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The Council and the “Papal Prince”: Trent Seen by the Italian Reformers*

Diego Pirillo

Introduction

In November 1550, having left Italy the previous year to embrace the Reformation, the former bishop of Capodistria Pier Paolo Vergerio published a pamphlet against Julius III, who, under pressure from Charles V, intended to reopen the Council in Trent.¹ The pamphlet, one of several launched by Vergerio against the council, was dedicated to Edward VI. The English king had recently welcomed the two prominent Italian reformers Peter Martyr Vermigli and Bernardino Ochino, who had arrived in England at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, himself determined to summon a general Protestant council in opposition to the one that had just begun in Trent.² From his Swiss exile, Vergerio attentively followed not only his fellow reformers abroad but also those still in Italy. By opting for the vernacular over Latin, he intended to reach a wide audience of Italian readers who remained undecided on whether to break off from the Roman Church and leave Italy or to stay and compromise with Catholic orthodoxy. A skillful pamphleteer, Vergerio knew very well that the purpose of “adversarial propaganda” was to create stereotypes and that, by contrasting a positive set of ideas with its negative antithesis, he could target the “uncommitted,” situated between the two extremes.³ Thus, Vergerio outlined a sharp opposition between the supporters of the Reformation on one side and the Roman Antichrist on the other, aware that any third alternative would have undermined the efficacy of his communicative strategy. This helps to explain why he expended

*This article is a revised version of the paper presented at the conference *Trento e dintorni: il Concilio, altri poteri, altre culture* (Trent, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, 3-5 October 2013) and published in Italian in Michela Catto and Adriano Prosperi, eds., *Trent and Beyond: The Council, Other Powers, Other Cultures* (Turnhout: Brepols, in press). I would like to thank Adriano Prosperi, Giorgio Caravale, Vincenzo Lavenia and Jon Snyder for their comments on the previous drafts of the article. Abbreviations: BAN = Bancroft Library, Berkeley; BL = British Library, London; BNCf = Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze; BUT, Butler Library, New York; NL = Newberry Library, Chicago; BOD = Bodleian Library, Oxford; TCL = Trinity College Library, Cambridge. All translations are my own where not otherwise indicated.

¹ Pier Paolo Vergerio, *Al serenissimo re d’Inghilterra Edoardo sesto de’ portamenti di Papa Giulio III: et quale habbia ad essere il concilio, che egli intende di fare* (Poschiavo: Dolfino Landolfi, 1550).

² On the Italian reformers in early modern England, see the still fundamental work by Luigi Firpo, “La Chiesa italiana di Londra nel Cinquecento e i suoi rapporti con Ginevra,” in *Ginevra e l’Italia*, ed. Delio Cantimori, Giorgio Spini, Franco Venturi, Valdo Vinay (Florence: Sansoni, 1959), republished in Id., *Scritti sulla riforma in Italia* (Naples: Prismi, 1996), 117-94. More recently see also Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Anne Overell, *Italian Reform and English Reformations, c. 1535-c. 1585* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008); and Stefano Villani, “The Italian Protestant Church of London in the 17th Century,” in *Exiles, Emigrés and Intermediaries*, ed. Barbara Schaff (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2010), 217-36. The consistory minutes of the Italian Protestant Church of London have been published in Owe Boersma and Auke J. Jelsma, *Unity in Multiformity: The Minutes of the Coetus of London, 1575 and the Consistory Minutes of the Italian Church of London, 1570-1591* (London: Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1997). On Cranmer’s intention to draw together the Italian and other continental reformers to open a general Protestant council in England, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 501-3.

³ Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), xxii-xxiii.

substantial energy attacking, alongside the papacy, the Italian Nicodemites, who refused to pick a clear side, hiding their real beliefs and expecting that the council would settle the theological controversies.⁴ In a contemporary pamphlet, the accused were in fact cited by name: Vergerio explicitly called out Cardinal Reginald Pole, whom he blamed for hiding his adherence to the doctrine of justification by faith alone and of not openly expressing his religious views, and the Benedictine monk Giorgio Siculo, who taught that “the Christians should be patient, and allow the errors and idolatries, and not say a word, nor speak to the contrary, until the council has concluded.”⁵ While Pole observed Vergerio’s offensive from a distance, especially after his return to England, Siculo faced harsher repercussions. As Adriano Prosperi has argued, his execution in Ferrara in May 1551 was also the result of the assault launched by Vergerio, who with his pamphlets provided the foundation for an alliance between reformers and inquisitors against the common enemy constituted by the radicalism of Siculo and his sect.⁶

Examining Vergerio’s publications in the first years of his exile, scholars have pointed out that the Italian reformer was among the first who clearly understood the relationship between the hopes of religious reform spurred by the council and the practice of religious simulation.⁷ Whether Nicodemism was a coherent theological doctrine or a far more varied phenomenon, it unquestionably acquired new strength in Italy after the opening of the council, as indicated also by the publication of Calvin’s writings against the Nicodemites, which appeared in Florence in 1550 in Ludovico Domenichi’s Italian translation.⁸ Indeed, in 1558, the connection between

⁴ Vergerio, *Al serenissimo re d’Inghilterra Edoardo Sesto de’ portamenti di papa Giulio III*, c. 16r.

⁵ Pier Paolo Vergerio, “A quegli venerabili padri domenicani, che difendono il Rosario per cosa buona,” partially reproduced in Silvano Cavazza, “‘Quei che vogliono Cristo senza croce’: Vergerio e i prelati riformatori italiani (1549-1555),” in *Pier Paolo Vergerio il giovane, un polemista attraverso l’Europa del Cinquecento*, ed. Ugo Rozzo (Udine: Forum, 2000), 136-41 (138: “che i christiani debbono star pazienti, et consentire agli errori et alle idolatrie, et non aprire bocca, né far parola in contrario, fin a tanto che non sia fatto il concilio”). Pole was the focus of several harsh attacks by Vergerio. See for example Francesco Negri, *Della tragedia intitolata Libero Arbitrio* (Basel: Johann Oporin, 1550). The preface to the second edition was drafted by Vergerio as noted by Silvano Cavazza, “Pier Paolo Vergerio nei Grigioni e in Valtellina (1549-1553): attività editoriale e polemica religiosa,” in *Riforma e società nei Grigioni, Valtellina e Valchiavenna tra ’500 e ’600*, ed. Alessandro Pastore (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1991), 33-62 (52, n. 47). On Vergerio and Pole, see Paolo Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole: eresia e santità nelle polemiche religiose del Cinquecento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1997), 76-145; and Anne Overell, *Italian Reform and English Reformations*, 145-66. On Vergerio’s use of propaganda, see also Silvano Cavazza, “La censura ingannata: polemiche antiromane e usi della propaganda in Pier Paolo Vergerio,” in *La censura libraria nell’Europa del secolo XVI*, ed. Ugo Rozzo (Udine: Forum, 1997), 273-95; Robert A. Pierce, *Pier Paolo Vergerio the Propagandist* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003); Giorgio Caravale, *Predicazione e inquisizione nell’Italia del Cinquecento: Ippolito Chizzola tra eresia e controversia antiprotestante* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012), 167-80. Still fundamental on Vergerio is Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio: The Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva: Droz, 1977). On Vergerio’s long bibliography, see Friedrich Hubert, *Vergerios publizistische Thätigkeit, nebst einer bibliographischen Übersicht* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1893).

