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THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY OF PARIS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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AS THEOLOGIANS know well, the term "magisterium" denotes the exercise of teaching authority in the Catholic Church.[1] The transfer of this teaching authority from those who had acquired knowledge to those who received power[2] was a long, gradual, and complicated process, the history of which has only partially been written. Some significant elements of this history have been overlooked, impairing a full appreciation of one of the most significant semantic shifts in Catholic ecclesiology.

One might well ascribe this mutation to the impetus of the Tridentine renewal and the "second Roman centralization" it fostered.[3] It would be simplistic, however, to assume that this desire by the hierarchy to control better the exposition of doctrine[4] was never challenged. There were serious resistances that reveal the complexity of the issue, as the case of the Faculty of Theology of Paris during the seventeenth century abundantly shows.

[1] F. A. Sullivan, *Magisterium* (New York: Paulist, 1983) 181–83.

[2] Y. Congar, "Pour une histoire sémantique du terme 'Magisterium,' *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 60 (1976) 85–98; "Bref historique des formes du 'Magistère' et de ses relations avec les docteurs," *RSPhTh* 60 (1976) 99–112 (also in *Droit ancien et structures ecclésiales* [London: Variorum Reprints, 1982]; English trans. in *Readings in Moral Theology* 3: *The Magisterium and Morality* [New York: Paulist, 1982] 314–31). In *Magisterium and Theologians: Historical Perspectives* (Chicago Studies 17 [1978]), see the remarks of Y. Congar, "Gregorian Reform to the Council of Trent," 219–21; of M. D. Place, "Trent to the First Vatican Council" 223–25; and of A. Dulles, "The Magisterium in History: A Theological Reflection" 271–72. See further G. Espiney-Burgard, "Le rôle des théologiens dans les Conciles de la fin du Moyen-Age (1378–1449)," *Les Quatre Fleuves* 12 (1980) 69–75; G. W. Olsen, "The Theologian and the Magisterium: The Ancient and Medieval Background of a Contemporary Controversy," *Communio* 1 (1980) 292–319. See also *Seminarium* 41 (1989).

[3] J. Cahill, *The Development of Theological Censures after the Council of Trent, 1563–1709* (Fribourg: Univ. Press, 1965); G. Le Bras and J. Gaudemet, eds., *Histoire du droit et des institutions de l'Église* 15: *Les Sources du Droit et la seconde centralisation romaine* (Paris: Cujas, 1975).

[4] It was not a matter of expressing new dogmas, since no one in this period envisioned the possibility of "development of doctrine."

THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

The evolution from a magisterium derived from science to one based upon authority was understandably in the background of many debates that took place during this period in the Great Hall of the Sorbonne, the meeting place of the doctors.[5] This "Faculty" was not a group of teachers associated with a school, in the modern meaning of the term, but a self-perpetuating corporation of scholars, itself a part of the larger body, the university.[6] A "democratic" institution, therefore, or, to be more precise, a consensual one, in the sense that, while giving a great importance to seniority, it elected its officers and took all decisions through a voting process. The general assemblies that statutorily took place the first working day of each month, the *prima mensis,* reflected well this conception of a corporate responsibility.

This medieval body, having more or less successfully survived the questioning of the Renaissance and the turmoils of the Reformation, took great pride in its "antiquity." Rightfully, it seems, since its statutes and organization went back to the establishment of Western education,[7] and its authority was sustained by the papacy.[8]

If at its origins the "power" of theologians was based upon their qualification, recognized through a lengthy process of education—apprenticeship is indeed a better image—that received them into the body of specialists, that power was not exercised in a vacuum, but within the complex organization of medieval society, under the twofold patronage of Church and State. To this company of clerics, the Church had granted a charter that recognized it to have a particular place in her service, and assured that it would remain under her control. The fact that state "protection" had also been granted meant that a certain degree of independence was possible as long as the members of the "studium" knew how to play one power against the other.

History shows that members of faculties of theology assumed an important place not only in situations where their qualification was needed, but also where a certain void existed that permitted the exer-

[5] The Sorbonne, the most famous college of the University of Paris, was a distinct institution from the Faculty of Theology, but since theological decisions were made "at the Sorbonne," it became common to use the term to define the entire Faculty. Modern historians prefer to avoid the term.

[6] L. W. B. Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

[7] H. Rashdall, *Universities in the Middle Ages,* ed. Emden and Powicke (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936) 1.269–497.

[8] The theology doctors of Paris had been granted by Pope Nicholas I the power "to read, teach, interpret Holy Scripture in Paris and everywhere on earth" (P. Féret, *La Faculté de théologie de Paris et ses docteurs les plus célèbres* [Paris: A. Picard, 1904] 29).

cise of their power. The participation of the universities in the conciliar movement is the major illustration of this.[9] What is important for later developments is that many of the divines who took such parts did not simply seize the occasion to intervene in the defense of Catholic truth, but often took great care to expose the ecclesiological meaning of their attitude.[10] These developments which must be understood in their proper context, both factual and theoretical, would later be appealed to in a totally different situation, serving as the basis for a redefinition of the power of the seventeenth-century Parisian masters.

THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE FACULTY

It was from this perspective, at the beginning of the modern era, that the Faculty of Theology of Paris could claim a particular type of religious authority, directly linked with the professional qualification of its members, but also supported by a long record of defense of orthodoxy.[11] It was both a magisterium of decision, entrusted with the safeguarding of sound doctrine, and a magisterium of education, assuring the continuation and propagation of these truths.

The decision-making authority had been constantly present in the history of the Faculty, which often acted as "Consultant of Christendom," giving its "doctrinal judgment" (*avis doctrinal*) on disputed matters.[12] In most cases the interventions were in the form of *Censures* where questionable opinions received technical qualifications that indicated the degree of error;[13] there were also positive interventions in the form of a *Declaration* exposing the correct expression of faith on an issue.[14] This twofold format was evidently in line with conciliar declarations, suggesting a type of association that would often be made.

[9] R. N. Swanson, *Universities, Academics and the Great Schism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 1979).

[10] G. Fitch Lytle, "Universities as Religious Authorities in the later Middle Ages and Reformation," in G. Fitch Lytle, ed., *Reformation and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1981) 69–97.

[11] J. K. Farge, "Self-Image and Authority of Paris Theologians in Early Reformation France," in M. U. Chrisman and O. Gründler, eds., *Social Groups and Religious Ideas in the Sixteenth Century* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan Univ., 1978) 68–75.

[12] J. K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500–1543* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985).

[13] The most famous was the *Determinatio* of 1521 against M. Luther (J. K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform* 125–30, 165–69), which was totally independent of papal condemnations (*ibid.* 228–229). See F. M. Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520–1551* (Geneva: Droz, 1979).

[14] Principally the Faculty's *Articles of Faith* (1542) (J. K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform* 208–13).

The educational element seems more classical, but it also encompassed notions that would eventually be used to strengthen the authority of theological schools. By controlling the education of its clerical elites the *alma mater* could rightfully claim a certain authority over its *suppôts*.[15] A graduate who became bishop or even pope, might well receive a new power of order and jurisdiction that directly dealt with the defense of orthodoxy, but in the area of the exposition of doctrine he remained a member of the body and as such was bound by his allegiance to his school.[16]

A third element should be added that explained the special claim to authority by the Faculty of Paris in the late Middle Ages: its close association with the State. "Consultant of Christendom," the Faculty was also the "Ordinary Council of the Gallican Church,"[17] a title which clearly reflected an evolution toward an identification with the National Church, protected by a set of customs that constituted its "Liberties." The crown was the defender of these rights, and the Parliament of Paris, the guardian of this independence. The title of "Permanent Council of the Gauls," bestowed by King Charles VI in 1414,[18] aptly defined this new perspective.

This conception however could not but be severely threatened by the religious divisions that nearly destroyed the Kingdom of France. By strongly fighting for the defense of Catholicism, the Faculty of Theology of Paris was faithful to its raison d'être, but it had to maintain a close association with the Papalists.[19] Did it not thereby surrender a long tradition of independence and, implicitly accepting the post-Tridentine vision, become reduced to being in the future a mere school of divinity?

