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De Auxiliis Controversy

Author: David Torrijos**Part of:** [Molina and Molinism Between Coimbra and Évora](#) (coord. by João Rebalde and Paula Oliveira a Silva)**Peer-Reviewed:** Yes**Published:** September 20th, 2022**DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.7098166

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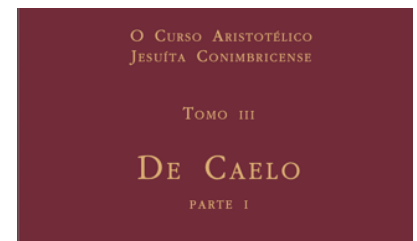
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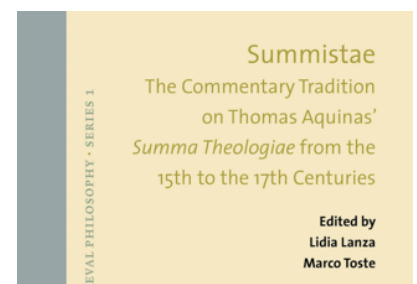


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Introduction

The *De Auxiliis* controversy is a theological debate which arose in Spain and Portugal because of the *Concordia*, a book published in Lisbon in 1588 by the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina, who taught in Coimbra, Évora and Cuenca. This book had the purpose of harmonizing divine omniscience, providence, predestination and reprobation with human free will. Several Dominicans maintained a hard opposition against Molina's doctrines, but the most renowned theologian among them was Domingo Báñez. Indeed, this polemic became a huge conflict above all between the Order of Preachers and the Society of Jesus. The controversy lasted for years in Spain until it finally was moved to Rome, where the so-called "*Congregationes de auxiliis*" were formed. These lasted between 1595 and 1607. Francisco Suárez was the most influential promoter of Molinism in Spain and Saint Robert Bellarmine its most famous defender in Rome. During the Roman period of the controversy, the main supporters of Báñez's position were the Dominicans Diego Álvarez and Tomás de Lemos. The final decision of the Pope was the

authorization to teach both theses and the prohibition of censoring either one as wrong.

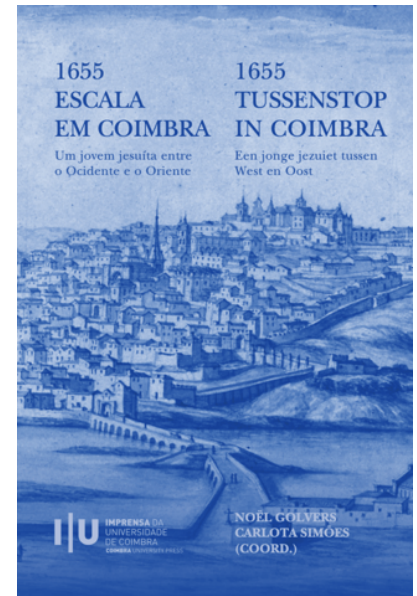
Molinism and Bañezianism

“Molinism” is the term usually applied to define the set of theses supported by Molina in his *Concordia* (Molina 1588). In opposition to his position, certain Spanish theologians who considered themselves more faithful to Saint Thomas Aquinas than Molina, strongly criticized the *Concordia*, accusing it of being close to Pelagianism. The most famous of them is Domingo Báñez, who was in turn accused before the Inquisition for sustaining a doctrine that Molina and other Jesuits considered close to Calvinism. Those who follow Báñez’s main theses are often called “Bañezians”, although they call usually themselves simply “Thomists”.

For Catholics, it belongs to Christian faith that the omnipotent God accurately knows everything that has happened, happens and will happen, that He is also provident and, as part of his providence, has predestined to salvation those who will enjoy Heaven forever. On the other hand, the divine decision to “allow” a person to die in mortal sin and, as a punishment for his sins, to be condemned in hell, is called “reprobation”. In contrast to Luther and Calvin, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) insisted that “meritorius” acts (i.e. acts that make a human being worthy of Heaven), presuppose two elements: the grace of God, the free gift by which He helps man to perform such acts, and the human freedom which, moved by grace, cooperates with God.