⁶ Adriano Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro Grande: storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2000), 191-225.

⁷ Silvano Cavazza, *Pier Paolo Vergerio nei Grigioni e in Valtellina*, 50.

⁸ Carlo Ginzburg, *Il nicodemismo: simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell’Europa del Cinquecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970); Albano Biondi, “La giustificazione della simulazione nel Cinquecento,” in *Eresia e riforma nell’Italia del Cinquecento* (Florence: Sansoni, 1974), 7-68; Carlos M.N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 234-75; Enrico Garavelli, *Ludovico Domenichi e i ‘Nicodemiana’ di Calvino: storia di un libro perduto e ritrovato* (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2004).

Nicodemism and conciliar hopes was restated by the Italian reformer Giacomo Aconcio, who, before being forced to leave Italy, had hidden his sympathy for the Reformation while working as a secretary of Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo. Instead of going through the perils of exile, Aconcio believed it was better to wait until “a free and holy council” was assembled to settle the disputes, “for sooner or later such a council will have to be called.”⁹ This was precisely the conviction that Vergerio intended to challenge, by presenting his readers with a clear antithesis between a true and a false church and by rejecting any intermediate stance. However, the expectations created by Trent seemed to give reason to those who avoided such a confessional choice in favor of an irenic solution to the religious question. As Delio Cantimori famously pointed out, “The hope that the Council, however it might be assembled, would resolve the conflicts, make the ‘true faith’ win, or at least put an end to the persecutions,” did not vanish after the disappointment of the first sessions and not even after the end of the council.¹⁰ On the contrary, as indicated by the case of Francesco Pucci and Marco Antonio De Dominis and by their dreams of Church unity, these expectations survived and continued to nourish religious utopias well into the age of confessions, confirming that at times in history “the hopes are perhaps as important as the events.”¹¹

New light can be shed on the history of these controversies through the papers of the Italian reformer Giacomo Castelvetro, nephew of the prominent Renaissance philologist Ludovico, author of famous commentaries on Aristotle, Dante, and Petrarch, translator of Melanchthon, and deeply committed to finding a conciliar solution to the confessional strife.¹² Having left Italy in 1564 to reach Ludovico in Geneva, Giacomo matriculated at the University of Basel in 1568 and finally arrived in England in 1573 with letters of recommendation from Basil Amerbach and Johann Jacob Grynaeus for the Stranger’s Church of London.¹³ Despite his close ties with

⁹ Giacomo Aconcio, “Dialogo di Giacopo Riccamati Ossanese,” in *De methodo e opuscoli religiosi e filosofici*, ed. Giorgio Radetti (Florence: Vallecchi, 1944), 200: “poiché questo concilio bisognerà pure che un di si faccia.” On Aconcio’s position on the council see Giorgio Caravale, *Storia di una doppia censura: gli Stratagemmi di Satana di Giacomo Aconcio nell’Europa del Seicento* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2013), 22-31.

¹⁰ Delio Cantimori, “‘Nicodemismo’ e speranze conciliari nel Cinquecento italiano,” in *Studi di storia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1959), 518-39. I am quoting from the English translation published in *The Late Italian Renaissance*, ed. Eric Cochrane (New York: Harper, 1970), 244-65 (257). See also Delio Cantimori, *Prospettive di storia ereticale* (Bari: Laterza, 1960), republished in *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 421-81.

¹¹ Frances A. Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: Warburg Institute, 1947), 199. After the fundamental studies of Delio Cantimori, Luigi Firpo, and Antonio Rotondò, the research on Pucci has experienced a revival in the last few years. For further bibliography see also Élie Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Le Périple de Francesco Pucci: utopie, hérésie et vérité religieuse dans la Renaissance tardive* (Paris: Hachette, 1988); A.E. Baldini, “Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci al Cardinal Nepote e a Gregorio XIV alla vigilia del suo ‘rientro’ a Roma,” *Rinascimento* 39 (1999): 157-224; Paolo Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia nel Cinquecento: nuovi documenti sul processo e la condanna di Francesco Pucci* (Padua: Cedam, 1999); Mario Biagioni, *Francesco Pucci e l’Informatione della religione cristiana* (Turin: Claudiana, 2011); Giorgio Caravale, *Il profeta disarmato: l’eresia di Francesco Pucci nell’Europa del Cinquecento* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011). On De Dominis see Noel Malcolm, *De Dominis 1560-1624: Venetian, Anglican Ecumenist and Relapsed Heretic* (London: Strickland & Scott, 1984) and Eleonora Belligni, *Auctoritas e potestas: Marco Antonio De Dominis tra l’Inquisizione e Giacomo I* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2003).

¹² On Ludovico Castelvetro and for additional bibliography see *Ludovico Castelvetro: letterati e grammatici nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento*, ed. Massimo Firpo and Guido Mongini (Florence: Olschki, 2008).

¹³ The account of Castelvetro’s escape from Modena can be found in Castelvetro’s *Album amicorum*: BL, Harley 3344, ff. 46v-47r. On Castelvetro see Eleanor Rosenberg, “Giacopo Castelvetro: Italian Publisher in Elizabethan

several Italian reformers, such as Francesco Betti, Camillo Sozzini, and Pietro Perna, Castelvetro never joined the Italian Protestant Church in London, which in those years was increasingly torn between an orthodox and a radical wing.¹⁴ In addition to working as an editor and language tutor, he found employment as a “pragmatic reader” thanks to his ability to circulate learning and information across confessional borders.¹⁵ Like the well-known cases of Gabriel Harvey and John Dee, Castelvetro also made his career through his reading skills, annotating texts, and offering useful knowledge to powerful patrons.¹⁶ His rich collection of papers, today dispersed among different libraries in Britain, Europe, and North America, has only been partially examined by scholars and is revelatory not only for Castelvetro's religious and political ideas but more broadly for the discussions over conciliarism and irenicism that erupted in the age of confessions.¹⁷

The secret history of the Council

In the fall of 1594, after several years spent in England and Scotland, where he was employed as Italian tutor for James VI, Castelvetro moved to Denmark. In the following months, working in the library of his new patron, the Danish ambassador Christian Barnekow, he edited a political anthology that included primarily copies of sixteenth-century Venetian *relazioni* and papal conclaves. Imitating contemporary political compilations such as the famous *Thesoro politico*, Castelvetro also intended to publish classified documents in order to expose the *arcana imperii*, starting from the secret procedures that regulated papal elections.¹⁸ With the exception of one

London and His Patrons,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 6 (1943): 119-48; Luigi Firpo, *Castelvetro, Giacomo*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 22 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1979), 1-4; H.G. Dick, “A Renaissance Expatriate: Giacomo Castelvetro the Elder,” *Italian Quarterly* 7 (1963): 3-19; Paola Ottolenghi, *Giacopo Castelvetro esule modenese nell’Inghilterra di Shakespeare* (Pisa: ETS, 1982); Maria Luisa De Rinaldis, *Giacomo Castelvetro Renaissance Translator* (Lecce: Milella, 2003); Chiara Franceschini, “Nostalgie di un esule: note su Giacomo Castelvetro (1546-1616),” in *Questioni di storia inglese tra Cinque e Seicento: cultura, politica e religione*, ed. Stefano Villani, Stefania Tutino, and Chiara Franceschini (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2006), 73-101; Federico Zuliani, “Giacomo Castelvetro e Machiavelli: appunti sulla conoscenza dell’opera e sull’edizione londinese dei Discorsi (1584),” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 73, no. 3 (2011): 593-605. The best biographical sketch is still Kathleen T. Blake Butler, “Giacomo Castelvetro 1546-1616,” *Italian Studies* 5 (1950): 1-42.