This was of course what the reforming papacy endeavored to

[15] This concern appears clearly in the successive amendments to the Faculty Statutes of 1601, especially in the *Statuta Sacrae Facultatis Theologiae Parisiensis* (Paris: A. Lambin, 1715).

[16] [P. d'Ailly,] *P. de Alliaco Cardinalis Cameracensis, Apologia Sacrae Facultatis Theologiae Parisiensis circa damnationem Ioannis de Montesono* (presented to Pope Clement VII), in *Ioannis Gersonii Opera*, ed. L. Ellies Du Pin (Antwerp: Sumptibus Societatis, 1706) 1.709–22.

[17] L. Ellies Du Pin, *Histoire de l'Eglise et des auteurs ecclésiastiques du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: A. Pralart, 1703) 1431.

[18] E. Puyol, *Edmond Richer: Étude historique et critique sur la Rénovation du Gallicanisme au commencement du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Th. Olmer, 1876) 1.211; G. Fitch Lytle, "Universities as Religious Authorities," *Reform and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church* 81.

[19] At the height of the Religious Wars, the Faculty of Theology sided with the League and endorsed rebellion against the king (P. Féret, *La Faculté de théologie de Paris* 1.253–58).

achieve. By the end of the sixteenth century, the establishment of permanent nunciatures assured a form of control that had never been possible before.[20] The instructions given to the ministers of the Holy See encouraged them to establish close contacts with the doctors and to favor among them fidelity to Rome.[21] This was not too difficult since preferments and benefices still depended upon registration by the Roman Datary. Moreover the new authority given by the Tridentine legislators to the ordinaries meant that the status of theologians was much more restricted within the boundary of their discipline. Though not explicitly conciliar in their format,[22] the assemblies of the French Clergy also contributed to this reduction of influence. The place of theologians in this system was therefore well defined by Melchior Cano, who simply considered them as mere witnesses of the tradition of the Church.[23] Concerned about the defense of orthodoxy, many Parisian divines accepted this reduced state.[24] But a reaction was inevitable.

THE RICHERIST REACTION

Edmond Richer, who became syndic, moderator, of the Faculty of Theology of Paris in January 1608, had been appointed to reorganize and strengthen an institution that had suffered severely during the religious wars. From his perspective this goal could only be achieved by a reaffirmation of the conciliar tradition which he envisioned in a personal way in the context of the modern state. He therefore asked his colleagues to reestablish what he called the doctrine of the school of Paris, by creating a *Body of Doctrine,* a set of references that expressed it. To do so would have been not only to refresh an ecclesiology that had been weakened by the Protestant schism, but to claim the particular authority of the company of theologians. His proposal was defeated by a coalition of ideologically "ultramontane" doctors headed by the fa-

[20] P. Blet, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint-Siège des origines à l'aube du XIX^e siècle* (Rome: Archivio Vaticano, 1982).

[21] A. Leman, *Recueil des Instructions aux Nonces ordinaires en France* (Paris: H. Champion, 1919) 30–31, 121–22.

[22] They were regular meetings of delegates from the episcopate and lower clergy. See P. Blet, *Le Clergé de France et la Monarchie: Étude sur les Assemblées générales du Clergé de 1615 à 1666* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1959).

[23] M. Cano, *De locis theologicis* (Salamanca: M. Gastius, 1563) 12.408–11; C. Koser, *De Notis Theologicis: Historia, Notio, Usus* (Petropolis: Editôra Vozes, 1963) 87–93.

[24] B. Chédozeau, "La Faculté de théologie de Paris au XVII^e siècle: Un lieu privilégié des conflits entre gallicans et ultramontains (1600–1720)," *Mélanges de la Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne* 10 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1990) 39–102.

mous André Duval and of moderates who wanted episcopal approbation.[25]

Richer's goals were complex ones that would need to be considered separately.[26] Rather than an organized resistance, they might well have represented a last effort to oppose an inevitable evolution of the French Church according to the lines of the *Parti Dévot*.[27] Nevertheless, despite its relative weakness, the Gallican tradition still had its defenders within the Faculty of Theology,[28] who were able to maintain their influence during the entire century and eventually become very strong. The imposition of different issues dealing with the magisterium of the body of theologians seems to be the major cause of this success.

THE PLACE OF THEOLOGIANS

The first challenge that the Faculty would have to answer came from theologians who simply denied its authority. In 1631 the doctors had censured a book written by an English Jesuit on the matter of ecclesiastical hierarchy.[29] In a response the author did not hesitate to rebuff his censors:

> No university, much less the one in Paris, has the privilege of infallibility in matters of faith, and the only authority it has depends upon the science and prudence exercised by its censors in their judgments.[30]

The reaction came in a work that was soon considered to represent the official doctrine of the French Church. Under the pen name of "Petrus Aurelius" the soon to be famous Abbé de Saint-Cyran offered a rather moderate conception:

[25] E. Puyol, *Edmond Richer* 1.122.

[26] A reassessment is necessary that would take into account the specificity of the period, including the strength of "Romanism" and the importance of the Protestant presence. See M. Vénard, *Histoire de la France religieuse* (Paris: du Seuil, 1991) 525–28; J. M. Gres-Gayer, "Gallican Theologians and the Quest for Christian Unity" (forthcoming).

[27] A. Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).

[28] As showed by the censure of Santarelli in 1626; see V. Martin, *Le Gallicanisme politique et le Clergé de France* (Paris: A. Picard, 1929) 163–244.

[29] A. F. Allison, "Richard Smith's Gallican Backers and Jesuit Opponents: Some of the Issues raised by Kellison's *Treatise of the Hierarchy*, 1629," *Recusant History* (1987) 360–65.

[30] The *Spongia qua diluuntur calumniae nomine Facultatis Parisiensis impositae Apologiae S. Sedis Apostolicae circa Regimen Catholicorum Angliae* (St. Omer: Seutin, 1631), quoted by the response *In Octo causas quibus Jesuita quasi praeviis exceptionibus censurarum parisensium autoritatem eludere conatur*, in *Petri Aurelii Theologi Opera* (Paris: A. Vitré, 1646) 128.

The [judgments of a faculty of theology] must be considered as the declarations of a company of qualified [habiles] theologians that must prevail over the opinions of individuals. Their judging has an authority in the Church that follows immediately that of the bishops, since they have received after them the power to teach solemnly in the Church and they have always enjoyed and still now enjoy this right.[31]

This passage concisely indicates the new context in which the reflection on the role of theologians was to develop. First, the authority of the papacy, with the unresolved but very present question of infallibility.[32] Second, the power of bishops and their relationship with the theologians. Speaking from an ultramontane perspective "Loemelius," a Jesuit, implicitly indicated a third element that Aurelius did not fail to notice and answer: the qualification of religious orders to perform this office of science and prudence. The quarrel between the university and religious orders belonged to ancient history, but the establishment in France of the Society of Jesus had rekindled it.[33] The recent censure of the author Santarelli had also contributed to throw suspicion on the order members of the Faculty, always inclined to receive direction from their Roman superiors.[34] Aurelius alluded to these elements in reminding his opponents that, though Cajetan had been censured by Parisian theologians, he always spoke with respect for the institution, and that Ignatius of Loyola had not wanted any response to be made against the conclusion pronounced by the Faculty of Paris against his Society "because of the respect he had for this company."[35]

Without clearly articulating it, Saint-Cyran suggested a danger that was confusedly perceived by many of his readers: the fact that with the renewed stress on the primacy of the pope and the aura given to it by the still undefined conception of infallibility, theological pronouncements might well be reserved to Rome, with the help of a few specialists. As a matter of fact this situation already existed with the stabilization of two "congregations," the Sacred Inquisition and the Index. Only the most "Roman" among French Catholics accepted the deci-

[31] P. Aurelius, *In Octo Causas* 130; J. Orcibal, *Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran et son temps* (Paris-Louvain: J. Duculot, 1947) 343–44; A. G. Martimort, *Le gallicanisme de Bossuet* (Paris: Cerf, 1953) 78–79; A. F. Allison, "Richard Smith," 373–78.

[32] U. Horst, *Unfehlbarkeit und Geschichte* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1982).

