

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS

Studia Historico-Ecclesiastica Upsaliensia

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Andreas Mazetti Petersson

A Culture for the Christian Commonwealth

Antonio Possevino, Authority, History, and the Venetian Interdict



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Abstract

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In this study, I investigate the authorial intentions of the early modern Jesuit Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) aiming to contribute to the understanding of his activities as an author, diplomatic administrator and missionary. I carry out analyses of his evaluative criteria of various topics and disciplines, such as history, geography, and politics. I also problematise earlier research on the Venetian Interdict Controversy of 1606 and 1607, in which he participated.

Main sources to the investigation are the *Apparato All'Historia* and the *Coltura Degl'Ingegni* which were initially included in the bibliography *Bibliotheca Selecta*, as well as the *Soldato Cristiano*. These sources are compared with three pamphlets written during the Interdict Controversy: the *Nuova Risposta di Giovanni Filoteo d'Asti*, *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, and *Risposta del Sig. Paolo Anafesto*.

My point of departure for the textual interpretation, are the transcriptions of the sources that I have produced. The methodology of interpretation borrows from Quentin Skinner's hermeneutics of recovering authorial intentions, without succumbing to a narrow contextualist view. I have complemented Skinner's approach with the concept of historicity, which accepts *person* to be able to relate to one's historical context without being locked inside it.

In the analysis, I use concepts to make the implicit meanings of the texts explicit. The framework for Possevino's texts concerns deliberative rhetoric, which aims either to exhort or dissuade readers to imitate given historical exempla. In his task of persuasion, emphasis is put on the moral dimensions of the transcendentals (*bonum, unum, and verum*). The transcendentals also function as his evaluative criteria.

Important to the analysis is the concept of traditions. The point of departure for the use of this concept is Alasdair MacIntyre's definition of tradition as a community with a shared ability to refer to canonical texts, which also shares the understanding of justice, authority, and sovereignty. In my analysis, I show that conflict arose between two rival traditions, one Roman and one Venetian, during the Interdict Controversy.

The first part of this study function as foundation for understanding the content that Possevino produced during the Interdict Controversy. Here, I discuss biographical notes about Possevino, as well as characteristics of the early modern Society of Jesus. In the second part, I investigate Possevino's definition of culture, his evaluation of disciplines, and his use of the principle of accommodation. In the third part, I provide a survey of the early modern Republic of Venice, as well as an analysis of the debates about authority during the Interdict Controversy. In closing, the results of my investigation show that Possevino's intentions consist of contributions to the common good, which add to a cohesive Catholic culture.

Keywords: Antonio Possevino, Society of Jesus, Venetian Interdict, Culture, Catholic Church, Authority and power, Roman Pontiff, *Apparato All'Historia*, Historical exempla, Christian Commonwealth, Accommodation

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To the memory of my grandparents

The world of research has gone berserk – too much paperwork.

Bob Dylan
Nettie Moore, 2006

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After nearly five years of research and writing I have concluded a study on the early modern Jesuit Antonio Possevino, who lived a fascinating life in a time which was very different from ours. On the other hand, as the conditions for being a human person have altered very little, history becomes accessible to us and we are able to relate to that which transcends time. Allegedly Petrarch once said that 'to know history is to value the deeds of one's predecessors'. Through the years of reading history works, I have come to appreciate this saying very much.

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Uppsala, July 2022.

Andreas Mazetti Petersson

Abbreviations: Works by Possevino

AAH, *Apparato All'Historia* (1598)

BS, *Bibliotheca Selecta* (1593)

CI, *Coltura Degl'Ingegni* (1598)

NR, *Nuova Risposta di Giovanni Filoteo di Asti* (1606)

RAG, *Ragionamento... fatto nella prima sinodo provinciale di Aquileia* (1597)

RPA, *Risposta del Sig. Paolo Anafesto* (1607)

RTE, *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* (1607)

SC, *Il Soldato Christiano* (1583)

Introduction

“When I read Caesar, I seem to see him, not only write about what he did, but do the very things that he wrote about.”¹ This was the impression of the Polish king, Stefan Báthory (r. 1575–1586), whose words about the impact of history reading were recorded in the *Apparato All’Historia* by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino (1533–1611). To the early modern reader, history was the teacher of life, the light of truth and the witness of times as pronounced by Cicero (106 BC–43 BC) in *De Oratore*. This maxim would have implications for the *vita activa* in society, as history was the provider of good, bad, exulted, and desultory examples for people to take to heart in order to shape character.

The shaping of characters aimed to achieve contributions for the common good. If not applicable to everyone, the early modern Society of Jesus incorporated this aim into its ministry. One who dedicated his authorial production to this aim was Antonio Possevino. His *opus magnum* the *Bibliotheca Selecta* (1593), which he wrote after having conducted various diplomatic assignments in the northern and eastern parts of Europe, assessed the disciplines that were taught in schools in a time when the Society of Jesus was developing its curriculum, a task that came to completion with the document *Ratio Studiorum* (1599). Nonetheless, the *Bibliotheca Selecta* was a personal assessment as much as it was a contribution to Catholic culture and the common good of the Christian Commonwealth.

The Christian Commonwealth, or the *respublica Christiana*, is a term that referred to a community of Christian believers, who, through institutions

¹ AAH, III, c. 8: 113v: “[...] quando io leggo Cesare, parmi di vederlo non solo scrivere ciò ch’egli fece, ma fare quelle medesime cose, le quali egli scrisse.”

and laws, sought to preserve unity between Christian states. Understanding of the elements that composed the common good of the Christian Commonwealth was not altogether uniform in the early modern period, as various ecclesiastical, political, and national traditions valued the common good differently. This was obvious during the Interdict Controversy of 1606 and 1607, when Pope Paul V (*sed.* 1605–1621) excommunicated the Republic of Venice. In this conflict, claims of independence of state, by the Republic of Venice, clashed with what the Church in Rome considered as foundations for a good society. In this controversy, in which Possevino was one of the more distinguished defenders of the papal intervention against Venice, questions of the legitimacy of authority and power, based on arguments from historical records, provided the structure for the phenomenon that has been called *la guerra delle scritture* (the war of writings).

In this study, Possevino's participation and authorial production during the *guerra delle scritture* will be compared with works from the *Bibliotheca Selecta*. The aim of this comparison is to define his authorial intentions. At the centre of this analysis are his rhetorical strategies when considering a variety of topics such as culture, geography, and history, as well as authority and power in the Church and in the temporal state. This study is divided into three parts and follows the chronology of Possevino's authorship between 1593 and 1607.

Aims and Questions

During the sixteenth century, the unity of the Catholic Church had been challenged from a number of angles such as the conciliarist movement during the Council of Pisa (1511), the Protestant Reformations, claims of acceptance for Huguenots in France, the bitter rivalry between the French and Hapsburg monarchies and the Ottoman invasion in European countries. Challenges to unity also included debates about grace and the free will of man – *De Auxiliis* controversy – between Dominicans and Jesuits.

Apart from these challenges to Catholic unity, other dissensions were noticeable. Amongst these were the questions of how to deal with missionary activities amongst the people of the 'New World', how to approach converts to the Catholic Church, how to deal with the increasing difficulty of synchronising society with the Julian Calendar, how to approach the scientific research about the solar system, how to address courtly interests in astrology and the art of magic, how to control the spread of books in the post-Gutenberg era, how to deal with the legacy of the Renaissance humanists, how to regard translations of the Bible other than the *versio Vulgata*, how to structure seminaries and public schools for education, how to regard various and opposing Church histories, how to assess various and opposing national histories, how to approach claims from nations of independent government, how to determine the prerogatives of the office of the Roman pontiff, and how to deal with conflicting legislation and compilations of law.

These were all concerns to the sixteenth-century Catholic Church, but they were also concerns that were imbedded in the two volumes of Antonio Possevino's *Bibliotheca Selecta* (1593). Many of these topics would resurface during the Interdict Controversy of 1606–1607, which Possevino commented upon in three texts. In this study, I will analyse and compare his position on the challenges of the early modern Catholic Church as documented in the *Apparato All'Historia* (1598), which was initially incorporated in the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, as well as in his Interdict Texts (1606–1607).

The aim of this study, is to investigate the authorship of Possevino, and although Possevino's name is brought up in many scholarly works, a thorough study of his authorial ambitions has not been previously conducted. Possevino is often mentioned in studies that investigate circumstances in which he participated, without thoroughly investigating his authorship in relation to his activities. With this study, I wish to fill a gap in early modern historiography by offering an investigation that provides a deeper level of analysis than previous studies of Possevino have carried out.

The aim of this study is also to problematise earlier research on the Interdict Controversy from a perspective which has not been previously considered, that is to discuss the topics that surrounded the Interdict Controversy through the writings of Possevino. By combining topics that are dealt with in the chosen writings by him, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of his authorial aims, as well as to Jesuit studies and to the research on the early modern Republic of Venice.

In order to carry out such a comparison, three main questions will be addressed. The first question is: by what criteria does Possevino evaluate authors of history, geography, and politics in the *Apparato All'Historia* and what is the purpose of such evaluation? This question concerns the disciplines that form the content of the *Apparato All'Historia* and the manner by which texts and their authors are assessed.

The second question: what are the authorial ambitions in the texts that Possevino wrote during the Interdict Controversy (1606–1607)? This question pertains to matters of authority and superiority in hierarchies of the Catholic Church and the Christian Commonwealth, as well as matters of the status of independent states vis-à-vis a distinct hierarchical structure with the Roman pontiff at its apex.

The third question: what continuity or discontinuity exists between the *Apparato All'Historia* and the Interdict Texts? This question concerns concepts and strategies of consistency or lack thereof, when comparing the two objects of study.

Sources

I will present the main sources that constitute the basis for the analysis in this study, providing information about authors, printing dates, and genre. The sources are divided into two categories: Non-Interdict Texts and Interdict Texts. First, the *Apparato All'Historia* which covers the period of 1593 to

1602 is a Non-Interdict Text. Second, the Interdict Texts cover the period between 1606 and 1607. I will first discuss the *Apparato All'Historia di Tutte le Nationi et il Modo di Studiare la Geografia* (Venice: 1598) (henceforth, shortened to *Apparato All'Historia*).

The *Apparato All'Historia*, in Italian, comprises of 270 folio pages, but the earliest printed edition of this text is Book XVI – with the title *De Historia Humana* – of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* (Rome: 1593), which was written in Latin.² The second printed edition was a free-standing edition, also written in Latin, titled *Apparatus ad omnium gentium historiam* (Venice: 1597). Its third edition, the *Apparato All'Historia*, was written in the Italian vernacular and the fourth edition, *De Apparatu ad omnium gentium* (Venice: 1602), was written in Latin and was extended to suit the format of the *Apparatus Sacer*, which was a reworked and updated version of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*. The *Apparato All'Historia* was once more incorporated in the 1603 and 1607 editions of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*.³

My reason for opting to analyse the 1598 Italian edition, rather than the latest free-standing edition, *De Apparatu ad omnium gentium historiam* (Venice: 1602), which is chronologically closer to the texts of the Interdict Controversy, relates to the question of intended recipients. I justify the distinction between the two mentioned editions of the *Apparato All'Historia*, not due to content but to their different languages. The former is written in the Italian vernacular, whilst the latter is written in Latin. Consequently, although different languages targeted different intended recipients, the 1598 edition of the *Apparato All'Historia* and the Interdict Texts shared intended recipients. Thus, the *Apparato All'Historia* is better suited to comparison with the conceptual apparatus of the Interdict Texts, since they are written in the same language.

² BS, II, XVI: 219–258.

³ BS, 1603, II, XVI: 304–467; BS, 1607, II, XVI; Balsamo, 2006: 55–104; Sommervogel, 1895: 1076–1080.

In fact, books that were written in the vernacular were aimed to be read by another set of readers than that of the European elite who were accustomed to the Latin language. Readers of only Italian vernacular were readers of modest education and primarily inhabitants on the Italian peninsula.⁴ The historian Luigi Balsamo has pointed out that since the Italian edition of the *Apparato All'Historia* was intended to be read by people of modest education, rather than a well-to-do elite, the paper quality was inferior when compared to the Latin edition of 1597. Balsamo also mentions that this indicates that the price of the Italian edition was somewhat lower.⁵

Other Non-Interdict Texts of importance to this study, besides the *Apparato All'Historia*, are the *Coltura Degl'Ingegni* and the *Soldato Cristiano*. The *Coltura Degl'Ingegni* was, like the *Apparato All'Historia*, included in the *Bibliotheca Selecta* but printed in extended free-standing editions in 1598 (Vicenza), 1604 (Venice), 1605 (Paris), 1606 (Treviso) and 1610 (Cologne). The edition that I will consult in this study is the 1598 edition.⁶ Conversely, the *Soldato Cristiano* (Rome: 1569) was not born out of the project of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*.⁷ The text was further published in 1576 (Macerata), 1582 (Mantua), 1583 (Macerata), 1585 (Treviso) and 1604 (Venice). In this study, I will consult the 1583 and 1604 editions.⁸

⁴ Prodi, 1991: 16; O'Malley, 2013: 194. Compare with what Stuart Elden says about the readers of Jean Bodin's *Six Livres*, which was written in the French vernacular. Elden, 2013: 172.

⁵ Balsamo, 2006: 55–104. Printers in the Veneto region, as well as in other parts of Europe, printed books that were 16 x 11 cm, and smaller, suited for travellers but also for students and wandering preachers. Luigi Balsamo notes that the typographer who oversaw the printing of the three editions of the *Apparato All'Historia*, expressed his trust to the bishop of Würzburg, Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn (1545–1617) that the book would be well read by both students and priests. Moreover, the historian John Patrick Donnelly discusses the circulation of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* and its intended recipients: “[...] a work running to more than a thousand folio pages in Latin obviously did not aim at a mass audience. It was designed for an elite of churchmen, and from the beginning it was recognized as a standard bibliographic guide and a major work of scholarship.” Donnelly, 1988[b]: 198. Cf. Balsamo, 1991: 63. For discussions of ‘volgare’ versus the Latin language, see Godman, 2000: 159; De Vivo, 2007: 226.

⁶ CI; Balsamo, 2006: 104–108; Sommervogel, 1895: 1076–1080.

⁷ Some content from the *Soldato Cristiano* is recurrent in Book V of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*. See BS, I: 382–419.

⁸ SC (1583 & 1604); Sommervogel, 1895: 1065–1066.

The Interdict Texts, moreover, are three in number and were published under the pseudonyms Giovanni Filoteo d'Asti, Paolo Anafesto and Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta. Unlike the *Apparato All'Historia* they are addressed to named recipients, and unlike the *Apparato All'Historia* they make no claim to be guides to studies, nor do they display any approbations from regents or superiorities of the Catholic Church. They merely provide comments on the acute crisis between the Catholic Church and the Republic of Venice and are replies, *risposte*, to other writings during the Interdict Controversy.

Just as with the *Apparato All'Historia*, no transcribed edition has been published of Possevino's texts of the Interdict Controversy except the *Nuova Risposta di Giovanni Filoteo di Asti, alla lettera di un Theologo incognito scritta ad un sacerdote suo amico, sopra le censure, & interdetto di Papa Paolo V, contro la Signoria di Venetia* (Bologna & Ferrara: 1606). This text, which encompasses fifty-six folio pages, can be found in the appendix of the book *Antonio Possevino's 'Nuova Risposta' – Papal Power, Historiography and the Venetian Interdict Crisis, 1606–1607*, Andreas Mazetti Petersson (Uppsala: 2017).⁹

The other two Interdict Texts that were written by Possevino are the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta all'avviso mandato fuori dal Signore Antonio Quirino Senatore Veneto, circa le ragioni, che hanno mosso la Santità di Paolo V. Pontefice à pubblicare l'Interdetto sopra tutto il Dominio Vinitiano*, which consists of fifty-four folio pages and the *Risposta del Sig. Paolo Anafesto all'avviso del Sig. Antonio Quirino, Nobili Venetiani, circa la scomunica della santità di Papa Paolo V contro il Duce, & Senato di Venetia*, which consists of fifty-five folio pages. In addition, a printed letter written by Possevino to the Franciscan *minor Conventuale* Marcantonio Capello, which also contains the reply of Capello to Possevino, will be discussed in this study. Its title is *Lettera del Padre Antonio Possevino Giesuita al Padre*

⁹ NR; Mazetti Petersson, 2017; Sommervogel, 1895: 1085–1086. Transcribed editions of the sources to this study will be made available in the series *Uppsala Studies of Church History*.

Marc'Antonio Capello, minor Conventuale, con la risposta di detto padre (Venice: 1607).¹⁰

Two other texts that were written during the Interdict Controversy that do not bear the authorship of Possevino, will also be discussed in this study, as these bring wider perspectives to the analytic work and are therefore valuable as comparative material. The first such text is a *risposta* to the *Nuova Risposta*, which was written by Fulgentio Tomaselli and bears the title, *Le Mentite Filoteane overo Invettiva di Giovanni Filoteo d'Asti. Contra la Republica Serenissima di Venetia, Confutata da Fulgentio Tomaselli, filosofo Albanese chiamato aliàs il Capelletto, à favore della istessa Serenissima Republica* (Padova: 1607).

The other source amongst the Interdict Texts that does not bear the authorship of Possevino, is the *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia ad una lettera scrittagli da un Reverendo suo Amico, Sopra il Breve di Censure dalla Santità di Papa Paolo V. publicate contro li Signori Venetiani. Et sopra la nullità di dette Censure, cavata dalla sacra Scrittura, dalli Santi Padri, & da altri Catolici Dottori*. This text bears an unnamed author on its frontispiece, but, as I have argued elsewhere, the author of the *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia* is likely to have been Giovanni Marsilio (d. 1612) from Naples.¹¹

¹⁰ *Lettera del Padre Antonio Possevino Giesuita al Padre Marc'Antonio Capello, minor Conventuale, con la risposta di detto padre*; Sommervogel, 1895: 1085.

¹¹ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 50–57. There is no information on the frontispiece of the *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia* regarding where the text was printed, nor does it indicate when it was printed. The *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia* is structured around eight *propositioni* which Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino commented upon in 1606. In the introduction to the *Risposta del Cardinale Roberto Bellarmino alla difesa delle otto propositioni di Giovanni Marsilio Napolitano*, Bellarmino states that while he wrote his *risposta* to Paolo Sarpi a defence for the eight propositions was written by Giovanni Napolitano, referring to the *Difesa di Giovanni Marsilio a favore della risposta dell'otto propositioni contro la quale hà scritto l'illustrissimo et reverendissimo Sig. Cardinal Bellarmino*. As noted in parenthesis to the title of the eight propositions, it was written in 1606. Therefore, the *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia* must have been written in 1606. Cf. Bellarmino: 1606[b].

Methodology

The first methodological task of this study has been to transcribe the main sources. The reason for this procedure was to facilitate both easier reading of the sources and key-word searches of the texts. Transcriptions of the texts have been executed by myself and whilst transcribing I have been careful not to alter the original texts in any way.¹² For instance, the *Apparato All'Historia* attaches a list of errors to the body of text, but because I wanted to change the original format of the manuscript as little as possible, notes on misspellings and other errors made by the author or by the printer have not been incorporated to preserve the originality of the text. Quotations, from my transcriptions are translated but shown in their original wording in footnotes. Quotes from the Italian original are marked with quotations marks, whereas quotes from the Latin original are marked with quotation marks and in italics.

The transcriptions are the point of departure for comparison and interpretation. Comparison is imbedded in hermeneutics and it aims to identify, as well as to explain, continuity, discontinuity, likeness and difference in texts and contexts.¹³ When interpreting the source material, the aim is to represent the authorial intentions according to hermeneutic principles suggested by Quentin Skinner. Unlike the hermeneutics proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, Skinner suggests a hermeneutic that focuses on authorial intention, where texts are understood as acts of communication and interventions in debates with a particular set of readers in mind.¹⁴ Given the intended

¹² When ambiguities, with respect to the interpretation of certain words in the original manuscripts have been identified, I have opted to account for such ambiguities in footnotes to the transcriptions in order to make the texts easier to read.

¹³ Stausberg, 2021: 15–22.

¹⁴ Gadamer's fusion of horizons concerns understanding whereby understanding is possible when the reader belongs to the tradition that shapes the text and accepts the tradition to which the text belongs as authoritative. Ricoeur, on the other hand, considered distance to be an advantage over Gadamer's fusion of horizons where utterances in texts gain autonomy from the author and the context of the author. The text needs to be decontextualised in order to be recontextualised by the act of reading, as the texts propose a world to the reader. Understanding, then, refers to understanding of texts as well as understanding of oneself in front of texts. Interpretation to Ricoeur entails abstraction from the author and the self, as the text proposes another possible world. MacAvoy, 2016: 13–30; Ritivoi, 2013: 64–82.

readers in mind, certain conventional codes of linguistics are presumed. Therefore, decoding the meaning of texts is to decode texts while situating them within contexts of structures and values. Such codes can include irony, satire and nuances with the intention to ridicule, which is presumed to have been understood by the intended readers since codes are considered to be conventionally recognisable.¹⁵

According to this hermeneutic scheme, it does not suffice to understand what authors were saying in their texts. To Skinner, the hermeneutics must include understanding of what authors meant by saying what they said. The meanings and intentions are to be found in the relationship between text and social context. Nonetheless, Skinner points out that the immediate context need not be the context that is relevant to the task of interpretation. Therefore, the recovery of context requires wide-ranging historical research to be able to pare text and context.¹⁶

Following the philosophy of speech-acts as presented by J. L. Austin, Skinner suggests that authors – when admonishing, warning or informing readers – perform illocutionary acts. In other words, the author is *doing* something and therefore *intending*. Intentions are, however, thought of as distinct from motives, which refer to reasons that prompted an author to produce a certain text. On the contrary, intentions refer to that which is to be observed *in* writing. Illocutionary intentions, as opposed to perlocutionary intentions, are characterized by that which the author intended *in* the text rather than whether the author achieved the intended goal with the writing.¹⁷

Illocutionary intentions refer to what the author *meant* in writing. For instance, whether the author meant to attack, defend or warn the readers. Since such intentions are regarded as an act of performance by Skinner, the meaning is said to be a *doing* in writing. Therefore, understanding of linguistics and

¹⁵ Skinner, 2004: 100–102.

¹⁶ Skinner, 2004: 82 & 86–87.

¹⁷ Skinner, 2004: 90–99.

social conventions is necessary to the task of recovering what the author was *doing* in texts; in other words, to recover what words meant to specific readers.¹⁸

Words, to Skinner, have social meaning where evaluative language signals social attitudes. Words are considered to be synchronically understood as significances and connotations of concepts may change. Skinner mentions concepts such as ‘religious’ and ‘culture’ as examples of terms that have changed significance over time. Conclusively, Skinner agrees with Reinhart Koselleck, admitting their shared admiration for Foucault, that normative concepts have a history and that they are tools for ‘innovating ideologists’ in persuasion of an audience, rather than statements about the world. The form of conceptual use, Skinner notes, is rhetoric.¹⁹

Criticism of Skinner’s method has been raised by several scholars such as Robert Lamb, who has argued that Skinner’s hermeneutics advocates a contextualism that rejects understanding of texts outside of their intellectual and linguistic context and therefore cannot be abstracted from this milieu. Thus, past texts are deemed as irrelevant to contemporary thinking and cannot contribute to the solving of perennial philosophical and theological problems. Lamb also criticises Skinner’s idea that past texts should have been authored by innovating ideologists, who, by means of rhetoric, sought to manipulate readers for political ends. Lamb, for his part, holds that political utterances cannot be reduced to ideological elements with claims to social power.²⁰

Sara Miglietti, moreover, notes that Skinner’s method aims to avoid anachronisms as he rejects the reading of historical works through the lens of contemporary concerns and concepts. Miglietti labels Skinner’s method as ‘synchronic holism’, in that it regards synchronic linguistics and social contexts as a framework for the interpretation of historical texts. In connection to

¹⁸ Skinner, 2004: 106–144.

¹⁹ Skinner, 2004: 158–187.

²⁰ Lamb, 2009: 51–73.

Skinner's affirmation of conceptual change, Miglietti criticises his rejection of the diachronic dimensions of historical texts as well as his conclusion that merely the recovery of intentions, *doings in texts*, is at the heart of the interpretative task. On the other hand, knowledge of motives – that which prompted the author to write – is considered by Skinner to be an irrelevant interpretative task. Miglietti concludes that, in his attempt to avoid non-causal explanations, Skinner is close to becoming a contextual reductionist.²¹

Tim Beaumont has, in the same vein as Miglietti, raised the point that Skinner's approach to historical meaning is relativistic, due to the stress of diachronic inconsistencies, at the expense of not allowing for a continuum of borrowing from past history in, for instance, early modern debates. As Beaumont aptly observes, borrowing and disagreement from past times is a significant impetus for further debates in history.²²

The critical notes about Skinner's method of interpretation are worth considering, since Miglietti has appropriately concluded that historical research should not be reduced to the recovery of textual identity, inasmuch as sources, such as correspondence, that tell of motives for writing are of adequate importance as they may assist in the recovery of authorial intentions. I also agree with Beaumont, who has pointed out the fact that a loss of a diachronic view on history leads to relativism. In my opinion, the dawn of the early modern era should not be regarded as intellectually isolated from the medieval period, since the early modern era was dependent on the medieval period either through borrowing or thorough disagreement. I hope the analysis of this study will provide additional evidence for this. Moreover, I agree with Luigi Stefanini who said that history refers to a community of persons that have been projected in time and whose conditions are regulated by individual

²¹ Miglietti, 2013: 474–494.

²² Beaumont, 2018. Tony Burns has proposed compatibility between Skinner's approach, that meaning of texts lies within texts and is recovered by the one who reads them, and that of postconstructualists, who regard meaning of text as something created by readers rather than by authors. To Burns' consideration, both Skinner and Derrida affirm that interpretation is not a method of attaining truths about the meaning of utterances. Burns, 2011: 313–331.

persons and not primarily by cast-iron ideologies. I see no reason to reduce early modern authors to have been innovating ideologists.²³

Even if interpretation of authorial intentions only yields one of multiple perspectives from which a text can be read, Skinner has nonetheless advocated a method of interpretation that is helpful for researching early modern history. By focusing on the relationship between the author and the intended readers, his method of recovering authorial intentions provides tools that enable interpretation within contemporary frameworks. If the research aims to discover what authors, through their texts, wished to tell their contemporary readers, the method that Skinner proposes can be of assistance.

Yet this method should be complemented by other approaches to produce a holistic analysis. The concept of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*), as elaborated on by Martin Heidegger, has the potential to balance the contextual reductionism of Skinner's method. Thus, my approach is a synthesis that recognises *person* as historically conditioned and understanding as dependent on a synchronic historical context. However, the concept of historicity also acknowledges the transcendent characteristic of *being a person*, in that person is regarded as being able to relate to one's historical context without being locked inside it. Therefore, historicity accepts person as being able to relate to that which is different from one's historical context. Consequently, historicity enables interpretation and comprehension, but not a total understanding, of other persons who were situated in other historical contexts.²⁴

Rhetorical Tools

One analytic task of this study is to make the implicit authorial meaning explicit. Such a method will have to consider the relationship between author,

²³ Stefanini, 1952[a]: 141.

²⁴ See Heidegger, 1931: 382; Vargi-Jani, 2020; Stefanini, 1952[a]: 154.

text and context while running the risk of confusing source language and analytical language. Still, such a risk need not be a deterrent, since a conceptual apparatus that is alien to contextual significance would instead suffer from too many anachronisms. To avoid anachronisms without interfering with source language, I will make use of three conceptual clusters: rhetorical exempla, evaluation according to the transcendentals, and traditions.

The first cluster of concepts relate to the rhetorical tools that are implicit in Possevino's texts. The choice of working with rhetorical tools stems from the fact that Possevino was educated in a milieu that took strong notice of rhetoric and closely studied ancient rhetorical handbooks, such as Cicero's *De Inventione* and *De Oratore* as well as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. I suggest that the rhetorical framework for Possevino's texts concerns deliberative oratory, which is one of three categories of oratory.²⁵

Deliberative rhetoric, as Edward Harris explains, "aims either to exhort or dissuade [...], the goal of this kind of speech is to show that a certain course of action is going to be either advantageous [...] or harmful."²⁶ Deliberative rhetoric shares affinities with practical knowledge (*phronesis*), as it engages with ethical deliberation, where arguments treat the utility of the common good. Deliberative oratory, then, engages in exhortation and dissuasion which appeal to the good (*bonum*) and to the useful (*utilitas*). Hence, deliberative oratory concerns what to choose and what to avoid. This, I suggest, is fundamental to the rhetorical structure of the *Apparato All'Historia* and the Interdict Texts which Possevino authored.²⁷

²⁵ Apart from deliberative rhetoric, Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, refers to judicial and epideictic rhetoric. May, 2002: 30 & 493–494; Skinner, 2004: 183; Kemmler, 1984: 82.

²⁶ Harris, 2017: 60; Bartlett, 2021: 1.3, 1–7, 1358a–9b.

²⁷ Bartlett & Collins, 2012, Book VI:1. 5, 9–10 & 13; Corbett & Connors, 1999: 121; Garver, 2013: 189–209.

A significant aspect of deliberative persuasion is to set up historical exempla for the audience to ponder. Historical exempla were part of Roman oratory, as James May notes, "to make moral, political or logical points."²⁸ In order to analyse the historical exempla that Possevino presents in his text, I propose a fourfold model of division. The first model of historical exempla, is the *exemplum imitandum*: an example to imitate through action. The second model, is *exemplum evitandum*: an example to avoid imitating through action. The third model, is *exemplum ad persuadendum*: an example that persuades of the conviction of an argument. The fourth model, is *exemplum ad dissuadendum*: an example that dissuades of an argument.

In connection with the presentation of historical exempla, Possevino's reasoning is often tied to the notion of providential intervention in history in such a manner that the results of historical events are depicted as the outcome of the will of divine providence. Vanita Neelakanta has discussed the term *providentialist rhetoric* as a designation for reading providence out of history in the scholarship of the early modern dramatist William Heminge (1602–c. 1653). Neelakanta explains that Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–c. 340) was one of the first to apply a providentialist assessment of the destruction of Jerusalem, in that the Jews are thought to have been punished due to their offences against Christ. Likewise, the Roman emperor Titus (r. 79–81) is portrayed by Eusebius as a vehicle for the will of God, in that Jerusalem was besieged.²⁹

The technique of reading providence in history has moral implications and Neelakanta describes how the example of Jerusalem was applied in rhetoric, in order for early modern readers in England to draw moral lessons from the sufferings of the chosen people of Israel. In this scheme, England is pictured as God's elected nation that was due to suffer the same punishment as the Jews. Providence, however, is thought to guide the chosen people to

²⁸ May, 2002: 61. The division between epideictic, deliberative, and forensic rhetoric is discussed by Quintilian. See Russell, 2001: 3.6: 91.

²⁹ Neelakanta, 2014: 88–89.

ultimate glory. This technique is part of the rhetorical framework of persuasion through historical exempla and I will apply the term *providentialist rhetoric* as an analytical concept in this study.³⁰

The rhetorical schemata of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos* will function as analytical devices in this study. First, *ethos* refers to persuasion through character; the persuasive means are trustworthiness, credibility and the moral character of the orator or author.³¹ Second, *logos* refers to persuasion through reasoning. In *logos* the persuasive means are analytical and logical skills, ordering of speech, eloquent style as well as good memory. Third, *pathos* refers to persuasion through emotional impact: the persuasive means are accommodation to the audience in that emotions may be aroused.³²

Transcendentals

The other cluster of concepts that will be applied in the analysis of this study is evaluation in accordance with the transcendentals. Transcendentals concern transcendent modes or properties of being. According to Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) there are six transcendentals: *ens*, *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum* and *bonum*.³³ In the fourteenth century, Lorenzo Valla's (c. 1407–1457) reduction of the transcendentals to *res* (thing) became influential.³⁴ The deviation, favoured by Valla, from metaphysical understanding of being to the linguistic understanding of reality has often been labelled as the linguistic turn, where linguistics and rhetoric competed with philosophy.³⁵

³⁰ Neelakanta, 2014: 90–92.

³¹ Herrick, 2005: 85; Corbett & Connors, 1999: 72.

³² May & Wisse, 2001: 30; May, 2002: 61–65 & 356.

³³ Aertsen, 2012: 13–17; Aertsen also tells that *pulchrum* was part of *bonum* in the medieval period. See 175–176.

³⁴ Valla considered that *res* needs to be qualified in conversation to give it meaning, yet the unqualified *res* transcends meaningful *sermo* (manner of speaking) and as such Valla considered *res* to be the only transcendental, expressive of semantic transcendence. Aertsen, 2012: 576.

³⁵ Copenhaver, 2005: 517–519; Stefanini, 1952[b]: 383–385.

As will be obvious in the analysis, Possevino took a stand against Valla and sided with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), who, contrary to Valla, sought to bring concord between scholastic philosophy and Renaissance humanism. To Pico, being – that which is – is known as one (*unum*), true (*verum*) and good (*bonum*). Jan Aertsen has noted that transcendentals had a moral dimension to Pico, parallel to Meister Eckhart’s ‘ethics of the transcendentals’. It would be possible to regard this moral dimension of transcendentals as treating the good (*bonum*) as a superordinate transcendental in evaluative rhetoric, since concerns with the good corresponds to deliberative rhetoric. In fact, this is one of the analytical points of departure in this study. In other words, the moral dimensions of the transcendentals, and foremost *bonum*, are part of Possevino’s evaluative criteria in his task of persuasion.³⁶

Traditions

The third cluster of concepts that I will apply relates to *traditions*. Tradition is not an unproblematic concept, as it can hold various meanings. In this study, tradition does not refer to its role in the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur.³⁷ Neither does the term, in this study, correspond to the theology of Tradition, which was coined in the early modern Catholic Church in order to unite divine revelation in Holy Writ with the continuity of doctrinal maturation in Tradition.³⁸ On the contrary, I will follow the understanding of tradition according to the definition of Alasdair MacIntyre, which says that a tradition is thought to be constituted by a linguistic community with a shared ability to refer to canonical texts. A tradition, according to MacIntyre, also shares a set

³⁶ Aertsen, 2012: 570–585. That Possevino was familiar with the study of metaphysics is certain, since in early modern theological education and formation metaphysics was part of the clerical curriculum. See Grendler, 2002: 353–392.

³⁷ In Gadamer’s theory the tradition of the reader meets the tradition of a text in the fusion of horizons. Ricoeur, for his part, recognised tradition yet applied his theory of distanciation. Common to these theories is to reach understanding. See Ritivoi, 2013: 63–82.

³⁸ Thiel, 1999: 1–18. Maurice Blondel, furthermore, elaborated an understanding of Tradition as a way to reconcile history and dogma. Blondel’s definition of Tradition won’t be applied in this study. For a summary of Blondel’s thoughts on Tradition, see Blanchette, 2010: 202–209.

of normative beliefs, morals, practices, and epistemologies, whereby "concepts of courage and justice, of authority, sovereignty and property, of what understanding is and what failure to understand is" can be said to be weaved into this notion of tradition.³⁹

According to this scheme, conflict arises when two rival traditions meet, each with their body of canonical texts and sets of beliefs and fundamental concepts. Since words can be interpreted differently in specific traditions, words are taken to reveal limitations of comprehension between traditions. Tom Angier writes that this notion of tradition sees traditions as both 'self-directed' and 'other-directed'. Traditions are self-directed in the sense that they aim to reach unanimity within tradition. Traditions are other-directed in the sense that they repudiate central coherences in a rival tradition.⁴⁰

Tradition is an open concept that can be defined in terms of ideological content (eg, Platonic, Aristotelian or Augustinian), national adherence (eg, English, Swedish or Japanese) and musical direction (eg, gregorian, polyphonic or madrigal). In short, a tradition is acknowledged when it endures over time and reaches a point where canonical texts, authorities, normative concepts and practices are identifiable. I agree with Tom Angier, who has contributed to the conceptual definition of tradition, that MacIntyre's definition of the term needs to be open to borrowing and learning from other traditions. Consequently, traditions are not to be recognised as isolated and static entities but are to be accepted as cross-fertilised phenomena.⁴¹

In summary, in history writing rival traditions are often observed. For instance, in the late medieval- and early modern periods the rival schools of thought the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*, can be defined as traditions given the above-mentioned criteria. The *via antiqua* approved of a canon of texts

³⁹ MacIntyre, 1985: 9.

⁴⁰ MacIntyre, 1985: 5–22; Angier, 2014: 540–572.

⁴¹ Angier, 2014: 540–572, quote on 559. See Åkerlund, 2016: 76–82.

stemming from Thomas Aquinas and held that the goodness of God is to be understood as analogous to the goodness of man, whereas the *via moderna* approved of a canon of texts stemming from Franciscan thinkers and held that the goodness of God is to be understood as univocal to the goodness of man. The conciliarist movement, moreover, relied on a canon of texts that were formulated by authorities such as Marsilius of Padua (1275–1342), William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347), Jean Gerson (1363–1429) as well as the ecumenical decrees *Haec Sancta* (1415) and *Frequens* (1417). Their rival tradition was that of the papalist tradition, whose authorities were Gregory VII (*sed.* 1073–1085), Innocent III (*sed.* 1198–1216) and Boniface VIII (*sed.* 1294–1303) as well as the bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302). It is also possible to regard the rival *spirituali* and the *zelanti* in the sixteenth-century debates on justification *sola fide*, as well as the Venetian and Roman factions during the Interdict Controversy, as traditions.⁴²

The defined traditions above are limited to their intellectual standpoints on theology, ecclesiology, soteriology and liberty. Although they were rival traditions, they were also participants in other traditions such as that of the Catholic Church and that of nations, thus sharing common authorities and canonical texts to a certain degree. In sum, the concept of tradition provides a structure that helps to define rival conflicting interests but it is deliberately vague in the sense that it needs to be filled with content.⁴³

Previous Research

The early modern period is a field of research that has produced a copious amount of scholarly work and has been investigated from numerous angles. Jesuit studies is one such angle. John O'Malley, through the publication of *The First Jesuits* (1993), covered several characteristics of the early modern

⁴² Oberman, 1987: 23–40; Oakley, 2008: 1–19; McNair, 1987: 614–624; Bouwsma, 1990: 97–111.

⁴³ Angier, 2014: 542.

Society of Jesus.⁴⁴ In 2013, O'Malley wrote a follow up to the *First Jesuits*, titled *Saints or Devils Incarnate?: Studies in Jesuit history*.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Society of Jesus during the leadership of Everard Mercurian (1573–1580) has been covered in *The Mercurian Project* (2004), edited by Thomas M. McCoog, S.J. Ciceronian influences on the early modern Society of Jesus have been treated by Robert A. Maryks in his *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits: the influence of the liberal arts on the adoption of moral probabilism* (2008). Jesuit education has been studied by Paul F. Grendler in *The Jesuits and Italian Universities 1548–1773* (2017), and Jesuit chaplaincy and catechetical promotion have been investigated by Vincenzo Lavenia in *Dio in uniforme. Cappellani, catechesi cattolica e soldati in età moderna* (2017).⁴⁶ Many recent Jesuit studies have touched upon either the authorship of Possevino or his works of ministry.⁴⁷

Jesuit Studies is not a recent field of research. The twentieth century saw various investigations in Jesuit studies. Some of these studies include aspects of the works of Possevino.⁴⁸ Amongst the more prominent works in the field is Oskar Garstein's *Rome and the Counter Reformation in Scandinavia* (four volumes: 1965–1992), where much attention is devoted to Jesuit educational strategies in sixteenth-century Sweden and Denmark. The first and third volumes cover the period when Possevino stayed in Sweden on a diplomatic assignment.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ O'Malley, 1993.

⁴⁵ O'Malley, 2013.

⁴⁶ McCoog, 2004; Maryks, 2008; Grendler, 2017; Lavenia, 2017[a].

⁴⁷ See Lavenia, 2006; Lavenia, 2017[b]: 599–623; Colombo, 2014: 23–42; Colombo, 2015: 393–407; Vermier, 2017: 231–238; Casalini, 2019; Casalini, 2016: 183–211; Puchowski, 2002: 228–249; Canaris, 2020; Gannett & Brereton 2016; Boswell, 2003.

⁴⁸ For a survey of the changes in focus surrounding Jesuit Studies see O'Malley, 2013: 1–35. For articles that have dealt with Possevino, see Crivelli, 1938; Castellani, 1945; Martin, 1974; Scaduto, 1959 & 1980; Biondi, 1981; De Lucca, 2012.

⁴⁹ Garstein, 1963, 1980, 1992[a] & 1992[b]. Other works that have dealt with Possevino have been the *Scondia Illustrata* (posthumously published in 1702), by Johannes Messenius (1579–1636), where the presence of Possevino and Jesuits in Sweden during the reign of King John III (r. 1569–1592) are narrated. The *Bibliographia politica* (1633) by Gabriel Naudé includes Possevino's writings against Jean Bodin (1530–1596). The *Storia della letteratura italiana* (1774) by Girolamo Tiraboschi mentions Possevino in connection with the history of Mantua. Messenius, 1702: 50–61; Naudé, 1673: 70; Tiraboschi, 1774: 301; Balsamo, 2006: 200–201.

In the twentieth century, Liisi Kartunen (1908) authored the text *Antonio Possevino: Un diplomate pontifical au XVI^e siècle*. The study concerns the ministry and missionary works by Possevino in various parts of Europe. Kartunen's intention was not to write a biography, but rather to contribute to the knowledge of Possevino's work on the missionary fields. Yet Kartunen presents a valuable biographical survey, especially about Possevino's time at the Gonzaga court in Mantua; his early work in Piedmont, Savoy, and France; his apostolic diplomatic assignments in Sweden, Poland and the Moscovite realm; as well as his involvement in European political and ecclesiastical affairs from 1587 until his death in 1611. Possevino's involvement in debates during the Interdict Controversy is not, however, accounted for in Kartunen's study.⁵⁰

Other works have been published that contribute to the knowledge of Possevino. These are the publication of the *Transilvania* (1913) and the *Moscovia* (1977). The *Transilvania* was written by Possevino in 1584, but due to difficulties in receiving a license to print the writing, the *Transilvania* remained unpublished until 1913. The work was published in Budapest (in Italian) and Kolozsvár (in Latin). The Budapest edition includes an introduction by the editor Andreás Veress as well as a dedicatory letter to Pope Gregory XIII (*sed.* 1572–1585). The *Transilvania* adheres to the genre of state-of-affairs, which encompasses descriptions of sites, rivers, people, history and religion.⁵¹

The *Moscovia* was first published in 1586 in Vilnius and it adheres, like the *Transilvania*, to the genre of state-of-affairs as it contains descriptions of sites, rivers, people, history, and religion in the Moscovite realm. In 1977, this work was published anew in an English translation by Hugh F. Graham with

Augustin Theiner's third volume to the *Annales Ecclesiastici* (1856) accounts for correspondence and descriptions about Possevino's apostolic diplomatic assignments in the Swedish, Polish-Lithuanian and Moscovite realms. Theiner, 1856: 44, 62, 68, 76–79, 185–194, 335–336, 342–353, 436–437, 448–453, 660–663, 705, 735–737, 757 & 786.

⁵⁰ Kartunen, 1908.

⁵¹ Varess 1913. See Balsamo, 2008: 29–46.

critical notes and a valuable introduction by the translator. The main emphasis in the narrative of the *Moscovia* lies on the discussions between Possevino and Tsar Ivan IV (r. 1547–1584) about the prospect of introducing the Catholic faith in the Moscovite realm as well as on details of the peace negotiations between the Polish and Moscovite ambassadors during the Livonian war, which resulted in the Jam Zapolski truce of 1582.⁵²

Furthermore, Giuseppe Castellani commenced important research which has not been built upon since he studied parts of Possevino's unpublished memoirs and annals. Castellani, in an article, discusses Possevino's path to membership in the Society of Jesus with the memoirs as the point of departure. Apart from Castellani, John Patrick Donnelly has consulted the memoirs in his research but more needs to be done to present the memoirs to readers of today.⁵³

Nonetheless, John Patrick Donnelly along with Luigi Balsamo have provided thorough articles and books about various aspects of Possevino's life and authorship. Balsamo has focused on the authorship of Possevino and his *Antonio Possevino S.I. bibliografo della contrariforma* (2006) is a profound scholarly work. In the first part of this book, Balsamo discusses biographical notes – quoting generously from correspondence – as well as characteristics of the early modern Society of Jesus, setting Possevino in a proper context. Balsamo has provided a survey of the different editions of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* and its eighteen books, along with details of free-standing editions. Balsamo has also presented valuable information about the *Apparatus Sacer*, which is the other of Possevino's more notable large-scale works. The second part of Balsamo's book focuses on the reception of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* and the *Apparatus Sacer* in the English area.⁵⁴

⁵² *Moscovia*; Sommervogel, 1895: 1071–1073.

⁵³ Castellani, 1945: 102–124; See Donnelly notes on the biography: Donnelly, 1986: 3.

⁵⁴ Balsamo, 2006.

Balsamo's research has contributed a learned survey, yet its analysis must be said to be somewhat general. John Patrick Donnelly has written about Possevino with a sharper analytical edge. Donnelly is arguably the most important Possevino scholar to an English-reading audience. His articles about Possevino cover many aspects of Possevino's career, including his role as mediator between the Republic of Venice and the Jesuits during the debates over the closure of the Jesuit College at Padua, as well as his role as mediator between the Polish king Stefan Báthory (r. 1575–1586) and Emperor Rudolf II (r. 1576–1612) in the 1580's. Donnelly has also commented on Possevino's exchange with his confreres, his supposed Jewish heritage, as well as his attitudes towards religions other than Christianity and early modern political thinkers.⁵⁵

As Possevino's own *Annales* are unpublished, the only existing biographical work about Possevino is *La vie du Père Antoine Possevino de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: 1712). It was translated into Italian and published in Venice in 1759 with the title *Vita del P. Antonio Possevino della Compagnia di Gesù*.⁵⁶ Its author was the French Jesuit Jean Dorigny. Although the biography is not what one would call critical, as it rather leans towards hagiography, his account of Possevino's life provides much valuable information, especially surrounding his apostolic nunciatures. Letters written by Possevino are, furthermore, recovered as quotes, which contributes useful details to the biographical notes. This study also assesses the Republic of Venice during the Interdict Controversy (1606–1607).⁵⁷

Early modern Venice is a large field of research with many notable publications. One of the pioneering scholars who wrote about events surrounding the Interdict Controversy was Gateano Cozzi. His works on Paolo Sarpi

⁵⁵ Donnelly, 1982: 45–79; Donnelly, 1986: 3–31; Donnelly, 1987: 31–39; Donnelly, 1988[a]: 163–169; Donnelly, 1988[b]: 179–198; Donnelly, "Antonio Possevino, 2000: 3–56.

⁵⁶ Dorigny-Ghezzi, 1759; Balsamo, 2006: 51–52 & 207.

⁵⁷ Donnelly, in a note to his article, reveals that he has been working on a biography on Possevino, which has yet to be published. Donnelly, 1986: 3.

(1552–1623), such as *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa* (1978), have been particularly influential. Besides Cozzi's contributions to research on early modern Venice, Gino Benzoni has provided much insight into the complexities of the Republic of Venice, such as its political foundations and its dedication to the 'Myth of Venice'. Moreover, the *Storia dell'inquisizione in Italia dalla metà del cinquecento alla fine del settecento: Venezia, vol. II* (1987) by Romano Canosa has provided thorough analyses of the practices of the early modern Venetian inquisition.⁵⁸

To an English reading audience, Elisabeth G. Gleason's *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome and Reform* (1993) and John Jeffries Martin's *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian heretics in a Renaissance City* (1993) built on studies of heterodox movements in early modern Italy. This research field was founded by Delio Cantimori, with the book *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento* (1939), and built on by Adriano Prosperi (*Tra evangelismo e controriforma. Gian Matteo Giberti (1495–1543)*, 1969) and Carlo Ginzburg (*Il formaggio e i vermi*, English: *The Cheese and the Worms*, 1976). Gleason and Martin adopted the perspective that Cantimori had brought forward, in that they wrote history of heterodox movements with a special focus on the Venetian milieu. Their shared focus was that of the *spirituali* movement, which included Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542), Reginald Pole (1500–1558) and Marcantonio Flaminio (1498–1550).⁵⁹

Recent studies of Paolo Sarpi have adopted the same perspective, which is noticeable in the study by David Wootton, *Paolo Sarpi: between Renaissance and Enlightenment*. The more recent study of Sarpi by Jaska Kainulainen, however, brings a more nuanced picture of Sarpi to the fore. In contrast with the unescapable duo of Sarpi and the Interdict Controversy, Stefania Tutino has analysed the Interdict Texts by the Jesuit Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621), one of Sarpi's sturdy opponents. This study has opened up new angles from

⁵⁸ Cozzi, 1978; Benzoni, 1978; Canosa, 1987.

