On the Proper Place for the Study of the Church History

JOSEP MARÍA BARNADAS

ABSTRACT: With his analysis based on the view of the faithful, the author of the paper analyses the issue of the competentness of the study of the Church history. He answers the question to what extent the ecclesiastical history is a theological discipline, where is the place of the priests and laymen in its study, where is the place of the faithful and unbelievers in this matter, etc. The author also evaluates current modern trends in the historical research, as well as the influence of laicization and secularization of life on historians and their thinking. Territorially, he mainly pursues the research in the countries of Latin America and South America. Special attention is paid to theological events in his home country – in Bolivia.

Keywords: historical research, Church history, Christianity, methodology, Latin America, Bolivia

For correct understanding and inclusion the issues it is necessary at the very beginning to clarify a few things.1 Firstly, it is a topic not only extensive and complicated, but, secondly, as well as that by which it is possible to have particularly simple get carried away by passions and with their inflictions to stuck in surprising paradoxes, and thirdly, the current climate situation is very charged.

I do not intend to offer some kind of the teaching lesson, because my goal is not to review all aspects of the topic. I will be satisfied with the final personal attitude to this question of dispute; however, the only after attempt to define it properly. My aim is therefore to give an explanation with the nature, which is clearly witness. Its foundation will be laid more on my own experience, and with a certain amount of reflection rather than on another scholarship.

1. Theses of the Hubert Jedin

Initially, I will mention about who later became (by his polemical remarks) in this issue of the “stumbling block”: the large historian of Trident council, Hubert Jedin. His attitude was formulated in two basic texts. First, by the slogan Kirchengeschichte in the work entitled Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche,2 and then Einleitung

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1 To write this contribution I was inspired by text, which I presented within the first year of Days of church history in the northwest of Argentina, Salta held in October 2006. I took the liberty to add it. I thank the organizers for inviting (especially P. Emiliano Sánchez OSA) and that made me think about a subject which seems to me important even today.

2 JEDIN, Hubert. Kirchengeschichte. In Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche. Freiburg : Herder, 1961, No. 6,
in die Kirchengeschichte published in the first volume of the work *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, on the edition of which he participated.³ After years, he summed up his attitude in the text of *La storia della Chiesa e storia è teologia*,⁴ of which the German version was published in the volume of the work *Kirchengeschichte heute: Geschichtswissenschaft oder Theologie*, edited by Raymund Kottjem.⁵

We can understand the thoughts of the Hubert Jedin also thanks to the following summary:

Similarly like Jesus Christ was both the man and God at the same time, even the Church is a subject of the faith, it is not in the history just *spiritual fellowship*, but visible historical being (with the soul and body), and it is subordinated to the *development*, not only as a human institution, but also because in it’s inside works the Holy Spirit. In this sense, the Church history is historical ecclesiology – it does not reveal only it what is supposed to be, but also what was or is. It makes visible of God in the human. Faith allows discovering in the history how human could never destroy the divine and bring the Church to fall. In other words said; it was always possible to be the holy in the Church.

Believers, looking at the Church, prevent to talk about controversial events (e.g. Edict of Milan, Tridentine ecclesiology, clericalism, Romanism, etc.). Who falls into such a perspective, either *sanctifies* the present and forgets the past, or does not know the past. The solution is not *keeping quiet* about the phenomena, with which we can not cope, nor do simply them just overlook. But neither to *condemn* what happened in the past. Between the first and the second is a *tertium quid*: relativizing of the past and the present in continuity (not in discontinuity).

Historical character of the Church history, however, does not constitute problems, and we consider it as fact (it would also deserve a certain clarifications, but we avoid them). It does not suggest the problems among historians, but the same is not happening among theologians. Jedin itself, who adopt a critical stance to the tendency of the dogmatists toward the paradigms of *salvation history and history of the theology*, has pointed out on this already in 1967. And in the colloquium in 1981, Miguel Batllori also alluded to the disdain of the dogmatic professors by the professors of the Church history.

This Join’s attitude had the options, refinement and chiseling from the side of those who belong to one or more subsequent generations. But the most important thing has been already said.