[33] Y. Congar, "Aspects ecclésiologiques de la querelle entre Mendiants et Séculiers dans la seconde moitié du XIII[e] siècle et le début du XIV[e]," *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-Age* 36 (1961) 35–151; H. Fouqueray, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus en France, des origines à sa suppression* (Paris: Les Études, 1925) 4.105–39.

[34] V. Martin, *Le gallicanisme politique* 211–38.

[35] P. Aurelius, *In Octo Causas* 122–23.

sions of these "tribunals," which quite evidently would limit, if not annihilate, the role of theological bodies such as the Faculty of Paris.[36] It was a steadfast attitude of the French monarchy to refuse promulgation of the decisions of these Roman congregations in the kingdom.

Unfortunately for Saint-Cyran and his friends, the very danger they envisioned soon materialized, and by their own doing, since it was through their insistence on the disputes about salvation and grace that the issue of "Jansenism" was deferred to the papacy.

In order to control the controversies *De Auxiliis,* hotly debated between Catholic schools of thought, the Holy See had proclaimed a "liberty of doctrine" and forbidden any further discussion,[37] a wise albeit unrealistic decision that was hardly observed, as the publication of Cornelius Jansenius's *Augustinus* (1640) made evident.[38] In its condemnation of the work, the bull *In eminenti* (1643) clearly renewed the general defense and expressed Rome's intention to keep in line such theological irresponsibility and lack of respect for its authority. This theme of "power over theology" was to underlie the long debate that followed.[39] For the doctors of Paris the Roman intervention created a real tension between their obedience to the Holy See and their self-perception; with the escalation of the disputes, it forced a continuing reflection on their own status. After days of discussions, the Faculty refused to register *In eminenti,* that is, to acknowledge it as a part of their official doctrine. This decision should be interpreted as the desire of the majority to keep their independence as private scholars and not to be bound on this "open matter" by an important but, in their eyes, not decisive utterance of the pope.[40]

The result of this successful exercise of "academic independence" was an increased controversy on these matters within the Faculty itself, which culminated in the denunciation of seven propositions at the *prima mensis* of July 1649. The history of these propositions, the first five of which would eventually form the core of the heresy called "Jansenism," is a complicated one.[41] From the perspective of the magisterium of the faculty two points are worth noticing: first, that the

[36] B. Chédozeau, *La Bible et la Liturgie en français* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).

[37] Paul V in 1611 and Urban VIII in 1625; see H. Rondet, *The Grace of Christ: History of the Theology of Grace* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1967).

[38] J. Orcibal, *Cornelius Jansenius* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1991) 47–49.

[39] B. Neveu, "Juge suprême et Docteur infaillible: La Pontificat romain de la bulle *In Eminenti* (1643) à la bulle *Auctorem Fidei* (1794)," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen-Age, Temps modernes* 93 (1981) 215–75.

[40] A de Meyer, *Les premières controverses jansénistes en France (1640–1649)* (Louvain: Van Linthout, 1919) 137.

[41] A. Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia, 1977).

propositions were not invented by Dr. Nicolas Cornet, the syndic who denounced them, but were present in theses submitted by students for their examinations; and second, that, though their association with Augustinian doctrine is evident, they were not directly excerpted from Jansenius's condemned *Augustinus*.[42] Therefore the conflict concerning the propositions was an authentic theological dispute that should have been resolved by the body in which it arose. But the doctors were unable to agree upon a procedure that would secure impartiality.[43] The Faculty having lost a major opportunity to assert its theological power, the first five propositions were submitted to Rome by an important number of French bishops. All the doctors could do was to send observers, who followed attentively the process of condemnation that produced the Constitution *Cum occasione*.[44] Their subsequent registration of the document was a mere formality controlled by the King who had sent the bishop of Rennes to ensure it.[45]

To sum up: whatever their theological inclinations, the authority of the doctors did not fare very well during the condemnation of the "Five Propositions." Not only had they shown their inability to resolve a difficult question by themselves, but the Roman decision established very clearly that the papacy was well in charge of such matters. That they had directly or indirectly witnessed this process of decision is also of importance, as they were more acquainted with curial procedures, totally in the hands of members of the regular clergy, and became aware of the assumption sustaining such an intervention: the special assistance promised by Christ to His vicar on earth.[46] This perception might help to explain the heat that accompanied a new dispute raised by the fact that *Cum occasione* remained unclear on one secondary question: the link between *Augustinus* and the condemned Five Propositions.

The name of another doctor stands out on this issue, Antoine Ar-

[42] L. Ceyssens, "L'authenticité des cinq propositions condamnées de Jansenius," *Antonianum* 55 (1980) 368–405; J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Le Jansénisme en Sorbonne (1643–1656)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1992).

[43] Suggested by one of them, Dr. Coppin, in December 1649, *Journal de M. de Saint-Amour* (N.p., 1652) 2.2–4.

[44] The Anti-Jansenists were of course more able to establish contacts with members of the special congregation in charge of the process; see L. Ceyssens, "Les cinq propositions de Jansenius à Rome," *Jansenistica Minora* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1973) 11.464.

[45] Henri de la Mothe-Houdancourt, First Almoner of Queen Maria-Theresa, made it clear to the doctors that "they would be lost, resourceless, if they dared to . . . weaken the respect due to the Sovereign Pontiff in his Constitution" (*Mémoires de Godefroy Hermant*, ed. A. Gazier [Paris: Plon, 1905] 2.185–86).

[46] This feeling of "inspiration" often expressed by Alexander VII on this occasion, is important to understand subsequent development of the crisis; see L. Ceyssens, "Correspondance romaine de Jérôme Lagault," *Jansenistica Minora* 11.289 and 357.

nauld, whose activity had a great influence upon the self-understanding by the Faculty of Paris of its authority and rights.

THE RIGHT TO DISSENT

Arnauld was considered one of the greatest theologians of his time. His writings are indeed typical of the strengths and weaknesses of the French school of theology: erudite, argumentative, and quite obstinate, if not narrow-minded. He rightly rejected an interpretation of Alexander's Constitution that assimilated Augustine's doctrine of grace with the condemned propositions, but based his "right to dissent" on an interpretation that seemed to oppose his own theological analysis against the Pope's decision and the French bishops' acceptance or reception of it. It is this aspect of Arnauld's argumentation, amply developed during the lengthy discussion of his case by the Faculty, that needs to be considered.

Having exposed his view in two rather aggressive pamphlets, the doctor was denounced to the Faculty and eventually condemned by his peers on two grounds: one of "temerity" concerning the "fact of Jansenius," that is the presence of the five propositions in *Augustinus;* the other of "heresy," for an expression that was indeed dubious.[47]

Far from being a futile exercise, the discussion of the temerity issue by 153 doctors exposed the tensions that existed not only within the body but also the theologians' personal positions on the issue.

I assent to *Cum occasione,* said Arnauld in substance, but this assent can only be external, since, as a theologian, I know: (a) that the propositions have an orthodox (Augustinian) sense; (b) that they cannot be found in *Augustinus.* In other words, when it comes to theology, the rules are the same for everyone: Scripture, the Fathers, correct methodology. As a Catholic, I am not going to deny explicitly the authority of the Roman Pontiff, but as a specialist I am entitled to exert my judgment and respectfully dissent.

The discussion at the Sorbonne showed how divisive this approach was, as many who were not particularly empathetic with their Port-Royal colleague totally shared his argument and developed it in ways that went much further.[48]

Arnauld's condemnation and his expulsion from the Faculty were

[47] A. Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth Century France* 72–74.

[48] The best contemporary treatment of this issue of authority is by J. de Launoy, *Joannis Launoii Constantiensis, Parisiensis Theologi, Notationes in Censuram duarum Antonii Arnaldi, quarum una facti, altera juris appellatur,* in *Opera omnia,* ed. F. Granet (Cologne: Fabri, Barillot & Bousquet 1732) 4.1.256–85. See also J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Le Jansénisme en Sorbonne* (forthcoming).

chiefly the result of the State's desire to silence him; but the way it was achieved—by his own *alma mater*—was for the Faculty a ritual act of self-mutilation that left deep scars. More than 100 doctors and graduates (about one fifth of the body) followed him in his dissent. They remained active nevertheless as individuals and contributed to bringing new perspectives to the company by appealing to its pastoral responsibilities.