¹⁴ Luigi Firpo, *La Chiesa italiana di Londra*.

¹⁵ Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, “Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England,” in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102-24.

¹⁶ Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, “‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy,” *Past & Present* 129 (1990): 30-78; William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994).

¹⁷ See Howard P. Louthan and Randall C. Zachman, *Conciliation and Confession: The Struggle for Unity in the Age of Reform 1415-1648* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Indeed, an entire volume—NL 5086 74/2—is dedicated to Renaissance conclaves and begins with Giovanni Francesco Lottini’s *Discorso sopra l’attioni del conclave*. For a brief description of the volume, see Aldo Scaglione, “Giacomo Castelvetro e i conclavi dei papi del Rinascimento,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 28 (1966): 141-49. On the *Thesoro politico* see Jean Balsamo, “Les Origines parisiennes du *Thesoro politico* (1589),” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 57, 1 (1995): 7-23; Artemio Enzo Baldini, “Origini e fortuna del *Thesoro politico* alla luce di nuovi documenti dell’Archivio del Sant’Uffizio,” *Studia Borromaica* XIV (2000): 155-74; and

volume donated in 1975 to the Butler Library at Columbia University, all the volumes prepared by Castelvetro in Copenhagen were acquired in 1965 by the Newberry Library at the behest of Hans Baron and have been subsequently examined by John Tedeschi.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Castelvetro's anthology has received little attention, and its copious annotations have been completely neglected by scholars. What makes the anthology particularly interesting are the marginalia that provide insight on Castelvetro's hermeneutic strategies as well as on his religious and political convictions. In this respect, they confirm what scholars have already observed with regard to the intensive and selective reading techniques employed in sixteenth-century Italy by religious dissidents, who appropriated written texts by extracting specific passages from their original context and circulating them through other channels of communication.²⁰ Moreover, Castelvetro's annotations offer new evidence of the dissemination and appropriation of Venetian *relazioni* in the early modern period, when ambassadorial records circulated well beyond the restricted circles of high politics, contributing to the transformation of information into a commodity.²¹

One of the most annotated volumes of Castelvetro's anthology is entitled *Vari scritti intorno il reggimento politico di Roma* and dated May 31, 1595. In addition to several Venetian *relazioni*, it also collects other political texts, including Cosimo de' Medici's *Parere sulla corte di Roma*.²² The tension between the text and the reading notes is striking here, as in the marginalia Castelvetro turns Cosimo's praise of the Papal court into a violent attack against the Roman Antichrist. Near the beginning, where Cosimo argued that the Roman court was "the holiest, the most noble, and the most illustrious," governed by the "true vicar of God, and legitimate successor of Saint Peter, and universal Patriarch, and omnipotent Lord of the world, to whom all of us lords and Princes, of every state, are subjects," Castelvetro rebutted in the margin that "according to this Prince and all the papists, the Pope is the Omnipotent Lord of the world. In which case it follows that he is the great Devil, the true mouth of Christ having said more than

Simone Testa, "Alcune riflessioni sul *Thesoro politico* (1589)," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 64, no. 3 (2002): 679-87.

¹⁹ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, Accession Number 63-1507. I owe the information about Baron's role in the purchase of the anthology to the generosity of Paul Gehl. The only two studies expressly dedicated to the anthology are John Tedeschi, "Tommaso Sassetti's Account of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre," in *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents*, ed. A. Soman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 99-154, (partially republished in John Tedeschi, *Intellettuale in esilio: dall'Inquisizione romana al fascismo*, ed. Giorgio Caravale and Stefania Pastore [Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2002], 239-50), which publishes from Castelvetro's volumes the *Brieve racconto del gran macello fatto nella città di Parigi* by Tommaso Sassetti, available also in an Italian edition in Tommaso Sassetti, *Il massacro di San Bartolomeo*, ed. John Tedeschi (Rome: Salerno, 1995), and Giuseppe Migliorato, "Vicende e influssi culturali di Giacomo Castelvetro (1546-1616) in Danimarca," *Critica storica* 19 (1982): 243-96, who offers important findings on Castelvetro's years in Scandinavia. For a brief description of the volume of the anthology held at BUT, Western 32, see Eleanor Rosenberg, "Giacopo Castelvetro in Scandinavia," *Columbia Library Columns* 25, no. 2 (1976): 18-27.

²⁰ Ugo Rozzo and Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Livre et Réforme en Italie*, in *La Réforme et le livre: l'Europe de l'imprimé (1517- v. 1570)*, ed. Jean-François Gilmont (Paris: CERF, 1990), 368-72.

²¹ Brendan Dooley, *The Social History of Skepticism: Experience and Doubt in Early Modern Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali: alle origini della pubblica informazione, secoli XVI e XVII* (Rome: Laterza, 2002); Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²² NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, ff. 180-182. The text is undated. Castelvetro's copy was finalized on July 25, 1595.

once that the Prince of this world is the Devil.”²³ With these words, Castelvetro was echoing the identification between the Roman Church and the Antichrist that had become a commonplace among the Italian reformers through the writings of Bernardino Ochino and Celio Secondo Curione.²⁴ In 1566, Giovanni Battista Trento gave this conviction a remarkable visual representation in the *Mappe-monde nouvelle papistique*, whose allegorical map situated Rome in the devil’s mouth and depicted Charon crossing the Acheron with an additional boat to fit the crowd of popes and cardinals destined for Hell.²⁵

As the examination of the other marginalia makes clear, however, Castelvetro was not simply repeating a trite commonplace of Protestant propaganda. The corruption of the papacy was in fact historicized and presented as the outcome of a sixteenth-century process that culminated in the Council of Trent. Indeed, numerous annotations suggest that the Italian reformer carefully annotated his anthology in order to reconstruct the history of the council and its failed attempt to reform Christianity. Following the report of the Venetian ambassador in Rome, Antonio Soriano, Castelvetro underlined the passages describing the fearful reactions that Luther’s call for a general council produced in the papal curia, adding in the margin that “this was the reason for which Leo X and later Clement VII avoided permitting a free council.”²⁶

It is well known to everyone that the subject of the council began to be debated many years ago, in the time of Leo X [...] but the fear of seeing with the council change in capite as in membris was the reason that, to escape the affair of the council, the most reverend Cardinal of San Sisto, legate to Germany, was easily persuaded to become the right instrument in seeing this need, the results of which the world can bear good witness.

As a result, the crisis was initially handled by the Cardinal legate Tommaso De Vio, but according to Castelvetro, despite the fact that the cardinal of San Sisto was highly learned, he was so unskilled at politics that he did more damage than good to the papal interests.²⁷ Nothing

²³ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 180r-v: “vero vicario di Dio, e successor legittimo di San Pietro, e Patriarca universale, e Signor onnipotente del mondo, a cui tutti noi altri signori o Prencipi, di qualsivoglia stato siamo sudditi”; “Il Papa secondo questo Prencipe e tutti i papeschi, è Signore Onnipotente del mondo. Il che s’è così è seguente che sia il gran Diavolo, havendo la verace bocca di Christo più volte detto, che il Prencipe di questo mondo è il Diavolo.”