2. Roman Colloquium (1981) and the Centenary of Jedin

Shortly after the death of Hubert Jedin, even in 1980, Italian-German Historical Institute organized in Trident a symposium entitled Hubert Jedin. Documents of this symposium appeared in the bulletin of the above mentioned Institute.6 These documents contain the contribution Kirchengeschichte als Geschichte und Theologie in der Sicht Hubert Jedins, in which explained point of Jedin view his student Erwin Iserloh.7

Soon after, the Rome Institute of Görres Company8 also organized a colloquium on fundamental issues of the church-historical method,9 the colloquium, which finally took place from 24 to 27 of June, 1981. About a hundred experts participated at this colloquium; however, just over twelve participants could imagine their views. Absence of representatives from the Latin America was scandalous. Documents from the colloquium appeared only in 1985, as the 80th volume of the magazine Römische Quartalschrift for Christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte. The seminar once again reserved the place for the Jedin spokesman, already mentioned Iserlohn, the orientation of which was defined by its very title of the contribution – Kirchengeschichte: eine Wissenschaft theologische.10 He was countered by Victor Conzemius with the contribution of, whose title was also lucid – Kirchengeschichte als nichttheologische 'Wissenschaft'.11 In other texts flashed a wide range of attitudes, what we just might imagine in this issue.12

In 2000, during the celebration of the Centenary of Jedin birth, which was held in Bensberg, the study session devoted to some aspects of his life and scientific work.13 Although no one specifically raised the topic, which we are now dealing

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6 Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento / Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient.
8 Römisches Institut der Görres-Gesellschaft in Roma
9 Grundfragen der Kirchengeschichtlichen Methode – Heute.
12 It is worth mentioning an examination of conscience of R. Aubert (AUBERT, Roger. Historiens croyants et historiens incroyants devant l’histoire religieuse. In L’histoire et l’historien; Debats et recherches du Centre Catholique des Français Intellectuels. Paris : Éditions Fayard, 1964 No. 47, pp. 28-43), although it also eventually inclined to the profane side of ecclesiastical historiography. I must add that on the one hand Aubert not address some important aspects, but on the other, the general situation drastically changed course for the last forty years, so some feature of its assumptions (e.g. Love for truth of the atheistic historian, or the granting of simplicity to those who are attacking of Christianity as such) stand out. It is still needed to mention about the O. Kohler (KOHLER, Oskar. Catholic Geschichtsschreibung allgemeiner History: und heute noch möglich notwendig? Schwerte : Schwerte Catholic Academy, 1989). In this case it is necessary to point out that the general framework is different (as the author has in the mind the general historiography, and not the one, subject of which is the Church). For the most part, he is not based on German history and historiography; he moves, moreover, between the theory and theology of history. But despite to all this, it can be deduced that he is situated to the Jedin side.
with, it starred in more than one citation: in the adhesive, confrontational or modulator form.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{3. Voices from the Present (several citations of the text)}

I would like to remind by a few examples, using the current texts, as that, what was outlined half a century ago, continues in determination (or assumptions) of the attitudes towards the Join’s arguments.\textsuperscript{15} Then, I will demonstrate few inaccuracies, inconsistencies, mixing the levels and questions, and I finish by an introduction of outlines a sense, which given question finally acquired in the present.

\textit{Europe}

In the connection with the fact that already for several years in Germany is published a collective work under the leadership of Erwin Gatz\textit{a} \textit{Kirche und Katholizismus} ... (Paderborn 1998-), we can begin to ask what forces us to make a distinction between the \textit{Church and Catholicism}? Is it conceivable an existence of the second without the first? And if so, on what basis anyone seeks to rid of the Church study of all its cultural, social, political ... manifestations (which would be supposedly something what is meant by Catholicism)?\textsuperscript{16}

In 2003, it was founded magazine \textit{Rivista di storia del cristianesimo} in Brescia, which declares itself as \textit{secular}. This term is understood in the sense of the detachment from the Church and the scientific approach to the issues. The notion of \textit{scientific} it is understood something what is not in accordance with the “\textit{ideological or theological ecclesiastical explanation}” or subordinated to this explanation.\textsuperscript{17}

It echoes from France even such a bold voice: “\textit{It is a battle already won, respectively, just winning; new and fruitful way of writing of this history, such, which clearly deprives it of any starting point of the theological basis. In a word: Church history is staggered by the religious history.”}\textsuperscript{18} It is strange that on the one hand (Savart 2004) it departs from a colleague, based on whom the Church history would be determined to the clergy and would be “an \textit{institutional history, which is created with aim to shape of those who should take care for the institution},” so that finally, on the other side, he stand his \textit{religious history} against the theology of the history (with which would be the Church history or denominational historiography),and thus he would found a sense with the mission to reflect “\textit{the relationship between human history and the history of salvation}.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{14} See also my comment to both remembering seminars (BARNADAS, Josep M. Boletín bibliográfico de historia ecclesiastica europea. In Anuario Boliviana de la Academia de Historia Ecclesiástica, 2003, No. 9, pp. 197-199).

\textsuperscript{15} Cases that I will introduce, however, should not to be interpreted as if they constitute at present the only valid position. See also Note to P. Ambrogio Eszer OP (No. 43).


\textsuperscript{19} Ibídem.
Certain Romanian author interrupted the dispute over the future development of the ecclesiastical historiography in his country; namely because he wanted to see “whether the interpretation of the phenomena studied finally liberated from the burden of nationalism and denominationalism”. Needless to say that the context forces to understand the issue from the starting point perspective, and that such exemption is appropriate and desirable!

