does not offer an adequate response to the problems to which 'modern' Catholic theology – with its various theories of 'pure nature' – had given rise³.

Based on our own research into the available sources and accounting for the literature that has appeared since de Lubac and Smulders, the goal of this study is to establish a new synthetic overview of the genesis and evolution of the theory of 'pure nature' in 16th century Leuven. We hope to investigate the theological implications of the latter, such as the condemnation of de Lubac's theology of grace and the discussion it engendered, in later publications.

We will focus our attention in the following pages on three theologians in particular: John Driedo (ca. 1480 – 1535), a representative of the generation of polemical theologians who was tutor to the key figure in the entire story, namely Michael Baius, and may have contributed to the form of Augustinianism that was later condemned as Baianism; Michael Baius (1513-1589) himself and Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), who taught for a number of years at the Jesuit College in Leuven where he became acquainted with the theology of the Leuven School. His understanding of nature and grace clearly bear traces of the latter.

2. John Driedo

The theology developed by John Driedo⁴ on the question of grace and nature⁵ is particularly evident in a work published after his

³ P. SMULDERS, *De oorsprong van de theorie der zuivere natuur. Vergeten meesters der Leuvense school*, in *Bijdragen* 10 (1949) 105-127.

⁴ M. GIELIS, *Johannes Driedo. Anwalt der Tradition im Streit mit Humanismus und Reformation*, in M. H. JUNG & P. WALTER (eds.), *Theologen des 16. Jahrhunderts. Humanismus – Reformation – Katholische Erneuerung*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002, pp. 135-153; R. BAIER, *Driedo(ens) Johannes*, in *Biographisch-Bibliographischen Kirchenlexikon*, Bd. XXII (2003), Herzeberg, Spalten, pp. 280-284; cf. the website Verlag Traugott Bautz (www.bautz.de), link *Biographisch-Bibliographischen Kirchenlexikon Online*, s.v. 'Driedo(ens)', where additional literature can be found, in particular W. FRANÇOIS, *Augustinus als 'onweerlegbare vertolker van de theologie'. Johannes Driedo over Schrift, Augustinus en de katholieke Traditie (1533)*, in P. VAN GEEST & H. VAN OORT (eds.), *Augustiniana Neerlandica. Aspecten van Augustinus' spiritualiteit en haar doorwerking*, Leuven, Peeters, 2005, pp. 427-446 on Driedo's Augustinianism.

⁵ On Driedo's doctrine of grace in *De gratia* see M. GIELIS, *L'Augustinisme anti-érasmien des premiers controversistes de Louvain Jacques Latomus et Jean Driedo*,

death by a colleague at the faculty of theology, Ruard Tapper⁶: *De gratia et libero arbitrio*. The two-volume publication is polemical in character, although the tone it maintains is consistently respectable and matter-of-fact. It was written as a refutation of three different heresies: Lutheranism⁷, Pelagianism and Manichaeism. While the fact that the lion's share of the author's attention is given to the contestation of Pelagianism might seem unusual, it is important to remember that the alledged heresy in question was not a thing of the past in Driedo's day. On the contrary, he argued that one of his contemporaries, someone who had even lived in the same city of Leuven for a time, was a defender of Pelagianism, namely Erasmus.

After much hesitation, Erasmus had set about writing a document entitled *De libero arbitrio*⁸ in which he rejected Luther's theology. The reformer responded with his vehement *De servo arbitrio*. The way in which Erasmus approached free will in his pamphlet, however, did not engender immediate enthusiasm among the Leuven theologians, the majority of whom had already maintained serious objections to a humanistic theology of renewal for a considerable period of time⁹. It would appear from the reports sent by Dirk van Heeze to the Roman Curia concerning his mission to silence the theologians of Leuven on the question of Erasmus, that the former considered the latter's

in LAMBERIGTS (ed.), *L'augustinisme*, pp. 19-61; cf. T. DHANIS, *L'anti-pélagianisme dans le De captivitate et redemptione humani generis de Jean Driedo*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 51 (1956) 454-470.

⁶ P. FABISCH, *Ruard Tapper (1487-1559)*, in E. ISELOH (ed.), *Katholische Theologen der Reformationszeit*, Vol. IV (Katholisches Leben und Kirchenreform im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung, 47), Münster, Aschendorff, 1987, pp. 58-74.

⁷ W. FRANÇOIS, *The Louvain theologian John Driedo vs. the German Reformer Martin Luther. And who could impose their Truth...*, in L. BOEVE, M. LAMBERIGTS, T. MERRIGAN (eds.), *Theology and the Quest for Truth* (BETL, 202), Leuven, 2006, pp. 31-60.

⁸ For Erasmus' ideas on free will and his stance on Augustine see: C.P.M. BURGER, *Augustinus' betekenis voor Erasmus' opvatting van de vrije wil*, in J. VAN OORT (ed.), *De kerkvaders in Reformatie en Nadere Reformatie*, Zoetermeer, Boeken-centrum, 1997, pp. 21-34.

⁹ Erasmus' most vehement critic in Leuven was the Carmelite Nicolaus Egmondanus, who spoke of him in the most condescending terms: ANASTASE DE ST.-PAUL, *Baechem d'Egmond*, in *DHGE* 6 (1954) col. 157-158 and M. O'ROURKE BOYLE, *Nicolaas Baechem*, in P.G. BIETENHOLZ & T.B. DEUTSCHER (eds.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Collected Works of Erasmus), Toronto – Buffalo – London, 1985-87, Vol. I, pp. 81-83. Jacobus Latomus was similarly dedicated in his rejection of Erasmus: M. GIELIS, *Latomus, Jacobus*, in *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, Vol. 15, Belgian Royal Academy, Brussels, 1996, cols. 425-435. On the relationship between Erasmus and the university see M.A. NAUWELAERTS, *De universiteit van Leuven en het Humanisme*, in *Onze Alma Mater* 34 (1980) 104-109.

understanding of free will to be even more heterodox than that of Luther¹⁰. If one were to follow Erasmus in the opinion that the *liberum arbitrium* is capable of deeds that can bring about its own salvation, then God's grace loses its significance, its primacy and priority. This was unacceptable to the Leuven theologians.

Driedo likewise rejected Erasmus' teaching on free will and grace, arguing that it inclined towards Pelagianism. The accusation in question turned around the humanist's recognition of the possibility of doing good deeds that have a meritorious character without reference to a prior gift of grace¹¹, such that the grace of God is ascribed only a limited role. Erasmus believed it was possible for people to acquire salvation without having received grace through the sacraments. According to Driedo, however, it remained a mystery of divine election that non-believers and children who had died prior to baptism could not acquire eternal salvation, in spite of the fact that they were not personally responsible for their situation.

2.1. Creation and original sin

Driedo's identification of Pelagianism in Erasmus' work centres around the former's own understanding of creation and the fall of humanity in which the interpretation of Rom. 5,12 played a crucial role¹². According to Driedo, many theologians were inclined to interpret this verse in a manner that avoided the strict consequences of the doctrine of original sin¹³, objecting to the idea that newborn infants

¹⁰ Letters written to Blossius and Giberti: P. BALAN, *Monumenta Reformationis Lutheranae*, Regensburg, 1884, p. 552-563; see esp. p. 562: "quae ratio sinat ut falsa et pernitiiosa [...] non damnentur in Erasmo? Animamus hominem ad scribendum contra Lutherum; [...] sed timeo quod longe melius esset eum dehortari ne quicquam ultra scriberet, nisi forte omnia sacra et sincera esse credimus quae [...] de libero arbitrio [...] scripsisse cernitur".

