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Ignasi Casanovas and Frederic Clascar. Historiography and rediscovery of the thought of the 1700s and 1800s*

Miquel Batllori

abstract

This text shows the similitudes and the differences between Ignasi Casanovas and Frederic Clascar, two of the most important representatives of the religious thought in Catalonia, in the first third of the 20th century. The article studies their philosophical writings in the rich context of their global work, analysing their deficiencies and underlining the positive contribution to the Catalan culture.

key words

Ignasi Casanovas, Frederic Clascar, religious thought.

I would like to begin with a small anecdote on the question as to whether there is such a thing as “Catalan” philosophy. Whilst teaching at Harvard, Juan Marchal, publisher and scholar of the life and political works of Manuel Azaña, was asked by an American colleague what he taught there. On receiving the answer “the History of Latin America Thought”, the colleague replied, “Is there such

* We would like to thank INEHCA and the Societat Catalana de Filosofia (Catalan Philosophical Society) for allowing us to public the text of this speech given by Father Miquel Batllori on 26 February 2002 as part of the course “Thought and Philosophy in Catalonia. I: 1900– 1923” at the INEHCA. The text, corrected by Miquel Batllori, has been published in the first of the volumes containing the contributions made in these courses: J. Monserrat and P. Casanovas, *Pensament i Filosofia a Catalunya* (Thought and Philosophy in Catalonia), Barcelona: Inehca / Societat Catalana de Filosofia, 2003; and later on, in *Comprendre V* – 2003/1, pp. 21–3. To our knowledge, this text is the last contribution that Miquel Batllori (1909–2003) could complete before his death on February 9th 2003. We are publishing it again, enriched with some remarks made by Josep M. Mas i Solench (1925–2005) in a letter addressed to Pere Lluís Font on July 22th 2004. Mas i Solench wrote Clascar’s biography, *Frederic Clascar i Sanou: entre l’ortodòxia i la política* (2005). The reader will find these remarks on footnotes, and the original letter at the end of the article. (The Editors)

a thing?”. In North America, some people knew absolutely nothing about the subject. This lack of knowledge probably embraces Catalan philosophy.

Given that we find ourselves in an institution that bears the name of Miquel Coll i Alentorn, I would like to recall two things about him: his hope that Catalonia's separate political identity would be recognized, and something that I feel is highly significant: when Jordi Rubió was Chairman of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, around 1970, he agreed that a meeting could take place at the Institute's Barcelona headquarters, of the Board of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. Its President at the time was the Soviet Zhukov, who would be succeeded by the very unusual German Professor Karl Dietrich Erdmann, a contemporary historian and great personal friend of Adenauer. At the closing dinner, Erdmann and Miquel Coll i Alentorn were sitting alongside each other and, naturally enough, their conversation turned to the historiography of Catalonia. When, a few days later, Erdmann and I met in Madrid, he mentioned to journalists that it was only then, when he had that conversation with Coll i Alentorn, that he understood the difference between the historiographical thought of Catalonia and that of the rest of Spain.

As far as Frederic Clascar and Ignasi Casanovas are concerned, it is not my aim to compare and contrast them, as I am not proposing a parallel biography in the style of Plutarch. Instead, we will look at the coincidences, similarities and differences between the two personalities, who were quite different in many regards, yet with parallels in some others. I will begin, then, by explaining a brief parallel history, to then move on to the thought –partly coinciding and partly divergent– of the two.

Casanovas and Clascar were only a year apart in age. The former was born in Santpedor, in Manresa, in 1872; the latter, in the frontier land that is Santa Coloma de Farners, between the dioceses of Girona and Barcelona.

I think that, first of all, the most important difference between the two is that Clascar represents a certain kind of self-made man, whilst Casanovas's studies were more complete and officially-recognised: a lengthy education in the Classics and ecclesiastical doctorates in Philosophy and Theology. Clascar, however, only graduated in Canon Law, his sole official qualification. Later, he would branch out into a range of studies, on history, thought, sociology, popular piety, oriental languages, Bible translations, etc. Since he was a self-made man, he was very complex. If he had a clearly university (or para-university) vision and background, he would have been more approachable and we could grasp him better. Clascar had so many sides to him that it is extremely difficult to work out which was the most important one. To talk of Father Clascar is, therefore, no easy task.

He coincided with Casanovas in some regards, such as, for example, their shared interest in Balmes. However, as we shall see, these coincidences would often set them against each other. To give but one example, at the beginning of the 20th century, on 9 July, Father Clascar gave the speech to commemorate the birth of Balmes, depicting a Balmes who only encompassed the Balmes of the city of Vic. When he spoke on the same occasion some years later, Casanovas, who must surely have felt that Clascar had encroached upon his territory, mentioned in a footnote his complete disagreement with Clascar, as the latter had only explained the philosophy Balmes proclaimed from Vic.

Despite the fact that, in his speech, he said almost the same things about Balmes's philosophy, Casanovas, who was preparing his great biography, had gained a fuller understanding of what Balmes meant, not only to Vic, to Barcelona and to Catalonia, but also to the Spanish politics and the Christian philosophy of the time, in all areas of Western thought. So, fundamentally, Clascar and Casanovas coincided, but had to "tell themselves" that they disagreed, perhaps because they had too many shared points of references not to stress those that set them apart.