Now, when Molina explains this synergy of creatural action and grace, his personal strategy is to emphasize the cooperation of human freedom, while Báñez and the Bañezians rather insist on divine initiative and power.

Molinism and Congruism



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The heart of Molina's harmonization among divine and human action lies in the so-called *scientia media* ("middle knowledge"). That means a third kind of knowledge between two sorts of knowledge that were attributed to God since the Middle Ages: the "knowledge of simple intelligence" and the "knowledge of vision". By knowledge of simple intelligence God understands everything that is intelligible by the mere fact of being intelligible, regardless of His will to create the world. For example, by this knowledge, God eternally knows that eight is greater than six. This knowledge is designated by Molina as "natural", and so God knows all that is merely possible and necessary. Secondly, by His knowledge of vision God knows the things that He has in fact created and governs with his providence. Molina speaks of a "free knowledge" insofar as His will is involved in it.

Between natural knowledge and free knowledge, Molina situates his middle knowledge for the "contingent futures", that is, what has not yet happened but may or may not happen. By middle knowledge God knows the futures that are "conditioned" by another series of contingent and merely possible events. A well-known example of middle knowledge can be found in the episode in which Jesus—who, according to Christian faith, is God—affirms that *if* He had done in Tyre and Sidon the miracles that He had in fact performed in Chorazin and Bethsaida, those cities would have already been converted (Mt 11:21; Lk 10:13). In this case, God, by His middle knowledge, knows how each one would behave *if* this person would be placed in a certain circumstance (which serves as a condition). This is due to a divine "supercomprehension," a deep penetration into the nature of things logically prior to the purposes of divine will.

According to Molina, God operates in all things not only as a creator and a conservator, but He also provides a "simultaneous and indifferent concurrence" to their action. He does not effectively direct the inclination of the created will at every moment, since the will, in order

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to be free, must preserve an indifference to the goods toward which it may be inclined. It orients itself to one side or the other, even after having received the concurrence of God. God by his concurrence and man by his free will are partial causes of the human act «like two people dragging a single boat» with different ropes from both sides of a channel (Molina 1588: 165). In other words, God works on the human act, not on the free will that produces it.

In the supernatural order, actual grace operates the same way concurrence does. God gives “sufficient grace” to everyone, because He grants a predisposition to act well. However, He, by His middle knowledge, knows who will make good use of that grace and who will not, in the definite circumstances in which He gives it. One and the same kind of grace (which can however have different degrees) becomes “efficacious” in those persons in whom God, thanks to His middle knowledge, had foreseen that they would make good use of it if they received it. In this sense, the divine motion is “moral” and not “physical,” since God does not incline the will in an irresistible way but provides the means for it to incline itself.

“Congruism” is the name given to the somewhat mitigated sort of Molinism supported by Bellarmine and Suárez, which was the one defended *de facto* in the controversies of Rome. According to this version, God gives a “congruous” grace morally adapted to the nature and circumstances of each one. This version tries to highlight the divine predilection for the predestined, somewhat diminished in Molina’s approach. Thus, unlike Molina, who thought that the divine decision to predestine some people presupposes in its design the good works they were going to perform with the grace of God (predestination *post praevisa merita*), congruists believe that predestination is logically previous to those merits and is, therefore, totally unwarranted (predestination *ante praevisa merita*).

Bañezianism

Those who substantially agree with Báñez in the topics linked to *De Auxiliis* controversy are usually called “Bañezians.” Shortly before the appearance of the *Concordia*, Báñez had begun to publish his commentaries to the *Summa theologiae* by Saint Thomas, in which he gathered the preceding theological tradition of Salamanca, adding his personal contribution (Báñez 1584a; 1584b; 1588; 1594). Additionally, he composed several writings on the controversy that have been published by Beltrán de Heredia 1968: 101-380.426-471.613-644; Báñez 1948: 351-420.