A BODY OF "PASTORAL THEOLOGIANS"

The body that participated in the Jansenist controversy in the years 1649–1655 was naturally in direct continuity with those who constituted the Faculty of Theology of Paris in the early part of the century. The one major difference was in its size; whereas the number of graduates of the Faculty oscillated between 21 and 41 every other year for the period 1578–1638, it varied between 41 and 66 for the period 1640–1658.[49] This growth reflected an influx of clerics regular (which was soon stemmed) and also an increment of members of the secular clergy, probably consistent with the success of the Catholic renewal. This sociological observation might explain the shift described here.

The corporation of theologians which was involved in the Faculty's decision of that period, and particularly Arnauld's case, certainly represented the elite of the French clergy. More and more bishops came from its ranks, as of course did professors in the different schools associated with the University; many Parisian curés were also among them, the rest exercised their ministry in a parish, a religious community, or a noble family. In other words, the context in which these professional theologians claimed to exercise their authority had subtly but enormously changed. They had been formed not simply to study; as priests,[50] they were expected to acquire a great sense of seriousness, of responsibility; they were to aspire to personal holiness, and were to sustain and strengthen the faith of the people committed to their care. They were "pastoral theologians"—not, of course in our current sense of that term, but the term and the image may help us to appreciate their dedication, their conviction, and also their limitation. The Faculty still remained a body of specialists, whose theological training was largely sound and coherent, and who enjoyed endless debates on

[49] Data based on the *Ordo Licentiatorum* (Bib. Nat. Paris, ms. lat. 15440) See L. W. B. Brockliss, "Patterns of Attendance at the University of Paris, 1400–1800," in D. Julia and J. Rével, eds., *Histoire sociale des populations étudiantes* (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1990) 2.494–95.

[50] Since 1616, one had to be ordained a priest in order to graduate (*Collectio judiciorum* 2.99).

abstract matters, but it also developed as a "company" of priests who deeply adhered to the spirituality in which they had been formed.

Theology was for them the science of salvation, and they perceived themselves as doubly qualified for its control: as doctors and as pastors. This meant, of course, that, when doctrinal issues would again be raised, the Faculty would be more interested than ever to take part in the discussion of them and to assert its competence.

Paradoxically this "pastoral" concern seems at first to have overshadowed the particular role of the Faculty; the anti-laxist campaign,[51] that followed in the wake of Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales,* was launched not by the doctors of Paris, but by the "companies" of curés.[52] The Parisian pastors, many of them graduates of the Faculty, demanded the condemnation of a defense of casuistry published in 1657.[53] Significantly they went first to the vicars general of the diocese, then to the Parliament, and finally to the General Assembly of the French Clergy which was in session. Their request to the Faculty of Theology was made on orders from the Chancellor of the Kingdom.[54] As it had been commanded, the Faculty duly censured the *Apologie,* thus endorsing a pastoral perspective shared by many, while undoubtedly resenting a persistent lack of independence and freedom.

FREEDOM OF THEOLOGIANS

This situation was hardly unusual, as in most instances the interventions of the Faculty of Theology of Paris were a response to the "request" of public authorities acting in the name of the crown, either the administrative or judicial branch. This corresponded to the assumption that the company of doctors was especially in charge of doctrine, under the protection of the Most Christian King. Such protection could go rather far, as the case of Arnauld's censure showed. On that occasion the Chancellor of France—the second-in-command in the kingdom—presided over the debates at the Sorbonne, often intervening, in the name of the monarch. This attitude, consistent with the strengthening of state administration under Louis XIV, might explain

[51] As R. Briggs aptly judges, from a modern perspective, "laxist theology" was more "pastoral," since it tried to be more practical (*Communities of Belief: Cultural and Social Tensions in Early Modern France* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1989] 350–51).

[52] I. de Récalde, ed., *Ecrits de Curés de Paris contre la politique des jésuites (1658–1659), avec une étude sur la querelle du laxisme* (Paris: Editions et Librairie, 1921); R. M. Golden, *The Godly Rebellion: Parisian Curés and the Religious Fronde, 1652–1662* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina 1981) 85–87.

[53] [G. Pirot, S.J.,] *Apologie pour les casuistes* (Cologne: P. de la Vallée, 1658).

[54] I. Récalde, ed. *Septième Ecrit des curés de Paris* 198–210.

why, among other factors,[55] "Roman" ecclesiology became more visible in the Faculty. After all, between two masters, the more distant one is often to be preferred. Actually many doctors wanted neither, as the conflicts about "Gallicanism" clearly demonstrate.

In 1663 the Parliament of Paris requested that the Faculty censure a student who had defended papal infallibility in one of his theses. The issue had little to do with the Faculty but much to do with the current difficult relations between France and the Holy See.[56] Gallican principles which had been steadfastly maintained by the body of jurists and more pragmatically by the public administration, suddenly became the only French tradition. Denis Talon, the *Avocat Général,* who expressed these ideas in an interview he had with a commission appointed by the Faculty to deal with these matters, certainly made a mistake when he stated that the Parliament, the "Protector of the Faculty, had always supported it in maintaining sure doctrine."[57] The theologians did not appreciate this type of support and made clear to the jurists that they were not qualified to judge doctrinal matters.[58] Eventually, of course, they had to yield to pressure, which grew heavier with the addition of another similar case.[59] A settlement had to be negotiated: it took the form of a *Declaration* in six articles in which the Faculty expressed in cautious terms its doctrine on ecclesiastical power.[60] The negative wording of the articles dealing with papal authority indicated the unwillingness of the theologians to commit themselves to more than what they were forced to define[61]—a matter of conviction, certainly, for many, but for most a question of pride.

[55] Including the expulsion of the graduates who refused to subscribe to Arnauld's censure, most of whom were more inclined to Gallican perspectives.

[56] P. Sonnino *Louis XIV's View of the Papacy (1661–1667)* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1966). Technically any thesis approved by the Faculty became a part of its official doctrine. This matter, often overlooked, also explains the furor over the seven propositions denounced by Cornet in 1649, since through this piecemeal process the entire "tradition" of the Faculty could be changed.

[57] Bibl. Nat. ms. fr. 17647, ff. 7r-39; A. Hamscher, *The Parlement of Paris after the Fronde, 1653–1673* (Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1973) 147–48, 234.

[58] Bibl. Nat. ms. fr. 17647, ff. 81r.-83v. *Mémoires du P. Rapin,* ed. L. Aubineau (Paris: E. Vitte, 1865) 3.201.

[59] The "Bernardin [Cistercian] thesis"; see L. André, *Michel Le Tellier et Louvois* (Paris: A. Colin, 1943) 115–32.

[60] *Collectio Judiciorum* 3.90–91. The first three articles deal with the Independence of the Crown, the fourth with "Gallican Liberties," the last two with the power of the Pope (A. G. Martimort, *Le gallicanisme de Bossuet* 323–36).

[61] Art. V: It is not the doctrine of the Faculty that the Pope is above the Ecumenical Council; Art. VI: It is not the doctrine nor a dogma of the Faculty that the Pope is infallible without the antecedent consent of the Church.

Despite their divergences on the issues, the doctors shared their syndic's opinion that it was better to wait for the end of these "bad times" and hope for freedom to be given back to the Faculty.[62] The Faculty did not take any satisfaction in the king's order to use its declaration as an official expression of doctrine and actually did not enforce it with its students.

It would be incorrect, though, to conclude from this behavior that the majority of doctors were totally opposed to the ecclesiology expressed in the six articles published under their names.[63] Above all, they resented the Parliament's intrusion, but they also had some illusions as to papal support of their cause. These were soon to dissipate as the doctors incurred a stern Roman rebuke for one of the few decisions they made with full liberty.

THE LIMITS OF THEOLOGIANS

For many doctors the tension between Faculty and Parliament had one positive result: it convinced the magistrates of the need to enforce the old statutes limiting the participation of clerks regular in the assemblies.[64] The theologians also understood that the best way to maintain their freedom was to defend it themselves by taking necessary initiatives. When they became aware of a book in French by one of their number—a Carmelite who had taken the pen name of "Jacques Vernant"—written on the sensitive theme of ecclesiastical power, they soon decided to defuse the time bomb by taking the matter into their own hands.