That is one thing. Another is a question that is difficult to answer: why there is no decent biographic study of Father Clascar. Note that his obituary did not appear in the yearbooks of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, despite the fact that he was one of its founding members. Although, in theory, the Institute was founded in 1907, it was not until 1911 that its three Sections were created, with seven members each, and it is curious to note it was the Philology Section that Father Clascar entered. When he died in 1919, a year after his edition of *The history of 18th-century Catalan philosophy*¹, the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* oddly did not publish his obituary, as it did of all its members and others who had contributed to Catalan culture. I would imagine that this silence was due to the fact that he died in the year in which they were preparing that weighty tome, delayed from 1915 to 1920, and maybe nobody was aware of the fact at the time².

As with many people of the period, we must again make use of the mention made of them in the Espasa Encyclopaedia, something in which we are, in part, fortunate. When dealing with a biography or biographic studies of those living at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, Espasa is a reliable source, since the compilers would send their subjects questionnaires,

1 The title of the cited work is "Estudi sobre la filosofia a Catalunya en el segle XVIII" instead of "Història".

2 The Institut d'Estudis Catalans published Father Clascar's obituary which was written by Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer.

which they themselves would complete. In the case of Clascar, we have a further advantage: an appendix in the (supplementary) third volume, which turns out to be more important than the entry that Clascar himself probably helped to draw up. It is difficult to know who was responsible for that appendix. I suspect that it was either his great friend and collaborator Father Lluís Carreras, or Josep Tarré, another collaborator of his.

A good friend of Clascar's (and, above all, a great friend of the collaborator and later member of the Institute, Lluís Nicolau d'Òlwer), the Mallorcan poet and librarian Miquel Ferrà, when talking of Father Clascar, said to me, "He always came up with a solution to our religious problems that left us at ease".

Within the ecclesiastical (or "church" as today's expression puts it) world, Clascar pushed back the frontier a little, a frontier that was quite defensive throughout Spain. In his publication of the two first volumes of the *Societat Catalana de la Bíblia* (Catalan Bible Society), in the case of Genesis, he was extremely demanding with the most etymological expressive forms³. In that of Exodus, there were many who complained about this attitude, which they considered pro-modernist. So Clascar was accused of being quasi-modernist: we do not know by whom, and maybe he did not either since, in ecclesiastical structures, and against all human and rational rights, censure was always anonymous. It would appear that the criticism was very serious and harsh, since he had to defend himself against them. He even published a slim volume (which, it should be said, I only managed to find in the Seminary Library in the Catalan Theology Faculty) in which he defends himself against all the accusations made by the anti-modernists against his books.

If Clascar, although not an out-and-out modernist, agreed with a large number of their criticisms, Father Casanovas, in his *Conferències apologetiques*

3 The version of Father Clascar was entitled "El Gènesi" (instead of "La Gènesi", even if the noun is feminine in Greek) and the edition belonged to the Institut de Llengua Catalana (instead of the Societat Catalana de la Bíblia). "L'Èxode" was not the second book of the Bible published by Father Clascar; it was a posthumous edition of 1923. On the contrary, he published "El Càntic dels Càntics de Salomó" (1918) in between. All these titles were published by the Institut de la Llengua Catalana.

Certainly, the Catholic Church censorship was quite reluctant to award the Nihil Obstat: as the first censor was hesitant, two new censors – which were Jesuits, anti-modernists and very demanding – were appointed, and this was why some sectors consider Father Clascar as a philomodernist.

The Nihil Obstat for "El Gènesi" was awarded on 7th December 1914 and the edition appeared on Saint George's day, 23rd April 1915. However, Father Clascar did not want to stop refuting the reports of the censors. For this purpose, instead of writing a "short volume", he wrote a 260 page book of thick typography entitled "Vindicació documental d'unes notes al Gènesi".

(which are, in fact, a theodicy treatise), always sought to slow down any research into the Bible and the early church a little.

Clascar's position was somewhat parallel to that of Monsignor Duchesne's in Rome: the first volume of the latter's *Early History of the Christian Church* was condemned in the Index of prohibited books, despite the fact that the author subsequently rewrote it, accepting some remarks, and even published a second volume. It should be noted that Duchesne was, at the time, a close collaborator with the French School in Rome, at a time when republican laicism almost excluded priestly scholars from that world.

Thus, in this regard, there are points of contact between Clascar and Casanovas, which are also points of differentiation.

Another point of both contact and divergence were their personal relationships with Prat de la Riba. The latter placed a great deal of trust in Father Casanovas, as is made clear in the two times that he sought him out as a religious advisor. The first took place in 1906, when he aimed to start the political alliance *Solidaritat Catalana* (Catalan Solidarity). Here, Prat de la Riba's aim was to unite all Catalan nationalist parties to take part in the Spanish general elections, to make the presence felt of a coherent political Catalan nationalism, spanning left-wing republicans to Carlists. The latter, however, split: the more fundamentalist wing, represented by Sabadell's Sardà i Salvany through his magazine *Revista Popular*, declared that Catholics could not, in all conscience, vote for *Solidaritat* as it included anti-religious people, even atheists. One had, therefore, to abstain or vote against them.

It was at this time that Prat de la Riba asked Father Casanovas for advice. This was provided in the form of a letter, conserved in the archive of Father Antoni M. Alcover, in Mallorca, in which he applies to the political issue of *Solidaritat* the theories of mediaeval theologians on acts that could have two consequences: one good, the other bad. When it was more probable that the good would outweigh the bad, the act could morally be carried out, even if it had a double effect. He therefore told him that, whilst the *Solidaritat* project entailed certain risks, he believed that, given the way he saw the political circumstances, traditional Catalan nationalism, respectful of the Church, would eventually prevail. The Carlists then split: Father Alcover gave two speeches at the *Ateneu* arguing that Catholics could hold this position with regard to *Solidaritat Catalana*. According to the oral testimony of Francesc de Borja Moll, Father Casanovas's letter made Prat de la Riba exclaim, "We have to publish this!", to which Casanovas answered: "It is a political issue that I have dealt with as a religious consultant. I will let you do with it as you wish, but I do not want my name on it".