²⁴ Antonio Rotondò, “Anticristo e Chiesa romana: diffusione e metamorfosi d’un libello antiromano del Cinquecento,” in *Forme e destinazione del messaggio religioso: aspetti della propaganda religiosa nel Cinquecento*, ed. Antonio Rotondò (Florence: Olschki, 1991), 19-164. See also Lucia Felici, “Il papa diavolo: il paradigma dell’Anticristo nella pubblicistica europea del Cinquecento,” in *La Papauté à la Renaissance*, ed. Florence Alazard and Frank La Brasca (Paris: Champion, 2007), 533-69.

²⁵ Jean-Baptiste Trento and Pierre Eskrich, *Mappe-monde nouvelle papistique*, ed. Frank Lestringant and Alessandra Preda (Geneva: Droz, 2009). I have consulted the copy of the map held at BNCF: Pal.C.B.3.36 str.982.

²⁶ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 2r: “La cagione, che Leone X e poi Clemente VII fuggirono di concedere che si facesse il Concilio libero”; “è noto ad ognuno che di questa materia di concilio si cominciò a parlare già da molti anni, fin al tempo di Leone X [...] ma il timore che si hebbe di vedere col concilio alterazione si in capite come in membris, fu causa che, per fuggire questa materia di concilio, facilmente fu persuaso essere atto instrumento di provvedere al bisogno la persona del q. R.mo San Sisto, legato nelle parti di Germania, il quale, che frutto habbia fatto, il Mondo ne può rendere tutto buono testimonio” In this and in the following translated passages, I have indicated the sections highlighted by Castelvetro and in brackets his marginal notes.

²⁷ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 2r-v: “Il cardinale San Sisto legato nella Magna quantunque letterato fosse, era nondimeno così poco destro, che più tosto nocque alle cose papesche, che giovamento alcuno vi recasse” (The

changed with Clement VII, who, harboring the same fears, held off opening the council for as long as he could.²⁸ Paul III stood out as remarkably different, as one who “with regard to the council, proceeded differently than Clement, because Clement was afraid, and he neither could nor knew how to hide it. On the contrary, Paul proceeded more astutely, because he never revealed his fear of the council.”²⁹ As Castelvetro indicated in the margin, Paul III “pretended publicly that he wanted the council, but secretly detested it.” Annotating his anthology, the Italian reformer highlighted that by dissimulating his real intentions Paul III succeeded in taking control of the council and subordinating it to what was previously decided in Rome.³⁰

[Paul III] holds that, with regard to the future council, it is appropriate to discuss but not to act; believing that, if any council should take place, it would only be in that manner and form which I described, having settled first every matter in Rome and decided according to the will of the pope (*This is a fine council*) and the cardinals, and then presented to the council to be approved, without further discussion [...] It is clear to those who rightly judge, that the council does not suit His Holiness nor perhaps that See. (*Please note that Soriano has a long nose with which he can sniff deeply.*)

As is well known, the same view was restated in the *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino* by Paolo Sarpi, who famously argued that Paul III “of all his virtues [...] esteemed most highly dissimulation.”³¹ With Sarpi, whom he met in Venice during the Interdict, Castelvetro shared, not only his convictions on Paul III and the council, but a whole interpretation of history as the reign of hypocrisy and dissimulation, in which the protagonists always masked their intentions and the real causes were never transparent. The history of the council was a perfect example of this, as in Trent religion was only a simple pretext to veil the political will of the popes. In addition, the examination of the conclaves made clear that the history of the Church was entirely secular and that the Holy Spirit, as Castelvetro often added in the margins, had no role in papal elections. As Peter Burke has suggested, this conception of history was a reaction against the humanist tradition and was grounded in the conviction that only by privileging official

cardinal of San Sisto, legate to Germany, despite being very learned, was nonetheless so politically incapable, that he hindered papal interests rather than helping them).

²⁸ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 2v.

²⁹ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 15r-v: “ha caminato in questa materia di concilio diversamente da Clemente, perché Clemente haveva timore, né lo poteva, o sapeva tenere nascosto. All’incontro Paulo ha proceduto più astutamente, perché non ha mai mostrato di temere il concilio.”

³⁰ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 16v: “tiene che, quanto al futuro Concilio, sia da ragionare, ma non da operare; avendo per certo che, se Concilio alcuno ha da succedere, non sia, salvo che in quel modo e forma che ho detto; regolata prima ogni cosa in Roma e determinata secondo il volere del papa (*Questo è un bel concilio*) e dei cardinali, e poi presentata al Concilio per esser da quello approvata, senza disputarla altramente [...] Occorre poi a chi ben considera, che il Concilio non fa per Sua Santità né forse per quella Sede (*Nota ti prego, il Soriano haver lungo il naso, onde odorare molto in dentro*).”

³¹ Paolo Sarpi, *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, 2 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1974), 1:121: “tra tutte le sue virtù, di nessuna faceva maggior stima che della dissimulazione.” Sarpi is echoing Tacitus, *Annals* IV, 71, a passage that was often cited in the early modern period to justify or to attack dissimulation. See Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 15-16. On Sarpi’s “etica della maschera,” see David Wootton, *Paolo Sarpi: Between Renaissance and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 119-35, and Vittorio Frajese, *Sarpi scettico: stato e Chiesa a Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1994), 143-49.

documents over speeches and orations was it possible to penetrate the hidden causes of past events.³² In this respect, Castelvetro's marginalia can be considered an attempt to use the reports of the Venetian ambassadors to write a "secret history" of the council, contributing to the rise of a new historical genre that was destined to become highly popular in the age of the *arcana imperii* and reason of state.³³

By annotating the texts included in his anthology, Castelvetro intended to shed light on what happened in Trent behind the scenes and to understand how the papacy was able to modify the balance of power in Italy and impose itself on the other states. For this reason, in the Venetian *relazioni* he carefully annotated the passages describing the "two souls" of the papal prince, a temporal sovereign who was at the same time universal pastor of all Christendom.³⁴ As Bernardo Navagero explained, the pope was not like the other princes and must "be regarded in two ways: as prince of the temporal state which he has and as pope because of his spiritual authority."³⁵ Again, while annotating the report by Paolo Tiepolo, the Italian reformer carefully underlined the passages on the double nature of the papal prince:³⁶

[The popes] are in no way like other common princes; since through the Person, who they represent on earth, it seems that they exceed the human condition, and therefore they are not just like other princes who have jurisdiction over lives and properties of men, but they claim authority over the whole world, even in the states belonging to other rulers, at least in spiritual matters.

This is, perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the most copiously annotated passages in Castelvetro's anthology. In the margin, after referring to Lorenzo Valla's famous rebuttal of the Donation of Constantine ("if you would like to see the truth of that see L. Valla on the Falsely [Believed and Forged] Donation"), the Italian reformer also contrasted the poverty of the primitive Church with the corruption of his present time, accusing the popes of being nothing but secular rulers who fought with other princes for the possession of Italy:³⁷

³² Peter Burke, "Sarpi storico," in *Ripensando Paolo Sarpi*, ed. Corrado Pin (Venice: Ateneo Veneto, 2006) 103-9. On Sarpi as historian, see also Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, 2 vols. (London: T. Nelson, 1961), 2:518-21; William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 556-623; Corrado Vivanti, introduction to Sarpi, *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino*, I: XXXIII-LXXXIX.