The censure they produced is an impressive document, reflecting a certain moderation, that goes beyond the classic opposition between "Gallicans" and "Romans." This is one of the few instances in which the Faculty appeared free from external pressure, though of course they knew that they had to take into account the doctrine published under their names a year before. It is significant that they went much beyond these articles in one particular instance: the rights and privi-

[62] Martin Grandin, syndic, to the Premier Président Lamoignon (April 14 1663), in R. Allier, *La Cabale des Dévots* (Paris: A. Colin, 1902) 373.

[63] This mistake was made by the nineteenth-century "Neo-ultramontanes" (D. Bouix, *La vérité sur la Faculté de théologie de Paris de 1663 à 1682 d'après des documents inédits* [Arras: Rousseau Leroy, 1864]), but not by nuncio P. Bargellini (A. Cauchie, *Le Gallicanisme en Sorbonne d'après la correspondance de Bargellini, nonce en France, 1668–1671* [Louvain: 1903]). See J. Gres-Gayer, " 'Gallicans' et 'Romains' en Sorbonne, d'après la correspondance du Nonce P. Bargellini," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (forthcoming).

[64] September 23, 1663 (*Mémoires de G. Hermant* 6.503).

leges of the curés.[65] The climate in which the document was produced also reflected a rare atmosphere of intelligent discussion and desire to reach a consensus, certainly fostering a renewed sense of identity and authority.[66] In the same vein, the issue of laxist morality was taken up again and dealt with in an even more consensual spirit.[67]

On that occasion, the doctors might have gone one step too far. In 1677 one of the most distinguished members of the Faculty, Jean de Launoy, published (under a pseudonym) a pamphlet accusing all the professors of theology of being "ultramontanes." One of them, he wrote, refused to approve a book for publication, with this explanation: "What will Monsignor the Nuncio say?"[68] This indicates how strong the influence of the papal representative over the Faculty might have been perceived to be.[69] But in 1663–1664, there was no nuncio in Paris[70] to warn the doctors of the limits they could not surpass. As soon as he arrived in the capital in August 1664, the new Vatican diplomat, Carlo Roberti, was informed of the fact that in addition to that of Vernant, the Faculty was to include in the censure of Guimenius a condemnation of papal infallibility. Probably to save time, Roberti bypassed the usual channels and directly asked the king to intervene, but to no avail.[71] Rome therefore decided to punish the doctors, first individually by refusing to grant them any bull of favor,[72] then as a body by condemning their censures and declaring them null and void.

The way in which this decision was announced left the doctors no illusions as to their authority: "their Faculty, *Parens scientiarum,* was

[65] Art. XIII and XIV of Vernant Censure (*Collectio judiciorum* 3.100–106).

[66] The more extremist doctors chose not to participate; consequently the group that was involved was more at ease to reach a consensus and to produce a text acceptable by most; see J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Le Gallicanisme en Sorbonne* (forthcoming).

[67] On the censure of Amadeus Guimenius, see P. Féret, *La Faculté de théologie de Paris* 3.365–71; *Collectio judiciorum* 3.1.107–14. In that instance the decision was unanimous.

[68] [J. de Launoy,] *Factum pour les supérieurs et boursiers théologiens des collèges de l'Université de Paris, contre les docteurs, professeurs en théologie des collèges de Navarre et de Sorbonne,* in *Opera omnia* 4.2.115.

[69] In 1663, O. Talon, the *avocat général,* was complaining about the "too frequent intercourse [commerce] the doctors had with the nuncio, and requested that they would be forbidden to visit him without a written royal authorization under pain of death" (*Mémoires de G. Hermant* 6.69).

[70] This was due to the tension existing between France and the Holy See; see Ch. Gérin, *Louis XIV et le Saint-Siège* (Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1894) 1.419–83.

[71] P. Sonnino, *Louis XIV's View of the Papacy* 70.

[72] Roberti had sent a list (communicated by one of the doctors) of the "bad doctors." This is why J. B. Bossuet could not take possession of his benefice as Dean of the Cathedral of Metz (A. G. Martimort, *Le gallicanisme de Bossuet* 251–52).

reduced in rank and left to the mercy of a handful of Roman qualificators."[73] "When We heard of the faculty censures," wrote Alexander VII,

> We asked for the advice of the most learned masters and professors in sacred theology, of the qualificators of the Sacred Congregations of the Apostolic See, and after consulting with our venerable brothers, the Cardinals of the Roman Church, General Inquisitors in all Christendom, We condemn by our apostolic power these censures. . . .[74]

The Faculty could naturally count upon the support of the parliament;[75] they received a rather florid recognition from the substitute of the procurator general as well as yet another lesson in Gallican theology.[76] But the shock was a harsh one: What could the doctors do when the very source of their authority was disavowing them? To challenge it would have been suicidal. A negotiation was attempted: the Pope would "explain the true meaning of his bull" and the Faculty would give "an explanation of its censures."[77] But Rome could under no circumstances accept a deal that seemed to place the Faculty on equal ground with the Supreme Magisterium. The condemnation therefore was not enforced, and the Faculty was left apparently untouched. But the message had been strongly expressed and unequivocally received: for the Tridentine Church the Faculty of Theology of Paris was a mere association of divines; when they erred, they were to be reprimanded by their superior, the Holy See.

In their responses, the doctors might well defend their right to pass a doctrinal judgment and explain that they did not claim any jurisdic-

[73] This is a quotation from B. Neveu about a later papal pronouncement, *Cum nuper* (1703) ("Histoire des relations diplomatiques," *Annuaire de la IV^e section de l'École pratique des Hautes Études, 1975–1976* [Paris/Genève: Droz, 1976] 781–82).

[74] From the Bull *Cum ad aures nostras,* in J. Boileau, *Recueil de diverses pièces concernant les censures de la Faculté de théologie de Paris* (Münster: B. Raesfeld, 1666) 92–96.

[75] The Court, however, appeared to be divided on the response to be given to this rebuke (Ch. Jourdain, *Histoire de l'Université de Paris au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècle* [Paris: Hachette, 1862] 1.222).

[76] "You owe to the Gallican Church the defense of its Liberties. She regards your company as the seminary of its bishops, the school where its prelates learn the important duties and the true extent of the power attached to their character. And last she considers you as a sort of standing council (concile perpétuellement assemblé), *concilium fidei,* according to King Charles VI, that, with untiring vigilance is always capable of resisting any dangerous novelty" (L. Ellies Du Pin, *Histoire ecclésiastique du XVII^e siècle* 1.337).

[77] Ch. Gérin, *Louis XIV et le Saint-Siège* 2.24–25; P. Sonnino, *Louis XIV's View of the Papacy* 71–72.

tion,[78] but they had been made to feel the extreme limits of their power.

The Faculty could not expect very much support from the State either, as they were soon to realize. In March of 1682 a royal edict was promulgated ordering the teaching of the *Declaration of the French Clergy,* comprising four articles on political and ecclesiastical sovereignties.[79] These "Gallican Articles" were in direct continuity with the six of 1663, but they had been approved by another body, and once again the Faculty was reduced to a secondary status. As the doctors saw clearly, the edict actually made the procurator general "judge of doctrine," and submitted their company to the "tyranny" of the Archbishop of Paris.[80] The majority of them refused to register it.

This strong resistance nearly brought on a radical transformation of the Faculty into a mere advisory council.[81] Eventually, of course, the doctors gave up, after being forbidden by parliament to hold their usual meetings. Upon their registration of the Articles, they received authorization to meet again "in order to be able to offer [when requested] their doctrinal advice." A year later the Faculty duly censured at the parliament's request excerpts from a pastoral letter by the Archbishop of Esztergom that had been deemed offensive to Gallican principles.[82]

A QUIET REVOLUTION

Up to that point the history of the Faculty of Theology of Paris during the seventeenth century might be entitled "The Agony of a Splendid Illusion." Living upon the memories of her glorified past, the Faculty had pretended that times had not changed, but despite the seriousness and qualification of its members and their desire to sustain their power, each controversy, each confrontation only brought forth the evidence of their weaknesses. Yet ten years later, the same body seemed to be in control again, giving proof after proof of its combat-

[78] J. Boileau, *Considérations respectueuses sur la bulle,* in *Recueil de diverses pièces* 129.

