4. THE MEDIEVAL SYSTEMATISATION

"Since in the patristic period the theology of the knowledge of Christ had been dominated by the consideration of [his] divinity, it remained at the Western medieval tradition the task of formulating more clearly in how Jesus' humanity and his human faculties were part of the Christological discourse"[87]. This, moreover, was in keeping with the spirit of the Middle Ages, characterised by a strong development of devotion to Jesus, to which the art, poetry, literature and liturgy of the time also bear witness. The new orientation taken on by Christology, however, did not have much influence on the field treated here, both because the sense of Christ's dignity that the medievals had inherited from the patristics was well in accord with a perfect and omniscient Jesus, and because reflection on the knowledge of Jesus developed in the shadow of Augustinian ideas (of Platonic inspiration), and only to a limited extent made use of the formulations of the new currents thought, more empirical and linked to Aristotelian philosophy.

In the Middle Ages, the perfection of Jesus' humanity was a fundamental principle from which Christology was conceived. The affirmation, first biblical and then patristic, that the Incarnate Word came into the world 'full of grace and truth' (Jn 1:14) inspired entire theoretical work and resulted, among other things, in the attribution of a perfect knowledge to Jesus. Christ had assumed the 'defects' necessary to show his true humanity (hunger and thirst in the body, sadness, fear and affliction in the soul) and functional to human redemption (according to the well-known patristic principle of exchange, in order to give man what belonged him, Christ had to assume what was proper to man). He did not, however, take on those faults that, in the eyes of time, would have diminished his godliness[88]; he took on nothing, therefore, that implied error or was directly linked to sin, and he was perfect in his knowledge of God and the world.

Gnoseology of the time also supported this thesis. the wake of Agostino, it was held that the knowledge of truth depended more on divine inner illumination than on the material offered by the senses, and that man, who occupied the intermediate place between visible and invisible creatures, was not the only one to know the truth.

[87] R. Moloney, *The Knowledge of Christ*, p. 53. We will follow this author closely here.

[88] Cf. K. Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, p. 48. See also M.M. Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee (WI) 1999.

li[89], the resemblance to angelic spirits prevailed over the earthly, corporeal condition. This, in a way, helped to abstract the con- ditions of knowledge from history and link them to the immateriality of the human spirit.

The comparison between the angelic and human spirit, however, made a remarkable contribution to Christology. St. Augustine had distinguished two forms of knowledge in angels: *morning* and *evening knowledge*. The latter would be the knowledge that the angels have of themselves, and pro- would come from their natural capacities to know; the 'morning' knowledge, on the other hand, would derive from their ability to contemplate God and to see, also through that gaze, the reasons for created things. This distinction was the starting point for medieval theologians to elaborate their speculations on the angels' way of knowing[90]. In the 13th century some authors[91] applied this distinction in an original way to the knowledge of Christ. They did not, however, "distinguish" between the two natures (divine and human), but, considering that the angels were creaturely knowledge, they attributed them both to the human knowledge of Christ: *morning knowledge* concerned the sphere of contemplation of the divinity (the Word) and all other things in it with human intellect, whereas *evening knowledge* concerned the sphere of reality that the human intellect possessed in a natural way.

The idea attracted the attention of theologians, who tried to apply this scheme more appropriately to the Christological sphere. In the angels, *vespertine science* designated the knowledge of created realities, which they had in a natural way by virtue of the *species* (concepts) infused into them by God at the moment of their creation. A similar type of science was also present in the human world and was proper to the prophets, who received notions supernaturally infused into their intellect from God. All the more reason why, and in a perfect way, this type of science must also have existed in Christ. It was therefore thought that, in his case, *vespertine* science was the science infused by God into his intellect from the moment of his conception. But since Jesus was a real man, the question arose as to whether He also possessed the knowledge proper to other men, i.e. that obtained through the natural ways of direct experience of the world. Thus, a tripartite scheme was arrived at that admitted as many sciences: the beatific, the infused and the naturally acquired. This formulation was the object of attention the theologians of the time.

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[89] Man seen as a microcosm, a synthesis of material and spiritual creation, so well described by Gregory of Nyssa in his *De Hominis Opificio*.