⁵⁹ Gleason, 1993; Martin, 1993; Cantimori, 1939; Prosperi, 1969; Ginzburg, 1976.

which to study the Interdict Controversy, contributing to a more nuanced field of research.⁶⁰

Furthermore, Filippo De Vivo has enhanced the study of the Interdict Controversy with a better understanding of the diversity of Venetian society during the controversy, through the publication of *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (2007). De Vivo has identified that a multitude of people were concerned with the controversy, not only the members of the Venetian *signoria*. He has proven that the interdict affected the entire Venetian society and was discussed by people who visited pharmacies, bookshops, and various public rooms, despite the fact that officials of the Venetian state were steadfast in their strategy of suppressing public speech about the interdict.⁶¹

The standard work on the Interdict Controversy and the political landscape of early modern Venice is still, however, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty* (1968) by William J. Bouwsma. This study covers not just contextual events but also the intellectual history of the Interdict Controversy, in a manner than no other study has managed to surpass. My study will, nonetheless, attempt to challenge some of the results that Bouwsma has brought forward, and provide a perspective that Bouwsma did not thoroughly cover: the thoughts of Possevino on the Interdict Controversy.⁶²

Outline

This study is divided into three parts. The first part provides a biography of Possevino and a discussion of the characteristics of the early modern Society of Jesus. In the second part, texts that were originally a part of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* – especially the *Apparato All'Historia* – in the period that spans the

⁶⁰ Wootton, 1983; Kainulainen, 2014.

⁶¹ De Vivo, 2007.

⁶² Bouwsma, 1968.

years from 1593 to 1605, will be analysed. In the third part, texts that Possevino authored during the Interdict Controversy will be analysed.

The first and second parts function as foundations for understanding the written content that Possevino produced during the Interdict Controversy. In order to perform a contextualisation, biographical notes about Possevino as well as a discussion of characteristics of the early modern Society of Jesus will be supplied. In the second part, Possevino's definition of culture and his discussion about the discipline of geography will be analysed. With regard to the discipline of geography, I will determine in what way the transcendentals function as evaluative criteria for the many challenges of the time, such as the fixing of dates of historical events, the fixing of foundations for the calculation of time, the division of time according to the biblical Four Monarchy Theory and explanations for the spread of people around the world.

A survey of the development within the discipline of history from the late medieval period up until the sixteenth century will subsequently follow. In the analysis, I will discuss in what way the transcendentals are implicit in the discourse of the *Apparato All'Historia*, what rhetorical principles it is possible draw from the text, what purpose Possevino presents for the study of history, and which preparatory actions he believes students of history should pay attention to. His evaluation of Greek, Roman and contemporary historians will be analysed, where authorial intentions, evaluative criteria, rhetorical principles, contents of moral exhortations and doctrinal argumentation will be taken into account. An analysis of the argumentation of the foundations for a good society will follow, in order illuminate his position with regard to the influence of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) on early modern political discourse.

The third part of this study assesses the contextual characteristics of the Interdict Controversy and Possevino's contribution to the *guerra delle scritture* that resulted from the interdict on the Republic of Venice. Analyses

of the various topics that Possevino treated in his Interdict Texts will be conducted in these chapters. These chapters will follow a thematic order that moves from the more abstract notions of the constitution of authority and power to the more concrete conflicts surrounding Church and politics, which were intertwined in the *guerra delle scritture*. The topics will be ordered according to the following scheme: i) on authority in the world and the authority of God, ii) the history of redemption from Moses, to Christ and the Roman pontiff, iii) the validity of the interdict, iv) on rhetorical argumentation with historical exempla.

Finally, I will summarise the results to the posed questions in the general conclusions. There, I will account for the *doings* of Possevino in the period that spans the years from 1593 to 1607. This period begins with his *opus magnum*, the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, and ends with his Interdict Texts of 1607. The answers to the posed questions involve the manner by which texts and their authors are assessed by Possevino, matters of authority and superiority in hierarchies of the Catholic Church and the Christian Commonwealth, as well as concepts, strategies, continuity, and discontinuity in his authorship.

Part I. Possevino and the Early Modern Jesuits

Chapter 1. Possevino – The Man Who Tried to Win the World for Rome

Possevino was born in Mantua in 1533 into a family of possible Jewish ancestry that had changed its name from Caliani (or Cagliani) to Possevino, upon moving from Asti in Monferrato to Mantua. The young Antonio was educated in a Renaissance humanist milieu and studied in Rome, Ferrara, and Padua. He was then employed as secretary to the Duke of Mantua, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga (1505–1563), and as a tutor to Scipione (1542–1593) and Francesco Gonzaga (1546–1620), sons to the marquis Carlo Gonzaga (1523–1555) and his wife Emilia Cauzzi Gonzaga (1524–1573). Both brothers were under the care of Cardinal Gonzaga and both were to make careers within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁶³

During his years as tutor, Possevino lived the life of a humanist as he travelled around the Italian peninsula with the young Gonzaga brothers. He dedicated himself to discussions of the book *Dialogo dell'honore* (Venice: 1553) – authored by his elder brother Giovanni Battista Possevino (1520–1549), who had passed away in his twenties – which contains a defence of the art of duelling. In 1559, Possevino resumed his own studies at the University of Padua. It was at Padua that he came in contact with the Jesuit Benedetto Palmio (1518–1585), whose sermons he particularly enjoyed.⁶⁴

⁶³ Dorigny-Ghezzi: 1–11; Castellani, 1945: 103. For a discussion of his possible Jewish ancestry, see Donnelly, 1986: 3–31; Colombo, 2014: 25–42.

⁶⁴ Possevino would eventually revise the *Dialogo dell'onore*. Dorigny-Ghezzi: 11–17; Somervogel, 1895: 1061–1062.

Not long after, he decided to enter the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Rome, where he arrived in 1559. However, due to his vast erudition, his time at the novitiate barely lasted one year. Instead of conducting further studies at the novitiate, the General Superior Diego Laínez (r. 1558–1565) sent him to Fossano, in the Piedmont region, which had been granted to Possevino *in commendam* by Ercole Gonzaga. Laínez wished for Possevino to persuade the Duke of Savoy, Emanuele Filiberto (r. 1553–1580), of the advantages of establishing a Jesuit College in the realm of Savoy, and Fossano made a good base for this assignment. In addition, Laínez trusted Possevino to promote the Catholic faith against the teachings of the Waldensians, who had gained much influence in the Savoy.⁶⁵

Whilst staying in Fossano, Possevino was ordained as a priest in 1561. The following year, Laínez sent Possevino to France to continue his activities of ministry. His stay in France lasted ten years and in that period he founded colleges in Avignon and Mondovì, introduced Petrus Canisius's (1521–1597) catechism to a French reading audience, argued against the doctrines of the Huguenots, and preached to local inhabitants in the French language and to Italian merchants in Italian. He also worked intensely amongst booksellers to regulate the spread of heterodox books, as well as authoring three books himself.⁶⁶

During these years, Possevino established contact with Pope Pius V (*sed.* 1566–1572) to whom he proposed that it was necessary to institute an inquisition in Avignon. His zeal for promoting Catholic orthodoxy did not make Possevino a popular figure amongst the inhabitants of Avignon and rumours spread of his uncompromising nature. Even some of his confreres were intimidated by his choleric temperament. Nonetheless, the General Superiors

⁶⁵ Dorigny-Ghezzi: 17–44; Scaduto, 1959: 53–62.

⁶⁶ These were the *Trattato del Santissimo Sacrificio dell'Altare detto Messa* (Lyon: 1563), *Risposta à Pietro Vireto, à Nicolao Balbani et à due altri heretici, i quali hanno scritto contra il Trattato della Messa di M. Antonio Possevino* (Avignon: 1566) and *Il Soldato Christiano* (Rome: 1569). See Dorigny-Ghezzi: 48–86; Sommervogel, 1895: 1063–1065; Balsamo, 2006: 20.

Láinez and Francis Borgia (r. 1565–1572) appreciated the efficiency of the Mantuan Jesuit. In 1569, when Pope Pius V needed a catechetical book to encourage the military forces who were to fight against the Turks, Borgia suggested that Possevino should write such a book. In a short period of time, Possevino had written the manuscript to the *Soldato Cristiano* and travelled to Rome to have it printed. Whilst in Rome, he professed the fourth vow of loyalty to the Roman pontiff. Subsequently, he returned to France, accompanying the Jesuit visitor Everard Mercurian (1514–1580), and in 1570 Borgia chose Possevino to be rector at the college in Lyon. His second stint in France was, however, brief as he was called back to Rome in 1572 just after having been an eyewitness to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.⁶⁷

Diplomatic Assignments to North-East Europe

In 1572, the General Superior Francis Borgia passed away, marking the end of Possevino's ten years in France. At the general congregation in 1573, Everard Mercurian (r. 1573–1580) was elected General Superior and he wanted Possevino as his secretary. This meant Possevino would attend to administrative business in Rome. Amongst his efforts in his Roman years was the administration of Jesuit missionary documents and attending to the growing archive of the Society. Apart from day-to-day affairs, Possevino took a stand against discrimination on the basis of purity of blood within the Society. In 1576, he wrote a memorial to Mercurian to convince him that the Society of Jesus needed to end their purity of blood discrimination. This was to no avail as Mercurian pursued the opposite course, depriving Jesuits of Jewish ancestry from important posts. Since Mercurian proved suspicious of *Converso* Jesuits, Possevino turned to Pope Gregory XIII (*sed.* 1572–1585) whom he persuaded to found a college of neophytes to promote conversion of Jews to the Catholic

⁶⁷ Dorigny- Ghezzi: 87–110; Balsamo, 2006: 24; Martin, 1974: 103–132; Donnelly, 2004: 323–324.

faith. In 1577, Possevino spent time at the Roman *casa dei neofiti* preaching to Jews to exhort them to convert to the Catholic faith. The same year, he also redrafted Jean Vendeville's (1527–1592) proposal to Pope Gregory on how to best spread the Catholic faith. This document has been recognised by historians as the founding document for the eventual establishment of the *Proganda Fidei* in 1622.⁶⁸

Tired of the piles of papers at his desk in Rome, the decision to delegate missionary activities in Sweden to Possevino must have been welcomed. Pope Gregory appointed Possevino as papal legate to Sweden, charging him with the Catholic mission in the realm of King John III (r. 1569–1592), who for economic reasons sought to enact a Swedish-Spanish alliance. In fact, King John had already established contact with Polish Jesuits, who were confessors to his wife Queen Catherine Jagiellon (1526–1583), and another Jesuit, Laurentius Norvegus (1538–1622), was appointed by the king to run a Jesuit College in Stockholm. In 1577, Possevino arrived in Sweden and his immediate task was to mediate between the Roman Curia and the king. John was willing to convert to the Catholic faith if concessions were granted. He wanted priests who were married to be able to remain so, he wanted communion to be distributed in both kinds, and he wanted the mass to be read in the vernacular language.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ On the memorial to Mercurian, see Donnelly, 1986: 5–6; Colombo, 2014: 30–31. About the college of neophytes, see Dorigny-Ghezzi: 114; Colombo, 2014: 26. About the Vendeville-Possevino document, see Donnelly, 1988[b]: 180–187. During his Roman years Possevino authored two books: *Laurentii Gambaræ Tractatus in quo cum de perfecta pæsos ratione agitur, tum ostenditur cur abstinendum sit a scriptione thematum turpium* (Francesco Zanetto, Rome: 1576); *Causæ et remedia pestilentiae* (Giunti, Mantua and Florence: 1577). See Sommervogel, 1895: 1066.

⁶⁹ Donnelly, 2004: 323–324 & 333–338. Further requirements from King John were that prayers for the conversion of Sweden would be said discreetly in mass, that bishops who were accused of crime would be put on trial in front of the Swedish lay court, that Church property confiscated since the reformation would continue to belong to its present owners, that the Jesuit school in Stockholm would be approved as a Catholic educational institution, that the tomb of Gustavus Vasa (r. 1523–1560) would not be removed from the cathedral of Uppsala even though he was responsible for the introduction of the Lutheran Church in Sweden, that bishops would pledge loyalty to the king when entering their office, that Swedish Catholics would be permitted to participate in Lutheran sermons, that prayers for the deceased and invocation of saints would not be part of the mass. Contingent elements, such as holy water, would also not be part of the mass. Garstein, 2018: 140.

In 1578, King John converted to the Catholic faith before Possevino, who heard his confession and distributed the Eucharist to the king, whereupon his son and future king of Sweden, Sigismund (1566–1632, king of Sweden: 1593–1599; king of Poland: 1587–1632) also confirmed his Catholic faith.⁷⁰ The concessions were nonetheless granted to the king of Sweden. This, along with the hostility of the Lutheran clerics and the Swedish nobility to the presence of Jesuits in Stockholm, ultimately led Possevino to the conclusion that it was better to leave the country. Before leaving, in 1580, he made sure that Canisius's small catechesis was translated into Swedish and that sixteen Scandinavian boys were sent to Catholic seminaries in Europe. He also drew up a plan for future missions to Sweden so that when Sigismund succeeded his father on the throne, the stronghold of Catholic missionary activities should be the Bridgettine monastery in Vadstena.⁷¹

Having left Sweden, Pope Gregory appointed Possevino to travel to the Court of Tsar Ivan IV in Moscow to mediate peace between Ivan and the Polish king Stefan Báthory (r. 1575–1586) during the Livonian War. The diplomatic assignment also included negotiations, which aimed to persuade the tsar to participate in a crusade against the Ottoman Empire. Possevino also discussed the prospect of a conversion from the Russian-Orthodox faith to the Catholic Church with the tsar, by providing reports from the Church union at

⁷⁰ RTE: 31–32, Dorigny-Ghezzi: 128–129 & 158. There have been debates amongst historians in Scandinavia as to the credibility of Possevino's account of the conversion of King John. Possevino writes about the event in the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* (1607), an Interdict Text. Next to the account of John's conversion are details about assignments in Moscow and Poland, as well as the founding of seminaries and Jesuit Colleges in eastern Europe. If one was to mistrust the credibility about the conversion of John, one would have to mistrust other parts of his accounts that he told from memory. This would lead to a discussion about the credibility of Possevino's accounts in general. Possevino was a polemical author, but as to facts surrounding events he was exceedingly meticulous. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt the credibility of his account of John's conversion to the Catholic faith. On the other hand, the king's loyalty towards Rome did not last long. For a survey about the debates about the credibility of King John's conversion, see Nyman, 2017: 147–149. For details of Possevino's involvement in the restitution of the Catholic Church in Sweden, see Cnatingius, 1969: 46–84, Garstein, 2018: 131–248.

⁷¹ Donnelly, 2004: 323–324 & 338–346; Dorigny-Ghezzi: 128–180. Possevino also wrote about the state of affairs in the Swedish realm to the Duke of Mantua, Guglielmo Gonzaga (r. 1550–1587): *Curiosità storiche Mantovane ... (1578)*: 12–38.

the Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438–1445). In the book *Moscovia*, he recorded the state of affairs in the Muscovite realm, his experience at the court of Ivan, as well as a memorandum of the negotiations that resulted in the truce of Jam Zapolski in 1582 between Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁷²

Upon his departure from Muscovy, Possevino went to the Polish court, where he was warmly greeted by King Stefan Báthory. There, he continued his missionary zeal and wrote commentaries on works by Protestants. These commentaries addressed, amongst other things, the writings of David Chytraeus (1530–1600).⁷³ In due course he was appointed to negotiate another peace, this time between Báthory and the Hapsburg emperor Rudolf II. The Holy Roman Empire had occupied the Transylvanian region of Szatmár in 1526. Báthory, who was born in Transylvania and had been its prince prior to his election to the throne of Poland-Lithuania, desperately wanted Szatmár to become part of Transylvania again. The quarrel between Báthory and Emperor Rudolf was untimely for Pope Gregory, since he had formed a plan to mobilise an alliance between the Republic of Venice, Poland-Lithuania and the Holy Roman Empire against the Ottoman Empire; it was for this reason that he had appointed Possevino to head the deliberations to negotiate peace between the quarrelling parties. After years of negotiations a settlement was reached in 1585.⁷⁴

In 1586, King Báthory passed away. This led to a power vacuum in Poland and discussions were held as to whether to elect Sigismund, son of King John III of Sweden, Maximilian of Austria (1558–1618, Archduke of Austria: r. 1612–1618) or Tsar Feodor (r. 1584–1598). Given Possevino's plan for the reintroduction of the Catholic faith in Sweden, he supported the candidacy of Sigismund. Nonetheless, the Polish nobility supported the candidacy

⁷² *Moscovia*; Dorigny-Ghezzi: 181–301.

⁷³ See Sommervogel: 1895: 1066–1071.

⁷⁴ Donnelly, 2000: 3–56; Dorigny-Ghezzi: 302–345.

of Maximilian, as did Pope Sixtus V (*sed.* 1585–1590), the successor to Gregory XIII. Pope Sixtus was anxious to have a Catholic king on the Polish throne, and had doubts about the orthodoxy of Sigismund as he had been brought up in a Protestant country. The pope instructed the papal legate Annibale da Capua (*sed.* 1578–1595), Archbishop of Naples, not to support the candidature of Sigismund. Possevino, for his part, officially supported Maximilian, but in secret promoted the candidacy of Sigismund.⁷⁵

The General Superior of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Acquaviva (r. 1581–1615), did more to hinder Possevino's support of Sigismund in that he persuaded Pope Sixtus to instruct Annibale da Capua not to consult Possevino, regarding the affairs of the Polish election. As it turned out, Sigismund was elected king, assuming the name Sigismund III, despite the efforts of Sixtus and Acquaviva. Still, Possevino had lost his former allies – Pope Gregory and King Báthory – in a short period of time. In 1587, he was called back to the Italian peninsula and the Jesuit Venetian province.⁷⁶

Apart from his role as mediator in royal affairs, Possevino's years as papal diplomat resulted in the founding of five seminaries, administered by Jesuits and paid for by Pope Gregory, located in Vilnius (Lithuania), Tartu (Estonia), Braniewo (Poland), Olomouc (Moravia) and Cluj (Transylvania). These years also resulted in book production, as he authored twelve books during his diplomatic assignments, amongst which were the unpublished *Transilvania*.⁷⁷

Authorial Career on the Italian Peninsula, a Diplomatic Assignment, and Conflicts

Books were the passion of Possevino, who had been born into a world of book distribution and censorship, which influenced his life from an early age at the

⁷⁵ Dorigny-Ghezzi: 346–354.

⁷⁶ Dorigny-Ghezzi: 346–354; Balsamo, 2006:32–34.

⁷⁷ Donnelly, 2004: 323–324 & 339. For the titles of these books, see Sommervogel, 1895: 1066–1074.

Gonzaga court in Mantua. When he was brought up in the 1550s, the book selling businesses flourished and printing houses, bookbinders and booksellers were well established around Europe, with notable strongholds in London, Lyon, Paris, Strasbourg, Antwerp, Cologne, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Basel, Venice, Florence and Rome. In Paris alone, over 500 book editions were printed each year and one edition, by a well-known author, would often be printed in at least 1500 copies. The majority of books were printed in Latin, which guaranteed spread across national borders to local booksellers.⁷⁸

The book trade was typically run by family organisations that kept the business going over time, such as the Manuzio, Gabiano and Giunti families. Success in book business often depended on wealthy patrons and a large network of contacts, including merchants who shipped books in barrels and bales to intermediaries. It goes without saying that the early modern book trade relied on tightly-knit groups that assisted each other in exchanging and transporting books.⁷⁹

The circulation of heterodox books became an increasing problem for the Catholic Church towards the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, and kindled the development of a universal index of prohibited books. In 1559, the Congregation of the Inquisition, which had been established in 1542 by Pope Paul III (*sed.* 1534–1549), wrote a comprehensive list of forbidden books that was approved by Pope Paul IV (*sed.* 1555–1559).⁸⁰ The *Index* was revised in 1564, the so-called *Tridentine Index*, by a committee of bishops, and then revised again in 1596, the so-called *Clementine Index* by the Congregation for the Index.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Sebastiani, 2016: 9; Nuovo, 2016: 60; Walsby, 2016: 86; Rossem, 2013: 18–20; Balsamo, 2006: 207

⁷⁹ Sebastiani, 2016: 9; Nuovo, 2016: 60; Walsby, 2016: 86; Rossem, 2013: 18–20.

⁸⁰ Lenard, 2006: 54 & 60. The list was, however, ignored in Spain and by the theological faculty of the Sorbonne in France.

⁸¹ Fragnito: 19. Max Lenard summarises the Tridentine rules for the prohibition of books: Rule I: "...All books condemned by the church before the year 1515 remained condemned, including those not listed in the *Tridentine Index*; Rule II: Absolutely forbade all books written by originators and leaders of heretical movements founded or revived after the year 1515. Rules III-VI: Permitted books translated or edited by condemned authors as long as they contained nothing

When called to the Italian peninsula, Possevino would embark on an authorial career as he prepared the publication of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, which was to be a contribution to the updating of the *Constitutions* to suit the engagement of Jesuits in teaching. During this period of time he resided in the Venetian province of the Society of Jesus, where he administered the spiritual exercises and taught at the Jesuit school in Padua. His time on the Italian peninsula might have been cut short since the papal legate Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini (1536–1605, later Pope Clement VIII: *sed.* 1592–1605) asked Possevino to accompany him to Poland in 1588, but Acquaviva refused the Mantuan Jesuit permission to leave the Venetian province.⁸²

In 1593, Possevino's *opus magnum* the *Bibliotheca Selecta* was published and printed in Rome by the Vatican Press. In subsequent years, many of its eighteen books were published as free-standing editions.⁸³ After the publication of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, he made a brief return to diplomatic mis-

in conflict with church doctrine. Absolutely forbidden were translations of the New Testament by authors condemned before the year 1515. Rules VII–IX: Absolutely forbade, and recommended severe penalties for the reading or possession of books containing 'lascivious or obscene' material as well as books on divination, fortune telling, sorcery, magic, and the mixing of poisons. Rules VII–IX permitted the Graeco-Roman classics, even those containing obscene or lascivious material, but forbade reading them to children. Rule X: Required all books to be approved by church officials prior to printing; prohibited circulation of unapproved manuscripts; prohibited printing, selling, and possession of all condemned books, [...] required booksellers to maintain lists of their inventories and forbade selling of any book not listed. Rule X forbade transporting books between cities without permission." Lenard 2006: 55. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1564): 4–5.

⁸² During this time Possevino was the spiritual director of François De Sales (1567–1622). Dorigny-Ghezzi: 346–354; Donnelly, 1982: 45–79. In 1588, Possevino published another writing, this time on how to read the Tridentine Catechism, *Evangeliorum per universum annum explicandorum ratio, una cum usu Catechismi, a Sancta Synodo Tridentina ad parochos scribe iussi. Secundum usum Romanum* (Arnoldi Mylii, Cologne: 1588), see Sommervogel, 1895: 1074. In 1592, Possevino, at the request by Pope Innocent IX (*sed.* 1591) published 'antidotes' to teachings by Machiavelli, Bodin, Philippe de La Nuoe (1531–1591), and Philippe de Mornay (1549–1623), which was prepared for the Venetian inquisition. The title of this publication is *Iudicium De Nuae militis Galli scriptis, quae ille Discursus Politicos, et Militares inscripsit. De Ioannis Bodini Methodo historiae; Libris de Republica et Daemonomania. De Philippe Mornaei libro de Perfectione Christiana. De Nicolao Machiavello*. Sommervogel, 1895: 1075.

⁸³ Boswell, 2003: 249; Garstein, 1992: 40; 44–47; O'Malley, 2013: 203; Bouwsma, 1968: 312. For a survey of the various editions of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, its reception in England, and comments about the the free-standing editions, see Balsamo, 2006: 55–112 & 133–199; Sommervogel, 1895: 1076–1080; Dorigny-Ghezzi: 361–365.

sions, as Pope Clement VIII entrusted him to meet the French delegate Ludovico Gonzaga (1539–1595). Gonzaga was on his way to Rome to convince the Roman pontiff of the sincerity of the conversion of the excommunicated Henry IV (r. 1589–1610). Due to strong opposition against King Henry at the Roman Curia, Clement entrusted Possevino with the task of persuading the French delegate to return to Paris. Clement estimated that Possevino would be well-suited for such a mission, because of his cordial bonds with the Gonzaga family. The two met at Grisons, Switzerland, in 1593 and despite difficulties in trying to persuade Ludovico to accept a withdrawal to France, he succeeded in the end.⁸⁴

Thereafter, he became involved in yet another conflict, this time within the Society of Jesus. During the Fifth General Congregation and the Venetian Provincial Congregation between 1593 and 1594, he was, as John Patrick Donnelly notes, outmanoeuvred from attending. Acquaviva and his associates wished to exclude persons of Jewish and Muslim origin from entering the Society of Jesus and Possevino was a strong opponent of such discrimination. He wrote letters to both Acquaviva and the Roman pontiff in defence of the right for former Jews and Muslims to become Jesuits. He considered the sacrament of baptism to be sufficient to cancel out former religious denominations. These considerations, however, gave further rise to rumours that Possevino was of Jewish ancestry.⁸⁵

Possevino had been born in Mantua, where there was indeed a large Jewish community. His father was a goldsmith – a trade that many Jews practised in sixteenth-century Mantua – who had changed his name to Possevino.

⁸⁴ Once Ludovico Gonzaga, the Duke of Nevers, had embarked on his return to France, Possevino went back to the Roman court to have talks with the pope in private. Whether Possevino agreed a deal with Ludovico is uncertain. There is, however, a possibility that Ludovico returned to France on the condition that Possevino tried to persuade Pope Clement, in private, to absolve Henry from the excommunication placed on him by Sixtus V. Dorigny-Ghezzi: 366–367; Sutherland, 2002: 507–509.

⁸⁵ Donnelly, 1986: 3–31; Colombo, 2014: 25–42. For a discussion of Possevino's view on Jews and Muslims, see Donnelly, 1988[b]: 179–198. The exclusion of Jews and Muslims was formally decided upon in 1608 and lasted until 1946, when the decision was repealed. Colombo, 2014: 25–42

Donnelly confirms that in 1557, before having entered the Society of Jesus, and in 1585, when residing in Prague during his diplomatic assignment, rumours were already spreading that he was of Jewish origin.⁸⁶ In 1607, moreover, during the Interdict Controversy, the pamphlet *Le Mentite Filoteane overo invettiva di Giovanni Fileoteo d'Asti contra la Repubblica Serenissima di Venetia* (1607) was written by Fulgentio Tomaselli. In this text there are allusions to Possevino's supposed Jewish heritage. For instance: "[Possevino] knows more about Hebrew than about Christian [teaching]."⁸⁷ Tomaselli further writes that Possevino is a half-Hebrew and Pharisee, who merely has a Christian alias and is better acquainted with the precepts of the Old Testament than the New.⁸⁸ Another pamphlet, written by Wolfgang Hoffman, accused Possevino of spreading Pharisee culture.⁸⁹

In 1594 Possevino moved to Mantua to work on his *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which was an updated version of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*. When published in 1603 it was renamed *Apparatus Sacer*. In 1597, after having participated at the Synod of Aquileia, he asked Acquaviva for permission to retire to Loreto, a plea that the General Superior dismissed. Instead, Acquaviva appointed the

⁸⁶ Donnelly, 1986: 3–5; Colombo, 2014: 30–33. Neither Donnelly nor Colombo trust that Possevino was a 'closet-converso'.

⁸⁷ Tomaselli, *Le Mentite Filoteane*: 7 "[...] sà più dell'Hebreo, che del Christiano." Gino Benzoni proposes that Marcantonio Capello (c. 1550–1625) was the author of one of the fiercest rebuttals of Possevino's *Nuova Risposta*: the *Mentite Filoteane*. The stated author to this writing is the Albanian philosopher Fulgentio Tomaselli called 'Capelletto'. If Capello was the author to the *Mentite Filoteane*, he did not trouble himself too much about hiding his true identity. See Benzoni, 1975; Bouswma, 1968: 398; Tutino 2010: 103–107.

⁸⁸ Tomaselli, *Le Mentite Filoteane*: 11 & 22. "[...] un mezo Hebreo."

⁸⁹ Hoffman, *Avvertimento e Ammonitione Catolica*: 9. According to Luigi Lazzzerini, the *Avvertimento* offers the possibility of dating the letter to another year. The letter, Lazzzerini holds, is dated the September 30, 1606, in Venice but details about the place of print and editor are absent. Lazzzerini considers the date to be false and proposes that it was printed not in 1606 but in 1607. The fact that the author also discusses the contents of Possevino's *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* – published in 1607 – strengthens Lazzzerini's argument. Yet, this discussion is conducted in the *postscritta*, so the date of 1606 could still be correct. Meanwhile, the *postscritta* and the printing occurred later, as Lazzzerini holds, in 1607. The *Avvertimento et Ammonitione* is allegedly written by the supposed former Jesuit student Wolfgang Hoffman from Wratislava, Wroclaw in present-day Poland. Hoffman begins his writing by testifying that he has been educated for many years in the discipline of the Society of Jesus in the *Collegio Germanico* at Rome during the pontiff of Gregory XIII. See Lazzzerani, 2004: 37–38. For comments on the *Avvertimento*, see Bouwsma, 1968: 366; 399; 431 & 455–456.

now 68-year old priest to be rector of the Jesuit College in Bologna in 1601. This stint was brief and Possevino swiftly relocated to Venice.⁹⁰

The *Apparatus Sacer* and Final Years

Although Possevino had begun updating the *Bibliotheca Selecta* as soon as the first edition had been printed, it was not until 1601, when he moved from Bologna to Venice, that he was able to continue work on the updated version. Its updated version, the *Apparatus Sacer*, was an elaboration on most of the topics that had been raised in his *opus magnum*. The updates were, however, done with greater care for the work of the Congregation for the Index, as it included a fuller list of prohibited books that was attuned to the *Clementine Index*.⁹¹

The process of restructuring and adding new authors to the *Apparatus Sacer* proved both complicated and tiresome for the elderly priest. In 1601, he

⁹⁰ Dorigny-Ghezzi: 367–372; Balsamo, 2006: 42–45. AAH, x. In the preface to the *Apparato All'Historia*, it is mentioned that its author, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, will comment on the lives of the popes written by the Florentine humanist Bartolomeo Platina (1421–1481), a work that the Augustinian Onofrio Panvinio (1529–1568) had studied. Panvinio rejected the opinions of the Benedictine monk from Douai, Arnold de Wyon (1554–c. 1610) whose writing was the main source to Platina's work on the lives of the popes. Possevino adds that Panvinio's unfinished history of the pontiffs of the Catholic Church, or rather annotations to Bartolomeo Platina's (1421–1481) *Vitæ Pontificum Platinae* (1479), are in need of improvement ('lima'). In fact, Bellarmino had been asked in 1582 to examine the chronology given by Panvinio. Pope Sixtus V wanted to publish Panvinio's work, but Bellarmino censured both Platina's and Panvinio's compositions for being historically incorrect. Platina was censured for writing too much about the vices of the popes and Panvinio for writing too ingratiatingly. AAH, IV, c. 44: 139r. See Tutino, 2010: 31. Possevino writes that he will treat the work of Platina in his *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which is referred to in the future tense (*tratteremo*). When discussing the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, however, the indicative remote past tense verb *mostrammo* is used, conjugated in the first-person plural.

⁹¹ The structure of the *Apparatus Sacer* differs from the *Bibliotheca Selecta* as the names of the authors in the *Apparatus Sacer* are alphabetically ordered, similar to the structure of Gesner's *Bibliotheca Universalis* and the order of the Tridentine rules for the prohibition of books. The *Apparatus Sacer* lacks the typographical exactness present in the work of Gesner, to whom Possevino made references. Because Gesner was considered a heretic by curial authorities, Possevino needed permission to use the *Bibliotheca Universalis* as source for the *Apparatus Sacer*. This was granted to him. With over eight thousand different names of authors in the *Apparatus Sacer*, it plainly outnumbered the authors assessed by Gesner. Balsamo 2001: 61–68. About the *Apparatus Sacer* in general, see Sommervogel, 1895: 1082–1085; Balsamo, 2006: 113–131.

sent the draft for the letter ‘A’ to Rome in order to receive publishing permission from the Roman pontiff. It would take nearly a year until he received this permission.⁹² In August 1602, he received printing licence from Acquaviva and from the *Consiglio dei Dieci* in Venice. Rome’s part in the process of examining, correcting, and censuring the contents of various drafts delayed the termination of the project. Curial objections to the drafts concerning letters ‘I’ and ‘M’ caused Possevino much distress.⁹³

It took until 1606, when the second edition of the *Apparatus Sacer* was printed, for the entire project to be terminated, although the first edition had been printed in 1603. Consequently, Possevino could barely have had time to catch his breath before he commenced writing the *Nuova Risposta*, which dealt with the interdict placed on Venice by Pope Paul V.⁹⁴

Possevino’s involvement in the Interdict Controversy will be thoroughly dealt with in this study, therefore no deeper investigation on this topic will be made in this chapter. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Venetian territory, in 1606, he moved to Bologna. For the sake of receiving further news about the development of the controversy, he headed to Rome to meet with Pope Paul V. Whilst in Rome, he was not granted a papal audience. After having waited for two months to meet the Roman pontiff, he left for Bologna. Later he discovered that Acquaviva

⁹² Such a procedure required a lot of time and money. A copyist was always needed to transcribe corrections to manuscripts. In fact, the patience of Clement VIII was beginning to dwindle; he grew tired of the debates between the inquisitors and the bishops on the corrections of books. Balsamo, 1991: 75.

⁹³ BS, 1593: vii; *Apparatus Sacer*: iii–v.; Balsamo, 1991: 78–79. Possevino also had trouble finding suitable collaborators for printing the *AS*. Possevino, who had little funding, was assisted by the archbishop of Gniezno, Wladislaw Karnkowski, who sent Possevino one thousand five hundred golden ducats in order for him to pay the copyists the approximately eight hundred golden ducats that were required for printing Possevino’s manuscript. On another occasion Possevino says in a letter that a friendly Venetian typographer offered to print one hundred copies of the *Apparatus Sacer* for free. Balsamo 1991: 84–85. For editions of the *Apparatus Sacer*, see Sommervogel, 1895: 1081–1084.

⁹⁴ Balsamo 1991: 81. Possevino managed to maintain control over his work and independently commissioned twenty-five editions of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* and another twenty-two free-standing editions of books from the *Bibliotheca Selecta* to be printed. Additionally, according to Balsamo, there is no safe source that tells how many printings were made of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* and the *Apparatus Sacer*, but he estimates that thousands of copies were spread across Europe and some to India. Balsamo 1991: 91.

had impeded the audience with Pope Paul, as the General Superior simply did not want him to act on his own initiative.⁹⁵

Possevino finally retired to Ferrara where he kept himself busy writing his *Annales* of his diplomatic assignments, which Cesare Baronio (1538–1607) had encouraged him to write. He also continued to write letters, in which his exasperation with Acquaviva was apparent. When he passed away in the spring of 1611, Acquaviva instructed the rector at the Jesuit College in Ferrara to lock up all of his written manuscripts in a box and send them to Rome to have them stored in the Jesuit archives.⁹⁶

Characteristics of the Early Modern Society of Jesus

As a member of the Society of Jesus, Possevino would have been familiar with specific attitudes to political theories involving hierarchy, sovereignty, and organisation as Jesuits wrote prolifically on these topics.⁹⁷ In fact, the Society of Jesus itself was founded as a religious association with a conspicuous hierarchical character. Jesuits promised particular obedience of mobility to the pope, whereas the General Superior of the Society – who was elected for life – had a mandate to appoint and dismiss members from their offices. The authoritative and legally binding document for the entire Society, was – and still is – the *Constitutions*. The annual reports, visitation protocols, member rolls with notes of temperamental adherence for each member, rules for recruitment, and a common educational plan and curriculum, moreover, prove the efficient administrative traits of the Society of Jesus.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Acting on his own initiative was typical of Possevino. For instance, in order to avoid scrutiny from the superiors of the Society of Jesus, he published all his written work during the Interdict Controversy under various pseudonyms. Balsamo, 2006: 45–48.

⁹⁶ In his last years Acquaviva commissioned Possevino to procure a translation of a catechism in the Greek vernacular. Balsamo, 2006: 48–53; Dorigny Ghezzi: 372–382; Balsamo, 2006: 52 & 207. The *Annales* have not been published, but John Patrick Donnelly mentions that his autobiography is available in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*. See Donnelly, 1986: 4.

⁹⁷ For instance, Luis de Molina, Gregory of Valencia, Roberto Bellarmino. Cf. Tutino, 2012: xxvii–l.

⁹⁸ Höpfl, 2000: 316–317 & 322; Malley, 2013: 54.

Possevino himself sums up the mission of the Society of Jesus in his *Moscovia*: “God summoned several thousand members of our Order to form a kind of army, composed of men free of all material considerations and personal concerns. In Jesus’ name we have all sworn a solemn oath to bring Him and the spiritual treasures of His Church to the peoples of the Indies, heretics, and those who are not fully joined to the body of the Church. In order to do this we have forsaken everything.”⁹⁹

Historians who have been inclined to see particular resemblances between the organisational structure of the Society of Jesus and military models have been repudiated by Harro Höpfl and John O’Malley on the basis that military metaphors are not specific to the Society of Jesus, but rather part and parcel of traditional Catholic language. It is more accurate, according to Höpfl, to look at the organisational structure of the early modern Catholic Church when aiming to establish foundations for the hierarchical structure of the Society of Jesus. Höpfl explains that the bureaucratic administration of the Society cannot be accounted for by referring to military models. O’Malley, for his part, points to the fact that the imagery of the soldier of God and the battling Christian, are also found in the Rule of Benedict of Nursia (480–543).¹⁰⁰

In 1540, Pope Paul III promulgated the bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae*, which established the Society as a religious order within the Catholic Church. The initial aims of the Society were to assist souls in life, as well as to defend the Catholic faith for the glory of God and to the benefit of the common good. To work for the benefit of the common good implied founding institutions, such as hospitals and schools to assist orphans and prostitutes. From the beginning of its constitution, the members of the Society, in order to be flexible, were not obliged to read the Liturgy of the Hours in community as were other religious orders. A certain individualism was also a feature of

⁹⁹ *Moscovia*: 19.

¹⁰⁰ Höpfl, 2000: 319–320; O’Malley, 2013: 40. For a discussion of the influence of Erasmus’ *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* on Ignatius of Loyola, see O’Malley, 2013: 173–174, 181–182 & 187.

the early modern Society, as can be seen in Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, which instruct readers on how to exercise individual discernment of spirits, the scrutiny of individual conscience, and the practice of individual meditation during Holy Mass. These individualistic features were present alongside Ignatius of Loyola's demands for blind obedience to the superiors of the Society and the vow of obedience to the Vicar of Christ, which make for a complex system of particular characteristics.¹⁰¹

Influenced by these structures, many Jesuits such as Roberto Bellarmino, Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) and Luis de Molina (1535–1600) wrote comments on spiritual and civic societies following a Thomist tradition. As will be discussed, Possevino's comments on the government of state was founded on ideas by Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, and Ptolemy of Lucca (c. 1236–1327), following a Dominican tradition. Over time different ways of interpreting Aquinas, especially his views on the theology of salvation, developed into the long-lasting *De Auxiliis* conflict between the Dominicans and Jesuits.¹⁰²

De Auxiliis was one of the more striking controversies in the late sixteenth century, which did not expand to Protestant countries and remained within the Catholic sphere. The controversy, which initiated after the publication of the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina's (1535–1600) *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* in 1588, is nonetheless a good example of the manner in which late sixteenth-century controversialist theologians debated. The content of the controversy stemmed from the debate on grace and free will between Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and Pelagius (360–420), which was later commented upon by various theologians, including Molina, who taught that salvation is dependent on grace and that the grace of God is performed according to his predestination. He also believed that the reception of grace by the

¹⁰¹ Höpfl, 2000: 322–328. Silvia Mostaccio discusses obedience within the Society of Jesus as a field of historical investigation. Mostaccio, 2014: 3; O'Malley, 2013: 37–44.

¹⁰² O'Malley, 2013: 61.

free will of man is necessary for salvation. In 1598, Pope Clement VIII instituted the *Congregatio de auxiliis* to thoroughly investigate the controversy that had erupted between Dominicans and Jesuits following the publication of Molina's *Concordia*. The controversy was still unsettled in 1607, when Pope Paul V forbade any further public debate on *De Auxiliis*.¹⁰³

A separate characteristic of the early modern Society of Jesus, was the hostility it experienced. Hostility against Jesuits would grow as their ministry expanded. O'Malley mentions that the term *jesuita* would become an invective connected to Jesuits signifying religious hypocrisy, and Jesuits would sometimes be depicted as 'devils in a soutane.' Examples of writings that illustrated hostility against Jesuits were the *Lettres provinciales* by Blaise Pascal (1623–1662).¹⁰⁴

An example of animosity against Jesuits that predated Pascal's critique was the *Censura* of the Society of Jesus, written by the Dominican friar Melchior Cano (1509–1560). There, Cano claimed Ignatius of Loyola to be vain, ignorant and a defender of heretics within the Society. Cano also held that the promise of experiencing God whilst performing the spiritual exercises in retreat was presumptuous and resulted in too much emphasis on affective spirituality. Cano, moreover, remarked upon the method of indifference taught by Jesuits when discerning the will of God. Cano concluded that the ostentation and certainty of carrying out the will of God, amongst people who had practised the exercises, was the work of the devil. Additionally, in one of the accusations in the *Censura*, Cano depicted Jesuits as pale and ashen due to the intake of substances in order to rescind their sexual appetites. Finally, Cano judged that the Society of Jesus brought novelties to the Catholic Church. In fact, the word novelty was a rhetorical circumlocution for heresy that was used

¹⁰³ Molina's teaching vexed the Spanish Dominicans Dominigo Báñez (1528–1604) and Tomas de Lemos (1555–1629), who denounced the Pelagianism that they considered to be present in the work of Molina. See Tutino, 2010: 15–16.

¹⁰⁴ O'Malley, 2013: 53; Schloesser, 2014: 363 & 370.

in early modern polemical texts and, as will be seen in this study, such use was widespread.¹⁰⁵

Commitment to Culture and Accommodation

Cultivation was what Ignatius of Loyola had in mind when he developed a spirituality that was attuned to the ministry of his time, where commitment to culture was intertwined with commitment to education. Oskar Garstein and John O'Malley have brought this aspect of the early modern Society of Jesus to the fore. Karin Knorr Cetina, furthermore, denotes Jesuit commitment to education and culture as an 'epistemic culture', which Koen Vermier agrees with. Vermier, in an article about Possevino's elaboration on the term culture, has pointed to the close connection between culture and education.¹⁰⁶

The elaboration of culture uses Cicero as its point of departure, to whom culture presupposes the term *natura*. Nature generates natural abilities, *ingenia*, for persons to cultivate. In comparison with nature, however, culture is a more dynamic concept. Vermier has even tied culture, in Possevino's thinking, to pedagogy, which further proves its educational connotation. Yet, culture, education, and pedagogy should be approached as concepts with wider connotations than just to schooling. Within the framework of the early modern Society of Jesus, the aim of cultivation and education was to help souls get to heaven. Cultivation and education were a means to an end, rather than ends in themselves.¹⁰⁷

Unlike the educational traditions amongst Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians, Jesuits did not only teach members of their own order or students of theology in public universities. The Jesuits founded distinctive Jesuit schools – the first school was established in Messina in 1548 – with Cicero

¹⁰⁵ O'Reilly, 2017: 365–394.

¹⁰⁶ Garstein, 1992: 40; 44–47; O'Malley, 2013: 46–60 & 193; Vermier, 2017: 231–238.

¹⁰⁷ Vermier, 2017: 231–238; May & Wisse, 2001, 2:88–89: 27; O'Malley, 2013: 46–60. For definitions of *natura* in connection with Roman law, see Berger, 1953: 591–592.

and the *studia humanitatis* curriculum as models, where teaching covered a wide range of subjects such as grammar, rhetoric, history, drama, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and theology.¹⁰⁸

Jesuit schools were public and enrolment was free of tuition. Students were divided in classes according to their educational progression, in line with the Parisian style. The cultural vision of the Jesuits embraced many aspects that creation had to offer, as God was considered to be found in everything. With the commitment to a broad notion of culture, Jesuits were destined to comingle with secular and public life and many former students who had been enrolled in Jesuit school learned the craft of persuasion with eloquence in the discipline of rhetoric. Many of these would hold important public offices.¹⁰⁹

O'Malley underscores that Ignatian spirituality, as understood in the early modern Society of Jesus, was a 'civic and culturally aware spirituality' and the *Spiritual Exercises* offered guidance for the spiritual director to assist in the cultivation of religious experiences. This enabled people to make choices in accordance with the will of God. Needless to say, the *Spiritual Exercises* were decisive for Jesuit ministry, for the cultural project of the Society and for its educational activities. Their educational activities, however, did not aspire to learning for its own sake but to the establishment of good culture, which, in turn, aimed to help souls reach heaven and to form cities that prospered with virtue.¹¹⁰

The educational models of the Society were shaped around classical antiquity and therefore similar to those of Renaissance humanists. Although indebted to the humanist idea of *pietas* – that the goal of education was formation of upright character – the canon of approved books for Jesuits differed from that of Renaissance humanists. On this basis, Garstein has concluded that

¹⁰⁸ Jesuit education followed a system that consisted of two sections: the *studia inferiora* and the *studia superiora*. Students were expected to use Latin both inside and outside the classrooms exclusively. Additionally, Greek was taught at every Jesuit school. Garstein, 1992[a]: 40 & 44–47.

¹⁰⁹ O'Malley, 2013: 46–60 & 193.

¹¹⁰ O'Malley, 2013: 49, 91, 184 & 209. Quote on 49.

Jesuits sought to establish an alternative culture to Renaissance ideals. Like Renaissance humanists, however, the Jesuits were particularly dedicated to rhetorical teaching that did not detach wisdom and teaching from eloquence and persuasion.¹¹¹

Rhetoric was suited to people living outside of the cloister. To the early modern Society of Jesus, rhetoric was an organising principle and an epistemological point of departure for ministry.¹¹² In connection with Jesuit ministry, the Ciceronian model of accommodation to circumstances, persons, place, and time, in that the orator needed to profess flexibility and subtleness to the peculiarities of each audience, became imbedded in Jesuit culture. One aspect of accommodation was the choice amongst Jesuits not to wear a religious habit in order to blend in with society. Another aspect of accommodation to circumstances, persons, place and time was the practice of casuistry – cases of conscience – that was applied to the sacrament of confession. There, moral reasoning was applied not through clear-cut judgments but relative to the conditions that the confessing person experienced when committing sin. In preaching, accommodation was applied so that awareness of the condition of listeners facilitated persuasion to undertake good actions.¹¹³

Attention to the uniqueness of individual persons was also supported in the *Spiritual Exercises*, which teach that each person is constituted according to the four humoral pathological entities of black and yellow bile, phlegm, and blood, corresponding to the four temperaments: melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic and sanguine. Through the publication of the *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* by Juan Huarte (1529–1588) in 1575, the teaching on the humours

¹¹¹ Garstein 1992[a]: 41; O'Malley, 2013: 184 & 202; Skinner, 2015: 3.

¹¹² For this reason of this I decline to make use of the concept of 'evangelisation' or 'world evangelisation' as used by John Patrick Donnelly. I do not consider such concepts sufficient descriptions of Possevino's authorial intention. Possevino did draw up strategies for the re-Catholicisation of Scandinavia and Moscow and in his *Bibliotheca Selecta* he drew up further strategies for the Catholicisation of the Greeks, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. But the concept evangelisation should, in my opinion, be viewed as imbedded in the concept of ministry. See Donnelly, 1988[b]: 179–198.