In addition, in one bibliographic comment related with a book about the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century, which was written by a man who claims to be a Christian, is such denominationalism assessed as “very sensible observation, because this dual nature gives the whole value to the work. He collect his documentation with the freedom and the precision of the real scientist, scholar ... But, on the other hand, he is an observer, whose own belief empowers to assess the facts from the inside, to read between the lines, to interpret the claims, to divine and express probable motives of such authority in such decisions and such choice of the religious policy ...”

In another commentary, specifically commenting the book *The Invention of Saintliness* (2003), we can read that “from the works of P. Brown or A. Abucheesa, which changed the image of the historiographical approach of these texts so that they got them rid of purely confessional use, which was previously in the habit ...

**Latin America**

In relatively recently elaborated work (Auza 1996) there are coming to light just some of the previous European coordinates, however, they are defined by the Latin American context. The author of the work begins with an outline of what he calls “specialized history, concerning the Church, which is understood as the Church history” that would be interested in “bishops, their lives and activities, of the Magisterium, the clergy, the list of saints, the physical building of churches, creating dioceses, establishment of the orders and congregations, relationship between Church – state”.

Against to this approach stands an approach of those who themselves “delve, rejecting the traditional way, into the study of no longer complete general history of the Church in our countries, and not of institutional histories, but partial aspects

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26 AUZA, El perfil del historiador de la Iglesia, p. 63.
27 Ibidem.
only, which are, however, less formal, but more deeply to understand the birth and growth of the faith in order to see the signs, which finally outline the history of salvation...⁵² These would probably have been known even as historians of Catholicism.

There would exist even the third group, “which is not considered by the upper sector of Catholicism – and they probably have the reason for it – as historians of the Church”,⁵⁹ specifically a group of secular historians, whose distinguishing feature is that they are “closing to the subjects based on the entirely scientific reasons, since, in general, they do not come from the Christian circles, or not showing an affiliation to the Catholic faith, even if they are not also against she doctrine of the faith. Therefore, they enter into religious themes or Church-related themes for other reasons, however, influenced by scientific objectives, which have nothing to do with the faith and have purely scientific nature”.³⁰ Their topics include, for example, religious demographics, acquiring for spiritual vocations, behavior of the hierarchy as regards political and social issues, Episcopal Magisterium, the Church and political power, etc. There is an important that “some issues, which are part of the Church history ... are becoming to be discussed by those who have little or no interest on the dimension of the faith” and that “for the greater part of secular culture are those historians used to be considered as professionals in the topics of the Church”.³¹

In regard to this third group, there is necessary to point out danger posed by. This danger is represented by the lack of an appreciation of their incompetence. Indeed, it is so, personal experience imposes to this group the idea that “it can study in more perfect way the questions connected with the Church as an institution, however, it does not have the ability to enter into more complex topics of the Church”.³²

The suggested overview offers two more options, but those are partly coincide with any of the previous groups. On the one hand, the group of “those who have not raised the attractive, original and profound issues and write for undemanding audiences,” and on the other side, “the works of those, who try to influence the historiographical currents and therefore they write with scientific precision, raising relevant issues and do not act based on initial apologetic attitude”.³³

The second example, which I want to introduce, is linked to the theme of Mexican cristeros. In 2006, eighty years have passed since this phenomenon was discovered. From an interview with the Archbishop of the Querétar Diocese, I would like to highlight one evaluation or the response to the following journalist question: “To name Cristeros those, who fought for fair law and religious freedom, was a mock-

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²⁸ AUZA, El perfil del historiador de la Iglesia, p. 65.
²⁹ AUZA, El perfil del historiador de la Iglesia, p. 69.
³⁰ Ibidem.
³¹ Ibidem.
³² AUZA, El perfil del Historiador de la Iglesia, p. 70 Regarding the competence that is required, it seems to me an important what - in the context of journalism religious themes - recently said Joaquin Navarro-Valls (which for decades led the Vatican Press Office): “just as is requested from a journalist, which forms sports information, to know what is a sport and show some respect to such activity, should be required such competence even of who constitutes information about the life of the Church” (January 23, 2007, Rome, <www.zenit.org>).
³³ AUZA, El perfil del historiador de la Iglesia, p. 70.
ery, is not it?” (August 17, 2006, Rome, <www.zenit.org>). Monsignor Mario de Gasperini replied: “A similar thing happened at the beginning of the faith with the name of Christians who were called the followers of the Christ. Mockery was again changed into the glory, but there was needed the savvy of one of the foreign historian, Jean Meyer (Frenchman with Mexican citizenship and author of one of the monumental work on the movement), to help us to discover its value and significance.”