¹¹ Deeds that are determinative of the ultimate salvation of the human person, and thereby bearing a 'meritorious' character, such that the human person can be understood as responsible for his or her own salvation.

¹² The Vulgate version of this passage reads: "Propterea sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit et per peccatum mors et ita in omnes homines pertransiit in quo omnes peccaverunt [...]". In a slightly contrived interpretation of this verse, the word 'quo' is understood as relative pronoun referring to Adam, through whom sin had come into the world. This was considered to be a strong scriptural argument in support of the doctrine of original sin. A considerable number of scholastic theologians likewise considered the Vulgate's 'Poenitentiam agite!' (Convert!) to be a reference supporting the sacrament of penance.

¹³ J. DRIEDO, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, f. 103v C – 115v B: "octo difficultates ex Paulo de originali peccato"; see esp. f. 103v C: "Amplius autem et hic considerandum, nonnullos solennes esse sacrae theologiae interpretes, tam vetustiores quam

should be burdened with sin. There can be little doubt that Erasmus was among the theologians in question. The latter was unable to detect an immediate scriptural foundation for the doctrine of original sin in the form of inherited sin in the Romans text. For Erasmus, the sin of contemporary men and woman was more of an 'imitation' of Adam's first sin. Driedo could not have disagreed more. Adam's sin had caused the fall of *all* humanity. Everyone was thus born 'in a state of sin' and in need of Christ's redemptive grace to achieve his or her original state of righteousness anew.

The differences between Driedo's perspective and that of Erasmus become all the more evident when one examines their different notions of *concupiscentia*. Driedo insists that many theologian of his day followed Pelagius by approaching concupiscence as a natural phenomenon and not as having its roots in original sin¹⁴. He quotes one of Erasmus' early works – the *Encomium matrimonii* published in Leuven by Dirk Martens in 1518 – word for word without making reference to his specific source, although he does make explicit use of Erasmus' name, an otherwise singular event in the Leuven theologian's extensive

huius temporis, qui locum hunc Apostoli ita interpretantur, quod ex eodem concludi non possit, parvulum mox natum, ullum habere peccatum, aut nasci in ira et indignatione divina, [...]”; f. 104v A: “Similibus quoque interpretationibus innixi sunt nonnulli huius temporis interpretes qui aut carpunt aut silentio praetereunt interpretationem [...] patrum [...] qui interpretantur Apostolum in hoc loco loqui de propagatione [...] peccati”; f. 104v C: “[...] nonnulli sic interpretantur, ut ex hac Apostoli doctrina ad illorum mentem interpretata, non relinquatur locus probandi ullum esse in parvulis originale peccatum”; f. 116r A: “[...] vulpes subintroierunt in Dei Ecclesiam, quae variis et peregrinis interpretationibus demoliuntur vineas, scripturas sacras adulterantes, et antiquas haereses renovantes, quae et supradicta scripturae testimonia aliorum ita interpretantur, ut ex eis prorsus fundari non possit ullum esse in parvulis originale peccatum [...]”; f. 121r B: “Hanc quoque Pelagii interpretationem imitati sunt qui hoc tempore putantur solennes sacrae scripturae interpretes, volentes forsitan occultas haereses seminare de parvulis non baptizandis”.

14 DRIEDO, *De gratia*, f. 162r A – B: “Et hanc sententiam visi sunt approbare quidam huius temporis amatores voluptatis, ac etiam novarum rerum inventores, qui singularitate scientiae gaudentes perturbant omnia, quae tradidit nobis veneranda antiquitas, censentes carnis nostrae pruriginem, Venerisque stimulos a natura, non a peccato proficisci, quibusdam moti rationibus: ‘Primum, quod neque Deus neque natura quicquam faciunt frustra. Deus genitale membrum condidit, et vim gignendi addidit. Deinde matrimonio opus sub innocentiae statu seu ante culpam, sine his stimulis peragi non potuit [...] Amplius autem, et in caeteris animantibus tales stimuli a natura, non a peccato proficiscuntur. Postremo addunt, nos huiusmodi prurigines carnis nostrae reddere imaginatione nostra foedas, quae suapte natura pulchrae sunt et honestae’. Cf. f. 132r D. “Argumenta vero solutionesque eorum, quibus haeretici conantur probare, concupiscentiam carnis, stimulum Veneris, seu pruriginem libidinis, esse naturale bonum; infra patebunt in secundo tractatu libri secundi”.

writings¹⁵. According to Erasmus, the sexual instincts of the human person continued to be good in themselves, even after the fall¹⁶. Erasmus' line of reasoning harks back to the ancient idea that God never does anything by mistake: if God created the human person with genital organs, it goes without saying that the latter also have a purpose. Driedo was inclined to follow Augustine's argumentation in this regard, however, maintaining that *concupiscentia* was one of the negative consequences of the fall, a characteristic of the corrupt state of human nature when it is deprived of grace. For Driedo, the phenomenon is thus essentially evil and he refers to it explicitly as 'evil' concupiscence, in spite of the fact that Augustine recognised the positive use thereof, namely in the context of marriage and procreation¹⁷. Driedo's doctrine of grace, together with his idea of 'pure nature', must be understood nevertheless against the background of his teaching on creation and the fall.

2.2. The Doctrine of Grace

a. Historical-theological backgrounds: From the Doctor Gratiae to the Doctor Angelicus

As most theologians in this controversy tend to do, Driedo refers to the works of Augustine in virtually every part of his argument.

¹⁵ DRIEDO, *De gratia*, f. 166v D – 167r A.: "Ad ea quae ad roborandum Pelagii heresim adiiciuntur in argumentis ex sententia Erasmi docentis, pruriginem carnis stimulosque Veneris non a peccato, sed a natura proficisci, facilis ets responsio ...".

¹⁶ D. ERASMUS, *Encomium matrimonii*, ed. J.-C. MARGOLIN, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami*, t. I, 5, Amsterdam-Oxford, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1975, p. 398-400, l. 183-186 and 190-195: "[...] si merito, velut adagionis vice ubique decantatum, neque deum neque naturam quicquam frustra facere, cur haec membra tribuit, cur hos stimulos, hanc gignendi vim addidit, si coelibatus laudi ducitur? [...] Nec audio qui mihi dicat foedam illam pruriginem et Veneris stimulos non a natura, sed peccato profectam. Quid tam dissimile veri? Quasi vero matrimonium, cuius munus sine his stimulis peragi nequit, non culpam precesserit. Iam in caeteris animantibus unde illi stimuli? an a natura an peccato? Mirum ni a natura. Postremo nos imaginatione foedum reddimus, quod suapte natura pulchrum ac sanctum est". Cf. D. ERASMUS, *Apologia pro declamatione matrimonii*, in ERASMUS, *Opera omnia*, Leiden, 1706, c. 109 C: "... rationibus undique petitis rem ago, quod genus est illud, quod alicubi dictum, stimulos gignendi non a peccato, sed a natura profectos, cum agatur de iis stimulis, qui rationi non repugnant".