¹¹³ O'Malley, 2013: 90–95 & 175–178; Schloesser, 2014: 347–372; Maryks, 2016: 60–72; Bizzell, 2016: 39–59.

of Galen (c. 129–c. 216) was recovered to an early modern audience. This work helped Jesuits to categorise persons into different temperaments, in order to pursue examination of talents. These theories would be incorporated in the *Ratio Studiorum* and, as Casalini mentions, thereby incorporated in the culture of the Society of Jesus. In addition, the humoral characteristics of each Jesuit were registered in the catalogues of members of the Society of. Humoral characteristics were thought to correspond to human behaviour, talents (natural abilities), and skills, and also to affect bodily constitution and facial appearance. Therefore, a person with an unordered humoral unity or with a repulsive appearance would not be admitted to membership of the Society.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Casalini, 2016: 189–211.

Part II. The *Bibliotheca Selecta* (1593–1603)

When forced back to the Italian peninsula after his diplomatic assignments, Possevino commenced his most important authorial enterprise: the *Bibliotheca Selecta*. The initial intent, when he began writing the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, was to consider only *historia humana*, aimed at the formation of princes and nobles. The working title for the project was *Bibliotheca principum ac nobelium*, but eventually the project was expanded into an encyclopaedia with the purpose of setting the standard for every discipline. It is worth mentioning that the *Bibliotheca Selecta* was censored, authorised, and printed at the Tipografia Apostolica Vaticana in 1593 in two large folio volumes. Part one (books 1–11) is dedicated to Pope Clement VIII (*sed.* 1592–1605) and part two (books 12–18) to Sigismund III (1566–1632), king of Poland and Sweden.¹¹⁵ Its printing was licensed by Clement’s *motu proprio* (on his own initiative), as well as paid for by the pope. The printing was preceded by an examination of the drafts by two committees, one composed of Jesuit scholars and the other by members of the Congregation for the Index. In order for the experts to give

¹¹⁵ BS, 1593, I, *In Præfat., Causæ et Idea*: 1–11. Cf. Balsamo 1991: 58. BS, 1593, I: iv–v. Possevino’s models for writing the *Bibliotheca Selecta* were Diodorus Siculus (90 B.C.–30 B.C.), Photius of Constantinople (810–891), and Sixtus of Siena. Allegedly, he had heard Sixtus, who was a Hebraist and a member of the Dominican Order, preach, and Possevino probably alluded to this work in his own title for the *Bibliotheca Sancta* (Venice: 1575). In fact, Possevino’s updated work, the *Apparatus Sacer*, had the working title *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which alludes even more strongly to the work of Sixtus. Moreover, Cesare Baronio, while working on his *Annales Ecclesiastici*, consulted Sixtus’s *Bibliotheca Sancta*. BS, I, *In Præfat., Causæ et Idea*: 4. “... *Ex iis, quos habemus, qui Bibliothecæ nomine suos libros appellarunt, fuere Diodorus Siculus, Photius Constantinopolitanus Archiepiscopus, Xystus Senensis.*” Cf. Colombo 2014: 35; Zen, 2010: 196.

censure to Possevino, he had to send his manuscripts and suggestions for correction manually.¹¹⁶

The *Bibliotheca Selecta* was the intellectual antithesis to the *Bibliotheca Universalis*, written by the Swiss Protestant Conrad Gesner (1516–1565), which Possevino had encountered during his travels around Europe. The *Bibliotheca Universalis* was a guide to research in all scientific areas, which supplied suggestions on resources and where to find them. The premise of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* was nonetheless different from Gesner's *Bibliotheca Universalis*. The aim of Gesner was to present a universal *bibliotheca*, whereas that of Possevino was to present a selected one.¹¹⁷

Possevino did not just try to counter the religious beliefs of the Swiss encyclopaedist but also to counter Gesner's classification of knowledge. According to Gesner, philosophy is a superordinate and rectifying discipline. This was contrary to Possevino's idea that good philosophers must first be good theologians. Thus, theology rectifies other disciplines in that even a lower level of truth can only be preserved when theology and natural philosophy are united. As follows, the *Bibliotheca Selecta* is hardly a manual for the conduct of research whereby every scientific discipline is autonomous. In this sense, the *Bibliotheca Selecta* is not a strictly bibliographical piece of work. It is rather a work that considers a selection of disciplines that are harmonious with theology.¹¹⁸

The notion of harmony between theology and other disciplines had, however, been severely questioned at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in debates that took place in Padua. These debates concerned whether natural

¹¹⁶ BS, I: iii & vii. See Balsamo 1991: 55; 59 & 73. The procedure of having literature censored by curial authority was decreed in 1487 with Pope Innocent VIII's (*sed.* 1484 – 1492) bull *Inter multiplices*, which, although unsuccessful, required censorship to be enforced by bishops. In 1515, during the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517), Pope Leo X (*sed.* 1513–1521) decreed that all books were to be subject to censorial review. See Lenard 2006: 53.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Bibliotheca Universalis* c. 1: 1: "*Scriptorum Omnis Generis, Quorum et Memoria extat, et Lucubrations in Literas relatæ sunt, ad nostra usque tempora, Catalogus.*" Cf. Kraemer & Zedelmaier, 2014: 322.

¹¹⁸ CI, c. 3: 5; BS, I: VIII, c. 16: 546 & 561; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 48.; Balsamo, 2001: 51–55. Serrai, 2014: 127.

philosophy could prove that the intellectual soul is immortal. In 1516 the Mantuan philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) published *De immortalitate animae*, in which he sought to prove that natural philosophy could not determine that the intellectual soul is immortal. Pomponazzi also maintained that the study of the human soul ought to be performed according to the basic rules of natural philosophy and not according to the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul.¹¹⁹

During the debate on the immortality of the soul, the premise of the division of disciplines was flagrantly affirmed by Pomponazzi. In opposition to this, Ignatius of Loyola sought to establish a Catholic culture by stressing the merits of Thomist theology, which emphasised harmony between God and his creation and, as Garstein mentions, harmony between faith, reason and culture. It was exactly this harmony that Possevino worked so hard to preserve.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Martin, 2021.

¹²⁰ Cf. BS, II: XIII, c. 2: 61; Garstein, 1992: 40.

Chapter 2. Culture – the Interpretative Key to Possevino’s Authorship

It can be concluded thus far in this study that the cultural aim of Ignatius of Loyola was indebted to the Renaissance movement. The difference between Jesuit education and the *studia humanitatis* concerned interpretation and valuing of models of classical antiquity. The difference between Dominican and Jesuit theologies over salvation was due to different interpretations of writings by Thomas Aquinas.¹²¹

In this chapter, I will make use of the term ‘Renaissance’. It must be said that the term, which signals rebirth of classical antiquity, did not include everyone. There was not a point in time when, as Skinner says, “the dark ages ended and a new light began to dawn.”¹²² Rather, the movement grew as students, at late medieval Italian universities, began to study the classics as a means to improve an eloquent Latin style. From this, Petrarch (1304–1374) and his followers went on to widen the scope to other studies of the humanities.¹²³ Hence, the *studia humanitatis* took shape, and history writing reached a prominent place amongst Renaissance scholars. Following the Ciceronian maxim that history reflects truth and that it is the mistress of learning and prudence, a large number of humanists wrote histories of their ‘patria’, concluding with moral judgments of its people and government. The core value of these histories was that of virtue. Accordingly, Renaissance connotes the humanist movement founded upon the *studia humanitatis* curriculum promoting historical, moral and rhetorical studies in particular.¹²⁴

It is the ideals of the Renaissance humanists that Possevino has something to say about in the fourth part of the *Apparato All’Historia*. In this chapter, I will discuss his response to aspects of culture such as certain novels,

¹²¹ Tutino, 2010: 18.

¹²² Skinner, 2015: 1.

¹²³ Skinner, 2015: 2.

¹²⁴ Skinner, 2015: 3–7.

pieces of music and images. When encountering such cultural aspects, in the literary production of Possevino, I have opted to make use of the term fallacious culture, which is discernible from his writings. The reason for this usage is my conviction that the term will uncover one of his intentions, which is to address fallacy in certain aspects of culture. The term will also indicate his intention of setting up a mental antagonist, which is rife with fallacy, in opposition to his notion of the proper cultivation of talents. The establishment of sources for the proper cultivation of talents is imbedded in his literary ambition and, as such, is one of the most vital interpretative keys to his authorship.

In this chapter, I will, furthermore, focus on how the spread of fallacious culture is portrayed and in what manner such spread can be remedied. The *Apparato All'Historia* will be the main source for the analysis in this chapter, which nevertheless includes topics found in Possevino's production that lie slightly outside of the contents touched upon in the *Apparato All'Historia*.

As noted in the discussion about the characteristics of the early modern Society of Jesus, establishment of a culture that contrasted with the Renaissance movement was at the heart of the ambitions of Jesuit education. I contend that this characteristic was also at the heart of Possevino's authorial activities in the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, inasmuch as culture is the superordinate topic in the beginning, as well as in the end, of the work. In fact, the devotion of twenty-eight folio pages in its last book – Book XVII, titled *Cicero* – to the dearest topics of Renaissance humanists, namely rhetoric and grammar, ends up in culture. For instance, Possevino prefers Ciceronian letters as models for the teaching of the Latin language to develop a pleasant style of writing. A style, based on mere imitation is, however, thought to misconstrue the aim of learning Latin, since the words used in letter writing must be suited and accommodated to the rhetoric at hand.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ In the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, Possevino favours Cicero to Julius Caesar and Cato, inasmuch as the remaining quantity of Cicero's letters clearly outnumbered that of the others. Nevertheless, he contemplated that there could be more wisdom imbedded in Caesar's or Cato's letters than in the letters of Cicero. BS, II, *Cicero*: 4r–4v. Cf. Boswell 2003: 250; 252.

Possevino proves his willingness to deviate from emulation of the ancient masters, who were dear to the Renaissance humanists. Instead of focusing on emulation, Possevino had another aspect in mind, where emulation at best could serve as a means to attain a goal. The goal, which is deliberative, is to act according to the will of God and cultivate virtues. With regard to emulation, he states “*no wonder that they let Cicero and other good Authors serve them, but they should not serve Cicero and other authors themselves.*”¹²⁶ Possevino had a more pragmatic approach to Latin style than the Latinists of the humanist movement, since style, according to him, is not an end in itself. On the contrary, students are required to regard their personal context and furthermore adapt their style according to the attended content.¹²⁷

Style is also touched upon in the *Coltura Degl’Ingegni*, where Huarte’s theory of language use is confuted. Huarte had determined that inferior language use by Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus (1266–1308) was due to bad memory, but to Possevino the lack of eloquence in the writings by Aquinas and Scotus was due to the unfit teachers of their time since “memory can hold both good and barbaric words.”¹²⁸ He held that it is necessary for any writer to accommodate to the times. The aim of teaching and learning was thought to be of assistance in cultivation where education involved reading good books, in order to cultivate each student’s character and moral capabilities.

¹²⁶ Quote from BS, II, “Cicero”, c. 2: 4v. “[...] *nimirum, ut Ciceronem, & bonos alios Auctores sibi servire faciant, non autem Ciceroni & alijs ipsi inserviant.*” It should be kept in mind that the virtues of style derive from Cicero’s *De oratore*, which was amongst the main early modern handbooks of rhetoric. In this text, Cicero defines these virtues as (i) correct use of language (good Latin/Greek); (ii) clarity; (iii) distinction (choice of individual words; connections of words; juxtapositions [...]); (iv) appropriateness. May & Wisse, 2001: 36.

¹²⁷ Contrarily, Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) and Marcantonio Flaminio (1597/98–1550), whose poems and letters were overtly intended to merely imitate and reproduce the style of ancient models, were eventually censured by curial authorities. For discussions about Latinists of the humanist movement, see Stefanini, 1952[b]: 381; May & Wisse, 2001: 2:88–89: 27; Herrick, 2005: 177.

¹²⁸ CI, c. 18: 35: “[...] la memoria può tanto haversi delle buone, quanto si ha delle barbare parole.” In contrast, Gregory Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Athanasius of Alexandria, Justin Martyr and Eusebius of Caesarea had all, in Possevino’s opinion, written elegantly in the Greek language, despite the fact that they were not native Greek speakers. BS II, XVIII, c. IX: 14. Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Chrysostom were included in the Jesuit curriculum for elementary Greek. Cf. Visser, 2011: 14.

Accordingly, each person should read and imitate the contents of books that match each vocation, talent and role in society.¹²⁹ Those to whom God has not given the talent to write according to the times, however, should devote their time to contemplation.¹³⁰

Defining Culture

The imitation of ancient scholars was a common trait amongst Renaissance humanists. This trait did not deter the Society of Jesus from establishing an alternative curriculum to the *studia humanitatis*, instead it was as prominent amongst Jesuits as amongst many Renaissance humanists. To synthesise Renaissance humanism in keeping with the aims of the post-Tridentine Catholic Church, Possevino opened the *Bibliotheca Selecta* by elaborating not on theology, but on the term *cultura*. The term is related to a method for the formation of ingenuity. This topic is elaborated upon in the first book of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, the *Cultura ingeniorum* (*Coltura Degl'Ingegni* in Italian), which became the most frequently printed part of the entire work. Eventually, the *Cultura ingeniorum* became an integrated manual of the *Ratio Studiorum* and was taught at the Jesuit Colleges.¹³¹

In Possevino's exposition, *cultura* is connected to *agricultura* and God himself is portrayed as the prime agriculturist. As such, God has planted seeds in every person which may or may not be cultivated. Those seeds contain both practical and theoretical wisdom, but whether these are to be cultivated hinges on whether or not one conforms to the will of God. Possevino's definition of culture, however, does not hold connotations for universal knowledge. On the contrary, he intended that every person needs to discern and cultivate those

¹²⁹ BS, I, I, c. 12: 62; Balsamo 2001: 68; Boswell 2003: 259.

¹³⁰ CI, c. 18: 32–35.

¹³¹ In the 1593 edition of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, the first book was simply called *Liber Primus (Studiorum Finis, Media, Impedimenta: ubi de publicis Academijs, & libris)*; it was not yet named *Cultura ingeniorum*. The *Cultura ingeniorum* was printed in at least eight editions. The sixth edition (Treviso, 1606) was dedicated to the Russian tsar Dmitri Ivanovich (also known as False Dmitri). Cf. Balsamo 2001: 66; 76–77.

seeds that are personal as opposed to general. It is not even desirable for any person to seek universal knowledge, since such an ambition is considered unattainable. Culture refers to specialisation, and the more specialists the better for the common good. These notions opposed the ideal of the ‘universal man’ expressed, amongst others, by Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) in *The Book of the Courtier*.¹³²

Just as with rhetoric and grammar, Possevino’s point of departure when discussing culture is the Ciceronian concept of *ingenium* (natural ability). It is emphasised that every person has inborn seeds of natural abilities, or talents, which parallels the parable of the sower in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 13: 24–30, 37–43). God has given health and beauty of the body to some and virtue, knowledge and arts to the minds of others. Hence, God gives different talents to different persons, which corresponds to different vocations.¹³³

While expounding on the subject of culture and talents, Possevino was not only referring to the passage of Matthew, but also to the Galenic and Hippocratic ideas of the humours of the body as presented in *Examen de ingenious para las ciencias* by Juan Huarte. He discussed Huarte’s treatment of the reason why some men are able to conduct certain arts which others are incapable of mastering. Although fascinated by Huarte’s theories about the four humours, he criticised the strict conformity to determinism in the *Examen*, as it can damage the truth of free will.¹³⁴

¹³² CI: 5v, 11v & 25r; BS, I, I, c. 2–3: 19r–24v; BS, I, I, c. 7: 33r; Vermier, 2017: 234 & 238; O’Malley, 2013: 184. O’Malley notes that the schools of Jesuits sought to prepare their students, regardless of whether they aimed to pursue a civil career or a life as a cleric, for the *vita activa* in the state for the sake of the common good. The scope of Jesuit education, moreover, was founded on ethical principles of forming characters rather than learning for its own sake. See also Opdycke, 2003.

¹³³ CI: 21v–25v; Cf. BS, II, XIV, c. 8: 166v–169r; SC: 35–37. This mode of reasoning is also noticeable in the *Soldato Cristiano*, where Possevino discusses whether one is called by God to become a priest or a soldier. Possevino interprets the Book of Judges 7:5–7, where God told to Gideon to separate those who lap water with their tongues as dogs, from those who kneel down to drink. The former Possevino concludes have been called to be soldiers, the latter have been called to be separated from such office and called to be priests.

¹³⁴ CI: 21v: “[...] apportar danno alla verità del libero arbitrio.” See Sánchez Barea, 2011: 2335–2340. In addition, in his *Moscovia*, Possevino writes explicitly of free will, saying that “Christ gives each person a measure of heavenly grace and then leaves him entirely free to choose the

Huarte's *Examen* was, as noted previously, much appreciated amongst early modern Jesuits, as they developed taxonomies of temperaments based on the theory of the four humours. The choleric character, for instance, was typically considered responsible for the talents of poetry, eloquence, preaching, leadership, and military art. The melancholic character, on the contrary, was suited to ascetic life.¹³⁵

Possevino is suggesting a concept of cultivating talents that is dynamic in character, as opposed to formalistic or deterministic. I argue that there is no reason to conclude that he advocated a deterministic view, since so much is written about the significance of the free will, in foremost the *Coltura Degl'Ingegni*. Nevertheless, he often accentuated the vital role of God's providence in historical acts, which can be looked upon as a subversion of the free will. For instance, in the *Soldato Cristiano* it is claimed that God assists the Catholic forces that give honest glory to the Divine Majesty which is said to be proven by the fact that the heresiarch Zwingli was put to death.¹³⁶ To give such credit to God's providence implies that God is thought to be accepting all good things. It does not logically entail that this view is deterministic as Possevino does not give heed to an abstract impersonal, but to a tangible God. Credit to God's providence is, furthermore, fundamental for the providentialist rhetoric that Possevino makes much use of in his texts.¹³⁷

The concept of culture is thus a valuable key to the interpretation of Possevino's authorship and it offers an insight to his anthropological point of departure. It also offers insight, presumably the anthropological point of departure for the educational activities of the Society of Jesus, since the *Cultura ingeniorum* was incorporated into the *Ratio Studiorum*.

style of life each person considers appropriate for himself and which the Lord has called upon him to fulfil." *Moscovia*: 89.

¹³⁴ CI: 21v–25v; Cf. BS, II, XIV, c. 8: 166v–169r. See Sánchez Barea, 2011: 2335–2340.

¹³⁵ Sánchez Barea, 2011: 2339.

¹³⁶ SC: 96.

¹³⁷ BS, I, I, c. 2: 19r–21r, & CI: 5r. See Vermier, 2017: 238 for a discussion of the term 'epistemic culture' as defined by Karin Knorr Cetina. According to Vermier, epistemic culture is imbedded in Possevino's *Coltura Degl'ingegni*.

In order to further examine Possevino's conception of culture I will turn to one of his literary aims, namely to construct a canon of approved books. The construction of a canon is a positive contribution to culture and not just a prohibition of books. In the following, I will analyse the concept of the 'Republic of Letters' that is to be found in the *Coltura Degl'Ingegneri*. I will also analyse how this concept relates to the term 'Christian Commonwealth'.

The Christian Commonwealth, the Republic of Letters, and Fallacious Culture

The concept of the Christian Commonwealth (*Respublica Christiana*) was political and frequently used in the medieval and early modern periods to signify a uniform institution with a community of Christian believers, which acted to preserve unity between Christian states through consent to canon law and Church doctrine. The meaning of the Christian Commonwealth was discussed by Augustine (354–430) and with time the meaning changed from referring to Rome to referring to a community of Christians. Gradually, the concept became a framework for understanding the legislation of civil laws and for conventional principles in Christian societies.¹³⁸

The Christian Commonwealth, in Possevino's thinking, is a concept that relates to a commonwealth whose borders equal the geographical confines of the visible Catholic Church, which include converted Christians by missionaries where diocesan structures were not established. The Christian Commonwealth is the thought space where cultivation of talents has fertile ground and where the Republic of Letters (*Respublica Literaria*) is active.

The early modern understanding of the Republic of Letters, is, as Anne Goldgar notes, not easy to define, although it was commonly referred to in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Possevino, in the *Coltura Degl'Ingegneri*, writes that studies, laws, requisitions and various duties of men constitute a

¹³⁸ *Moscovia*: 28 & 101 for Possevino use of the Christian Commonwealth. See Ristuccia: 2018: 15–21; Jackson, 2007: 33–35; Skinner, 2015: 28.

form of the Republic of Letters.¹³⁹ Thus, the Republic of Letters is a point of departure for intellectual activities in universities, colleges, seminaries, royal courts, or other places where teaching might be conducted. It is, furthermore, cohesive and a means to cultivate talents, as well as being shaped around a canon of books that is valid within the Christian Commonwealth.¹⁴⁰

With these ideas, Possevino sought to contribute to the good of the Christian Commonwealth. He conceptualised culture from within a Jesuit tradition and applied a methodological approach that resembles the procedure of inhibiting texts, or making suggestions for the purging of texts, by Roman censors, especially when facing the canon of a rival tradition. His role as an informal censor is most conspicuous in the elaboration of antitheses to his notion of culture. In connection with this, I have opted to define the antithesis to his cultural project as fallacious cultures, inasmuch as the antitheses to proper cultivation of talents are singled out for having Satan as their root. Such fallacious cultures, as will be seen, are prone to heresy, which is thought to be guarded by the successors to Simon Magus. In contrast, the successors to the apostle Simon Peter are viewed as guardians of truth.¹⁴¹

In the *Apparato All'Historia*, heresy is perceived as dating from Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24). Philostratus' (c. 172–c. 245) writing about Apollonius is said to contain a description of how Apollonius used the art of magic, which was transferred from Satan to Simon Magus.¹⁴² This is similar to what Justin Martyr (c. 100–165) writes, that Simon Magus was recognised as a god in

¹³⁹ CI, c. 35: 80; Goldgar, 1995: 2.

¹⁴⁰ CI, c. 35: 79–80 & c. 49: 97; O'Malley, 2013: 184. O'Malley mentions that when the Society of Jesus was founded, the humanists' contribution of an expansion of the corpus of approved authors and books was prolific, as it included unmediated texts written in classical antiquity and secular as well as religious texts. Previously, texts of classical antiquity were mediated through the works of writers such as Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham.

¹⁴¹ Possevino writes in the *Soldato Christiano* that the genealogy of heretics dates back to Simon Magus. SC: 45r.

¹⁴² AAH, IV, c. 2: 146v–147r; SC: 45r. On a capital of the Autun cathedral, in Burgundy, from the twelfth century, Simon Magus is presented in his attempt to fly through the use of magic. Instead of flying, however, the prayers of Simon Peter causes Simon Magus to precipitate. Morris, 2001: 201.

Rome and honoured with a statue. Possevino pictured the art of magic as having been transferred from Satan to Simon Magus and on to Apollonius.¹⁴³ He accused Philostratus of having raised up Apollonius as a deity under the name Hercules Alexicacos. Under this alias he was included in the chapel of the Roman emperor Severus Alexander (r. 222–235), who made sacrifices and honoured him with a statue. Possevino, for his part, judged sacrifices and honours to Apollonius to be the work of demons, which cloud the true work of God.¹⁴⁴

Remedying Fallacious Culture

The milieu of classical antiquity is depicted as decadent and responsible for enslaving people to practices of idolatry and for the spread of fallacious culture. This was due to the workings of Satan, who “procured that the pagans produced spectacles and in the Theatres men were slayed. And from the Oracles answers were demanded.”¹⁴⁵ Along these lines, pagan culture is considered to have favoured teachings by authors who were moved by wicked spirits.¹⁴⁶ The main target of Possevino’s polemics against pagan culture was not, however, classical antiquity as such, but rather the Renaissance movement. It must be remembered that he wanted to appeal to a contemporary audience.

¹⁴³ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, c. 26: 40. There is a resemblance between the exposition of Possevino and Justin, since Justin acknowledges the art of magic to be the work of demons and that demons worked through Simon Magus to whom a statue was raised by the River Tiber, bearing the inscription: “Simoni Dei Sancto”. This is similar to a statue of Hercules Alexicacos that Possevino discusses. The theme of demons as imitators of Christ is, furthermore, prevalent in the discourse of Justin, as in the evaluation of Possevino when denouncing the ostensible affinity between the ascension of Christ into Heaven and the uplifting of Apollonius to Paradise. Cf. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, c. 54: 61.

¹⁴⁴ AAH, IV, c. 2: 147r–147v.

¹⁴⁵ AAH, IV, c. 3: 148v “[...] procurò che i pagani facessero spettacoli, & ne i Teatri si amazzassero gli huomini, & da gli Oracoli si dimandassero risposte.” The text reads “si amaezassero” but in the list amongst printing errors it becomes clear that “amazzassero” is intended.

¹⁴⁶ Possevino explicitly names such scholars as the Neoplatonic philosophers Porphyry (c. 233–c. 305) and Iamblichus (c. 245–c. 325), the Byzantine historian Michael Psellos (c. 1017–1078), as well as Apollonius of Tyana as having written under the influence of wicked spirits. AAH, IV, c. 3: 148v.

Thus, it is through the discourse of fallacies in pagan antiquity that the indiscriminate imitation of ancient models by Renaissance humanists is confuted. The choice of antiquity as the point of departure for a description of fallacious culture was indeed strategic, since the Renaissance movement held it so dear.¹⁴⁷

Contrary to pagan culture stands cultivation of talents, which is threatened by false deities (or alternately mentioned as wicked spirits). To illustrate the operation of false deities, Possevino, in the *Apparato All'Historia*, turned to the parable of the sowing man. Just as good culture presupposes God as its origin, fallacious culture – the mental adversary – presupposes the work of the wicked spirit who approached men and “spread all those diabolical seeds in them, and (as is written in the Gospel) thereafter he left.”¹⁴⁸

The theme of fallacious culture is also prevalent in *De Poësi et Pictura ethnica* (Book XVII of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*) in which Possevino made his readers aware of corrupt culture in ancient Rome. He proposed that the reading of pagan poets should be conducted with caution, but not to the extent of neglecting the preservation of stylistic and narrative techniques. In the opposite camp are texts written by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), Eusebius, and Justin Martyr. They are regarded as *exempla imitanda* because of their edifying content. The style of those texts, Possevino explicated, is nonetheless subordinate to content.¹⁴⁹

Behind the division of authors into categories lies the rhetorical strategy of accommodation to circumstances, persons, places and times, which focuses on usefulness. In other words, works by authors are estimated as useful because of either style or virtuous content. In the context of the Society of Jesus, moreover, the method of accommodation was established in the *Constitutions* as a dimension of deliberative rhetoric. This aspect of Jesuit ministry must not

¹⁴⁷ AAH, IV, c. 3: 148r–148v; CI, c. 7: 11. See Schloesser, 2014: 348.

¹⁴⁸ AAH, IV, c. 3: 148v. “[...] sparse in loro tutti que’diabolici semi; & (come è scritto nel Vangelo) poscia se ne andò.” CI, c. 7: 11. Cf. Matt 13:3–6.

¹⁴⁹ BS, II, XVII, c. 3–5: 264–265.

be overlooked when studying Possevino's evaluative procedure, since the procedure is precisely a practice of accommodation. Thus when contents of books, pictures, poetry, or musical lyrics are judged as unwanted, but the style or form in which contents are presented, are valued as pleasing, imitation is encouraged due to usefulness. The reader is exhorted to take note of style and forget about content. In other cases the reader is advised to consult censored editions, where fallacious elements have been replaced with matters of edification. The opposite is also valid. When contents from antiquity are edifying but the style is not regarded as eloquent, the methodological procedure of refining that which is good (*bonum*) is still applied.¹⁵⁰

Possevino admonished his readers to take note of that which is useful, whether it be selected passages in a text due to either style or content or an entire work. This procedure opposes mere imitation of ancient models favoured by Renaissance humanists, as opposed to imitation of both content and style. He favoured selective imitation of either style or content when treating tropes from classical antiquity. This methodical procedure is defined in what follows as 'neo-classical', since it aims to preserve that which is supposedly good in classical antiquity, either in content or style, whilst failing to meet the evaluative criteria. This method enables literature that at first glance does not meet the evaluative criteria to become useful and, in turn, participate in the mental source-compendium for the fostering of virtues: the Republic of Letters.¹⁵¹

The neo-classical method thus refers to selective imitation and censored products. As follows, Possevino consented to the censored reading of the *Aeneid* that was presented by Giulio Capilupi (c. 1544–c. 1600).¹⁵² The moral framework is not, however, limited to literature but is also a concern for other aspects of culture, such as painting. Possevino thought that the purpose of

¹⁵⁰ Schloesser, 2014: 353.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Balsamo, 2006: 85.

¹⁵² BS, II, XVII, c. 3–4: 264–265; BS, II, XVII, c. 15–16: 280–288; BS, II, XVII, c. 21–22: 303–312; Cf. Balsamo, 2006: 85.

paintings is, apart from arousing delight in the eyes of the observer, to give praise to God. Therefore, painters ought to let their compositions encompass a moral dimension and, in turn, shun motives of obscenity.¹⁵³

The same sense of selected imitation, as with literature and paintings, is applied in the comments about theatrical plays, which were produced in ancient Rome. In the comments about theatrical plays Possevino took the same position as the French humanist Denys Lambin (c. 1520–1572).¹⁵⁴ Lambin claimed that the plots of tragedies are abominable, maculated and impious as they tell of slaughters of mothers by ferocious boys, of other boys' sexual intercourses with their mothers, of religious sacrifices of daughters by distraught fathers and of wives with licentious appetites.¹⁵⁵ Comedies in general and Terence's comedies in particular are estimated as excessive, obscure and obscene, even though they were praised by erudite men, since they tell of impudent and greedy prostitutes, wicked and fraudulent lovers, and rapacious parasites.¹⁵⁶

Although Lambin's comments are harsh, it should not be assumed that Possevino wished to blight theatrical plays. Instead, he used the assessment of Lambin to encourage contemporary early modern playwrights to favour the neo-classical method. Namely, the exposition invites the use of narrative and dialogical techniques of classical antiquity but it also invites the adjustment of plots in order to suit the edification of a Catholic audience. The purpose of such efforts should once again, I hold, be viewed as fostering virtues. In fact, theatrical plays, as an instructive and pedagogical tool, were encouraged by Ignatius of Loyola. Plays were eventually sanctioned in the *Ratio Studiorum*, wherefore dramas in Latin and Greek were staged at Jesuit Colleges. This indicates, given the role of theatrical plays as an instructive and pedagogical tool

¹⁵³ BS, II, XVII, c. 23: 312. For a discussion of the interrogation by the Venetian inquisition with regard to Paolo Veronese's *Convito in casa di Levi*, at the refectory of the Dominican convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, see Canosa, 1987: 136–139.

¹⁵⁴ See Grafton, 2012: 240 about Lambin.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. BS, II, XVII, c. 12: 277.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. BS, II, XVII, c. 12: 278.

in the Ignatian framework, that the staged theatrical plays at Jesuit Colleges were well attuned to the neo-classical method which Possevino favoured.¹⁵⁷

Theatrical plays came to be decisive in Jesuit education, perhaps to the point where music was given less attention. Even if this was true, music was still a concern in the formation of the Jesuit curriculum. In 1575 Everard Mercurian, the fourth Superior General of the Society of Jesus, issued four principles concerning musical instructions for Jesuit Colleges. The principles encourage singing of lyrics to music, which do not contain obscenities. Such musical scores should be disposed of.¹⁵⁸ With this dicta, Mercurian admonished the singers not to deprive performance of music of good morals. Since Possevino, who in 1575 was Mercurian's secretary, had access to this system of thinking it must not be ruled out that Mercurian might have had an impact on his future authorship. As for Possevino's musical preferences, the Euclidean theories of sounds, harmonies, and inter-beat intervals are set up as *exempla imitanda*. In connection with the discourse of sounds and harmonies, he reproduced a translation by the historian Fulvio Orsini (1529–1600) of a Greek manuscript containing Euclidean theories.¹⁵⁹

Finally, what remedies did Possevino suggest, in order to outdo fallacious culture? His point of departure was that pagan culture was under satanic influence and that wicked spirits were conveyed in cultural expressions such as theatrical plays, poetry, pictures and music. These expressions are fallacious, since they have been founded on a chimera rather than the truth (*verum*). Consequently, it fails to meet with the criterion of *verum*. As a remedy to this,

¹⁵⁷ Muneroni, 2019: 274.

¹⁵⁸ Cook, 2009: 11–12. The people in charge, at the Jesuit Colleges were on the one hand obligated to scrutinise compositions in order to promote those that were counted as edifying, but on the other hand watch over the books of students so that students did not keep literature that had not been scrutinised by the people in charge.

¹⁵⁹ This manuscript was kept in Vatican Library. Cf. BS, II, XV, c. 6: 187–200. The author of the work *De modis musicis antiquorum* was unpublished by the time of the printing of the Bibliotheca Selecta. This work revived the music of classical antiquity, the first to labour on such a topic since Boethius' (c. 477–524) *De Musica*, making it suitable to Possevino's consideration of elevating music and lyrics. This, of course, fits well with the neo-classical method. Its author, Girolamo Mei (1519–1594), is set up as an *exemplum imitandum*. BS, II, XV, c. 4: 184; Restani, 2011: 259–271; Palisca, 1954:1.

Possevino made use of the neo-classical method, which intends to refine that which is useful, either by adapting an edifying content to an already eloquent style or the other way around. The procedure does not intend to entirely replace one culture with another, but rather to keep elements that are considered worthy of keeping since they are good (*bonum*).

Classical antiquity was the cultural ideal to medieval and early modern thinking and the Renaissance movement was completely devoted to its preservation. What Possevino argued in favour of was neither the abandonment of the heritage of classical antiquity nor the total rejection of the Renaissance movement, but rather a synthesis which aims to outshine these entities and, simultaneously, to remedy fallacious culture.

Shunning Literary Novels

Literature was one of the most effective means of persuading people. As such, books were rhetorical tools. To Possevino, books played a significant part in his life as a diplomat and as an author. Few constituent parts of culture were as important to him as books.¹⁶⁰ In his remedies of literature from classical antiquity that adhered to fallacious culture, he converted pagan writings to useful companions for his audience. This was done through the use of the neo-classical method, which involved selective imitation and censored reading.

¹⁶⁰ In the *Apparato All'Historia*, he refers to the warnings given during the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517) about ideas taken from books that were spread around Europe, containing false prophecy and anticlerical sentiments. Along these lines, the tenth rule of the Fifth Lateran Council, reproduced in the 1596 edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, states that “therefore, if any book is printed in the noble City of Rome, it shall first be examined by the deputy of the Roman Pontiff or the Master of the Sacred Palaces or by persons who are appointed by our Most Holy Lord.” *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Romæ*: 1596: vi, “Regula X”: “[...] *Quare si in alma urbe Roma, liber aliquis sit imprimendus, per Vicarium Summi Pont. & sacri palatij Magistrum, vel personas, à Sanctissimo Domino Nostro deputandas, prius examinetur.*” Cf. AAH, IV, c. 3: 148v–149r. Additionally, in places outside of Rome, bishops, inquisitors, or other well-esteemed persons who were knowledgeable about contents of books were obligated to carry out examinations of books. See Romano Canosa’s discussion on how the Venetian inquisition proceeded against the spread of alleged dangerous books. Canosa, 1987: 57–70.

References to medieval and early modern literature, however, did not provide space for the neo-classical method to be put into practice. On the contrary, Possevino expressed disfavour and lamented the lack of *pietas* amongst the characters of Lancelot (knight of the Round Table in the *Legend of King Arthur*); Perceforest (in the anonymously written prose romance *Perceforest* from the fourteenth century); Tristan (of the romance about *Tristan and Iseult* from the twelfth century) and Girone the Courtier (from the poem *Girone il Cortese* by Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556). Possevino also disfavoured *L'Amadigi* (a poem by Bernardo Tasso (1493–1569); *Primaleón* (a chivalric romance by Francisco Vázquez, published in 1512), as well as *Decamerone* by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). Not only Possevino, but other writers of the early modern era also gave voice to criticism of fictitious novels, love stories and chivalric romances. The German scholar Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486–1535), in his *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* (1530), thought that Boccaccio, and even Dante and Petrarch wrote indecently.¹⁶¹

A work of particular distaste for Possevino was Tasso's 100 songs in *L'Amadigi*, which is held to have been written by a ravening wolf. This is what he thought about *L'Amadigi*: "it was a book that came from a land far away in a foreign Language and Satan made use also of Luther, as his faithful servant, in some Provinces. And wishing to enter in the Kingdom of the most steadfast faith, he procured that the book of *L'Amadigi* was most elegantly translated."¹⁶² Tasso, whose work adheres to the genre of chivalric romance, was influenced by the medieval Spanish prose *Amadis*. Although Tasso introduced

¹⁶¹ Cf. AAH, IV, c. 3: 149r. "[...] Lanceloto dal Laco, Perse Foresto, Tristano, Girone Cortese, Amadigi, Prima Leone, il Decamerone del Boccaccio, & altri, per non istare à raccontare hora qui i versi di altri ignobili, & obsceni Scrittore malamente composti; & giustamente (si come appare nella settima regola dell'Indice de'libri più volte, & ultimamente uscito) prohibiti?" See Rozzo, 2001: 194–222.

¹⁶² AAH, IV, c. 3: 149r. "[...] era un libro venuto di paese lontano in Lingua straniera, & Satanasso già si serviva anco di Lutero, come di suo fidele servitore in alcune Provincie, & volendo entrar nel Regno della saldissima fede, procurò che elegantissimamente il libro di Amadigi si traducesse." The ravening wolf alludes to a passage in Matt 7:15.

virtue in his work, his opposition to the inquisition and his literary use of chivalric mythological and pagan characters earned him a bad reputation with members of the Catholic clergy.¹⁶³

An example of Possevino's distaste for *L'Amadigi* is found in the *Apparato All'Historia*, where Possevino, in a mode of *pathos*, asserted that Tasso, instead of reproducing divine and sacred histories, drew attention to the art of magic and told stories of the giant Pantagruel and 'all rubbish of Hell'. Tasso's ignorance of the wars that were fought by the armies of God is remarked upon, as well as his preference for launching blasphemy, vices and unbridled desire 'like a deluge'.¹⁶⁴ It is, moreover, mentioned in the *Soldato Cristiano* that the soldier ought not to read the *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), since "it is a most shameful matter that a soldier should know the stanzas, sonnets, dishonest songs of Furioso by heart but should not know the Apostolic Creed, which is the true light of the Christian."¹⁶⁵ Ariosto's inventive and fictitious characters – and fictitious location on the moon – offered other knightly ideals than those of Possevino's Christian soldier, since Rinaldo's and Orlando's battles with the Saracens are intertwined with Orlando's love for the pagan princess Angelica. The poem also tells of the love between the Christian Bradamante and the Saracen Ruggiero, a love story that did not fit Possevino's cultural project which did not compromise Catholic orthodoxy.¹⁶⁶

The act of displaying the publicly acclaimed authors of *Orlando Furioso* and *L'Amadigi* as *exempla ad dissuadendum*, contains a moral verdict

¹⁶³ Bernardo Tasso was the father of Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), famous for his poem *Gerusalemme liberata* ('The Liberation of Jerusalem'). Cf. Hall, 1947: 233–234.

¹⁶⁴ AAH, IV, c. 3: 149v.

¹⁶⁵ Quote from Possevino, SC: 77: "[...] è cosa molto vergognosa, che un soldato sappia à mente le stanze del Furioso, & sonetti, & canzoni dishoneste, & non più tosto sappia il simbolo Apostolico, il quale è la vera lucerna del Cristiano." See also SC: 8 & 45; Cf. Dan 11:38–39; AAH, IV, c. 3: 149v.

¹⁶⁶ Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is a chivalric poem where the high ideals of Knights are ridiculed. Chivalric mythology was, nonetheless, imbedded in the literary tradition to which he adhered. This tradition was guided by Aristotelian principles of composing text and closely related to the Arthurian legend and *Chanson de Roland*. This was a tradition to which Ariosto and Bernardo Tasso belonged. Cf. Zatti, 2006: 13–94

where the authors do not meet the criterion of *bonum*. The verdict also contains a dimension which is not primarily moral, but rather consists of an accusation of irrationality since the authors have invented fairy tales. As such, they have written contrary to truth (*verum*). The inventors of fairy tales are thought to have received poisonous eloquence from the devil, instead of cultivating their proper and God-given talents. Logically, they fail to meet the criterion of *unum*, since they must be taken to be excluded from contributing to the common good of the Christian Commonwealth.¹⁶⁷

No advice about censure or selective imitation with regard to style or content is presented. The neo-classical method, on the other hand, signals such accommodation. As the method implies, accommodation is applicable to literature from classical antiquity and not early modern literature such as *Orlando Furioso* and *L'Amadigi*. It is likely that the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* provided a sufficient set of criteria for Possevino as he evaluated early modern novels. Its seventh rule states the following:

*Books that clearly discuss, tell, or lecture on either lascivious or obscene things shall be totally forbidden, since care has to be taken not only for faith but also for moral, which is easily corrupted by the reading of that sort of books. And those persons who have had them [in their possession] shall be severely punished by the Bishops. Books from antiquity written by pagans are allowed because of the elegance and distinct character of their language and style, but they may under no circumstance be read aloud to schoolboys.*¹⁶⁸

This passage conforms to what Possevino took into account when he discussed contents of books. Yet, it has to be concluded that the rule of the *Index* is somewhat softer, in comparison to Possevino's reasoning on the contents composed by pagan authors. If elegantly written, the rule permits reading works by pagan authors, unless the reader is immature of age. The *Apparato*

¹⁶⁷ AAH, IV, c. 3: 149r.

¹⁶⁸ *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Romæ: 1596: iv, 'Regula VII':* "[...] *Libri qui res lascivas, seu obscenas; ex professò tractant, narrant, aut docent, cum non solùm fidei, sed & morum, qui huiusmodi librorum lectione facile corrumpi solent, ratio habenda sit, omnino prohibentur: & qui eos habuerint, severè ab Episcopis puniantur. Antiqui verò ethnicis conscripti, propter sermonis elegantiam, & proprietatem; permittuntur, nulla tamen ratione, pueris prælegendi sunt.*"

All'Historia is written with young men in mind, but such a distinction between suitable readings for boys on the one hand and for adults on the other is not to be found in its exposition.

Concluding Remarks

A wide range of aspects are included in Possevino's definition of culture, which is a dynamic concept that relates to the formation of ingenuity. The term takes its cue from the word *agricoltura* and God is perceived as the prime agriculturist, who sows seeds – talents – in the souls of men for men to either cultivate or neglect. Cultivation is not related to a general but to a personal level, which implies discerning and practising talents that God has granted specifically to each person. On a general level, each specialisation contributes to the common good.

The establishment of a Catholic culture involves refinement of a canon of approved books that provides readers with models to take to heart. The construction of such a canon was imbedded in Possevino's aim to contribute to Catholic culture. Notably, the notion of the Christian Commonwealth is depicted concretely, namely as a commonwealth whose borders equalled the geographical borders of the visible Catholic Church. Within these borders, talents are to be cultivated and the Republic of Letters is in practice. The canon of approved books is, moreover, conceived as a constituent part to the Republic of Letters along with studies and activities that were devoted to the benefit of the Catholic Church and the common good.

The selective reading of models from classical antiquity that Possevino proposed marked a deviation from the Renaissance humanist movement, which made no distinction between imitating content and imitating style. The selective reading is denominated as neo-classical, since it regards material produced in classical antiquity. It is in accordance with the neo-classical method that Possevino attempted to outdo fallacious culture and replace it with a decreed culture.

In a manner that strongly resembled expurgation amongst censors, Possevino suggested that works by pagan poets be read with caution and instead focus on style and narrative techniques. In doing so, he sought to refine that which is useful, be it style or content, and thus kept elements of fallacious culture and refashioned them to fit his notion of culture. This method was not applicable to medieval and early modern authors of novels and fairy tales.

Chapter 3. Time, Space and Geography – For the Sake of Unity

The *Apparato All'Historia* is mainly a guide to the study of history, but it also covers geography. In the *Bibliotheca Selecta* the treatment of geography precedes the treatment of history. In the *Apparato All'Historia*, the treatment of history precedes the treatment of geography. Possevino's approach to the discipline of geography demonstrates his attempt to impose unity in a world that would eventually collapse due to the scientific revolution, as harmony between biblical scriptures and natural sciences dissolved.¹⁶⁹ The aim of this chapter is to assess how the authorial intentions of Possevino come across in his treatment of the discipline of geography.¹⁷⁰

The Study of the World

Strabo (c. 63 BC–c. 23) and Ptolemy (c. 90–c. 170) were the more famous ancient geographers, but Possevino claims that Moses was the first to mention geography in his description of Eden. Moses becomes the originator of geography, although it is a commonplace in Possevino's works that Moses was the originator of every discipline.¹⁷¹ To students of geography, he recommended that preparatory studies be conducted in astronomy and cosmography. After

¹⁶⁹ O'Malley, 2013: 90.

¹⁷⁰ Part five of the *Apparato All'Historia* focuses on the history of Europe in general; part six, on the history of Asia in general whereas the focal point of part seven is the history of Africa and its islands.

¹⁷¹ AAH, Geographia, c. 1: 236v; c. 2: 236v–237r & c. 4: 240r–248r. With Moses as the originator, the point of departure for the detailed study of geography is, however, Ptolemy. In the *Apparato All'Historia*, Possevino discusses five published Latin editions of Ptolemy's *Geography* and two translations into the Italian language. The first was printed in 1409 by Jacopo d'Angelo (c. 1390–1411), the second in 1490 printed in Rome, a third edition in 1535 by Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530), a fourth in 1540 by Johannes Noviomagus (1494–1570), a fifth by Giuseppe Moletti, and a sixth by Gerardus Mercator (1512–1594). Translations into Italian are those by Moletti and Girolamo Ruscelli (1518–1566). The geographic atlas *Nova et aucta orbis terrae descriptio ad usum navigantium emendate accomodata* (1569) by Mercator is not, however, given much credit by Possevino, although he admits that most learned men seem to be in favour of Mercator's atlas.

cosmography comes chronology, which formed a strong association with geography during the early modern period, in order to create an encyclopaedia of history. Chronology comprised the course of history and geography the locations where history took place.¹⁷²

The term ‘location’ in fact had a subtle meaning to Possevino, who was influenced by the Spanish linguist Benito Arias Mantano (1527–1598). Mantano based his definition of location on the word *locus* from the Book of Genesis. He understood *locus* to be an active as opposed to a passive space, referring to two natures. The first is immense and infinite, distinct from every corporeal association. This locus-nature is God, called *Makon* in Hebrew. The other locus-nature is not God but the world, which is created by God, as described by Moses in the Book of Genesis. Thus, the study of geography entails the study of location in a profound sense, involving God and the world, with no separation between them.¹⁷³

The Gregorian Calendar and the Spanish Era

Possevino attempted to prove consensus between biblical, ancient and contemporary methods of fixing dates, by harmonising the ‘*verità hebraica*’ with subsequent chronologies, so that there was consistency between calculating dates according to the creation of the world in Jewish tradition (*Anno Mundi*, occurred the year 5200 BC), the birth of Christ (as decided upon by Dionysius Exiguus (c. 470–c. 544), *Anno Domini*), the ancient commonplace of fixing dates according to the period of a certain Olympiad, and the foundation of the city of Rome (*ab urbe condita*). The calculation of historical dates for historical events becomes a matter of custom and tradition. These are not set up against each other and therefore they do not compete. This is a method that

¹⁷² AAH, *Geographia*, c. 1: 235v. Cosmography is said to: “[...] descrivendo il Mondo composto de’ quattro elementi & del Cielo.” Kelley, 2005: 222; Grafton, 2012: 182.