[90] Cf. H. Goris, *Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure*, in T. Hoffmann (ed.), *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2012, pp. 149-185.

[91] Alexander of Hales? Hughes de Saint-Cher?

To better understand what has been said, we will briefly focus on two of them: Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas.

a) Bonaventure of Bagnoregio

Bonaventure modified Augustine's theory of intellectual knowledge, bringing it slightly closer to Aristotle's [92]. The Seraphic Doctor held that the truth of things is accessible to the human intellect only because God illuminates it with his light and, in so doing, puts it in contact with divine truth (the truth of the divine Ideas). In other words, through his light, God, present in the human intellect as an innate idea and as the exemplar of all created reality, shows the divine model to the intellect itself, so that, in abstracting the concept from the matter offered by the senses, it can refer it to that model and, therefore, to its divine author[93]. Man can be certain that his concepts are true because they are 'founded' on divine light. God's grace, then, makes this knowledge of creation "sapiential" and allows the soul mystical union with the Creator. Moving from these epistemological assumptions, in the *Itinerario mentis in Deum* Bonaventure proposed a path from the sensible world to the Creator, passing through the knowledge that the soul acquires when it seeks the image of God within itself.

Christ's soul, according to the Franciscan theologian, was the seat of perfect knowledge of God. The intimate union with the Word, the fullness of charity and the absence of sin meant that no obstacle stood between it and God. The light of the Word was present there 'in perfect transparency'. Following his teacher Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure distinguished three different aspects in the human knowledge of Jesus: the *knowledge of the Word*[94], the

[92] For further study see L. Schumacher*, Divine Illumination. The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of* Knowledge, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken 2011, pp. 141- 153; S. Metselaar, *Are the Divine Ideas Involved in Making the Sensible Intelligible? The Role of Knowledge of the Divine in Bonaventure's Theory of Cognition*, 'Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales' 79 (2012), 339-372; E. Gilson et al., *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson (NJ) 1965, pp. 309-390.

[93] Bonaventure spoke of the *contuitio*, by which the intellect has present the created reason and the eternal reason of things: the former in an intuitive and direct way, the latter in a consecutive and reflexive way. Having perceived the object intellectually, the intellect relates it to its divine model. This is a way of knowing God that starts from natural experience and the experience of grace. Cf. G. Reale - D. Antiseri*, Il pensiero occidentale dalle origini ad oggi. Corso di filosofia per i licei classici e scientifici*, La scuola, Brescia 1992,
pp. 443-444.

[94] Obviously the expression does not refer to the divine intellect, but to the knowledge of the Word present in the human intellect of Jesus.

science of simple intelligence and the *science that proceeds from experience*. Jesus could not but possess them all, for his soul had to be perfect not only with regard to the quantity of knowledge, but also with regard to the different modes of knowledge[95].

Knowledge of the Word , and objectively, concerned the divine essence, but also included knowledge of creatures. Since divine ideas are possible ways in which God's essence, His perfections, can be reproduced in the finiteness of creatures, knowledge of the divine essence brings with it a knowledge of the perfections of creatures and, therefore, of the reasons for created things. Here, the Franciscan theologian touched upon a question that preoccupied medieval authors: that of the extent of the human knowledge of Jesus, considered in comparison with the divine knowledge, that is, with that of the Word as God. Peter Lombard had affirmed that, as a man, Jesus knew as much as he knew as God, with the difference, however, that his human intellect did not know with the same clarity (*claritas*) with which his divine intellect knew(96). This thesis, however, seemed to disregard the fact that the human intellect is necessarily limited, and that it is difficult, therefore, to think that it can accommodate the absolute knowledge of the divine intellect. Bonaventure then distinguished between the knowledge Christ had of God as *Creator in act* and the knowledge he had of God as *potential Creator*[97], as well as between *actual* knowledge and *habitual* knowledge. By virtue of the hypostatic union, Christ's soul knew "habitually" as much as it knew the pre-existent Word, but "in act" in its mind were present only those aspects and realities that the Word wished to reveal to it at a given moment[98].

By virtue of the *science of simple intelligence*, the mind of Christ contained all that the angels[99] and prophets (who know through ideas or *species* infused by God into their intellect) know.