[79] J. T. Loyson, *L'assemblée du Clergé de France de 1682, d'après des documents dont un grand nombre inconnus jusqu'à ce jour* (Paris: Didier, 1871) 381; P. Blet, *Les Assemblées du Clergé et Louis XIV, de 1670 à 1693* (Rome: Gregorian Univ., 1972) 312–62.

[80] *Mémoires de l'abbé Legendre,* ed. M. Roux (Paris: Charpentier, 1865) 52–53; *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en Sorbonne au sujet de l'enregistrement de l'Édit du Roi sur la Déclaration de M.M. du Clergé de France concernant la puissance ecclésiastique,* Bibl. Arsenal, Paris, mss. 2291, 2758–2760.

[81] J. T. Loyson, *L'assemblée du Clergé* 425–34.

[82] V. Davin, *Quarante-cinq assemblées de la Sorbonne pour la censure du primat et des prélats de Hongrie, relevées dans le ms. 7161 de la bibliothèque Vaticane* (Paris: A. Savaete, 1903).

iveness and its desire to take theological matters into its own hands. The best way of claiming a power being to exert it, we see the doctors taking up the hottest issues of the time; we notice also that they took great care to explain the theological basis of their intervention. This "quiet revolution" would inevitably set off a major confrontation. It happened with the crisis of the Constitution *Unigenitus* (1713). On that occasion the issue of the magisterium of the Faculty was at last openly argued. The doctors did not win their case, but at least what it was all about finally became clear to all.

The first significant decision taken by the Faculty to assert itself was the establishment in 1696 of a commission in charge of the approval of books to be printed. This ancient privilege of the Faculty had been undermined by the establishment of a "preliminary censure" under state control.[83] The new decision manifested a desire to regain lost ground.[84] It was a mild challenge to the State that went undisturbed.

Rome was also quietly but repeatedly defied. Also in 1696, the Faculty censured the works of Maria d'Agreda, which had been condemned by the Roman Inquisition in 1681,[85] a not very subtle way to deny the universal value of that earlier decision. In 1698 a procedure was engaged to collect signatures against twelve propositions extracted from Archbishop Fénelon's *Maximes des saints*,[86] a book already under scrutiny at the Holy Office.[87] This action, possibly the first step toward a full censure, was not exactly well received in the Eternal City.[88]

The same procedure was followed in 1700 regarding an even more sensitive topic, what is commonly but inappropriately called the "Chi-

[83] J. Lebrun, "Censure préventive et littérature religieuse en France au début du XVIII[e] siècle," *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* (1975) 201–25.

[84] P. Féret, *La Faculté de théologie de Paris* 3.36.495–97.

[85] J. Le Brun, *La Spiritualité de Bossuet* (Paris: Klincksieck: 1972) 628–42.

[86] *Animadversio plurium doctorum e Facultate theologiae Parisiensis in diversis propositionibus excerptis e libro cui titulus: Explication des Maximes des Saints etc.*, in F. Lachat, ed., *Correspondance de Bossuet* (Paris: L. Vives, 1865) 30.61–71.

[87] J. Orcibal, "Le Procès des *Maximes des Saints* devant le Saint-Office," *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pieta* 5.410–501; *Mémoire sur la consultation signée par des docteurs de Paris contre le livre de M. l'archevêque de Cambrai*, Paris, 1699, in F. Fénelon, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gaume, 1851) 9.651.

[88] Letter of the Abbé Chanterac to Abbé de Maulevrier (November 25 1698), in J. Orcibal ed., *Correspondance de Fénelon* (Geneva: Droz, 1987) 8.294: "One would say that Rome is offended [by the doctors' initiative] and that they would not like to be given a lesson so publicly or seem to follow by necessity the opinion of a few doctors. This might in the future be perceived as the first step to take in reaching such decisions. Cf. also Chanterac to Fénelon, November 16, 1698 (*ibid.* 271).

nese Rites controversy," which was also pending at the Vatican.[89] A first consultation simply collected the doctors' (negative) judgments over the very questions under study at the Holy Office since 1697.[90] In that case however the Faculty went further and, after lengthy debates, condemned a series of propositions excerpted from different books on this subject.[91]

That this later initiative was perceived as a renewed affirmation of the Faculty's magisterium appears evident in the polemics that followed it,[92] and more subtly in the "message" that Clement XI sent to the Faculty through a French visitor:

> That he never considered the censure of the latest propositions more than a doctrinal opinion (*avis doctrinal*), similar to those given by the Faculty on many important occasions, upon request of his predecessors. That the Faculty was too enlightened not to know that decisions in matters of faith do not belong to faculties [of theology].[93]

The publication, a year later, of a *Case of Conscience* resolved by members of the Faculty, must have signaled to Clement that subtlety was not sufficient.[94] The case was soon condemned for renewing the Jansenist controversy, but both the pope and the French bishops, including those considered usual supporters of the Faculty, made very clear that decisions of faith were no longer within the doctors' competence.[95]

With the Constitution *Vineam domini* (1705) that condemned the

[89] L. Caperan, *Le problème du salut des infidèles: Essai historique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1912); V. Pinot, *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France (1640–1740)* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1932) 92–115.

[90] *Duo responsa centum doctorum Sacrae Facultatis Theologiae Parisiensis ad Sinarum quaesita in Sacra Congregatione S. Officii propenenda* (n.p. 1700).

[91] J. Davy, "La condamnation en Sorbonne des 'Nouveaux Mémoires sur la Chine' du P. Lecomte," *Recherches de Science religieuse* 37 (1950) 366–97.

[92] L. Ellies Du Pin, *Défense de la censure de la Faculté de théologie de Paris contre les propositions des livres intitulés Nouveaux Mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine etc.* (Paris: A. Pralard, 1701) 519–73.

[93] P. F. Burger, "L'abbé Renaudot en Italie," *Dix-huitième siècle* 22 (1990) 251.

[94] P. Blet, *Le Clergé de France, Louis XIV et le Saint-Siège de 1695 à 1715* (Rome: Archivio Vaticano, 1989) 167–245. The resolution of cases of conscience was a traditional expression of the Faculty's authority; see F. Pontas, *Dictionnaire des Cas de conscience* (Paris: Le Mercier, 1715–1716).

[95] Brief *Cum nuper* (Feb 12, 1703). Cf. Archbishop Noailles' *Instruction Pastorale* (February 22 1704): "Despite the trust we put in such capable men [the doctors] we cannot relinquish to them the decision of important and difficult matters, which we must look upon as the essential function of episcopacy" (*Recueil des Mandements, Ordonnances, Instructions et Lettres pastorales* [Paris: J. B. Delespine, 1718] 370).

Case, the Faculty entered once again into the troubled waters of Jansenism. The doctors had no choice but to register the papal document, as well as the one that soon followed censuring Quesnel's *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament,* a book approved by faculty censors. The issues about the Constitution *Unigenitus* (1713) were mostly doctrinal, and were analyzed at length by an assembly of French bishops; as for the theologians, they were simply ordered to submit.[96] In a somewhat pitiful move, some even sought to avoid registration by pleading that it was unnecessary since the Faculty was dependent upon the ordinary.[97]

The conflict rebounded after Louis XIV's death in 1715, signaling a deep division within the Gallican Church on matters of both doctrine and authority. It is not surprising therefore to find the Faculty at the center of the debates.[98]

In January 1716 the Faculty annulled the 1714 registration for a very simple reason: it was void, since they had been denied freedom to deliberate—*non fuit acceptata, quia non fuit deliberatio.*[99] This was unequivocally a claim to special authority on the part of the body. It was countered by a minority within the Faculty that was expelled for disrespect to the institution, but above all by the *constitutionnaires* bishops along a very simple line: "Rome had spoken, the majority of the French episcopate had received the papal pronouncement, the king had approved it: all had to obey, beginning with theologians."[100] The controversy kept growing between "accepting bishops" and the Faculty.[101] It expanded into a public debate with the participation of the magistrates, the nuncio, and inevitably the papacy, which delivered the strongest rebuke yet issued. Considering the Faculty as a school directly subject to the Apostolic See, Clement XI suspended all its priv-

[96] J. M. Gres-Gayer, "The 'Unigenitus' of Clement XI: A Fresh Look at the Issues," *TS* 49 (1988) 259–82.

