

THEOLOGICAL METHODS IN THE MIDDLE AGES¹

Métodos Teológicos en la Edad Media

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Abstract:

To speak of the methods of theology in the Middle Ages means to recognize the coexistence of pluriform methodological and epistemological postures in theology. In some cases this may be caused by the interests that generate them, in others the contexts of reflection and production, or the direct ties with socio-cultural events that feed them and make them diverse. Thus theological knowing from the point of view of its rationality and the way or ways in which it is elaborated and developed in its sphere of tradition and Christian thought supposes an appropriate location in the cultural medium that gave it life and of which it is, at the same time, its expression.

Key words: Fundamental theology, Medieval theology, Scholastic Theology, Dialectical theology, Theological method.

Resumen:

Hablar de los Métodos de la Teología en la Edad Media, significa reconocer la coexistencia de muy pluriformes posturas metodológicas y epistemológicas en Teología, sea por los intereses que la generan, los contextos de reflexión y producción de los cuales son expresión, así

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como de sus vínculos directos con los acontecimientos socio culturales que la alimentan y hacen diversa. Así, el saber teológico, desde el punto de vista de su racionalidad y de la forma o formas como se elabora y desarrolla en el ámbito propio de la tradición y del pensamiento cristiano, supone una apropiada ubicación en el medio cultural que le dio vida y del cual es al mismo tiempo, su expresión.

Palabras clave: Teología fundamental, Teología medieval, Teología escolástica, Teología dialéctica, Método teológico.

The Middle Ages is culturally a very rich and controversial stage in Western history, because of the deep changes given then, that will mark definitively not only the identity of modern and contemporary Europe, but also the identity of Christianity and its varied Occidental expressions. From the standpoint of Christian theology, this period is very relevant because in this age takes shape the archetypal building of the thinking and the Catholic faith.

An approach to its own context, especially from its epistemological level, it will let to identify three successive stages of theological knowledge, ranging from the initial dominance of faith over reason, followed by the weight of speculative reason over faith, and finally a radical distinction and separation of these two paths of Christian mystery discernment, in a moment of history that is identified with the decline of the dialectics, as constituent and fundamental component of the theological task. Thus, it generates scholasticism, dogmatic and doctrinal, where it survives the Catholic thought. Not so much the dynamism of its critical and methodological pluralism, but the overall conclusions reached by the Christian tradition dependent on the Trent Council, which has preserved, through treaties, statics and invariable such as inspirational deposit of all true theology.

This article is developed in six parts, the first four have a historical and contextual nature, necessary to frame the issue from different perspectives (socio-cultural, religious and theological, especially). The fifth part reviews in an original way theological knowledge in the Middle Ages and its methods, to provide in the sixth, an approach to scholastic dialectics, in the framework of pedagogical strategies for the transmission of knowledge in the Medieval University.

I. CONCERNING THE PERIODIZATION OF HISTORY

One of the most debated issues in the field of historiography is precisely that of the periodization of history². This periodization can be fixed around limitations of different order: chronological, identifying the principal and highly significant events for the advance of peoples; their characteristic modes of production; their distinctive cultural forms; the march of the spirit of ideas, etc., to mention of few of the more frequent criteria used.

From the viewpoint of ideas, the most adequate criterion of periodization has to do with the forms of knowledge; it is the epistemological one, as has been posed very well by Michel Foucault in his work *Les mots et les choses: une archeologie des sciences humaines*. There, the author distinguishes five periods:

1. The primitive period, from the dawn of humanity, characterized by a space of nomadic and primitive culture, until the forming of sedentary western societies; in this period, the way of knowledge is identified with the mythos;
2. The ancient period,³ which is related to the beginning of writing between 3,500 and 3,000 B.C.E., a period that has a special preponderance of Greek philosophy, and that extends until the fall of the Roman Empire, which happened, for many, in the second half of the V century C.E. In this period, the characteristic knowledge is logos which replaces the mythos.
3. The Medieval Period, that goes from the fall of the Roman Empire until the beginning of the shaping of modern societies in the XV century C.E.; in this period, knowledge around which societies structure themselves is in a proper sense, theology.
4. The modern period, from the renaissance movement until the French revolution in the XVIII century, that will be characterized by the enter of *experimental reason* as synonymous of a culture in search of autonomy;
5. Finally, the contemporary period, identified with the XIX and XX centuries, epistemologically is an expression of the dominance of *positive science*, natural

² Another of the prior aspects of capital importance, at the moment of approaching history, has to do with the very concept of history as it has been developed in the West and in the East. Such a study, no doubt, permits the better comprehension of periodization and the option that best directs an approximation to the particular events of some period, but given the characteristics of this work, it is a question we can avoid for this moment.

³ This period is also presented as Greco-Latin or Greco-Roman, affirming that it extended from the formation of the Greek people and society in the VIII century B.C.E., until the fall of the Roman Empire in the V century C.E., even if the consolidation of the classical Greek culture and society did not take place until the IV century B.C.E.

and social, and the so-called *critical rationality*; there are those who include in the last period of Western history what is today called *postmodernity*⁴.

In general terms, considering the epistemological criterion, the periods of history are marked by the meaning of the great gnoseological revolutions:

1. For the primitive period, it is the appearance of the *homo faber* and his passage to the *homo sapiens*;
2. For the Ancient period its definition is with the emergence of Greek philosophy and rationality;
3. The Medieval period is synonymous with Christian faith, for it is Christianity that determines the identity of Western thought;
4. The Modern period is marked by the Copernican revolution and the development of the empirical sciences;
5. Finally, the renewed attention to the human sciences, the social sciences, positivism and the scientific revolution, constitute the charter of citizenship of contemporary Western knowledge⁵.

This understanding of history, from the type of knowledge that characterizes its different periods, takes us immediately to another conclusion: the aspects of knowledge cannot be treated separately from those of method, for there is a great mutual implication, so that knowledge needs the method to produce more knowledge, just as the method must be founded on a particular knowledge in order to be affirmed by an epistemological mediation; thus, the epistemological posture of the moment puts us before a very determined understanding of knowledge but also a specific way of reaching it, that is, a method⁶.