Prat de la Riba called on Father Alcover and, whilst Casanovas said what Catholics *could do*, Alcover told them what they *should do*. This went be-

yond what Casanovas had said in a very detailed study, which was greatly debated at Barcelona's *Ateneu*, and which Alcover later published as his own in a separate pamphlet entitled "How should Catholics vote in the light of *Solidaritat Catalana*? The pamphlet returned a profit of eight hundred pesetas, a considerable sum at the time. With this money, Prat de la Riba, who had sponsored its publication, gave a gift of two typewriters, one to Alcover and the other to Casanovas. Alcover commented to his follower, Moll: "Look, I have received this machine thanks to a document that is not mine!". When I heard this anecdote, I realised that the typewritten sheets in Casanovas's archive must have been produced after 1907.

It would thus appear clear that, even then, Prat de la Riba had more confidence in the opinions of Ignasi Casanovas than those of Clascar. Remember that the latter only possessed a bachelor's degree in Canon Law. This would make one think that his bishop, Morgades (or maybe even his predecessor), would want him to become a man of the Curia, of government, which are fields closely related to canon law. By way of contrast, Casanovas was, as we have seen, a Doctor of Philosophy and Theology, subjects that he had studied in great depth. It was not too late for me to get to know one of his fellow-students, who assured me that he was extraordinarily intelligent and sharp. Whenever there was some public philosophical or theological disagreement, Casanovas's insight and sharpness astonished him.

However there was another important moment in which Prat de la Riba placed greater trust in Casanovas than in Clascar. This was the episode studied by Josep Benet in his book *Maragall i la Setmana Tràgica* (Maragall and the "Tragic Week"). Maragall submitted three articles on the "charred city" to the editor of *La Veu de Catalunya*. The first was written on 1 October 1909 (the day I was born), just after the fires of the *Setmana Tràgica* had been extinguished, and was published the following day. Prat de la Riba, editor of *La Veu*, was afraid of how readers would react to some of Maragall's –shall we say– "ultra-democratic" attitudes (particularly in the first and last articles). He therefore asked Casanovas for his private view. The text can be found in Maragall's archive, and has been revealed to the world by Josep Benet in his book. It shows that Casanovas suggested only a few amendments and had no wish, as some were seeking, to suppress an ending that included a passionate plea to the Church not to close the doors of those places of worship attacked and burnt by a people who were more sinned against than sinners⁴.

4 The right version of Maragall's consultation as regards his article "L'església cremada" neither appears to be the presented nor the defended by Josep Benet. Father Clascar explains in the transcribed letter that Prat de la Riba gave him the article original and, as a result, he got an

In 1940, I myself put Casanovas's papers in order, and it is my impression that when people began to say, even in 1930, that the Jesuits could be banned and disbanded by the government, he only held onto his most important papers and belongings, moving them from his home in carrer Llúria to his office in the Balmes Library. These included his correspondence with Torras i Bages, Ruyra, Maragall and other great writers. By way of contrast, there was not a single letter to Clascar. It would therefore appear that, despite the fact that it was not tense, neither was their relationship a close one. However, some parallels between the two of them do appear.

These parallels are numerous, and there was only one difference: the issue of liturgical life. Both began to publish, almost at the same time, small tracts in Catalan on popular piety. Clascar did so much earlier, because Casanovas was not definitively assigned to Barcelona until 1904, after completing all his studies. Then, before dedicating his life to preaching, he asked for a year off to bring his studies up to date, and this he was granted. Luckily, we have many of his notes from that year, which show us what a fruitful time it was for his self-improvement: he spent his time reading the most important histories of Catalonia, the history of Catalan law, works on the Reapers' War (*Guerra dels Segadors*) and on the War of Spanish Succession, taking extracts from them. It was at this time that he, shall we say, "re-Catalanised" himself. It was not that he ever lost his Catalan identity, as can be seen in an autobiographic writing of his in which he confesses that he had always felt closely linked to his Catalan identity and, whenever he was unable to dedicate himself to the fact, he had always remained very faithful to Catalan as an intimate language and that of prayer. This is an extremely interesting and important autobiographical document, Bonaveturesque in style, which he entitled *Itinerarium mentis et cordis ad Deum*.

Casanovas received the Suarist education typical of the faculties of Philosophy and Theology in which he studied. This set him some way apart from Torras i Bages, who still had the idea that pure Thomism was the answer to everything. In fact, neither Clascar nor Casanovas felt any enthusiasm whatsoever for Thomism, despite the fact that this was the period in which Leo XIII established the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas as the basis of all Christian thought. Neither of the two was clearly Thomist. They both respected Saint Thomas but, whilst Clascar had some studies that lay outside of any purely doc-

interview with Maragall. Due to the moral responsibility, Father Clascar turned to Father Casanovas who made the last revision. The consequence was not presented in the article, but as Benet writes: "The direct intervention of Father Clascar and the later indirect participation of Father Casanovas in the revision of Maragall's text original is made obvious in this letter".

trinal philosophy or theology, Casanovas was educated in a Suarist environment, which was not particularly interested in pure Thomism.

Note that, at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries, both Spanish and German Jesuits were asking themselves whether what the order practised and taught, in both private and public, was or was not a valid expression of Thomism.