¹⁷³ AAH, *Geographia*, Avertimento trattato da Plinio: 235r–237r. Cf. Genesis 1:9.

aims to prove unity between traditions. The method was not, however, applicable to the sixteenth-century calendar debate.¹⁷⁴

The Julian calendar, which dates back to Julius Caesar (100 BC–44 BC), was used in European states but became difficult to rely upon, since there was an increasing dislocation of the vernal equinox, whereby society became more and more out of sync with the solar phenomena.¹⁷⁵ This issue led to debates about how to reform the Julian calendar. To reform the Julian calendar, Pope Gregory XIII (sed. 1572–1585) commissioned a group of ten people. Amongst these were the German Jesuit mathematician Christopher Clavius (c. 1538–1612).¹⁷⁶ In due course, the commission completed their work and Pope Gregory promulgated the bull *Inter gravissimas* in 1582, which authorised the reform of the calendar. The reformed calendar was called the Gregorian calendar, named after the pope. Nonetheless, the Gregorian calendar met with its doubters. Clavius' severest critic was the French mathematician François Viète (1541–1603) who admired Pope Gregory, but denounced Clavius as an unreliable mathematician. The latter's work on the 'truly Gregorian calendar' was eventually condemned by Pope Clement VIII in 1603.¹⁷⁷

Possevino was in favour of the Gregorian calendar since it was a work of Catholics, who had cleansed the calendar from implications of imperial cult and veneration of pagan deities. Such traits were imbedded in the Julian calendar and, as has been discussed previously, imbedded in cultures that Possevino perceived as fallacious. Similar traits were also infused in the so-called Spanish Era, which came into use in 38 BC on the Iberian Peninsula. The

¹⁷⁴ AAH, I, c. 10: 17v; AAH, I, c. 11: 18v–21r; AAH, I, c. 14: 29v; AAH, II, c. 1: 36v; AAH, II, c. 2: 42r; AAH, II, c. 3: 51r; AAH, II, c. 7: 63v. AAH, II, c. 7: 66r; AAH, II, c. 12: 74v; AAH, II, c. 13: 76r; AAH, II, c. 14: 78r; AAH, II, c. 19: 83r; AAH, III, c. 2: 93r; AAH, III, c. 2: 94r–99r; AAH, III, c. 3: 100r–104r; AAH, III, c. 12: 118v–120v; AAH, III, c. 33: 129v; AAH, V, c. 13: 172v; AAH, V, c. 13: 174r; AAH, V, c. 14: 174r; AAH, V, c. 19: 182r & AAH, Geographia, c. 2: 236v; AAH, Geographia, c. 4: 262r. Cf. Grafton, 2012: 165 & 246.

¹⁷⁵ Parker, 1893: 20.

¹⁷⁶ Bien, 2007: 43. Bien stresses that the need to reform the Julian calendar had already been given attention by Pope Pius IV (sed. 1559–1565) during the Council Trent.

¹⁷⁷ Bien, 2007: 39–42. Viète was a member of the French court during the reigns of Henry III (r. 1575–1589) and Henry IV where he became known for his research on algebra. Viète was convinced that Pope Gregory's legacy had been betrayed by Clavius. Helander, 2001: 40.

Spanish Era was attributed to Emperor Augustus (r. 43 BC–14) and his predecessor Julius Caesar (100 BC–44 BC). Hence, it implied adherence to the cult of venerating emperors as deities. The Gregorian calendar, on the other hand, fit well into the culture that Possevino sought to offer to his audience: a culture which deviated from Renaissance humanism.¹⁷⁸

The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the Four Monarchy Theory

Not only did culture on the Iberian Peninsula have an era of its own, it also divided time into four ages.¹⁷⁹ This division had a biblical model, namely the Prophet Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue of gold, silver, copper and iron. Daniel pronounced that after the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, there will be another three kingdoms and the last kingdom will be superior to the other. This also corresponded to the myth of the ages

¹⁷⁸ The Renaissance humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494–1573) is repudiated by Possevino for having romanticised the Spanish Era at the expense of *Anno Domini*. Moreover, Possevino presents an etymological survey of the Spanish era before confuting it. The etymology of *AERA*, Possevino notes, is *Æs -æris* (money, payment, copper, and bronze). Ancient writers who wrote fables called the parts of the scale and its numbering *ærea*, which were composed of ounces, silicones and so forth. Together these components made the sum and from there, Possevino concludes, *æra* corresponds to sums of money. The Spaniards who followed the era from Emperor Augustus (63 BC–14) would date the seventieth year of the reign of Emperor Augustus in the manner of *Annus erat Augusti septuagesimus*. The initial abbreviated form became *A. ER. A. LXX* and later the abbreviation became *AERA*. *AERA* was printed on marbles and other ancient memorials in Spain. In what Possevino refers to as the barbaric century, the abbreviation *AERA* became *ERA*. AAH, V, c. 14: 174r–175r; cf. Roth, 2003: 190.

¹⁷⁹ AAH, V, c. 13: 167r–167v. Regarding this division, Possevino admitted an error in the 1593 edition of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* where he had claimed that the Hebrew word *Sepharad*, meaning port or border, was connected to the etymology of Spain. In the *Apparato All'Historia*, however, he corrected his error by referring to his confrere Francisco Ribera (1537–1591) who had written that the word *Sepharad* was not connected to Spain but to the Bosphorus, originally meaning passage of oxen ('bovi'). Along these lines, the first inhabitants on the Iberian Peninsula are connected to the Bosphorus, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The four ages of Spain are said to have gone from infancy to maturity. Possevino mentioned that the first age corresponds to childhood ('pueritià') when the 'Iberi Aquilonari', who came from the area around the Mæotian Lake (Sea of Azov) entered Spain. They took possession of the land and called it Iberia. Possevino referred to the exposition given by Pomponius Mela (c. 15–c. 50) in his *De situ orbis libri III*. Moreover, the presence of the Romans, Goths and Moors, Possevino held, coincides with the second age. The third age, corresponds to virility ('viriltà') when the Spaniards shook off the yoke of the Moors, whereas the fourth age corresponds to the mature age when Spain, during the reign of Ferdinand (r. 1479–1516), drove away the enemies and Spain became a Christian nation.

of the world – gold, silver, copper and iron – which was a common way to divide epochs in ancient Rome.¹⁸⁰

During the early modern period, the division of history into four stages was particularly appreciated and authoritative amongst Lutheran intellectuals. They divided history into four monarchies. The point of departure for the Lutherans, on the four monarchy theory, was the *Chronicon*, an ancient chronology compiled by the German astrologer Johann Carion (1499–1537). Carion’s *Chronicon* was subsequently rewritten by Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), a task which Caspar Peucer (1525–1602) finished in 1560 after Melanchthon’s death.¹⁸¹

The *Chronicon* contained all epochs in the history of the world and adopted the order of the four monarchies – Assyria and Babylonia; Mede and Persia; Macedonia and Rome – from the Book of Daniel. The fourth monarchy, corresponded to the Holy Roman Empire. A troubling issue for Melanchthon was that most countries that constituted the Holy Roman Empire, professed loyalty to the Catholic faith. This led him to draw an apocalyptic picture of changes in the visible Church, comparing the time period of the Gospel to his own days, as he depicted only a reduced number of souls to be eternally saved. An associate of Melanchthon, Johann Sleidan (c. 1506–1556) even thought that the Protestant Reformation was the culmination of God’s plan.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ In Daniel 2, it is said that Nebuchadnezzar “looked, and there before you stood a large statue – an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.” Dan. 2:31–33. Daniel prophesies that after the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar there would be another three kingdoms and the fourth kingdom would be strong as iron: “it will crush and break all the others.” Dan. 2:40.

¹⁸¹ AAH, IV, c. 6: 157r. The revision of the *Chronicon* by Melanchthon and Peucer was listed on the Index. Cf. *Index, Romæ: 1596*, ‘I–Auctores Primæ Classis’: 21v; *Index, Romæ: 1596*, “G–Appendix”: 16v. According to Schmidt-Biggemann, the *Chronicon* was a standard textbook amongst Lutheran scholars. Schmidt-Biggemann, 2004: 403. Cf. Helander, 2001: 11–12; Grafton, 2012: 168 & 187. Bellarmino in his *De translatione Romani a Grecis ad Francos adversus Matthiam Flaccium Illyricum, libri tres* discussed how the empire transferred from the Greeks via the Romans to the Franks and subsequently to the Holy Roman Empire. Bellarmino: 1589.

¹⁸² To Melanchthon’s notion the first three monarchs were the kings of Babylon, the Persian ruler and the reign of Alexander the Great and his successors. Melanchthon believed the first age to have been a golden one, as it was closest to the creation of the world and men were less inclined to depravity. The second age is held to be the age of the Law, where useful history functions as

The revision of Carion's ancient chronology into a Lutheran narrative did not go down well with Possevino. He considered Peucer, Melanchthon and Sleidan to have achieved nothing other than corruptions of the work of Carion. Their most serious corruption consisted in the belief that only a few members of an invisible Church were to enjoy life eternal. The notion of an invisible Church that, in the history of mankind, safeguarded faithful believers to salvation was alien to Possevino. On the contrary, he thought that the visible Catholic Church is salvific and without membership in this entity salvation would hardly be possible.¹⁸³

The Tower of Babel and Languages

As has been observed, Possevino aimed to keep the calendar as well as chronologies unanimous and cleansed of doctrinal contradictions, especially when such contradictions would threaten the teaching of the Catholic Church. In a similar manner to the discourse of chronologies, he tried to explain the spread of people around the world through one cohesive narrative. The trusted *exemplum ad persuadendum* to this task was the Jewish historian Josephus (c. 37–c. 100). According to Josephus, the event that caused the spread of people – and in consequence the evolution of different languages – in various parts of the world, was the edification of the Tower of Babel. True to Genesis 11:1–9, Possevino suggested that while the world had one faith and one tongue, the Hebrew language was spoken amongst people and God commissioned Adam to name all species. Naming was not fortuitous and when Adam nominated species, he did thus out of convenience as opposed to convention.¹⁸⁴

That convenience guided Adam, and not convention, is a significant aspect of Possevino's thinking since it accentuates his use of a providentialist

a provider of good examples relating to the Ten Commandments. The end of the third age, Melanchthon thought, was the present age, soon to be followed by the last age, ending with the Last Judgment. Schmidt-Biggemann, 2004: 403–408.

¹⁸³ Helander: 2001: 12 & 26; cf. Kelley: 1988: 751; Schmidt-Biggemann, 2004: 403–407.

¹⁸⁴ CI, c. 17: 29.

framework that does not allow for coincidental causes. His reasoning on the name of species also reveals his position in the early modern debates about the relationship between words (*verba*) and things (*res*). This question was widely debated on in humanist circles during the fifteenth century, when Giovanni Pico della Mirandola sought to prove that words were distinct from things.¹⁸⁵ The doctrine that words are conventional was discussed by Aristotle and defended by Huarte, who did not ascribe objective significances to words. Huarte thought that only memory can guarantee the preservation of the significance of words.¹⁸⁶ Possevino confuted Huarte's notion by referring to Adam's nomination of species out of convenience and he also acknowledged Pico's position.¹⁸⁷

Possevino also acknowledged Pico's notion that the initial word was *Bereshit*, from whence the Hebrew language multiplied and in the long run wherefrom all other languages derive. The theory of traces of Hebrew is also applicable to mixtures of languages and the multiple spin-offs of proto-languages. That Hebrew was the 'proto-language' amongst the members of the 'proto-religion', is the start of the cohesive narrative of languages, which in turn derives from the recognition of Adam as the first human person to utter words in this language. Hebrew is not, however, confined to the pre-Tower of Babel period since Possevino reasoned that after the dispersion of people, traces of the original Hebrew language were preserved by Abraham and Israel.¹⁸⁸

To prove that Hebrew was preserved, Possevino contended that the Greek and Latin alphabets have almost the same nomination of vowels and consonants as the Hebrew alphabet. Therefore, they must derive from the original Hebrew language. He asserted that Latin carries much from the Greek

¹⁸⁵ See Stefanini, 1952[b]: 384, for a discussion of 'verba and res' in the correspondence between Pico and Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493).

¹⁸⁶ CI, c. 17: 28.

¹⁸⁷ CI, c. 17: 29–30.

¹⁸⁸ CI c. 17: 29. A theory of name-changes in the Old Testament is also found in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 113: 168–170.

language, whereas Greek carries much from Phoenician language. The Phoenicians spoke a language “that in sound and pronunciation are not very different from the Hebrew language.”¹⁸⁹ Leading languages back to one cohesive Hebrew proto-tongue.

Differences between People

The discourse of the Hebrew language as the proto-language is amongst a number of aspects in Possevino’s authorship that demonstrate his intention to introduce constituents to a culture that relies on a cohesive narrative. Unity was also the guiding principle when Possevino discussed varieties of human bodily constitutions. As mentioned previously, the interest in bodily constitutions by members of the Society of Jesus was connected to the Galenic humoral theories through the work of Huarte. When Possevino narrated about varieties of bodily appearances between people, however, he depended on the accounts given by the Archbishop of Aix, Gilbert Générard (1535–1597).

Once more it is the Tower of Babel, which is recognised as the cause for the change from unity to multitude and once more it is providentialist rhetoric that serves as framework for the discourse. According to Générard, Ham, the second son of Noah (Genesis 5:32), caused subsequent varieties in bodily appearances. The reason being that Ham did not receive God’s blessing, wherefore his youngest son Canaan and the Canaanites were subjected to slavery and were eventually destroyed by Abraham and Lot. The peoples of Africa, having variations in bodily constitutions when compared with the people of Judea, are further said to have been perpetually subjected to slavery due to the curse of Ham.¹⁹⁰

Subjection to slavery refers to restriction of another imposing will. Hence, such a people are not free. In turn, a people who are not restricted by

¹⁸⁹ CI, c. 17: 31. “[...] Che in suono, & pronuncia non sono molto distanti dalla lingua Hebraica.”

¹⁹⁰ AAH, Geographia, c. 2: 238r.

the imposing will of another are free. Slavery also implies submission to foreign kings, and in the case of the peoples of Africa foreign kings have been Europeans and Asians but also Jews, Persians, Ptolemaidans, Greeks, Romans, Saracens and Ishmaelites. The latter, Possevino concluded, are descendants of Cush, Ishmael, Esau, Midian and other children of Abraham, Keturah and Lot.¹⁹¹

By presenting the peoples of Africa and Arabia as inheritors of the curse of Ham, Possevino displayed his belief in the inferiority of these peoples. The framework of providentialist rhetoric also establishes that there is a genealogy to heresy. Given this logic, the ‘cursed’ people of Africa were doomed to give in to the Donatist heresy just as the people of Arabia gave in to the religion of Islam. Possevino considered Islam to be the competing religion to the Christian faith and because the Ottoman Empire threatened to occupy European states, Islam was a cause for concern for him.

Possevino sought to discredit the Ottoman Empire through remarks on authorial faults in descriptions of the Turkish people. He repudiated the humanist Leonicer (d. 1569) for having interpolated the preface to the *Cinque libiri della legge, religione et vita de’Turchi* by the Genoese sailor Giovanni Antonio Menavino (1492–c. 1555), since too much credit is given to the Ottomans. As a remedy, Possevino proposed that his readers consult the *City of God* by Saint Augustine (354–430), as a general example of an apology for the Christian faith and for the abrogation of competing religions.¹⁹²

Nonetheless, he acknowledged that reading of the *Quran* could be conducted by those who converse with people from the Orient. Yet, comments by

¹⁹¹ AAH, Geographia, c. 2: 238v. There are some variations in the order of chapters between the 1597, 1598, and 1602 editions that concerns geography. Cf. *Apparatus ad omnium gentium historiam*, 1597, VII, cs. 1r–29v: 184r–224v; *De apparatu ad omnium gentium historiam*, 1602, VII, cs. 1–29: 414–493.

¹⁹² Possevino wrote that not only did Leonicer speak of the amplitude of the Turks, but he kept silent about the growth of the Catholic Church in the New World, in Brazil to the west and in India to the east. Possevino claimed that through reading the *City of God* “one could confute all that one reads in the eight commandments of Turks about destiny and other of their errors.” AAH, VI, c. 23: 203r. “[...] si potrebbe confutare tutto ciò che si legge de gli otto Commandamenti de’Turchi del destino, & di altri loro errori.”

Catholic authors on the Islamic religion should be taken into account, such as his own comments in Book IX of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*.¹⁹³ Beyond that, he deemed the reading of the *Quran* as most inconvenient, as knowledge of the content of the *Quran* would hide Christian cultivation and the light of the divine mysteries. He added that many history books about the Turks are forbidden by the Catholic Church.¹⁹⁴

The use of providentialist rhetoric as a pedagogical framework proves Possevino's intention to demonstrate that events took a bad turn due to committed faults. It follows that the inferior attributes are explicitly ascribed to those who lack Catholic unity and culture, such as the Ottomans or the Donatist followers. Whereas the superior attributes are implicitly ascribed to those who have cultivated the Catholic faith. Amongst people who are estimated to have preserved a proper culture are, however, the Scots, because of their loyalty to the Catholic faith despite the Protestant Reformation.¹⁹⁵

The Protestant Reformation in the British Isles kept many Jesuits, such as Edmund Campion (1541–1580) and Robert Persons (1546–1610), busy defending the Catholic faith. Members of the Society of Jesus, along with Cardinal William Allen (1532–1594), set up strategies and activities for a Catholic restoration in Britain. For instance, Allen advocated for the Spanish Armada, which eventually failed, to invade Britain in 1588. Allen also founded the English college at Douai, in Spanish Flanders, and facilitated the English translation of the Vulgate Bible, the Douai-Rheims New Testament.¹⁹⁶ Persons, for his part, initiated the so-called Scottish strategy, a strategy that aimed

¹⁹³ AAH, VI, c. 23: 203r. "[...] ò curiosamente gustano cotai cose, ò conversano con li Orientali." Further on, AAH, VI, c. 23: 204v.

¹⁹⁴ AAH, VI, c. 23: 203r.

¹⁹⁵ AAH, 162r–232v. This is determined in a part of the *Apparato All'Historia* that treats *historia naturalis*, or histories of nations and islands. Besides the exception of the detailed discussion about the Scots, the histories of nations and islands do not contribute to scrutinised discourses but rather to a survey of authors who have contributed to enrich the general knowledge of nations and islands. In the survey, authors are listed who, for instance, have written about the reign of Naples, the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Florence, Milan, Mantua, Siena and France. There are also the historians of Poland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway as well as comments on the histories of the Moscovite realm, China, India, and Brazil.

¹⁹⁶ Eire, 2018: 347.

to convert the Protestant Scottish king James VI (1566–1625), later James I of England, to the Catholic faith in the hope that the rest of the British Isles would follow.¹⁹⁷ Persons thought that the most effective way to convert the king was to surround him with Catholic advisers, preferably Jesuits.¹⁹⁸

Roberto Bellarmino also entered a campaign to persuade King James to convert to the Catholic faith. Bellarmino, in the beginning of 1580, composed a list of authors who wrote on English controversies. This list was given by Bellarmino to Possevino, who inserted the list into his *Responsiones ad Viri cuiusdam pij Septentrionalis interrogationes*. There, Possevino listed Bishop John Fisher (1469–1535), Nicholas Sanders (c. 1530–1581), and Thomas Stapleton (1535–1598) as *exempla ad persuadendum* in line with the Scottish strategy.¹⁹⁹ This is the sort of history that would not have been allowed in England at the time. In 1601, a Royal decree determined that all histories published in England would have to be approved by official English authorities.²⁰⁰

When writing about Scotland, Possevino employed a framework of providentialist rhetoric. He reasoned that the Scottish border is located in isolation and due to God’s providence, the Scots have remained faithful to the Catholic faith. This faith is said to have been received through the care of Pope Victor I (*sed.* 189–199) and King Donald (r. 812–862), who foresaw that the whole of Scotland would become a Christian nation. If praise is to be given to the people of Britain it is because of the Scots, Possevino remarked, since they

¹⁹⁷ Eire, 2018: 347–363. James, whom Elizabeth I (1533–1603) chose to succeed her on the English throne, was the son of the Catholic queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart (1542–1587), who was imprisoned in England before being executed on charges of treason.

¹⁹⁸ Tutino, 2010: 119. Much in the same way that the queen of Sweden, Catherine Jagiellon (1526–1583), allowed Jesuits to advise her son Sigismund, the future king of Sweden and Poland. Cf. Östergren, 2005: 25.

¹⁹⁹ AAH, VII, c. 5: 214v–215v. On the other hand, in the *Apparato All’Historia*, Possevino warns of the book by William Camden (1551–1623), “in which he treats the realms of England, Scotland, Hibernia”, as he discredits the Catholic faith. AAH: xii.

²⁰⁰ AAH, VII, c. 5: 215v. Possevino wrote that the Roman emperor Septimius Severus divided the parts of Britain that obeyed the Roman Empire and Scotland with a wall. The border between Scotland and England is located between Severus’s wall and the river Tweed, Possevino added. See Possevino, *Responsiones ad Viri cuiusdam pij Septentrionalis interrogationes*; *Responsiones ad Viri cuiusdam pij Septentrionalis interrogationes* (Vilnæ: 1581; Ingolstadii: 1582); *Responsiones ad nobilissimi viri Septentrionalis interrogations* (Ingolstadii: 1583); Sommervogel, 1895: 1066–1067, cf. Hadfield, 1998: 51; Tutino, 2010: 120.

have kept the Catholic faith intact. The English, on the other hand, are thought to have shifted in their religious beliefs, due to Roman occupation and to commingling with Arians, Pelagians and Saxons.²⁰¹

The challenge for Scottish Catholicism is considered to be due to the impact that John Wycliffe's (1324–1384) writings had on students at the University of St. Andrews, which caused germination of heresies from 1540 onwards. Yet the outcome of the Protestant revolt in 1546 at the University of St. Andrews, which led to the murder of Cardinal David Beaton (1494–1546) and the Siege of St. Andrews castle is left unmentioned. Instead, Possevino wrote that God watches over the faithful souls of Scotland and that the Scots run with humility to the womb of the Catholic Church.²⁰²

Concluding Remarks

Possevino's intent in his elaboration on geography was to demonstrate unity between disciplines as well as to set guidelines for a Catholic culture which

²⁰¹ AAH, VII, c. 5: 216r–218v. The Saxons, Possevino noted, adored false deities and therefore Pope Gregory I (*sed.* 590–604) appointed Augustine (sixth century–604) to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Augustine is credited with having settled the controversy of Quarta-decimanism. In addition, Possevino quoted John Chrysostom who, in a sermon, spoke about a popular belief in the fourth century that the Scots ate human flesh.

²⁰² AAH, VII, c. 5: 221r–223r. Possevino also mentioned the testimonies of Walahfrid Strabo (808–849) in his *De rebus ecclesiasticis*, discussed by Cesare Baronio in *Annales Ecclesiastici*. Walahfrid says that Scotland had many illustrious buildings, the bishops and abbots were friendly towards strangers, the monasteries were distinguished for their hospitality, mendicant friars were always interested in care of the poor and nobody had succumbed to apostasy. However, Possevino did not mention the impact of George Wishart (1513–1546) and John Knox (c. 1514–1572) on the Scottish Reformation movement. As an antidote to the followers of Wycliffe's teaching, Possevino mentioned the Irish martyrs Coloman of Stockerau and Saint Patrick (fifth century), as well as Saint Columba and his disciple Saint Gall. Cf. Eire: 358–359. Moreover, the bodies of the Scots are said to be robust and their souls are attentive to every discipline that was cultivated in Scotland. These traits were also discussed in the *Soldato Cristiano* regarding the captains of the soldiers. SC: 21. That the Scots possessed such bodily constitutions is thought to be confirmed by the successful participation in battles against the English, the Danes and the Picts, in battles in the British Isles as well as those fought in the armies of Charlemagne, Louis XII (1462–1515) and Charles VIII (1470–1498) and, in Holy Land itself. In the last notes of the discourse of the British Isles in the *Apparato All'Historia*, Possevino discussed the seminary that Pope Gregory XIII founded in Pount-à-Mousson in the Lorraine region for the Scottish nation but which, during the pontificate of Clement VIII, transferred to Douai in Flanders. In his eulogy of the Scots, Possevino commends books by Bishop Fisher, Sanders, Stapleton as works to be read, in order for the Scots to preserve their unity with the Catholic faith. AAH, VII, c. 5: 221v–223r.

the reader could convert into action. The study of geography is partly a prerequisite for the study of the world where history, in turn, takes place. The term 'world' bears a connotation of activity, as it does not imply a passive space, but rather refers to human activity. The study of geography, however, is not justified solely as a prerequisite for the study of history. To Possevino geography should be studied in its own right given its practical utility.

The expansion of the world and the diffusion of people are described as having occurred after the edification of the Tower of Babel. The time before this edification is portrayed as a period of unity, when only the Hebrew language was spoken amongst people. Names were given to species out of convenience, as opposed to convention. Possevino determined that divine providence was at work, wherefore no name giving can be ascribed to convention or coincidence.

His aim, regarding the topic of diffusion of people and varieties in bodily constitutions was to prove the authenticity of the *verità hebraica*, a truth that had passed down from the Hebrew writings of the Jewish people and on to the Christian Church. All people were originally from the same kernel and therefore the same proto-religion. One of his authorial purposes was to prove the benefits of reuniting everyone to this kernel, whose uniting principle is the Catholic faith. Without unity with the Catholic Church there is no unity at all.

Unity with the Catholic faith is the precondition for the culture for which Possevino set guidelines. For instance, calculation of time is an aspect of culture and must be according to the Gregorian calendar. To write about human constitutions and bodily appearances is in line with drawing a genealogy, which agrees with biblical texts and therefore the truth of the Church. That disciplines originate from Moses is also an aspect of proving genealogy back to the foundations of the Catholic faith.

Chapter 4. History – the Making of Exemplary Models

If geography considers time and place, the discipline of history can be said to involve persons and circumstances. The discipline of history had broad applications in the early modern period and its uses were extensive. History legitimised contemporary claims of authority, for example during the Interdict Controversy of 1606–1607. But foremost it was instructive, as moral exempla could be drawn from works of history. In this sense, history functioned as a tool to persuade readers and exemplary models are set up either as *exempla imitanda* or as *exempla ad persuadendum*. Certain historians and historical figures who were disregarded were, however, set up as either *exempla evitanda* or *exempla ad dissuadendum*. This categorisation is implicit in Possevino's authorship, but made explicit by me. I contend that Possevino's aim of categorising historians and historical figures into this scheme is to be understood as his contribution to Catholic culture. In this chapter, I will discuss the early modern discipline of history in its relation to rhetoric and how the discipline changed during the sixteenth century.

Regarding Jesuit activities, history had the same foundations of classical Ciceronian rhetoric that were applied in the activities of preaching, in as much as classical rhetoric recognised history to provide moral exempla and had the capacity to establish truth in its aspects of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. Still, with the introduction of accommodation to circumstances, persons, place, and time, Jesuits pushed the adoption of classical rhetoric into ministry further than previous utilisation in handbooks of *artes praedicandi*. Circumstances and persons are aspects of the principle of accommodation that were applied to the evaluation of history. It is explicitly noted on the frontispiece to the *Apparato All'Historia* that accommodation is considered, because works of history are to be read as it suits the order of the times.²⁰³

²⁰³ AAH: i; O'Malley, 2013: 90–91; Bouwsma, 1990: 146. Bouwsma notes that legal history was especially used to legitimise contemporary interests and needs.

History is a discipline that occupied Possevino for his whole life. Before becoming a Jesuit, he intended to write a universal history and through it introduce virtuous historical *exempla* to the reading public. In a letter to his friend Gagliardi, Possevino gives testimony that Paolo Aicardo visited him in his room at the Jesuit College and asked him to author a guidebook to history reading for Catholics in Italian, so that the *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* by Jean Bodin might be confuted. Obviously, Possevino paid attention to the wish of Aicardo, as he presented the *Apparato All'Historia* in the Italian vernacular in 1598. This text does not consist of stories of events, but is a guide that sought to train students to focus on the moral implications that could be gathered from the reading of history books. This manner of reading history was in turn fully attuned to the developments of the *ars historica* during the sixteenth century.²⁰⁴

Conceptual Change of the Term *Historia*

Different aspects of the world were arranged according to disciplines and *historia* during the early modern period, which is a concept that, as Gianna Pomata and Nancy Siriasi note, did not include boundaries between nature and culture. In early modern Europe, the studies of *historia divina*, *historia naturalis* and *historia humana* were often conducted by the same persons. These historians produced an enormous number of texts where increasing attention to the empirical aspects of history was prompted by expeditions to far off lands, discoveries of ancient manuscripts and practices of dissection on human bodies. All these undertakings brought about a growing epistemic trust in eye-witnessing, *autopsia*. Eyewitnesses as evidence were by no means a novelty in the early modern period, as it was common in the art of persuasion during

²⁰⁴ BS, 1593, I, *In Praefatione, Causae et Idea*: 1–11; Castellani, 1945: 112; Balsamo 1991: 58–64; Garstein 1992: 48.

classical antiquity and famously favoured by the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484 BC–c. 425 BC).²⁰⁵

During late classical antiquity, the Greek word *historía* came to connote narration of the lives of real or fictional persons, semi-human beings, animals, and plants. Early modern views of history, were indebted to the Renaissance humanists who desired this ancient connotation of *historía*. The humanists turned to the ancient understanding in opposition to the Scholastic definition that had adopted Aristotle's distinction between history and poetry. To Aristotle, history spoke more of particulars, whereas poetry spoke more about generalities. Due to the influence of humanists, a conceptual change in the art of history occurred in the fifteenth century. This brought about a revitalisation of the ancient definition of *historía* as a thorough investigation, or inquiry, and as an epistemic tool. What happened in the fifteenth century was that the reputation of *historía* progressively improved, as it was refined within the *studia humanitatis*.²⁰⁶

Ars Historica in the Sixteenth Century

The Renaissance movement advocated encyclopaedism – as a result of the humanists' busy collections of ancient manuscripts and material objects – which shifted the *ars historica* from a focus on writing *historía* (*ratio historiae scribendi*) to favouring reading *historía* (*ars historiae legendi*). Humanists were also more interested in studying human action rather than causation, which the Scholastics favoured. Given the steady publication of such voluminous works as the *Magdeburg Centuries*, Gesner's *Bibliotheca Universalis*, Sixtus of Siena's (1520–1569) *Bibliotheca sancta ex praecipuis Catholicae Ecclesiae auctoribus collecta* and Cesare Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici*

²⁰⁵ For a survey of *historía* in the early modern period, see Pomata & Siraisi, 2005: 1–38.

²⁰⁶ Pomata & Siraisi, 2005: 3–10. Pomata and Siraisi further tells of the pictorial and musical connotations of *historía*, for instance biblical history painted on church walls as well as chanted memory from *vitae* of saints. See Kelley, 2005: 213.

questions were raised, towards the end of the sixteenth century, as to how to make navigation possible amongst the copious amount of books available to the reading public.²⁰⁷

Solutions to this problem were elaborated upon in several manuals and guidebooks such as Bodin's *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* as well as Possevino's *Apparato All'Historia*. These manuals were means to accommodate the need of instruction for the early modern reader. The impact of guidebooks on intellectual activities was significant, during the second half of the sixteenth century, since the *ars historica* increasingly came to signify a hermeneutic discipline focusing on critical reading of history.²⁰⁸

Following the conceptual change of the term *historia*, the purpose of the study of history was still primarily understood as *magistra vitae* (teacher of life), wherefrom moral exempla were to be collected. Cicero (106 BC–43 BC) and Lucan (39–65) were models for the discipline of history and with that, history kept strong ties to rhetoric and jurisprudence. The strong ties between history and jurisprudence can be seen in methodological discussions during the sixteenth century where Melchior Cano, François Baudoin (1520–1573) and Jean Bodin emphasised historical value, and consequently, also encouraged the reader of history to make judgments.²⁰⁹ The assessment of *historia humana* in accordance with the method of evaluative reading, is also imbedded in Possevino's comments on Greek, Roman and contemporary historians.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Lyon, 2003: 271. Cf. Tutino, 2010: 33; Pomata & Siraisi, 2005: 5–6; Oglivie, 2005: 86. Many scholars who were polymaths in Renaissance milieus showcased their virtuoso of encyclopaedic knowledge such as Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), Baldassare Castiglione, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Ermolao Barbaro, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), and Lorenzo Valla. Stefanini, 1952[b]: 381–388.

²⁰⁸ Grafton, 2005: 51; Grafton, 2012: 68.

²⁰⁹ Grafton 2005: 56–59. Furthermore, Baudoin and Bodin had different opinions on how to structure history, the former favoured a *historia integra*, whereas Bodin defined history according to three aspects: *historia divina*, *historia naturalis* and *historia humana*. See Grafton, 2012: 94.

²¹⁰ AAH, I, c. 10–11: 17r–22v.

Definitions of History

Possevino divided history into three parts: *historia divina*, *historia naturalis* and *historia humana*. The division of history into three parts was not original, it was used by Possevino's nemesis Jean Bodin, along with many others. The German historian and professor of the University of Freiburg, Johann Jakob Beurer (1537–1605), for instance, stated that *historia divina* studies God using both sacred and profane writings, adding that *historia divina* studies statements and not facts. To study facts, to Beurer's notion, is the task of *historia naturalis*.²¹¹

History was at the centre of attention, in the content of the *Apparato All'Historia*, as well as in the *Bibliotheca Selecta* more generally. The *Bibliotheca Selecta*'s emphasis on history was intended to shape characters according to the Christian faith, even though it gives pre-eminence to the discipline of theology. Apart from the theological focus in volume one, there is no other discipline than history that is represented in the *Bibliotheca Selecta* in two different books. The discipline of history constituted a vital part of Possevino's cultural project.²¹²

Historia divina is defined as studies of sacred scripture in the *Bibliotheca Selecta*.²¹³ When defining *historia humana*, Possevino explained that it is “that which encompasses either public or private affairs, as well as those things that include various forms of [a] republic, empires, realms or any other Principality.”²¹⁴ *Historia naturalis*, on the other hand, concerns the world, its

²¹¹ For discussions of the three early modern aspects of history, see Grafton, 2005: 51; Muslow, 2005: 185.

²¹² This is stated in its preface. BS, I, ‘Causæ et Idea Operis’, 1r. “[...] *Qui enim ad efformandos Principes, aliosue Magistratus, duces item, ac milites, libros emiserunt de politicis rebus, methodove humanæ historiæ, hi si fuere ethnici, adumbrata potius, quàm plena illa, quæ Deum spiraret, scientia, vel fortitudine mentes hominum potuerunt imbuerè.*”

²¹³ BS, I, II, c. 1: 150r. “[...] *Quid est autem SCRIPTURA SACRA, nisi quædam Epistola omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam suam?*” Prior to this definition, Possevino mentions that Divine history is called: “[...] *SACRA SCRIPTURA [...] LIBER hic est, cælestium plenissimus mysteriorum.*” BS, I, II, c. 1: 150r.

²¹⁴ AAH, I, c. 2: 3v: “[...] [La quale historia humana finalmente io intendo essere quella] che comprende le cose, ò publiche, ò private, & quelle che contengono varie forme di Republica, ò imperij, ò Regni, ò qual si voglia altro Principato.” Cf. Balsamo, 2006: 58–59.

animals, the heavens, the earth, the sea and how to navigate, as well as the human being, her health, nations, and cities.²¹⁵ Possevino asserted that when Aristotle wrote about the history of animals, he investigated causes such as *by whom, from where, when and to what end*.²¹⁶

The epistemological point of departure, when studying *historia humana*, is belief. Possevino wrote that in order not to live like brute animals, man must believe and the one who learns is bound to believe ('credere').²¹⁷ He portrays believing as a dynamic process where justification for believing develops as erudition grows, adding: "the one, who readily believes, is shallow of heart."²¹⁸ On the other hand, one should not too readily despise historians who at first glance appear untrustworthy since the effects of events are not always tangible to he who reads about historical events.²¹⁹

Possevino cited the Greek historian Thucydides (c. 460 BC–c. 400 BC) saying: "history is a perpetual allotment," which is a reference to knowledge set into practice. In other words, once something is read and trusted it is kept in the mind of the one who reads it. Subsequently, knowledge becomes practical wisdom and is cultivated like a crop amongst other crops in an allotment.²²⁰ History, Possevino affirmed, is not only beneficial to the politician or to the domestic governor but to authors and students in every discipline.²²¹

²¹⁵ AAH, I, c. 2: 3v. In addition to these, Possevino states, "everyone who has treated mathematics can be counted into this cape of natural history if one also refers to [...] natural things (which withal are defined by certain causes and ends) where one includes wars, customs and the actions of men." Balsamo, 2006: 58–59.

²¹⁶ AAH, I, c. 2: 2v.

²¹⁷ Cf. AAH, I, c. 1: 1v.

²¹⁸ AAH, I, c. 13: 29r. "[...] Colui, il quale presto crede, è leggiero di cuore."

²¹⁹ AAH, I, c. 1: 1v; Kelley, 2005: 217.

²²⁰ AAH, I, c. 1: 1v. "[...] L'Historia un perpetuo podere." Possevino wrote in his *Moscovia* that love is the end of the teachings and the laws of the Lord. Thus, the teachings and laws must be framed within the context of love. *Moscovia*: 87.

²²¹ AAH, I, c. 1: 2r.

Method for Reading History

Turning to princes and other ‘elevated ones’, Possevino emphasised that one who wished to come to terms with history must first come to terms with one-self – and acknowledge one’s talents – but even more importantly acknowledge God’s providence. Preparatory actions before studying history consisted of receiving the Eucharist and discerning the gifts of God.²²² Here Moses is set up as an *exemplum imitandum*, who, before being called to perform great deeds, is said to have put his hand on his chest in a gesture of meditation, because in the chest “men might understand what they are for themselves and what they are by God’s gift and benefice.”²²³

Possevino also stressed that history should be read as a means to dismiss sins and escape vices. Along these lines, the fruits of history reading ought to cause neither selfishness nor preference for one’s own land at the expense of nations. The aim of history reading is thus deliberative, in that all actions caused by the reading of history ought to lead to the benefit of the common good, as opposed to a selfish good. History to Possevino is not just a way to learn of past events. The reading becomes a spiritual exercise and the fruits of reading lead to a dignified life, as the Christian virtues are increased in the one who studies history. The reading should be sensitive and the awareness of the good and evil stirrings caused from reading, must not be lost.²²⁴

He warned of historians who had written about fate, referring to the example of the Ottomans, whose warriors are persuaded by their captains’ speeches in a manner that expose them to danger. Still, they do not fear death. The Christians, on the other hand, should be erudite enough to despise naïve

²²² AAH, I, c. 13: 26v–27r. About the Eucharist, Possevino noted that “to preserve the strengths, one often gives food to the body and so one is nurtured by this divine food of the Most Holy Sacrament to have light and strength of the soul, with these means [...] discern that which is good or bad.”

²²³ AAH, I, c. 13: 27r. “[...] Comprendano ciò che essi per se siano, & che cosa sieno per dono, & beneficio di Dio.”

²²⁴ AAH, I. c. 13: 27r–29v. Cf. SC, where Possevino dwells not only on just-war theory, but also on *ius in bello*. See Bizzell, 2016: 39.

beliefs. Such beliefs are linked to belief in fate. Thus, attention, when reading, must be paid so that pagan or other non-Christian beliefs do not confuse the Christian mind.²²⁵

The purpose of studying works of *historia humana* is to gain virtues and to make life more attuned to God's providential care. Gentile authors should be read with circumspection, since their histories might have been composed or influenced by oracles. Possevino bundled the workings of oracles together with demonic influence, exclaiming: "in those miracles, moreover, which the Gentiles attributed to their Gods or Emperors, everyone will easily apprehend the cunning of Satan."²²⁶ The substance of demons, moreover, is not known and sometimes they wish to be "authors of evil things, but never of good things."²²⁷ Thus, demons are described as tricksters that confuse the truth and are nurtured in the free will of man. For this reason, discernments of evil stirrings in the content of books, were crucial to Possevino.²²⁸

Criteria for Evaluative Reading of History

The deliberative character of history renders the discipline an instrument from which to gain knowledge or moral uplift, rather than an end itself.²²⁹ The term *utilitas* was a criterion for judging books by the Congregation for the Index, which can be seen to have been adopted by Possevino. Hence, an author whose work was put into the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* could nevertheless be considered useful if the work was expurgated according to the censures given by the Congregation of the Index. It will be proven that Possevino's methods when evaluating historians bore much resemblance to the manner in which the

²²⁵ AAH, I, c. 14: 30v. On belief, see AAH, I, c. 14: 32r–32v. Cf. SC: 14, where the Turks are described as "infidels".

²²⁶ AAH, I, c. 14: 31r. "[...] Ne i miracoli poi, i quali de' Gentili erano attribuiti à i loro Dij, ò Imperatori, ciascuno agevolmente comprenderà à l'astutia di Satanasso."

²²⁷ AAH, I, c. 14: 32r. "[...sono...] auttori di cose malvagie; ma non giamai delle buone."

²²⁸ Ignatius wrote that the evil angel ostensibly transforms to an angel of light and ensnares the human soul into its double crossings and pervasive intentions. *The Spiritual Exercises*: Ganss, 1992: sections 332–333.

²²⁹ AAH, I, 1v.

Congregation of the Index censured books. Yet Possevino's purpose differed from the purpose of the authors of the *Index*, which was primarily to prohibit books. Possevino, on the other hand, can be seen to contribute to the shaping of a canon of approved books.²³⁰

Given traditional, confessional, and local differences amongst historians, the canons of approved books were numerous in the early modern period. As the canons multiplied, so did manuals for determining proper reading. Machiavelli, for instance, was concerned with judgment of historical exempla and Bodin, whose concern with exempla was no less than Machiavelli's, developed a method for studying history. Bartholomäus Keckermann (c. 1572–1609), on the contrary, was simply not interested in registers of historical exempla and the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) did not consider historical exempla to be particularly valuable to his contemporaneous conditions.²³¹

The *Apparato All'Historia*, however, is structured according to the pedagogy of extracting moral exempla. It is also structured according to evaluative criteria that correspond to the transcendentals. In the excerpted guide to history writing, which is placed in the geography part of the *Apparato All'Historia*, the writer Lucan is set up as an *exemplum ad persuadendum*. He held that only a prudent person can write good history and the one who writes history must not be driven by a certain doctrine, but by a particular natural talent. This talent should be practised and trained with effort and with imitation of the ancient writers. If a disciple is unable to understand and speak, but has a

²³⁰ The same approach is noticeable in the *Bibliotheca Universalis* where Conrad Gesner “provided information that helped decide whether something was of any use and suggestions as to how to locate material deemed to be useful.” Kraemer & Zedelmaier 2014: 322. See Godman 2000: 37; 123. Savelli 2001: 245–246.

²³¹ Grafton, 2012: 124; 208–226 & 249. In the preface to the *Apparato All'Historia*, praise is given to Justus Lipsius as well as to authors who have written about politics and of ‘the illustrious women’. The conception of illustrious women refers to writings about virgins, women martyrs, the Virgin Mary, Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), and Joan of Arc (c. 1412–1431), named ‘la Pucella’. AAH, vi– xiii. Such authors who have written about illustrious women are: “Simone Colineo, Giacomo Bergamasco, Giovanni Pino, and Valerando Varanio Abbavilleo.”

sharp character and military mind, let him be a military captain instead. The historian, Lucan established, should not be controlled by a patron. On the contrary, the historian ought to sacrifice his story to the truth. Lucan admonished the historian to be free from the adulation of others and to write history, not with the intention of satisfying the taste of a contemporary audience, but to leave that which is true to posterity.²³²

Possevino complemented Lucan's manual for writing history with Lipsius's three rules for evaluative reading of history. Lipsius held that legitimate history "is that which contains Truth, Explanation and Judgment."²³³ It does not suffice that events are being told truthfully, they need to be placed in the right order and they have to be explained. Judgment, moreover, refers to the author's task of moral reasoning of what to accept and what to condemn from events.²³⁴

In addition to the rules stated by Lipsius, Possevino brought forward another set of criteria for evaluating history. These criteria are stated by Melchior Cano in his *De Locis theologicis* (Salamanca: 1563).²³⁵ Cano's first rule is that good historians are known for their rectitude as a result of goodness, whereas his second rule states that the historian ought to have wisdom to make the right judgment on what to trust from the multitude of what people are recorded to have seen and heard, along with a distrust of what Cano calls "vain

²³² AAH, Geographia, c. 4: 251v–270r.

²³³ AAH, I, c. 5: 4v. "[...] è quella, in cui sieno Verità, Dichiaratione, Giudicio."

²³⁴ AAH, I, c. 5: 4v. The explanation, according to Lipsius, requires attention to "how" and "why" things occurred as they did and "when these qualities are deprived from history that which remains is [...] a thing of game rather than of doctrine."

²³⁵ Curiously enough, Possevino does not regard Cano as a fully trustworthy philosopher, which can be observed in his *Apparatus ad Philosophiam*. In the *Apparato All'Historia*, however, Cano is very much appreciated by Possevino. *Apparatus ad Philosophiam*, III, c. 2: 65r–65v

hearsays of the common people.”²³⁶ The third rule of Cano focuses on authority, in which he argues that a historian is only worthy of trust if he is attributed with authority by the Catholic Church.²³⁷

The criteria given by Lipsius and Cano share distinct affinities. Lipsius’s first criterion about truth in history writing corresponds to Cano’s second rule of disregarding vain hearsays, which, in turn, correspond to the transcendental *verum*. To Lipsius’s second rule, truth does not suffice in order to make a proper evaluation of history, but a sound explanation is necessary. Lipsius’s fear of turning history into a game corresponds to Cano’s rule of agreement with the authority of the Catholic Church. Both Lipsius’s rule of explanation and Cano’s rule of adherence to Catholic doctrine correspond to the transcendental *unum*. Finally, to make judgment in order to prefer the good is the concern in both Lipsius’s third rule and Cano’s first rule, which correspond to the transcendental *bonum*.

The most explicit comments about the transcendentals in the whole of the *Apparato All’Historia*, are the excerpted comments by the cartographer Tomasso Porcacchi Castilone (1530–1585). This proves that the transcendentals in the *Apparato All’Historia* are not just implicit evaluative criteria. The comments do not, however, discuss the transcendentals as transcendentals, but rather as evaluative criteria for the reading of history. The superordinate criterion in Porcacchi’s comments is *bonum*. The constituent parts of *bonum* regard the capabilities and qualities of the author to a much larger extent than the actual produced work. This, in turn, is in accordance with the rhetorical mode of *ethos*.²³⁸

²³⁶ AAH, I, c. 5: 6r. “[...] Le vane dicerie del volgo.” Cano continued: “the same truth shines forth from the author in candidness and genuineness and when encountering a specific author who is anxious and too shrewd I discover the lie.”

²³⁷ To turn to *auctoritates* for support of one’s position was common in the Dominican tradition of which Cano was a part. AAH, I, c. 5: 6r. On Cano, see Kelley, 1988: 755; cf. Mostaccio, 2014: 45.

²³⁸ The first edition of Porcacchi’s work was printed in 1567: *Parallelli o essempli simili di Thomaso Porcacchi cavati da gl’historici, accioché si vegga, come in ogni tempo le cose del mondo hanno riscontro, o fra loro, o con quelle de’ tempi antichi. E’ questa, secondo l’ordine*

The beautiful and the advantageous coincide as two aspects of good history, which take shape in reasoning, in judgment, in descriptions and in speeches. Porcacchi also commented that measurement (‘misura’) is required in history with respect to choice of material, knowledge of things, judgment in instruction, ability to move the souls of the readers and to reproach when fit; to laud sparingly, to have a firm memory and present solid arguments, to treat things of morals and politics sufficiently, as well as to accommodate descriptions of fortifications and sites.²³⁹ The stress on the inner qualities of the historian to keep the narrative solid and unified (*unum*), and the composition of a true (*verum*) account of the things that have occurred, complete Porcacchi’s evaluative criteria.²⁴⁰

Jean Bodin and David Chytraeus

Two sets of evaluative criteria that Possevino did not appreciate, came from two of his contemporaries: David Chytraeus and Jean Bodin.²⁴¹ The invectives against Chytraeus had little to do with his history method. It had more to do with the fact that Chytraeus had been banned by the Catholic Church as well as his acceptance of the legitimacy of the history writing by Annio da Viterbo, which, in turn, was common amongst Lutheran historians.²⁴² According to the

da lui posto, la seconda gioia, congiunta all’anella della sua collana historica (Gabriele Giolito, Venice: 1567). Porcacchi’s comments are linked to Plato’s discussion in the *Philebus*, that the good (*bonum*) is constituted of “beauty, measurement and Truth.” AAH, III, c. 40: 134r.

²³⁹ AAH, III, c. 40: 134r.