II. CHRONOLOGICAL LIMITS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The manuals of universal history coincide in saying that in the year 476 the Germanic chieftain Odoacrus dethroned the last of the emperors of the West, Romulus Augustulus, and that with his overthrowing the Roman Empire disappeared. In truth, the Roman **ὀικουμένη** had already fractured as a result of the exacerbated nationalism of the peoples of diverse origin, identified then under the common denomination of barbarian peoples, while classical Rome, the heart of the empire, was also suffering mutations in its customs and institutions. This combination of situations reflects the changes in the midst of the culture which in the end came to mark the beginning of the Middle Ages.

⁴ TORRADO, RAFAEL. "De la ciencia antigua a la ciencia moderna", Conferencia n. III, in Simposio Permanente sobre la Universidad, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá 1998, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Cf. TORO JARAMILLO, IVÁN DARÍO. *Primer Coloquio Nacional de Profesores de Teología*. (conference for the event), Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigó, Medellín 2003, 8-9.

Taking as a point of reference the descent of the Nordic tribes into central Europe in the V century, that continues until the fall of Constantinople in 1453, this determines the principal limits of the Middle Ages. This in turn is subdivided into four periods: 1) The high Middle Ages, from the Vth to the VIth centuries, characterized by a very low level of scientific studies; 2) The IXth to the XIIth centuries in which there is the reception of Islamic science into the West, along with the discovery of Aristotle, facts that raised the level of scientific knowledge; 3) the XIIIth and XIVth centuries during which scholastic medieval science takes shape and flowers; and 4) the lower Middle Ages, in the first half of the XVth century, a period of the decline of scholastic science, in which science as such tries to insert itself more efficiently in practical affairs. Thus appear the first signs of a transformation that will accelerate during the following period, the end of the XVth and the XVIth centuries, yielding finally in the XVIIth to the birth of modern science⁷. As such, the Middle Ages did not enjoy the splendor of the Greek period, for which reason it has been named by many a period of darkness and just a poor copy of the Greeks.

III. GREAT MOMENTS IN THEOLOGY UP TO THE VTH CENTURY

I. The New Testament as history and text: Foundational theology

The facts concerning the New Testament, as also its hermeneutics, cover the first hundred years of the common or Christian era; theological reflection, if one can already call it so, centers on the recovery of the historical memory of the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the understanding of his words and deeds and, above all, the significance of his second coming, all of this without a primarily biographical intent but a believing one. This hermeneutics, done at first by witnesses of the historical event of Jesus, as the evangelist Luke says: "just as it has been passed on by those who were in the beginning eyewitnesses and servants of the Word" (Lk 1,2; cf. Acts 1,8; 2,32; 3,15; 5,32; 10,39.41; 13,31), allow us to observe that this hermeneutic is varied in the light of the plurality of sources and of the doctrinal intentions of the authors in relation to the concrete needs of the different communities.

Nevertheless, the event Christ projects literarily in such a manner that in the text of the New Testament one can identify two clearly defined moments, though inverse in their order of appearance: On the one hand, the combination of the four gospels about Jesus and the interest in recovering their historical memory and, on the other, taken up in a generic manner, the rest of the writings of the canonical New Testament. In these, the literary and theological genius of Saint Paul shines and shows, not an interest in the memory of Jesus but an interest in recovering the historical memory of the community and or what nourishes it, that is, the Passion and Easter kerugma and the different and complementary understandings that happen in the interior of the community. The great effort to understand and deepen the meaning of the historical happening of Jesus, his saving action in the cross and resurrection, and the reach of his teachings and actions,

⁷ Cf. LE GOFF, JACQUES. *Los intelectuales en la Edad Media*, Gedisa, Barcelona 1973, 462.

in the clothing and the discourse and Greek coherence. This is, already at the end of the first century, the first great attempt at understanding and exposition of the truths of Christian revelation. Far from an academic and speculative reflection, the results of the founding Christian experience are laid forth to nourish the faith⁸.

2. Beginning of the IInd Century: Apologetic Theology

The period of the Apostolic Fathers, between 90 and 150 C.E., more or less, is characterized by the direct link with the apostles, as disciples and successors of the same, and in a special manner in its interpretation of Christian revelation. Today more subtle distinctions are made in identifying the great segments that make up the first century: 1) the first thirty five years: the time of Jesus; 2) the years between 33 and 70, the time of the disciples of Jesus, of the apostles or the first Christian generation, which is the same; 3) from the years 70 to 100, approximately, the time of the disciples of the disciples of Jesus, the disciples of the apostles, the second Christian generation, distinguished from the first by its second-hand knowledge of Jesus. According to the distinction of periods, in reality, the Apostolic Fathers would not be directly linked to the apostles but rather to their successors, making up, therefore, the third Christian generation. This period is the transition between the New Testament era, before that fully Christian one, the one of Clement (98), Ignatius of Antioch (110), Policarp (died 156) and Papias (135)⁹.

About the middle of the second century, when Christians had entered fully into contact with the Greco-Roman world, captivated by the profane culture, literary and philosophical, there arises the need to defend and justify the Christians before the civil authorities and public opinion, the need to refute the doctrinal deviations that begin to show up in the midst of the communities, deviations that already showed up in the canonical Christian literature from the end of the first century (cf. Jn 20,31; 1 Jn 4,2-3, 5,1.5 etc.). There imposes itself the need, then, to struggle against heresies, such as the docetists –the passage of a non-human Jesus who merely appeared to be human-; Gnosticism –passage of a preexistent Jesus to believers also preexistent who proceeded like him from the celestial regions--; Marcionism –the rejection of the Old Testament as Holy Scripture for Christians and only partial acceptance of the New--, and Montanism –the possessors of the Paraclete or incarnation of the Paraclete-¹⁰. In this way Christians make an effort to give a reason for their faith in a moment when Christianity emerges from its hiding and of the persecution by Rome, a time when it becomes necessary to offer arguments for Christian convictions before members of the community itself. To achieve this objective, the apologists resort to a philosophical rationality and conceptual instruments with the purpose of showing that Christian truth coincides with the truths of intelligence.

⁸ Cf. LIBANIO, JUAN BAUTISTA Y MURAD, ALFONSO. *Introducción a la teología. Perfiles, enfoques, tareas*, Dabar, México 2000, 108.

⁹ Cf. BOFF, CLODOVIS. *Teoría del método teológico*, Dabar, México 2001, 163.

¹⁰ Cf. CONGAR, YVES. *La foi et la théologie*, Desclée de Brouwer, Belgium 1962, 212.