It seems to me that in view of what happened, the claim can not be more accurate. Moreover, it introduces us the misery of liberal, Marxist and secular historiography (in connection with which it is not possible to stop not considering the Mexico as one of the sample cases) – for its ideological dependence, incapable to assess fairly the fact politically very incorrect and to see the obvious. It had to do an alien: Jean Meyer praised the democratic exemplary nature of that popular uprising. But he did not remain only at this; he schematized all religious and social potential of the rural folk faith (of course, not just rural!).

Although, I can not elaborate it, I think that in order to strive for the true historiography, it is undoubtedly necessary on one hand, to recover, in its fully active shine, searching of truth in the historian profession, which – we assume – is the only common area, and on the second side, to enjoy from the intellectual freedom and benefit it. Finally, cristeros case would also offer us the opportunity to address more permanent need of both the revisionisms, as well as the distinction among them. But now, we are focusing on a different topic.

Bolivia

In 1996, my two Bolivian historians (Iván Jiménez and Eugenia Bridikhina) sent me a copy of the joint work concerning the colonial religious sisters in one Char-Case cloister (the term refers to the current Bolivia) and asked me on the view. I fulfilled their prayer. The work appeared on the following year under the title Las Esposa Cristo de vida religiosa y actividades en los economicas conventos de Charcas del siglo XVIII. By the way, it was published without having one only single difference between the original and the published text, and my criticism did not deserve the slightest mention. But, I really made a number of repairs. After all, why not to make them, even if that, what those above mentioned writers ultimately knew to say about women monastic life in CharCase, was the discovery of subordination

34 Ibidem.
35 About the personal trajectory of Jean Meyer I was able to find the following: Although, it seems, was baptized and confirmed early – I do not know if as a Catholic or Protestant – he grew up outside the of faith. For his doctoral work, he began, as an agnostic, research related to the topic of cristeros. Then he moved (or returned) to Catholicism and got married in the church. Later, divorced and re-married, he converted into Orthodoxy that tolerates the second marriage. (I am grateful for this data to Dr. GG Doucet, Buenos Aires, and the letter of 25 November, 2006). Its position in relation to the Jewish ques tion in the Catholic Church is explainable by its origin (see La Iglesia Católica y sus culpa en el pasado. In Istor. Mexico 2000, No. 3, pp. 123-128; Del Antisemitismo genocidio. In Istor. Mexico 2001, No. 5, pp. 139-148).
of women to a man (anachronistic feminist dogma), and that it was a life on the margins of society and in closeness (sterile tautology), and that its economic activity in the management of her property showed the important role of the Church in colonial society (banality)?

Just this case seems to me worthy to be selected, because from it shines theoretical dependence of the Latin American historiography on the subject (with long series of the incompetence, prejudices and their own limits), of the historiography incapable of filtering and critical approach, and shows the incompetence of the authors in the field, which they decided to make the subject of the study, and about which mentioned Auza (1996) spoke and from it screams an inevitable and rough reductionism in the presentation and in the interpretation of the information, and lack of the harmony between the author and subject.

4. Several Definitions

Historiographical levels

At colloquium in Rome, particularly Dr. Miquel Batllori SJ\(^37\) had the task to emphasize the distinction of different levels at which it operates, and in which the ecclesiastical historiography is manifested. He distinguishes namely teaching, the research and the interpretation so that after the various peripeties finally located himself at the outside of Jedin position. Although, I personally am not convinced with his argumentative chain in any of its links, it does not prevent me to discern the part, which is not being wrong – in order we really know whether the Church history is a discipline theological or historical, we must, first of all, make clear whether we mean an erudition, while there is no doubt that it is able to valuable and beneficial without the need to believe in the God, or to have a culture of the theologian (the Church history are understood as a positive science), and the synthesis of large thematic or territorial areas, when the competence and the Christian faith are already less dispensable, but in them, in extremis, the historian can still stay outside of theological grouping or the interpretation – assessment on any of its level of the generalization, because whether or not theology is the product, and the author certainly will not be able to assess the subject of his study without knowledge from the inside (indeed an equivalent adherence to him by himself, and therefore unthinkable without him).

Although Batllori did not touch this, it seems to me that in the current conjunction of the struggle for hegemony paradigm, it is of utmost importance to stress that we cannot raise the question within the academic environment only. I want to say that it’s truly topos / locus / site includes – perhaps even more frequently – what we might call controlling of the mass media (press, television, journalism ...).\(^38\) When we


\(^{38}\) As a demonstration of the delicate topic (abortion) and the frequent insolvency of the introduced information, I would like to give this case as a cocky and irresponsible handling "New York Times admits that he used false information in the article advocating abortion" (ACI, 2007, Jan. 7). I want to
observe the situation of our topic from this perspective, the question of competence, on the one hand, becomes much more fundamental importance, and on the other hand, it is necessary to start with leaving that complexed naivety aside, to which is reduced our effort by the dominant environment, naivety, which, it seems, forbids us to reach for the coupling hypothesis, namely active and threatening intervention of the lodges and the mafias, etc. Remember yourselves – to get an example – the huge waves that caused the book *The Da Vinci Code* written by Dan Brown.