¹⁷ Augustine did not deem 'concupiscentia' to be a serious sin, but considered it rather as a 'peccatum veniale', see M. LAMBERIGTS, *A Critical Evaluation of Critiques of Augustine's View of Sexuality*, in R. DODARO & G. LAWLESS (eds.), *Augustine and his Critics. Essays in honour of Gerald Bonner*, London, New York, NY, Routledge, 2000, pp. 176-197. Cf. G. BONNER, *Concupiscentia*, in C. MAYER (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*. Vol. 1: *Aaron-Conuersio*, Basel, Schwabe & co., 1986-1994, cols. 1113-1122.

Augustine's basic idea can be summarised as follows: the human person originally enjoyed a positive relationship with the creator, but because of original sin, humanity as a whole has been confronted with the loss of the state it once had in paradise (*natura vitata*). This implies that generation after generation is born in a state of sin, and that the human person is incapable of achieving the good unaided¹⁸. Human free will is not enough to allow human persons to live according to the commandments of God since it is likewise obscured by the power of sin. God sent His Son, however, to liberate humanity by offering them his redemptive grace¹⁹. The source of every misfortune is the hold exerted by original sin on humanity. A consequence of this conviction is the absolute necessity of baptising children to save them for eternal life in the event that they should die a premature death²⁰.

This theology of grace is further specified in the scholastic period by Thomas Aquinas, among others²¹. For Thomas, the deeds of those who have acquired a state of grace through baptism and have been influenced by the *liberum arbitrium* are '*de condigno*' meritorious deeds²². Other medieval theologians gave more credit to fallen humanity than Thomas was inclined to do. Thinkers such as William of Ockham and the Nominalist School recognised that the human person had the ability to perform deeds with a positive moral character under their own steam as it were, deeds that were also meritorious from the viewpoint of salvation. In contrast to Augustine, Thomas Aquinas was prepared to accept that the human person was capable of morally good deeds in spite of his or her fallen state, still he refused to accept the suggestion that such deeds were meritorious when it came to eternal salvation. This ultimately implied that the human person was unable to bring about his or her own salvation, and Thomas maintained an opposition between the natural order and the order of grace²³.

¹⁸ Cfr. the debate with Julian of Aclanum, M. LAMBERIGTS, *Iulianus IV (Iulianus von Aclanum)*, in *Realenzyklopädie für Antike und Christentum* 19 (1999), 483-505.

¹⁹ V.H. DRECOLL, *Gratia*, in C.P. MAYER (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, Vol. 3, Basel, Schwabe, cols. 182-242.

²⁰ W. HARMLESS, *Baptism*, in A.D. FITZGERALD, *Augustine through the Ages*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids MI & Cambridge, 1999, pp. 84-91.

²¹ See a.o. J.B. KORS, *La justice primitive et le péché originel d'après S. Thomas. Les sources. La doctrine* (Bibliothèque thomiste, 2), Kain, 1922.

²² Later theologians (especially during the period of baroque scholasticism) insisted, however, that even those in a state of grace were in need of actual or immediate grace ('*gratia cooperans*') in order to avoid sin.

²³ A. VANNESTE, *Le 'De primi hominis iustitia' de Baius*, in LAMBERIGTS (ed.), *L'augustinisme*, pp. 123-166.

The Nominalist School, on the other hand, maintained that the person who did everything in his or her power to live an ethical life based on equity and reasonableness could contribute positively to his or her own salvation. Such a life was understood as meritorious '*de congruo*'. At the level of the doctrine of predestination, this led to the notion of '*praedestinatio post praevisa merita*': thanks to divine prescient knowledge, God is aware of the potential merits of the human person (ascribed exclusively to his or her moral activities) and is thus able to grant the said individual his grace and favour a positive 'salvific' predestination.

Erasmus' thinking in this regard can be understood in line with that of Nominalist theology²⁴. Bearing in mind that he limited the influence of original sin to an occasional and individual inclination to sin, it remained possible for human persons to cooperate in bringing about their own salvation on the basis of their morally correct deeds. This implied that a non-believer who had remained faithful to the natural law was capable of performing meritorious deeds without being aware of it.

b. Grace versus moral deeds

The Nominalist/Erasmian line of argument places a logical emphasis on the personal responsibility of the human person for his or her own salvation. Driedo, however, sternly rejects this rather moralistic vision of the Christian life. If one is to take the fall seriously, he claims, it makes no sense to argue that fallen humanity is capable of earning salvation on the basis of its own deeds. The theology of creation lies at the heart of Driedo's doctrine of grace. At the moment of creation, the human person was given both reason and a *liberum arbitrium*. Furthermore, in the paradisiacal state, the human person had received the gift of grace and was free from *concupiscentia*. According to Driedo, the true nature of the human person prior to the fall was

²⁴ It should be noted in this regard that the 'sources' of Erasmus thought are the focus of considerable debate. Authors such as Bouwsma, for example, are inclined to describe his thought as a renaissance-like neo-stoicism (W.J. BOUWSMA, *The Two Faces of Humanism. Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought*, in H.A. OBERMANN & T.A. BRADY (eds.), *Itinerarium Italicum. The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of Its European Transformations. Dedicated to P.O. Kristeller on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 14), Leiden, Brill, 1975, pp. 3-60), while Burger insists on the influence of Hugolinus of Orvieto (C.M. BURGER, *De receptie van Augustinus' genadeleer. Gregorius van Rimini, Hugolinus van Orvieto, Erasmus en Luther (tot 1518)*, in VAN GEEST & VAN OORT (eds.) *Augustiniana Neerlandica*, pp. 420-422).

one of intactness and integrity, free from negative *concupiscentia*, free from suffering and death. After the fall, however, humanity was subject to sin and human persons were “*natura filii irae*”²⁵ As far as he is concerned, therefore, humanity’s originally good nature had been corrupted and this had two primary implications: the loss of humanity’s originally righteous state and the loss of the positive orientation of the will towards God. After the fall, humanity was inclined to evil, and this could only be undone by Christ’s gift of grace.

According to Driedo, the loss of the state of righteousness likewise deprived human persons of the possibility of performing good works since a good work is a gift of God. This position is quite understandable when we bear in mind that original sin for Driedo determines everything. For this reason, Driedo prefers to speak of fallen *humanity* rather than fallen *human beings* in the individual sense. Being part of humanity as a collective implies being born *ipso facto* in a *state of sin*. It makes no difference if the individual has sinned under the influence of his or her own will. It is of primary importance to realise that God’s wrath rests on all human persons, in spite of the fact that an individual person may not have sinned by his or her own free will. In Driedo’s opinion, human nature had been corrupted by original sin to such an extent that even the possibility of acting morally had been undermined. Where Thomas was able to accept that fallen men and women were capable of performing morally correct deeds, albeit without salvific value, Driedo takes matters a step further. The ‘yet to be justified’ human person was so corrupt that the performance of morally correct deeds had become transparently impossible²⁶. While there can be little doubt that Thomas and Driedo oppose one another in this regard, the latter’s opposition to the Ockhamist tradition and Erasmus is even more manifest²⁷. A discussion of the correctness of Driedo’s interpretation of Augustine’s vision of morality would take

²⁵ DRIEDO, *De gratia*, f. 79v C-D: “Homo iam post lapsum Ade filius irae natus, et in peccato conceptus”; f. 119v B: “Caput [...], in quo [...] demonstratur, parvulos nasci filios irae, vinculo damnationis obstrictos”. The terminology here is borrowed from Ef. 2,3. It is interesting to note that the expression is also found in the *Decretum de iustificatione*, Cap.1 dated January 13th 1547, from the sixth session of the Council of Trent. See Denz. 793.