³³ Peter Burke, "Publishing the Private in Early Modern Europe: The Rise of Secret History," in *Changing Perceptions of the Public Sphere*, eds. Christian J. Emden and David Midgley (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 57-72. On the use of Venetian *relazioni* as historical sources see Gino Benzoni, "Ranke's Favorite Source: The Relazioni of the Venetian Ambassador," *The Courier* 22, no. 1 (1987): 11-26.

³⁴ Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice: un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1982).

³⁵ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 32r-v: "Si può il Pontefice considerare in due modi, o come Principe per lo stato temporale, ch'egli ha, o come Pontefice per la spirituale autorità." Navagero's relazione from Rome was copied, fragmented and rearranged by Castelvetro more than once. See for example TCL R.4.6.

³⁶ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 58r-v: "non sono punto con gli altri Principi communi; poi che essi con la Persona, che rappresentano in terra, pare si levino sopra la conditione humana, onde non solo, come gl'altri Principi ne i loro stati hanno autorità sopra la robba e la vita delli huomini, ma ancora per tutto il mondo, anco ne i paesi di tutti li altri pretendono d'haver certa superiorità almeno nelle cose spirituali."

³⁷ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 59r-v: "se vuoi veder di ciò la verità vedi L. Valla de falso [credita et ementita Constanini] donatione"; "Nota come la primitiva chiesa fino a 300 dopo la morte di Christo visse sempre di

Note how the early Church until 300 years after the death of Christ always lived on charity, without ever possessing any estate or property. During that entire time, then, the Church was good and true, but then after it began to own goods, it immediately became corrupt.

The bishops of Rome, the poorest and meekest of the world, have become powerful and fight with the Emperors for dominance over Italy.

Along with Valla, the marginalia suggest that, while reading the reports of the Venetian ambassadors, Castelvetro kept Machiavelli in mind as well. As was common among the Italian reformers, he considered Machiavelli not the adviser of tyrants but a republican thinker who provided insight on the political and religious causes of the Italian wars.³⁸ It was presumably the famous chapter of the *Discorsi*, accusing the Church of having kept Italy divided, that Castelvetro was thinking of while emphasizing Tiepolo's brief reference to the responsibilities of the papacy in the crisis of Renaissance Italy:³⁹

Rarely it has happened that barbarian soldiers have come to disturb the peace of Italy, without being invited or called, or even forced to come by the Popes, and then they dare to call themselves the Vicars of Christ, or the successors of Peter, being the Devil, the father of all conflict, discord, and war.

The *Discorsi* was of course a constant point of reference in the sixteenth-century discussions of the power of the pope, not only among the reformers, but also within the Church. In his *De Summo Pontifice*, the Cardinal Reginald Pole used Numa Pompilius to explain why the pope, as prince and pastor, was superior to any secular ruler.⁴⁰ In Castelvetro's case, it was Machiavelli's analysis of the political use of religion that allowed him to discern the double nature of the papal

elemosine, senza già mai possedere cosa alcuna stabile, né proprietà. Tutto quel tempo dunque ella fu buona e vera chiesa, ma così dopo che cominciò ad avere beni subito si corruppe"; "I vescovi di Roma di poveri e miti quanto al mondo, divenuti potenti contendono della signoria d'Italia con gli Imperatori".

³⁸ On Machiavelli and the *eretici italiani* see Werner Kaegi, *Machiavelli a Basilea*, in Id., *Meditazioni storiche*, ed. Delio Cantimori (Bari: Laterza, 1960), 155-215; Leandro Perini, "Gli eretici italiani del '500 e Machiavelli," *Studi Storici* 10 (1969): 877-918; Diego Pirillo, "Republicanism and Religious Dissent: Machiavelli and the Italian Protestant Reformers," in *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England: Literary and Political Influences from the Reformation to the Restoration*, ed. Alessandro Arienzo and Alessandra Petrina (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 121-40.

³⁹ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, 74r: "Rade volte è accaduto che sieno venuti barbari soldati a disturbare la quiete d'Italia, che non sieno stati invitati, o chiamati, anzi sforzati da Papi a venirvi, e poi ardiscono di chiamarsi Vicari di Christo, o successori di Pietro, essendo del Diavolo padre d'ogni dissensione, discordia, o guerra." Cfr. *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, 1.12, in Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 233.

⁴⁰ Adriano Prosperi, "Reginald Pole lettore di Machiavelli," in *Cultura e scrittura di Machiavelli: atti del convegno Firenze-Pisa* (Rome: Salerno, 1998), 241-62. On Pole as reader of Machiavelli see also Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 78-91; Sydney Anglo, *Machiavelli - The First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, Irrelevance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 115-42; and Alessandra Petrina, "Reginald Pole and the Reception of the Principe in Henrician England," in *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England*, 13-27.

prince and to understand the features of ecclesiastical principalities. A famous chapter of *Il Principe* considered them the only ones “that are secure and successful,” though it nonetheless refused to examine them in detail because, “as they are exalted and maintained by God, it would be the act of a presumptuous and audacious man to do so.”⁴¹

Highlighting Pius V’s role in the execution of Pietro Carnesecchi and in the trial against Giovanni Morone, Castelvetro gave specific examples of how the reinforcement of the papal monarchy shaped the course of sixteenth-century Italian history, calling attention to the victory of the Inquisition over the council.⁴² The reinforcement of the papacy was not, however, a problem limited to Italy. Annotating Tiepolo’s *relazione*, Castelvetro emphasized the reactions that French Gallicanism opposed to papal interferences, noting that “the Sorbonne of France denies that the Pope is above the Council.”⁴³ Since the memory of Elizabeth I’s 1570 excommunication was still vivid, the Italian reformer was well aware that the pope was able to play a crucial role in international affairs through his spiritual power. This was a problem destined to remain at the height of Castelvetro’s interests in the following years, when the oath of allegiance imposed by his patron James I in January 1606 attacked the doctrine of the pope’s authority in deposing secular rulers, aiming to give the sovereign a form of spiritual as well as temporal authority.⁴⁴

In the reports of the Venetian ambassadors, Castelvetro also found confirmation that the doctrine of the pope as *dominus beneficiorum*, which allowed the papacy to distribute ecclesiastical benefices, lay at the heart of the conflict between the Church and the European states. As the Italian reformer added in the margin, “great is the power to confer ecclesiastical benefices, which are found in other countries.”⁴⁵ For Castelvetro, however, the pope’s attempt to impose his will on secular states had been strongly undermined by the Reformation, which, contrasting Christ and the papal prince, identified the Roman Church as the Antichrist.⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Il Principe*, in Machiavelli, *Opere*, 148, English trans. in Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. P. Constantine, intro. A.R. Ascoli (New York: The Modern Library, 2008), 52.

⁴² NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 88v, NL, 5086, 74/2, f. 60v. On the victory of the Inquisition over the Council see Alain Tallon, “Le Concile de Trente et l’Inquisition Romaine,” in *Mélanges de l’Ecole Française de Rome* 106 (1994): 129-59; and Adriano Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 117-34. On the trials against Carnesecchi and Morone see Massimo Firpo, *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinal Giovanni Morone*, 4 vols. (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea, 1981-1987); Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcato, eds., *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi, 1557-1567*, 4 vols. (Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1998-2000); Massimo Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma: studi sul cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509-1580) e il suo processo d’eresia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2005).