So it was that neither Casanovas nor Clascar attached a great deal of importance to Thomism. However, it was crucial to Torras i Bages, and would later be taken up by the Capuchins, who would, in the 1920s, start the Franciscan magazine *Criterion*. It is interesting to note that its first editor, Father Miquel d'Esplugues, apologised in the magazine's prologue for the fact that they, of the Franciscan tradition, were producing a magazine that declared itself almost dogmatically Thomist. I believe that both Clascar and Casanovas were right, because I still fail to understand how, in the 20th century, one could seriously define oneself as either Thomist or Suarist, despite the fact that I believe that a Christian philosophy must often turn to Saint Thomas and perhaps also to Suárez.

This (in a way agnostic) position between Suarism and Thomism held by the two of them is connected with the fact that the two reached the year 1915, when things in Rome changed due to Benedict XV's moderation towards all those truly Christian thinkers who had been accused of being modernists in the times of Pius X. Thus, when, even by the time of Pius XII, serious consideration was being given to the beatification and subsequent canonisation of Pius X, it was officially said that this decision left later historians completely free to judge his negative attitudes to some non-Thomist currents of philosophy and theology, which were prevalent in those times amongst Catholics.

I have considerable direct knowledge of this reaction by Benedict XV. The pope acted with great decisiveness. One of his first decisions was to request a list of all those who accused him of modernist heresy against the *santo Offizio* when he was Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna, and forced them to leave Rome. One of their most intransigent leaders of pure Thomism was the Jesuit Father Mattiusi, who was sent to Friuli, in the north of Italy, and banned from returning to Rome. In contrast, the future Cardinal Paolo Dezza, who had studied philosophy in Sarrià (where the Jesuits were Suarists), returned to Italy (where everyone was a Thomist) and went to study Thomism –with Father Mattiusi. To be honest, I have never understood how, well into the 20th century, people could seriously consider being purely Thomist, or seriously Suarist, when they are two schools of ecclesiastical thought that differ in only a few areas that are not, fundamentally, mediaeval but post-mediaeval, of a scholastic revival of the 16th century.

So, as we were saying, the Thomism so characteristic of Torras i Bages is absent from both Clascar and Casanovas. Both were separated from this link,

something that should, given the ecclesiastical environment of the time, be highlighted as a positive quality in both of them.

Philosophical speculations aside, Clascar's religious publications were quite parallel to those issued by Serra i Buxó and Ignasi Casanovas from the publishing house *Foment de Pietat Catalana*.

Clascar's *Floretes de Maig* were designed to accompany *Foment's* first communion book, a text that was published in numerous editions. Whilst it is true that we should not confuse religious and philosophical texts, any comparison between Clascar and Casanovas, who were both priests, means we have to embrace the two together, adding, albeit briefly, the liturgy and the Bible.

What appears in Clascar's works on piety is a rapprochement with liturgical life. In the last yearbook of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* in which Clascar's name appears as a founder member, his specialities are listed as being the Bible and liturgy, despite the fact his only qualification was in Canon Law. At the same time, he wrote an annotated Book of the Gospels. This tradition of translating and explaining the gospels had started in the Middle Ages, but its greatest moment came at the time of the Counter-Reformation, at the end of the 16th century. Clascar published a Book of the Gospels for the faithful and another, more special one, for the Dominicans in Barcelona, whose chaplain he was⁵.

1915 proved quite an important year for both of them, as they took part together in the first Montserrat Liturgical Conference. Also attending were Lluís Carreras and the brothers Josep and Joan Tarrés, both great friends of mine. They all collaborated in that first conference on liturgical life. They were already aware that piety could not be restricted to the months of May and June, the traditional novenas, etc. These had to be retained, but more deeply rooted in the liturgy. In this regard, an influence was exercised over Casanovas perhaps by Clascar, but certainly by Monsignor Eudald Serra.

Another key point about which both Casanovas and Clascar were in agreement was the issue of the direct use of the Bible by the people. Not, however, with regard to the subject of hagiography, as Clascar only had a small fantastic biography of Saint George (a saint who actually existed, but whose legend is totally fictitious). On the other hand, they shared an interest in the Holy Scriptures, encouraged by the Montserrat monks.

5 In 1913, Father Clascar published "Evangeluari" so that the faithful could use it. In 1917, it seems that Josep Carner took part in the translation of this work into Spanish, which was entitled "Leccionario de las Dominicas". Therefore, this book was to be used on Sundays by the faithful and not by the "Dominican nuns of Barcelona". In fact, Frederic Clascar was never their chaplain.

Before the Spanish Civil War, there were three types of Bible in Catalonia. Firstly, there was the essentially scientific one that was begun by the Montserrat Benedictine Father Ubach. As the author lived in the Holy Land and Egypt, he was able to carry out archaeological and linguistic fieldwork. It is the most scientific Bible of all.

Then there was the popular Bible, written in a correct, comprehensible non-literary Catalan and which followed the text of the Vulgate versions, although the translators and collaborators from *Foment de Pietat Catalana* also took into account the original Hebrew and Greek. And, if they translated the Vulgate version, it was precisely so that it did not distance the liturgy too far from the spiritual life of the faithful.

Thirdly, there was a Bible that was essentially literary in nature. This was the one commissioned by the *Fundació Bíblica Catalana* (Catalan Bible Foundation), under the auspices of Francesc Cambó, shortly after the creation of the *Fundació Bernat Metge*.