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[95] Cf. St Bonaventure, *In tertium librum Sententiarum*, d. 14 a. 3 q. 1. In the *Breviloquium* he speaks of five types of science, which can, however, be summarised in the three we have mentioned. Cf. J. Benson, *The Christology of the Breviloquium*, in J.M. Hammond - J.A. Wayne Hellmann - J. Goff (eds.), *A Companion to Bonaventure*, Brill, Leiden 2014, pp. 247-287. [96] Cf. Petrus Lombardus, *Libri IV Sententiarum*, Lib III, *disp.* 14 (Coll. S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas, Florentiae 1916, p. 608).

[97] Jesus did not know in detail (*comprehensive*) all that God can create, the infinite forms in which He can express Himself, but He knew in a complete and perfect way the reasons for what God created: He knew God as Creator in action. Cf. St Bonaventure*, De scientia Christi*, q. 7, *Conclusio*.

[98] Cf. Id., *Sent* III 14.2.2 *Resp.* and 14.2.3 *Sol.*

[(99)] Angels know by innate ideas or *species* (i.e. existing in them from the moment

As mentioned above, the Franciscan theologian also admitted in Jesus *a knowledge by way of experience of reality*, but his epistemology led him to attribute to experience an 'applicative' role (of sensible data to concepts) and not properly constitutive of knowledge. It, in other words, contributed nothing to the science of Jesus. In line with what some of the Fathers had affirmed, Bonaventure attributed to the biblical texts that speak of a growth in wisdom a confirmatory value (Jesus confirmed through the senses what he already knew by virtue of his knowledge) or a manifestative value (Jesus showed before others an ever greater part of the wisdom he possessed from his conception[100]). Experience, in short, did not produce new concepts[101], there was no progress in knowledge in Jesus, because He as man was omniscient from the moment of the Incarnation.

b) Thomas Aquinas

In contrast to Bonaventure, Thomas formulated a theory of knowledge with a decidedly Aristotelian stamp, departing in this from Augustine and almost all Christian thinkers of his time. Truth, according to Aquinas, is in the judgement that the intellect derives from reality. It is true that every man's reality, as well as the reality outside him, is changeable, but in every change there is something 'fixed' that remains unchanged. Things have an essence, a way of existing that has a certain immutability. Thanks to its light, which is a participation of divine light, the human mind can therefore know what is essential and stable in things, i.e. it can formulate con- ceptions and judge the existence and mode of being of reality. It needs, however, sensible objects and the 'phantasms' that proceed from them, because intellectual knowledge starts from the senses and makes use of the data they provide[102]. Moving from this perspective, Thomas attributed greater im- portance to the experiential science of Christ. The mind knows through the senses and, through this cognitive process, contributes to man's growth: this, so to speak, is its 'work'. If Jesus had not had an experiential science, elaborated from the senses, his intellect would not have made its specific contribution: the "acting intellect (. . .)

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of their creation) or by communication from other angels or by the vision God (in the case of the blessed angels).

[100] Cf. *Sent* III 13.10.3 *Sol.*

[101] "Christus non proficiebat veniendo in notitiam rei prius incognitae" (*Sent* III 14.3.2 *Resp.*). Cf. K. Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, pp. 30-31.

[102] 'Aristotle showed that we know truth not by means of Ideas existing outside the sensible world, but by the light of agent intellect, a power that enables us to abstract ideas from sensible things'. A.A. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*, p. 183.

cannot remain idle, having the task of making objects intelligible in action"[103]. Through experience, Jesus, moving from what he saw according to the natural mode of operation of the intellect, could form judgements, reason, draw conclusions, do science, etc. (103). In an interesting page of the *Summa Theologiae* Thomas explained:

> "If, therefore, in Christ's soul, in addition to the habit of infused science, there was not some habit of acquired science, as some *believe* and *as I also once believed* (. . .), then no science would have increased in Christ in an essential way, but only in relation to its exercise, that is, in relation to the application of the infused intelligible species to the individual phantoms. And this would explain the experimental progress in Christ's science: *in the sense that he applied his infused intelligible species to the new knowledge he received from the senses*. But since it seems inconvenient that Christ lacked a natural activity of the intelligence, and since, on the other hand, to abstract the intelligible species from the phantasms is a natural activity of man's acting intellect, it is well to admit in Christ also such an operation. From which it follows that in the soul of Christ *there was a habit of science augmentable by means of the abstraction of species*, inasmuch as the acting intellect, after the first intelligible species abstracted from the phantoms, could abstract still others"[104].