It should be noted that while Molina prided himself on having discovered something new that «no one before him» had managed to explain (Molina 1588: 492), Báñez considered himself a defender of «the ancient doctrine that is in the minds of theologians not only of all Spain, but of the whole Church since the time of St. Thomas, and even since the time of St. Augustine, and the second Council of Orange» (Meyer 1705: 805). In fact, other Spanish theologians, including some Jesuits, were astonished by Molina’s teachings, but those of Báñez did not cause them any trouble.

In any case, from the beginning Molina saw in the Dominican theologian his greatest adversary, since he enjoyed the most important theological chair in Salamanca, which was the most prestigious university in Spain in theology and, at that time, one of the most important in the world. For this reason, Báñez, as we will see, took part in the controversies, but he did not monopolize as much prominence as the Jesuit historiography has given him.

Báñez considered somewhat pretentious to “harmonize” divine omnipotence with human freedom. He believed that both faith and reason forced him to affirm a divine providence which orders even every free human act and, at the same time, that such acts were indeed free. He felt able to affirm each one of these two theses separately and to refute those who deny them. However, to explain

exactly how God acts on free will is something that, according to him, goes beyond our intelligence.

According to Báñez, Molina's main mistake is to think that freedom consists in the indifference of the will, even «once all the requisites for acting have been posited» (Molina 1588: 12). On the contrary, Báñez believes that the indifference which provides freedom to free will does not reside in the will itself but in the objects of the will which are unable to necessitate its inclination towards them (Beltrán de Heredia 1968: 164-174): the intellect notices this indifference and, whenever it does so, the will freely follows what the intellect shows to be worthy of be wanted. Its freedom is real although the will does not follow but the object presented by the intellect in its last practical judgment. Similarly, when God moves it with His efficacious grace towards something good, it cannot be oriented towards another good (when the creature sins, there is rather a lack of divine motion). Therefore, the divine influence does not undermine freedom, because it does not only strength its will, but also opens the eyes of the intellect to appreciate the indifference of its objects and, therefore, makes the human freer.

Although the human will *necessarily* follows the divine will to attain the good, it does not do so with an absolute necessity (called “necessity of the consequent”) but only with a hypothetical and relative necessity (called “necessity of the consequence”). For example, the fact that the sun shines is an absolute necessity, provoked by the very nature of the sun; however, here we speak of a certain conditional or hypothetical necessity, such as the one the proposition “Peter is seated” has, while Peter is effectively seated. It is not absolutely necessary for Peter to be seated, but, if he is seated, then *it is necessary* for him (with necessity of consequence) to be seated. Likewise, if God, with his efficacious grace, moves a man here and now to conversion, it is necessary that he performs his conversion, but he will do so freely, because he possesses the intrinsic capacity to do it or not. Moreover, God does not concur in the human act as a

partial cause, as Molina thought, but as a principal total cause, while the created free will is also a total but subordinate cause.

The divine motion as presented by Báñez was later called “physical premotion.” Instead, the Apology of 1595 speaks of “physical predetermination” (surely due to the influence of D. Álvarez, since Báñez did not usually express himself in any of these ways). The will of God directs the history and the acts of men, and it is always fulfilled, so that the good works of men have been predetermined in the divine plan of benevolence, while the bad works have been foreseen and allowed. Unlike Molina, who assures his concord through divine knowledge, for Báñez the divine knowledge about creatures is mediated by the divine will.

Physical premotion is necessary both in the order of nature and in the order of grace. Báñez designates as sufficient grace all the aids «which are given as a sufficiency to complete the very potency in its first act» (Báñez 1948: 396). Sufficient grace is everything that makes the created faculty capable of performing the act and, particularly, manifests to the intellect the good toward which the will must be inclined. On the other hand, the actual realization of the act is the effect of efficacious grace. Sufficient grace gives the “being able to act” (first act) while efficacious grace gives the “being acting” (second act). As can be seen, the difference between sufficient and efficacious grace is not only “moral” but of an entitative character, they are “really different”, since they are two divine interventions of a different nature.