The very first publications of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* mention, as a book being prepared, *La Gènesi* (Genesis), translated by Frederic Clascar. "*La*" *Gènesi*, because the word is feminine in Greek, took a long while to appear. 1915 and 1916 saw the publication of Genesis and Exodus, with the subtitles "translated from the original Hebrew". I do not know where Clascar learnt Hebrew to allow him to carry out a direct translation. It is possible that it happened at the Barcelona Seminary, where he followed his basic studies, or even earlier at the Vic Seminary. His was a case similar to that of Carles Riba who, with a little help, was able to translate Biblical Hebrew after only following the course taught by Doctor Barjau at the University. However, aside from these more religious aspects, there are two philosophical disciplines that are of particular interest to us here: aesthetics and sociology. It has always been said of Casanovas that he was a kind of shadow (or, more accurately, projection) in Barcelona of Dr. Torras i Bages. This is stated by Josep Maria de Sagarra in his splendid *Memòries*, and Miquel Querol i Gavalrà repeats it in his book on contemporary Catalan aesthetics. I do not believe that this view is entirely correct. Almost the only area in which the Bishop and the Jesuit coincided was their vision of Catalan culture within the framework of Christianity, and in an aesthetic regard; between the two aspects mentioned by Nietzsche, Dionysian and Apollonian classicism, Torras and Casanovas both identified themselves with the Apollonian position, deeming the Dionysian position to be un-aesthetic, not only from a moral but also from an aesthetic point of view. It was without doubt, the two's religious roots that were the cause of this.

There was, however, a great difference between them: Torras i Bages was almost unaware of Aristotle's *Poetics*, which is the basis of classical, mediae-

val and post-mediaeval aesthetics, yet on the other hand attached much more importance to Plato. It is easy to understand how a man who was also self-made (the only subject he had completed was Law, not Philosophy and Letters, as the revolution of 1868 prevented him from finishing his studies in them) would be attracted to Platonic aesthetics. Ignasi Casanovas, on the other hand, as someone educated in Aristotelian-style poetics and rhetoric, had a highly-characteristic aesthetic: an Aristotelism that is grafted, by means of the youngsters of the *Acadèmia Catalanista de la Congregació*, onto the *noucentisme* of the followers and those carrying on the work of Eugeni d'Ors. Indeed, it was in the journal *Empòrion*, led by these young men, where he published an introduction to Aristotle's *Poetics* and a first translation into Catalan. These young men included, amongst many others, Josep Carner (President of the Academy for six years in a row), Bofill i Mates (Secretary), López-Picó, Jordi Rubió, etc.

As far as Clascar is concerned, we are unable to pinpoint his aesthetic, as he never dealt directly with the matter, but did so rather on the basis of the aesthetics of the liturgy and thus rather indirectly. This approach was very close to that of some pro-modernist Christians, especially in Italy. On the other hand, both Clascar and Casanovas had a great interest in sociology and, more particularly, in regard to *Solidaritat Catalana* and the *Setmana Tràgica*.

Solidaritat marked a highly significant milestone for the history of Catalonia, and linked both Clascar and Casanovas in quite a remarkable way. I have already noted the –shall we say– theological-moral air of Casanovas's involvement with Prat de la Riba in 1905. It is also curious to note, however, that *Solidaritat* was the cause of an interesting piece of writing by Clascar. In 1907, the parliamentary elections were won by *Solidaritat*: nevertheless, the coalition lost the municipals ones in Barcelona the following year. This led to a speech of a pedagogical nature by Clascar (curiously, one of the few times he approached pedagogy), entitled *De la majoria social de Barcelona en relació a la majoria política* (On the Social Majority in Barcelona with regard to the Political Majority).

Even though the Republicans gained a majority in Barcelona, he said: "The Republicans who voted did not all think like those Republicans in the council chamber who approved the provisions on education favouring lay schools". And he makes a commentary on the Clause Five of the regulation; indeed, the entire book is a collection of comments upon it. It should be remembered before reading it that, under the municipal regime of the liberal monarchy of the time, schools depended upon the municipal councils, from which they received a small subsidy. This comes from the "Romanones Act", the first in which the Spanish state intervened in public education. I remember that Américo Castro said to me one day: "People in Spain do not know when public education began. The most optimistic amongst them put it after the Napoleonic Wars. Do you know?" I answered, "Yes, I think it was with the Ro-

manones Act”, And he said, “Here, shake my hand. You are the only one who has got it right: people just don’t know”.

At that time, then, the organisation of schools was in the hands of municipal councils. Of those in Barcelona, Clascar wrote:

“Education in these municipal schools shall be “neutral” on religious matters, without statements or business that are offensive to the feelings of believers. [Here religion is simply a feeling and nothing more]. One day a week, in the afternoon, shall be dedicated entirely to teaching the Catholic religion to those children who voluntarily attend school that afternoon. This education shall be distributed between the teaching staff of all the schools, it being prohibited from obliging against their will those who consider themselves relieved of this service”.

Today, this would seem perfectly fair to us.

Then, however, Clascar distinguished between the “social majority” and the “political majority”. His reasoning was as follows: the republicans – who were, at the least, generally agnostic and sought a (religiously) neutral school – had a political majority within the City Council; however, their voters were not of the same mind. Therefore, there was a need to distinguish between that political majority and the social majority of the people of Barcelona, who did not think like their representatives. The same was the case when, in 1931, the Spanish Republic was created and laicism was imposed. The Right, both in the centre and periphery of Spain, were of the same opinion: “The measures taken by the Left will disappear, because people are very Catholic”. They were quite serious in this, and they believed it to be true. Therefore, Clascar’s entire book points in this direction⁶.