²⁴⁰ AAH, III, c. 40: 134r.

²⁴¹ Chytraeus, professor of the University of Rostock, was a German Lutheran theologian and rhetorician. Anthony Grafton calls Chytraeus’s manual a ‘notebook method’, which recommended the reader to take notes and order them according to *Loci communes*. For instance, notes on moral exempla should be placed under *sententiae*, whereas notes concerning speeches and style should be placed under a different heading. All classification, Chytraeus added, should be attentive to circumstances, place, and time. This advice was not invented by Chytraeus, but gathered from instructions given by both Erasmus and Melancthon. Grafton, 2012: 209–214.

²⁴² AAH, I, c. 8: 10r–10v. Possevino thought that Chytraeus had written falsely about the Holy Fathers in order to establish heresies against celibacy, against the universal primacy on earth of the Roman pontiff, against the most holy Eucharist, and against invocation of the saints. In the *Apparato All’Historia*, there is a chart of genealogy, as presented by Chytraeus, from Emperor Augustus onwards. Possevino advised his readers to consult Lipsius’s chart instead. This chart is inserted in the Latin editions, whereas in the *Apparato All’Historia* from 1598 the chart has

Index, Chytraeus had been banned from the Catholic Church for his lack of trust in the authority of the Roman pontiff, his critique of Catholic doctrine and his “wrongdoings”.²⁴³ Possevino recommended that anyone who wished to explore Chytraeus’ history method to read his *Rifutatione*, which was dedicated to King John III of Sweden, where Chytraeus’ notes about histories and synods are refuted.²⁴⁴

The French jurist and philosopher Jean Bodin is met with a similar assessment. Bodin is considered to have erred when promoting the reading of Plato (c. 424 BC–c. 347 BC) and Xenophon (c. 430 BC–c. 354 BC) “who allow the Magistrates to deceive and tell lies for the sake of the Republic.”²⁴⁵ Bodin’s affection for astrology is likewise rejected, as Bodin claimed that changes in realms should be attributed to aspects of the stars. Possevino, for his part, operated within the framework of providentialist rhetoric and thereby responded that the fall of the realms should rather be attributed to the sins committed by princes.²⁴⁶

To him, Bodin had failed to conform to the transcendental of *verum*, as he is considered to promote lies. Moreover, Bodin is accused of making fun of the reverence towards the Roman pontiff and for denying that the office of the Vicar of Christ was constituted for the glory of God. This was a failure against *unum*. In relation to this, Possevino refuted Bodin’s high esteem of

been transformed into an ongoing text with the same content as in the Latin editions. Cf. *Apparatus ad omnium gentium historiam*, I, c. 8: 9r–11v; *Apparato All’Historia*, I, c. 8: 11r–14r; *De apparatu ad omnium gentium historiam*, I, c. 8: 19–24.

²⁴³ Cf. *Index, Romæ: 1596*, ‘D–Appendix’: 10v; ‘D–Certorum Auctorum Libri Prohibiti’: 10v.

²⁴⁴ AAH, IV, c. 6: 157v. The mentioned *Rifutatione* is a reference to the second edition of the *Notæ Divini Verbi et Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ Fides, ac Facies ex quatuor primis œcumenicis Synodis*, first published in 1586 in Poznan, Poland. The same year the second edition was printed in Cologne. Its first chapter is titled *Refutatio Responsionis Davidis Chytræi Sectio prima: De Causis scriptiois et inani Davidis Chytræi ad Sereniss. Sueciæ Regem provocation*. This is dedicated to King John III of Sweden. Sommervogel, 1895: 1070:20.

²⁴⁵ AAH, I, c. 9: 16r. “[...] I quali permettono à’ Magistrati, che per causa della Republica mentano, & dicono bugie.” To promote studies of Plato and Xenophon is also what Erasmus suggested in his *Institutio Principis Christiani*. Corbett, 1921: 31–33.

²⁴⁶ AAH, I, c. 9: 15v. About Bodin, see Lyon, 2003: 272.

hereditary monarchical rule, and for wanting the Catholic Church to be governed by a hereditary monarchy.²⁴⁷ He contended that Bodin's method of history had been rightfully banned by the Church.²⁴⁸

There is another facet in the *Methodus* that irritated Possevino, which concerned a certain appreciation by Bodin of the pre-Christian Roman state. Bodin "(but falsely) shows that in the temples of impiety (that is while the pagan Emperors lived) there was happiness."²⁴⁹ This happiness, according to Bodin, faded as the Christians came to power, which was also, Possevino remarked, what Machiavelli had said. By contrast, Possevino argued that wherever the Christian religion is fully preserved there the empires and realms flourish. Consequently, the happiness in Calvinist Geneva – which Bodin praised – can only be a chimera since "there is not [a] flower where there are thorns of heresy, and of impiety, and shelter of Apostates without any punishment."²⁵⁰ As Bodin and Chytraeus were considered as *exempla ad dissuadendum* their writings were intended to go through *damnatio memoriae*, since they failed to contribute to a culture which is true to Catholic morals and doctrines and that is united with the Roman pontiff.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Possevino replied to Bodin's argument in the following manner: "if a pope dies then he will be succeeded by his son in that he rules the College of Cardinals and the rest of the Church." This, Possevino states, would encroach on the celibacy and pave the way for new sets of marriages. AAH, I, c. 9: 17r. The opening of the *Apparato All'Historia* moreover warns the reader not to trust the contents of the books written by Bodin about *Les six livres de la république* and these are, for reasons that are perfectly just, prohibited by the Catholic Church as long as they are not cleansed from error. AAH, xii.

²⁴⁸ AAH, I, c. 9: 17r. In addition, Roberto Bellarmino, Roman censor, appreciated the erudite writings of Bodin, but censured parts where Bodin preferred Lutheran to Catholic authors. *Index, Romæ: 1596*, "I–Certorum Auctorum Libri Prohibita, Appendix": 26v. Cf. *Index: 1596*: xii. Cf. Tutino, 2010: 32.

²⁴⁹ AAH, I, c. 9: 15v. "[...] Mostra (ma falsamente) che ne' tempi dell'Impietà, (cioè mentre gli Imperatori gentili vissero) fosse felicità."

²⁵⁰ AAH, I, c. 9: 16v. "[...] Non è fiore dove son spine di heresia, & di impietà, & ricetta di Apostati senza pena veruna." Possevino advanced that "those who used to be subjects to Demons and evils but had turned Christians, had achieved an admirable piety as in the times of Clovis, of Charlemagne, and many wise and Catholic kings of Spain." AAH, I, c. 9: 16r.

²⁵¹ Nicholas Popper notes that Bodin chose from a wide set of authoritative authors including Lutherans. Popper holds that Bodin's choice of sources was more ecumenical as he, as opposed to Matthias Illyricus Flacius and Possevino, trusted authors from a broad confessional scope. See Popper: 2011: 387.

Concluding Remarks

Renaissance humanists of the fifteenth century sought to revitalise the conception of history. This eventually led to a deeper concern for epistemic trust in eyewitness, or *autopsia*, which guided historians to undertake travels and to witness traces of past events to a greater extent than before. Still, during the sixteenth century, the *ars historica* was primarily concerned with persuasion and evaluation of adequate moral exempla and avoiding deception by false histories.

The sixteenth century witnessed a steady increase of encyclopaedism, a Renaissance heritage, which culminated in various *bibliothecae* and exhaustive histories from the creation of the world until the present time. The attention given to the Renaissance ideal of imitation of ancient models resulted in the spread of manuals on how to act in certain circumstances. The many spiritual guidebooks published during this epoch only confirms the consideration for practical manuals for persons of all walks of life.

The *Apparato All'Historia* was Possevino's contribution to the genre of manuals on how to read and evaluate history writing. His methodological procedures were similar to the procedures of evaluation of books by the Congregation of the Index. Unlike the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, which was only concerned with *exempla ad dissuadendum*, Possevino was equally interested in defining *exempla ad persuadendum*. Consequently, his evaluative notes led to the proposal of a canon of approved history books of moral exempla.

He practised the principles of accommodation and emphasised that works of history were to be read as it suited the times. Reading history should aim to foster virtues in accordance with what is true, good and unified. The transcendentals were evaluative criteria for establishing a canon of approved authors and books for a distinct Catholic culture. Those criteria were established by Lucan, Lipsius, Cano and Porcacchi. They were, in turn, regulatory for Possevino's own evaluation. To him all reading is integrated in culture and there was simply no difference between profane and spiritual reading, since

whatever is read has an effect on the one who reads. Therefore, every reading is conducted within the cultural sphere.

Chapter 5. Evaluation of Historians

In this chapter, Possevino's rhetorical framework will be further analysed. Apart from the rational (*logos*) arguments, given for or against approval of authors, and the appeal to the emotions of the readers (*pathos*), the procedure for evaluating historians is primarily in line with the persuasive means of *ethos*. Speaking in favour or disfavour of trustworthiness, credibility, moral character and benevolence of authors are appeals to the reader for acknowledgment or repudiation of authors. These constituted the superordinate persuasive means in Possevino's evaluations of historians.²⁵²

Reading Greek Historians

The examination of Greek historians was dedicated to the two giants of the history of ancient Greece, namely Herodotus (c. 484 BC–c. 425 BC) and Thucydides. The former is renowned for his *Histories* (Ἱστορίαι), signifying inquiries, of the Greco-Persian wars, the Persian Empire, the history of Egypt, and the geography and customs of Scythia. The latter wrote detailed accounts of the Peloponnesian Wars (431 BC–404 BC), in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*.²⁵³

To engage in the reading of *historia humana*, by attending to works written by Herodotus and Thucydides, is not depicted as a mere amusement. Studying the compositions of Herodotus and Thucydides are rather good exercises to improve judgment of the truth. Despite the fact that Thucydides did not like Herodotus's *Histories*, Possevino, wanting to prove concord between the two giants of Greek history, cited the Roman scholar Quintilian (35–100) who had estimated Herodotus and Thucydides as more eminent than other

²⁵² Herrick, 2005: 85; Corbett & Connors, 1999: 72. It should be added that the word "Greek" in Possevino's *Moscovia*, connotes Greek-Orthodox Christians. In the *Apparato All'Historia*, the common denominator of evaluated authors from classical antiquity, the Byzantine Empire and those who lived on the Italian peninsula, is the Greek language in which all those evaluated authors wrote. Cf. *Moscovia*: 60.

²⁵³ Cf. Foster & Lateiner, 2012: 1–8.

Greek historians. This is what Quintilian wrote about Herodotus and Thucydides: “Thucydides [is] eminent in public orations, Herodotus in persuading in private.”²⁵⁴

Possevino, on the other hand, rebutted the judgment of *Histories* given by Strabo, who had followed the examples of those who estimated that Herodotus’s *Histories* describe things that probably could not have occurred. To this objection, Possevino replied that the seemingly incredible could well be true. By featuring personal remarks from his days as a missionary, he paralleled the occurrence of the seemingly incredible in Herodotus’s writing with his own experiences. Accordingly, he argued in favour of conceding justified belief of the seemingly incredible in Herodotus’s *Histories*. This is how this argument is presented:

Many things can appear incredible to those who stay at home, without ever going out in the world. But had they been to Asia, Africa and India, they would have changed opinion. If I will say that the same happened to me, having only been to diverse parts of Europe, it will be most true. Because in my youth, whilst staying in France, I read Olaus Magnus’s history of the things of the septentrional Goths, which I estimated as fantasies. Thereafter, after a long period of time, I was sent, more than once, to Gothia and Sweden. I discovered many things to be very true, which I had considered to be inventions and fantasies. The same thing happened to me again when I negotiated with the Muscovites, with Tartars and with the Scythians. By reason of this, the writings of Herodotus ought to be justly examined.²⁵⁵

In this quote, it is possible to observe that Possevino affirmed that belief is conditional in order to gain knowledge, but he also emphasised *autopsia* as a basis for knowledge in general, as well as defending a fair examination of the

²⁵⁴ AAH, II, c. 2: 39v–41r. Quote on 41v: “[...] Tucidide vale nell’orationi publiche, Herodoto nel persuadere in privato.”

²⁵⁵ AAH, II, c. 2: 41v–43v, quote on 43v: “[...] molte cose possono apparire incredibili à coloro, che stanno à casa, senza andare mai per il Mondo; la onde se fossero stati nell’Asia, nell’Africa, & nell’India, muterebbero parere. Se dirò ch’il medesimo è avvenuto à me per essere io solamente stato in diverse parti dell’Europa, sarà verissimo; imperoche essendo in Francia giovinetto, & leggendo l’Historia di Olao Magno delle cose della Gottia Settentrionale, le riputavo, come sogni: Mandato poi doppo molto tempo più di una volta in Gottia, e Svetia, trovai essere molte cose verissime, le quali da me erano tenute per inventione, & favole. Il medesimo ancora mi avvenne, mentre trattai co i Moscoviti co’ Tartari, & co i Sciti. Perilche devono giustamente bilanciarsi i scritti di Herodoto.”

occurrence of the seemingly incredible in *Histories*. When presenting a personal remark from his experience as a traveller to foreign countries he proved his sympathy for Herodotus, who, while compiling *Histories*, travelled far and wide to collect sources, which in some cases told of things that seemed hard to believe. By drawing attention to the similarities between Herodotus's travelling experiences and those of his own, Possevino gave heed to the preferable methodological approach of a historian in classical antiquity, which was that of *autopsia*.²⁵⁶

By arguing in favour of the advantage of *autopsia* as a source of knowledge, Possevino also found enough proof to establish the legitimacy of Herodotus as the master and 'father of history'.²⁵⁷ Evidently, Possevino appreciated the manner in which Herodotus balanced the reports of others in his writings. By adding phrases such as 'so they say', 'as far as I am concerned' and 'therefore it seems unlikely to me', whenever there was uncertainty, Possevino inferred that such phrases of reservation attested to the nuanced and moderate mind of Herodotus and he ought to be valued on these terms. Moreover, it was not only the trustworthiness of Herodotus's accounts that Possevino embraced, but also Herodotus's eloquent style and promotion of the virtue of temperance. Thus Herodotus was approved of, as his *Histories* are congruent with the transcendental terms *verum* and *bonum*.²⁵⁸

The appraisal of Herodotus' eloquent style was probably intended as a confutation of humanists such as Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), who did not appreciate the style of Herodotus. This is what Possevino says of the style of Herodotus: "in him the eloquence is so great, which delights me very much, as much as I understand of the Greek language."²⁵⁹ Aside from the praise of Herodotus's eloquent writing, it is possible to determine that Possevino was

²⁵⁶ On *autopsia* during classical antiquity see, Popper, 2011: 377; cf. Megill, 2007: 3.

²⁵⁷ AAH, II, c. 2: 40v: "[...] Padre dell'Historia".

²⁵⁸ AAH, II, c. 2: 44r.

²⁵⁹ AAH, II, c. 2: 40v. "[...] in lui è sì grande l'eloquenza, che assaissimo mi diletta, per quanto io comprendere della lingua Greca." See Earley, 2016; Grafton, 2012: 242–243.

not all that conversant in the Greek language. Such an admission could, of course, be modesty on Possevino's part, but I suggest that he did not read the entire *Histories* in the Greek language.

In the *Apparato All'Historia*, he evaluated various editions of Herodotus's *Histories*. A Latin edition was translated by Lorenzo Valla which was esteemed as the edition "which one should prefer above all the others, by those who have licence to read and see the works or efforts of the forbidden authors."²⁶⁰ I propose that Possevino's knowledge of the content of *Histories* was mostly drawn from reading Valla's translation, by reason of his estimation of this work as "preferable". If he was less knowledgeable in the Greek language, the reading of Valla's translation was certainly a pragmatic choice.

Yet, he warned of such reading. The reason for such warning, is probably due to the fact that any writer that had his or her name on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* cannot participate in the corpus of preferable books. Consequently, such authors fail to meet the standards of the transcendental *unum*. In other words, an unapproved author is divided from the unity of the Catholic faith.²⁶¹

Concerning other editions than Valla's translation of *Histories*, Possevino mentioned a translation made by Henri Estienne (c. 1528–1598), a French book printer and a Huguenot. The first edition by Estienne, he remarked, was printed in its original Greek wording and the second edition contains additional pictures of buildings and machines, for which Herodotus accounted.²⁶² The judgment of Estienne's two editions of *Histories* was, curiously enough, left with no further comment. However, when discussing the *Apology* in defence of Herodotus, which was written by Estienne, he proved

²⁶⁰ AAH, II, c. 3: 46v. "[...] la quale si dee anteporre à tutte l'altre da coloro, che hanno licentia di leggere, & vedere l'opere, ò fatiche de gli auttori prohibiti."

²⁶¹ AAH, vi–vii. Lorenzo Valla was amongst the forbidden authors, whose writings were included in the 1596 edition of *Index, Romæ: 1596*, 'L–Certorum Auctorum Libri prohibiti': 28v; 'L–Certorum Auctorum Libri prohibiti, Appendix'.

²⁶² AAH, II, c. 3: 46v. Aldus Manutius printed an edition of Herodotus' *Histories* in 1502. Estienne's first edition was published in 1566, whereas the second edition was published in 1570. Cf. Earley, 2016.

less uncritical. The *Apology* “is full of errors against the Catholic Church, as much in Latin as in French. Such a book by being stinging and rabid could not even be tolerated by those who are of his faction.”²⁶³

Possevino alluded to the fact that Estienne was a Huguenot by using the phrases like ‘his faction’. Having stated that Estienne’s *Apology* is full of errors against the Catholic Church, he disqualified this work from approved reading. The reason for disqualifying Estienne’s *Apology* was presumably its failure to fulfil the criterion of *unum*, since Estienne, as a Huguenot, was placed outside of the unity of the Catholic Church. He also pointed to Estienne’s vices in writing by declaring the content of his *Apology* to be ‘stinging and rabid’. These are traits that do not fulfil the criterion of *bonum*.

The compendium to Herodotus’s *Histories*, written by Chytraeus, was met with the same treatment as Estienne’s *Apology*, as Possevino wrote that “he [Chytraeus] was prohibited through heresy and separated from Holy Church.”²⁶⁴ This entails failure to fulfil the criterion of *unum*. The inability of Valla, Estienne and Chytraeus to fulfil the criterion of *unum* explains why Possevino suggested that his readers were in need of a summary that was different from the efforts of Valla, Estienne and Chytraeus. He did so as follows: “here we will add the History of Herodotus and the use of it more briefly, like in summary, so that the young Princes and other nobles in particular can receive more solid guidance.”²⁶⁵ Such a summary can be looked upon as a contribution for the good of the Christian Commonwealth and the culture upon which he elaborated.

²⁶³ AAH, II, c. 3: 47r. “[...] tanto latina, quanto Francese è piena di errori, contra la Chiesa Catolica; il qual Libro per essere mordace, & rabbioso non puòè essere pure tolerato da quei che sono della sua fattione.” In fact, Estienne’s *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* was put on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, Romæ: 1596. “T—Certorum Auctorum, Libri Prohibiti”: 43.

²⁶⁴ AAH, II, c. 3: 47v. “[...] egli fù proibito per l’heresia, et separado da Santa Chiesa.”

²⁶⁵ AAH, II, c. 3: 47v. “[...] noi soggiungeremo qui più brevemente l’Historia di Herodoto, come in sommario, & l’uso dilei, accioche i giovani Principi, & altri nobili specialmente possano ricevere più sodi ammaestramenti.”

Keywords in the mentioned summary are ‘useful’ and ‘solid’. The terms function as heads in deliberative oratory where ‘solid’ implies persuasion of something worthy (*dignitas*) or good (*bonum*) and ‘useful’ implies persuasion of something advantageous.²⁶⁶ These words marked an interpretation of Herodotus’s *Histories* that focused on fostering virtues. The words ‘useful’ and ‘solid’, were treated by Possevino in relation to his compendium of *Histories*. The purpose of inserting a summary, which focused on usefulness and solid guidance, was to emphasise the *magistra vitae* perspective of history and offer Herodotus as an *exemplum ad persuadendum*.

Since using transcendentals as evaluative criteria, oddities in Herodotus’s text that could contradict truth, good morals and unity were overcome by complementary reading. Possevino recommended reading comments by his confreres Benedict Pereira (1535–1610), for improved knowledge about the realm of Persia, and José De Acosta (1540–1600), for better accounts about the history of Egypt and the river Nile.²⁶⁷

Complementary readings to Herodotus’s *Histories* also included comments about the European Scythia, Moscow, Poland, Moldavia, Wallachia “and all that which is contained from the river Danube towards the North.”²⁶⁸ Possevino contended that Herodotus’s portrayal was not thorough enough. Instead, he suggested complementary reading which included that which he himself had written about Moscow. By doing so he was not just making references to a canon, but also put himself in that canon.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Corbett & Connors, 1999: 121.

²⁶⁷ AAH, II, c. 3: 49–50v. De Acosta’s *De natura novi orbis* is referred to since De Acosta is said to have had better access to sources that Herodotus does not mention in *Histories*. In relation to Egypt, Possevino asserted that Herodotus’s comments on the succession of the kings of Egypt should be complemented by the reading of the eighth book (*libri octo*) of the *Evangelicarum institutionum* by the Bishop of Coria (Spain), Pedro García Galarza (d. 1604).

²⁶⁸ AAH, II, c. 3: 52v: “[...] et di tutto quel, che è contenuto dal fiume Istro verso’l Settentrione.”

²⁶⁹ The *Moscovia* was written after having concluded his diplomatic mission in 1582, at the court of Tsar Ivan IV Vasilyevich. Three editions of this text were printed: in Vilnius (1586), Cologne (1586 and 1595), and Antwerp (1587). A translation into Italian conducted by Possevino’s nephew, Giovanni Battista Possevino, was printed in Mantua (1596).

Herodotus's *Histories* are included in Possevino's canon of approved books, given their appraisal of virtue, eloquence, and credibility. Herodotus was even compared with prophets of the Old Testament. Contrary to Possevino, however, Chytraeus not only compared Herodotus to prophets of the Old Testament, but considered *Histories* to be a profane continuation of the Old Testament.²⁷⁰ That Chytraeus claimed Herodotus in the canon of his tradition could explain why Possevino, when evaluating Herodotus, offered a purged summary of the *Histories*. Hence, this summary would provide a Catholic reading of Herodotus against rivalling interpretations of other traditions. Possevino's admiration of Herodotus's *Histories* did not extend to Thucydides's *Histories*. Yet, he held that many aspects of these *Histories* were commendable and Thucydides was thought to have included a blaze of devotion that "could have given evidence of Religion if he had had true and inner faith in God."²⁷¹

As with the evaluation of Herodotus's *Histories*, Possevino remarked that the content in Thucydides's *Histories* needs to be studied side-by-side with subsequent works of history. In fact, the writings about democracy and oligarchy were the only writings that Possevino judged as solid reading in the entire corpus of Thucydides. These writings were subsequently quoted by the Church Father Athenagoras (133–190). Accordingly, the writings about democracy and oligarchy were approved of as Athenagoras, as Church Father, participated in the canon of approved books.²⁷²

Christian and Pagan Historians

Aware of the fact that Herodotus touched upon non-Christian themes in *Histories*, Possevino nonetheless thought that many of the things that Herodotus

²⁷⁰ Earley, 2016.

²⁷¹ AAH, II, c. 6: 63r.: "[...] havrebbe potuto dare segno di Religione, se havuto havesse vera, & intiera fede in Dio."

²⁷² AAH, II, c. 6: 61v.

recalled were praiseworthy. Other things were, however, unsuitable, such as “how the minds of the Egyptians [...] were misdirected by Satan in that they turned around to adore even beasts, garlics and onions. We have great reason to lift our hands to the Heavens and as much as possible thank the Divine Majesty, for having made us Christians and Catholics.”²⁷³

Possevino attributed non-Christian customs, found in *Histories*, to be the work of Satan and therefore the worshipping of beasts, garlic, and onions could not be deemed proper worship to the members of the Catholic Church. It should be kept in mind, however, that the presentation of Egyptians as worshippers of garlic and onions, was a rhetorical *extenuatio*, meaning an insistence on the weakness and insignificance of the opposing arguments. Such a presentation was intended to appeal to the emotions of the readers, primarily young Christian nobles. The aim of the presentation was to persuade through *pathos*.²⁷⁴

The attribution of false worship to Satan was not only common in the authorship of Possevino, but also in other authors of the Christian tradition. Justin Martyr, for instance, was one of the first to write in this vein, followed by Augustine. Thus, Possevino can be seen to have followed a tradition that was established in the early Church where it was common to attribute idol worship to the works of Satan and demons. Just as Justin wrote that demons misrepresent Christian doctrine, Possevino attributed misrepresentation by heretics of the Christian doctrine to satanical sway.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ AAH, II, c. 2: 44v. “[...] come da satanasso le menti de gli Egittij [...] che si voltarono ad adorare le bestie, & gli agli, & le cipolle, grande occasione habbiam noi di levare le mani al Cielo, & di ringratiar quanto più sia possibile la Divina Maestà, che ci habbia fatti Christiani, & Catolici.”

²⁷⁴ Cf. Corbett & Connors, 1999: 288.

²⁷⁵ AAH, II, c. 2: 44v. In Justin’s *First Apology*, it is said of the Christian people, whom Justin esteems as a most gentle people, that “neither do we honour with many sacrifices and garlands of flowers the objects that people have formed and set in temples and named gods [...] and have not the form of God [...] but have the names and shapes of those evil demons which have appeared.” Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 9: 27. Editions of works by Justin Martyr was in printed Basel (1536) and Paris (1551). See Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 35: 54–55; Dyson, 1998: c. 29: 92.

Despite considering pagan writers to be inferior to Christian ones, Possevino, in a similar manner to Justin, aimed to prove concord between some ancient Greek authors and writers of the Old Testament. Possevino wrote that Herodotus, in his second book, “hints to have heard a few things about the liberation of Hezekiah.”²⁷⁶ He also thought that the style of Herodotus resembled the prophets Isaiah, Amos and Jeremiah. Emphasis is put upon the dependence of ancient pagan authors on the Catholic tradition and not vice versa. Rather than setting up pagan and Christian writers in a dichotomy, traces of truth were admitted amongst non-Christian authors insofar as these truths were traceable in the Catholic tradition.²⁷⁷

To Possevino, true history must be anchored in the Catholic tradition and novelties must not be paid heed. On the other hand, if ancient writers could be proven to have borrowed from the Catholic tradition, they could be said to participate in the canon of approved books. In fact, as long as they cannot be said to have diverged from tradition – or when they have been purged sufficiently to fit tradition – pagan authors fulfil the necessary criteria. This manner of ordering arguments was in accord with the neo-classical method, which as has been seen previously, Possevino made use of in his authorship.

It is according to the notion of similarities in history that he further informed his readers to pay attention to the fact that different historians, when using different names, do not necessarily contradict each other. On the contrary, they simply used different names for the same historical figures wherefore the same kings are indicated with different names in the biblical scriptures when compared to writings by pagan authors.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ AAH, II, c. 2: 45r. “[...] accenni di havere udito qualche cosa della liberatione di Ezechia.”

²⁷⁷ AAH, II, c. 2: 44v; Justin Martyr in his *First Apology*, held that “Plato took his statement that God made the universe by changing formless matter, hear the precise words spoken through Moses, who [...] was the first prophet and older than the Greek writers.” Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 59: 64–65.

²⁷⁸ AAH, II, c. 2: 45r.

Errors amongst Historians

The Roman historian to attract the largest attention in Possevino's evaluation was Julius Caesar (100 BC–44 BC). It was not an evaluation, however, which served to compliment the Roman dictator. Despite his technical skills as an author and orator, an entire chapter in the *Apparato All'Historia* is dedicated to advice on how to protect and shield oneself when studying Caesar's writings. However, in a similar manner to his assessment of Herodotus and Thucydides, Possevino recommended complementary reading. If Caesar's writings were purged and read alongside Augustine's *City of God*, they were nonetheless deemed as useful, especially due to the elegant style of the Roman dictator.²⁷⁹

Commentaries on Caesar's writings by Paulus Æmilius (1455–1529), Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) and Justus Lipsius are also included in the list of complimentary reading.²⁸⁰ License from the Holy Apostolic See and from the inquisitors were mandatory when studying the Huguenot François Hotman's (1524–1590) annotations of Caesar's Commentaries (Lyon: 1574). The annotations, Possevino claimed, "are from a man far away from the Catholic faith and who, because of this, is prohibited by the Holy Church and he is numbered amongst first-class heretics, hence one should not read them without license from the said Church."²⁸¹ Due to Hotman's complaint about the Roman pontiff and what Possevino considered as his use of occultism, he

²⁷⁹ AAH, III, c. 8: 113v.

²⁸⁰ AAH, III, c. 11: 117v. Paulus Æmilius is noted for his writing on French kings and Lipsius is noted for his descriptions about machines, figures, the river Rhine, and its bridges. Possevino described a translation of the *Commentaries* printed in 1575, in Venice, in the Italian language. This edition include pictures and plans by the famous architect Andrea Palladio. Another text is said to have been printed in Ferrara and thereafter in Venice bearing the title *Il Brancatio della vera disciplina, & arte militare ne i Commentarij di Cesare ridotta all'uso militare*. The latter edition, Possevino esteems as useful for its descriptions of rivers and plants during Caesar's reign as well as for its comparison of ancient and sixteenth century military discipline.

²⁸¹ AAH, III, c. 10: 116r. "[...] sono di huomo lontano dalla fede Catolica, & il quale per questo è proibito da Santa Chiesa, & è numerato fra gli heretici della prima classe, però non debbono leggersi senza licenza di detta Chiesa."

stressed that Hotman should be shunned. Instead, trust was to be given to Holy Scripture where it is said that Christ gave the keys of Heaven to Saint Peter.²⁸²

A cause for concern, not just in Hotman's annotations, but in Caesar's own writings, was the attribution of much to 'fortuna' and diligence so that "the one who does not have clear knowledge of the truth will easily suppose that everything depends on either fortune or diligence, or the two in combination."²⁸³ Indeed, 'fortuna' was a concept opposed to Possevino's providentialist framework. This framework revolved around the precept that divine providence governs everything, wherefore the impact of 'fortuna' on events was declared null and void. Possevino underscored the danger of attributing anything to destiny and 'fortuna', since such an attribution would not only be false but endangered the souls of students who were unable to discern divine providence from 'fortuna'. Evidently, Caesar is not in line with the transcendental term *verum*.²⁸⁴

Between the lines of the comments about 'fortuna', there might have been a desire to outdo the idea of which Machiavelli subsequently argued in favour, namely, that successful governance requires the assistance of the goddess 'fortuna'. It is likely that Possevino sought to surpass any attribution to 'fortuna', which could encourage Machiavellian foundations for the government of states, as the *Apparato All'Historia* was primarily a manual for young princes and aristocrats who in time would have influence on states.²⁸⁵

Caesar is not portrayed as in line with the transcendental term *bonum*, by reason of his alleged stimulus for going to war. A stimulus which was held to have caused innumerable persons to be killed and in the end Caesar himself,

²⁸² Hotman, the professor of Roman law, was a Huguenot and a controversial figure to the Catholic Church, since he, in his *Franco-Gallia* (1573), brought forth ideas of public religious freedom. He drew on arguments from Roman law and thus challenged lawyers of the Catholic Church, who drew on sources of Roman antiquity. Hotman was put in the appendix to the 1596 edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, Romæ: 1596, 'F-Appendix': 14. AAH, III, c. 9–10: 114r–116v. See Skinner, 2015: 388.

²⁸³ AAH, III, c. 9: 114r. "[...] chi non ha chiara cognitione della verità, stimerà che il tutto dipenda dalla fortuna ò dalla diligenza, ò insieme da amendue."

²⁸⁴ AAH, III, c. 9: 114r.

²⁸⁵ AAH, III, c. 8: 114r; Skinner, 2015: 171–172, for a discussion of Machiavelli and 'fortuna'.

in exchange for a brief period of short-lived and momentary glory, was killed and acquired eternal death. As seen, Possevino took up a familiar trope, which was that of ascribing the act of divine retribution to *exempla evitanda*. In other words, those who have committed wickedness die a horrible death and are forever deprived of the heavenly bliss of eternal life. This narrative technique was imbedded in the providentialist rhetoric that Possevino used in his writings.²⁸⁶

The stimulus that drove Caesar to his death was regarded as a vice, which was either his own ambition or demonic powers. Thus, Possevino did not consider Caesar to have acted in accordance with either the transcendental *bonum* or with *unum* as he failed to appreciate the notion of divine providence. In lieu, divine wisdom paved the way for a better dictator. This better dictator, was not Augustus, but Jesus Christ who “would bring another sort of inner peace in the human hearts and would transfer the office and Roman Empire to a Fisherman, and to the Christian pontiff with a larger Dominion.”²⁸⁷

The quote signals a recurrent topic in the authorship of Possevino, as authors in classical antiquity were portrayed as inferior to Christian authors in content and in virtue. When the evaluation of Caesar is compared with the examination of Herodotus’s *Histories*, however, it becomes clear that the appreciation of the latter as a kind of ‘Christian before Christ’ did not apply to Caesar. The quote also illustrates trust in the event that the authority of Christ was handed to the Roman pontiff, which to Possevino also indicated a transfer of temporal authority from the Roman Empire to the Roman pontiff. In the *Apparato All’Historia*, however, he did not mention the donation of Constantine to Pope Sylvester I (*sed.* 314–335), but rather implied the granting of the keys to Peter in Matthew 16:19 as explanatory of such a transfer.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ AAH, III, c. 8: 114r. Cf. Genesis 18–19.

²⁸⁷ AAH, III, c. 8: 114v. “[...] apporterebbe un’altra sorte di pace interiore ne i cori humani: & transferirebbe quella sede, & Imperio Romano ad un Pescatore, & al Ponteficato Christiano con piu largo Dominio.”

²⁸⁸ AAH, III, c. 8: 114v

Another ancient Roman historian whom Possevino deemed to have written erroneously was Marcus Junianus Justinus (c. first century BC), who was set up as an *exemplum ad dissuadendum*. The reason for such a negative stance was errors that he identified in the writing of Junianus Justinus. Amongst the errors are the account that the first king of Damascus was succeeded by Abraham, Moses, and Israel who all reigned as kings in Damascus; that Josef – son of Israel (Gen 35:24) – taught the art of magic in Egypt, and that Josef was the son of Moses and that Moses gravely afflicted many parts of Egypt.²⁸⁹ Another error, ascribed to Junianus Justinus, was that “Moses in the desert, tired due to hunger and thirst, together with his exiles, was relieved from this sickness [boils] on the seventh day, thus he perpetually consecrated every seventh day with fasting. This day, according to the use and language of this nation, is called Sabbath.”²⁹⁰ The narration of Moses’ son Arua, whose government was a mixture of kingship and priesthood, was also held to be false. Instead, Possevino acknowledged that the interfusion between secular princes and pontiffs began during the principality of Aristobulus, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.²⁹¹

In short, Junianus Justinus was set up as an *exemplum ad dissuadendum* for having failed to meet the standards of *verum* and *unum*, due to his un-Catholic interpretation of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, Possevino assessed that Junianus Justinus wrote with some eloquence. Parts of his writings were still regarded as “arid and [...] exhibits not [a] lightweight hate against them [foreign nations].”²⁹² Consequently, due to an arid style and hatred Junianus Justinus was not considered to have written in accordance with *bonum*.

²⁸⁹ A probable reference to boils, the sixth of the ten plagues of Egypt according to Exodus 9:8–11. Junianus’ history is entitled: *Historia Philippicarum T. Pompeii Trogi libri XLIV in epitome redacti*.

²⁹⁰ AAH, III, c. 34: 130v. “[...] Moise nel deserto insieme co i suoi sbanditi stanco dalla fame, & dalla sete fu da quell’infermità nel giorno settimo sollevato, così consecrò ogni settimo giorno perpetuamente con digiuno, il quale giorno secondo l’uso, & voce di quella natione si chiama sabbato.”

²⁹¹ AAH, III, c. 34: 130v–131r.

²⁹² AAH, III, c. 34: 131r. “[...] arido, & [...] mostra un’odio non leggiero contra loro.”

Early Modern Historians

Setting foundations for the cultivation of talents, purging texts of doctrinal errors and shaping a canon of approved books that would contest authors of the Renaissance movement and Protestant readings of Herodotus and Julius Caesar, were part of Possevino's authorial intentions. These intentions are illustrated by the evaluative emphasis on *ethos*. Contesting Renaissance humanists and Protestant thinkers also demonstrates a collision between rival traditions that were equally anxious to include the same ancient authorities in their respective canons.

The neo-classical method, which was a tool to purge texts from classical antiquity, was not applied in the evaluation of medieval and early modern historians as these were all of a Christian denomination. Medieval and early modern historians are, in turn, evaluated in a less elaborative manner as doctrinal orthodoxy is measured to a larger extent than in the examination of ancient historians. Amongst medieval and early modern historians, adherence to particular traditions was, in most cases, given beforehand. The evaluation was, therefore, straightforward and concerns credit or discredit rather than usefulness.

As noted previously, an important aspect in the change of the *ars historica* in the early modern period was the turn to critical reading of history. Although the function of history was acknowledged as *magistra vitae* from which to draw examples, the sense of truth in events became increasingly important, as opposed to a mere moral truth that was disclosed through fictitious stories. Critical reading was also part of Possevino's methodology, which was practised in particular as he evaluated Annio of Viterbo (1432–1502) and his influential *Commentaria*. Annio sought to prove that his hometown was the first city to be founded after the Flood (Gen. 6:5–8:19) and that the Etruscans – alleged founders of Viterbo – descended from Noah's grandson Comerus. Noah, then, was thought to have been the first pope and Etruscan was said to be an ancient form of the Hebrew language. That Etruscan was more ancient

than the Hebrew language of the Book of Genesis was opposed to Possevino's position, which sought to prove that the Hebrew that Adam spoke was the proto-language. There was more, however, to Possevino's criticism of Annio than only language theory.

When accounting for the works of Berossus, which Annio of Viterbo had used as source in his *Commentaria*, he wrote: "the name Berossus does not deceive anyone any longer, [...] it is an evident thing that the authentic writings by Berossus have perished along with other ancient Authors."²⁹³ As the quote reveals, Possevino wanted to convey to his readers that it is not Berossus (c. 4th century B.C.) himself who had written erroneously, but a pseudo-Berossus. This pseudo-Berossus was to his understanding no other than Annio of Viterbo himself. Thus, he wished to demonstrate that Annio had altered or even invented texts in order to establish credibility. Annio himself had in fact claimed that his sources had been presented to him by two sponsors.²⁹⁴

The manner of proving textual forgeries – the method of textual criticism – was developed by philologists such as Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam. The method of the philologists was established in the fifteenth century, as Valla undertook the enterprise of comparing the Vulgate Bible with Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. This enterprise was a decisive source of inspiration for Erasmus, who was not satisfied with comparing Greek manuscripts to the Vulgate, but translated the New Testament anew. Yet, both Valla and Erasmus were put up on the 1596 edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. A reason for this might have been the appreciation

²⁹³ AAH, IV, c. 1: 142v. [...] "il nome di Beroso non inganni piu veruno, [...] essendo cosa evidente, che i leggitimi scritti di Beroso insieme con altri antichi Auttori perirano." A priest of Bel-Marduk and a Babylonian, Berossus wrote the history of his native country in a work called *Babyloniaca*. Josephus mentioned that Berossus was well-known for having contributed to Hellenistic learning by discussing astronomy and Babylonian wisdom in his writings. In addition, Eusebius of Caesarea, in his now partly lost *Chronica*, cited Berossus. See Dillery, 2015: vi–x.

²⁹⁴ The *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium*, first published in 1498 and up until 1612, was re-edited eighteen times. Stephens, 2011: 699–706; Stephens, 2004: 204–214; Temple, 2002: 153–155. Cf. Popper, 2011: 378–379.

that they received from Lutheran readers. Indeed, Valla's criticism of the Donation of Constantine had a big impact on the early days of the Lutheran Reformation movement. Ulrich von Hutten's (1488–1523) second printing of Valla's *Declamatio* came into the hands of Martin Luther (1483–1546), who used Valla's critique as armour to discredit the institution of the Apostolic See.²⁹⁵

The praise of Valla in textual criticism was, moreover, turned into blame by the early modern philologist Agostino Steuco (1497–1548). The blame concerned Valla's arguments against the authenticity of *Donatio Constantini*, which was founded on the examination of the *Constitutum*. Valla concluded that the text was a product of the eighth or ninth centuries, rather than the fourth century when Constantine reigned. Steuco confuted this conclusion. His confutation was not, however, a critique of philology, but of Valla's alleged neglect of Greek manuscripts and he criticised Valla for only having consulted Latin manuscripts.²⁹⁶

Apart from having questioned the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine, the idea of a pseudo-Donation of Constantine resulted from Valla's examination. To establish an author as a pseudo presupposes textual criticism, which is what Possevino advocated when determining the deceit of pseudo-Berosus. To some extent, even if he gave pre-eminence to doctrinal criticism, Possevino must be said to have favoured textual criticism, since it was concerned with the establishment of truth (*verum*). Although his attitude towards

²⁹⁵ Valla was put on the Index due to his writings on the Donation of Constantine, on pleasure (*De Voluptate*), on the free will, as well as his annotations of the New Testament and his book about person, against Boethius [c. 477–c. 524], 'if not corrected'. Erasmus, on the other hand, was condemned of the first class along with many of his writings, amongst which was his paraphrase of the Gospel according to Matthew. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Romæ*: 1596, "L–Certorum Auctorum Libri Prohibiti": 28–29. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Romæ*: 1596, "D–Certorum Auctorum Libri Prohibiti": 10; "E–Auctores Primæ Classis": 12. Cf. Kelley, 1988: 749.

²⁹⁶ The first edition of Erasmus' translation of the New Testament was published in 1516, titled *Novum instrumentum omne* (apud Inclytam Germaniae Basileam: 1516); Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*: 142. Cf. Bently, 1977: 13.

Valla and Erasmus – the pioneers of philology in the early modern era – was less than benevolent.

Nonetheless, contemporary defenders of the Catholic faith, such as Baronio and Bellarmino did agree that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery. Due to this, Baronio, who had contested the authenticity of the donation in the twelfth volume of the *Annales Ecclesiastici*, was criticised in the Roman Curia for his implicit agreement with the philological research of Valla.²⁹⁷ Despite the curial critics, the *Annales Ecclesiastici* was a work that Possevino appreciated. He held that the Catholic Church was in need of such a work: “the heretics of this century, because they have procured, in every most fallacious manner, to pervert or annihilate – if they could have – the word of God and the ancient histories.”²⁹⁸ The collection of such alleged perversions and annihilations are thought to be found in the *Magdeburg Centuries*, but “they have been mortally wounded (so to say) by Baronio’s *Annales*.”²⁹⁹ Moreover, Possevino described the *Magdeburg Centuries* as “a book by Matthias Flacius Illyricus [that does] not contain histories but lies and deceits.”³⁰⁰

The main figure behind the *Magdeburg Centuries*, Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575), was born in Istria, in Venetian territory. He is famous for having been the head, although Possevino called Flacius the precursor, of the consortium that gathered in Magdeburg and wrote the *Magdeburg Centuries*. In this work, Flacius’s sense of the true Church comes across. That notion was guided by the criterion of a unity of doctrine, rather than apostolic succession. The witnesses of truth in his catalogue, published as a separate work piece in 1556, spoke of an elected group who fulfilled this criterion. Like Possevino, Flacius would use *exempla*, but the gnesio-Lutheran historian set up

²⁹⁷ Zen, 2010: 179–219.

²⁹⁸ AAH, III, c. 46: 140v. “[...] gli Heretici di questo secolo, si come havevano con ogni fallacissimamente maniera, procurato di pervertire, ò di annihilare, se potuto havessero, la parola di Dio, & l’antiche Historie.”

²⁹⁹ AAH, III, c. 46: 140v. “[...] dagli Annali del Baronio sono state mortalmente (per così dire) ferite.”

³⁰⁰ AAH, IV, c. 7: 159v. “[...] un libro di Mattia Flacco Illyrico non contiene historie, ma bugie & inganni.”

Girolamo Savonarola and Niccolò Machiavelli, because of their critique against Roman pontiffs, as *exempla ad persuadendum*.³⁰¹

Flacius divided his history into five ages, which were influenced by the theory of the four monarchies. The borders of the ages were marked with the events of the Council of Nicaea (325), the end of reign of Emperor Charlemagne (814), the end of the reign of Emperor Henry IV (1106), and the condemnation of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus at the Council of Konstanz (1415). Flacius, in his revaluation of ecclesiastical tradition, would also incorporate Lutheran *loci communes* and Lutheran criticism of medieval sacramental practices into his work. Given the division of these ages, Flacius intended to signal an ecclesiastical history that favoured certain historical figures such as Emperor Constantine, Emperor Charlemagne, Emperor Henry IV (r. 1084–1105), John Wycliffe, and Jan Hus. Obviously, the *Magdeburg Centuries* is not a history of the popes. On the contrary, Henry IV stands antithetically against Pope Gregory VII, whereas Wycliffe and Hus are depicted as theological heroes against the ecumenical Council of Konstanz which condemned their theological positions as heretical.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Lyon, 2003: 254–257 & 269; Acciarino, 2017: 21–22. The first century bears the title: *Ecclesiastica Historia Integram Ecclesie Christi Ideam, Quantum ad Locum, Propagationem, Persecutionem, Tranquillitatem, Doctrinam, Hæreses, Ceremonias, Gubernationem, Schismata, Synodos, Personas, Miracula, Martyria, Religiones extra Ecclesiam, & statum Imperij politicum attinet, secundum singulas Centurias, perspicuo ordine complectens: singulari diligentia & fide ex vetustissimis & optimis historicis, patribus, & alij scriptoribus congesta: Per aliquot studiosos & pios viros in urbe Magdeburgica*. The volumes are divided into *Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ Centuriæ*, starting with *primæ* and ending with *decimaquartæ*. Flacius wanted to write the story of how Antichrist had been active in the Church, especially during the medieval period, and incorporates a catalogue of seven thousand witnesses of truth who had preserved the true Church despite ecclesiastical interventions by Antichrist.

³⁰² Flacius made use of *fides* in his search for evidence that could prove that the Catholic Church, during the medieval period, had been affected by demonic intervention in the governing of its members. In fact, one of Flacius' collaborator's François Baudoin criticised the *Magdeburg Centuries* for its bias and emphasis on finding historical errors in the history of the Christian Church. Baudoin favoured the focus in the discipline of history at the turn of the late sixteenth century of *ars historiæ legendi*. This trait is also the focus of the *Apparato All'Historia* whereas the *ratio historiæ scribendi* very much applies to the *Magdeburg Centuries*. Lyon, 2003: 260, 263, 268 & 271; Kelley: 1988: 752 & 755; McLaughlin: 2008: 21–22; Popper: 2011: 385. Cf. Tutino, 2010: 33.

Both Flacius's name and the *Magdeburg Centuries* were put in the *Index*, which did not stop the work from being published several times between 1559 and 1574.³⁰³ This proves the impact of this work on early modern intellectuals. Possevino, for his part, refused to call the *Magdeburg Centuries* an ecclesiastical history, since its objective was to identify the *congregatio fidelium* in an institution that, apart from the true believers, was altogether in decay. The objective of the *Magdeburg Centuries* can be said to have been reversed in Possevino's own evaluation, since he intended to identify heretics in an institution that was guided by divine providence. In his opinion, Flacius had named a new monster that could make students inclined to partake in fallacious culture. Such culture would rest on an order that belittled the importance of unity in the visible, yet multifaceted, Church and instead idealised the force of an invisible Church, consisting of true believers, that was reluctant to submit to the authority of Roman pontiff.³⁰⁴

To describe the purpose of the *Magdeburg Centuries*, Possevino used the word 'nuovo'. This implied something suspicious and possibly heretical. The purpose, from his point of view, was to erect another Tower of Babel that would confuse people and cause further fragmentation. In effect, this tower was destroyed by other heretics. Presumably he meant the Philipist Lutherans, who opposed the *Magdeburg Centuries*. In the end, he judged it to be a patchwork, put together without order, printed without publishing authority from the Catholic Church and composed "without the will of God."³⁰⁵

³⁰³ *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Romæ: 1596*, "C-Incertorum Auctorum Libri Prohibiti": 8; "M-Auctores Primæ Classis": 32. See Lyon, 2003: 253.