History of the Controversy

Origins of the dispute

The question of providence and freedom are two central

problems of Renaissance thought, but in a special way they became important for theology with the theses of Luther and Calvin. In the Catholic sphere a definitive answer was given by the Council of Trent in the Decree on Justification (1547). There, the biblical teaching on the divine initiative of human salvation is recalled, but the emphasis is also placed on the cooperation of man: grace is a gift of God, but the work of grace does not happen without active human cooperation.

Note that the University of Salamanca contributed to the Council with several significant theologians such as the Dominican Domingo de Soto, who composed a treatise on grace (Soto 1547). The Jesuits Diego Laínez and Alfonso Salmerón stood out in the Council as well.

Among the theologians of the 16th century there are some, like John Driedus or Ruard Tapper, that are sometimes invoked to support the Molinism, but it is also necessary to recognize that the Dominicans will question that these authors truly held Molinist ideas. Although Molina studied in [Coimbra and Évora](#), he was also influenced by the most important members of the School of Salamanca. Perhaps because of this, some authors have believed that they anticipated some Molina's ideas (Vansteenbergh 1936: 2097). However, it should be taken into account that Stegmüller, after intense documentation efforts, affirmed the opposite: «The main ideas of the later Thomistic [i.e. Bañezian] doctrine on concurrence as well as its causality, priority, and efficacy are already found in Francisco de Vitoria; likewise, in him are found the foundations of the concord between concurrence and freedom defended by the later Thomists» (Stegmüller 1934: 54). Consequently, Molina's clearest allies can be found in other Jesuits, especially Pedro da Fonseca, who held a very similar doctrine about the famous "middle knowledge", although it is controversial whether Molina took it from him or vice versa. In any case, Molina himself was a significant exponent of Coimbra's Aristotelianism (Casalini 2016: 62-63).

Molina was not personally involved in the event that is usually considered the opening of the controversy: it was a dispute held in Salamanca on January 20th, 1582 (Barrientos García 1996: 675-772). In that dispute the Jesuit Prudencio de Montemayor held several theses that were publicly contested by the Dominican Domingo Báñez, who had recently received the chair of *Prima*, the most prestigious one in Salamanca. According to him, Montemayor's theses were Semipelagian. Nevertheless, the Augustinian Luis de León came to the defense of the Jesuit. There was a great commotion and the Inquisition ended up investigating the case. As a result, Luis de León was admonished and Báñez, who had also been accused, was acquitted, but Montemayor's academic career ended there. According to Montemayor's argumentation, one could conclude that divine providence had not preordained human acts in all their details. But the main accusation was that God could give the same grace to two men, of whom one would perform the act of conversion and the other not, so that the only difference between both would be in the free will of each one of them, in their acceptance or rejection of the grace. It is noteworthy that Montemayor later declared that, in that occasion, he had said nothing he had not learned from his teachers «especially Father Francisco Suárez» (Abad 1960: 64). Note that Suárez's first work went to press two years after the *Concordia* in 1590.

The publication of the *Concordia*

Although the condemnation of Montemayor was an important precedent, the event that triggered a real controversy was the publication of the *Concordia* (Molina 1588). The book had received the authorization of the Portuguese Inquisition, with the approval of the Dominican Bartholomew Ferreira and the Cardinal Archduke Albert of Austria, Grand Inquisitor and Viceroy of Portugal. However, the latter was immediately alerted by other Dominicans regarding some statements contained in it which were similar to Montemayor's theses. For this reason, he sent the book again for

examination to Francis Cano and not to Domingo Báñez, as several historians have said: a letter from the Archduke's confessor attests this fact (Prado 1907: 581). Cano saw the book and found that it certainly contained many of those erroneous statements. For this reason, the Grand Inquisitor prevented the book from being sold for a few months. To remedy this situation, Molina wrote a brief "appendix" in which he defended himself from the objections made to him and, in particular, from the accusation of «having incurred in certain propositions that the court of the Holy Inquisition had prohibited from teaching in the kingdom of Castile» (Molina 1589: 3). From then on, the book continued to be sold, as we shall see, not without difficulties.