It has been said that Clascar’s style is very Baroque, unlike that of Casanovas, which gives a glimpse of his deeply classical background, with little evidence of what was called “seminary rhetoric”. Clascar, on the other hand, infuses his “seminary rhetoric” base with an air of *noucentisme*. He searches for exquisite, not archaic, words, in contrast to the authors of the *Renaixença*, and creates or uses neologisms, Latinisms or Hellenisms. This is his style, whether he writes in Catalan or in Spanish (but more in Catalan, evidently, since he published little in Spanish). This exquisiteness, however, sometimes comes close to archaism and dialecticism. For example, he said: “*Nosaltres som viscut durant molt*

6 In 1908, Father Clascar gave his lecture “De la majoria social de Barcelona amb relació a la majoria política” which was also published the same year. It was the result of a municipal regulation that stated that students should receive “neutral religious” teaching in schools. Two months later, there was another municipal regulation which was published with the title: “La Educació Religiosa en les Escoles”.

temps...". The locution "*som viscut*" is a misshapen echo of the dialectical forms of the Balearic Islands and some districts of Catalonia. He should have said "*som viscuts*" or "*hem viscut*". Personally, however, if I had to choose between Clascar's exquisiteness (and errors) and today's slang, I would obviously pick Clascar. Here is an extract:

"We have for a long time lived in the heart of one of the suburbs that has been most affected by anti-social and anti-Christian preaching, and we have been able to see how, in the majority of those poor souls, more than atheism, there is a practical abandonment of religion, arising both from the bad seed sown and from misery and the lack of harvesters of the religious spirit, which they carried hail and hearty in them before they came to Barcelona".

Here, it is very clear that the people, even if they voted Republican and did not go to church, were basically more religious than they thought. This is a viewpoint typical of Torras i Bages. And he concludes with a characteristic epiphonema on social life, which coincides with what Maragall said, as noted above: the people are "*dolent*", but in the sense of "suffering greatly". This echo of Maragall is clearer in Clascar than in Casanovas:

"We repeat that we still expect that the municipal authorities will take more account of reality and amend Clause Five in line with the true feelings of our people. If not, Barcelona will tell it loud and clear what we have oft said and repeated in this speech, that the Republican majority is a social minority, as I have said. It is time for the social forces in Barcelona to show that, although they are a political minority at the moment, they are a social majority that has the right and duty to be heard and represented. Ad maiorem Dei gloriam".

This, then, is a very traditional position of the entire Spanish Right.

Clascar and Casanovas also coincided in having the same interest in 18th-century Catalan philosophy. This came to them, in part, from Torras i Bages and also from other Catalan philosophers, whose thought has now been researched much better: it is not so clear that Martí d'Eixalà belonged to the Scottish school as Llorens i Barba did.

However, before dealing with this point in which the interests of first Clascar and then Casanovas coincided, I would like to note some other areas where they coincided, not only with regard to the apostolate, but also to publications.

I have already mentioned the case of the Bible. In the *Foment de Pietat* Bible, by Serra and Casanovas, it can be seen that, more than scientific interest, their purpose is apostolic and to provide religious training. These two facets also appear in Clascar. However, what set them apart was perhaps the fact that Clascar, in addition to being a writer and member of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*,

formed part of the priestly team of a number of parishes and thus lived more of a pastoral life than the other two.

For his part, Casanovas, from the moment he became involved in *Foment de Pietat Catalana*, in 1915, distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which were sold for one peseta. Father Massot himself, who has studied the religious history of the 20th century in Catalonia and Mallorca so deeply, was astonished at the thousands and thousands of books in Catalan that *Foment* managed to publish.

This is a significant piece of information, which makes clear how wrong the Holy See was to persecute the Catalan language, which was at the time the almost compulsory language of the people. There was a very great difference between the state of religious culture in Catalan towards 1915, and that of the culture of the time of Father Claret, when one might have accepted the statement of the popular Jesuit missionary Father Mach that “the Catalan people are saved in Spanish and damned in Catalan”.

So, with regard to the Catalan language, the difference between the times of Claret and Mach, on the one hand, and that of Clascar and Casanovas, on the other, is very considerable. A Catalan culture had been created that ran from children’s comics –with *En Patufet* at the forefront– to novels for the young, such as those by Folch i Torres, whose print numbers were the envy of authors in Spanish. I remember that, in 1928, while I was still studying, there was an exhibition on Catalan books in Madrid organised by Joan Estelrich and Ernesto Giménez Caballero, where it could be seen that novels in Catalan could achieve a circulation of twenty thousand copies, when it was quite a success for a writer in Spanish to sell twelve thousand.

The most essential difference between Clascar and Casanovas was that the former dedicated himself more directly to a, shall we say, popular apostolic life, whilst the latter considered the nineteenth-century legacy of apologetics to be an important philosophical discipline. At the beginning of the century, the first great French dictionary of theology was still entitled the *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*. It was no theological dictionary, but instead an apologetic one, designed to defend the Catholic faith against the philosophers that were challenging it. That current came principally from the French apologetists of the 19th century, and was also influenced by a group of German apologetists which, although smaller in number, was as or more prestigious than the French one.

Ignasi Casanovas left to us in his *Conferències apologètiques* (Apologetic Speeches) an entire theodicy treatise on what we can know of God from an exclusively philosophical point of view, something that was already the subject of debate in the Middle Ages. From the Renaissance on, philosophy began to have

its doubts and distinguish itself from mediaeval times, until reaching the 19th and 20th centuries. Almost everybody accepted that the existence of God could be proved through philosophical reasoning. However, as far as the immortality of the soul was concerned, even before the Renaissance, many European writers, influenced by Averroes, argued that it could not be proven by means of pure philosophy, but only through revelation –something that should be carefully borne in mind when dealing with Bernat Metge's *Lo somni*.