*Historiographical polarization*

Another angle of the view, which can be applied to the Jedin thesis, is manifested in a series of opposing definitions:

a) *positivism – interpreterism*. It is not necessary that those, who require historiographical nature of the Church history, became the supporters of positivism, although it might be seemed so. Similarly, it is not unnecessary even to those, who are doing it from a *theological* position, fight on the side of the interpreterism. Undoubtedly, there is conceivable the positivist theological historian – theolohistorian and the historic historian – histohistorian – of the interpreterism. It seems to me that this division has more depth than the choice between the Church histories from purely historical or purely theological (or mixed) point of view. If we’re already on the subject, it is worth pointing asymmetry: the first confirms purely the historical nature of the Church history; others again require diverse or mixed nature of the ecclesiastical historiography.

b) *theology – history*. Looking at the above texts can find a list of the following (or rather labels?): Theology; History of salvation; Church history; Institutional history; Religious history; The history of religion, etc.

This list should, already itself, stand us in front of the wide range of the confusion, misunderstandings and wrong ... solutions. I limit myself to one example. Religious histories can be understood as the things so different: on the one hand, as a synonym of the religious studies (de-ecclesiologic and outside of the denominationalism), and on the other hand, as a label, which French Catholic histori...
ans gave to their field of the work within the state (laicus or laical) universities of their country.

I marked as an *incorrect* the terminology solutions, especially in the *trivial* sense. Really, why one, who is studying spirituality, makes the *religious history* and does not make the *history of salvation* or even the Church histories? I mean, why is the Church histories forbidden to study other things, as an institution or hierarchy?[^1] Even the term *trivial* emphasizes also *conventional, tautological nature*, therefore to reserve the certain content to some labels only based on the decision, and not as the result of an internal conceptual necessity to deal with those labels.

c) *ecclesiology / de-ecclesiology-denominationalism / interdenominationalism*. With these pairs of opposing signs we get to the heart of the matter, which, seems to me, is more important given that the debate about theology/ non theology study of the Church histories are disappearing, even though it is also not *just* a question of *competence* and even not of the interdenominational *ecumenicity*. Or in other words, it is necessary to define of the *entitlements* which *competence* brings, and to point out on the possible incompatibilities between interdenominationalism and the competence.

d) *faith – atheism*. We get to the next question (because one way or another, finally, we would come to it), *what guarantees of the respecticity / scientific confidence may deserve the historical interpretation of the Christian realities formed outside of the faith?*

I mean the clear study of the religion from the *outside* (*outside* itself). And to be understood that the preceding argument applies to *methodological* or *programmatic*, not *existential outside*; whereas it does not mean that all those who decided for this type of *the religious studies*, would be personally the atheists.

If we were limited to the level of the *facticity*, there is no doubt of its existence; even in certain areas, topics on some territories or in the academic environments, the given existence could become intellectually *hegemonic* (and let us remember the old familiar science-policy *strategy* consisting of the selection, referring to and citing only those who share the same assumptions and choices, in this case the assumptions and premises of those who are not interested in the denominationalism). Of course, this facticity is not enough to build the legitimacy on it. And then, there already can be emerged many and serious doubts.^[2]

It seems to me, however, that more than on them, it is an important to draw attention to another fact – when the terms of the *facticity* and *hegemony* surprise us, maybe we will be able to start focusing on real, concise terms of the Join’s question.

[^1]: Commenting on the book at *L’Historien et la foi* (DELUMEAU, Jean (ed.). *L’Historien et la foi*. Paris : Fayard, 1996) I had in mind “a thousand and one misunderstandings, to which lead the terms so innocent, such as history of the Church, the religious history or the history of religion and other similar. The reader of the work, which we comment must know that the label of the *religious history*, which is too far from – at least not among the French – the notion of the *history of the Church created by atheists*, is a label, which was imposed to very lively French Catholic historiography by hegemonic laicism ...” (Barnadas in *Anuario Boliviana de la Academia de Historia Ecclesiástica*, 1998, No. 4, p. 204).
In my opinion, there is at least in the present the question raised in term of power (institutional, paradigm, methodological, doctrinal, and ideological). There is gradually acclimatized / promoted the idea (especially through the facts!) that normal, canonical, acceptable, and valid prerequisite for the study of the Church histories is declerical, de-ecclesiologic, interdenominational, secular or simply the academic approach. For now, and in the best case, there occurs only the coexistence of two paradigms: next to the confessional perspective stands the consideration, which is disconnected from the faith. But it does not appear to be merely unthinkable only, but rather reasonably foreseeable and that we soon reach the moment, where we are not yet occurred, and in which the so-called religious studies will be totally subordinated to the service of that global anti-Christian Kulturkampf global, which has secular laic character, and which I tried to outline a few years ago.