In this community and social setting a careful scientific study of revelation appears at the end of the second century with Ireneus (died 220) in his work *Adversus haereses*, a refutation of the Gnostics, a sort of first sketch of systematic theology. In Alexandria, the classical site of contacts, if not of syncretism between Biblical faith and Greek reason, emerges a school called **Διδασκαλία**, a Center of Higher Studies in Revelation, founded by Pantenus (died 200), and deepened by his successors Clement (died 215) and Origen (died 255). For them, philosophy has a preparatory or propedeutic nature for the faith, but above all the Christian knowledge that comes from Holy Scripture¹¹, a conviction that emphasizes the elaboration of a rational type with the clear intention of supporting the truth of the content of the Biblical text and explaining for preachers.

3. Greek and Latin Patristics

The Constantinian peace of the IVth century puts Christian before a vast Hellenistic culture and before the official social structures of the Roman Empire. Christians first tend to helenize received doctrine, achieving a union too easy and material between faith and Hellenistic thought, and second, to secularize the Church, entering into the organizational structures of the Empire, especially via the honors and privileges. This influence causes the Church to understand itself and organize itself as a monarchy, with a monarch and rules to assure the succession to the throne, a court, palaces, jurisdiction and an enforced juridical system. In spite of the acquired forms, so far from the gospel and so near to the reproduction of the systems that had oppressed them, in this cultural and ecclesial context is where the Fathers are situated, with their doctrines and lives¹².

The Greek Fathers, in Alexandria and Antioch, attempted through philosophy to approach theology; the Alexandrians opted for Neoplatonism while the Antiochians decided for Aristotle. Origen (died 255) to whom we owe scientific rigor, thanks to which he was able to lead the intellectual effort of theology, and Eusebius (died 364), begin to design as *theology* the *language about the God of Jesus Christ*. Later, in the work of Dionysus the Areopagite, who possibly lived in the fifth century, the word will reach its fullness. Prominent figures are Clement, the teacher of **Παιδεία**, in the Alexandrian school, more interested in the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures. John Chrysostom and Jerome (died 420), the great positive theologian of the Antiochian school, emphasized literal exegesis¹³.

The Latin Fathers, for their part, were slower to utilize the word *theology* and Augustine of Hippo (354-430) preferred the expression *Christian doctrine*, while later Thomas Aquinas would opt for *sacra doctrina*, though he also used the word *theologia* in its etymological and philosophical sense.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹² *Ibid.*, 218.

¹³ Cf. LIBANIO, o. c., I 12.

IV. APPROACH TO THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Great characteristics of medieval society are its economic, political, religious linguistic and cultural unity; the emergence of feudalism; the theocratic order surrounding the Christianization of culture; the fusion of faith and *logos*, as well as between religion and philosophy, giving origin to a new type of knowledge, *theology*. This is understood as the desire to explain the whole of what is real, taking as a beginning divine and Christian revelation, and on the basis of faith, reasoned and intelligible; in other words, it is a matter of translation of the Judeo-Christian conception, of Semitic roots, into a scheme of Greek thought¹⁴. In such a context one can understand the supremacy of theology over philosophy, the latter remaining as a servant to the former and as its only dialogue partner. Later Christian tradition will take charge of transmitting all that this means, with the well-known motto *philosophia ancilla theologiae*.

From the point of view of knowledge, the great interests of the Middle Ages rotate around the concern to found rationally the true faith, and with it, to found the hierarchical social order, justified legally and divinely; the preservation and faithful transmission of tradition. Hence the apologetic nature of knowledge, the defense of orthodoxy and the pointing to and punishment of deviation from it, the respect for order and institutions, and the unqualified support to whoever holds higher office by investiture, based on the principle of authority; finally, the search of a system of integrating knowledge of all the sciences that would be reflected later in the *summae*.

In a direct manner, the elements we have pointed out impelled the surging and development of the methods to construct knowledge, either in Byzantium, a point of meeting in the Orient with classical antiquity, or in general in the Latin tradition, heir of Greco-Roman culture.

The first centuries of the Middle Ages are intimately linked with the incorporation of the Hellenistic inheritance in philosophy, politics, the arts, the sciences, the art of education, the conception of the human being, the entry into the scene first of Plato and then of Aristotle, and the inheritance of Rome, especially in the field of law and the art of government over humans.

Simultaneously, Occident confronted the influx of the barbarians, immigrant peoples who transformed Greco-Roman culture, just as the competitive expansion of the Muslims between the VIth and VIIIth centuries, with their conquering power all over the Mediterranean but also the knowledge of the contributions of philosophy and the sciences.

Beginning with 800, the year of the imperial coronation of Charlemagne, commonly known as the guardian of Catholicity, by Pope Leo III and the instauration of the Christian

¹⁴ Cf. TORRADO, *o. c.*, 33.

Empire in the West, the symbiosis of political structures of earthly kingdom with the religious ones of the Church was realized, causing a confusion of roles. As a result, the regime of vassalage produced by the struggle of the investitures, as ecclesiastical offices extended that had joined a benefit, compromised seriously the autonomy of the spiritual realm.

The Xth and XIth centuries represented an authentic period of obscurity for Christendom with its two Churches, the Western Roman and the Eastern Byzantine. The feudal system in which the life and social organization of the clergy was inserted made it become accustomed to the privileges of nobility, entering into the struggle for power and its benefits (*simony*), and it shaped itself into the relaxed moral life proper to the noble ambience (*nicolaism*). In the end, the excess of the symbiosis empire-church would bring as a consequence the decadence of the religious institutions and the loss of credibility of the Christian Church, a decadence that would deepen later with the emergence of the reformed churches.

And yet, just as the XIth century is that of medieval obscurantism and the three parallel Popes, it is also the period of the Benedictine reform at Cluny and in the Cister and the birth of the movement of evangelical life in which one finds the origin of the mendicant orders in the XIIIth century, which oxygenated the dark Catholicism of the Xth and XIth centuries.

With Charlemagne the seven liberal arts are configured, though in their essence they go back to the Roman sphere of the IInd century (the *trivium* that contained grammar, rhetoric and dialectics and the *quadrivium*, that contained arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), opposed to the servile arts proper to the slaves, in a sort of school improperly called Carolingian university that was not bound to times and places but to the shared life of teachers and pupils.

V. THEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND ITS METHODS

I. *Credo ut intelligam* or the force of faith. The high Middle Ages (Vth to IXth centuries)

In this period of medieval history the Christian West was marked by the reception of Plato, since with Augustine of Hippo (354-430), "the father of theological meditation in the West"¹⁵, it has its place in the integration of Christian faith. For Augustine knowledge is more than a speculative theory: it is the encounter of the soul with God; it is a matter of spiritual assimilation into God by means of charity, expressed in his famous axiom, *believe to understand*, according to this, contemplative life emerges from the harmonious synthesis of the natural light of reason, thanks to the sciences and to philosophy, and the moral attitude as a radical decision for the good and divine illumination in a grace-given and revealed faith.

¹⁵ Cf. CONGAR, *o. c.*, 223.

The wisdom ideal in Patristic theology and in the beginning of the Middle Ages leads to an ample methodological development; thus, in Augustine many aspects of the attitude and theological method of the Fathers are synthesized as he strives to balance the relation between Christian revelation and philosophy, alternating in his work the dialogical method and Biblical narrative with the proofs characteristics of the apologists. For Augustine the *intellectus fidei* in its two variants, *credo ut intelligam* (which affirms the preeminence of faith and hence of theology) with the *intellego ut credam* (preeminence of reason and philosophy), at the service of the same blessedness and Christian contemplation¹⁶.

Patristic theology which channels into monastic theology of the beginning of the VIth century¹⁷, in some aspects can constitute the historical precedent of scholasticism, for without undervaluing the conceptual rigor and systematic exposition it tries to contain dialectical excesses of reason; it is a matter of a *lectio divina* or *sacra pagina*¹⁸.

In fact, it is in this context that the great Latin philosopher and poet *Boethius* (died 524) has been described as "the last Roman and first scholastic," for whom, influenced by Neoplatonism, philosophy is the only true science and the true end of man since it shows the order of the world and the goodness and greatness of God.

2. *Intellego ut credam* or the force of reason. The middle Middle Ages (IXth to XIVth centuries)

This period is characterized by the static and quiet medieval society owing to feudalism, the Christian reaction to the loss of religious hegemony with the crusades, the loss of institutions and the struggle for power. These phenomena, though begun centuries before, manifest themselves fully in the XIth century.

And yet, in the midst of this crisis there is a flowering of the sciences, the arts and philosophy, thanks to the penetration of Arab sciences into the West, astronomy, astrology, medicine and alchemy, and the entry into the West of the Arab philosophers, Al Kendi (800-873), the first commentator on Aristotle, Al Farabi (died in 950), who set forth the bases for a classification of the sciences in the first universities of Islam, Avicenna (980-1037), who would best reflect Aristotelian thought¹⁹, Abentofail (1110-1185), and the unsurpassable Averroes (1128-1198), the best of the translators and Arab commentators on Aristotle. These philosophers, though persecuted with zeal, gave vitality and dynamism to the new medieval university academy, making it a space of criticism and discussion.

¹⁶ Cf. TORO, o. c., 9.

¹⁷ Ceasarius of Arles (died 543), Gregory the Great (died 604), Isidorus of Seville (died 636), John Climacus (died 649), Maximus the confesor (died 662), John of Damascus (died 750) and the Venerable Bede (died 735).

¹⁸ Cf. TORO, o. c., 9.

¹⁹ Cf. BORRERO CABAL, ALFONSO. "Primera expansión del movimiento universitario medieval siglos XIV y XV". Conferencia n. VII, in Simposio Permanente sobre la Universidad, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá 1998, 31.

Together with the current of Arab thought one should underline also the influence of Jewish thinkers of Spanish origin in this period of the Middle Ages, represented specially by Avicbron (1020-1070), Jewish religious poet, moralist and philosopher born in Malaga, and Maimonides (1135-1204), a Cordoban philosopher, rabbi and theologian, teacher of mathematics, medicine, Aristotelian philosophy and Jewish theology, whose work is preserved in Arabic and Hebrew. He is considered the most important Jewish theologian of the Middle Ages.

In two great tendencies one can see the effort to understand Aristotle and Plato: one the one hand, closer to Aristotle that represented by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the Angelic Doctor, and on the other, closer to Plato, that represented by John Fidanza (1220-1274), the Seraphic Doctor, better known as Bonaventura.

Thus, while for Thomas the ultimate and supreme knowledge is theology, reason for which he subordinates philosophical knowledge to theological knowledge, since it is a matter of understanding in order to believe, for John Fidanza, philosophy should be submitted and preceded by faith, since it is a matter of believing in order to understand.

2.1. Scholasticism

Scholasticism as such finds its roots in the change undergone by the classical schools, that is, the monastic, the cathedral ones and the palace ones, into the teachers' and students' guilds and the inclusion of the study of theology, philosophy and law together with the liberal arts²⁰. Scholasticism, then, is linked to the precipitous growth of the teachers and the consolidation of the social status in Europe; the birth of the universities, the appearance of the bourgeoisie and urbanization. This places us in the debated XIth century, period of excesses and reforms, like that of Gregory XII, and the beginning of the Crusades into Palestine and Syria, and the XIIth century, when one assists the cultural rebirth and the formalization of the first universities. Palencia (1212) will be considered the first in Western Europe, followed by Naples (1224) and soon thereafter, Paris, Oxford and Montpellier, where theology found new horizons.

In this period *Anselm of Canterbury* (1033-1109) stands out, the first representative of the first scholasticism or monastic theology, who with his *fides quaerens intellectum* postulates the need to penetrate into the believed mysteries with the help of reason and renounces the argument from authority as a determining theological expression. Natural reason and the light of intelligence lead, with the help of God's revelation, necessary to the truth that is none other than the intelligence of faith.

Scholasticism is being born, and with it the *dialectical method*; the way is thus opened for the reception of Aristotle. The teachers begin to ask themselves if theology can be compatible with the Aristotelian method of science and to the method of logical

²⁰ Cf. CONGAR, o. c., 233.

conclusions, and if the whole of knowledge by faith can be given an autonomous knowledge. In time schools and tendencies will emerge that support or refute the recourse to Aristotle in theology, such as Thomism, Augustinianism, Scotism, and nominalism, movements which beyond their religious denomination what is important is the freedom of thought, discussion and theological interpretation.