Ignasi Casanovas's *La religió natural* (Natural Religion), is a text that is apologetic in nature: in other words, coming from a 19th century mentality applied to the religious problems of the beginning of the 20th; specifically, the problems affecting, in a very individual way, all theological modernism. The success of these speeches is made clear by the attendance at them of figures of the stature of Gaudí, Maragall, Ruyra and others. Leading Catalan Catholic intellectuals of the time sent their congratulations to him. Casanovas conserved some of them in his correspondence. Maragall continually repeated his recognition, saying to him: "I see, behind the thinker in you, a poet", something that could not be seen so clearly in Frederic Clascar.

Another area in which the two coincided was in their interest in 18th-century Catalan law. However, in this regard, neither of them was original, depending as they did upon Torras i Bages, who attached great importance to the subject. Within the Catalan legal school he is an insightful commentator from an interpretative rather than historic viewpoint. His work is still very valid, although it lacks the new and critical investigative power of that of Guillem M. de Brocà, published above all, in the *Institut's* yearbook. Brocà was the first member of the *Institut* and a great defender of law at a time when there was a need to strongly defend Catalan law against the central Spanish government, which was always seeking to suppress the peripheral rights of the Civil Code. It was thus a defence of a historical nature that was of highly significant political value at the time.

The history of mediaeval law led Torras i Bages to study the figure of Finestres, and he soon realised the importance of his school of Roman law. Many of the texts on Roman law that he provided commentaries on are still, today, in force here in Catalonia. This was not the case at the time in Valencia, which, after the suppression of its local private and public law by Philip V, had a culture of 18th-century Roman law but no legal renaissance in the 19th. An attempt was nonetheless made to restore private Valencian law, based on the fact that the 14th-century legal edicts of the *Reordenamiento de Alcalá* attached legal value to *nous* or common legal sense. Although this *neo-foralista* attempt would fail before the courts, it would continue to be practised in the legal life of many Valencian agricultural labourers.

This was not the case of Catalonia, where a good part of Constantinian Roman law remained in force. Post-Constantinian law was, however, predominant in Mallorcan law, which is very different in terms of the inheritance law still in force in the Balearic Islands.

In any case, what Torras i Bages grasped was the fact that Roman law was key not only to the history of Catalonia but also to its very social structure. This was why he, as a Doctor of Law, was so interested in the history of Catalan law from the 12th to the 18th centuries, to the time of Josep Finestres, to whom he dedicated an entire chapter of his *La tradició catalana*.

This is a chapter on an important Roman law expert from Cervera, who was of interest not only to Catalonia but who was considered the best Roman law expert in all Spain by the leading Valencia Roman law specialist, Gregori Mayans, who also considered him his master, although he had never seen him. Our law schools of the 18th century would have received Europe-wide recognition had the Dutchman Geert Meerman included their leading examples in his *Novus thesaurus iuris civilis*, as he had once planned.

The interest of both Clascar and Casanovas in the 18th century depends upon Torras i Bages. Despite everything, there is a quite clear difference between them: Casanovas paid attention only to the Cervera law school and its literary and philosophical studies, whilst Clascar never ceased talking of the Scottish philosophy of the 18th century with regard to Catalonia.

However, I would like to note that a professor of the *Universitat Ramon Llull*, Dr. Misericòrdia Anglès, has shed new light on the entire matter with her research into the archives in Glasgow and Edinburgh. She has discovered that the Scots were well informed of 18th-century European currents of philosophical thought, and has established that, at the end of the 19th century, the “Scottish School” of the University of Barcelona did not focus on Reid and Martí d’Eixalà, but instead on Hamilton and Llorens i Barba.

Clascar’s vision of Catalan –and Valencian– philosophy of the 18th century is broader than that of Casanovas, but slightly confused. His book on the Catalan philosophy of the 18th century is of great interest but is a mishmash of poorly connected subjects, and difficult to read. By the way, after the end of the Spanish Civil War, a book came out on the history of Catalan philosophy, in which everything relating to the 18th century was a complete copy of Clascar. However, the author, as a historian of philosophy, was skilful enough to provide an overall vision of it, something that Clascar failed to offer. In this regard, Casanovas was blessed with a firmer mental structure, but he was sometimes led astray by certain preconceptions of religious schooling and, furthermore, failed to establish any connection between the philosophy of Cervera and the remainder of that of the 18th century.

There is a central point that has been studied by many historians, both Spanish and Catalan: the economic school of 18th-century Catalan and Aragonese treatise writers. This school was completely different from that of Castile. It was one of the subjects that Ernest Lluch was working on when he was murdered by ETA. An excellent historian of economics and economic theories, Felipe Ruíz Martín, a good friend of Vicens Vives and a collaborator on his great *Historia Social de España* (Social History of Spain), used to say that when someone read a Castilian economist or an Aragonese or Catalan one, one could already see that they had two different mentalities. The exile of the House of Austria to Vienna helped to create two different cultures.

Casanovas was familiar with some, mainly French, sources, but was unaware that all Catalan and Valencian philosophy of the 18th century was marked by eclectic philosophy. Clascar, on the other hand, did remark on the fact. This was of some merit at a time when the only thing heard in the clerical world was the voice of Leo XIII in favour of pure Thomism. In this regard, Clascar was clearly superior to Casanovas, and I believe that the latter should have known better. When he gave his talks on the 18th century, he made no allusion to the eclectic philosophy of Jesuits around Europe, especially those in 18th century Germany. Even the title of Mateu Aymerich's *Philosophia antiquo nova* reflects those of the German Jesuits' philosophical texts. Casanovas was unable to detect this influence due to his isolation from the European world, except for the individual case of Jaume Balmes.