²⁶ DRIEDO, *De gratia*, f. 164v B: “Aristoteles ceterique philosophi ignorantes Dei iustitiam, veram iustitiam a peccato liberantem et gratificantem ad vitam aeternam, non sunt assequuti et idcirco aliter docet fides Christiana”. In the margins: “Iustitia Dei longe diversa a iustitia morali”.

²⁷ Both the Nominalists and Erasmus recognised the possibility that unjustified people could perform meritorious deeds. This moralistic vision was not at home among Driedo’s Augustinian ideas.

us beyond the boundaries of the present contribution. It is important to note, nevertheless, that Driedo considered himself to be supported by the *doctor gratiae*.

2.3. *Driedo and pura natura*

The concept of pure nature stemming from the theology of the 16th century is both well-known and disputed in equal measure. The concept takes its point of departure from the following question: could God have created humanity in an exclusively natural order, in which it was not destined to live according to the gift of grace and look forward to the ultimate beatific vision of God, but limited rather to a merely immanent finality? Some theologians were inclined to respond to this question by positing the existence of two strictly distinct finalities with respect to human existence: a natural finality on the one hand, in proportion to the capacities of human nature, considered pure in itself and thus detached from the human person's need for grace (brought about by original sin), and a supernatural finality on the other hand, which presupposes a free enhancement of human nature.

The development of this idea ran counter to the medieval notion that the single finality was to be found in the final *visio beatifica* – based on the *desiderium naturale*. The proposed separation of finalities ascribed two different states to humanity, which were related to one another in a hierarchical way. This tradition has clear roots in Cajetan's idea of a division between the order of natural morality and the order of grace. According to a broadly accepted hypothesis, maintained into the middle of the last century, the first to make mention of a *natura pura* was Robert Bellarmine in the context of his dispute with Baius.

To what extent did Driedo already maintain a notion of *pura natura*? In order to answer this question we return to his theology of creation in which he inquires inductively whether God should not be considered unjust when he condemns human beings for a fault they themselves did not commit. He responds to his own question – *modo hypothetico* – by noting that God could have created without original justice, and thus without the right to the *visio beatifica*²⁸. In other

²⁸ DRIEDO, *De gratia*, f. 119v A: “Quod si Deus primum hominem talem condidisset qualis nunc est, id est, mortalem, secundum carnem primum concupiscere adversus spiritum, et non praeditum originali iustitia, qua tenerent omnia sub suo dominio, tunc in eo carentia originalis iustitiae nulla esset culpa: quia non esset illa carentia tum facta ulla transgressione voluntaria”. A parallel text can be found in another of his works: DRIEDO, *De concordia*, f. 13v D – 14r B; for the text see SMULDERS, *Oorsprong*, p. 113 and DE LUBAC, *Augustinisme*, p. 184.

words, God could have created human beings according to a completely different order than he *de facto* did, i.e. in a state of immediate fallenness. Such an 'unfallen' human state would imply that there was no prior violation of God's commandment. Driedo makes reference to the possibility of a pure natural order in *De gratia et libero arbitrio* as well as *De concordia liberi arbitrii et praedestinationis*²⁹.

By hypothesising a creation of humanity according to a purely natural order, Driedo was endeavouring to solve a problem that was close to his heart, namely the fate of the multitudes of people who had never been given the chance to become Christian and receive baptism. The problem in question was raised by a number of theologians of the 'via moderna' and by humanists such as Erasmus. They asked themselves whether God should not be considered unjust when he punishes people for a sin they did not commit, a sin committed in fact by their forefather Adam. Driedo's hypothesis of a creation of humanity according to a different order thus appears to have the same goal as those who defend a 'rational' theological anthropology (i.e. the fully-fledged theory of pure nature and twofold finality), namely to offer an answer to the problem of theodicy or the 'justification of God'. Driedo's answer is that God is free to give to those he has already granted the great blessing of earthly life, the even greater blessing of eternal life, which is a supernatural good.

This answer poses a serious problem, however, one to which de Lubac has already alluded³⁰. According to Driedo, the hypothetically pure natural state of the human person is equal to the state in which the human person is now born, the state of (sinful) fallen nature. Bearing in mind that the human person (theologically speaking) is ultimately created by God in order to be happy with Him but is unable to achieve this goal when left to his or her natural powers, he or she is thus of necessity unhappy when abandoned to his or her natural powers. Such a state can only lead to hell and damnation. For this reason, it is difficult to imagine that God would create human persons in a state in which human life is ultimately meaningless and absurd. One cannot claim in line with Driedo, therefore, that an unhappy and meaningless human existence in such a natural state is a blessing and should be understood as a gift of God. Human nature can only be understood as 'grace' if it is not absurd. In line with Martin Luther and the other major Augustinian theologian of his day, Driedo insists on fidelity to

²⁹ This work was also published posthumously by Ruard Tapper.

³⁰ DE LUBAC, *Augustinisme*, pp. 184-185: "L'hypothèse imaginée par Driedo accuse une pensée peu réfléchie, inapte à concevoir la liberté, même divine, sinon sous les formes de l'arbitraire".

Revelation, which teaches us that human persons are (now) no longer the same as God wanted them to be at creation. When he endeavours to conceive of a pure nature to be characterised as 'good' (as a grace), he can only think of fallen nature in its present state ('*natura ut nunc est*'), in spite of his efforts to make sin an abstraction. Such an understanding of human nature does not solve the problem, rather it relocates it. Instead of questioning the righteousness of a God who punishes people on account of the sin of their forefather Adam, he is now forced to question the goodness of a God who creates men and women only to hand them over to hell and damnation.

It is important to bear in mind in this regard that Driedo's approach is strictly theological. His theory of *natura pura* avoids the abstract and speculative philosophical dimension found, for example, in Cajetan (and also in embryonic form in Thomas³¹). Driedo's evident aversion to the overuse of philosophy has its roots in Augustine, who branded recourse to philosophy as a denial of the reality of original sin, which impinges on human reason. Driedo is thus obliged to adopt a radical, salvation-historical point of departure. As a theologian, he is interested in the state of *human nature* both in the present and prior to original sin. It is only against the background of these theological concerns, whereby the notion '*human nature*' is never approached as an abstract concept, that Driedo is able to distinguish between the two natures. His reflections on the idea of *natura pura* are rooted in Augustinian creation-theological preoccupations. In this sense, Driedo's doctrine of pure nature differs radically from that of Cajetan. For Driedo, the suggestion of a double (positive) finality with respect to human existence is unthinkable. If human persons are not oriented towards God, they face eternal damnation.

3. Michael Baius

Michael Baius³² was born in 1513 near the city of Ath, obtained his degree in the *artes* and theology at the university of Leuven and was appointed professor royal (*professor regius*) in Sacred Scriptures

³¹ A. VANNESTE, *Saint Thomas et le problème du surnaturel*, in *ETL* 64 (1988) 348-370.