⁴³ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 72r-v: “Nega la Sorbona di Francia che il Papa sia sopra il Concilio.”

⁴⁴ On the controversy that erupted with the oath of allegiance see Stefania Tutino, *Empire of Souls: Robert Bellarmine and the Christian Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 117-58. On the notion of *imperium* in sixteenth-century debates on papal power see also Benoît Schmitz, “Pouvoir pontifical et *imperium* au XVI^e siècle,” in C. Callard, É. Crouzet-Pavan and A. Tallon, eds., *La Politique de l’histoire en Italie: arts et pratiques de réemploi (XIV-XVII siècle)* (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2014), 79-94.

⁴⁵ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 73r: “grande è quella podestà di potere conferire i benefici, che sono negli altrui paesi.”

⁴⁶ NL, Vault Case MS MS 5086, 59/2, f. 72r-v: “Ci sono stati alcuni si sfacciati lusinghieri, c’hanno havuto ardire di dire che tutti gli stati, e tutte le signorie mondane sieno sottoposte al Papa, però non è da meravigliarsi se i veraci Catolici Christiani riformati, senza punto temere l’ira, né la tirannasca forza sua gli hanno detto in faccia essere in vero figliuolo del gran Diavolo, il quale tentando Christo disse, che di lui erano le signorie tutte del mondo o che le poteva donare a chi l’adorasse, e a chi gli piacesse.”

There have been some truly impudent flatterers, who have dared to say that all states, and all governments, are subject to the Pope, but one should not be surprised if true reformed Catholic Christians, without any fear of His wrath, nor his tyrannical strength, have said to him openly that he was the true son of the great Devil, who when tempting Christ said that all the governments of the world were his and that he could give them to whoever adored him, or who pleased him.

Along with several Venetian *relazioni* on the Roman court, the Italian reformer included in the same volume the *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma* by the papal nunzio and Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone, well known to Castelvetro's family and a correspondent of Ludovico and his brother Giovanni Maria even after their escape from Italy.⁴⁷ His *Discorso* was never printed but nonetheless enjoyed a wide scribal circulation in the early modern period.⁴⁸ Castelvetro fragmented and rearranged the text, dividing it into sections and adding new titles and marginalia. The notes indicate that he did not intend simply to turn Commendone's *Discorso* into an anti-papal pamphlet, but that he was focusing again on the figure of the papal prince, to further clarify in what respect the head of the Roman court was different from other sovereigns.⁴⁹ Indeed, Castelvetro attentively annotated the sections dealing with the elective nature of the papal monarchy. According to Commendone, as no hereditary succession existed in Rome, each election marked a sharp change with the past, clarifying that the pope, unlike secular rulers, had two souls but only one body. Having highlighted the passage explaining that "upon the death of the Pope everything is immediately sent into tumult, and the tumults lead to schisms," Castelvetro repeated in the margin: "Upon the death of the pope everything is sent into tumult until schisms arise."⁵⁰ In a following page, he annotated Commendone's comments about the alterations that marked the life of the papal state, in which the new sovereign is often radically different from his predecessor as in each elective monarchy:

as it happens in republics, which all sooner or later change and pass from one form of state to another because of the natural shift of habits that occurs in cities, likewise for the same reason it happens in principalities and even more abruptly in those electives, because with admirable effort the successors are created of different nature than their predecessors.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Giulio Poggiani, *Epistolae et orationes*, ed. Girolamo Lagomarsini, 4 vols. (Rome: G. Salomonio, 1757-1766), 4: 441-44, cited in Domenico Caccamo, "Commendone, Giovanni Francesco," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 27 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1982), 606-13.

⁴⁸ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, ff. 103-173. Along with the one included in Castelvetro's anthology, I have consulted the copy of Commendone's *Discorso* in BAN 92/162 z. For the modern edition of the text, see Giovanni Francesco Commendone, *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma*, ed. Cesare Mozzarelli (Rome: Bulzoni, 1996).

⁴⁹ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 107v.

⁵⁰ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, 112r: "in morte del Papa subito si sente tumultuare ogni cosa e in vita si tumultua nelle scisme"; "Per la morte del papa ogni cosa tumultua, e in vita nascon le scisme."

⁵¹ NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, 208r: "siccome avviene nelle repubbliche, che tutti o tardi o per tempo si mutano e passano da una forma di stato in un'altra per una naturale mutazione de' costumi che succede nelle città, così parimente per la cagione istessa avvenga ne' principati ed ancora molto più repentinamente negli elettivi, perché a bello studio si creano li successori di natura differente dal predecessore." In the margin Castelvetro added: "Perché si cerchi per lo più, ne Principi elettivi di creare il successore che sia diverso di costumi del morto" ("For which

Commendone's description of the variability of the Roman court became a commonplace in early modern political literature, and its echo can be found again in the other texts included in Castelvetro's anthology. While repeating that in Rome "it seems that nothing can last at length in a state; because even in the inconstant air, it seems that Rome is more prone to change than any other place," Tiepolo's *relazione* pointed out that the popes "think that the further they distance themselves from the habits of their Predecessor, the more success they will have," and as a result the new pope often repealed the decision of the previous one. Castelvetro annotated in the margin that this was the reason for the execution of "the gentle Carnesecchi," who after being absolved by Pius IV was sentenced to death by his successor Pius V.⁵²

The consequences of the elective nature of the papal monarchy have often been considered by scholars who have highlighted for example that, as the patronage system in Rome was continually dismantled and reorganized, posts were redistributed more frequently and with a higher degree of social mobility than in secular monarchies.⁵³ Less attention has been given to the impact that this feature of the papal monarchy had on the early modern myth of the angelic pope. Grounded in medieval apocalypticism, it survived in Tridentine Italy when millenarian hopes often grew in the interregnum between the death of the old pope and the election of the new.⁵⁴ The echo of this myth was particularly strong among the Italian reformers. Francesco Pucci's call for a new general council and his decision to propose to Gregory XIV and Clement VIII his plan to reform Christianity indicate how strong and persistent the faith in a conciliar solution to the religious question remained still at the end of the century.⁵⁵ The conclusion of the French religious wars and Rome's dialogue with Henry of Navarre convinced Pucci that the time had come for a religious unification of the whole world, which included not only the Christian confessions but also Turks, Jews, and even the American Indians and Chinese, who "by far exceed we Christians in morality and political government"; the same conciliatory ideals were shared by Castelvetro's uncle Ludovico.⁵⁶ As new research has demonstrated, Ludovico Castelvetro's translation of Melanchthon's *De ecclesiae auctoritate* was not an expression of a generic Lutheranism but instead a spiritual and irenic interpretation of Christianity that justified

reason in the elective principalities it is generally sought to create a successor with different habits from the deceased").

⁵² NL, Vault Case MS 5086, 59/2, f. 88v: "pare che niuna cosa possa lungamente conservarsi in uno stato; si che sino all'aere per se incostante pare che in Roma sia più soggetto alla mutatione, che in qualsivoglia altro luogo;" "[P]ensino di dover dare tanta maggiore sodisfattione di loro, quanto più s'allontanano dell'uso del Predecessore suo."