In 1590 D. Báñez and the Mercedarian Francisco Zumel were entrusted with the elaboration of a new *Index* of forbidden books and unsuccessfully tried to register the *Concordia* in it (Astrain 1913: 165-168). A little later, Diego Nuño, rector of the College of San Gregorio of the Order of Preachers, located in Valladolid, taught that Molina's theses were erroneous and scandalous, to the point of interrupting the sale of the *Concordia* in that city. In response to this, the Jesuits organized a public act on March 5th, 1594, presided over by Jesuit Antonio Padilla, to defend Molina's affirmations as safe and Catholic. Nuño intervened in the discussion very passionately. Shortly after, during his Lenten preaching, the Dominican Alonso de Avendaño referred to the "eagerness for novelty" of recent theologians. Finally, on May 19th, D. Nuño announces another event where six conclusions against the *Concordia* would be presented, although no specific mention of it was made. The Jesuits considered themselves insulted and requested support from the Inquisition.

A year after these events, Molina managed to obtain permission to print a new version of his *Concordia*, this time in Antwerp. In this edition, the theologian took the opportunity to appropriate the remarks made by some Jesuits on his book and to clarify some points. Therefore,

he modified certain sections, added some new ones and eliminated others (Rabeneck in Molina 1959: 32-39).

The Intervention of the Spanish Inquisition

In 1594 the conflict had grown from Castile to the point of reaching the Pope's ears. It is likely that the Jesuits urged Rome to take charge of the matter, feeling safer before the authorities of the Eternal City than before the Spanish Inquisition. Thus, on June 28th, 1594, Cardinal Aldobrandini urged the Nuncio in Spain to prohibit any discussion about *De Auxiliis*, although the order was not transmitted by the Nuncio until August 15th, 1594. So far, it has been assumed that this prohibition had been enforced until 1598, since Báñez wrote a libel of supplication to ask for its moderation in 1597. Presumably, however, the injunction not to dispute the issue must have been reduced, shortly after September 1594, to a prohibition of condemning the position of the opposing party as heretical. This prohibition against censure was already in force in Spain, since it had been given by the Spanish Inquisition, probably as a result of the events of Valladolid. In October the Inquisition must have obtained from Rome the permission to uphold the prohibition in the original terms determined in Spain. Again, on March 19th, 1596, king Philip II urged both orders not to qualify the doctrine of the other party, without constraining them to keep silent on the subject absolutely. The memorial signed by Báñez in 1597, which is preserved in the Angelica Library (Rome, ms. 883, f. 54r), mentions a new prohibition from that year: this order prohibited yet again to deal with the subject *De Auxiliis* in any way, something too difficult to comply with. In response to his request, on February 26th, 1598, the Pope agreed to allow discussion again, with the condition of avoiding any censure of the opposing party.

In 1594 another controversy arose in Salamanca, involving two great figures: Francisco Suárez and Domingo Báñez. During the summer, Juan de Zúñiga, a

member of the Inquisition Council, visited the University of Salamanca and tried to make an appointment with Suárez, since the Jesuit asked for an interview. However, he found the Jesuit indisposed, so that, instead of that conversation, Suárez sent him a memorial in Spanish as an apology of the Society of Jesus against accusations on the subject *De Auxiliis*. As we can see, Suárez, like the Jesuits of Valladolid, was turning Molina's cause into the business of the whole Order. In August the document was spread out in Salamanca so that it reached Báñez, who felt obliged to defend, on his part, the Order of Preachers and respond in kind to Suárez. He composed another memorial in vernacular language, which he gave to the Inquisition (Beltrán de Heredia 1968: 411-471).