³² V. GROSSI, *Bajus, Michael*, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Vol. V, 1979, pp. 133-137; F.W. BAUTZ, *Bajus Michael*, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Band I (1990), 349-350; see also the website Verlag Traugott Bautz (www.bautz.de), link *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon Online*, s.v. *Bajus, Michael*.

in 1549. A year after his appointment, he became president of the Pope's College where he demonstrated his skills as both president and teacher while continuing to be actively involved in pastoral work. The government valued his ability to counter the claims of the Reformation and appointed him as royal commissioner for the 'general pardon'³³. In this capacity, he enjoyed the power to grant amnesty on behalf of the government to those who had compromised themselves with the doctrines and teachings of the reformers.

3.1. *The condemnations of Baius*

In spite of Baius' many qualities, a number of his colleagues at the faculty – among them Ruard Tapper and Josse Ravesteyn³⁴ – were suspicious of his aversion to scholasticism, which had inspired him to develop his own conceptual framework, rooted for the most part in the Church Fathers and alien to the majority of scholastic theologians. From the 1560's onwards, Baius was subject to consistent critique with respect to his highly Augustinian theology. Ravensteyn isolated fifteen contestable propositions from two of Baius published works and sent them to the universities of Alcalá and Salamanca where they were condemned in 1565 and 1567. Division of this kind among Catholic theologians was a thorn in the flesh of Philip II, since it appeared to weaken Catholicism's position. For this reason he insisted that Rome provide a solution in order to bring a speedy end to the dispute. Other colleagues at the faculty of theology were likewise of the opinion that Baius had gone too far and invited the king to submit the matter to the Roman authorities. Philip agreed to their request, as did Archbishop Granvelle of Mechelen. On October 1st, Pius V promulgated a bull inspired by the censorship activities of the Spanish inquisition entitled *Ex omnibus afflictionibus* in which 79 of Baius' propositions were condemned.

The bull was first presented to Baius in person and then to a closed group of professors at the faculty of theology. Baius' immediate submission does not suggest that he considered himself to have

³³ Detailed information can be found in V. SOEN, *Geen pardon zonder paus! Studie over de complementariteit van het koninklijk en pauselijk generaal pardon (1570-1574) en over generaal inquisiteur Michael Baius (1560-1576)* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten), Brussels, in preparation.

³⁴ W. TROXLER, *Ravesteyn Josse*, in *Biographisch-Bibliographischen Kirchenlexikon*, Band VII (1994), 1422-1424; see also the website *Verlag Traugott Bautz* (www.bautz.de), link *Biographisch-Bibliographischen Kirchenlexikon Online*, s.v. 'Ravesteyn, Josse'; and M. LAMBERIGTS, *Ravesteyn, Josse*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Band VIII (1999), col. 862-863.

been unjustly treated. He nevertheless addressed a letter of protest to Pius V, who answered in 1569 that the Leuven professor should reconcile himself with the situation. Once again Baius submitted. In the same year, the faculty published the bull in an endeavour to suppress rumours that the entire faculty of theology had been subject to condemnation. In spite of its ups and downs, Baius' career does not seem to have suffered from the affair. In 1575, he became dean of the chapter of St Peter's Church.

When Gregory XIII promulgated the condemnatory bull for a second time in 1580 (included word for word in his *Provisionis nostrae*), Baius and the faculty submitted for a third time. To counter the still lively rumour mill, the faculty charged one of its senior professors, Johannes Lensaeus³⁵, with the task of compiling a *Corpus Doctrinae*³⁶, intended to determine the position of the faculty on the difficult questions of grace and nature, predestination and free will. The manifesto was approved unequivocally by the entire faculty in 1586 and remained free of condemnation by Rome or another theological faculty. Michael Baius died three years later and was buried in the chapel of the Pope's College, of which he was president to the day of his death. In the following pages we will review some of the core aspects of Baius' thought.

3.2. *The Doctrine of Grace: Protestant and Pelagian perspectives*³⁷

In his book *Surnaturel*³⁸, Henri de Lubac accuses Baius of developing an overly legalistic theology. His critique brings us immediately to the very core of the Baianistic conceptual world. De Lubac's accusation is related to Baius' doctrine of justification, or more precisely, to his description of the human person *in statu iustitiae*, as elaborated in his *De primi hominis iustitia* and *De virtutibus impiorum*. Baius interprets the concept *iustitia* in the first instance as 'the human state of obedience to the law and strict observance of God's commandments

³⁵ M. GIELIS, *Lensaeus (de Lens) Johannes*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. 6 (1997) col. 813.

³⁶ The *Corpus doctrinae* has its roots in Pope Gregory XIII's determination to settle the various disputes surrounding Baianism. The pope encouraged Johannes Franciscus Bononi, nuntius of Cologne and Johannes Hauchin, Archbishop of Mechelen, to involve themselves in the matter and they in turn exhorted the faculty to compile the corpus. See E.J.M. VAN EIJL, *La controverse louvaniste autour de la grâce et du libre arbitre à la fin du XVIe siècle*, in LAMBERIGTS (ed.), *L'augustinisme*, p. 215.

³⁷ Cf. A. VANNESTE, *Nature et grâce dans la théologie de Baius*, in E.J.M. VAN EIJL (ed.), *Facultas S. Theologiae*, pp. 327-350.

³⁸ H. DE LUBAC, *Surnaturel. Études historiques* (Théologie, 8), Paris, 1946.

with which charity ultimately coincides'. Both before and after the fall – supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism converge on this point in 'Baianism' – *iustitia proprie dicta* consists of the meticulous fulfilment of the commandments. The human person can only be justified and thereby attain salvation by observing the commandments in the presence of the Creator. In line with Augustine, Baius maintains that such merits are only possible thanks to a divine gift of grace, whereby the *liberum arbitrium* is brought into harmony with the divine will. One can only speak of *iustitia* on the basis of an *a priori* gift offered by God. In the last analysis, therefore, the human person needs the grace of Christ as the *conditio sine qua non* for human merit. Up to this point, Baius would be likely to receive the approval of all Catholic theologians. Nevertheless, Baius maintains that human nature has been injured and weakened by the fall to such a degree that it also needs God's grace to behave 'naturally' (ethically, humanly, with dignity). He thus creates the impression that the human person has a right to the grace necessary to act according to his or her nature and that God as Creator of the said nature is obliged, as it were, to grant such grace. For de Lubac, the idea that the human person can lay claim to grace and has the right to salvation (as completion of his or her nature) is one of the most objectionable elements of Baius' theology³⁹.

Baius' ideas concerning human merit and human freedom are indeed surprising to a certain extent and can only be correctly understood within their anti-Protestant polemical context, which is particularly nuanced where Baius is concerned. Instead of being part of the throng of theologians who dismissed the ideas of Protestantism *en masse*, Baius exhibits a genuine desire to enter into the debate and even accepts a number of Protestantism's basic intuitions. His theology is an endeavour to return to Augustinianism, following thus in the footsteps of Driedo. He nevertheless rejects the idea that the *liberum arbitrium* had

³⁹ De Lubac even resurrects the old accusation that Baius was a Pelagian. If the human person, according to a 'classical' Pelagian, can assert his or her right to salvation before God on the basis of his or her own works, which have a meritorious character without any prior sanctification or justification by God, then the same human person, according to the 'juridicising' pelagian Baius can assert his or her claim to salvation because God is obliged to ensure that human nature maintains its integrity or has it restored. On the other hand, de Lubac himself was accused of Pelagianism, since he challenged the doctrine of pure nature. De Lubac insists, however, that there is no question of a claim emanating from the human person as such, but rather an 'exigence divine', the fulfilment of a claim to which God is obliged to himself and not to the human person. The present authors would be inclined to include Baius here. It is thus clear that according to Baius any so-called claim on the part of the human person to grace and salvation should be understood in a particularly restrictive sense.

the capacity to keep God's commandments even after the fall (in spite of the *consuetudo peccandi* stemming from the sin of Adam). He argues on the basis of the Bible and the Church Fathers – thus sharing common ground with Protestantism at the level of methodology – that human nature is truly and radically (i.e. to its roots) corrupt. In its fallen state, the *liberum arbitrium* is no longer able to do good of itself⁴⁰.