It is natural to this period to not be satisfied with considering things in their value or significance for the other world, but to consider them in themselves. It is the irruption of naturalism, of the desacralization of the world, of rationality, of the passage from a symbolic to a world of understood entities, and there precisely "with Anselm of Canterbury, philosophical rationality is being developed to take the place of theology"²¹. With it, theology begins to occupy the place of the guiding science, a fruit of joint, methodical labor, and a tendency to systematization.

The work of Anselm will be widely diffused through *Peter Abelard* (1079-1142), he also, a representative of the first scholasticism of monastic theology, will be considered the founder of scholastic method²², the great artificer of the *sic et non* (yes to one and no to another), and therefore, of dialectics as the motor of theology in the university; this means that more than *Lectio* were the *Quaestiones* and *Disputationes*, which led to the clarification of doubts and the finding on the truth, the real starting point of the theological task is not the *Quaestio* but the *Lectio*²³. According to Peter Abelard, one cannot believe that which has not first been understood. He wants to respond to this demand of rationality and not demonstrate Christian truths at the margins of faith but show an immense confidence in the faculties of reason and dialectics. There is a passage from the *sacra pagina* to *theologia*, in the modern sense, which Abelard was the first to employ²⁴. Years later *Peter Lombard* (died 1160), with his famous *Sententiae*, which enter the school curriculum as the backbone of scholasticism²⁵, will show the way in which questions or problems acquire the form of systematic exposition for the use of students.

After Anselm, Abelard and Lombard, finally, 1) critical analysis of the data of tradition, 2) doctrinal exposition, and 3) argumentative debate were shaped into the medieval *summae* as an expression of the systematic thought about the data of faith, oriented toward the construction of a theological synthesis²⁶, we are in the period of treatises.

Towards the end of the XIIIth century there begins to be knowledge and use of the mathematics, physics and ethics of Aristotle. This is the third entry of Aristotle

²¹ *Ibid.*, 231.

²² Cf. GUTIÉRREZ, ALBERTO. "La autonomía del espíritu en la Edad Media, el renacimiento del siglo XII". Conferencia n. 1, in Simposio Permanente sobre la Universidad, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá 1998, 46.

²³ Cf. PARRA, ALBERTO. *La determinación de los métodos en teología*, (Working notes), Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá 2003, 2.

²⁴ Cf. CONGAR, o c., 237-238.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

²⁶ Cf. POZO, G. Y FISICHELLA, R. "Método", in *Diccionario de teología fundamental*, Madrid 1992, 910.

(the first was the Patristic period and the second the first scholasticism of Anselm and Abelard); now, with Albert of Bollstädt of Albert the Great (died 1280) and with Thomas Aquinas (died 1274), Aristotelian philosophy represents a scientific knowledge of the world, of the structures of the created and of being. The created appears as a power of knowledge into which believers can enter in order to see, understand and prove what they have to believe²⁷. Thus, the *sacra doctrina* begins to be presented as *scientia* (Ist, q. I, a.2), and especially as speculative science (a.4). In this fashion theology, more than a search for salvation will be knowledge about it. The theology of Thomas Aquinas will be a science of revelation, in the sense that it deals with a speculative knowledge of the structures of the salvific order²⁸.

Beginning with the Aristotelian notion of science as the certain knowledge of causes, *scire per causas*, Thomas Aquinas perfects the scholastic method, joining it closely to a precise vision of theology as a scientific task²⁹. In truth, two principle markings identify the episteme and the theological methodology of the scholastics: 1) the fact that the deepening of the data of faith, taken from Scripture, from tradition, and from the teaching of the councils and the life of the Church through a confrontation with the conceptual apparatus of philosophy, especially Aristotelian philosophy, become ever more the prime task of theology, and 2) the ever more decisive fact that the paradigm of theological work is taken from the Aristotelian concept of science and the acceptance that the first science is metaphysics³⁰.

With Bonaventure, and in general with the Franciscan tradition, with the taking on of the doctrine of illumination of Augustine, theology is understood by the specifics it contributes to salvation and the union with God. While Thomas Aquinas objectivizes theology as science, Bonaventurian Augustinianism refuses to recognize an epistemological status apart from religious subjectivity or to assimilate it to other sciences, for this would betray it³¹.

2.2. Reason or faith? Concerning the confrontation and separation (XIII-XIV centuries)

The XIVth century in England will see the birth of a new position interested in distinguishing very well the boundaries between the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of reason. This is nominalism that with John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) is seen as a criticism of rational knowledge, separate from theological knowledge. Along the same line, William of Ockham (1300-1350) will be considered its founder because he will be characterized by his radicalism insofar as he not only wishes to understand in separation the limits of these two types of knowledge, but also wishes to take theological matter into the political sphere, separating the temporal from the spiritual, and scientific

²⁷ Cf. CONGAR, o.c., 243-244.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁹ Cf. TORO, o.c., 10.

³⁰ Cf. POZO, o.c., 910.

³¹ Cf. CONGAR, o.c., 247.

reason from faith. In the end, for Scotus and Ockham God is the sovereign liberty to which only faith can respond³².

Together with nominalism, the XIVth century will see the bubbling up of a movement diametrically opposed: a pure spirituality or mysticism represented by the master John Eckhart and his disciples John Tauler (died 1361) and Henry Suson (died 1366). The mystical movement of Eckhart seeks the union of the soul with God through a series of stadia: the soul first recognizes that being belongs only to God, while it is nothing in itself; in a second moment it discovers itself as the image of God when it has forgotten itself; thirdly, the soul recognizes itself as identical with God, a thesis that gave cause to the accusation of pantheism and whose meaning has been debated widely; the last stadium supposes the overcoming of God as Creator, in His anterior moment as exempt of determinations and this means, therefore, nothing. A century later, with Nicolas of Cusa they will return to Christian thought, a Platonic current and the apophatic theology of the Greek Fathers in consonance with the mystical tradition of the period.

3. The decline of the Medieval dialectics. The Lower Middle Ages (XVth century)

Regarding the interpretation of faith, one must grant to scholastic theology the passage from symbol to analogy, to concept, and the theoretical rigor in the act of thinking the faith. Scholastics is a tributary of the ideal of knowledge and science coming from Aristotelian philosophy: conceptual essentialist, metaphysical, deductive and with a tendency towards ahistoricism since in considering the object of science it takes only what is necessary and universal, setting apart the contingencies, ignoring the concrete, historical, experimental, and personal about being, thus transforming it into a science of conclusions³³.