Unlike a number of authors of his time, who did not admit experiential science in Christ, or who (like Bonaventure) admitted it, but only attributed to it the function of applying the infused species to individual senses (*phantasmae*), Aquinas therefore carved out a space for it, believing that it extended to everything that the acting intellect can know according to its own mode of operation. As can be seen from his own words, he decisively changed his opinion on this point, because he had previously denied that Jesus had a true experiential science[105]. [105] This was an important turning point, because it emphasised the reality of the incarnation and thus the similarity of Jesus to us, so central to soteriological dogma, and helped to dispel Platonic scepticism knowledge. With many authors of his time, Thomas shared the conviction that in the soul of Christ were present the vision of God and of everything in God, and an infused knowledge encompassing everything related to Himself. Like other theologians of his time, he therefore attributed three different sciences to it, to each of which he applied the principle-criterion of perfection.

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[103] *Summa Theologiae*, III *pars*, q. 12, a. 1.
[104] *Ibid*., a. 2 (italics ours).
[105] Cf. *Sent* III 14.3 *Sol.* V.
[106] See the considerations K. Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, pp. 33-38.

Concerning the beatific vision, Aquinas asserted that Jesus contemporated the divine essence with his human soul, but did not totally embrace it, because the human intellect is finite, whereas God is absolutely infinite[107]. Jesus, therefore, could only comprehend the divine essence with divine intellect. With the human intellect, however, he could contemplate it and, in it, he could see everything about Himself, that is, everything that He had been, that He was, and that He would be in Creation, because everything had to be submitted to Him[108]. Christ had of the Word a simple vision, which embraced the divinity with a single glance, as happens, for example, to one who, observing a circumference, grasps its radius or perceives the different polygons inscribed in it. A single act of understanding had as its object the divine essence and the participations of it by created reality[109].

beatific vision, Aquinas observed, transcends the capacities of human com- prehension, imagination and expression, and therefore in no way interferes with the usual *modus operandi* of these cognitive faculties[110]. In Christ, therefore, there was no "superfluous" infused science which, although of supernatural origin, was communicated through con- cept and *species*, and was therefore commensurate with the nature of the human intellect. Recent authors who refer to St Thomas tend to articulate the different sciences in unity, and state that in Jesus the function of infused and acquired science was to express in conceptual, comprehensible terms what He saw and knew through the beatific vision.

5. PARADIGM SHIFT

> "The most profound characteristic of the medieval period," writes Gaston Paris, "is the belief in the immutability of things. Antiquity, especially the last centuries of late antiquity, was dominated by the idea of constant decay; modern times, from their inception, were dominated (. . .) by the idea of the

[107] Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, III *pars*, q. 10, a. 1c.

[108] Cf. *Ibid*., a. 2c.

[109] In this perspective, Thomas, unlike Bonaventure, did not need to attribute to "habitual" knowledge the vision in God of created objects, and to "actual" knowledge the concrete object present to the mind's attention. In fact, in his impo- sition, Jesus embraced the whole with mere intuition in action, and knew concrete objects through the categories offered to him by the other types of knowledge, particularly infused science. Cf. R. Moloney, *The Knowledge of Christ*, pp. 59-60.

[110] Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, III *pars*, q. 9. a. 3. ad 3: "The divine essence is a form that exceeds the limits of any creature. Therefore nothing prevents the rational soul from having intelligible species in proportion to its own nature along with this supra-eminent form'.

perpetual progress; the Middle Ages knew neither that anguish nor that hope, for the men of that time the world had always been as it was then - that is why their representations of the ancient world appear so *naïve* - and so, surely, it would be until the Last Judgement'[111].

