

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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