Already since the beginning of the XVth century there is a decadence of medieval science where the dynamics, or better, the dialectics of theological production was paralyzed by the substitution of the questions for the lessons, giving privilege to the repetitive communication of doctrine and its contents with the loss of the real problems that are essential to genuine theological production³⁴ and that make it dynamic.

The unitary and metaphysical character of scholastic theology is what enters into crisis with the appearance of modern science and the implementation of the inductive method. It is on the principles of the metaphysical and epistemological and the domination of the principle of authority and the defense of the faith that the theology after the Council of Trent (1546) until Vatican II (1965) will be built. It is represented in the dogmas and manuals, and in the so-called return to Saint Thomas with the

³² *Ibid.*, 250-253.

³³ Cf. LIBANIO, *o c.*, 128.

³⁴ Cf. PARRA, *o c.*, 2-3.

anti-modernist vow and the method of repetition as the identity of Catholic theology of the XIXth and XXth centuries³⁵. In truth, the fidelity to the Medieval and Thomist heritage is not a matter of the repetition of the treatises of perennial doctrine but in the appropriation of the method and its effort to elaborate the proper material objects under the formality of Christian tradition, that is, *sub ratione Dei et salutis* (in the light of God and His plan of salvation), as taught and practiced by Thomas Aquinas himself³⁶.

The theological production that is presented in the *tractati* reproduced through the *lectiones*, that is, in teaching, has contributed to the formation of plans of study and curricula of theology in the seminaries and the theological schools. In 1931, Pope Pius XI promulgated the Constitution *Sapientia christiana* that emphasized the validity of the theological treatises and the scholastic method that in a substantive way are preserved in the *Sapientia christiana* of John Paul II in 1979. Likewise, the privileged mediation of the theological treatises is assured by philosophy on the basis of the principle of the harmony between faith and reason, a correlation that still is the purpose of the recent encyclical *Fides et ratio* (March of 1999). Such a panorama of theology suggests a permanent circle of a repetitive sort in which there is room for innovation but not alteration; where theology and the process of theologizing are identified with the permanent reception of the contents and method that are pre-established, oriented more to saving the acquired as if it were the ultimate task of theological work³⁷.

VI. STRATEGIES OF MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITY PEDAGOGY

The concept of metaphysical and epistemological unity, characteristic of theology in the Middle Ages, is an inheritance received from Aristotle, upon which he structured his three fundamental treatises on metaphysics, physics, and ethics. It is in this same dynamics that the step is taken from the *summae* to the *tractate*³⁸.

In the medieval university there are to be found four methodological options: the *lectio*, the *collatio*, the *quaestio*, and the *quodlibetum*³⁹.

The *lectio*, which means the *reading* of a text, consists in the presentation, exposition or reading which a teacher of a student, in his condition *ad-hoc* of lector, makes the selections of texts in order to make the known and to explain them. In the case of the teacher, this collection is accompanied by commentaries from his own intellectual harvest. The *lectio* was, clearly, an eminently oral activity.

The rite of the *lectio* or *exposition* was developed in three moments: the *littera*, the *sensus*, and the *sententia*. The *littera* was a grammatical and etimological commentary on the text, trying to recover its basic meanings; the *sensus*, a sort of reading between the

³⁵ Cf. TORO, o.c., 11.

³⁶ Cf. PARRA, o.c., 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ Cf. BORRERO, o.c.

lines, attempted to identify what the author really intended to say. Finally, the *sententia* was a judgment or interpretation of what was said, an attempt to get to the bottom, into the mind of the author.

The *collationes* were, fundamentally, an extension of the *lectio* and were developed as a dialogue or conversation of all that might help to deepen the theme.

The effect of the *lectio*, as an informative activity and textual exegesis, were the *quaestiones*, questions to which one had to respond and as the *lectio*, the *quaestio* had its own rite: It began with the *utrum* (Latin adverb=as if) to enunciate briefly the *question*; with the expression *videtur quod* (it seems that) were presented reasons in favor of the veracity of the question; with the *sed contra* (but, on the contrary) contrary opinions were presented with force.

When the reasons in favor and against the matter proposed were considered (*sic et non*), the proponent of the *quaestio* emitted his opinion in a strict manner in the *corpus articuli* (body of the opinion); this was then justified through arguments against the contrary opinions, in an ordered and correlative fashion. The *responsio* (answer) had also its introductory rite in the expression *respondeo dicendum* (I answer saying) *ad primum* (first), *ad secundum* (second), *ad tertium* (third), etc., until the arguments against the contrary opinions had been exhausted.

In the rite of the *quaestio*, what this produces is a hypothesis that requires verification; and there are various discrepancies that stimulate the *contentio*, *discutio* or *disputatio*. Etymologically the *quaestiones* evoke the discussion (shake=*discutio*) and analyze the diverse aspects that contribute to a better understanding of the *quaestio*. Its nucleus rotates on the questions that are produced and the debate that qualifies its analysis; concerning the *quaestio*, Congar says that it treats a methodological procedure of elaboration of knowledge⁴⁰.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142), as was said, will be considered for posterity, as the great artifice of the *sic et non* (yes to one and no to the other), and therefore of dialectics as the motor of university theology, which means that the *lectio* were the *quaestiones* and the *disputations* that led to the clarification of doubts and the affirmation of the truth: Thus, the read point of departure for theological work was not the *lectio* but the *quaestio*⁴¹.

The *quodlibetum*, a word that comes from the Latin expression *quod libet* (concerning what one wishes), unlike what one believes, is not a spontaneous exercise but the exposition of a master on a theme at the request of the audience and its consequent deepening with the help of the *quaestiones* and the *disputatio* that followed immediately. The *quodlibetales* were the space where the master could show

⁴⁰ Cf. CONGAR, o.c., 232.

⁴¹ Cf. PARRA, o.c., 2.

immediately his mastery, his *expertitia*, and where one could see better the manner in which the analysis of the *quaestiones* proceeded.

A good example of how these strategies functioned in school practice and in theology can be seen in the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, written between 1266 and 1273, not concluded due to his death, was finished (the last ninety nine questions) by a close disciple.