This assessment of the medieval worldview has been rightly criticised by Étienne Gilson[112]. According to the French philosopher, in fact, the Middle Ages also had its own specific conception of history. The mentality of medieval man rested on the great coordinates of Christianity, which also determined the way history was conceived. The creation of world and man, original sin, salvation history and the Incarnation, the prospect of eternal life and the Last Judgement . . were the fundamental elements from which the medieval world was built. These are, in fact, the constant themes of the paintings and frescoes of the time. For this very reason, however, Paris's above-mentioned judgement has some truth in it: since the mentality of the Middle Ages was hinged on a narrative, the Christian one, that had the pretension of being universal and definitive, medieval man had a certain faith in the 'immutability of things', at least of the most essential ones.

This led him to live more in the perspective eternity, in the hope of the future life, a hope that undoubtedly characterised Christians from time immemorial, but which in the Middle Ages became, so to speak, more evident, because the perspective of transcendence pervaded the culture entirely. The monks and clerics, who were the first repositories of such culture, then instilled in the people and society a sense of the urgency of eternal life. The great literary, pictorial and architectural works of the Middle Ages (The *Divine Comedy*, Giotto's paintings, Gothic cathedrals, etc.), in heavenly and earthly scenes appear in close contact with each other, were entirely permeated by a strong sense of transcendence. All this favoured a worldview firmly grounded in unshakeable truths, in which what happened on the stage of history had importance and value only insofar as it related to ultimate and definitive destiny.

a) The turn towards the subject

With the Renaissance came a new change in perspective: there was a return to world view in which man took centre stage.

[111] *La littérature française au Moyen Âge*, Hachette, Paris 1890, p. 30.

[112] Cf. É. Gilson*, Lo spirito della filosofia medioevale*, Morcelliana, Brescia 1988, pp. 466- 467.

God and religious themes continued to have a strong presence society and art, but everything was now seen from perspective of man, of a man who had taken the reins of his life back into his own hands. The discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo first, and Newton later, helped to erase the mediaeval image of the world, replacing it with that of a universe once again centred man[113]. Philosophy too, with Descartes and Kant, focused on the human spirit and its ability to access reality. What can man know and how? These are the main questions that the most important philosophers of the modern age constantly tried to answer.

Medieval theologians had often referred to the philosophical principle that 'one receives according to the condition of the recipient'. Philosophers in recent centuries have applied this axiom to the field of the philosophy of knowledge. Beyond individual theories, it has become increasingly clear that this principle also applies to area of human understanding: concepts developed by the human mind only make sense in the context of its understanding of reality and its relationship to the world. Intellectual and personal predispositions, culture, individual and community history, the web of relationships that weaves human life... everything becomes part of his understanding of reality[114]. Truth (the *adaequatio mentis*) is not configured in the same way in subjects and, although there is much in common between the various human judgements[115], this gives rise to a variety of evaluations and points of view that multiply the

[113] "At the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the modern age," Walter Kasper observes, "the religious orders and rulers who up to that point had given stability and guidance to mankind fell. With the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo, the old image of the universe disappeared. Suddenly humanity found itself left to itself, no longer supported by a grand cosmological, metaphysical and theological framework. Since there was no longer a pre-established orderman had to create his own. He made himself the starting point and the norm. As a result, freedom became autonomous, i.e. self-governed. From then on, this would become an unconditional and ultimate principle, a for everything else'. *The Christian Understanding of Freedom and the History of Freedom in the Modern Era: the Meeting and Confrontation Between Christianity and the Modern Era in a Postmodern Situation*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee (WIS) 1988, p. 13 (our translation).

[114] As Juan José Sanguineti states (*Introduction to Gnoseology*, Le Monnier, Fi- rence 2003, p. 239), all knowledge is grafted onto the prior reality of the individual, whose intelligence is shaped and predisposed by 'contents, skills, attitudes, ability to perceive groups of objects, ability to relate them, and more'.

[115] In each person, judgement is based on reality and derives from a similar process of understanding. Immanentism, which implies a rupture between the 'thing in itself' and the 'phenomenon', is a

perceptions of reality, adding problematicity to the complexity of creation. Beneath these differences, contemporary man perceives a world that is not harmonious and stable, but elusive and dynamic.