While he asked for silence on the subject, the Pope commissioned the two parties to express their points of view. This procedure had already been launched by the Spanish Inquisition, which also requested the opinions of various theologians and universities throughout Spain, not only on Molina's book, but also on the works by Báñez and Zumel, whom the Jesuit had accused before the Inquisition. Thus, the superiors of the Dominicans and the Jesuits asked several theologians to write their opinions in defense of their own position. Several of them will publish in printed books the reflections that began here, like Suárez 1599, Zumel 1608, Álvarez 1610 or Ledesma 1611. Báñez's treatise was remade until 1600 but remained unpublished until last century (Báñez 1948: 351-420). We also have the original version of the writing sent by Zumel to the Inquisition (Zumel 1953).

In addition to these reports, the Dominicans decided to elaborate a brief censure which was hastily composed in Valladolid by several of these theologians on October 3th, 1594 (Prado 1907: 571-578). With similar intent, they met in May 1595 in their Chapter and decided to entrust the elaboration of an apology in defense of the Order of Preachers to a commission of three scholars headed by Báñez, which synthesized the treatises composed by the designated theologians. It was presented in November of

that year. This text, known as *Apologia*, is of undoubted importance to know the position of the Dominicans in the debate, although it remained unpublished until last century (Beltrán de Heredia 1968: 115-380). It is a very rich writing, but still too extensive. For this reason, Diego Álvarez, one of Báñez's colleagues in its composition, wrote a *Summa apologiae* to summarize its main points.

It was not until 23th October 1598 that the Spanish Inquisition was able to send all the collected material, which Báñez himself said would take at least «two years» to read (Biblioteca Angelica, Rome, ms. 883, f. 54v; in Meyer 1705: 806 it says «three years»). Three packages arrived, one with the writings of the Dominicans and Zumel, another one with those of the Jesuits and a third one with the judgments of the bishops, universities and other theologians consulted (see an accurate description in Meyer 1705: 179-180; Astrain 1913: 228-244).

Beginning of *De Auxiliis* Congregations in Rome

It is difficult to determine the course of events in Rome with total precision, because of lack of certitude about the fidelity of the extant documents. The minutes of the congregations were discredited by the Holy Office, especially regarding the congregations in the presence of the Popes (Meyer 1705: 707). Nevertheless, many texts published by Serry and Meyer are certainly based on manuscripts still preserved and seem reliable. The minutes drawn up by the secretary of the congregations, Gregorio Núñez Coronel, are preserved in Rome and there is another copy in Paris with the notes of Francisco Peña (Astrain 1913: 334-335). The minutes attributed to Tomás de Lemos O.P., also discredited by the Holy Office, were published posthumously (Lemos 1702). However, they do not have to be considered entirely false, because the main point of the declaration of the ecclesiastical authority was a refusal to recognize them as official, since they were not.

During the Roman years of the dispute, Diego Álvarez stands out among the Dominican theologians designated in Rome as a direct disciple of Báñez and his main collaborator in the writing of the *Apologia*. Later, Tomás de Lemos will join him. Among the Jesuits, mention should be made of Cardinal St. Robert Bellarmine, who had already received the command from the General of his Order to revise the *Concordia* shortly after its publication.

The discussions began during the pontificate of Clement VIII in March 1598 with a commission of theologians from various orders (excluding the Order of Preachers and the Society of Jesus) to examine the *Concordia*. They soon concluded that Molina's doctrine was close to the one of Cassian and other Semipelagians, so that the book had to be banned. However, since the voluminous material sent by the Spanish Inquisition arrived at that time, the condemnation of the *Concordia* had to be deferred until such copious reports could be reviewed. Nevertheless, after reading them, the commission confirmed its punitive judgment.