³⁰⁴ AAH, IV, c. 8:159v.

³⁰⁵ AAH, IV, c. 8: 160r: "[...] Senza il voler di Dio." Lyon, 2003: 258.

Concluding Remarks

Possevino used deliberative oratory, which engages in exhortation and dissuasion, to appeal to the good (*bonum*) and the useful (*utilitas*). As such, the transcendental term *bonum* is, in most cases, superordinate to *unum* and *verum*. The evaluative method, used by Possevino, is a means of persuasion that in most cases put a heavier emphasis on *ethos*. In other words, persuasion through character rather than rational arguments and to an even lesser degree on *pathos*. There are some authors who failed to meet the standard of every evaluative criterion but who are, nonetheless, portrayed as useful and therefore considered as complements to the authorised historians if read with circumspection.

Herodotus was included in the canon of approved texts and his *Histories* were favoured at the expense of other historians of classical antiquity. The basis for putting him in the canon was the link between Herodotus and the prophets of the Old Testament, the credibility to the content of *Histories*, the appraisal of virtue and eloquent style. Still, the reader of *Histories* was instructed to consult complementary reading in order not to diverge from a non-Catholic interpretation.

Possevino was more reserved with appreciative judgment of Caesar than he was with Herodotus. There is a tendency in the evaluation of Caesar to work with the neo-classical method, to distill that which is useful and to fill the gaps with complementary reading so that heterodox content could be purged. Possevino operated as a censor in order for his readers to draw fruits from the reading. Such fruits, aimed to encourage the fostering of virtues amongst the readers.

The evaluation of historians was marked with an unreserved rejection of some contemporary literature. Such literature fell into the category fallacious culture. The Protestant historians are repudiated and placed within the category of promoters of fallacious culture. Possevino was conspicuously hostile towards the *Magdeburg Centuries*. The word 'new', which was used by

Possevino to described the content of the *Magdeburg Centuries*, implied suspicion and heresy in early modern ecclesiastical debates. As noted, Flacius's history belonged to a rival tradition which, in turn, cultivated a culture that was contrary to Possevino's cultural project.

Chapter 6. Culture, Politics and Sovereignty in History

In this chapter, I will provide a survey of selected theories that defined some of the debates about temporal authority during the sixteenth and early parts of the seventeenth centuries. This chapter, will take the medieval, especially Dominican, tradition of comments about public affairs (*respublica*) and governing into account, since Possevino drew on this tradition in his discussion of government. This tradition was rooted in ancient literary models such as Aristotle's *Politics*, Cicero's *De Officiis* and Augustine's *City of God*.

Political theories with an increasingly technical legal apparatus were shaped during the sixteenth century, which either drew from preceding models or reproached them. These theories would converge and clash during the Venetian Controversy. Representatives from the Roman camp such as Possevino and Bellarmino were challenged by Venetians such as Paolo Sarpi, Antonio Querini (1554–1608) and Giovanni Marsilio, on questions that related to historical models for the government of states and how to legitimise authority.

In this chapter, I will discuss early modern understandings of the concept of sovereignty and analyse Possevino's positioning before the Venetian Interdict, as presented in the *Apparato All'Historia*, with regard to temporal rule of states. This will be conducted to provide comparative material to his writings during the Interdict Controversy.

Early Modern Understandings of Sovereignty

The concept of sovereignty was famously formulated by Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) as that authority which is not subject to the legislation of another authority. Grotius, although an innovative thinker, drew on the political thoughts of Jean Bodin, who held that controlling the military and owning absolute authority over legislation were the key elements to sovereignty. Bodin thought that sovereignty was indivisible in the commonwealth, which can only have one sovereign at its apex. In similar manner to Erasmus, he contended that

insofar as persons are citizens, it is because they are subjects to the same sovereign. Not because they live together in a community. The multitude of persons become citizens through subjection to a common sovereign, whereby the common laws are binding for a sovereign out of politeness, and for a subject out of necessity. The state, Bodin noted, is the seat of legislative authority that appertains to the sovereign.³⁰⁶

The growing tendency, during the sixteenth century, for monarchs to rule according to Machiavellian principles paved the way for theories of resistance against tyrannical sovereigns and even defences of regicide. As with theories of sovereignty, theories of moral right to resistance and removal of sovereigns were diffused in France. Authors in this genre were Huguenot thinkers such as François Hotman and Philippe de Mornay (1549–1623). Theories of resistance to tyrant monarchs had previously been introduced by William of Ockham and Jean Gerson (1363–1429), only to be further elaborated by Luther and Melancthon. The Huguenots, however, proved to have a stronger link to political activity than the German Lutherans. This was especially the case after the St. Bartholomew massacre in 1572 in Paris. In the aftermath of this event, the so-called monarchomachs, involving both François Hotman and Philippe de Mornay, sought to disentangle the term sovereignty from the sovereign and plead for the election of monarchs rather than hereditary succession. The monarchomachs recognised regicide as a divine right. The views of the monarchomachs were, moreover, the impetus that drove Bodin to outline his theories about sovereignty in the *Six livres de la république*.³⁰⁷

An early modern Catholic thinker who also defended the moral right to armed resistance against tyrant monarchs, was the Spanish Jesuit Francisco

³⁰⁶ Straumann, 2015: 424; Parsons, 2001: 62; Skinner, 2015: 325 & 399–401; Elden, 2013: 263–267; Corbett, 1921: 13.

³⁰⁷ Theories that spoke favourably of meeting injustices, committed by sovereigns with armed force, is, as Quentin Skinner writes, traceable to Roman law. Skinner, 2015: 245–246. The Bartholomew massacre in 1572 refers to the event where over two thousand Huguenots were executed. Skinner, 2015: 247, 387–388 & 395

Suárez. He thought that people had originally founded conventions, customs and legislative authority, but by introducing the monarch as sovereign they had passed on their authority to the monarch. According to Suárez, however, the people, in specific circumstances, had the moral right to remove a tyrant king and even to commit regicide.³⁰⁸

Another Jesuit who defended the moral right for people to remove tyrant monarchs was Robert Persons. He based his theory on the natural free will of people to be subject to a sovereign. Should a sovereign monarch fail to grant justice to the people, the same free will of the people that made them subjects could be reasserted in order to remove a monarch. This opinion was contrary to the opinion of Bodin, who did not consider the power of the people to be superior to the power of a sovereign monarch. It was also contrary to Paolo Sarpi's idea of an absolute sovereign, who is not bound to his people but only to God.³⁰⁹

Sarpi was a Servite monk and a philosopher, jurist, philologist, scientist, a staunch anti-Jesuit as well as the official theologian to the Venetian government during the Interdict Controversy. His political theories were to a certain degree indebted to Bodin's *Six livres de la Republique*, but adapted to suit the early modern Venetian context. Sarpi asserted that temporal authority is directly granted by God, *iure divino*, and this authority is absolute in the sense that the temporal sovereign is independent and therefore not obliged to obey anyone other than God. The people were restricted to obedience to the sovereign. The Roman pontiff, on the other hand, might have some temporal authority, but in Sarpi's view certainly not outside of the Papal States. On the opposing side, however, stood Bellarmino who in contrast regarded the spiritual authority as one granted directly from God, whereas temporal authority is indirect, whether the temporal sovereign be pope or king.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Åkerlund, 2018: 365–379.

³⁰⁹ Skinner, 2015: 389 & 396.

³¹⁰ Bellarmino, *De Romano Pont.*, II, c. 1: 298A–E; Tutino, 2010: 34; Kainulainen, 2014: 209.

In Sarpi's writing it is possible to note that to preserve the notion of unity (*unum*) in the Venetian state, he referred to the Republic of Venice as one absolute sovereign prince bound to no other authority except God. The 'republic' in Sarpi's writing refers to the state entity and often with reference to the Republic of Venice in particular. Consequently, the Republic of Venice is a 'prince'.³¹¹

To Possevino, as was customary in the early modern period, 'republic' (*respublica*) referred to public affairs and government in general and not to the state or a republican constitution. Sarpi's use, therefore, brought a new connotation to the concept of republic whilst seeking to preserve the notion of unity, by depicting the Republic of Venice as prince. As it turned out, Sarpi did not refer to Venice as ruled by a mixed government. This signalled a divergence from the political theories of Venetian patricians such as the cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542) and the diplomat Paolo Paruta (1540–1598), who were enamoured with the mixed governmental structure of Venice.³¹²

Government of States

Machiavellian principles for the government of states were contested within the early modern Jesuit community. This also applied to Possevino who arranged material that would provide antidotes against Machiavellian principles of government of states. As mentioned earlier, early modern debates on sovereignty and political theory proved originality amongst many authors. Possevino, on the contrary, guarded himself against novelties by trusting the tradition of Dominican *auctoritates*. In the debate about the government of state,

³¹¹ Sarpi, 1763[c]: 197. Sarpi was, in the aftermath of the Venetian Interdict, thorough in his distinction between *conte* and *principe* as the latter, according to Sarpi, designates sovereignty whereas the former designates hierarchical inferiority with respect to a prince. Cf. Cozzi, 1962: 219; Kainulainen, 2014: 204–208 & 235–236.

³¹² Mazetti Petersson, 2019: 53–75; Skinner, 2015: 146–147; Kainulainen, 2014: 29.

Possevino presented Thomas Aquinas as an *exemplum ad persuadendum* by excerpting *On Kingship* as an antidote to Machiavellian doctrines.³¹³

The princely mirror, *On Kingship – To the King of Cyprus*, written by Aquinas, bears the Latin title *De regimine principum (De regno ad regem Cypri)*. The work discusses political theory within the frame of morals. *On Kingship*, had a major impact on medieval and early modern philosophy of politics. It became a model for the influential writings on governmental affairs by the Dominican Ptolemy of Lucca and the Augustinian Hermit Giles of Rome (1247–1316). In fact, Ptolemy of Lucca completed the unfinished *On Kingship* as Thomas Aquinas had merely written its first part and a few chapters of the second. After Ptolemy's completion, the work had extended to four parts.³¹⁴

In Possevino's selection of passages from *On Kingship* for the *Apparato All'Historia*, it is established that it is necessary to govern the state with reason and that public, not private, interests should be prioritised. It reads that every dominion originates from God with respect to the nature of being, the nature of motion, and the nature of the end of every creation. Therefore, *On Kingship* prefers the government of one monarch, since that person will be able represent God and imitate nature. The office of a sovereign monarch vis-à-vis his realm, should be as the hierarchical structure between the human soul and the body, and the relationship between God and the created world. Nevertheless, in governing a state the royal office must be kept distinct from the priestly office. This type of government, Possevino notes within parentheses, is only favourable as long as the ruler is just. If the ruler is unjust, this type of government is worse than the government of many.³¹⁵

Augustine is also quoted, claiming that Christian princes are not happy because they have reigned for a long period of time. Neither are they happy if

³¹³ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155r.

³¹⁴ Many manuscripts of *On Kingship*, though, were attributed solely to Thomas Aquinas. See Blythe 1997: 1 & 45; Elden, 2013: 172.

³¹⁵ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155r–156v.

they enjoy a tranquil death, having passed on realms to their sons, nor for having diminished the enemies of the state. On the contrary, happy rulers are those who have reigned justly. Consequently, the just rulers are those who do not act out of vainglorious ardour – since this is not an activity in accordance with virtue – but out of charity for lasting happiness. This thought resembles Ciceronian theories of politics prevalent in *De Officiis*, in which justice is thought to preserve common unity within the republic. Justice, Cicero remarked, consists of distribution to subjects according to their due and in avoidance of violence. This latter trait of justice was disputed by Machiavelli, who will be discussed later.³¹⁶

Moreover, *On Kingship* suggests that to accomplish happiness, the king should arrange for his subjects to live according to virtue. In doing so, the king must be wise enough to make the ends of means available to his subjects. As follows, the king should pronounce the ends with attached explanations, with which the obstacles for obtaining happiness can be removed. Possevino affirmed that the theories of governing states as presented by *On Kingship* suffice to confute the deceits (‘inganni’) of Machiavelli. Still, Possevino mentioned that other works, in the genre of princely mirrors, are beautifully written, such as that which the Dominican scholar Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli (c. 1470–c. 1538) authored – implying Javelli’s *Philosophia civilis Christiana* (1540). Such works, however, were to Possevino’s mind better suited to be read by rulers and their councillors than students of *humana historia*.³¹⁷

Possevino’s suggestions for the government of states were similar to the theories that Bellarmino developed. There, the royal and priestly offices

³¹⁶ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155v. The probable understanding of happiness in this passage stems from the ancient period. Thus, happiness, according to Aristotle, is an end for its own sake which consists in activity of the soul, as opposed to disposition, in accordance with virtue. In other words, an activity performed well. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 10.6; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae Partis, q. 91, article 2*. To the Venetian writer Giovanni Maria Memmo, on the other hand, happiness in governing refers to common tranquillity. This is in line with the presentation of the Venetian republic as *la Serenissima*. Cf. Skinner, 2015: 26; 124–125, & 207; Kainulainen, 2014: 21.

³¹⁷ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155v–156v. See Johannes Chrysostomus Iavellus, *Philosophia Civilis Christiana* (Venetiis: 1540).

were distinct due to difference in duties. The duties of the earthly king and the ecclesiastical duties function on different levels, delineated by the use of the analogy of body and soul. The analogy of body and soul, where the monarchical and priestly offices are requested to be kept distinct from one another, was moreover picked up by Possevino in his comments about *On Kingship*.³¹⁸

Bellarmino, whose thoughts about temporal sovereignty were indebted to *On Kingship*, sought to prove that every temporal ruler is granted authority through concessions by other monarchs or people. The temporal authority of the pope is held to be mediated. The quoted passages from *On Kingship* in the *Apparato All'Historia*, however, simply regard every temporal dominion as having originated from God. It does not explain whether such authority is mediated through concessions by other monarchs or the people, or whether the authority is immediate.³¹⁹

On Kingship moreover proposed that a just monarch is the optimal ruler, but if the monarch proves to be unjust a mixed government is preferred. This resembles what the Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) had said. Guicciardini claimed that a mixed government would secure an even distribution of authority to the prince, aristocrats, and people, for the sake of freedom.³²⁰ In fact, both Machiavelli and Bellarmino also taught that

³¹⁸ AAH, IV, c. 5: 156r. Bellarmino, 1606[c]: 17.

³¹⁹ The status of temporal sovereigns was further debated during the beginning of the seventeenth century. The king of England, James I, for instance argued that a temporal sovereign enjoyed spiritual authority within his territory. Stefania Tutino, 2010: 127.

³²⁰ AAH, III, c. 40: 133r–135r. Guicciardini was born into a noble family and brought up in Florence in a time when the wealthy banking family dei Medici had lost much of its governing influence. At a grown age, Guicciardini acted as *governatore* with legislative authority in the public sphere in Modena. He was well taught in the arts of military and politics. Guicciardini was, according to Possevino, well appreciated by the popes Leo X; Adrian VI (*sed.* 1522–1523), and Clement VII (*sed.* 1523–1534). Additionally, both Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici) and Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici) were of Florentine origin. Three persons are said to have made remarks on the writing of Guicciardini: the cartographer Tomasso Porcacchi Castilone (1530–1585); the poet Giovanni Battista Leoni (1542–1613), and Justus Lipsius. The former two presented their considerations in the Italian vernacular, whereas the latter wrote his annotations in the Latin language. The translation and interpretation of Guicciardini's *Florentine histories* into the Latin language by Celio Secondo Curione (1503–1569) in 1566 (printed in Basel), however, was put in the appendix to the 1596 edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* 'until expurgated'. This is left unmentioned by Possevino. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, 'F-Appendix':

temporal states, due to human corruption, were often composed of a mixture between aristocracy and monarchy. Contrary to Machiavelli, though, Bellarmino considered that a mixture of aristocracy and monarchy must be given a democratic basis, approved by the people. To Bellarmino, an unjust monarch is more preferable than no ruler at all, since even an unjust monarch would preserve unity.³²¹

This notion is not to be found in Possevino's suggestions for the government of states. Given the frequent references to Bellarmino, in the *Apparato All'Historia*, I consider it plausible that Possevino had an affinity for the political thoughts of Bellarmino. It must be taken into account, however, that when Possevino seized the opportunity to suggest a model for the government of states he opted to reproduce parts of *On Kingship* rather than narrating political comments by fellow Jesuits.

Refusing Machiavellian Principles

The publication of works by Jesuits such as Bellarmino and Suárez, comprised moral theology as a component in the discussions about the relationship between ecclesiastical and temporal authorities, as well as the government of the Church and states. In several cases, Jesuit compositions of political theory were prompted by a reaction against writings authored by Machiavelli. Machiavelli was included in the 1596 edition of *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* amongst the *auctores primæ classis* and a strong anti-Machiavellian stance was made by the Spanish Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira (1527–1611). In 1595, Ribadeneira published *Tratado de la religion y virtudes que deve tener el*

15. The *Apparato All'Historia* uses Leoni's considerations on the history writing of Guicciardini, mentioning that these considerations were published in 1583, printed at the Gioliti printing house in Venice. Cf. Pinelli, 2015.

³²¹ Skinner, 2015[b]: 32–33. On Florentine thoughts about mixed government, see Gorgini, 2013: 628. On Bellarmino's thoughts about a mixture of aristocracy and monarchy in the temporal realm, see Stefania Tutino: 2010: 26.

Principe Christiano, para govenar y conservar sus Estados. As the title reveals, Ribadeneira's work contains advice for Christian princes on how to govern a state in accordance with Christian virtues, as opposed to Machiavellian virtues.³²²

Ribadeneira's anti-Machiavellian work is not, however, to be found amongst Possevino's sources for the confutation of Machiavelli's teaching. This text was published in 1595, so Possevino would have had the opportunity to incorporate a discussion of it in the *Apparato All'Historia*. Instead the anti-Machiavellian writing by Innocent Gentillet, the *Antimachiavel*, was Possevino's point of departure for the discussion of Machiavelli's teaching. He says that amongst the Calvinists there was one who had fled to Geneva, where he composed a book that he called *Antimachiavello*. Possevino thought that topics from ancient history, which Machiavelli reprehended, had been diligently chosen by the author of *Antimachiavello*.³²³

Gentillet's arguments not only contested Machiavellian principles, but also contradicted the teaching of the Catholic Church. Therefore, Gentillet was not set up as an *exemplum ad persuadendum*. At times, Possevino noted, Gentillet's argument diverged too much from the purpose of confuting Machiavelli, such as his criticism of the Catholic Church: "this disastrous person has wasted everything that could be of use, as well as that reward that he thereby could have obtained from God and from men, if he had done nothing else but confuted Machiavelli."³²⁴ The notes on Gentillet conclude with the judgment that "this nearly all heretics have the habit to do, when they use the antidotes in evil ways, not to dispose of but to conceal and bedeck poisons."³²⁵

³²² *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Romæ: 1596*, "N–Auctores Primæ Classis": 34: "Nicolaus Macchiavellus"; Pedro de Ribaneneira, *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que deve tener el Principe Christiano, para govenar y conservar sus Estados. Contra lo que Nicolas Machivelo los Politicos deste tiempo enseñan*. (P. Madrigal, Madrid: 1595). See Tutino, 2010: 15.

³²³ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155r. Cf. Lavenia, 2006: 185.

³²⁴ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155r. "[...] questo sciagurato perdè tutto quel che poteva giovare, & quanto premio egli ne poteva conseguir' da Dio, & da gli huomini: s'egli non havesse fatto altro che confutare il Machiavello."

³²⁵ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155r. "[...] Il che solgiono fare quasi tutti gli Heretici, mentre che usano gli antidoti in mala parte, non per togliere mà per mascherare & recoprire i veleni."

The passage establishes that it would be impossible to reproach one error by means of another error.³²⁶

Antidotes are used metaphorically, implying the orthodoxy of the teachings of the Catholic Church, whilst ‘poisons’ refer to the doctrinal errors of, in this case, Gentillet. What Possevino was doing with this metaphor, was to profess that the errors of Machiavelli were merely seemingly confuted by Gentillet. As follows, Gentillet was regarded as an *exemplum ad dissuadendum*. Rhetorically speaking, Gentillet was unable to persuade through character, or through rhetorical *ethos*. In order to present true antidote against the ‘poisonous’ teaching of Machiavelli, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were set up as *exempla ad persuadendum* where *On Kingship* was the point of departure for the presentation of alternative advice to princes, as opposed to Machiavelli’s *Il Principe*.³²⁷

In the fifth chapter of the fourth part of the *Apparato All’Historia*, the alleged errors contained in the writings of Machiavelli are assessed. This chapter consists of a translation of Possevino’s earlier rebuttal of Machiavelli’s teaching in *Iudicium*, which was published in Rome in 1592. In the *Iudicium*, he not only criticised Machiavelli but also Bodin, François de La Noue (1531–1591), and Philippe de Mornay. Subsequently, in the 1593 edition of *Iudicium* (printed in Lyon), he added criticism of the Augsburg Confession, of Erasmus of Rotterdam, and of the Picards (heirs to Bohemian Hussites). The Latin editions of 1597 and of 1602 of the *Apparato All’Historia*, however, do not include the extensive rebuttal of Machiavellian teaching, as presented in the Italian version of *Apparato All’Historia*. In the Latin editions the text is reproduced in a slightly condensed format.³²⁸

³²⁶ Possibly with an implicit reference to the paradox given in the Gospel of Matthew 12:26 that Satan should fight against himself.

³²⁷ AAH, IV, c. 5: 155r.

³²⁸ Possevino, *Iudicium De Nuæ militis Galli scriptis, quæ ille Discursus Politicos, & Militares inscripsit. De Ioannis Bodini Methodo historiae: Libris de Repub. & Dæmonomania. De Philippi Mornæi libro de Perfectione Christiana. De Nicolao Machiavello*. (Romæ: 1592); Possevino, *Iudicium De Nuæ militis Galli, Ioannis Bodini, Philippi Mornæi, & Nicolai Machiavelli quibusdam scriptis quorum Catalogum inversa pagina indicabit. Item, Defensio*

Although Possevino sought to discredit Machiavelli, he nevertheless acknowledged his talent and acuity. Still, he considered that *Il Principe* attributed happiness to luck and coincidence instead of virtue. Therefore, it was absent of truth and *pietas*. He compared the absence of truth to wings that Machiavelli was deprived of, since “if he tries to fly, it is necessary that he crashes precipitously.”³²⁹ Referring to *Il Principe*, he called the advice given to princes ‘pestiferous’ as he appealed to students to agree with his rhetorical questions, in the following manner:

That if there will be something false in the Religion, he approves of it and confirms it despite the fact that this benefits to give favour [to] any religion there is? That he utters [words of] Pagan Religion to the Christian [religion]? That he does not show any respect to the Doctors of the Christian religion? That he has terrible opinion of the Roman Catholic Church? That he believes that the authority of Moses and his laws were sustained through force and arms, and not through faith and through God? That he attributes happiness to luck and to chance and not to virtue and true religion?³³⁰

veritatis adversus assertiones Catholicæ fidei repugnantes eiusdem Nuæ libri asperas auctore Petro Coreto Tornaci Canonico. Item, Eiusdem Antonij Possevino de Confessione Augustana, ac num admittendi sint hæretici ad colloquium publicum de fide, De Desiderio Erasmo, & secta Picardica iudicium. (Lugduni: 1593); *Apparatus ad omnium gentium historiam* (Venetiis: 1597): 148r–151v; *De apparatu ad omnium gentium historiam* (Venetiis: 1602): 313r–318v. That which differs from the translation in the *Apparato All’Historia* into the Italian vernacular and the original text found in *Iudicium*, on the topic of Machiavellian teaching, is the inclusion, in *Iudicium*, of an excerpted additional judgment on Machiavellian teaching by the Portuguese bishop Jerónimo Osorio (1506–1580). Osorio’s judgment is only referred to as expedient reading and it was not reproduced in the 1598 edition of the *Apparato All’Historia*. The excerpted text in *Iudicium* bears the same title as Osorio’s original work from 1542, *De Nobilitate Christiana*. Possevino, *Iudicium* (Romæ: 1592): 167r–186v; Possevino, *Iudicium* (Lugduni: 1593): 136r–152v. AAH, IV, c. 5: 156v. Cf. Hieronymi Osorii Lusitani, *De Nobilitate Civili, Libri Duo. Eiusdem de nobilitate Christiana Libri tres.* (Olyssipone, Apud Ludovicum Rodericum Typograhum: 1542).

³²⁹ AAH, IV, c. 5: 152r. “[...] se tenta di volare, è necessario che precipitosamente ruini.”

³³⁰ AAH, IV, c. 5: 152r–152v. “[...] Che se nella Religione sarà qualche cosa falsa, l’approvi, & la confermi, purché questo giovi a favorire qualunque religione si sia? Ch’egli proferisca la Religione Pagana alla Christiana? Che non faccia stima veruna de’Dottori della Christiana religione? Ch’egli habbia pessima opinione della Chiesa Catolica Romana? Ch’egli creda, che l’auttorità di Mosè, & le sue leggi fossero appoggiate nella forza, & nell’armi, & non nella fede, & in Dio? Ch’egli attribuisca la felicità alla fortuna & al caso, & non alla virtù, & alla vera religione?” It may well be that the word “preferisca” (prefers) is intended, instead of “proferisca” (utters), but it is not mentioned in the list amongst printing errors.

Rhetorical Use of Historical Exempla

Whether Machiavellian advice was poison or not, princes throughout Europe read *Il Principe*, which was well-known in circles of nobility even before its publication in 1532 (possibly as early as 1513). After its initial publication it was translated into European vernacular languages. The reputation of Machiavelli in the early modern era was not altogether warm, though, as is proven by the placement of his writings on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. It is also proven by the repudiations of Machiavelli's writings by notable Jesuits, along with those of the Dominican scholar Ambrogio Catarino Politi (1484–1553), the Oratorian priest Tommaso Bozio (1548–1610) and Justus Lipsius.³³¹

In the vein of Renaissance humanist tradition, Machiavelli made use of ancient thinking as he pictured ancient Rome to be the model for governing principles. Machiavelli also made use of the concept of *anacyclosis*. Machiavelli's turn to the determinism of *anacyclosis*, as presented by the Greek historian Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 BC), in order to designate changes from one form of government to another, was not appreciated by Possevino. As discussed earlier, he did not share in the notion of determinism with regard to historical changes.³³²

In the confutation of the alleged flaws of Machiavelli, Possevino turned to a set of *exempla imitanda* and *exempla ad persuadendum* of wise men. These wise men, he explained, have proven that “the Empires [of wise men] were maintained with *pietas*, with one Catholic religion, and ready with advice, with truth, and with humility; and they were ruined through the opposite vices.”³³³ Exempla that Possevino regards as having been wise governors were

³³¹ Venetian patricians would have been inclined to disapprove of Machiavelli's rejection of the recruitment, by the *Serenissima*, of common people for conducting warfare. Giorgini, 2013: 625–30; Zen, 2010: 184; Walsh, 2007: 284; Elden, 2013: 246.

³³² Kelley, 1988: 753.

³³³ AAH, IV, c. 5: 152v. “[...] gl’Imperij essersi mantenuti con la pietà, con una sola Catolica religione, & appresso col consiglio, colla verità. & coll’humiltà; & da vitij contrarij essere stati ruinati.”

Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and the Maccabees. Another exemplum put forward was Emperor Constantine, who won the battle on the Milvian Bridge against his opponent Maxentius (d. 312). Constantine's fight against his enemy was paralleled to Moses, who fought against the Pharaoh. Possevino maintained that the victory of Constantine was due to his adoration of God and not of demons.³³⁴

Other exempla of rulers, that are presented, were more ambivalently portrayed. One such exemplum was Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565), who “as long as he was [a] Catholic he reigned very blissfully, in such manner that he annexed Italy, Africa and many other countries to the Roman Empire [...]. But as soon as he became [a] heretic and wanted to propose the decree [...], immediately he was taken away by a sudden death and liberated the Church from a great fear.”³³⁵

The words ‘a great fear’ (*‘una paura grande’*) are most likely a reference to the turmoil surrounding the times of the Second Council of Constantinople (553) when Pope Vigilius (*sed.* 537–555) refused to agree to Justinian's condemnation of the three bishops Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–c. 428, Ibas of Edessa (c. 435–c. 457), and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c. 393–c. 457) on charges of Nestorianism, rejecting that the human and divine nature of Christ operate concurrently. This turmoil provoked the so-called Schism of the Three Chapters.³³⁶

In a similar manner to Emperor Justinian, Heraclius (r. 610–641) was depicted as a wise emperor since “as long as he was [a] Catholic he had a very illustrious victory against the Persians and rescued the Cross of the Lord [...].

³³⁴ AAH, IV, c. 5: 152v–153r.

³³⁵ AAH, IV, c. 5: 153v. “[...] fin ch’egli fù Catolico. Imperò felicissimamente, di maniera che ridusse all’Imperio Romano l’Italia, l’Africa, & molti altri paesi [...]. Mà subito ch’egli divenne heretico, & volle proporre il bando [...], subito fù lievato via da una repentina morte, & liberò la Chiesa da una grande paura.”

³³⁶ Pope Vigilius was willing to agree to a condemnation of the writings of the Three-Chapters but was unwilling to condemn them post-mortem as persons. After fiery pressure by Justinian, the pope travelled to Constantinople and eventually yielded to Justinian's condemnation of the Three-Chapters, which in turn caused the bishop of Aquileia to assume the title patriarch and brake the diocese's communion with the Roman pontiff. Hoff & Nuffelen, 2017: 278.

But as he became [a] Monethelete all things went the wrong way for him, and he was deprived of life by a new unheard-of infirmity.”³³⁷ Possevino attributed the fall of empires to the adoption of heresies. In the case of Justinian, the cause for his sudden death was his ill-treatment of Pope Vigilius and in the case of Heraclius it was his adherence to monotheletism (the notion that Christ had only one divine will). Monotheletism was rejected at the Third Council of Constantinople (680–681).³³⁸

Possevino also blamed the iconoclasts, who prohibited veneration of images, for the separation between the Roman pontiff and the Eastern empires. The success of a sovereign was dependent, he thought, on how willing each sovereign is to prove himself a son and protector of the Catholic Church. As evidence for his conclusion, he referred to Paulus Æmilius as the latter exemplified that France, during the pontificate of Innocent III, was a protector of the Catholic Church, by enabling eight thousand Catholics to slice a hundred thousand Albigensian heretics to pieces in one battle.³³⁹

Possevino made use of providentialist rhetoric in the narratives about the emperors Justinian and Heraclius, as well as about the Albigensians. He also attributed outcomes of contemporary events to the intervention of divine providence, for instance, in battles in Switzerland where “the Catholics always won, even though they were much inferior in numbers and arms.”³⁴⁰ The emperor Charles V was depicted to have had a miraculous victory against the Lutherans in 1547 due to the intervention of divine providence. It was also mentioned that in France and in Spanish Flanders, Catholics have reported that

³³⁷ AAH, IV, c. 5: 153v. “[...] fin ch’egli fù Catolico, hebbe un’illustrissima vittoria de Persiani, & ricuperò la Croce del Signore [...]. Mà divenuto ch’egli fù Monotelita, tutte le cose gli andarono al rovescio, & egli fu privato di vita da una nuova, inaudita infermità.”

³³⁸ Denzinger, 550–559: 191–195.

³³⁹ AAH, IV, c. 5: 153v–154r.

³⁴⁰ AAH, IV, c. 5: 154r. “[...] sempre vinsero i Catolici, benche di numero, & d’armi fossero molto inferiori.”

as soon as a heretic has become superior the time comes when he is confronted by his equals.³⁴¹

Just War and Violence

Possevino valued the efforts of Catholic soldiers in battles against the pacifist Christian soldier of Erasmus.³⁴² He had a firm conviction of what justified war. The just cause for entering a war is the defence of what he labels legitimate *podestà*, or defence of the person in charge of public affairs in a community. As far as an attack war was concerned, grounds for justification could only be approved if it aimed to restore the homeland, peace, and the Catholic faith. Machiavelli, however, justified war if it is thought to be in some way necessary. If necessity demanded war, then it was a sufficient cause for going to war. Hence, it justifies war. In reply, Possevino held that such reasoning would set the world on fire, since it would spur people who are similar to Emperor Nero (r. 54–68). Along these lines, he suggested that such arbitrary grounds, as presented by Machiavelli, cannot justify war. Yet he considered that nothing from the pen of the Florentine thinker was as poisonous as when he claimed that the prince “in order to completely chop off every hope and every desire of peace, must violate the opponents by means of conspicuous insults.”³⁴³

Machiavellian theory was thought to have been practised in Cologne. Temporal authorities in Cologne were set up as *exempla evitanda* because they had forced long-time inhabitants to transfer to other nations, thereby destroying them in varying degrees, depending on how far-off the transfer was, since transferring long-time inhabitants would ruin families. Possevino asked the

³⁴¹ AAH, IV, c. 5: 154r. In addition, in Possevino’s *Moscovia*, he testified that Tsar Ivan IV called on him saying “‘Antonio, see that you do not take any Lutherans into the Church with you!’ I [Possevino] said: ‘Prince, until they come to their senses we do not admit Lutherans, or have any converse with them whatsoever.’” *Moscovia*: 78.

³⁴² Himelick, 1963; Corbett, 1921: 57–63.

³⁴³ AAH, IV, c. 5: 154r–154v, quote on 154v. “[...] per troncare affatto ogni speranza, & ogni desiderio di pace, dee violare gli avversarij con segnalate ingiurie.”

readers of the *Apparato All'Historia* within parentheses if they realised that the ruin of family foundations paralleled the constitution of 'maometismo', or Islam. 'Maometismo' is certainly, a word with strong negative connotations in the authorship of Possevino.³⁴⁴

Cicero as the Point of Departure

The customs that Machiavelli is depicted as wanting to instigate are the prince's need to imitate tyrants and to consent to the reputation of cruelty. Thus, Machiavelli asserted that it would be more useful for the prince to be feared than loved, to mistrust friendship, and for the prince to cultivate the talents of the lion and the fox. Machiavelli also believed that princes should nurture the establishment of different factions and divisions in the state. The prince should commit mischievous acts with skill, deception, and damage to the subjects. These and other similar things, Possevino exclaimed, the unholy Machiavelli taught, who was an "enemy of nature, of justice, of religion, and sower of atheism."³⁴⁵ Along these lines, Machiavelli failed to meet the underlying evaluative criteria of *unum*, *verum* and *bonum*. Technically speaking, Machiavelli was considered an *exemplum ad dissuadendum*.³⁴⁶

Possevino made further use of the analogy of sowing seeds. In the *Cultura Degl'Ingeni* he referred to God as the sower of the good seeds, which are to be nurtured and cultivated with the co-operation of human free will. While discussing Machiavelli, he portrayed another less elevated sower. Machiavelli became the sower of atheism and as such a spokesman for resistance against the Catholic faith. In fact, early modern understandings of

³⁴⁴ AAH, IV, c. 5: 154v; SC: 69, BS, I, IX, c. 6: 571–574.

³⁴⁵ AAH, IV, c. 5: 154v–155r. "[...] nemico della natura, della giustizia, & della religione, & seminatore dell'Ateismo."

³⁴⁶ AAH, IV, c. 5: 154v.

atheism, both Catholic and Lutheran, were diverse in that it could mean pursuing immoral behaviour, lack of commitment to Church practice, defiance of Church doctrine, ridiculing sacred scripture, or yielding to superstition.³⁴⁷

Cicero, along with the Gospel of Matthew, was important for Possevino's elaboration on the analogy of the sower, who plants seeds of creative talents, *ingenia*, into the human being. Nonetheless, Possevino was far from alone, in working around ancient tropes influenced by Cicero. Erasmus, in his manual for the education of a Christian prince, *Institutio principis Christiani*, had made several references to Cicero's *De Oratore*. He also appreciated Aristotle's *Rhetoric* just as Possevino did. However, Erasmus' admiration for the Greek philosopher Plutarch (46–119) and the treatment of him as an *exemplum ad persuadendum* was incompatible with Possevino's advice for Christian nobles in the *Apparato All'Historia*. There, Plutarch was reproached for having called the *Histories* by Herodotus lies and fables, for having been biased in favour of the Thebans as well as for having written about his love of young boys.³⁴⁸

Like Possevino and Erasmus, Machiavelli too showed appreciation for Ciceronian literature, as *De Officiis* was especially important for treatises that dealt with governmental affairs. In *De Officiis*, Cicero decreed that all citizens should engage with creative talents, *ingenia*, to the service of the common good. All actions within the state, moreover, which manifest themselves as good, proves the prevalence of virtue. Just as Cicero had done, Machiavelli stressed the need for the prince to possess virtue in order to maintain the state. But for Cicero, a virtuous leader ought to avoid means of violence and avoid the brutality of the lion and the cunning guile of the fox.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Hunter, 1985: 135–157.

³⁴⁸ AAH, II, c. 2: 42r–43v; AAH, II, c. 16: 81r–82v. Corbett: 1921.

³⁴⁹ There is an interconnectness of *natura* and *ingenium* in Cicero's thinking, which is also observable in Cornelius Tacitus (c. 55–c. 120) writings. Before the arrival of printed editions of *De Officiis*, the work was commonly known from compilations such as the anonymously written *Moralium Dogma Philosophorum*, written during the fourteenth century, and *Summa Virtutum et Vitiurum* written by Guillaume Perrault (c. 1190–1271). Syson, 2009: 45; Skinner, 2015: 42–43, 145, 209 & 218.

In his encouragement of the prince to imitate the lion and the fox, Machiavelli emphasised the necessity for princes to act according to brutal methods given the dark times in which he lived. Machiavelli set up the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (r. 193–211) as his *exemplum imitandum* of a brutal and cunning leader. As Skinner confers, Machiavelli was well aware of the fact that he ridiculed Cicero by presenting a reversed analogy of the lion and the fox and he was, likewise, aware that his use of the concept of virtue was very different from other ancient and contemporary princely mirrors and guide-books.³⁵⁰

Machiavelli was controversial for his encouragement of violence and for his cynicism towards the gap between ideals and reality. The keeping of ideals and the fostering of virtues, especially justice, by the temporal ruler proved important to Possevino, whereas Machiavelli would submit to a different concept of virtue that would surrender to human weakness. Necessity became a cardinal virtue whatever the means might be, as long as the state is maintained. On such grounds, Machiavelli, contrary to Cicero and Possevino, judged that a prince was better off in maintaining the state if he was feared, rather than loved. This notwithstanding, neither Machiavelli nor Possevino unreservedly associated monarchy with tyranny as Cicero had done.³⁵¹

Concluding Remarks

The theories of the government of states, during the early modern period were diverse. Common denominators were the extensive use of rhetorical exempla, as well as the emphatic notion of ‘one’. This signals unity and indivisibility, which were desirable traits for governing. Machiavelli affirmed that states were often composed of a mixed government due to human corruption. Yet he thought it desirable that the state was governed by one prince. Paolo Sarpi,

³⁵⁰ Skinner, 2015: 145.

³⁵¹ Skinner, 2015: 146–147 & 395.

moreover, emphasised that the government of a state ought to be maintained by one supreme and absolute prince granted *iure divino*. The prince to Sarpi's understanding did not connote one person, as in the Machiavellian teaching, but a state – labelled republic by Sarpi – in its entirety.

To Possevino, a temporal state was better governed by one monarch, rather than a mixed government. His suggestions for the government of states bear no novelties regarding papal temporal authority, nor do the definitions of the concepts of *respublica*, prince, or virtue. Neither is the topic of removal of a tyrannical monarch through regicide touched upon. Nor did he make use of such a technical legal apparatus as Bellarmino and Sarpi did. Through Possevino's affirmation of medieval *auctoritates* as sufficient for the presentation of an alternative model to Machiavelli for the government of states, he safely manifested his adherence to medieval tradition, thereby declining the opportunity to project anti-Machiavellian tropes, as conducted by his confrere Ribadeneira. It is also worth noting that he did not, in the *Apparato All'Historia*, engage in a discussion about papal temporal authority in relation to temporal government.

He did often refer to Bellarmino, yet an explicit reference to his elaboration of papal *potestas indirecta* did not occur in Possevino's discussion of temporal government. This might be a sign that he did not fully agree with Bellarmino's premises regarding the certification of papal *potestas in temporalibus*. By comparing Possevino's writings during the Venetian Interdict this question will be answered, as will the question as to whether he can be seen to have altered his conclusions in the *Apparato All'Historia* when debating during the Interdict Controversy.

Part III. The Venetian Interdict (1606–1607)

In 1606, Pope Paul V placed an interdict on the Republic of Venice. The interdict forbade the celebration of Mass and distribution of sacraments in Venetian territory. The reason for placing an interdict on Venice was the laws enforced by the Republic of Venice, for constructing new Church buildings and devotional places, as well as the imprisonment of two clerics.³⁵² Placing the Republic of Venice under an interdict was nonetheless no novelty in its history. It had occurred five times before.³⁵³

For instance, in 1508 Pope Julius II (*sed.* 1503–1513) had placed an interdict on Venice due to its execution of its right to appoint a new bishop to the vacant seat of Vicenza, as well as refusing to surrender some enemies of Pope Julius who had taken refuge to Venice. The questions of jurisdiction and dominion over geographical areas were prevalent in the discussions that led to the interdict of 1508, and they were prevalent in the Interdict Controversy of 1606–1607.³⁵⁴

In the third part of this study, I will discuss the background to the Venetian Controversy of 1606–1607. In chapters seven and eight, I will provide a survey of Possevino's contribution to the *guerra delle scritture* – the war of writings. In chapters nine to fourteen, I will analyse topics from Possevino's authorship during the Interdict Controversy that concern authority in the world

³⁵² Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 5.

³⁵³ Venetian territory refers to a geographical area where Venetian jurisdiction is valid. Jurisdiction refers to an areas where a certain set of laws is valid. Norwich, 2003: 130; 172; 186–188; 360–362; 372–375. Cf. Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 5.

³⁵⁴ The outcome of this particular controversy, was that the League of Cambrai caused a severe defeat for the Republic at the Battle of Agnadello in 1509. Norwich, 2003: 394–413.

and the authority of God as well as the history of redemption from Moses, to Christ, and the Roman pontiff, the validity of the interdict, and the rhetorical argumentation with historical exempla.

Chapter 7. Background to the Venetian Interdict Controversy of 1606–1607

Much has been written about the extraordinary past of the city of Venice and its islands, hidden inside the lagoon and surrounded by 500 square kilometres of water from the rivers of Sile, Brenta, Po and Adige. Although on ancient land, the city of Venice is far younger than the communities on the mainland (the *terraferma*). During the invasions of the Lombards in 568, communities on the *terraferma* took their refuge in the islands of the Venetian lagoon and over time, settlements grew into small towns. The settlers were named *venetiae* who, in the beginning of the eighth century, were subject to the government of the Byzantine Empire through the Exarch of Ravenna.³⁵⁵

Yet, the Exarch of Ravenna was forced to give up his post due to the iconoclast controversy, which was spurred on by the puritan zeal of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741). After this episode, the northern parts of the Italian peninsula were left with independent communities that had little choice but to constitute new modes of government and new leadership. One story says that Venetians chose one Orso as *dux* – the military commander of a district – which in the Venetian tongue became *doge*.³⁵⁶

Contrary to the story of Orso (r. 726–737) as the first Venetian doge stands the story that the first doge was Paolo Anafesto who, in turn, negotiated a concord with the Lombard ruler Liutprand (r. 712–744). According to the historian John Julian Norwich, Paolo Anafesto should be equated with Paulus, Exarch of Ravenna, who indeed would have been the legitimate *dux* over the Venetian lagoon community, since Venice constituted a part of the Byzantine province on the Italian peninsula. But Anafesto, in Norwich's opinion, can hardly be considered as doge of an independent Venice. As will be seen further on in this study, the idea that Paolo Anafesto was the first doge of Venice was

³⁵⁵ Norwich, 2003: 5–13; Kazhdan, 2005[b].

³⁵⁶ Norwich, 2003: 5–14.

still prominent in narratives of the origins of the Republic of Venice during the Interdict Controversy of 1606–1607.³⁵⁷

During the medieval period, the Republic of Venice grew into a leading mercantile and maritime force in the Mediterranean through its close trading ties with the Byzantine Empire. During the Fourth Crusade in 1204 the Republic of Venice participated in ransacking Constantinople, which resulted in an increase in wealth. As Venice's wealth increased, so did its expansion of its geographical area. Crete, Corfu, Cyprus, and the coast of Dalmatia surrendered to the Republic of Venice, as did towns on the *terraferma*. Venetian towns on the *terraferma* were situated on the trading routes to the middle and northern areas of Europe. Towns such as Treviso, Ceneda, Belluno, Udine, Vicenza and Verona opened up new territories of trade. Towns on the *terraferma*, moreover, came to be crucial strongholds for the Republic, as it strengthened its military capabilities.³⁵⁸

During the fourteenth century and onwards, Venice became noted for its humanist and artistic milieu. This milieu was to be enhanced due to contributions by Byzantine exiles who had participated in the Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438–1445) and who had chosen to stay on the Italian peninsula after Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. One such exile was the Platonist scholar Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472), who subsequently made a generous donation of approximately nine hundred codices to the Republic of Venice, which became the foundation for the Biblioteca Marciana in central Venice.³⁵⁹

Eversince the medieval period, Jews had been permanently present in the Republic of Venice. In Crete, for instance, they built synagogues and founded communities. Nonetheless, they were obliged to wear the yellow

³⁵⁷ Norwich, 2003: 13–14 & 641; Pietro Giustiniani, *Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita ad annum MDLXXV*: 5–6. The title of Possevino's *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto all'avviso del Signor Quirino* reveals that this idea was prominent during the Interdict Controversy.

³⁵⁸ Bowd, 2010: 11–14.

³⁵⁹ Grafton, Most & Settsi 2010: 126 & 196; Bowd, 2010: 161–162; Moss, 1996: 59–61; Vergani, 1966: 32–37.

badge and were not allowed to own property outside of the borders of their communities. In Venice itself, they were refused permanent residency until the ghetto was set up in 1516. The ghetto was set up as Jews began to be valued, on the basis of their skills in money lending. Their skills were particularly sought-after due to the economic stagnation in trade since the fall of Constantinople, along with the growing mercantile competition of trade with the west.³⁶⁰

The Myth of Venice

In the sixteenth century, Doge Andrea Gritti (r. 1523–1538) launched a reform plan for the city of Venice called *renovatio urbis*, which was centred on the so-called ‘Myth of Venice’. Venice was to be portrayed as miraculously created by God on the waves of the Adriatic, conferring a taste of heavenly bliss. Since the Republic was known to be the most serene republic, *la Serenissima*, Gritti aimed to present the city as preserving *dignitas*, *honor*, and above all *pax*. Venice was to manifest its freedom from servitude imposed by other, external, lords, and achieve equal status to that of the ancient Republic of Rome, which Gritti even sought to outshine. Venice was to be portrayed as *altera Roma*, if not greater.³⁶¹ Furthermore, as Venice constituted a passage on the pilgrimage route to Holy Land, Gritti strove to display Venice as the New Jerusalem. In this fashion, the Doge’s Palace was to be transformed into a temple of justice with wisdom to discern good from bad, equivalent to Solomon’s Temple and the Venetian Senate. The Doge’s Palace was to be *the* institution for justice-in-action.³⁶²

Although the Myth of Venice was imbedded in early modern Venetian culture, it is not an easy concept to pin down as different aspects of the myth

³⁶⁰ Bowd, 2016: 1260–1266.

³⁶¹ Tafuri, 1995: 109–112; Fenlon, 2018: 114; Moretti, 2004: 163–164; Benzoni, 1991: 48–55. See Skinner, 2015: 289, for a definition of *libertas* according to Roman law and according to Roman historians.