[97] *Résolution de quelques doutes sur le devoir des docteurs de Sorbonne par rapport à l'enregistrement de la Constitution de N. S. P. le Pape Clément XI, du 8 septembre 1713* (n.p., 1714) viii–xi.

[98] J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Pouvoir et théologie en Sorbonne: La Faculté de théologie de Paris et la bulle Unigenitus* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991).

[99] [J. B. Cadry & J. B. Louail,] *Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament et de la Constitution Unigenitus* (Amsterdam: Nicolas Potgieter, 1723) 1.640–41.

[100] *Mandement* of the bishop of Toulon, L. de la Tour du Pin de Montauban (March 14, 1716) (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales,* 1.614).

[101] In June 1716, it was resolved to expel those alumni, including bishops, who had written against the honor of their *alma mater* (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.659–60).

ileges and forbade the granting of degrees.[102] The Faculty's response was coherent, if politically incorrect; it revealed a fascinating maturation of earlier theories through the experience of the preceding century.

THE POWER OF THEOLOGIANS

The effort to [re]claim the authority of their body took the Parisian theologians along two complementary paths: one offensive, the other defensive. The most noticeable element of the first course was the project presented by the syndic H. Ravechet of a *Body of Doctrine* aimed at representing the official position of the Faculty on "divisive matters."[103] Richer's suggestion comes to mind at once, though only the precedent of the *Articles of Faith* of 1542 was mentioned then.[104] The purpose was the same: to construct a comprehensive reference that would be binding for all graduates. The matters that were to form this *corpus doctrinae* corresponded exactly to those under consideration during the past century; they were also related to *Unigenitus*.[105] A draft was prepared by a commission appointed by the Faculty; it made reference to various pronouncements by the Faculty itself, but also to those of the French clergy and of the papacy. The articles were discussed, voted upon, and sent back, when necessary, to the committee.[106] The Faculty was only partially successful in its endeavors,[107] but the procedure it followed manifested without any ambiguity that on theological matters the last word was to be uttered by the professionals. This corporate concern appeared even more evident in the efforts made to associate the theological faculties in the Provinces with the decisions taken at the Sorbonne.[108]

The occasion to express these claims fully came in response to attacks that denounced "those mere priests who expose their ideas publicly . . . and thus position themselves as a tribunal of doctrine inde-

[102] Brief of Clement XI (November 18 1716) (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.825–27).

[103] Presented to the Faculty in April 1716 (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.651).

[104] See notes 25 and 14.

[105] I. *De Actibus humanis;* II. *De Sacramentis;* III. *De Gratia;* IV. *De Hierarchia.*

[106] Three times in the case of the second part, *De Sacramentis.*

[107] They were not allowed to discuss the third part, *De Gratia;* the fourth part, *De Hierarchia,* was also tabled.

[108] Associations with the Faculties at Reims, Nantes, Rennes, and the University of Caen (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.492–500).

pendent from that of the Church."[109] On the contrary, said the syndic, the doctors as Christians have the right to defend the truth, and as priests and doctors, the right to give doctrinal opinions and judgments, even in councils.[110] A few months later, he was even more explicit:

> He agreed that bishops were the true doctors instituted by Jesus Christ, but showed that this superior right did not exclude the one the doctors had, though on an inferior level, to teach the people and to bear witness to the truth; and that even bishops could not properly fulfill their eminent office without consulting theologians, under which name one had to include not only doctors, but pastors who were lesser prelates.[111]

Ravechet, it will have appeared by now, was not far from the conception of Richer, his predecessor of about a century before. But his "Richerism," if one may use such an ambiguous term, was the fruit of a hundred years of reflection and conflict. The syndic and his friends were dissatisfied with the evolution of Catholicism since the Council of Trent; they yearned for a better, purer, more truthful model of the Church—one in which their qualifications would be acknowledged and their expertise needed. They were dreamers and they paid dearly for their utopian vision.[112] Their conception was flawed in many ways; however it should not be forgotten, as it represents the flip side of an evolution that still influences Catholic theology today.

CONCLUSIONS: A UTOPIAN ECCLESIOLOGY

In June 1720, the Faculty of Theology of Paris decided to send a deputation to offer its "support" to Cardinal de Noailles, the Archbishop of Paris, in his struggle to obtain an explanation of the Constitution *Unigenitus*. Their protector's reaction tells the whole story: *Il faut que chacun se mèle de son métier,* "everybody should mind their own business."[113] For Noailles, as well as his episcopal confreres, theology was too serious a matter to be left to theologians.

[109] *Lettre de M. l'évêque de *** à M. l'évêque de **** [n.p. n.d.] 3.

[110] April 17, 1716 (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.651). The first part of this justification could open the possibility of lay theologians, including women, as the doctors' adversaries did not fail to point out. See [G. H. Bougeant S.J.,] *La femme docteur, ou la théologie tombée en quenouille* (Liège: Veuve Procureur, 1730).

[111] H. Ravechet (January 2, 1717) (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.672–73). This was a response to an attack that said: "Doctors are not appointed to govern the church," *Lettre de M^gr^ l'archevêque, Duc de Reims . . . à MM. les Cardinaux, Archevêques et Évêques assemblés à Paris* [n.p. n.d.] 64–85.

[112] More than 100 doctors were expelled from the Faculty between 1721 and 1730 (J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Théologie et pouvoir en Sorbonne,* 70).

[113] *Journal de M. Marais,* ed. M. de Lescure (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1863) 1.314.

This anecdote suggests the limits of the classical distinction made in French religious history between "Gallicans" and "Romans." The cardinal was a graduate of the Faculty and a staunch defender of the "Maxims of France," but his ecclesiology differed greatly from his fellow alumni.

The difference can be put in terms of "models of the church."[114] The French archbishop's was a variation of the Tridentine model, simply transfering within the hierarchical system some power from the Pope to the local ordinaries.[115]

Totally different was the vision of the doctors, as they expressed it at the time of *Unigenitus,* in the polemical context that has just been described. It might well still be called "Richerist," in order to acknowledge the influence of the seventeenth-century syndic, but Richer was more a catalyst than an inspiration. The real antecedents lay in the heyday of the Faculty, during the conciliar period, whose "participant ecclesiology" was rediscovered and reinterpreted by its later members during the conflicts of the century.

This "participant model" appears to have developed along the lines of a juridical and political conception of the Church, as it stressed two constitutive dimensions: *communion* at the horizontal level, and *representation* at the vertical.[116] From this perspective, what constituted the Catholic Church was the unity of faith manifested by the communion of the different (local) churches, one element being necessarily their communion with the Roman Church. The common faith, however, belonged to the entire body and therefore needed not only to be expressed but "verified." This task was eminently if ideally assumed by the General Council, "representing the Church," but only as it reflected the culmination of a long process of representation, by way of synods, from the local community to this general assembly.[117] In that conception, the "representatives" did not act as delegates—this was not a democratic process—but as witnesses. They represented, that is expressed, the faith of their native church, with the purpose of expos-

[114] See A. Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974).

[115] P. Blet, "L'idée de l'épiscopat chez les évêques français du XVII[e] siècle," in B. Vogler, ed., *L'Institution et les pouvoirs dans l'Église de l'antiquité à nos jours* (Miscellanea Historiae ecclesiasticae 8; Louvain/Bruxelles: Nauwelaerts, 1987) 311–23. See also in the same book the conclusions of M. Vénard, "L'Épiscopat catholique à l'époque du concile de Trente" 307–10. 'Royal Gallicanism' was another variation within the same hierarchical model, in that case transferring power from the Papacy to the Crown.

[116] J. M. Gres-Gayer, "Le gallicanisme de L. Ellies Du Pin," *Lias* (1991) 54–55.