The requests made to Rome by the Jesuits and various authorities persuaded the Pope to follow another procedure: to give the interested parties the opportunity to discuss, in order to achieve some kind of reconciliation. In this way, the *Concordia* was set aside, and they focused on the crucial points of divergence between the two orders. For this purpose, the Pope entrusted Cardinals Madruzzo, Bernerio O.P. and Bellarmine S.I. to preside over the sessions in which a commission of Jesuits and Dominicans, led by the General Superiors of both orders, would discuss. In February 1599 they began their work and, while the Dominicans sought above all to condemn Molina, the Jesuits believed that the question of the effectiveness of grace should be examined. They insisted on the error contained in the predetermination of human acts by the efficacious grace as defended by Báñez. For this reason, the Pope ordered Madruzzo to write several questions, to be answered by members of both orders.

The Jesuits believed that these questions favored the Dominicans, and for this reason Bellarmine presented further questions. Since neither party wanted to respond without hearing before the other's response, the Pope had to intervene and the theologians of both orders agreed on a series of theses that all were willing to subscribe to, although arguments remain heated.

At the end, Madruzzo with the help of Cardinal d'Ascoli, summarized his questions and sent them to both orders in July 1599: this provided the opportunity for each Order to give its answers; later, the reply and counter-reply of the other's answers were written (Serry 1700: 216-217; 95-132 appendix; Meyer 1705: 232-233.237-238). This debate is very interesting because the commissioners had enough time enough to consult Spain. Therefore, we can read the answers from Báñez and Suárez to Madruzzo's questions (Beltrán de Heredia 1968: 638-642; Aldama 1948: 228-232) as well as Báñez's reply to the Jesuits' answers (Beltrán de Heredia 1968: 613-638).

Madruzzo was about to give his assessment to the Pope after his review of the presented documents, when he was surprised by death in April 1600. From that time on the work was reoriented towards censuring the *Concordia* by Molina, taking up the previous reports. However, the Jesuits challenged the accuracy of this censure. In the meantime, Molina died on October 12th in Madrid.

Clement VIII requested a new revision of the *Concordia* in order to extract from it a series of theses which could be submitted for discussion by Dominicans and Jesuits before the designated commission of theologians. During the first half of 1601 there were thirty-seven sessions, and everything pointed to a condemnation of Molina, but the Jesuits appealed again, and the Pope hesitated in his decision. Bellarmine even proposed to convoke a Council, but a more modest solution was followed: that theologians of both orders should discuss their position

before the Supreme Pontiff in person.

Congregations *De Auxiliis* in the Presence of the Pope

In March 1602, the disputes began, presided over by Clement VIII. For a period of three years the congregations were to be exclusively dedicated to the examination of the Concord. In these debates, Molina's doctrine is compared with that of Saint Augustine, Cassian and the Council of Trent, regarding the efficacy of grace, free will, justification, contrition and attrition. It was not until July 1604 that the question of the middle knowledge was addressed. Most of the theologians designated by the Pope were against Molina. In January 1605, the subject of predestination and good use of grace was studied. The same month the Cardinal Jacques Davy du Perron, who had contributed to the conversion to Catholicism of Henry IV of France, arrived in Rome. His presence warns us about the political background of the controversies: the powerful king of Spain, whose influence on other Catholic regions like France and Italy is looked at with suspicion, leans towards the Order of Preachers; on the contrary, France, then engaged in a hard fight against Calvinism, will rather support the Society. Shortly thereafter, Pope Clement VIII died on March 5th, 1605. Meanwhile, on October 22th, 1604 Domingo Báñez had died in Spain, like Molina, without knowing what would come out of the controversy: in fact, the Dominican had warned years before that such a huge question might not be resolved in a single pontificate (Meyer 1705: 806).

After the very short pontificate of Leo XI, Paul V, who had been Clement VIII's assistant in the congregations, was elected. He was determined to close the controversy as soon as possible. Bellarmine proposed a series of theses that were far from both Pelagius and Calvin, but Tomás de Lemos contested them as captious. Despite this, the Pope allowed the Jesuits to discuss the question of the physical predetermination supported by the Dominicans.