Baius also differs with Protestantism, however, especially with respect to the potential restoration of fallen humanity. He considered the Protestant idea of the non-imputation of sin after justification to be inadequate⁴¹. In his opinion, and thanks to Christ's grace that should be understood as a genuine gift, the capacity to do good was *effectively* restored. For Protestants, *iustificatio* was separate from *sanctificatio*, while for Baius they coincided. Salvation for Baius thus represented an *intrinsic* justification. This must also be understood correctly. For Baius, grace did not have an ontological character (as was the case with respect to the scholastic doctrine of grace with its distinction between *gratia increata* and *gratia creata* – as well as *gratia sanctificans*). Baius understands grace rather as an *animi motus*, which can also be described as *adiutorium*⁴².

3.3. Baius and pure nature

What is the significance of Baius' understanding of grace for our understanding of pure nature? Baius clearly agrees with Driedo to the extent that he takes Adam's original sin as the departure point of this theology. Both theologians then adjoin the necessity of redemption by Christ. It is not surprising, therefore, that Baius refers in the preface to his *De peccato originis* to Augustine, according to whom human history is embodied in the narrative of two people: one through whom all people have been placed under the yoke of sin and one through whom all people have been liberated from sin⁴³. The theological

⁴⁰ "Quod liberum arbitrium hominis, quale nunc est, ex se neque bonum facere possit, neque tentationem ullam superare." Quoted according to VANNESTE, *Nature et grâce dans la théologie de Baius*, p. 333.

⁴¹ At the risk of generalising, one could describe the Protestant vision as a changed attitude on God's part with respect to the human person. The latter remains a sinner nevertheless.

⁴² This offers a good example of the difference in terminology employed in the scholastic theological discourse and that employed by Baius, who borrowed his concepts from the reflections of the Church Fathers, in particular Augustine.

⁴³ A. AUGUSTINUS, *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali*, II.24: "in causa duorum hominum quorum per unum venundati sumus sub peccato, per alterum redimimur a peccato".

status of the contemporary human person is resolutely determined by the radical change brought about in human *nature* by original sin, a change that brings about an absolute need for grace. When we read Baius, we should understand every statement about grace in relation to the fall and to redemption. In like fashion to that of Driedo, Baius' theology of grace is radically salvation-historical in conception⁴⁴.

When we examine Baius' explanation of original justification at closer quarters, restoration and the corruption of human nature would appear to be correlated. Reference to restoration requires an existing state of corruption, and corruption in its turn engenders an expectation of restoration. Legitimate allusion to the corruption of human nature presupposes that there is true evil. The fall has to be taken seriously. This is exactly what Baius attempts to do when he defines the *vitium originis* as *naturalium privatio bonorum*. This definition is of crucial importance. Baius' definition of the *vitium originis* as *naturalium privatio bonorum* implies that the original or supralapsarian justification of the human person was not a supplementary grace. There can be no question of an *additional* gift of grace, bestowed on human nature in its paradisiacal state, as a consequence of which original sin disappeared. With this in mind, it becomes possible to make an abstraction of grace and speak of a pure human nature, exclusive of the additional gift of grace. In other words, this would imply a theory of *natura pura*. From this perspective, Baius' reaction against Pelagianism – which was related to a reaction against the distinction between nature and the supernatural generally accepted in post-Tridentine Catholic theology – becomes more accessible. If one considers the grace of the unfallen state to be supplementary, additional to an already intact human nature, and maintains that the latter disappears with original sin, then one can argue that human nature remains intact, even after the fall. Sin is not taken seriously, and as a consequence the concept of grace remains an 'empty box'.

For Baius this implies *de facto* Pelagianism, since the consequences of the fall are minimalised in such a vision to the loss of something that the human person does not need to be complete⁴⁵. For the Leuven magister, by contrast, original sin was an authentic *actus viciosus*, whereby human nature was fundamentally damaged. Baius had

⁴⁴ See in this regard V. GROSSI, *Peccato e grazia nell'antropologia di Baio*, in *Augustinianum* 8 (1968) 69ff.

⁴⁵ Baius alludes to a "nudam iustitiae originalis, in qua naturaliter a Deo conditum, privationem". Cfr. VANNESTE, *Nature et grâce dans la théologie de Baius*, p. 334.

exhibited the same anti-Pelagian concerns as his teacher Driedo in his anti-Erasmian stance. Yet, at the same time he rejects the *natura pura* doctrine as Pelagian⁴⁶. In this sense, he distances himself remarkably enough from Driedo. In contrast to other scholastics, Driedo had arrived at this doctrine of pure nature on the basis of biblical and Augustinian propositions rather than philosophical speculation based on Aristotelian entelechism. In addition, however, he maintained the old hypothesis of a single, unique finality in which both nature and grace are oriented towards the *visio beatifica*. It is not impossible that Baius considered this to be contradictory. Baius likewise took biblical and Augustinian conceptual frameworks as his point of departure. Indeed, in terms of methodology he was even more radical than his teacher and rejected elements of his theology in which he detected concessions to a form of Pelagianism that must have been inherent to scholasticism.

4. Baius' theological anthropology and the Catholic tradition

To conclude our brief study of Baius we will endeavour to determine the source of the radicality with which he developed his theological ideas. Vanneste points out that a correct understanding of Baius' Christian anthropology⁴⁷ requires seeing it as a radicalisation of the Augustinian idea of the *natura viciata*⁴⁸, and thus of the classical hypothesis that sin brings about a degree of injury in the human person. This completely legitimate Christian biblical hypothesis acquires a disproportionate importance in Baius' system. He radicalises it in a twofold manner, first by making the idea of a *per se* corrupt human nature the basis of his theology, and second by introducing such a far-reaching definition of corruption. This can be illustrated on the basis of a closer consideration of the *liberum arbitrium*.

For Baius, the free will of the fallen human person differed radically from that of Adam. Adam was granted a *natura sana* at creation and possessed, as 'part' thereof, a free will that was capable of inducing good

⁴⁶ See in this regard M.W.F. STONE, *Michael Baius (1513-1589) and the Debate on 'Pure Nature'*. *Grace and Moral Agency in Sixteenth Century Scholasticism*, in J. KRAYE & R. SAARINEN (eds.), *Moral Philosophy on the Threshold of Modernity* (The New Synthesis Historical Library, 57), Kluwer, Dordrecht, 2005, pp. 51-90.

⁴⁷ In spite of its age, J.P. VAN DOOREN, *Michael Baius. Zijn leer over de mens* (Van Gorcum's theologische bibliotheek, 29), Assen, Van Gorcum, 1958, continues to be informative in this regard.