The *Summa Theologiae* is made up of three great parts: the *prima pars* (119 questions) contains the treatise about God; the *secunda pars* is in turn divided into two parts: *prima secundae* (114 questions) and the *secunda secundae* (189 questions), containing the treatise about man, and the *tertia pars* (90 questions) that contains the treatise about Christ. The *supplementum* (99 questions) includes the missing sacraments from the second part, the *novissimae* and the condemned. It was incorporated to the *Summa* years after it was written by Thomas. In total, the work consists of 631 questions, 3,000 articles and 10,000 objections. As a philosophical-theological synthesis it is structured on a scheme taken from the Christian Biblical tradition, whose graphic representation is the curve shaped like a U, taken from the Gospel of Saint John.

As has been indicated, each of the parts is made up of questions, and each question of articles; let the first article of the first question of the first part of the *Summa theologiae* serve as an example, according to a bilingual version of the original Latin text, developed in ten articles:

QUAESTIO PRIMA

(In decem articulos divisa)
(Divided into ten sections)

De sacra doctrina, qualis sit, et ad quae se extendat
What is sacred doctrine and to which things it extends

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| <p>To put our attempt within fixed limits, it is necessary in the first place to find what might be and to what does holy doctrine apply. Concerning this question ten things must be determined:</p> | <p>Et ut intentio nostra sub aliquibus certis limitibus comprehendatur, necessarium est primo investigare de ipsa sacra doctrina, qualis sit, et ad quae se extendat. Circa quae quaerenda sunt decem:</p> |
| <p>First: concerning the necessity of this doctrine. Second: if it is a science. Third: if it is one science or many. Fourth: if it is speculative or practical.</p> | <p>Primo: de necessitate huius doctrinae. Secundo: utrum sit scientia. Tertio: utrum sit una vel plures. Quarto: utrum sit speculativa vel practica.</p> |

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| <p>Fifth: of its comparison with other sciences. Sixth: is it wisdom. Seventh: what is its subject. Eighth: if it uses reasoning. Ninth: if one ought to employ metaphorical or symbolic locutions. Tenth: if the sacred texts which it uses can be expounded in various senses.</p> | <p>Quinto: de comparatione eius ad alias scientias. Sexto: utrum sit sapientia. Septimo: quid sit subiectum eius. Octavo: utrum sit argumentativa. Nono: Utrum uti debeat metaphoricis vel symbolicis locutionibus. Decimo: Utrum Scriptura sacra huius doctrinae sit secundum plures sensus exponenda.</p> |
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In the analysis of the article, basic cell of the *Summa theologica*, one can identify the investigative and expository method of Thomas Aquinas as the methodology of development of dialectics. In the article, there are in order, the following elements: 1) the posing of the question in brief and precise terms, 2) presentation of the reasons in favor of the two parts in litigation, 3) personal position concerning the matter posed, and 4) answer to the contrary reasons.

- 1) Posing of the question:** The problem for which a reasoned solution is sought is briefly enunciated; every question supposes and involves a real or methodical doubt; thus, Thomas uses the conjunction *if (utrum)* to pose the problem, because this expresses the alternative between alternative aspects, presenting a live and present problem for which clarity is required.

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| <p>ARTICULO I</p> <p><i>Utrum sit necessarium, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, aliam doctrinam haberi</i></p> <p><i>Whether it is necessary that there be a different doctrine that the philosophical sciences</i></p> |
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- 2) Presentation of the reasons in favor of the two parts in litigation:** Starting from believing that one cannot reach a true solution of the problem unless one first does not know and examine in depth the reason in favor and against, this second stage corresponds to the dispute that is shaped by two series of arguments: To the first series there antecedes invariably the introduction *It seems that (videtur quod)*, where the contrary positions are presented. The second series is introduced with the formula *but on the other hand (Sed contra)*, where attention is drawn to the alternative left in the dark and which is presented as favorable.

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| <p>Difficulties. It does not seem necessary that there exist a different doctrine than the philosophical sciences.</p> <p>1. Man ought not to set himself to reach what is above the understanding, as it says in Ecclesiastes: "Do not seek what is above you." But what is accessible to reason is taught sufficiently in the philosophical disciplines and, therefore, it appears superfluous that, apart from these, there be another discipline.</p> | <p>Ad primum sic proceditur. Videtur quod non sit necessarium, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, aliam doctrinam haberi.</p> <p>1. Ad ea enim quae supra rationem sunt, homo non debet conari, secundum illud Eccli.3,22: "altiora te ne quaesieris". Sed ea quae rationi subduntur, sufficienter traduntur in philosophicis disciplinis. Superfluum igitur videtur, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, aliam doctrinam haberi.</p> |
| <p>2. There cannot be more science than that of being that is identified with being. Now, the philosophical sciences treat of all beings, even God, and thus one of the parts of philosophy is called theology or the science of God, as one sees in the philosopher. Therefore, it is unnecessary that there be another doctrine besides the philosophical one.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Apostle says that "all divinely inspired Scripture is useful to teach, to argue, to correct and to educate in justice." But the Scripture, divinely inspired, does not belong to the philosophical sciences which are the discoveries of the human reason. Therefore it is useful that, apart from the philosophical sciences, there be another doctrine inspired by God.</p> | <p>2. Praeterea doctrina non potest esse nisi de ente: nihil enim scitur nisi verum, quod cum ente convertitur. Sed de omnibus entibus tractatur in philosophicis disciplinis, et etiam de Deo: unde quaedam pars philosophiae dicitur "theologia", sive scientia divina, ut patet per Philosophum in IV Metaphys: Non fuit igitur necessarium, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, aliam doctrinam haberi.</p> <p>Sed contra est quod dicitur II ad Tim. 3,16: "omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum ad iustitiam". Scriptura autem divinitus inspirata non pertinet ad philosophicas disciplinas, quae sunt secundum rationem humanam inventae. Utile igitur est, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, esse aliam scientiam divinitus inspiratam.</p> |

- 3) **Personal position concerning the posed question:** This part is called the body of the article, since it is the principal and contains the satisfactory answer to the problematic question posed in the first stage and discussed in the second. Here the personal answer is introduced with the words I respond saying (*respondeo dicendum quod*), which is objective and verifiable, characterized by the veracity of the problem in debate.