In this context, the way of considering the person of Christ and his science also changes. The classical image of Jesus is questioned, which is considered not to correspond to the canons of critical thought, because it does not sufficiently take into account human, cultural and personal mediations, which introduce a 'distance' between historical reality and the idea that one can make of it. Such mediations, indeed, are part of the process of knowledge man and, therefore, also of the human condition that Jesus wished to assume. Neither Jesus nor the members of the early Christian community can be 'deprived' of an intrinsic and essential dimension of the human condition in the world such as 'historicity'. But an omniscient being, who transcends time through his science, is not a historical being and, therefore, neither is he a man like any other. On this basis, the question of the science Jesus can no longer be based, as in the Middle Ages, on an "abstract" principle of perfection: the perfection that made Jesus the perfect man must be thought of as the fullness of a truly embodied humanity, fully integrated into the laws and constraints of time and history.

b) Research on the 'historical Jesus

The process described above had a considerable repercussion especially in the field of biblical studies. The need was realised to take into account the interpretative mediations between the sources (mainly the gospels) and the event of Jesus' life. Applying the criteria of historicity, modern historiography is used to reconstruct the event ('what really happened') through the sources, starting from them. In the case of the gospels, the attempt to reconstruct "the Jesus event" has a long, often unsuccessful history, the origins of which date back to at least the 18th century[116]. It has not, in any case, been a fruitless endeavour: in fact, considerable progress has been made in both

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nonsense without solution. The 'relativism' into which it flows makes true morality impossible and undermines social coexistence.

[116] The studies relating to "research on the historical Jesus" are innumerable. Among them are: B.D. Chilton - C.A. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus. Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, E.J. Brill, Leiden - New York 1994; P. Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: the Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus*, Yale University Press, New Haven (CT) - London 1988; A. Cadavid, *La investigación sobre la vida de Jesús*, "Teología y vida" 43 (2002), 512-540; J.J. Bartolome, *La búsqueda del Jesús histórico*, "Estudios Bíblicos" 59 (2001), 179-242; G. Segalla, *Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, "Teologia" 26 (2001), 238-245; B. Sesboüé, *La question du Jésus historique au regard de la foi*, in D. Marguerat et al. (éds.), *Jésus de Nazareth. Nouvelles approches d'une énigme*, Labor et Fides, Geneve 1998, pp. 439-457; D.L. Bock, *Jesus*

research method and in the results obtained. Priority is given to the question of method, which has been strongly studied and debated. The most valid studies not those that seek to reconstruct a historical Jesus that is *different* or *alternative* to that of the gospels, but those oriented towards explaining the historical dimension of the Jesus *of* the gospels. In the field of Christology the most useful approach is the one adopted by those exegetes who consider the sources to be the fruit of "in- terpretative" traditions (Jesus is seen in the light of faith), but based on eyewitness accounts of events[117]. (117)Although the proposals of the various authors diverge in some particulars, moving from this perspective a fairly homogeneous image of Christ can be delineated; this allows the essential aspects of his life and ministry, his self-understanding and his mission to be founded in a scientific way (118).

Research on the historical Jesus, in any case, is indispensable for Christology, which "cannot refrain from reflecting on this relationship between faith and history, because if Jesus did not exist, or if he was such that he could not form the basis of the interpretation that faith gave of him, but another very different one, even entirely different, Christianity collapses in its original claim"(119). If we could not be rationally certain of the main aspects of the story of Jesus, faith would crumble

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According to Scripture. Restoring the Portrait from Gospels, Baker Academic - Apollos, Grand Rapids (MI) - Leicester (UK) 2002; M. Bordoni, *Is it possible to access Jesus Christ through the Gospels?*, "Revista Española de Teología" 63 (2003), 141-165; R. Latourelle, *A Jesus through the Gospels: history and hermeneutics*, Cittadella, Assisi 1982; J. Caba, *Dai Vangeli to the Historical Jesus*, Paulines, Rome 1979; J.-N. Aletti, *Exégètes et théologiens face aux recherches historiques sur Jesús*, 'Recherches de Science Religieuse' 87 (1999), 423-444; J.D. Marguerat, *The search for the historical Jesus between history and theology: links and tensions*, 'Theology' 33/1 (2008), 37-54;

A. Vargas-Machuca, *La investigación actual sobre el Jesús histórico*, "Estudios Eclesiásticos" 77 (2002), 3-71; A. Pitta, *Latest insights and recent debates on the historical Jesus*, "Lateranum" 75/1 (2009), 129-145; F. Lambiasi, *L'autentità storica dei vangeli. Studio di criteriologia*, Dehoniane, Bologna 1976; G. Theissen, *El Jesús histórico. Manual*, Sígueme, Salamanca 1999; R. Penna, *Searching for and Finding the Historical Jesus*, "Rivista Biblica" 50 (2012), 371-395. (117) Cf. R. Bauckham, *The Gospels as Testimony to Jesus Christ. A Contemporary View of their Historical Value*, in F. Aran Murphy - T.A. Stefano (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015, pp. 55-69.