⁴⁸ Vanneste notes that Baius holds an incorrect interpretation of Augustine's *natura vitiata*, arguing that one would do the classical hypothesis more justice by accepting that corruption is the consequence of sin, which remains secondary. Human nature is injured thereby and human freedom is reduced.

works. If Adam had remained in this state, he would have been able to lay claim to salvation and reward with justification, but he disobeyed and all of human nature became corrupt as a result. In order to corrupt human nature as such, Baius maintains, sin did not bring about the loss of something incidental. It would be wrong to argue, for example, that a child is born in a state of sin. Rather one must say that a child comes into the world with an *a priori* corrupt nature. Baius' goal here is the formal confirmation that every person is fundamentally sinful. For Baius, by contrast, human nature as it was before the fall disappears and freedom in its entirety is lost. In his opinion, sin not only brings about the loss of something added to human nature, but also the damaging of human nature as such (*privatio naturalium bonorum*). This demonstrates once again that one cannot speak of *natura pura* in regard to Baius⁴⁹. The particularity of his position is to be found in the radical extent of the corruption to which nature is liable on account of sin.

4. Robert Bellarmine

Robert Bellarmine⁵⁰ was born in Montepulciano in the Italian region of Tuscany on October 4th 1542. Under the guidance of his uncle, Cardinal Cervini, he was introduced to the Latin and Greek classics and he commenced his study of the *artes* in 1560 at the Jesuit run Roman College. One of his professors was Frans of Toledo, who was associated with Molinism. After studying the *artes*, Bellarmine interrupted his curriculum in order to find his way in everyday life. From 1567 to 1568 he taught rhetoric at Mondovi, where he started to explore theology as an autodidact.

1. Bellarmine and Leuven⁵¹

In the middle of the 16th century, the Jesuits established a residence in Leuven that enjoyed the support of professors such as Ruard

⁴⁹ VANNESTE, *Nature et grâce dans la théologie de Baius*, p. 337: "Pour qu'il y ait vraie corruption il faut que la nature ait perdu son intégrité, la perte d'un surajouté, même très précieux, ne suffit pas. Une nature qui a conservé sa santé et sa bonté naturelles n'est pas une nature corrompue".

⁵⁰ G. GALEOTA, *Belarmino, Roberto*, in O'NEILL & DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.), *Diccionario histórico*, Vol. I, pp. 387-390; BAUTZ, *Bellarmin, Robert*, *Biographisch-Bibliographischen Kirchenlexikon*, Band I (1990), 473-474; see also the website Verlag Traugott Bautz (www.bautz.de), link *Biographisch-Bibliographischen Kirchenlexikon Online*, s.v. 'Bellarmin, Robert'.

⁵¹ Cf. L. CEYSSSENS, *Bellarmin et Louvain*, in LAMBERIGTS (ed.), *L'augustinisme*, pp. 179-205.

Tapper and Martinus Rythovius. Bellarmine was sent to Leuven in the spring of 1569 after completing his third year of theology in Padua⁵² and quickly settled into his new home where he was to give lessons to the Leuven Jesuits and complete his own studies. He also established something of a name for himself as a preacher. The young Jesuit received the tonsure, the minor ordinations and the sub-diaconate in a single ceremony on February 9th 1570 in Liege. Three weeks later he was ordained deacon and priest by the bishop of Ghent Cornelius Jansenius (1568-1576). Little can be said with certitude about the remainder of his theological formation in Leuven, beyond the fact that he followed classes at the *Collegium Trilinguae* with a view to sharpening his classical language skills.

When Bellarmine arrived in Leuven, Michael Baius had already been branded a theologian suspected of heterodox opinions. The papal bull *Ex omnibus afflictionibus* had been promulgated, and while the content thereof was still unknown, the turbulent situation at the faculty of theology would not have slipped his notice. While it is probable that Bellarmine already distanced himself in his own theology classes from the positions maintained by Baius, there are no indications of a direct controversy between the two⁵³. During his stay in Leuven, Bellarmine seems to have been particularly Augustinian in his thinking, not differing to any great degree from the theological positions of the Leuven School. In 1570-1571, he vehemently disagreed with theologians who maintained an 'auxilium sufficiens', which became a '*gratia efficax*' in conformity with the '*liberum arbitrium*'⁵⁴. This is entirely in line with Augustine, and even exhibits an element of kinship with Baianism. It would appear that Bellarmine immersed himself from the outset in the Augustinian atmosphere that dominated in Leuven. In 1573, he applied his vision for the first time to the positions that would later be considered Jesuit theology. Three years later, Bellarmine left Leuven once again after a planned stay of seven years. It was only after his departure from the city that he came to distance

⁵² On Bellarmine's earlier theological training and the development of his ideas, see a.o. M. BIERACK, *Initia Bellarminiana. Die Prädestinationslehre bei Robert Bellarmine SJ bis zu seiner Löwener Vorlesungen 1570-1576* (Historische Studien in Auftrag der Historischen Kommission der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, 15), Stuttgart, Steiner, 1989.

⁵³ See M. BIERACK, *Bellarmin und die 'Causa Baii'*, in LAMBERIGTS (ed.), *L'augustinisme*, p. 176: "Bellarmine kam nicht nach Löwen um gegen Baius zu streiten. Zumindest die Löwener hatten keinen Eindruck von einer polemischen Haltung des Jesuiten gegen Sie".

⁵⁴ BIERACK, *Bellarmin und die 'Causa Baii'*, pp. 171-173.

himself more openly from the deviant Augustinianism of Baius. This later rejection of Baianism will constitute the focus of the following paragraph.

2. Bellarmine's polemic with Baius

Bellarmino's rejection of Baianism did not hark back to the moderate vision of the *natura viciata*, according to which human nature is only corrupt to a certain degree (*aliquo modo*). In contrast, the later to be canonised Bellarmine provided a highly systematic analysis of the supernatural character of original justification. In his best known work *De controversiis christianae fidei* – which should be situated in the context of anti-Protestant polemic in line with the works of Baius – Bellarmine clearly states what he believes to be the Catholic position with regard to two heresies, namely Pelagianism and Lutheranism: “Catholic theologians are convinced that Adam was granted many supernatural gifts at creation. Through Adam's sin, however, all humanity experienced degradation. Nevertheless, while the supernatural gifts were lost, free will and the other natural gifts remained intact”⁵⁵. Bellarmine endeavours to escape both heterodox positions by stating unequivocally that original justification was a supernatural gift that was lost in the fall, leaving humanity in a state of degradation. Humanity's natural possibilities, however, remained unaffected. Bellarmine clearly adopts a completely different stance to that of Baius on the extent of humanity's corrupt state brought about by Adam's sin. Where Baius radicalised the Augustinian notion of the *natura viciata* in a twofold manner, Bellarmine deprives the latter of all content. The only corruption to be spoken of is the loss of supernatural gifts⁵⁶. The passage we have examined, therefore, is not only against Protestantism, but equally against Baius. This becomes evident at the end of the said chapter of *De controversiis christianae fidei* where Bellarmine quotes the papal bull of 1567 to the letter.