There are the phases through which the demonstration takes place: analysis, synthesis and criticism. 1) Analysis of reality, font of our knowledge, which will be the manner implicit and latent in the answer to the problem; 2) the synthesis is made beginning with the analysis, from which is derived the essential concepts from the existent data in that same reality; in itself, in this phase the truth of the problem posed is presented, and 3) in the criticism of judgment of existence, abstract reality is contrasted with concrete reality, the laws, definitions or ideas of the existing, lived reality.

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| <p>Answer. It was necessary for the salvation of man that, apart from the philosophical disciplines, a field of research of human reason, there should be a doctrine founded on divine revelation. In the first place, because man is ordered by God as an end that exceeds the capacity for our understanding, as Isaiah says, "Outside of you, Oh God, I do not see the eye that you prepared for those who love you." Now, humans that are to order their acts and intentions toward an end must know it.</p> | <p>Respondeo dicendum quod necessarium fuit ad humanam salutem, esse doctrinam quandam secundum revelationem divinam, praeter philosophicas disciplinas quae ratione humana investigantur. Primo quidem, quia homo ordinatur ad Deum sicut ad quandam finem qui comprehensionem rationis excedit, secundum illud Isaiae 44,4: "oculus non vidit Deus absque te, quae praeparasti diligentibus te". Finem autem oportet esse praecognitum hominibus, qui suas intentiones et actiones debent ordinare in finem.</p> |
| <p>Therefore, in order to be saved humans needed that they should be given divine revelation, some truths that exceed the capacity of human reason.</p> | <p>Unde necessarium fuit homini ad salutem, quod ei nota fierent quaedam per revelationem divinam, quae rationem humanam excedunt.</p> |
| <p>Even more, it was also necessary that humans should be instructed through divine revelation on those same truths that human reason may discover concerning God, because the truths about God investigated by human reason would reach them through just a few, after much time and mixed with many errors and, yet, from their knowledge depends that they be saved, and their salvation is in God. Then for more speed and sureness that salvation should reach men it was necessary that they be instructed by divine revelation concerning the divine.</p> <p>Therefore, it was necessary that, apart from the philosophical disciplines, in Whose investigations the human understanding exercises itself, there be a sacred doctrine known by revelation.</p> | <p>Ad ea etiam quae de Deo ratione humana investigari possunt, necessarium fuit hominem instrui revelatione divina. Quia veritas de Deo, per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per longum tempus, et cum admixtione multorum errorum, homini proveniret: a cuius tamen veritatis cognitione dependet tota hominis salus, quae in Deo est. Ut igitur salus hominibus et convenientius, et certius proveniat, necessarium fuit quod de divinis per divinam revelationem instruantur.</p> <p>Necessarium igitur fuit, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, quae per rationem investigantur, sacram doctrinam per revelationem haberi.</p> |

- 4) **Answer to contrary reasons:** In the last phase, after judging and evaluating contrary opinions, are introduced the answers with the words *to the first matter, I respond saying (ad primum respondeo dicendum quod...), to the second (ad secundum...), to the third (ad tertium...), etc.*

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| <p>Solutions. I. If indeed man ought not to try to find by means of understanding what exceeds his capacity, he ought, nevertheless, accept by faith what God has revealed, as is added there: "Many greater things than human thought have been revealed," and in these things does sacred doctrine consist.</p> | <p>Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, licet ea quae sunt altiora hominis cognitione, non sint ab homine per rationem inquirenda, sunt tamen, a Deo revelata, suscipienda per fidem. Unde et ibidem subditur (v. 25): "plurima supra sensum hominum ostensa sunt tibi". Et in huiusmodi sacra doctrina consistit.</p> |
| <p>2. That which constitutes the diversity of sciences is the different point of view through which knowable things are seen. The astronomer, for example, shows the same conclusion as the physicist, for instance, the roundness of the earth; but the astronomer does it using mathematical means, setting aside the qualities of matter, and the qualities of matter, and the physician uses the Material means. For this one sees nothing inconvenient in that of the same things that the philosophical disciplines study in the light of natural reason, should occupy another science insofar as known in the light of divine revelation. Therefore, theology that concerns itself with sacred doctrine differs in genre from that other theology that forms a part of the philosophical sciences.</p> | <p>Ad secundum dicendum quod diversa ratio cognoscibilis diversitatem scientiarum inducit. Eandem enim conclusionem demonstrat astrologus et naturalis, puta quod terra est rotunda: sed astrologus per medium mathematicum, idest a materia abstractum: naturalis autem per medium circa materiam consideratum. Unde nihil prohibet de eisdem rebus, de quibus philosophicae disciplinae tractant secundum quod sunt cognoscibilia lumine naturalis rationis, et aliam scientiam tractare secundum quod cognoscuntur lumine divinae revelationis. Unde theologia, quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur</p> |

CONCLUSION

In the act of understanding, we are not only projected to future possibilities, because we come from a past; in fact, our understanding, as well as our pre-comprehension are powered by a tradition and different traditions, and theology is not an exception to this epistemological and methodological reality⁴².

⁴² Cf. SÁNCHEZ CARO, JOSÉ MANUEL. "El problema hermenéutico y las ciencias del hombre", in Artola, Antonio and Sánchez Caro, J.M. *Biblia y Palabra de Dios*, Verbo Divino, Estella 1995, 289.

The pathway made in this paper, reflects the most significant aspects of theology, from the point of view of their identity and development, particularly attractive in an era that gives a particular course to Occidental theology. In my opinion, it's very important to recognize three stages and not the two classics (high and lower Middle Ages). In the dynamics of medieval thought it is better to consider: *the High Middle Ages*, the *Middle Middle Ages* and the *Lower Middle Ages*, in order to characterize clearly what is peculiar to each of them, the strength of faith or reason, their tensions, the crisis in this relationship and with it, the decline of the dialectics and its transformation into pure repetitive *lectio* not moved by the *quaestio* nor by the analytical debate.

In terms of what medieval teaching strategies were and meant, I have tried to stress the essential character of the dialectics in one of its clearest expressions, as it was the case of the *Summae*, starting from the analysis of the first article of the masterful *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas. Obviously, there were other teaching strategies, but these are not addressed here, this is the case of the *Glossae* (marginal and interlinear) and *Sententiae*; eventhough the four books of Peter Lombard were timidly mentioned.

Finally, the reader of this writing will find in the final bibliography, in addition to the titles quoted in the body of the article, others references that may be useful in relation to the topic. In this sense, I included them in order to help the reader to progress on the subject.

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