[117] B. Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theories* (Cambridge Univ., 1968); G. Alberigo, *Chiesa Conciliare* (Brescia: Paideia, 1981).

ing, under the assistance of the Spirit, the faith of the Church Catholic.[118] This is why, in order to be authenticated, their decision had to be accepted, along a reverse path, from the council to the local communities.[119]

This sounds like rehashed conciliarism adapted to the needs of post-Tridentine theology. As a matter of fact these composite elements, borrowed from different authorities of the Middle Ages,[120] concurred to stress one element: the magisterium of the Faculty of Theology, the only authority able to exercise this twofold task of representation and verification. A document prepared for the defense of the University of Paris at the time of *Unigenitus* said that:

> It is not true that only bishops have the *key of science*. One would hope that they all had it and found means to have it in order not to be exposed to mistakes, either on doctrine, or on texts quoted to them. But priests and doctors are *also* in condition [en état] to have this key, and every man who can pray, meditate, read Holy Scripture, church history, etc., *also* has this key in proportion to the degree of light God bestows upon him, and this light does not prevent him from being perfectly submitted to the Church and to her decisions.[121]

The entire vocabulary of this *Defense* comes from medieval authors,[122] and it actually paraphrases a famous text by the then chancellor of the University, J. Gerson.[123] But its context is as different from its sources as are its inferences. For the early eighteenth-century doctors, the *clavis scientiae* was of course *their* knowledge, that which allowed them to understand and explain difficult matters.[124] They

[118] G. de Lagarde, "Les théories représentatives du XIV^{e}-XV^{e} siècle et l'Eglise," *Etudes présentées à la Commission internationale des sciences historiques* 9 (1937) 425–51; H. Hofmann, *Repräsentation: Studien zur Wort- und Begriffsgeschichte von der Antike bis ins 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Dunkert und Humblot, 1974).

[119] Y. Congar, "La réception comme réalité ecclésiologique," *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 56 (1972) 369–403; and "Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 36 (1958) 210–59. See also "Aspects théologiques de la querelle entre Mendiants et Séculiers" 147–51.

[120] With a strong Aristotelian flavor by way of Marsilius of Padua: J. Quillet, *La philosophie politique de Marsile de Padoue* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1970).

[121] [G. de Montempuys,] *Mémoire présenté à S.A.R. Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans, Régent du Royaume, pour la défense de l'Université* (Paris: C. L. Thiboust, 1717) 37.

[122] Cf. Y. Congar, "Pour une histoire sémantique" (see n. 2 above).

[123] J. Gerson, *De Examinatione doctrinarum*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. P. Glorieux (Paris: Desclées, 1973) 462.

[124] D. E. Heintschel, *The Medieval Concept of Ecclesiastical Office* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1956); J. Quillet, *Les clefs du pouvoir au Moyen-Age* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971).

certainly had a high opinion of the state of theology in their age and were tempted to consider it an independent science.[125] They also had a high opinion of themselves, not simply as individuals[126] but as members of a corporation, as parts of a body.

In order fully to understand this last point, one needs to reassess the themes of "freedom" and "dissent" that kept appearing in the complex history of the Faculty. The issue was not simply one of "academic freedom," or the right to maintain theological conclusions against criticism from ecclesiastical authorities, but of the function of a university. The "mother of knowledge"[127] was the place *par excellence* where fundamental truths were exposed through a process of research, reflection, and argumentations, freedom and independence being the prerequisite to this process. Without these same elements that assured the success of conciliar deliberations under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,[128] the Faculty simply could not exist.[129] Not that the company ever claimed a similar authority, but it defined itself as an indispensable wheel in the mechanism that expressed the faith of the Church. Independent, qualified, but also representative—as priests and pastors—the body of scholars saw exposing orthodoxy as its responsibility, as a jury reaches its verdict in a trial. The charge of the hierarchy was that of the judge, to pass the sentence and see to its execution.[130] In the words of L. Ellies Du Pin, one of the most influential theologians of the period:

Judgments by the Pope and by the Faculty are of different genres. The Faculty's is only a doctrinal judgment [*avis doctrinal*], the one by the Pope and

[125] J. M. Gres-Gayer, "Le gallicanisme de L. Ellies Du Pin," *Lias* (1991) 67.

[126] This explains their emphasis on holiness. For an interpretation of the *clavis scientiae* that was offered by P. Abelard and renewed by William of Ockam, see L. Hödl, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Literatur und die Theologie der Schlüsselgewalt von ihren Anfängen bis zur Summa aurea des Wilhelm von Auxerre* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1959) 83–84; G. de Lagarde, *La naissance de l'esprit laïque à la fin du Moyen-Age* (Louvain/Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1963) 153–55.

[127] P. R. McKeon, "The Status of the University of Paris as *Parens scientiarum:* An Episode in the Development of its Autonomy," *Speculum* 39 (1964) 651–75.

[128] Hence the importance of unanimity in such decisions. As one theologian expressed it: "Our assemblies have often been considered as councils, but if liberty of deliberation is taken away from councils, their authority also is taken away" (March 1714) (*Relation des délibérations de la Faculté de théologie de Paris au sujet de l'acceptation de la bulle Unigenitus* [n.p., 1714] 111).

[129] J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Pouvoir et théologie en Sorbonne* 120–21.

[130] With Gerson's works, the basis for this distinction was the first part of Pierre d'Ailly, *Apologia Sacrae Facultatis Theologiae Parisiensis circa damnationem Ioannis de Montesona,* in *Ioannis Gersonii Opera,* ed. L. Ellies Du Pin 1.710–22.

bishops is a juridical decision. The first establishes Truth by way of counsel and instruction, the other by authority and jurisdiction.[131]

In that light the magisterium of the doctors was not a claim to authority as individuals, nor even as a committee of able theologians, but as the Faculty of Theology of Paris, as an atemporal body, a repository of the authentic tradition of their Church.[132] Their *avis doctrinal* was to be more than an opinion or a particular judgment of authorized specialists;[133] it was to be an official utterance, consistent with previous pronouncements[134] and totally in accordance with their ecclesial function.[135]

Unfortunately for the doctors, neither the pope nor the French bishops were ready even to entertain their arguments, especially as they were aired in such a public manner. The ecclesiastical hierarchy considered theologians as individuals to be consulted privately, not as an independent authority to be heeded. The fight initiated by Richer was definitively lost by his heirs,[136] though its influence remained powerful in the political field.[137]

On the surface, nothing changed. The Faculty continued during the century to produce censures and condemnations, but more as a national theological commission than as a magisterium in its own right.[138] The doctors kept on teaching and examining students, thus

[131] L. Ellies Du Pin, *Défense de la Censure de la Faculté de théologie de Paris contre les propositions des lives intitulés Nouveaux Mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine etc.* 157.

[132] This self understanding was supported by the old (and ambiguous) title of "Perpetual Council of the Gauls" (H. Deniffle, E. Chatelain, eds., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* [Paris: Delalain Frères, 1897] 4 [2017] 284).

[133] This was the "ultramontane" interpretation (J. M. Gres-Gayer, *Pouvoir et théologie en Sorbonne* 189 n. 5).

[134] Such consistence is expressed by the different projects of a *Body of Doctrine,* and the publications of major Censures "with proofs," that is references to earlier censures; see J. de Launoy, *De Scholis celebrioribus* (1672), in *Opera Omnia* 4.112–36.

[135] Cf. the biblical reference supporting this claim (Ephesians 4:11); H. Ravechet (January 2, 1717) (*Histoire du livre des Réflexions morales* 1.672–73).

[136] After 1730 the Faculty of Theology of Paris became a very docile institution that defended a very mitigated version of "authoritarian Gallicanism"; see L. W. B. Brokliss, *French Higher Education* 274–76.

[137] D. Van Kley, "The Estates General as Ecumenical Council: The Constitutionalism of Corporate Consensus and the *Parlement's* Ruling of September 25, 1988," *Journal of Modern History* 61 (1989) 1–52.

[138] M. Perronet, "Les censures de la Sorbonne au XVIII[e] siècle: Base doctrinale pour le Clergé de France," in F. Lebrun & R. Dupuy eds., *Résistances à la Révolution* (Paris: Imago, 1987) 27–35.

shaping future generations. They also continued to exercise a more humble but possibly more effective form of magisterium as the drafters of so many episcopal letters. But for many this was not what the Faculty was intended to be. The body had been destroyed; what remained was a mere carcass,[139] which they thought it would be better to dispose of entirely. The French Revolution would accomplish this task for them.

[139] *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques* 1733.