Both Clascar and Casanovas were able to grasp the evolution from didactic to essayistic philosophy. In this area, the most important personality was, as they both remarked, Father Aymerich. A great expert in the Spanish philosophy of the 18th century, Father Ceñal, told me that the philosophical essay, in Spain, began with Aymerich's *Elucubrationes philosophicae*, written in Latin.

As far as the question of language was concerned, it should be noted that German Jesuits and non-Jesuits alike agreed with the Catalans in retaining Latin as that of philosophy. The former, because they had not agreed to give it up for French, despite the latter being the only language of the Berlin Academy of Sciences until the death of Frederick II, the Academy's founder. Until the middle of the century, the most interesting books published by German philosophers were written in Latin. The first important history of philosophy published in all Europe, that by Jakob Brucker, was published in Latin in Leipzig, from 1742 on.

Here, we reach another point where Clascar and Casanovas come slightly closer. The few allusions made by Clascar to Ramon Llull are always ones of admiration. Casanovas also admired him and studied him deeply (we have his documents from the year he devoted to his intellectual training, where

it can be seen that he studied him in great depth). What is surprising, though, is that despite the fact that he spoke frequently of the summary of Brucker's history of philosophy made by Father Bartomeu Pou, of Mallorca, under the name *Theses bilbilitanae*, the latter takes only a brief look at the thought of Ramon Llull, whereas Brucker regarded him as the first modern philosopher. Aymerich, on the other hand, in his *Elucubraciones*, speaks of him with greater enthusiasm than Pou, regarding Llull as a highly original person, and knows how to capture these peculiarities within the world of mediaeval philosophy. Nevertheless, and curiously, both Pou and, even more so, Aymerich, who were both neo-classicists, attached importance to a thinker as Baroque as Baltasar Gracián: both distinguish his style from his thought, saying that his thought is very lofty and acceptable, enough for him to be counted amongst the great philosophers, but that his style is excessively pompous. I consider both aspects of Gracián to be of interest. However, at least they managed to understand the value of this philosophical side.

To conclude, let us turn to a final subject of interest: the issue of philosophy and the sciences, so characteristic of the 18th century. The truth is that some philosophers, and particularly Aymerich, began to attach importance to the sciences, within philosophy. Philosophical physics had a propaedeutic (introductory) aspect: physics as a science first, then physics as a philosophy. This was a viewpoint closer to the times of the Renaissance than the 18th century. Casanovas, more than Clascar, was aware of a development: the growing interest of the Jesuits of Catalonia and Valencia in the new physics. In the middle of the 18th century, three systems of philosophy were taught at the University of Cervera: the Scotist or Franciscan school, the Thomist or Dominican school and the Suarist or Jesuit school, with students being allowed to choose freely one of the three. A relative value was thus attached to philosophical conclusions, until the unifying reforms of Charles III.

In the middle of the 18th century, two Jesuit teachers who had already stood out whilst students (one, Tomàs Cerdà, Catalan and the other, Antoni Eiximeno, Valencian) studied physics in Marseille with Father Pézénat, who had been a direct student of Newton's school in England. In this way, the new, truly scientific physics was transmitted from Newton, through Pézénat, to the *Col·legi de Sant Pau* in Valencia and the *Col·legi de Betlem* in Barcelona, and later to the *Col·legi de Cordelles*. This latter institution became a place of learning for the noble classes and shaped a group of mathematicians and physicists who created, in the same location and shortly after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the Academy of the Sciences and Arts. This fact has been well documented and is the subject of serious study by Dr. Josep Iglèsies. So, Spain's current Royal Academy is, in part, a continuation of the teachings of Father Cerdà.

Another important personality, studied deeply by Clascar but not so much by Casanovas, was Tosca, who had an extraordinary influence on the entire Valencian school of philosophy, and later in the whole of Spain and Latin America. He was, together with Aristotle and Saint Thomas, one of the three basic authors studied in Philosophy in Bogotá and other cities of Latin America during the century of the Enlightenment.

We have thus been able to cover just some of the many points of contact and divergence between Clascar's and Casanovas's different lines of philosophical thought. To sum up: Clascar, unlike Casanovas, had no impact upon the field of apologetics but did, on the other hand, on that of sociology. He displayed a great interest in the 18th century, with a much broader vision than that of Casanovas, who covered almost exclusively the men of the University of Cervera. We have highlighted the deficiencies of both, but what I find more remarkable is the positive contribution made by each of them to Catalonia's philosophical culture in the first half of the 20th century⁷.

Appendix. Letter to Pere Lluís Font by Josep M. Mas i Solench

22nd July 2004

Dear friend,

According to the phone call we had two days ago, please find attached the notes about the mistakes of the article "Ignasi Casanovas i Frederic Clascar". In case it was to be published again, I think that it should be reviewed. To be honest, I don't understand why Father Batllori wanted to prove which of these two people had a closer friendship with Prat de la Riba.

Personally, I would like to know who was the author of a history of philosophy in Catalonia –published after the Spanish Civil War–, as this person plagiarized the text of Father Clascar.

Enjoy your summer. Warmest regards

7 By express wish of the author, conveyed to us shortly before his death, we would refer to the book by A. Balcells and E. Pujol, *Història de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans, volum I: 1907-1942* (*Memòries de la secció Històrico Arqueològica, LVII*) [History of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, Volume I: 1907-1942 (Reports of the Archaeology Section, LVII)], Barcelona / Catarroja: IEC-Afers, 2002. Miquel Batllori felt it important that readers were made aware of the contributions made by this book, with especial regard to Frederic Clascar.