³⁶² Benzoni, 1991: 54–55.

were brought to light. For instance, the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639), considered Venice to be more like ancient Rome than present day Rome and Gasparo Contarini pictured a bridge being raised from ancient Rome to Venice, in line with Gritti’s project of *renovatio urbis*. Guillaume Postel (1510–1581), on the other hand, portrayed Venice as the New Jerusalem, also in line with the project of *renovatio urbis*.³⁶³

There has been considerable debate amongst historians regarding the meaning of the myth, but the scholar Marion Leathers Kuntz has presented one of the better explanations of its core elements. Kuntz reasons that the kernel of the concept, is the blend between human and divine elements in the intertwining of the Doge’s Palace with the Basilica of Saint Mark (the doge’s private Church building). This blend was certainly embodied in Doge Gritti’s project of *renovatio urbis*.³⁶⁴

The ornate stonework on the Western façade of the Doge’s Palace, depicting Doge Francesco Foscari (r. 1423–1457) receiving the Ten Commandments from Saint Mark (whose relics rest in the Basilica), manifests the blend that Kuntz discusses. Here, Venetian law is portrayed as the continuation of the Ten Commandments, both administering justice. The image conveys that Venetian law is modelled on the Ten Commandments and that the doge has similar functions to Moses, functions that were political and religious. Mediating the Commandments to the doge, in the ornate stonework, is the Evangelist Saint Mark, patron saint of Venice. The fact that Saint Mark was of Levite origins underlines the continuity between Moses and the Republic of Venice.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ In Contarini’s notion, the mixed government of the Republic contained a perfectly balanced blend of democracy, represented by the *Maggio Consiglio*; oligarchy, represented by the Senate; and monarchy, represented by the doge. Jean Bodin, furthermore, also appreciated the mixed government of Venice. Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 23–27.

³⁶⁴ Leather Kuntz, 2006: 151; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 20–21.

³⁶⁵ According to the tradition of the diocese of Aquileia, the Evangelist Mark came to Aquileia where he founded a diocese, thus inaugurating the succession of patriarchs of Aquileia. Through the Schism of the Three-Chapters in the sixth century, the diocese split in two. One patriarch resided at Aquileia and one resided at Grado. In 1451, the patriarch of Grado transferred to Venice where the relics of Saint Mark had already rested since 828, when they were brought

Apart from the connection between Moses and Saint Mark, Venetian historiography emphasises two historical events that reinforce the Myth of Venice. One of these events was the Peace Treaty of 1177 in Venice between Pope Alexander III (*sed.* 1159–1181) and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190). The other event of significant importance to Venetian historiography was the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.³⁶⁶

The Venetian side of the story of the Peace Treaty of 1177, is illustrated in Pietro Giustiniani's (c. 1510–1576) *Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita ad annum 1575*. It reads that Pope Alexander was vexed by Barbarossa's raids on the Italian peninsula. The pope, allegedly, fled to the Dalmatian coast and eventually sailed into Venice in disguise, where he hid in the monastery of Santa Maria della Carità. During the celebration of Mass, however, he was recognised and instantly the Venetian government held a council as to whether to assist the pope against Barbarossa or not. In the end, Venice decided to aid the pope and launched its fleet to fight the imperial navy.³⁶⁷

Venice won the battle and through the mediation of Doge Sebastiano Ziani (r. 1172–1178), Pope Alexander and Emperor Barbarossa were able to settle a peace treaty. According to the narrative of Giustiniani the pope, as a token of gratitude for having saved the Catholic Church from imperial fury, gave Doge Ziani a golden ring saying that through papal authority the Adriatic Sea is perpetually declared submissive to Venice. Giustiniani writes that the pope exhorted that the ceremony of their union is to be repeated annually. Consequently, every year on Ascension Day, the doge sailed out of the lagoon and dropped a ring into the sea, sealing the illustrious marriage between the *Serenissima* and the Adriatic Sea. This ritual was a salient aspect of Venetian Catholicism. Although paramount in Venetian historiography, the story of the

from Alexandria to the Basilica of Saint Mark. Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 22–23; Leather Kuntz, 2006: 161.

³⁶⁶ Fenlon, 1991: 375.

³⁶⁷ Giustiniani, 1575: 33–34. De Vivo, 2003: 160–164; De Vivo mentions the fourteenth century document *Historia Ducum Veneticorum*, incorporated into Venice's official record the *Libro pactorum*, which narrates of the events surrounding the Peace Treaty of 1177.

intervention by Venice in the Peace Treaty of 1177 was disputed by Cesare Baronio in his *Annales Ecclesiastici*.³⁶⁸

Apart from the Peace Treaty of 1177, the other important historical event in Venetian historiography was the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 when the Christian League, summoned by Pope Pius V and the Spanish King Philip II (r. 1556–1598), won a decisive victory against the Turks. This victory would not have been won without the Venetian fleet. Therefore, in the refurbished Doge's Palace, the iconography of the Battle of Lepanto became conspicuous in the overall impression of the rooms and chambers in the sanctuary of Venetian politics.³⁶⁹

The Battle of Lepanto occurred on the feast of Saint Giustina, October 7, which had a minor role in the Roman calendar but a prominent place in the Venetian calendar. In fact, the Venetian Senate decreed that a solemn procession was to be held on this day from 1572 onwards, starting at the piazza of Saint Mark and ending at the Church of Santa Giustina. Although the Venetian calendar only marginally deviated from that of the Roman calendar, the feast of Saint Giustina marks this deviation. Particular attention, in the Venetian calendar, was of course also given to the Feast of Saint Mark on April 25.³⁷⁰

Venetian Catholicism is also singled out for its focus on the doge, who embodied the monarchical aspect of the mixed government. The doge's authority over internal administration was notably diminished when compared to most rulers of European states. Due to this fact, Venice sought to corroborate the prestige of the ducal office through public ceremony. Whenever he

³⁶⁸ Giustiniani, 1575: 34; Norwich, 2003: 115–116. See Baronio, 1608: 850.

³⁶⁹ Tintoretto's large allegory – where the figures of Pope Pius, Philip II, Doge Alvise I Mocenigo (r. 1570–1577), the Virgin Mary, and Saint Giustina all constitute components in the composition – as well as Palma il Giovane's (c. 1548–1628) votive picture (where largely the same collection of characters, as in Tintoretto's allegory, are present) are examples of the deep effects that this military victory had on the Myth of Venice. Giustiniani, *Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita ad annum MDLXXV*: 437–468; Fenlon, 1991: 375–393.

³⁷⁰ Fenlon, 1991: 389–392. Moreover, Pius V introduced the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in the Roman rite, which was to be celebrated on October 7, commemorating the Battle of Lepanto. In fact, the liturgy in the Venetian state derived from Aquileia which, along with most local rites, was suspended in favour of the *Ritus Romanus* after the Council of Trent.

made public appearances, the doge was escorted by Venetian dignitaries and on the day of his election he was carried around the *Piazza di San Marco* in a chair, *il pozzetto*, akin to the papal ceremony whereby the pope was carried around in the *sedia gestatoria*. As follows, the decrease in executive authority of the doge was compensated for by an increase in ceremonial pomp.³⁷¹

The commemoration of events, imbedded in Venetian Catholicism, was all connected to the Myth of Venice, but outside of the Republic less flattering opinions circulated about Venice and its people. The two Florentine humanists Machiavelli and Guicciardini held that Venetians were arrogant and self-sufficient cowards.³⁷² Camilio Borghese (1552–1621), later Paul V, who eventually placed the interdict on Venice in 1606 objected to the Venetian claim of supremacy on the Adriatic Sea. The historian Filippo De Vivo writes that a conversation took place between Borghese and Leonardo Donà (1536–1612; r. 1606–1612), the future doge of Venice. During the conversation, Borghese asked to see the official document that confirmed Venice's status as supreme ruler of the Adriatic. Donà replied that the document that confirmed the privilege of Venice's supremacy on the Adriatic, was to be found on the rear side of the Donation of Constantine.³⁷³

Several early modern descriptions of the Myth of Venice praised the mixed government of the Republic of Venice, often idealising the balance between monarchic, oligarchic and democratic elements. In effect, the governing of the Venetian State in the early modern period did not exhibit an equal share of these elements, as measures were taken to strengthen the oligarchic element at the expense of the other two. During this time popular acclamation changed to popular involvement in the election of a new doge, which was a sign of a move towards strengthening the centre of the political body.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ After 1204, the sack of Constantinople was commemorated every year in Venice during Mass on December 6 in the presence of the doge. Fenlon, 1991: 389–392; Norwich, 2017: 110; Bouwsma, 1990: 301.

³⁷² Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 27.

³⁷³ De Vivo, 2003: 176.

³⁷⁴ Norwich, 2017: 110.

At the top of the Venetian hierarchy, at least symbolically, was the doge, who was elected for life. In order to counteract corruption, an intricate system for the election of a new doge had been devised by the Venetian government that was as tedious as it was complicated. It contained several steps for nominating, voting, and reducing candidates in procedures that took place behind closed doors.³⁷⁵ Measures for counteracting corruption around ducal authority were inculcated with even greater force since Doge Marin Falier (r. 1354–1355) had attempted to overthrow the constitutional order. An attempt which cost him his life, as well as perpetually being remembered as a traitor. Eventually, precautions that would strengthen the oligarchic element of Venice's mixed government were taken after the dogeship of Falier. This is recognisable in the institutions of the *Maggior Consiglio*, the Senate, the Council of Ten, the *Signoria* and the *Collegio*. The largest of these institutions was the *Maggior Consiglio*, consisting of 2000 members that voted on proposals on behalf of the Republic.³⁷⁶

Venetian Reform Movements

Dedication to Church reform constitutes another aspect of the history of the Veneto region. For instance, Marsilius of Padua, whose writing *Defensor Pacis*, published in 1324, considered reforms of ecclesiastical structures. This work contained such severe criticism of the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff that he had to seek refuge at the Bavarian court.³⁷⁷ Church reform was also what drove the early modern Venetian camaldolese monks Tommaso

³⁷⁵ For an excellent presentation of the procedure of electing a doge, see Norwich, 2003: 166–167.

³⁷⁶ Where a portrait of Falier should hang, in the Doge's Palace, is instead a black painted tablet accompanied with the words: *hic est locus Marini Faledri decapitati pro criminibus*. Norwich, 2017: 223–229. Moreover, the Senate, comprising of more than 120 members, attended to legislation whereas the members of the Council of Ten – elected by the *Maggior Consiglio* every six months – attended to investigations in order to prevent corruption within the government. Norwich, 2003: 153 & 282–283; Rösch, 2000: 68.

³⁷⁷ The *Defensor Pacis*, in turn, had an impact on the conciliarist theories of the fifteenth century. Oakley, 2003: 27.

Giustiniani (1476–1528) and Vincenzo Querini (1479–1514), in 1513, to propose a reform of the Roman Curia in their writing *Libellus ad Leonem X*. Gasparo Contarini supervised the composition of another proposal of Church reform, the *Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia* (1536), addressed to Pope Paul III. Contarini was also a member of the *spirituali* movement, which also included Reginald Pole – the future cardinal and archbishop of Canterbury – and the poet Marcantonio Flaminio (1498–1550).³⁷⁸

These clerics joined together in an informal setting at the Benedictine Church of Santa Giustina in Padua and on the island of Alga in Venice to discuss Church reform and the doctrine of justification by faith alone. An apprehensive attitude towards popular devotion and hesitancy about the sacrament of confession was characteristic of the *spirituali*, which cast suspicions at the Roman Curia of crypto-Protestantism. In time, Pole and Flaminio, the more avid supporters of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, relocated at Viterbo where the *spirituali* manifesto *Il Beneficio di Christo* was composed. In 1546, however, the Council of Trent anathematised the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This eventually led to the dissolution of the *spirituali* movement, but its legacy would prevail amongst the *giovani* of Venice into the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century.³⁷⁹

The *giovani* began to emerge as a political force, a decade after the Battle of Lepanto and the loss of Cyprus in 1571. Amongst the *giovani* were Paolo Sarpi, Antonio Querini, Cesare Cremonini (1550–1631) (professor at the University of Padua) and the future doges Leonardo Donà and Nicolò Contarini (r. 1630–1631). Their main place of meeting was at the Ridotto Morosini in

³⁷⁸ The Sack of Rome in 1527 had brought some of the young reform-minded men to Venice who earlier had gathered in the Oratory of Divine Love at Rome. At Venice, however, it became noticeable that their ideas of reform was not congenial anymore. Thus, Contarini, Pole, Giberti, and Flaminio sought to reform the Church in other ways than Gian Pietro Carafa, later Pope Paul IV (1476–1559, *sed.* 1555–1559). Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 4–8.

³⁷⁹ The diplomatically-minded Contarini did not withdraw to seclusion, but sought to bring the Lutherans and Calvinists back into the fold of the Catholic Church at the Diet of Regensburg in 1541. Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 23–32; Benzoni, 1991: 53.

Venice, home to the Morosini family. At the Ridotto, the *giovani* were often visited by people such as Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and Giordano Bruno (1548–1600). Just as their predecessors the *spirituali*, the *giovani* sought to implement reform but with a greater concern for the day-to-day business of the state. The *spirituali*, on the other hand, had had no such political influence. Unlike their antagonists, the *vecchi*, the *giovani* wished to expand further on the *terraferma*. The *vecchi*, for their part, were anxious not to challenge the Papal States and the Spanish king in expanding Venice's *terraferma* dominion.³⁸⁰

Unlike the *vecchi*, there were elements of anti-clericalism amongst the *giovani* who held a strong anti-Jesuit position. Nevertheless, the *giovani* were not religiously lax. They had a fervour and a zeal of piety and devotion, much like the *spirituali*. The *giovani* can be said to have presented a new spirit, which was attuned to the refurbished Doge's Palace with its memories of the Battle of Lepanto rather than with the Venetian Gothic style of the old palace. This spirit grew strong during the dogeship of Nicolò da Ponte (r. 1578–1585) as the influence of the *giovani* on Venetian politics increased. Although they were less concerned with holding on to old alliances, the fear of Spanish influence on Venetian politics led to diplomatic relations with England and France. The *giovani*, moreover, firmly opposed the idea that bishops should first be theologians. Rather, bishops should maintain order according to Venetian law. Consequently and contrary to the *vecchi*, the *giovani* in power appointed laymen to be patriarchs. The first amongst laymen to assume the title of patriarch of Venice was Lorenzo Priuli (*sed.* 1591–1600).³⁸¹

The *giovani*'s influence on Venetian politics, would be even more distinct in 1606 when Doge Donà appointed Sarpi as official counsellor to the

³⁸⁰ Bouwsma, 1968: 193–236; 271–292; 397 & 411; De Vivo, 2006: 38; 47–48; Wright, 1974: 549–550; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 30–32.

³⁸¹ Bouwsma, 1968: 232–292; 360; 411; Wright, 1974: 549–550. Rivero, 2014: 62–78; De Vivo, 2006: 38–43; Reeves 2009: 64. If, however, the patriarch opposed an appointment of an ecclesiastical office, he was required to find an agreement with the Council of Ten before an appointment could be altered. Bouwsma, 1968: 76–80.

Venetian Senate. Following this appointment, Sarpi became deeply involved in the *guerra delle scritte*, during which he wrote that there are some precepts declared by the Roman pontiff that are not valid and neither is “the Sacred Council of Trent observed nor is it valid in many provinces and in many Christian realms.”³⁸² Sarpi blamed the Council of Trent for not appreciating the Church in classical antiquity, which was Sarpi’s ideal (as well as the ideal of the *spirituali* movement) since he pictured the early Church to have been decentralised and directed by lay people. Centralisation, on the contrary, was depicted by Sarpi as a slow process of continuous usurpation of political authority by primarily the bishops, whose authority in turn became usurped by the Roman pontiff.³⁸³

The Church, to Sarpi’s notion, had gone from a free *respublica* to being chained by tyrannical papal authority. The deterioration had commenced, Sarpi claimed, with the barbaric invasions and throughout the medieval period, popes had strengthened centralisation in the Church and thereby steered it to further decay. In truth, the historical description by Sarpi was used as a weapon against Baronio’s *Annales Ecclesiastici* which Sarpi considered to be composed to advance the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff *de iure divino*. As William Bouwsma has pointed out, Sarpi’s historiographical approach resembles the cynical attitude which was imbedded in the Machiavelian trope that the loss of liberty on the Italian peninsula, was due to the usurpation of authority by the Roman pontiff.³⁸⁴

³⁸² Sarpi, 1763[b]: 153 [...] Il Sacro Concilio di Trento non si serve, e non obbliga in molte Provincie, e molti Regni Cristiani.” In Sarpi’s *Istoria del Concilio tridentino*, published in London in 1619 under the pseudonym Pietro Polano, he presented the German Protestant Johannes Sleidan as an *exemplum ad persuadendum* for having written well about the time of the Council of Trent. Sarpi, *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino*: 2–3. See Bouwsma, 1968: 358–359; Kern, 2016: 379; Rivero: 62–64; Keenan, 2015: 746.

³⁸³ Bouwsma, 1968: 572–608.

³⁸⁴ Bouwsma considers Sarpi’s *Istoria* to be a continuation of Guicciardini’s *Storia d’Italia*. Bouwsma, 1968: 572–610.

The *giovani* and the Jesuits

After having been appointed to the post of official counsellor to the Venetian Senate, one of Sarpi's first suggestions was to banish the papal nuncio to Venice, along with the Jesuits, from Venetian territory. The *giovani* were particularly hostile towards Jesuits and sided with the Dominicans in the *Auxiliis* dispute, surely with motives that were equally doctrinal and political. Most of the *giovani* disliked Jesuits, since they were considered a threat to Venetian independence due to their close ties to the Roman pontiff. During the Interdict Controversy, the Theatines and Capuchins were also expelled.³⁸⁵

Nonetheless, Venice holds a special place in the historiography of the Society of Jesus, since the first Jesuits were ordained to the priesthood in Venice in 1537. In Venice, the Jesuits gave spiritual care to prostitutes, the poor and the sick. After their ordination, they travelled around the Veneto region to recruit new members. In 1552, they founded a college at Padua, initially teaching grammar to twenty students at Santa Maria Maddalena, which had previously housed the Teutonic Knights.³⁸⁶

The founding of the college led to competition with the University of Padua, which had been the only institution in the Republic of Venice that offered university courses in theology since the fifteenth century. The theological faculty held lectures mostly for students of the mendicant orders. Dominicans taught theology and metaphysics according to the *via antiqua* and Franciscans and Augustinians taught according to the *via moderna*.³⁸⁷

At the Jesuit College the *Constitutions*, written by Ignatius of Loyola, stated that students of the Jesuits could live in colleges where they were provided with food and time to study.³⁸⁸ The Jesuits depended on donors to fund

³⁸⁵ Bouswma, 1968: 572–610.

³⁸⁶ In 1550, Pope Julius III granted permission to the Jesuits to teach at Padua. Bouwsma, 1968: 254; O'Malley, 1993: 33–34 & 166; Wright, 1974: 546.

³⁸⁷ Grendler, 2017: 31.

³⁸⁸ Members of the Society of Jesus who had completed their studies lived in professed houses, where food was not supplied. O'Malley, 2013: 196.

the colleges, and enrolment was free of tuition. Contrary to university practices, Ignatius firmly prohibited corporal punishment of students. This helped to preserve cordial bonds between teachers and students.³⁸⁹

In the early days of the Padua College, it was common for students to hear lectures at both the University and at the Jesuit College. Eventually, tensions emerged as Benedetto Palmio, Jesuit superior to the Venetian Province, expressed his dislike of the comingling between Catholic and German Lutheran students inside and outside the lecture halls of the University. Palmio also disapproved of the reading of Aristotle according to the interpretation of scholastic scholars by the University's medical department. The University, however, considered the Jesuits' method and tradition of studying Aristotle outdated.³⁹⁰

In 1516, Pietro Pomponazzi had not only written *De immortalitate animae*, he had also taught on the mortality of the soul at the University of Padua. The teaching was based on the Aristotelian commentaries by Alexander Aphrodisias (third century). This spurred debate as to whether natural philosophy could demonstrate the immortality of the soul, which was advocated by the Catholic Church. This doctrine was decreed after the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517). Ostensibly, the University of Padua had not surrendered to the authorities of the Church because fifty odd years prior to the Fifth Lateran Council professors, such as Cesare Cremonini, carried on teaching Aristotle in the tradition of Pomponazzi and would continue to do so throughout the sixteenth century.³⁹¹

Moreover, in 1591, the University of Padua decided to allow German sermons to be preached for German students. Possevino, like Palmio, com-

³⁸⁹ O'Malley, 2013: 206–210; Carlsmith, 2002: 227 & 239. The highest salaries at the University of Padua, were granted to canonists, teaching law students. Grendler, 2002: 447.

³⁹⁰ Ever since the thirteenth century, German merchants had a quarter of their own at Venice called the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Grendler, 2017: 31–36 & 394–395.

³⁹¹ Grendler, 2017: 394–395; Grendler, 2002: 293–309; Bianchi-Giovini, 1849: 123.

plained about the number of German students at the University of Padua. Although the University was renowned for attracting foreign students, the majority of students were, still, from the Italian peninsula. Even so, the Germans constituted well over thirty percent of the students enrolled at the University. Indeed, the German *nation* comprised students from present-day Germany as well as students from Bohemia and Vienna. The students of the University outnumbered the students at the Jesuit College. In 1591 the University counted 1500 students, compared with 470 enrolled at the Jesuit College. This student number was nevertheless the largest in the Venetian Jesuit province.³⁹²

The growing number of students taught by the Jesuits came to be considered a threat to the University and discussions arose as to whether the Jesuits taught at Padua by the authority of the Venetian Senate or by authority of the Roman pontiff and therefore the authority of a foreign temporal ruler. Discussions were held by the Venetian Senate, ultimately leading to a ban on Jesuits teaching students who were enrolled at the University of Padua, leaving them to teach only their own seminarians. Further legislative measures restricted the implementation of Jesuit culture on Venetian soil. Accusations in the Venetian tongue were raised that the Jesuits were loyal to the Spanish monarch Philip II, implying loyalty amongst the Jesuits to foreign temporal rulers.³⁹³

Due to this hostility in the Republic of Venice, the General Superior of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Acquaviva, considered a relocation of the college and a reduction of its teaching activities. Possevino voiced his disagreement in a reply to a speech by Cesare Cremonini. In the *Risposta al Cremonini*, Possevino argued against allegations made by the *giovani* faction. In keeping

³⁹² Donnelly, 1982: 46–47; Grendler, 2017: 52; Carlsmith, 2002: 230. In 1591, the Jesuits were admitted by Pope Gregory XIII to establish a college at Bergamo. Cf. Carlsmith, 2010: 182.

³⁹³ The Hapsburg emperors were traditionally enemies of Venice, as Venice often sided with France in matters of foreign political affairs. Donnelly, 1982: 46–47; Grendler, 2017: 52–58 & 119; Norwich, 2003: 435.

with the rhetoric of the sixteenth century, Cremonini had put forward historical exempla which Possevino found erroneous. In the end, Possevino's reply, in which he argued in favour of the good morals of Jesuit teachers and their readiness to hear confession, had no impact on the Venetian Senate's decision to suppress the college.³⁹⁴

The Reasons for the Interdict

In the early hours of June 7 1606 the Jesuits who lived in Venice were escorted to two boats that took them out of the Republic. The exiled Jesuits wore crucifixes and held lit candles in their hands as they said their goodbyes to a mourning crowd that included many women over whom the Jesuits had had a profound influence. Indeed, many women went to confession in tears at the Jesuit house on the day of their departure. Noble women, nuns, and servants alike would prove to be amongst the strongest supporters of the Roman pontiff during the Interdict Controversy and wives reproached their husbands, who went to Mass, for not observing the Interdict.³⁹⁵

On June 14, 1606, Sarpi made notes about the Jesuits. In his notes, he asserted that the Jesuits were welcomed with benefices when they settled in Venice. The Jesuits, Sarpi added, did not show any signs of gratitude, and as they were wickedly disposed, they seduced other religious orders in Venice to follow their bad example and spoke ill of the Republic from their pulpits. In fact, the aversion to Jesuits which led to their expulsion, is called an 'ideology'

³⁹⁴ After the suppression of the College at Padua, Possevino again attempted to persuade the Venetian authorities to re-open the Jesuit teaching institution. John Patrick Donnelly, who has devoted much research to Possevino's correspondence, concludes that an anonymous exhortation that argues in favour of allowing the Jesuits to teach was authored by Possevino. The title of the anonymously written text is: *Ragioni, le quali hanno mosso questa nobilissima città di Padova a tener publico consiglio et determinar il dì Giugno 1594 di pregar il Ser.mo Prencipe et Ecc.mo Senato della Republica a restituire alla città le scuole della Compagnia di Giesù per loro Gioventù et di molti nobili di altre città et nationi che lo desideranno*. Donnelly, 1982: 46–47. See Grendler, 2017: 60–71, 72–78 & 130–141 & 153; Bianchi-Giovini, 1849: 123.

³⁹⁵ De Vivo, 2007: 191–192. On August 18, the Venetian government prohibited women and men from having contact with Jesuits and Venetian families were not allowed to send their children to Jesuits schools. Reeves, 2009: 74; Bouswma, 1968: 386; De Vivo, 2007: 175–176.

by scholar Paul F. Grendler, implying ideas held against the Jesuits that were not based on facts. To Grendler the adversaries of the Jesuits were mostly concerned with Jesuit teaching, as that activity was the major basis for spreading treason and theories of regicide, in the service of the Spanish king.³⁹⁶

There were several factors that contributed to the Interdict of 1606–1607, including a long history of conflicts between Venice and Rome. When the interdict was placed, however, there were various formal causes declared by Pope Paul V. These included the laws that prohibited construction of new Church buildings without consent from Venetian governors, as well as the imprisonment of clerics by acts of a civil tribunal. These actions were interpreted by the Roman pontiff as infringing upon the authority that should have been exerted by the Catholic Church.

The *Serenissima* held control of the affairs of the Church, appointing Venetians to important ecclesiastical positions. Two ecclesiastical positions were more important than others. The first was the patriarchate of Venice. The second was the patriarchate of Aquileia, with a revenue of 20 000 ducats each year. Its ecclesiastical jurisdiction encompassed Padua, Treviso, Vicenza, and Verona. However, there were dioceses on the *terraferma* that were out of Venice's control, such as Brescia and Bergamo. These dioceses were incorporated into the Archdiocese of Milan, whose archbishop during the immediate post-Tridentine period was Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584). Borromeo had different priorities for reform than those of the Venetian state. For example, he sought to strengthen episcopal authority by putting female convents under the jurisdiction of dioceses instead of under a corresponding male convent. In the Republic of Venice, on the other hand, lay people commonly supervised female convents.³⁹⁷ Moreover, the inquisition within the Archdiocese of Milan involved inquisitors, bishops as well as the Spanish king, but in the Republic of

³⁹⁶ Sarpi, 1763[a]: 134–135; Grendler, 2017: 143–150.

³⁹⁷ Giorgio Chittolini writes that out of 111 bishops on the Venetian *terraferma*, 85 were Venetian patricians between 1405 and 1550. Chittolini, 2012: 478. See Wright, 1974: 537–540.

Venice the inquisition was under the supervision of government officials. Thus, in the Venetian territory multiple jurisdictions operated in parallel.³⁹⁸

Fourteenth century laws forbade construction of new Church buildings and other ecclesiastical edifices within Venetian dominions without the approval of the Venetian government, as well as receiving benefices from foreigners. Subsequently, in the fifteenth century, Venice started taxing ecclesiastical income and property. Furthermore, in 1602, the Senate passed a law that made it difficult for ecclesiastics to return Church property leased on emphyteusis contracts, if improvements had been made by lay leaseholders.³⁹⁹

In 1605, another law was decreed that prevented the Church from maintaining property. The law stated that lay owners could lease land to the Church for no more than two years and thereafter the land had to be sold to another layman. These laws suggest disagreement between the Venetian state and the Church about the use of the substantial revenues from monasteries to contribute to military costs. This was an urgent matter for Venice, since it suffered a decline in trading income at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A food crisis between 1590 and 1591 also meant that the Republic was anxious to keep as much land and revenue as possible within their control.⁴⁰⁰

Apart from the laws that restricted the Church in Venice, the abbot of Nervesa, Marcantonio Brandolin Valdemarin, was imprisoned on charges of murder and theft in 1605. The canon Scipione Saracino from Vicenza was arrested by Venetian custodians on charges of having violated the Republic, since he had torn down a public manifesto. Saracino was also accused of having committed abuses against his own nieces. The imprisonment of clerics fuelled hostility between Rome and Venice.⁴⁰¹

On Christmas Day 1605, the papal nuncio presented a brief from Pope Paul to the Venetian government in which Venice was told to revoke its laws

³⁹⁸ Wright, 1974: 542–550.

³⁹⁹ Bouwsma, 1968: 78–79 & 344.

⁴⁰⁰ Bouwsma, 1968: 343–345; Grendler, 2017: 142.

⁴⁰¹ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 35–36.

controlling ecclesiastical property. Another brief had been dispatched from Rome to the nuncio, along with the brief that was presented to the Venetian government, but that did not reach government officials until the end of February. Additionally, over Christmas 1605 Doge Marino Grimani (r. 1595–1605) passed away, leaving the ducal office vacant. It would take until January 10 for Leonardo Donà to be elected as the new doge of Venice. During the interim between the two doges, the papal brief was left unread. On April 16 1606, silence was broken as Pope Paul gave the Republic twenty-four days to withdraw from their position, before Venetian territory would become an excommunicated area. On May 6, instead of submitting, Doge Donà published a protest to the threats of an interdict. The protest was addressed to ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Republic, which, effectively, sentenced the Republic of Venice to excommunication.⁴⁰²

The majority of the citizens, lay people and clerics alike, did not follow the proscriptions of the interdict. Amongst clerics who were loyal to the Roman pontiff remained the patriarch of Aquileia along with the bishops of Treviso, Ceneda and Verona as well as the bishops on the Venetian *terraferma* who were subject to the Archbishopric of Milan. Even priests on the *terraferma* showed their distaste for the actions of the Venetian lords, with some proposing war, others calling the doge a Calvinist or the devil. In order to convert those who were loyal to the Roman pontiff, the Venetian government used income taken from former properties of the Jesuits to pay for the preaching sermons in favour of the Republic of Venice. In some cases, priests and lay people who expressed sympathy for the interdict were arrested.⁴⁰³

Even though the interdict on the Republic of Venice was limited to its people, its impact stretched beyond the confines of the Italian peninsula. In Spain, the king proved a firm supporter of the Roman pontiff, whereas Venice was supported by King James I of England. Through the ambassador Sir

⁴⁰² Bouswma, 1968: 339–346 & 355; Reeves, 2009: 74; Norwich, 2003: 511–513.

⁴⁰³ Bouswma, 1968: 384; De Vivo, 2007: 188–194.

Henry Wotton, King James followed the events of the controversy. Wotton even hoped that Venice would become Protestant, as he detected similarities between Sarpi's notion of absolute sovereignty for Venice and James's thoughts on the topic. Both were suspicious of Jesuits. Support for Venice was also voiced in the Polish dioceses of Warsaw and Cracow, but Venice's most committed supporter was France. King Henry could not, however, promise any military support as he had recently made peace with the Roman pontiff and the Catholic nations that were loyal to Rome. The peace was still too delicate to be jeopardised.⁴⁰⁴

La Guerra delle scritture

The *guerra delle scritture* – the war of writings – during the Interdict Controversy of 1606 and 1607 involved cardinals, clerics, and lay people, who seized the opportunity to express their views on topics such as theology, philosophy, and political theory. In a sense, the intellectual traditions of the sixteenth century came together in this written war. In this war, clerics fought the anticlerical, civil lawyers fought canon lawyers and members of religious orders fought each other.

The format of the writings varied from circulation of letters in networks, transcriptions of speeches, *avvisi* – manuscript newsletters – and pamphlets. Pamphlets were the most common format of writings during the Interdict Controversy, since they were easier to produce – up to a thousand a day could be printed. As demand increased during the *guerra delle scritture*, pamphlets became cheaper to produce and prices dropped.⁴⁰⁵

One of the main reasons that this war reached different levels of society was the language in which it was fought. The language used in the *guerra delle scritture* was predominately the Renaissance Italian that Pietro Bembo

⁴⁰⁴ King James' thought on absolute monarchy was to be materialised in June of 1606 in the Oath of Allegiance. Tutino, 2010: 113; Oakley, 2003: 146–147; Bouswma, 1968: 392–407.

⁴⁰⁵ De Vivo, 2006: 37–46; De Vivo, 2007: 177–181.

(1470–1547) had argued in favour of in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525). The Jesuits, in particular, had contended that useful texts should be translated into the vernacular language. Yet, books in the vernacular with doctrinal content were disliked by the Roman Curia because they were intended for those who could not read Latin. The circulation of writings did not please the Venetian government either, since it had chosen a strategy of silence and denial of the interdict⁴⁰⁶

The steady circulation of writings also kept the Venetian censors on their toes, as they worked hard to suppress rumours of the interdict so that no division would threaten the unity of the Venetian state. The purpose of the Venetian censors was to protect the strategy, chosen by members of the government, of *damnatio memoriae* of the interdict. Eventually, however, they would deviate from their initial position, as they subsidised Venetian pamphlets such as Querini's *Aviso delle ragioni della Repubblica di Venetia intorno alle difficoltà che Le sono promosse dalla Santità di Paolo V*, and sent copies to be distributed for free amongst Venetian clerics. They also ordered copies of the *Aviso* to be sent to foreign courts.⁴⁰⁷

Despite the initial efforts of the Venetian government to diminish the impact of the papal ban, the *guerra delle scritture* escalated and Venice received a constant supply of books in defence of its cause. The Venetian ambassador to France, Pietro Priuli (1568–1613), supplied his compatriots with literature written by the conciliarist theorists William of Ockham, John of Paris (c. 1255–1306) and Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420).⁴⁰⁸ Many writings during the Interdict Controversy were printed and published in Venice. In Venice, there were printers, such as Ciotti – who printed the *Apparato All'Historia* in

⁴⁰⁶ Kern, 2016: 382–383.

⁴⁰⁷ Paolo Sarpi's *Considerationi sopra le censure della Santità di Papa Paolo V, contra la Serenissima Republica di Venetia del P. M. Paulo da Venetia dell'Ordine de Servi* (Venice: 1606) was authorised by the Venetian government. De Vivo, 2007: 219–228; Oakley, 1996: 387; Bouswma, 1968: 397–399.

⁴⁰⁸ The conciliarist tradition of the fifteenth century was as valid for Sarpi as for Huguenot writers such as François Hotman and Theodore Beza (1519–1605). Oakley, 2003: 152 & 227–228.

1598 – who were hired by pro-Venetian authors. The majority of the printing houses were still loyal to Rome, however, outside of Venice, Mantua and Bologna were strongholds for the opponents of the Venetian government during the controversy, an opposition that was in many ways directed by Possevino.⁴⁰⁹

The *guerra delle scritture* was not, however, discontinued when the interdict was lifted in April 1607. Anti-papal writings were still printed by the Venetian presses and anti-Venetian publications came from elsewhere, containing much of the rhetoric that was customary during the Interdict Controversy. Some writings stated the true name of the authors, whereas other writings were published under pseudonyms and some were anonymously written, just as in the days of the Interdict Controversy.⁴¹⁰

The Lifting of the Interdict

By 1607 the fear of a full-scale war between the allies of the Papal States and the Venetian Republic convinced the majority of representatives in the Venetian government that the time had come for negotiations about lifting the interdict. The representative of Henry IV of France, Cardinal François de Joyeuse (1562–1615), won the approval of the Venetians to mediate. The negotiations subsequently resulted in the transfer of the imprisoned clerics to France rather than to Rome. During the negotiations, Venice never formally asked the pope to lift the interdict, since such a request would have implied acknowledgment of its validity. Neither would they revoke the laws that complicated maintenance of ecclesiastical property. In Rome, moreover, Pope

⁴⁰⁹ Bouswma, 1968: 375–403; Tutino, 2010: 44 & 110. De Vivo notes that a translation of Bernard of Clairvaux’s letter to Pope Eugene III, in which the former rebuked the temporal concerns of the Roman pontiff, was printed by Ciotti in order to draw parallels between Bernard and Venice on the one hand, and Pope Eugene and Pope Paul V on the other. Moreover, Possevino, wrote his pamphlets in Bologna and it was there that he awaited the arrival of the Franciscan friar Marcantonio Capello. See *Lettera del Padre Antonio Possevino Giesuita al Padre Maestro Marc’Antonio Capello Minor Conventuale con la risposta di detto padre*.

⁴¹⁰ Keenan, 2015: 764–766; Reeves, 2009: 75; De Vivo, 2006: 44; Oakley, 1996: 387.

Paul made inquiries to Joyeuse about the possibility of readmitting the Jesuits to the Republic of Venice. The reply from Venice was, unsurprisingly, in the negative. Nevertheless, Pope Paul lifted the interdict on April 21 1607. Venice, for its part, revoked its formal protest against the interdict.⁴¹¹

One contributing factor to the lifting of the interdict was that the Roman pontiff did not wish to increase Spanish influence over the affairs of the Church, nor did he want to encourage Spain to declare war against Venice. Once the negotiations were concluded successfully, Cardinal Joyeuse considered the lifting of the ban a cause for celebration and proposed to the Venetian government that a solemn Mass be celebrated. The members of the government did not consent. On the contrary, they forbade any public celebration connected to the abolition of the excommunication. Venice wanted no absolution, not even a benediction, since the governors remained strong in the conviction that no sin had been committed that was cause for an interdict. Not even Joyeuse was allowed to absolve the Venetian clerics. In the end, few things changed with the abolition of the interdict, as the Jesuits were denied re-entrance until 1657, although the expelled Theatines and Capuchins were allowed back after the lifting of the interdict. Nevertheless, the influence of the *giovani* slowly declined as the appeasement of the Roman pontiff mitigated the spiritual strains of being excommunicated amongst people in the Veneto.⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ Bouswma, 1968: 407–416.

⁴¹² Norwich, 2003: 515–517; Grendler, 2017: 152; Bouswma, 1968: 412–416 & 483; Wright, 1974: 549–550.

Chapter 8. Interdict Texts – Concepts and Context

In this chapter, I will provide presentations of three of the Interdicts Texts that Possevino authored during the *guerra delle scritture*: the *Nuova Risposta*, *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* and *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*. I will also define central concepts, as these will be of assistance to the analysis of the content of Interdict Texts. The definitions will be supplemented with a survey of the history of some important concepts. The contextually bound concepts should be looked upon as historical, geographical and political. They are bound to their context and as connotations of words can change, it is important to treat these concepts as situated within their historical framework. The concepts assessed recur in the source material, but will be defined as openly as possible. For instance, the concept “Church”, will be treated descriptively, as the community of Christian believers.⁴¹³

Central Legal Concepts

The first of the contextually bound concepts to be defined is natural law. This concept has been prevalent in classical antiquity and in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim philosophy. Natural law, in western Christianity, was defined by the conduct that God demanded of human beings, which presupposes God as creator of the human species, and it presupposes that this species is created for a purpose. The concept further presupposes the definition of human being as a rational creature, who has the ability to observe the moral order that is imbedded in creation. This moral order refers to consciousness of good and evil, and that conscience orders actions for the objective good. Examples of the objective good include parents caring for their children, children honouring their parents, keeping agreements (*pacta sunt servanda*), and preferring a greater good before a lesser good. Such precepts are taken as universally binding,

⁴¹³ Elden, 2013: 330.

as these are regarded as intuitively known from nature and not from legislative acts of states.⁴¹⁴

Natural law is referred to extensively in the Interdict Texts, but apart from natural law other laws are also referenced. One such law is the law of nations, or *ius gentium*. This law is regarded as universally binding, just like natural law, as it does not owe its validity to pacts and conventions. However, it is not regarded as intuitively known from nature but from human wisdom, customs and solutions to problems. For instance, that ambassadors be inviolable, that the white flag is respected as a sign of truce and that independent sovereign states are respected as such. As opposed to natural law and the law of nations, positive human law is determined by the coercive force of a state. The positive human law, the validity of which is owed to pacts and conventions, is regarded as confined to individual states and therefore not universally binding. To this category, civil law and criminal law also belong.⁴¹⁵

References to other sets of normative bodies, in the source material refer to precepts that are included in compilations of canon law, which regulate the Church. Compilations of canon law consist of not only *ius divinum*, precepts from Holy Writ, but also precepts from natural law. At times, canon law and natural law are referred to together as *ius divinum naturalis*, natural divine law. Natural divine law, as a subcategory of divine law, is complemented with *ius divinum positivum*. This body of precepts refers to the commandments given in Holy Writ as well as derivative precepts from Holy Writ, which are taught by the Tradition of the Church.⁴¹⁶

Connected to these concepts is 'jurisdiction', which is defined by the authority of a certain office in judicial matters. In states, distribution of jurisdictional competence was carried out through either high courts (where criminal law was applied) or low courts (where civil or common law was applied).

⁴¹⁴ Mortimer, 1961: 8–14; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 15. See Emon, Levering & Novak: 2014.

⁴¹⁵ Mortimer, 1961: 8–26; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 15.

⁴¹⁶ Mortimer, 1961: 27–37; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 15; Link, 2012.

Distribution of jurisdictional competence varied in the early modern period depending on local political structures that often were intertwined with ecclesiastical claims to jurisdiction. This was the case not only in ecclesiastical affairs, but also in civil and criminal affairs. The body of laws considered valid for ecclesiastical courts was canon law and its severest punishment was excommunication.⁴¹⁷

Excommunication refers to an act of a bishop, whereby a person is banned from receiving sacraments. An excommunication presupposes an act against the faith and order of the Church. When an excommunication is not primarily a censure against a person but a territory – for instance, a state, nation or a monastery – the juridical status of such a ban is referred to as an interdict. An interdict, in Roman law, was the equivalent of any kind of ban or prohibition and the goal of placing an *interdictio* was to achieve a quick solution to a controversy. The procedure of an interdict was, however, absent of the examination of evidence and hearing of witnesses. Moreover, a 'territory', as Stuart Elden has shown, was a concept with multifaceted meanings during the medieval and early modern periods. Nonetheless, it suffices to denote territory as a geographical space where a construction of offices exists and where a particular jurisdiction is valid.⁴¹⁸

Authority, Power and Jurisdiction

In order to establish *doings* in texts, the concepts of authority and power need to be discussed. When encountering these concepts in the authorship of Possevino, and in the works of other authors during the Interdict Controversy, it

⁴¹⁷ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 14; See Härter, 2012; Eibach, 2012; Simon, 2012. In Protestant countries, ecclesiastical jurisdiction disappeared but was sometimes substituted with disciplinary courts.

⁴¹⁸ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 14; Elden, 2013: 1–18. In Roman Law there were plenty of types of interdicts: "*Interdictio aquae et ignis; interdictio bonorum; interdictio commerciorum; interdictio honorum; interdictio locorum.*" See Berger, 1953: 507–512.

is obvious that these concepts relate to an office, the functions of which involve exercising judgment on the basis of some legal act. Authority and power thus imply *having authority, being an authority, granting something with authority* and to *testify to something through the authority of someone*.

Aware of the fact that these concepts have not always been interchangeable, I will pick them apart for the moment only to merge them together again. Beginning with authority, which in classical antiquity referred to a person or a group who demanded respect from others. It could be a father demanding respect from his children, a teacher demanding respect from pupils or a prince demanding respect from subjects. In the Roman Senate, the *iuris prudentes* (experts in law) were attributed with *auctoritate*. *Auctoritas*, when elaborated upon in private and public law, came to signify the capacity to carry out a decision.⁴¹⁹

As Emperor Augustus was attributed with *auctoritas*, the word referred to his legal capacities of public office. Augustus was a participant in the Roman Senate yet his office as emperor, originally commander in chief of a military or senate, entailed superior *auctoritas*. The imperial cult was further expanded by the successors of Augustus and the emperor came to be revered as divine; he bore insignia and ceremonial colours of gold and purple and was attributed with *auctoritas sacra*.⁴²⁰

Unlike the imperial cult from the days of Augustus, *auctoritas* in the Christian vocabulary did not refer to the emperor but to God. In this sense, God is the supreme *auctor*, by reason of being creator and legislator, who, in turn, grants *auctoritas* to offices of the Church. *Potestas*, on the contrary, referred to physical faculty or legal capacity in classical antiquity. Most often though, it referred to the legislative capacity of the military commander or the

⁴¹⁹ Berger, 1953: 368.

⁴²⁰ Di Bello, 1998: 131–132; Kazhdan: 2005[a]. ‘Insignia’ refers to an old Roman custom where emblems with symbolic meaning, often referring to possession of an office or a right to a dominion, were presented to higher officials. Banners, crowns, rings, and lances were such emblems. Kazhdan 2005[c]; Berger, 1953: 503. Blumenthal, 1991: 32; van Espelo, 2013: 271; Bruun, 2012: 13.

civilian proxy of the magistrate and was regulated by public and private law. In public law, *potestas* was *maior* or *minor* depending on the rank of the magistrate. In private law, *potestas* signified the head of the family or master of slaves.⁴²¹

In the aftermath of the Edict of Milan (313), the distinction between *auctoritas* and *potestas* became more and more fluid. Still, Pope Gelasius I (*sed.* 492–496) would keep them distinct as he connected *auctoritas* to spiritual authority and *potestas* to temporal power. During the Carolingian period, however, the meaning of the words were more or less interchangeable. In fact, another pair of words, *imperium* and *regnum*, were used interchangeably in Carolingian documents. Originally *imperium* connoted superiority – referring to the right to give orders to a small group – and with regard to the *imperium* of Rome, the city of Rome was the superior authority within its territory. In the Byzantine realm, the *imperator* was regarded as chosen by divine providence and therefore God’s lieutenant and Vicar on earth. The *imperator* was legislator (but not obliged to act according to law), landowner and military head.⁴²²

Charlemagne, after his imperial coronation in 800, came to prefer the designation of *imperium* at the expense of *regnum*, to mark superiority above other royal offices who had merely territorial rule, or *regnum*. During the Carolingian period, *imperium* is seen to be merged with *auctoritas* and *potestas*. When coupled with *unitas*, *imperium* referred to harmony, order and concord.⁴²³ Technically speaking, to possess *imperium* came to signify bestowal

⁴²¹ Berger, 1953: 640. For instance, Tertullian (c. 155–c. 225) maintained that apostolic succession was granted by God in the same sense that a seller of goods was guaranteed by private law that his sold goods would not appertain to a third purchaser. Di Bello, 1998: 132–145.

⁴²² Dorine van Espelo has drawn attention to the fluid understanding of *imperium* during the Carolingian period, as *imperium* could refer to several types of *auctoritates*, such as governmental administration, territorial rule, and military command. Van Espelo, 2013: 270–274. See Elden, 2013: 163.

⁴²³ Indeed, although *imperium* was distinguished from the ecclesiastical order of *sacerdotium*, the Roman pontiff was considered to possess *imperium* in the Carolingian period. Van Espelo, 2013: 270–274; Di Bello, 1998: 132–135.

of *auctoritas* or *potestas* with regard to an office charged with performing legally binding judgments. Following the imperial coronation of Charlemagne, which was conducted by Pope Leo III (*sed.* 795–816), *imperium* began to acquire geographical connotations. Pope Leo sought to relocate the Roman Empire from Byzantium, which Constantine had built after having surrendered the city of Rome. Leo did this in the wake of the turbulent deposition of Constantine VI (r. 780–797) when Irene (r. 797–802) took full imperial charge of Byzantium.⁴²⁴

The *translatio imperii* that Pope Leo had in mind would establish Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans, but not of Rome, as Stuart Elden notes, as ‘Romans’ referred to Latin Christians as opposed to the Greek speaking part of Christianity. Whether Leo thought that *imperium* of the Romans would signify the protectorate of a Latin Christian Commonwealth, or if he extended the notion of *imperium* to include rule over a distinct geographical area, similar to the confines of the Roman Empire of classical antiquity, is debateable.⁴²⁵

Since the days of Emperor Justinian *auctoritas* and *potestas* referred to administration of an *iurisdictio*. Jurisdiction is in turn administered over a territory, the geographical area where a certain jurisdiction is valid. Jurisdiction was therefore a term that stemmed from Roman civil right but found its way into Church canon regulations in the seventh century. From the eleventh century onwards, Roman pontiffs became increasingly engaged in public governmental affairs and with regard to jurisdiction a distinction between the jurisdictional power over consciences (*potestas iurisdictio in foro interiori*) and the public and territorial jurisdictional power (*potestas iurisdictio in foro ex-*

⁴²⁴ It might have been, Dorine van Espelo notes, that Empress Irene offered *imperium* to Charlemagne. Due to the ambiguity of the word it is unclear what Irene might have intended by such a gesture. Van Espelo, 2013: 279; Elden, 2013: 137–141.