5. And we Come to the Witness...

In 2005, I published, in the form of the interview, something like memories. I would like to choose two parts from them, in which are recorded certain motifs, previously registered, but they summed up my attitude towards the topic studied. I wish that through these texts was clearer my point of view.

The first represents the part of the twelfth chapter, whose title is En la Brecha de la Historia (I): La Practica del oficio (1962–2002). “What relationship exists between your practice as the historian and your Christian faith, or your relationship to the Church?” Of course, there always had, has and will have different forms, and therefore it must be spoken about them separately. My Christian faith is linked to my work of the historian to such an extent, in which this work has forced me to be interested in the historical phenomenon of Christianity and the Church. We can start by my joining into the Comisión de Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina (CEHILA, 1973) and my unsuccessful collaboration with the magazine Presencia on the issue devoted to the one hundred and fifty’s anniversary (1975). For these reasons, there is included into the problem even the theme of interference of certain Catholic hierarchy in the production and distribution of my certain texts. But it

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43 From the voluminous casuistic that is an anecdotal and picaresque, and which could be mentioned, let us mention this case. As regards the two huge volumes of documentation containing the analysis of the reign of the Emperor – the Charles I. of Habsburg (he died in 1922 and was beatified in 1988), and in which among a thousand other topics is documented the conspiracy of the freemasons and the communists, and coming out the aspects that are not at all alien to our topic. On the one hand, they are well meant of the laic objections to his conspiracy inventions and the judgments, which are based on the catholic moral criteria, and on the other hand, the peaceful response of one commentator: “tut catholique a le droit de juger les événements passés selon les canon moraux de son Église et les justes intérêts de celle-ci. Si on définit ‘non scientifiques’ les recherches et les publications sur certaines organisations [he thinks here about the freemasonry and the sovietism], il me semble que l’on s’éloigne de la vérité “ (see review Ambrogio Eszer OP in the Revue d’ Histoire Ecclesiastique (2006, Vol. 101, No. 3-4, pp. 1304-1310) works Rettung der Untergang oder Donaumonarchie? Ed. Elisabeth Kovacs. Wien etc.: Böhlau, 2004.


seems to me, an incomparably more important, of my longstanding belief the lack of congruence in the so-called religious studies, which are within the competence of the people, who are mostly unbelievers in the Christian God, nor in any other entity, which should be accrued with the name of God (it is needed to note like this, because St. Paul also mentioned, on certain occasion, of those who have stomach for God). If I should summarize it, it seems, as if a deaf tried to make judgments and to express himself with the expert knowledge on the Beethoven’s 9th Symphony.

In this sense, and with an importance incomparably greater such as whether or not this was in conflict with the hierarchy, I therefore consider that my historiographical treatment of the Christian topic has always been from the inside of the both, the Church and the faith. At first, because I was baptized in the Church, which has never me excommunicated (!), then because I consider absolutely dishonest the studies of the atheists dealing with avatars and scandals of the believers histories; thus, if one of them seeks to derive the discredit of the Christianity.

Religious attitude, which human being poses, has, in the more general sense, necessarily an impact on his intellectual production as of the historian (sociologist, anthropologist or anyone). In the world of the Christian history (currently little bit after Christian), in extent, in which the Christianity contains the idea of the human being, about his destiny, social life, needs, in the attitude, which the human being poses, is reflected more or less consciously, in the form of evaluation, measurement and views on human life, which deals with. Needless to say, I’m totally alien from the secular-laic schizophrenic paradigm, which lives in the illusion, that they can deal with (ex) Christian communities, which as if were not as such or even never existed.

My position, as a prudent member of the Catholic Church in Bolivia, was finally an incentive of such initiatives, as the establishment of Bolivia Academy of History of the Church and series of the studies, which incurred by its sheer existence and which would otherwise be likely not to see the light of the world. This page presents an important elements in the Church so forgetful, as is the Catholic Church in Bolivia, because it gives a very specific historical responsibility for any of the historian, who has not denounced his Catholic baptism, and puts him in front of the obligations exceeding those, the majority of misinformed Catholic believers attributed to historical knowledge. I mean, they are not part of what we usually attribute to the general historiography in the general society, because the consciousness of their historical status is an essential component of the Christian faith.46

The second text is part of the sixteenth chapter, entitled Algo de una vida menos religiosa. “It seems to me that since a certain time I was becoming ever more motivated to raise the profile of my Catholicism in my cultural production. Am I right?”