[118] To the studies already cited in footnote 16 (p. 17) we add: G. Segalla, *L'autocomprensione di Gesù come mediatore di Dio Padre e del suo regno alla luce della "terza ricerca"*, in G. Bof (ed), *Gesù di Nazaret. Son of Adam, Son of God*, Paoline, Turin 2000, pp. 39-70;

N.T. Wright, *Jesus' Self Understanding*, in S.T. Davis - D. Kendall - G. O'Collins (eds.), *The Incarnation. An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, pp. 313-331; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Thought World of Jesus*, 'Early Christianity' 1 (2010), 321-343.

[119] R. Latourelle *Historicity of the Gospels*, in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, R. Latourelle - R. Fisichella (dir.), Cittadella, Assisi 1990, col. 1406.

inexorably. The historical event of Jesus, in fact, is the foundation of all Christological reflection[120]: if this foundation were inaccessible, it would be difficult to distinguish between faith and simple arbitrary belief. If one does not want to limit oneself to abstract speculation, one who deals with Christology cannot ignore (at least in their fundamental lines) the proposals formulated regarding Jesus by the research and scholars of the Gospels[121]. Recent research (particularly *Third Quest*) has shown that Jesus was fully embedded in his time and that his doctrine was profoundly original and, at the same time, intimately rooted in Judaism[122]. Originality and Jewishness characterise his figure and person in most biblical studies.

6. DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT DECADES

In the light of these premises, the fundamental question facing scholars concerns Jesus' subjectivity, his psychology and his understanding of reality. What did Jesus think of Himself? How did He consider Himself (Christ's self-awareness) and His mission in the world? Furthermore, the question of the foundation remains open, that is, of understanding from where His originality derived, and how He could grasp the relevance of His person and mission. In the debates of the first half of the last century, a more 'classical' approach prevailed, linked to medieval systematics[123], but which,

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[120] Cf. M. Bordoni, *Jesus of Nazareth. Lord and Christ*, vol. II.

[121] Still useful (as well as authoritative) is the reflection on the subject by J. Ratzinger, *L'interpretazione biblica in conflitto. Problems of the foundation and orientation of exegesis*, in L. Pacomio (ed), *L'esegesi cristiana oggi*, Piemme, Casale Monferrato (AL) 1991, pp. 93-125 (taken up in J. Ratzinger, *Exegesis and Theology. Problems of foundation and orientation of contemporary exegesis*, in C. Ruini - U. Casale [ed.], *Fede, ragione, verità e amore. La teologia di Joseph Ratzinger*, Lindau, Turin 2009, pp. 59-91).

[122] Cf. G. Segalla, *La verità storica dei vangeli e la "terza ricerca" su Gesù*, "Lateranum" 61 (1995), 461-500. It should be noted that "Judaism" cannot be understood as a monolithic movement: it is in fact a complex religious orientation, which presents multiple facets and diversified identities according to the various groups and systems of thought. On the question of the Jewishness of Jesus' preaching, see, others, the bibliography cited by R. Penna, *Research and Discovery of the Historical Jesus*, p. 373, footnote 8.

[123] The documents of the Magisterium also referred to it when they had to deal with the science of Christ. Thus, in *Mystici Corporis*, Pius XII spoke of the beatific vision by which Jesus "surpasses every capacity of the human mind" (DS 3812). A few decades earlier, the doctrine had been the subject of the anti-modernist struggle waged by, among others, the then Holy Office, which issued two declarations in 1918 to curb theories that analysed the knowledge of Jesus with merely anthropological parameters. Cf. DS 3646- 3647. Cf. J. Galot, *Who Art Thou, O Christ?*, LEF, Florence 1977, p. 337, footnote 33.