In view of the claims of both, the Pope decided to be present at the discussions from October 1605 to February 1606, while the issue of physical predetermination was being discussed, without the Jesuits managing to persuade the commission of the erroneous character of this doctrine.

Then the Pope, with the purpose of putting an end to the dispute, consulted all the members of the commission of theologians asking which definitions should be made, what theses should be condemned and if any book should be expressly mentioned. The immense majority was in favor of condemning a series of propositions of the *Concordia*. He also consulted the cardinals, who were in favor of giving some definition, although not all were inclined to condemn Molina. Also, the Pope asked Saint Francis of Sales, who recommended to give freedom to teach the doctrine of the Jesuits as well as that of the Dominicans.

Finally, on August 28th, 1607, feast of St. Augustine, the cardinals met with the Pope in a session that we know well because it was described by the Pope himself (Schneemann 1881: 287-291). The Dominican Cardinal d'Ascoli was the only one in favor of condemning the *Concordia*, trying however to leave the Jesuits in a good position due to their innumerable merits. The others were hesitant, except for Bellarmine and du Perron who excused Molina and severely accused Báñez but did not propose any condemnation. The Pope, in his turn, declared that the Council of Trent had defined both the influence of grace and human freedom in the human acts performed with divine help, and that the whole controversy lay in whether such a motion was moral or physical. In his view, there was no need to make a statement on this matter, since neither the Dominicans were falling into the error of Calvin nor the Jesuits into the one of Pelagius. He also noted that to make a statement on what was agreed upon and not discussed did not seem necessary; instead, this might give cause for gossip among Protestants. In any case, if considered

convenient, such business should be consulted with universities and theologians.

The Pope dismissed the commissioners of the congregations with orders not to reveal the issues discussed. On September 5th, 1607, he also transmitted to the superiors of both orders the license to dispute on this matter and the severe prohibition to declare the opposite side wrong. As he told to the king of Spain, his decision to avoid all condemnation was partly motivated by his desire of preserve the reputation of two orders which had performed such services to the Church. In short, Rome did not want to take sides and to this day has yet to pronounce itself on this matter.

Influence of Controversies

The pontifical decision did not conclude this problem. Over the centuries, voluminous books have been published by supporters of both positions. Moreover, the controversy drifted into the field of historiography, trying to formulate a partisan narrative of the events that would demonize the opposite side. For this reason, even today it is difficult to reconstruct an objective account of the events. Similarly, there are also relatively few studies on the history of the ideas addressed by the different authors, while there are many studies inscribed in one of the two scholastic traditions developed during the controversy.

The main repercussion of the debate among its contemporaries outside the Catholic sphere could be observed in the thought of the reformed theologian J. Arminius, whose doctrine must have been based on the *Concordia*, as recent scholarship is increasingly recognizing (Muller 2019; Stanglin 2019: 151-155). A century later, Leibniz himself recognized the acuity of Thomists and Molinists in dealing with the same issues that interested him. On the other hand, the Jansenists,

who believed their doctrines to be corroborated by Bañezianism, took advantage of the *De Auxiliis* controversy to feed the black legend of the Society of Jesus. Going deeper and considering the growing recognition of Suárez's contribution to the beginning of modernity, J. Maritain's opinion deserves special attention, when he holds the *De Auxiliis* dispute partially responsible for the emergence of modern atheism (García Cuadrado 2016).

Today, attention to Molinism is increasing in the Protestant sphere, since some theologians see it as a more acceptable theological solution than strict Calvinism. Moreover, Molinism is considered as an attractive point of view among some contemporary analytical philosophers such as A. Plantinga or W. L. Craig. Despite the growing disinterest in scholasticism that became widespread in the Catholic sphere in the last fifty years, there has been a true revival of this question among Thomists in the first decades of the 21st century, especially in the English-speaking world. This way, the important debates developed during the first half of the 20th century among Catholic theologians such as Norberto del Prado, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Francisco Marín-Sola, Bernard Lonergan and Jacques Maritain have been updated.

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