Maybe ... I have previously said that there was a gradual discovery of the huge Christian illiteracy, and that this discovery has moved me to raise the profile of the Christian starting points of my culture. I think that everything lies in overcoming of another misunderstanding: I perceive the culture of the 20th century in Bolivia as a culture modeled by secular – laic paradigm, which brought initially the liberals

and Marxists later. It comes from Europe, especially from France. We may ask: what constitutes the laicism practiced in the community life? Normative answer is: any citizen, whether he is religious or not, when acting in the public space, he should behave as if he had any. I want to say that a visible social space should remain clean of any religious adherence (in doctrinal definition it is a private question). In such countries as Bolivia, which a hundred years ago took yet up the way of dechristianization, and this move already counted on with the support, which was almost taboo, and with the conviction that the Catholic life is the subject of women. Thus, there could be build the literary, historiographical, music, art, etc. ... culture from which the Catholic phenomenon barely peered out.

In relation to the canonical interpretation of the laicism I take opposite view. To accept the hypothesis of an adoption of the laic constitution of the state we cannot legitimately ignore the existence of the faithful, and therefore neither to deny them, whether directly or indirectly, and the public display of what they are (i.e. the faithful Christians) in any sphere of their existence (private and public). Therefore, the only form of democratic normalcy that I can accept is one, in which each creator of the culture reflects in his work his deepest world. It follows that the catholic cultural creator is to offer the work, whose real understanding will be possible only by taking into the consideration its Christian religious component, without any type of the Nikodem transvestitism. If this component is not perceived by some honest consumer, it can be said that his Christianity is questionable, or that he allowed to be convinced by the prevailing laic concept. Only when these things are understood and put into practice, we can really imagine what a Christian can become the Bolivian culture.

All this will be perhaps understandable if I will mention another relatively fresh episode of my life. One day I red in a newsletter titled Rápidas that there will be celebrated The Centenary of evangelization (1895–1995) in Bolivia. Sense of responsibility, which forces the historian to stand up for the Church and for the truth, encouraged me to publish a short note, in which I refuted this manipulation of the history. Then I wrote: „Stressing not once, but more than twenty years of many uncertainties that accompanied the Catholic evangelization in CharCase since the 16th century, it seems to me an appropriate to make note of that as the historian I never thought that we should wait for the arrival of the Plymouth Brethren, to be proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Bolivia, and by whom we want to be inspired all those, who – because we want to – consider ourselves for Christians.”

Therefore, it seems to me the right attitude of Dr. Raniero Cantalamesu OFM Cap., papal preacher: “Is the Christian faith conditional on the historical research? No doubt, at least to some extent. But I think that ungodliness makes it much, much more. If someone close to the figure of Christ and to the Gospels as unbeliever (this is the case, if I understand correctly, of the Augean at least), the substantial is already decided at the outset ...” (CANTALAMESA, Raniero. Modernas Investigaciones sobre Jesús de Nazaret, <http://www.zenit.org/article-21940?l=spanish>, December 2, 2006). And there is something grotesque that do not yet exist or occur rarely, laic scholars willing to admit that they have a plank in own eye, but there is the abundance of those who see, complain and ultimately negatively assess the plank in the foreign eye ...

48 BARNADAS, Ecumenismo y verdad, p. 2.
Against this background, we can better understand the reason for the existence of what we understand as certain procedural *denominationalism* of the historian’s work. From this perspective of the historiography, it would perhaps be sufficient to say that development reflects the awareness of the need to overcome the purely erudite level, and give it a transcendent dimension. Or, even my personal way to bring into practice the truth that the Church is composed by all baptized, not just by the hierarchy, or those, who are entrusted with more or less by bureaucratic tasks. The Church as a living organism must rely on the public word in the disciplines, which are *own* to each one of their experts. What would the Church be, if things were going as if there was no historian among them?

6... *To Finally Take a Position on the Topic*

After attempting a summation of various elements and factors that were gradually emerged to us, we might ask the following two questions:

1) In the context of increasing of the *global laic onslaught* (its impact, of course, goes beyond the historiography, as we have already seen that it seeks to erase any religious reference from the public space), it does not mean any kind of *interdenominationalism* of the study of the Church history and it’s necessarily promotion? Is it not a result of validation of purely and simply anti-Christian project? Too many and too strong signs forces me to think that this is the application of that general project of *Kulturkampf* into our area.

2) If we stand in front of the match, however, it is not just about power and hegemony, but simply for the right of Christians on the *socially visible* existence, it is not far-fetched question: Will it not be another embarrassing kind of the liquidation, hatred towards himself and cowards of the silence / retreat (which were already mentioned forty years ago by Pope Paul VI., and since then they have became stronger), the submission to the domination of the *single laic thinking*? If we look at things from this perspective, it is clear that only the power of faith (in our Christian context) is able to give a proper answer to the real *question of our time*. On the other hand, we can again discern that the proposal (with a choice of the approval of the laicism) of the large part of the *liberal* historiography (*liberal* in their remote origin, since after the time it lost on its original severity and was renamed into the aggressive fighter for intolerance everywhere that will receive some space under its control) is absolutely poor and insufficient.