⁵³ Maria Antonietta Visceglia, "Burocrazia, mobilità sociale e patronage alla corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento: alcuni aspetti del recente dibattito storiografico e prospettive di ricerca," in *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 3 (1995): 11-55; Wolfgang Reinhard, *Papauté, confessions, modernité*, ed. Robert Descimon (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1998).

⁵⁴ Cesare Vasoli, "L'immagine sognata: il 'papa angelico'," in *Storia d'Italia, Annali 16, Roma, la città del papa: vita civile e religiosa dal giubileo di Bonifacio VIII al giubileo di papa Wojtyła*, ed. Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 75-109; Adriano Prosperi, "Un papato 'spirituale': programmi e speranze nell'età del Concilio di Trento," in *Il Papato e l'Europa*, ed. Gabriele de Rosa and Giorgio Cracco (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2001), 239-54.

⁵⁵ Prosperi, "Un papato 'spirituale'." On Pucci and for further bibliography, see Baldini, "Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci"; Carta, *Nunziature ed eresia*; Biagioni, *Francesco Pucci e l'informazione della religione cristiana*; Giorgio Caravale, *Il profeta disarmato*.

⁵⁶ Baldini, "Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci," 185.

Nicodemism and intended ultimately to reconcile Germany with Rome.⁵⁷ On this point, however, Giacomo ended up distancing himself sharply from the ideas of Ludovico and the other radical reformers. Indeed, it was precisely the reading of the *relazioni* that undermined any expectation of Church reunion. The reinforcement of the papal monarchy after Trent, carefully described by the Venetian ambassadors, made clear that the dreams about the coming of an angelic pope and an irenic solution to the confessional strife were, in fact, nothing but dreams.

The “state of religion”

Castelvetro’s reading notes demonstrate that he collected ambassadorial *relazioni* in an attempt to reconstruct the secret history of the council, which he regarded as the crucial turning point in understanding the rise of the papal monarchy and the new conflicts that had erupted in confessional Europe between ecclesiastical and secular powers. The Italian reformer continued to focus on these issues in the following years, when he moved from Copenhagen to Venice, establishing a close relationship with Sarpi and his circle. Evidence of this is provided by Castelvetro’s manuscripts held in the Wren Library of the Trinity College in Cambridge. They include a rich collection of the texts that he copied and annotated during his stay in Venice between 1599 and 1611, when he worked for the printer Giovanni Battista Ciotti.⁵⁸ Among them are not only handwritten copies of the censored passages of Francesco Guicciardini’s *Storia d’Italia* on the temporal power of the popes but also an extract in Castelvetro’s hand of the Italian translation of the *Relation of the State of Religion* by Edwin Sandys.⁵⁹ “A unique attempt to produce an overview of religious practices and beliefs throughout Western Europe,” the *Relation* was published in London anonymously in 1605 with a dedication to the Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift.⁶⁰ It pondered whether a possibility for reconciliation among the Christian churches still existed, arguing in favor of a pragmatic coexistence among the different confessions while participating in the debate on the possibility of a new ecumenical council, an idea that gained new strength with the conciliatory politics of James I.⁶¹ In a famous passage, often cited by scholars of Renaissance irenicism, Sandys pointed out that “a kind of men there is [...] in all Countryes, not many in number, but sundry of them of singular learning and piety” who “write or deale on eyther side, these flames of controversies might bee extinguished or

⁵⁷ Guido Mongini, “Ludovico Castelvetro tra Modena e Chiavenna: eterodossia, nicodemismo e indifferentismo confessionale,” in Ludovico Castelvetro, *Filologia ed eresia: scritti religiosi* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2011), 5-155.

⁵⁸ On Castelvetro’s manuscripts in the Wren Library see Diego Pirillo, “Questo buon monaco non ha inteso il Macchiavello: Reading Campanella in Sarpi’s Shadow,” *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 20, no. 1 (2014): 129-44.

⁵⁹ The passages about the temporal power of the popes censored from Guicciardini’s *Storia d’Italia* were reprinted in Latin by Pietro Perna: Francesco Guicciardini, *Loci duo, ob rerum quas continent gravitatem cognitione dignissimi, qui ex ipsius Historiarum libris tertio et quarto dolo malo detracti in exemplaribus hactenus impressis non leguntur* (Basel [Pietro Perna], 1569). Cfr. Paolo Guicciardini, *La censura nella storia guicciardiniana: Loci duo e Paralipomena* (Florence: Olschki, 1954); Castelvetro’s copy of the censored passages of Guicciardini’s *Storia d’Italia* is in TCL, R.16.23, ff. 47v-56r. The extract of the Italian translation of Sandys’s *Relation* is in TCL, R.4.36, ff. 43r-48r.

⁶⁰ Theodore K. Raab, *Jacobean Gentleman: Sir Edwin Sandys, 1561-1629* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 22.

⁶¹ W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

asslaked, and some godly or tolerable peace re-established.”⁶² Yet the *Relation* concluded projecting a strong skepticism on this goal, arguing that “there appeare for the effecting of it sundry difficulties so great, that they draw to bee next neighbours to so many impossibilities.”⁶³ No hope could be placed in a “generall Councell,” not only because of the “untractableness of the papacy,” but also because of the unwillingness of the European princes to promote such a reunification: “Where are these Princes? They dreame of an old world, and of the heroicall times, who imagine that Princes will breake their sleeps for such purposes.”⁶⁴

Despite the fact that just after its publication the court of High Commission ordered that the *Relation* be burned for its tolerant remarks on Catholicism, the text had a remarkable circulation in the seventeenth-century through new English editions and translations into Italian, French, and Dutch.⁶⁵ The Italian translation, which appeared in Geneva in 1625, was then revised by the Italian Calvinist Jean Diodati, who expanded the text with “notable additions,” as the title page announces.⁶⁶ As Gaetano Cozzi and Theodore K. Raab have established, the author of these additions was Sarpi, who translated the text with the assistance of William Bedell, chaplain of the English embassy in Venice, and with his collaborator Fulgenzio Micanzio.⁶⁷ The additions were already attributed to Sarpi by Hugo Grotius, who in 1637 wrote to his brother to say that the “book published in English by Knight Edwin Sandys was translated into Italian with additions by friar Paolo, without indicating his name.”⁶⁸ While copying the *Relation*, Castelvetro did not forget to include Sarpi’s additions. Indeed, at the end of the second chapter, having labeled the Catholic veneration of the saints and Mary a “horrible blasphemy” (*bestemmia horribile*), he indicated in the margin that the “beginning and origin of the corruption of the Church” (*principio, et origine della corrotione della Chiesa*) took place when “the Roman Pontiffs assumed temporal power over the kingdoms and principalities,” with the result of

⁶² Edwin Sandys, *Europae Speculum or A View or Survey of the State of Religion in the Westerne Parts of the World* (London: T. Cotes for Michael Sparke, 1632), 194-95. The first edition, entitled *A Relation of the State of Religion; And with what Hopes and Pollicies it hath beene Framed, and is maintained in the severall States of these Westerne Partes of the World*, appeared in London in 1605 and was printed by Val. Sims for Simon Waterson. On the *Relation* see Joseph Leclerc, *Histoire de la tolérance au siècle de la Réforme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1955), 1:346-49; Cantimori, *Prospettive di storia ereticale*, 465-67; Corrado Vivanti, *Lotta politica e pace religiosa in Francia fra Cinque e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), 339-41; Gaetano Cozzi, “Sir Edwin Sandys e la *Relazione dello stato della religione*,” *Rivista storica italiana* 79 (1967): 1096-1121; Theodore K. Raab, “A Contribution to the Toleration Controversy of the Sixteenth Century: Sandy’s ‘A Relation of the State of Religion,’” in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. Anthony Molho and John Tedeschi (Florence: Sansoni, 1971), 833-47.