⁵⁵ BELLARMINUS, *Controversiae*: “Porro Catholici Doctores, qui multis supernaturalibus donis primum nostrum parentem initio creationis ornatum fuisse non dubitant, duos ullos errores (Pelagianism and Lutheranism) sine ulla difficultate declinant. Docent enim, per Adae peccatum totum hominem vere deteriorem esse factum; et tamen nec liberum arbitrium, neque alia naturalia dona, sed solum supernaturalia perdidisse”. Cf. VANNESTE, *Nature et grâce dans la théologie de Baius*, p. 342.

⁵⁶ According to Bellarmine: “supernaturalium bonorum privatio”. According to Baius, one should speak of a “naturalium bonorum privatio”, whereby human nature became completely and fundamentally corrupt.

3. Bellarmine and the *natura pura*

It will be apparent from what we have said so far that Bellarmine accepts the notion of a *natura pura*. As a matter of fact, he describes the state of original justification in terms of a surplus of grace. In his opinion, only this surplus was lost as a result of original sin. In rejecting Baius, he explicitly presupposes that God could have created humanity for a goal other than the beatific vision in order to demonstrate that grace is a 'supernatural' gift. Bellarmine thus speaks in this regard of a pure natural state, which enjoys only a hypothetical character and never existed in reality. For him there is only one genuine order and that is the supernatural order, since humanity was created in reality to be happy in and with God. As a consequence, humanity is to be characterised on the basis of its '*desiderium naturale ad visionem beatificam*'. Bellarmine thus remains in line with the Leuven augustinian School⁵⁷.

In his reflections on the said state of pure nature, however, Bellarmine points out that this can also be compared with the situation of non-believers: if one makes abstraction of sin itself (and thus of grace!), the human person in a state of fallen nature does not differ in any way from the human person in a state of pure nature. To use Bellarmine's image, they differ from one another as a naked person differs from a person who has been robbed of all his clothing⁵⁸. Bellarmine thus considers himself obliged to explore the significance of the life of a non-believer who has not received sanctifying grace and consequently does not share in salvation. Bellarmine is of the opinion that the life of a person should not be considered absurd because God has withheld the means necessary to achieve the beatific vision⁵⁹. As with Cajetan (and ultimately Thomas!), such ideas locate Bellarmine's image of the human person more in the philosophical world than the

⁵⁷ Cf. H. RONDET, *Le problème de la nature pure et la théologie du XVI^e siècle*, in *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 (1948) 481-521; p. 516. According to Rondet, Bellarmine was "trop augustinien encore pour se faire une haute idée d'une fin purement naturelle. Pour lui l'esprit se définit par son rapport avec Dieu possédé face à face".

⁵⁸ BELLARMINUS, *Controversiae*, c. V, 12: "non magis differt status hominis post lapsum, quam differat spoliatus a nudo; neque deterior est humana natura, si culpam originalem detrahas, neque magis ignorantia, et infirmitate laborat, quam esset, et laboret in puris naturalibus condita. Proinde corruptio naturae, non ex alicujus doni naturalis carentia, neque ex alicujus malae qualitatis accessu, sed ex sola doni supernaturalis ob Adae peccatum amissione profluxit".

⁵⁹ BELLARMINUS, *Controversiae. De gratia primi hominis*, c. 7: "Aequum omnino fuisse ut Deus homini ad talem finem tam sublimem ordinato, media necessaria non negaret; tamen nihil absurdum secuturum, si negasset". Cf. RONDET, *Problème*, p. 515 and DE LUBAC, *Augustinisme*, p. 191.

theological world. By incorporating this philosophical perspective in his doctrine of pure nature, he succeeds in solving the problem that arose as a result of Driedo's hypothesis of pure nature.

Bellarmino's theological anthropology is subject to considerable tension because it endeavours to combine several traditions. In certain places he describes the human person as he or she now is, a being with a wounded nature that is characterised by a natural desire to see God. In other places, however, he speaks of the state of pure nature, which he views from a philosophical perspective and more or less equates with the situation of non-believers. In his efforts to counter Lutheranism and Pelagianism, Bellarmine thus places himself in a 'Baianist' light, maintaining a position that ought to be described as 'Pelagianising'. Bellarmine's stance likewise accords with the work of Driedo, specifically where the latter differed so radically from his student Baius, namely in his formulation of the hypothesis of the state of pure nature.

Based on our analysis of the reception of Driedo by Baius and Bellarmine, it might be plausible to argue that the conflict between these two theologians⁶⁰ already had its roots *in nucleo* in Driedo's work. In reaction to Erasmus' (semi-)Pelagianism, Driedo developed a theory on the state of pure nature and thereby drew critical attention to the problem of the salvation or meaning of the life of those who find themselves outside the order of grace. His student Baius rejected the doctrine of pure nature, but was left with a dilemma: strict Augustinianism, in which human nature is seen as so corrupt that it becomes necessary to consider non-believers as condemned to hell, and a new form of Pelagianism in which humanity is considered capable of demanding salvation from God in order to preserve or restore the integrity of human nature. Bellarmine solves the problem by integrating Cajetan's philosophical understanding of the human person into Driedo's doctrine of pure nature. In so doing, however, he took an important step in the direction of the theology of the modern period, which recognises a dual finality for human existence.

Conclusions

An initial conclusion to be drawn from our research is that all *lovanienses* – certainly from the time of the students of Adrian of

⁶⁰ More information in this regard can be found, for example, in V. GROSSI, *Due interpreti di San Agostino nelle questioni del soprannaturale. Michele Baio, Roberto Bellarmino*, in *Augustinianum* 6 (1966) 203-225.

Utrecht (Latomus, Driedo, Tapper) – appear once again to share a single characteristic feature: a passion for Augustine and a correlative aversion to Pelagianism, with which each of them contended in his own manner. This Augustinianism lead Driedo to criticise scholastic theology with its Aristotelian roots. Spurred on by his teacher Adrian, Driedo revealed a preference for a more ‘modern’ positive theology, taking the Scriptures and Augustine as its point of departure and as its theological sources. While Driedo nevertheless made room for the scholastic tradition in his Augustinian theology, however, Baius presents us with a theology focused one-sidedly on Augustine. Rooted in his Leuven background, Baius’ major critic Robert Bellarmine was also extremely Augustinian, although he allowed for the input of scholasticism to an even greater degree than Driedo. This lead to a more balanced theology, which aligned itself seamlessly with Leuven’s ‘*doctrina augustiniano-scholastica*’, as it can be found in Johannes Lensaeus’ *Corpus doctrinae*, for example.

A second conclusion is that not all Leuven theologians shared a single interpretation of Augustine’s ideas. On the basis of his own interpretation, Driedo was able to accept the theory of a hypothetical *pura natura*. His student Baius, on the other hand, opposed Driedo on the very issue of the *natura pura*, which was nevertheless followed by Bellarmine. The latter associated the notion of a hypothetical state of pure nature in which God could have created humanity but did not, with the philosophical speculations of Cajetan – fully in line with Thomas Aquinas – on the possibility of the human person ‘in puris naturalibus’, considered from the perspective of his or her nature alone, detached from any Christian theological perspective. In so doing, the doctor of the church Robert Bellarmine adopted a position that ran radically counter to that of Michael Baius.

As a final conclusion we can observe that theory of a hypothetical pure nature did not originate in Bellarmine’s opposition to Baius, but rather in Driedo’s critique of Erasmus. This has far reaching consequences for the interpretation of the theory in question, which Pius XII defended – against de Lubac’s ideas? – in the encyclical *Humani generis* in 1950.

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