50 BARNADAS, Una vida entrevista, pp. 234-236.
51 About something from that I wanted to give as an evidence in the obituary titled El meu Pare Batllori, 1909–2003 (Barnadas in Questions de Vida Cristiana. Barcelona: Montserrat, 2003, No. 210, pp. 128-138). In one of his an important passages can be read (translation): "... how is it possible that there is not in the formation of P. Batlloriho a piece of his unacceptable banality? Or, in other words, do not they see that his liberalism does not reach such a level so that an entire one professional life was legitimized in his product? Or, to be, at least, presented as such? Several times I have asked to myself, what is missing in his, such extensive work. Maybe it was something out of it. We already know that the history has nothing to do with the *system* (and should they some be, so certainly not logical). And if it is so, would not it need so that just the historian reflected him by himself in such reality that would allow discerning the network of the incoherency and mealy of all kinds, which must certainly not to
7. Something to the Conclusion

My conclusions can be expressed by the following five theses:

1. It seems clear to me that what started by Jedin as a conversation about the theology of the study of the Church history, ends today by establishing the match for supremacy between denominationalism and interdenominationalism, or even by studying of the history of Christianity, which is cut off from faith, that between believing historiography and laic historiography (an atheistic in practice) of our knowledge of the subject. In fact, it is important to stress that this is only a partial aspect of the struggle for the absolute supremacy of the enforced laicism over the right for social presence of the Christians as such. In this struggle some episodes may scrunch and scrunch more than others and some periods are more advanced than others. But globally it’s clear.

2. With the distance of nearly fifty years, it is now much more difficult to defend the position intertheological historiography, since the new configuration of the environment and its actors radicalized terms: tendency, currently already documented without problems, allows to see the day, and it is already close, when there will simply excluded, silenced, canceled and become impassable the legitimacy of the believing ecclesiastical historiography (unless it is understood in the context of the denominationalism, and delivered by one of the parties involved for private per se).

3. There is no doubt that the terms, on which we currently built question, are incomparably much more transcendent than those from the period of the Jedin and its adversaries (which belonged, one and the second, even into peacetime, in which was not doubt about rights of both, the faith and the believers, to be present in the academic and intellectual public space). On the other hand, the current formulation of the question has the advantage, which allows seeing more clearly what was about, at least, since the period of Jedin.

4. There is suited time to understand that the real debate at present is not found-ed primarily in whether atheists (Apostolic or not), agnostics, or believers of the other religions or faiths can also deal with the study of the historical phenomenon of Christianity,52 but whether confessional, or believer access get an equal scientific

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52 In the context of the topic of this contribution needless to say, that since it’s opening (1880/1881) the entrance of researchers into the Vatican secret archives was depended on their position of the believer or atheist (see Il libro del Centenario: l’Archivio Segreto Vaticano and un secolo dalla sua aper-
legitimacy as to the another against it standing approaches, as well as whether is it, especially in our latitudes and in the current circumstances, justified, so that the believer could put into the study, analysis and evaluation of the historical expressions of the Christian life, which, as if (within the meaning of Kantian als ob) it was not, and to force him to do it in this way.53

5. If we face to more radical and more fundamentalist Kulturkampf, as was the German in the second half of the 19th century, and when the Christian faith will, in its various confessions, face to the further the more subjugate and conquering fight of civil paradigms, then the place of the historiographical question of denominationalism and ecclesiology will be reserved in the trench, in the context of general cultural dialogue / cultural defense from the Catholicism side. And, it seems to me that we believer, are not allowed to give up the place which belongs to us, and especially to encapsulate of our broken faith cowardice by the terms as a progressive view on the faith or others, no less credible, because the place, which belongs to us, is absolutely the right and appropriate place of the study of the Church histories.

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53 In the connection with this, it is appropriate to mention what, speaking about the study and evaluation of the Christian art, recently emphasized Benedict XVI. by pointing out that, to be act “not like acting sometimes the art historians, who interpret it only formally under the art techniques. It is more desirable that we entered into content and revived the content, which inspired this great art... So even the Church will be able to imagine itself as the organism, rather than an oppression and the power – as some want to see – but in the spiritual fertility in the history unrepeatable, or, at the very least, I would dare to say what can not be found outside of the Catholic Church” (<http://www.zenit.org>, March 11, 2007). That, what is here really raised, outside of the confessional framework, it is more than doubtful legitimacy of the artistic, and unbelieving historiography in relation to the believers, or to the confessional artistic expressions.