⁶³ Sandys, *Europae Speculum*, 201.

⁶⁴ Sandys, *Europae Speculum*, 199-201, 205-6.

⁶⁵ Theodore K. Raab, “The Editions of Sir Edwin Sandys’s ‘Relation of the State of Religion,’” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (1963): 323-36.

⁶⁶ Edwin Sandys, *Relazione dello stato della religione: e con quali disegni et arti è stata fabricata e maneggiata in diversi stati di queste occidentali parti del mondo*. Tradotta dall’Inglese del Cavaliere Edoino Sandis in Lingua Volgare con aggiunte notabili, [Geneva], 1625.

⁶⁷ Cozzi, “Sir Edwin Sandys”; Raab, “The Editions of Sir Edwin Sandys’s ‘Relation of the State of Religion.’” Sarpi’s additions have been republished in Paolo Sarpi, *Opere*, ed. Gaetano and Luisa Cozzi (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1969), 295-330.

⁶⁸ Cozzi, “Sir Edwin Sandys,” 1116.

creating “a Hierarchy that, excluding the faithful from having access to the common goods of the Church, turned the Roman Pontiff into an absolute Emperor above every other power.”⁶⁹

The presence of Sandys’s *Relation* in Castelvetro’s papers confirms that the Italian reformer was closely connected with Sarpi’s circle; furthermore, it suggests that he might have acted as intermediary between Sarpi and the English embassy. The latter granted him protection for his entire stay in Venice and played a decisive role in saving him from the Inquisition in 1611. What is certain is that the Italian reformer was at the center of the intricate international network that existed in the “Anglo-Venetian seventeenth century.”⁷⁰ It was not just a coincidence that at his death Castelvetro left most of his papers to Adam Newton, the translator of Sarpi’s *Historia del Concilio Tridentino*, edited in 1619 in London by Marco Antonio De Dominis.⁷¹

Conclusion

It is often noted that the fragmentary nature of marginalia provides remarkable insight on the specificity of past readers, though they rarely allow for the formulation of master narratives and general conclusions.⁷² In this case, however, Castelvetro’s reading notes not only offer evidence on the practices of one single individual but more broadly illuminate the controversies around Nicodemism, conciliation, and irenicism that agitated the circles of the Italian reformers during and after the Council of Trent. While annotating his political anthology, Castelvetro was exposing what he considered to be the real outcome of the council and describing the rise of the papal monarchy in order to attack not only Rome but also those reformers who believed in the possibility of a reunification among different orthodoxies. In his opinion, the division of Europe into different confessions was not a temporary situation but something destined to last. The reading of the *relazioni* and of Sandys’s *Relation* inflicted a mortal blow on the dreams of religious unity. According to Castelvetro, it was necessary to follow the example of Sarpi and the Venetian Interdict, unmasking the secrets of the papal prince and convincing European rulers to be actively engaged in opposing the Roman *totato*. If pacification could still be achieved, it depended on the alliance of the Protestant states and on their capacity to prevent Europe from falling under a universal Catholic monarchy. For this reason, the danger was constituted not only by the papacy but also by those radical reformers whose millenarian hopes of religious reunification led them to compromise with Rome, weakening the Protestant front. This was a conviction that Castelvetro shared with several patrons and fellow reformers in England, from Philip Sidney to Alberico Gentili. In his *De Papatu Romano Antichristo*, after repeating Vergerio’s invective against Trent, Gentili also blamed “the Anabaptists, the Libertines, the

⁶⁹ TCL, R.4.36, f. 45v: “i Pontefici romani s’assunsero potenza temporale sopra i regni et sopra i prencipati”; “[U]na Gierarchia, che, esclusi i fedeli dal partecipare le cose communi della Chiesa, costituisce nel Pontefice Romano un Imperio assoluto sopra d’ognuno.”

⁷⁰ See Enrico de Mas, *Sovranità politica e unità cristiana nel Seicento anglo-veneto* (Ravenna: Longo, 1975), and Filippo de Vivo, “Francia e Inghilterra di fronte all’Interdetto di Venezia,” in *Paolo Sarpi: politique et religion en Europe*, ed. Marie Viallon (Paris: Garnier, 2010), 163-88.

⁷¹ On the publication of Sarpi’s *Historia* see Frances A. Yates, “Paolo Sarpi’s ‘History of the Council of Trent,’” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 7 (1944): 123-43; Gaetano Cozzi, “Fra Paolo Sarpi, l’anglicanesimo e la ‘Historia del Concilio Tridentino,’” *Rivista storica italiana* 68 (1956): 559-619.

⁷² William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008), XVI.

Schwenckfeldians, the Servetians, the Antitrinitarians,” who, in not understanding the danger constituted by the papal prince, became its unconscious allies.⁷³

In this respect, Castelvetro’s reading notes also permit a reconsideration of the history of sixteenth-century irenicism and of its different currents. Against the *irénisme utopique* of reformers such as Pucci and De Dominis, marked by a strong millenarianism and by a radical spiritual and anti-institutional interpretation of Christianity, Castelvetro situated himself among the supporters of the *irénisme étatique*, founded on an Erastian conception of the relationship between Church and state and on the idea that only a strong secular authority was able to bring confessional strife to an end.⁷⁴ From the point of view of the *irénisme étatique*, the example to follow was the Anglican Church, where, as in antiquity, the king was both prince and pastor and the reform of religion took place peacefully through the will of the state.⁷⁵ It was this belief that led Castelvetro to contrast the conciliatory utopias of the Italian heretics with his perception of England, which following Sandys and Sarpi he also considered “the only Nation that tooke the right way of iustifiall Reformation, in comparison of other who have runne headlong rather to a tumultuous innovation... whereas that alteration which hath beene in England, was brought in with peaceable and orderly proceeding, by generall consent of the Prince and whole Realme.”⁷⁶

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⁷³ BOD, D’Orville 607: Alberico Gentili, *De Papatu Romano Antichristo assertiones ex verbo Dei et ss. Patribus*, f. 15r, f. 84r. Gentili’s attack against the “eretici italiani” has been examined by Vincenzo Lavenia, “Alberico Gentili: i processi, le fedi, la guerra,” in “*Ius gentium Ius communicationis Ius belli*”: *Alberico Gentili e gli orizzonti della modernità*, ed. Luigi Lacchè (Milan: Giuffrè, 2009), 165-96.

⁷⁴ On this distinction see Guillaume H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, “Tolérance et irénisme,” in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, ed. Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Jonathan Israel, and Guillaume H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 63-73. The notion of *irénisme utopique* is applied to Pucci by Caravale, *Il profeta disarmato*, 187-93.

⁷⁵ Posthumus Meyjes, *Tolérance et irénisme*, 70.

⁷⁶ Sandys, *Europae Speculum*, 214.

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