⁴²⁵ Nevertheless, at the rise of the Ottonian dynasty, *imperium* came to refer to geographical areas ruled by the authority of the king of Germans. Elden, 2013: 137–143.

teriori) was made by canonists. These *potestates* would eventually, in the thirteenth century, merge in the formula *plenitudo potestatis*: plenitude of jurisdictional power.⁴²⁶

To wield jurisdiction is, then, to administer legally binding judgment. To public jurisdictions, administration comprised punitive justice, whether of low or high justice. Before the rise of the Roman Empire, republican governors administered criminal jurisdiction on civilians whereas the commander of the military had the right, due to the enacted *imperium*, to execute soldiers found guilty of crimes through a judicial process. The authority to issue a verdict in accordance with criminal jurisdiction was called *ius gladii* or *merum imperium*. The Roman governors' right to wear a sword was a symbol of their authority to judge according to *ius gladii*.⁴²⁷

With the rise of the Roman Empire, *ius gladii* referred to authority to execute soldiers as well as civilians and such authority was delegated by the emperor to the Roman governors. During the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) famously informed Pope Eugene III (*sed.* 1145–1153) that the Roman pontiff had two swords at his disposal: the spiritual to be practised *by* the Church and the temporal – which is a reference to *ius gladii* – to be practised *for* the Church. Furthermore, when the early modern thinker Hugo Grotius discussed *ius gladii*, he reasoned that the right to execute civilians rested on the same foundations as the right to carry out just war: for the protection of the state.⁴²⁸

During the pontificate of Gregory VII (*sed.* 1073–1085) the terms *au-toritas* and *potestas* reached another level of understanding, since the Roman pontiff demonstrated the prerogative of freedom from secular interference

⁴²⁶ In certain acts from classical antiquity that predate the Justinian law, *imperium* does not concern jurisdiction. Sometimes it is opposed to jurisdiction. Berger, 1953: 494; Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 14; Oakley, 2003: 4–5.

⁴²⁷ Garnsey, 1968: 51–59; Nifterik, 2007: 397.

⁴²⁸ However, Elden notes, Bernard did not attribute the authority of a temporal lord to the Roman pontiff. He merely allowed that Pope Eugene was entitled to urge the temporal sword to be wielded in order to protect the Church. Elden, 2013: 163–165. Cf. Garnsey, 1968: 51–59; Nifterik, 2007: 397.

with regard to property of the Church – monasteries and dioceses became increasingly significant landowners as a result of donations. He viewed the involvement of lay people with ecclesiastical goods as simony, and inculcated the ecclesiastical legal right to invest bishops with their offices.⁴²⁹

In the Western Empire, the emperor was regarded as protector of the Church and that protection was understood as a privilege. In fact, imperial protection included monasteries and this privilege was called *libertas*. During the reign of Otto I (r. 962–973) bishops were invested by the secular ruler. After his imperial coronation, Otto claimed patronage over the Papal States. During the reign of Emperor Otto II (r. 967–983), moreover, all dioceses on German territory were subordinated to the protection of the emperor, which encompassed proprietary rights.⁴³⁰

Emperor Otto I contributed to a system of fiefs and vassals that has been referred to as feudalism, although this concept is not medieval source language. In short, the system refers to exchanges between lords, *Landsherren*, and vassals with regard to a piece of land or property – so called fief (*feodum*) – that generated income. The vassal received income as the lord refrained from collecting his share and, in turn, the vassal swore an oath to place his services – arms and advice – at the disposal of the lord. The granting of fiefs to vassals was followed by a ceremony where the vassals were invested with insignia by the lord, as a token of their agreement. Workers for the landowners were included in the composition of the *familia* of a lord and, although fiefs were not initially hereditary, during the reign of Conrad II (r. 1027–1039) fiefs were allowed to be passed on to the heirs of vassals.⁴³¹

The historian Susan Reynolds has drawn attention to some scholarly errors concerning contemporary understandings of fiefs and vassals, in that

⁴²⁹ Di Bello, 1998: 135–138; Blumenthal, 1991: 36.

⁴³⁰ In connection with this, Otto acknowledged his status as successor to Charlemagne who, in turn, had had Constantine's empire transferred to the west. Blumenthal, 1991: 29–41.

⁴³¹ Blumenthal, 1991: 29–30; Reynolds, 1996: 2–3 & 5; Elden, 2013: 153–154.

they were products of sixteenth-century thinking. The interpretative framework during the sixteenth century for students of law, Reynolds contends, was that of Roman law, wherefore the understanding of early medieval property law became simplified. Neither does Reynolds consider that the alliance between bishops or abbots and the tenants of the properties of the Church, equalled the commitment between lords and vassals during the early medieval period.⁴³²

Important for the alliance between bishops, abbots, and tenants of Church property were the conceptions of *emphyteusis* and *libellus* from Roman law. *Emphyteusis* had developed from the *ius in agro vectagali*, which granted tenants the right to cultivate agricultural land. This right was conceded by the state, whereas *emphyteusis* was extended to include private land. With regard to *emphyteusis*, the proprietor conceded full use of the land and its revenues to the lease holder in exchange for rent.⁴³³ The contract was long term and hereditary and transferable by testament or *ab intestato*. During the medieval period new forms of contracts were introduced, which granted that fiefs could be divided. Such contracts were called *libelli* ('livelli' in the Italian vernacular). Forms of transfer from dependent fiefs to fiefs with allodial (full and independent) rights were also developed.⁴³⁴

The pontificate of Gregory VII was preceded by the tumultuous events at the Synod of Sutri, where Pope Gregory VI (*sed.* 1045–1046) had been deposed by the soon-to-be-elected Emperor Henry III (r. 1046–1056). To Pope Gregory VII, such acts were intolerable and he took measures to keep the

⁴³² Reynolds, 1996: 3–7. On the rediscovery of Roman law during the medieval period: Elden, 2013: 213–241.

⁴³³ For a discussion of a similar concept, *ius usus fructus* in medieval rights discourse, see Tierney, 2000: 94.

⁴³⁴ *Ab intestato*: when a person died without leaving a testament or when a testament became invalid if, for instance, heirs refused to accept inheritance. Berger, 1953: 452 & 752. Moreover, *usucapio* – acquisition of ownership from a proprietor after a fixed period of time – did not nullify the right of the proprietor to collect rent from the tenant. See De Mare & Manganelli, 2014: 25–26; Reynolds, 1996: 5.

Church free of secular intervention. Following the path of Pope Gregory, theologians would elaborate upon the meaning of the two swords in the Gospel of Luke 22:38 in order to prove that superior authority resides in the office of the Roman pontiff. Opponents of such claims were equally anxious to prove the unity of the Church, but, with reference to Romans 13:4, that the authority and jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff was distinct from secular power.⁴³⁵

An important factor during the investiture controversies was the notion of authority and power granted immediately and directly by God. Defenders of imperial authority granted immediately by God would claim that even an unjust temporal ruler was to be obeyed, since rebellion against an unjust prince would violate God's established order. As mentioned above, royal protection of the Church, including monasteries, was called *libertas* during the Ottonian period. However, during the pontificate of Gregory VII a new set of meanings was given to *libertas*. In acts drawn up at the Roman Curia, *libertas ecclesiae* came to signify freedom of the universal Church from the interference of secular power, initially referring to the ecclesiastical freedom of the Benedictine monastery of Cluny. It was also during the Gregorian reforms that the concept of *ecclesia Romana* became increasingly associated with the Roman pontiff to whom was given the privilege to reside on the *sedes* or *cathedra apostolica*. This development was encoded in the bull *Dictatus Papae* by Pope Gregory, which holds that clerics were not to be considered subjects to temporal rulers. Over time, the authority and power of the Roman pontiff would merge in the title of *plenitudo potestatis*.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ Di Bello, 1998: 138–140. Luke 22:38 (KJV): "And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, it is enough." Rom 13:4 (KJV): "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

⁴³⁶ As is well known, the Gregorian reform movement sparked off the investiture controversy between Pope Gregory and Emperor Henry IV. The investiture controversy formally ended with the Concordat of Worms in 1122, leaving secular rulers with the right to elect and invest bishops. The right of secular rulers to elect popes was surrendered. A similar struggle for authority between Pope Alexander III and Frederick Barbarossa had already been fought before the investiture controversy between Gregory and Henry and struggles of authority would follow during the course of the medieval period. Di Bello, 1998: 140–148; Blumenthal, 1991: 66–72; Elden, 2013: 164.

During the thirteenth century, conflicts between spiritual and temporal authorities were in full swing. The term ‘holy’ had been added to the imperial title whilst the Roman pontiffs claimed to have *plenitudo potestatis*. Quarrels opened between Pope Boniface VIII (*sed.* 1294–1303) and the French king Philip IV (r. 1285–1314) over the right to tax clerics and to judge criminal clerics. These issues regarded jurisdiction and the early medieval claim of the Church to clerical exemption, or immunity, from verdicts of civil or criminal law (*privilegium fori*). With the promulgation of the bull *Unam Sanctam* in 1302, Pope Boniface emphasised that the Church is one holy body with one head and those who divert from the Church will not see eternal life.⁴³⁷

Boniface also contended that spiritual authority is superior to any temporal ruler, therefore the spiritual authorities can judge temporal authorities, whereas spiritual authorities cannot be judged by temporal rulers. Spiritual authorities can only be judged by other spiritual authorities except the pope, who can only be judged by God alone. It was also argued that the pope holds jurisdiction above clerics and therefore they cannot be taxed by temporal lords. In the words of Giles of Rome (c. 1243–1316), the spiritual authority governs the world as the soul governs the human body. Philip IV did not consent to such ideas and he was followed by Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham who sought to limit the extent of the *plenitudo potestatis* of the Roman pontiff. Members of the conciliarist movement would continue these efforts throughout the fifteenth century and into the early modern period.⁴³⁸

Nuova Risposta

Once the interdict was placed on Venice, the *guerra delle scritture* broke out. This led to the expulsion of Jesuits from the Republic of Venice. Before the Interdict Controversy Possevino, who was exiled along with other Jesuits, had

⁴³⁷ Elden, 2013: 142 & 180–188. On *privilegium fori*, see West, 2021: 86–108.

⁴³⁸ Elden, 2013: 180–207.

been a controversial figure for the Venetians. His outspoken mistrust of the comingling of Catholics with people of Lutheran, Calvinist, Greek-Orthodox and Jewish faith, along with indiscreet attempts to persuade ambassadors to leave Venice at the dawn of the Interdict Controversy, caused public contempt. His hectic activities to maintain orthodoxy in Venice did not end with the expulsion and neither did his activities cease to generate public antipathy. At least three pamphlets were written against Possevino, which give witness to such antipathy. Before making his escape, Possevino complained to Doge Donà that spiteful rumours about him had spread in Venice. One such rumour claimed that he would use the stove in his room to unglue gold and silver from nuggets, when in fact the stove was used to warm up the room and, at times, stones would be used to iron his biretta.⁴³⁹

After having been expelled from Venice, Possevino relocated to Bologna in the Papal States. In Bologna Jesuits had posted the interdict bull publicly, which caused some indignation since this action had not been authorised by the archbishop Alfonso Paleotti (*sed.* 1597–1610). Nonetheless, most of the people of Bologna supported the Roman pontiff against Venice and Bologna became a stronghold for the anti-Venetian camp during the Interdict Controversy.⁴⁴⁰

The first of Possevino's pamphlets during the *guerra delle scritture* was the *Nuova Risposta*, which was published in 1606 in Bologna and Ferrara and

⁴³⁹ Cappelletti, 1873: 130–134. Three pamphlets that were written against Possevino are: *Avvertimento, et ammonitione Catolica al Padre Antonio Possevino Giesuito* (1606); *Condoglienza di Stanislao Przwoski* (1606) and the *Le mentite filoteane* (1607).

⁴⁴⁰ In his correspondence with the Franciscan friar, Marcantonio Capello, Possevino tried to persuade Capello to leave his duties in Venice and instead transfer to Bologna where he would be welcomed. *Lettera del Padre Antonio Possevino Giesuita al Padre Maestro Marc'Antonio Capello Minor Conventuale con la risposta di detto padre* (1606); Cappelletti, 1873: 43. Another letter that was written in Bologna by Possevino is addressed to the Republic of Venice by an anonymous representative of the Republic of Genoa. The letter was received by the Venetian Senate that had no doubt that Possevino was its author. The letter defended the interdict and the king of Spain against the allies of Venice, as well as accusing Venice of comingling with heretics and malignant advisers. *Copia di una Lettera, che si finge esser stata scritta dalla Repubblica di Genova alla Repubblica di Venetia, in Risposta di un'altra, che falsamente si afferma che la Repubblica di Venetia habia scritta a quella di Genova*. Cappelletti, 1873: 169–172 & Sommervogel, 1895: 1085.

in 1607 in Viterbo. The *Nuova Risposta* comprises fifty-six pages, and was published under the pseudonym Giovanni Filoteo d'Asti, and is a response to the anonymously written *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia ad una lettera scrittagli da un Reverendo suo amico* (1606).⁴⁴¹ The title of the *Nuova Risposta* refers to a prior response to the anonymous doctor of theology. This is a reference to Bellarmino's reply: *Risposta del Card. Bellarmino a un libretto intitolato, Risposta di un Dottore di Theologia, ad una lettera scrittagli da un Reverendo suo amico* (1606).⁴⁴²

As the *guerra delle scritture* carried on, no other writing from the anonymous doctor would appear. Yet a pamphlet signed Giovanni Marsilio did appear to which Bellarmino responded.⁴⁴³ I have argued elsewhere that the author of the *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia* was the former Jesuit Giovanni Marsilio from Spanish Naples.⁴⁴⁴ There are several allusions to this in Possevino's *Nuova Risposta*. For instance, when Possevino discusses an *exemplum ad persudadenum* of the doctor's, Diego de Covarrubias (1512–1577), he alludes to the Spanish nationality of the doctor: “it surprises me that

⁴⁴¹ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 42. For an overview of the editions of the *Nuova Risposta*: Sommervogel, 1895 1085–1086. The pseudonym Giovanni Filoteo from Asti, shares a connection with Possevino himself as his father came from Asti, Monferrato, and Giovanni, or rather Giovanni Battista Possevino, was the name of Antonio's brother. Filoteo, furthermore, signifies ‘friend of God’.

⁴⁴² The anonymous doctor, at the end of his writing, promises to write more of these matters in a book “about the supreme authority of the secular Prince that I soon will bring into light in the Latin language.” *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 14.

⁴⁴³ Giovanni Marsilio: *Difesa di Giovanni Marsilio a favore della Risposta dell'otto propositioni*; Roberto Bellarmino: *Risposta del Card. Bellarmino alla difesa delle Otto Propositioni di Giovanni Marsilio Napolitano*.

⁴⁴⁴ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 43–57; Bouwsma, 1968: 99. The joint answer to the interdict, *Trattato dell'interdetto della Santità di Papa Paolo V, nel quale si dimostra che egli non è legittimamente pubblicato*, by Venetian theologians consists of nineteen propositions. The *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia* was added to this volume. Moreover, the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* contains information about Giovanni Marsilio. It says that Marsilio has been driven out from the Society of Jesus and that last year, 1605, he came to Venice to spread his pedantry. He is said to have been content to teach immodesty to many noble youngsters, therefore he insolently opposed the Apostolic See. Marsilio is said to have fled from the judgment of the Roman pontiff and, Possevino notes, “one looks forward to [the day] when he finally will finish his insolence.” RTE: 6.

you – in the state of Venetians – to such a high degree make use of the authority of a Spaniard such as Covarrubias.”⁴⁴⁵ Moreover, Possevino alludes to the fact that the doctor came from Spanish Southern Italy: “in your pedantic grammar full of ignorance, you know your blindness, with which you go to Southern Italy because you want to separate yourself from the light of the Catholic doctrine and faith.”⁴⁴⁶

In contrast, there are no allusions to the origin of the anonymous doctor in the introduction to Bellarmino’s *Risposta*, but rather a complaint of the widespread use of pseudonyms by the Venetian defence: “this new license to print little books in Venice without names of authors, without license from the Ecclesiastical Superior, without accounting for the time and place of the Print, is a clear sign that disobedience is increasing with evident danger to the Faith.”⁴⁴⁷

Possevino did not seem to have noticed Bellarmino’s complaints, but rather made use of pseudonyms in his writings during the Interdict Controversy himself. Still, the frontispiece to the *Nuova Risposta* contains a publication date and location and reads that license has been granted from superiors (in this case local inquisitors). The use of a pseudonym was probably strategic as Possevino was able to avoid having his texts scrutinised by Acquaviva and other Jesuits.⁴⁴⁸ In the preface of the *Nuova Risposta*, however, Possevino can be seen to show his sympathy with Jesuits. In an irascible tone, Possevino indicates that the participation of Bellarmino, in the debates about the interdict

⁴⁴⁵ NR: 47: “[...] mi meraviglio che nello stato di Venetiani ti servi tanto dell’ autorità d’ uno spagnuolo come Covarrubias.”

⁴⁴⁶ NR: 43: “[...] nella grammatica tua pedantesca piena de ignoranza, conosci la tua cecità, con la quale vai a mezzo giorno [...] per volerti separare dalla luce della catolica dottrina, e fede.”

⁴⁴⁷ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 3. “[...] ”questa nuova licenza di stampare libretti in Venetia senza nome di Autori, senza licenza del Superiore Ecclesiastico, senza notare il tempo, & luogo della Stampa, è un segno manifesto, che la disubidienza vâ crescendo con evidente pericolo della Fede.” Bellarmino wrote that books without named authors and without approval from superiors are forbidden, but in Venice many books, are produced without names of authors and without license. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 4.

⁴⁴⁸ Balsamo, 2006: 48.

is a waste of resources. This is what Possevino writes in the beginning of the *Nuova Risposta*:

If the men placed in rank and temporal state, through the malice of the times in which we are and live, had not followed the adulators and bad advisers to the imitation of Rehoboam instead of [following] the good ones, and had not clung to every slight and apparent motive favourable to their political plans – they are scarcely pious and reverent towards the Mother and Pastor who are the Catholic Church and the Supreme Pontiff – it would not have been necessary that the Lord Cardinal Bellarmino should have lowered himself to respond to the letter of one, who entitles himself Theologian. He should rather be called Diabologian or Apostate of the true Theology, full of manifestly schismatic and heretic errors.⁴⁴⁹

It is possible to observe Possevino's common use of *exempla evitanda*, in this case Rehoboam. Rehoboam, the son Solomon and first king of Judah, functions as a *typos* from the Old Testament implying that the powerful Venetians, in the same manner as Rehoboam, abandoned their true domicile and the teaching of the Lord.⁴⁵⁰

The demanding vocabulary, also found in the *Apparato All'Historia*, is prominent in the bestowal upon the doctor of theology – a former Jesuit – of the title apostate or 'diabologian' rather than theologian. This is characteristic of the rhetorical use of invectives in order to deploy *exempla ad dissuadendum*. Neither did Possevino address the doctor of theology in the polite third person, but in the less polite second person. Bellarmino in his *Risposta*, on the other hand, writes *about* the doctor, frequently calling him 'the author', and does not address him communicatively.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹ NR: 3. "[...] Se per la malignità de tempi, ne quali siamo, & viviamo gli huomini posti in dignità, e stato temporale, non seguissero più tosto gli adulatori, e mali consiglieri ad imitatione di Roboamo che i buoni, & non si appigliassero ad ogni minima, & apparente ragione favorevole ai loro politici disegni, poco pii, & riverenti verso la Madre e Pastore; i quali sono la Chiesa Cattolica, & il Sommo Pontefice; non sarebbe stato necessario, che il Signore Cardinale Bellarmino si fusse abbassato, a rispondere alla lettera di uno, il quale s'intitola Theologo, più tosto Diabologo, ò vero Apostata dalla vera Theologia p[i]ena di errori manifestamente schismatici, & heretici."

⁴⁵⁰ NR: 3; Bellarmino, *Risposta a un libretto intitolato, Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 56; 2 Chronicles 12:1–3.

⁴⁵¹ NR: 3; Bellarmino, *Risposta a un libretto intitolato, Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 4; *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 3.

Possevino, using the literary double Giovanni Filoteo, further explains his motives for authoring his text, which could be interpreted as a circumlocution of the fourth vow professed by member of the Society of Jesus: “pushed forward through zeal for the honour of God and irritated by the insult made towards the Vicar of Christ our Redeemer, to whom I am obliged to share blood and life itself.”⁴⁵² He also insists that the conditions of the times in which he and his contemporaries are living resemble the days of Saint Paul when “*men are lovers of themselves.*”⁴⁵³ The familiar Renaissance trope of imitation of classical antiquity is emphasised in this passage, as is the rhetorical device of setting up Saint Paul as an *exemplum imitadum*. This trait is also commonplace in the anonymous doctor’s *Risposta*, and it is probably against this background that Possevino acts expeditiously to turn Saint Paul into an *exemplum imitandum* of his own.⁴⁵⁴

Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta

At some point in 1607 Claudio Acquaviva protested Possevino’s activities when presented with the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*. Acquaviva had not consented to its publication, but Possevino, for his part, denied being its author. Notwithstanding, the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* bears his stylistic stamp and shares the same typographical details as the *Nuova Risposta*.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵² NR: 3. “[...] spinto dal zelo dell’honore di Dio, & irritato dalla ingiuria fatta al Vicario di Christo nostro Redentore, per il qual son obbligato a dare il sangue, e la propria vita.”

⁴⁵³ NR: 3. “[...] *sunt homines sui ipsius amantes.*” Cf. 2 Timothy 3:2, *Vulgata Clementina*: “*erunt homines seipso amantes*”. The future tense, *erunt*, in the Vulgate differs from Possevino’s use of present tense, *sunt*.

⁴⁵⁴ The itinerant Paul was a model of vocation in the Society of Jesus, but Paul was also a constant point of reference in early modern Venetian theological debates, especially surrounding the doctrine of justification. Paul and Augustine inspired many writings during the sixteenth century, for instance: Marino Grimani, *Commentarii in Epistolas Pauli, ad Romanos et ad Galatas* (1542) and *Il Beneficio di Cristo* (1543). Flaminio & Fontanini, 2009. On Paolo Sarpi’s attraction to the Pauline-Augustine tradition, see Bouwsma, 1990: 258

⁴⁵⁵ Wolfgang Hoffman claimed that Possevino was the author of the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio*. Hoffman, *Avvertimento et Ammonitione Catolica Catolica al Padre Antonio Possevino Gesuito* (1607). Cf. Balsamo, 2006: 48.

The *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* was Possevino's second pamphlet during the *guerra delle scritture*. It was written under a pseudonym, albeit using the alias of Teodoro from Famagusta. It consists of fifty-four pages and was published in Bologna in 1606 as well as in Ferrara and in Viterbo in 1607.⁴⁵⁶ The pamphlet addresses the *Aviso delle ragioni della Repubblica di Venetia intorno alle difficoltà che Le sono promosse dalla Santità di Paolo V* (Venetia: 1606) written by the lay patrician Antonio Querini, which contains strident criticism of the Jesuits. Nonetheless, as Possevino turns to Querini he uses the polite address of third person singular, unlike his more impolite address of the anonymous theologian in the *Nuova Risposta*.⁴⁵⁷

The choice of pseudonym in the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* singles out the author as a Venetian by birth, as opposed to the foreigner Giovanni Filoteo from Asti, yet from a colony. Teodoro Eugenio is both an insider, well accustomed to the customs of his *patria*, as well as someone who has travelled far to reach the centre of the Venetian Republic. The author tells of how he travelled from Famagusta, on the east-coast of Cyprus, which was a part of Venetian territory until the Turkish invasion of 1571, in the following manner:

I navigated to Venice, when our Reign of Cyprus was occupied by the Turks, along with other poor remains of home. Thereafter, I went to Rome [...] and in Rome I, from the beginning [of my stay], enjoyed the charity of Pope Gregory XIII who, as to all the nations so to our Cypriots [...], provided sustenance to live. I decided to observe that which happened at the front of the apostolic faith, in order to join theory with practice. Then, relocating myself many times

⁴⁵⁶ Possevino, *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta all' Aviso mandato fuori dal Signore Antonio Quirino Senatore Veneto, Circa le ragioni, che hanno mosso la Santità di Paolo V. Pontefice à pubblicare l' Interdetto sopra tutto il Dominio Vinitiano* (1606: Bologna; 1607: Viterbo apresso Girolamo Discepolo, *con licenza de' Superiori*): 1–54. For a minor discussion of the text see Balsamo, 2006: 48.

⁴⁵⁷ Bouwsma, 1990: 106; Bouwsma, 1968: 438–442; Grendler, 2017: 147–148 & Norwich, 2003: 188–198. Possevino's *Risposta* to Querini's *Aviso* was approved by the Dominican Friar Pietro from Fiorenzuola d'Arda, through mandate by Paulo De Vicariis (Inquisitor of Bologna), and the Augustinian friar Sanctes from Rimini (accounting auditor to Alfonso Paleotti (1531–1610), archbishop of Bologna). RTE: 2. Querini had, in Possevino's opinion, erred in that his text had been published without legitimate authority by the Catholic Church. Possevino reacted to this use as he reminded Querini that the inquisitor of Venice is called Giovanni Domenico Vignucci from Ravenna, asking "why has it not been signed by him?" RTE: 4.

to Venice, I had opportunity [...] to attain some close light of the state of that Republic. Today, I see that this is beneficial to me as I need to write of that which has happened between the said Apostolic See and the Venetian Lords, under whom I was born.⁴⁵⁸

True principles, Possevino wrote, were present in the ancient reign of Cyprus whilst it was subjected to the Apostolic See, and the ancient kings of Cyprus are said to have followed the wise precepts that are to be found in *On Kingship* by Aquinas. The reason for the fall of Cyprus, however, was considered to be due to the nullification of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and, with that, the loss of hundreds of thousands of souls.⁴⁵⁹

An oddity appears in the text where Possevino seems to forget that he writes under pseudonym saying that “I have not responded to the argument made by you [...] since I have reasoned enough about this towards the end of the above-mentioned book of mine about the Architecture of the Christian Church.”⁴⁶⁰ The mentioned book is most likely a reference to Book XV of the *Bibliotheca Selecta, De Mathematicis*, where architecture is treated. Surely, the content of the quote reveals a lapse by Possevino, who pretended to be Teodoro Eugenio from Cyprus.⁴⁶¹

In the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, an unnamed printer is held to be accustomed to print bundles of prohibited books from Germany and errand boys are said to have been sent to towns on the *terraferma*, in order to sell books that are forbidden by the Apostolic See. These errand boys were also thought to be sent to printing houses in Frankfurt so that “the Pipsqueaks

⁴⁵⁸ RTE: 2. “[...] Quando il nostro Regno di Cypri fu da Turchi occupato, io con altre misere reliquie della Patria navigai a Venetia, & poi andai a Roma [...] et a Roma havendo io da principio provata la paterna carità di Gregorio Terzodecimo Pontefice, il quale come a tutte le nationi, così a nostri Cipriotti, [...] assignò sostentamento per vivere, mi risolsi per congiungere la teorica con la pratica, di osservare ciò che passava inanti la fede Apostolica; Indi trasferitomi più volte a Venetia hebbi modo [...] di conseguire qualche intima luce dello stato di quella Republica: il che tutto che mi giova, dovendo scrivere di quanto è succeduto fra la detta Sede Apostolica, & i Signori Venetiani; sotto i quali essendo io nato.”

⁴⁵⁹ RTE: 4.

⁴⁶⁰ RTE: 43. “[...] non ho risposto all’argomento da lei fatto [...] perioche di questo ho ragionato a bastanza nel sudetto mio libro dell’Architettura della Chiesa Christiana, verso il fine.”

⁴⁶¹ BS, II: XV, c. 16–18: 207–212.

and Lullabies by Aretino” and the books by Machiavelli are diffused within the confines of the Republic of Venice.⁴⁶² Those who have grown accustomed to print books without license from the authorities are linked to Paolo Sarpi, whose publications, along with that of Giovanni Marsilio, are acknowledged to contain arguments that are recurrent in the *Defensor Pacis*, by Marsilius of Padua, and which the *Magdeburg Centuries* have brought forward. Such books are considered to have been administered by the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Henry Wotton. This ambassador, Possevino asserted, is manifestly a Calvinist, and that teaching is preached in his house.⁴⁶³

Despite Possevino’s obvious distaste for the devotional preferences of Sir Henry Wotton, he took the initiative to meet with ambassador. They met at Possevino’s home or at the Dominican monastery of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, but Wotton would not welcome the Jesuit to his residence. Even though Wotton was renowned for his anti-Catholicism the meetings seem to have been somewhat amicable, so much so that Wotton offered to send the newly discovered tobacco herb to Possevino.⁴⁶⁴

Possevino showed interest in the possibility of a conversion of King James I to the Catholic faith. During the meetings with Wotton, he noted that the king of Sweden, John III, had converted, although his advisers were Protestants. Wotton was hesitant to discuss a possible conversion of James I. Instead, he spoke about his mistrust for persons of religious orders. In a letter

⁴⁶² RTE: 5: “[...] le Pippe, e le Nanne dell’Aretino.” Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) was an author whose satirical works were reknown to men of letters during the sixteenth century. Aretino was once a court poet in Mantua but eventually settled in Venice. His sexual poems and connections with Northern European reformers caused his literary production to be placed on the *Index*. Waddington, 2004: xx–xxv.

⁴⁶³ RTE: 5–6. Possevino mentioned that there were many erudite theologians in Venice with a clear conscience, but some were chosen by Sarpi in secret – presumably Marcantonio Capello – with assignment of salary and insurance of life. Additionally, Wolfgang Hoffman defended the accusations against the spending of fees by Sarpi, as Hoffman held that although Sarpi received 200 ducats from the Venetian government he did not spend a *quattrino* – a small coin – of this payment. Sarpi, Hoffman expressed, is most abstemious and content with that which his monastery provides for him. Hoffman, *Avvertimento e Ammonitione Catolica*: 7. Moreover, it is interesting to observe that Possevino speaks of Sarpi’s aim to become a bishop in the same manner as Sarpi, in the *Condoglienza*, accuses Possevino of being ambitious after an appointment to the cardinalate. Przewoski, *Condoglienza di Stanislao Przewoski Lubrinense*: 11.

⁴⁶⁴ Balsamo, 2006: 141.

to the privy council of King James, moreover, Wotton claimed that Possevino had tried to convert him to the Catholic faith. Subsequently, in a letter to Possevino, Wotton admitted his disapproval of the manner in which Possevino spoke of the king of England. Possevino replied that Wotton needed not worry, since he knew perfectly well how to address royalties.⁴⁶⁵

Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto

The last of the three pamphlets that Possevino authored during the *guerra delle scritture*, was the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto all'avviso del Signor Quirino* (Bologna: 1607). The text consists of fifty-five pages and is addressed to the same *Avviso* by Querini that the *Risposta del Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* addresses. The pseudonym in this writing is chosen from Venetian history, as Paolo Anafesto had been considered the first doge of Venice.⁴⁶⁶

Possevino did not, as in the other writings of the *guerra delle scritture*, set up a dialogue with the recipient – second person in the *Nuova Risposta* to the anonymous theologian and third person in the *Risposta del Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* to Antonio Querini – because, in the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*, he speaks *about* Querini. The choice of pseudonym in this text, singles out the author as an insider who is familiar with the state of affairs in the Republic of Venice. As opposed to the outsider Giovanni Filoteo from Asti and the semi-insider Teodoro Eugenio from Famagosta. Paolo Anafesto, on the other hand, is a pseudonym with claims of authority. In order to provide

⁴⁶⁵ Soranzo, 1933: 385–422. Ord, 2007: 1–23.

⁴⁶⁶ The para-text of the *Riposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto* contains a poem in Latin: "[...] *Anaphestus ad Quirinum: Obiectis, perculusa tuis, mens fida, Quirine, obstupit, tantum luce carere virum. Te mallen siluisse diu, quam luminis expers, Talia, deluso pectore verba dares. Tanta ne sublimen cepit dementia mentem, Immemor, ut recti, falsa colore tegas? Non miror, quia luce carens velut orbis oberras, Deque, coloratis inscie rebus agis. Quae dedimus response, tuis obstantia dictis. Si pius evolves, forsitan alter eris. Nomen Anaphesti simulo (timor improbus urget). Sumque tui monitor, qui minus esse putor. Scire magis, vestris, nolite Parentibus, oro, Pontificis monitus, hi tenere, DEI. Haec ubi signa, manet, noscas asserta Quirini.*" RPA: 2. John Julius Norwich, writes that an imaginary picture of Anafesto is situated in the *Sala del Maggior Concilio* at the Doge's Palace in Venice. Norwich, 2003: 13–14.

ethos, the author professes to be a good Catholic and a true friend of the liberty of his ‘*patria*’.⁴⁶⁷

In the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*, the ancient order *arengo* is connected to Anafesto. The *arengo* was an assembly, reminiscent of a system of direct democracy, in ancient Venice that voted on weighty concerns for the republic. As time went by, professional judges replaced the *arengo* and, during the medieval period, the characteristic form of Venetian government began to take shape. Indeed, it is this ancient order to which Possevino refers when claiming that it is licit for everyone through *via d’Arringo* to speak one’s ideas and to put these to the test in front of councillors in accordance with the saying “contraries placed next to each other shine better forth.”⁴⁶⁸

In recent times, however, the prudence of Venice is said to have been distracted as the road that unites the Supreme pontiff and the Most Serene Republic has been closed, due to a hatred against the Roman pontiff that is not superseded amongst Turks, heretics, or other enemies of the Catholic religion. The senators of Venice are held to have found it licit to imprison and put a price on (‘*metter taglie à*’) priests and monks, as well as touching the fruits that are dedicated to the divine cult.⁴⁶⁹

These customs are initially considered as new as the author, who admits that he is an old man with experience in public affairs through the guidance of his late father and uncles, testifies that he went to consult some learned men, who, nonetheless, told him that the new opinions were in fact not new at all, but renewed by evil men. The customs are traced to thinkers of the *via moderna* and conciliarist traditions, such as Marsilius of Padua, William of Ockham, and Jan Hus. It is concluded that their books have been rediscovered by the evil councillors of Venice, even though Roman pontiffs and patriarchs of Venice declared them heretical and ordered them to be burnt.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁷ RPA: 4–5.

⁴⁶⁸ RPA: 3: “[...] *Contraria iuxta se posita magis elucescunt.*” Norwich, 2003: 34 & 301.

⁴⁶⁹ RPA: 3–5.

⁴⁷⁰ RPA: 7.

Chapter 9. Authority from God and Superiority

After the interdict was placed on the Republic of Venice in 1606, Possevino threw himself into the task of defending the measure against the Venetians. His positioning in writing on the validity of the interdict, was prompted by writings in defence of the *Serenissima*. In the *Nuova Riposta*, Possevino sought to confute the propositions in the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia*, written by the anonymous doctor of theology, and in the *Riposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* and *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto Avviso* he argued against the defence of Venice in the *Aviso* by Antonio Querini.

In the analysis of Possevino's *doings* in his Interdict Texts, I will discuss topics that were distinctive in the debates during the Interdict Controversy. In Chapter 9, I will analyse the debate on whether or not authority is given to the temporal ruler directly by God. In chapters 10 to 14, I will analyse the debate about the spiritual and temporal authority of Moses, Jesus Christ, and the Roman pontiff, along with debates about clerical exemption or immunity, Catholic practice and validity of the interdict.

The first topic in the analysis of Possevino's contribution to the *guerra delle scritture* regards authority granted by God. This topic is the point of departure in the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia*, as it was fundamental for proving authority in the temporal state. To the Venetians, led by Paolo Sarpi, authority in the temporal state refers to sovereignty, in other words full legislative authority. To Sarpi, such authority was *de iure divino* but not constrained by the rules of universal order. Rather, it is granted to the prince immediately from God, as opposed to mediated through spiritual authority, to suit the needs and customs of each community.⁴⁷¹

The theological language used during the Interdict Controversy is tinged with juridical terms, which had to do with the juridical character of the arguments raised at the time. Ecclesiastical prerogatives, secular interests in

⁴⁷¹ Bouwsma, 1990: 104–106.

reason of state and legal systems were intertwined into a whole with several possibilities of interpretation. Whilst law was depicted by Roman theologians as being governed by the absolute principle of justice, amongst their Venetian counterparts the purpose of law was, to solve conflicts in society where different interests collided. In this sense, law was not perceived as eternal or universal but subject to change according to the rotating interests of the state and the variable needs in society.⁴⁷²

Risposta d'un dottore in theologia and Bellarmino's *Risposta*

Notes by Roberto Bellarmino, in his *Risposta del Card. Bellarmino alla difesa delle Otto Propositioni di Giovanni Marsilio Napolitano*, imply that the publication of the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia* initiated the *guerra*. Giovanni Marsilio was an ex-Jesuit from Naples who had travelled to Venice to teach. In 1606 he entered the *guerra* as a staunch supporter of the Venetian case and when the news of his death in 1612 reached Paolo Sarpi, the Servite friar suspected that Marsilio had been poisoned. True or not, Marsilio was not a popular figure in the Roman camp.⁴⁷³

I have argued that the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia* was written by Marsilio, in which he defends the Republic of Venice against the interdict through eight propositions, which both Bellarmino and Possevino sought to confute during the *guerra delle scritture*.⁴⁷⁴ The first proposition of the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia* begins with the statement that the authority

⁴⁷² Bouwsma, 1990: 138–147.

⁴⁷³ Bouwsma, 1968: 489.

⁴⁷⁴ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 50–57. Here I argue that Giovanni Marsilio was the author of the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia* to whom the *Nuova Riposta* by Possevino was addressed. Moreover, it would seem that Sarpi's *Trattato, e risoluzione sopra la validità delle Scommuniche di Gio. Gersone* (1606) was published subsequently to the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia* and Bellarmino's *Risposta del Card. Bellarmino a un libretto intitolato Risposta di un Dottore in theologia*, as Bellarmino wrote that Marsilio's other writing, the *Difesa di Giovanni Marsilio a favour della Risposta dell'otto propositioni* (Venice: 1606), appeared to him whilst preparing a reply to Sarpi. This is most likely a reference to the *Risposta del Card. Bellarmino ad un libretto intitolato Trattato, e risoluzione sopra la validità delle Scommuniche di Gio. Gersone* (1606).

of secular princes, the Roman pontiff as temporal prince of the Papal States included, is granted immediately by God without exceptions, following the teaching of the apostle Paul that temporal authority is granted *iure divino*. The doctor wrote that the prince has authority from God to command, to legislate, to receive tribute, to judge and to castigate his subjects, including the authority to punish clerics in severe and atrocious cases. “The doctrine is not mine”, the doctor maintained, “it is of the Apostle Paul [...] but rather it is of the Holy Spirit, with whose mouth he spoke and with whose pen he wrote.”⁴⁷⁵

The doctor can be seen to share Sarpi’s opinion that temporal authority is granted immediately from God and by affirming that the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff was granted in the same manner as the authority of all secular princes, the Roman pontiff is treated as an equal to the prince of Venice. The doctor also followed the criteria given by Sarpi regarding the discernment of a legitimate prince. Such legitimacy is thought to be according to *iure gentium*, not *iure divino*, and introduced in four ways of ruling. These four ways are through election, inheritance, donation or *iure belli*. Therefore, every prince who rules based upon any of the four ways is held to be a legitimate prince.⁴⁷⁶

The first confutation of the *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia* was authored by Bellarmino, who stated that there is no authority of a Christian prince that is not subjected to the authority of the Vicar of Christ. Here, Bellarmino discussed Christian princes that are intended to be subject to the universal spiritual character of papal authority, which was thought of as distinct from princes of other religious denominations, who, in turn, are not intended to be subject to the spiritual empire of the Vicar of Christ. The difference, to Bellarmino, between the ecclesiastical principedom and secular principedom, was

⁴⁷⁵ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*. 4 & 11, quote on 4: “[...] la dottrina non è mia, è dell’Apostolo San Paolo [...] anzi, è dello Spirito Santo, che con la bocca di lui parlò, & con la penna di lui scrisse.” The admonition in John 17:21 (“that they may all be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you”) could well have been implicit in the Venetian claim of temporal authority *de iure divino*.

⁴⁷⁶ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*: 4; Sarpi, 1765: 208.

that the Roman pontiff commands every Christian through universal reason, whereas the secular prince governs his subjects temporally and his authority is mediated.⁴⁷⁷

Bellarmino proposed that the one who acquires a dominion does not have authority immediately from God, but that such power is mediated through election, as in elections of emperors, kings of Poland, and doges of Venice. Mediated authority could also be legitimate through hereditary succession, such as the kings of France and Spain, or through donation, such as feudatory princes, or through just war, such as Godfrey of Bouillon, king of Jerusalem, (r. 1099–1100). Thus, Bellarmino shares the views of Sarpi and the doctor that the legitimacy of a temporal ruler is not *iure divino*. The difference between Bellarmino and the defenders of the Venetian case, however, is that the prerogatives to temporal authority was not acknowledged by Bellarmino, as opposed to Sarpi and the doctor, to be immediately from God.⁴⁷⁸

Bellarmino contrasted the election of the doge with that of the Roman pontiff. The latter is considered as an election through the votes of the cardinals, but the spiritual authority of the Roman pontiff is not *from* the cardinals but immediately from God. This authority was understood as granted to the Roman pontiff *iure divino*. Moreover, the title of the pope is divine and not human. Therefore, no one can diminish the authority of the Roman pontiff, neither the College of Cardinals, general councils nor the pope himself because papal authority is immediately from God. In Bellarmino's conclusion, the doge does not have authority immediately from God, but from his Republic and such authority is mediated through human authority.⁴⁷⁹

Another notable difference between the disputants was that temporal rule connoted 'earthly affairs' for Bellarmino, which are not concerned with

⁴⁷⁷ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 5–6.

⁴⁷⁸ Bellarmino's understanding of the prince of Venice is generic as it seems to equal the doge, whereas to the Venetian defenders the concept of the prince of Venice was understood as equaling the Republic of Venice in its entirety. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 6.

⁴⁷⁹ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 7.

the ecclesiastical sphere. For Sarpi, on the other hand, the head of the spiritual realm and the temporal ruler are not divided, due to the amount of involvement in spiritual affairs. On the contrary, Sarpi envisioned the spiritual and the temporal rulers to be two religious agencies, the spiritual ruler being the head of a loose confederation of individual believers, whereas the temporal ruler is considered to preside over the divinely instituted state. The spiritual head is supposed to regulate the practice of preaching and the administration of the sacraments. The temporal ruler is supposed to regulate the affairs of citizens, clerics included.⁴⁸⁰

The Nature of Temporal Authority

Possevino agreed with the theological foundations stated by Bellarmino, regarding the immediate authority of the Roman pontiff. His emphasis were nonetheless different from those of his Jesuit confrere. In the *Apparato All'Historia*, he acquiesced to Aquinas's preference for one monarch to be the representation of God, as long as the monarch is righteous. In the *Nuova Risposta*, as in the *Apparato All'Historia*, he referred to Aquinas but the sentences in the *Nuova Risposta* have been accommodated to the situation of solving an acute crisis rather than reason about how to read *historia humana*. Thus, in the *Nuova Risposta* he is emphatic about the fact that the prerequisite for the establishment of a temporal state is sin due to the fall of man.⁴⁸¹

Possevino wrote that temporal authority implies servitude. Yet, servitude did not exist before the fall of man and neither did the temporal state exist. This was introduced after the arrival of sin. The introduction of the temporal state was not granted by God immediately, but merely permitted by God. Permission for this was due to the punishment of sin, or to remedy the inability

⁴⁸⁰ Bouwsma, 1990: 248.

⁴⁸¹ NR: 5.

of the body of people to govern themselves, or to remedy the importunity of a people who wished for a king.⁴⁸²

To wish for a king is depicted as an act of opposition to the will of God, but God permitted kings in order to avoid greater faults amongst people. Possevino reminded the anonymous doctor that Thomas Aquinas and the divine scriptures narrate that the people of God were permitted authority over their enemies on many occasions due to the justice of God, even though the permitted rulers were unjust patrons. As follows, sin conditions temporal princes. Hence, the authority of the Republic of Venice, to dominate its subjects, is not thought to have been realised had it not been for the introduction of sin in the history of mankind. To Possevino, temporal authority entailed servitude, even to a temporal dominion that appertains to a political or a despotic principedom. Servitude is not according to *iure naturale*, however, but in accordance with *iure gentium*, as servitude was not natural in creation since it was introduced after the sin committed by the first people.⁴⁸³

He emphasised that in his contemporary time temporal authority connoted servitude, since the law that regulates temporal authority is no longer the natural but the customary law. In a state of innocence, however, submission was directive, such as the natural obedience of a son to his father, or that of a less erudite person to a more erudite, or that of a less just person to a more just person.⁴⁸⁴

Against the opinion amongst Venetian theologians that temporal authority is granted *de iure divino*, by intending that *iure divino* equals *iure naturale*, Possevino claimed the premise to be false, thereby disqualifying the premise of not meeting the standards of the transcendental *verum*. To him, authority *de iure divino* is not legitimate through wars, donations, elections,

⁴⁸² NR: 5.

⁴⁸³ NR: 5.

⁴⁸⁴ NR: 4.

or hereditary succession. He rhetorically asks “how many wars, donations, elections and hereditary [successions] are unjustly made and possessed?”⁴⁸⁵

He concluded that temporal authority cannot be *de iure divino* or *de iure divino positivo* except in the case of the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff, as the temporal authority of strictly temporal rulers is either permissive or by consequence. He did not share the opinions of the anonymous doctor or Sarpi that legitimacy of a temporal ruler *de iure gentium* entailed authority *de iure divino*. In that sense, he agreed with Bellarmino. However, Bellarmino accepted temporal rulers to be legitimate *de iure gentium* whereas Possevino diminished the criteria of legitimacy of temporal rulers. Nevertheless, the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff is said by the latter to be *iure divino* as such authority is granted to the apostle Peter and his successors in Matt 18:18–19.⁴⁸⁶

A temporal ruler is described as having no authority immediately from God, otherwise the tyrannical realms of the Turks would have had legitimate authority directly from God. As was customary in the authorship of Possevino, the Turks are set up as *exempla evitanda*, yet the path that was trodden by his confreres Suárez and Persons, of arguing in favour of regicide if a ruler was perceived as a tyrant, cannot be seen to have been taken by Possevino as he remained silent on the topic of regicide. Instead, he emphasised the importance of peace amongst Christian princes in defence of the common enemies by lifting heresies from the field of the Catholic Church.⁴⁸⁷

Tyrannical governments are thought to be founded on the assumption that the law can be violated on the basis of acquisition of power.⁴⁸⁸ To Possevino, tyrants do not reign according to the authority granted by God. As

⁴⁸⁵ NR: 5. “[...] quante guerre, donationi, elettioni, & heredità sono ingiustamente fatte, & possedute?”

⁴⁸⁶ NR: 7. Cf. Matt 18–19: “And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

⁴⁸⁷ NR: 6

⁴⁸⁸ RPA: 50.

follows, by applying providentialist rhetoric, he expressed that reigns founded on false reasons are not perpetual and although God permits them, in the end he gives them that punishment which is proper for tyranny. As Caesar was the first in the Roman Republic who founded this tyrannical proposition, he is held to have been the first to suffer punishment because of it.⁴⁸⁹

Ruling by Necessity

In the *Apparato All'Historia*, Possevino suggested that necessity does not grant authority to act unjustly. Therefore, references to necessity cannot excuse the unjust acts of thieves, seammers of roads ('graffatori di strade'), tyrants, and those who oppose laws and perturb reigns. This claim was different from the Machiavellian concept of 'necessità', as Possevino did not consent to the idea that necessity grants arbitrary acts to be valid if they are unjust. During the *guerra delle scritture* he nonetheless advanced in his thinking about necessity, when compared with the *Apparato All'Historia*. In the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*, "necessità" implies an act in accordance with the result of an examination of conscience and in the *Nuova Risposta* he discussed necessity in connection with the office of the Roman pontiff. There it is mentioned that the Roman pontiff was prefigured in Melchizedek and that Emperor Justinian declared that necessity of conscience forced him to affirm the supremacy of the Roman pontiff before other potentates.⁴⁹⁰

It follows that Possevino went from thinking that no good could spring from necessity to connecting necessity to conscience. In other words, what conscience determines is necessary to act upon in as much as it is God who speaks to conscience. Although the two arguments about necessity, presented in the *Apparato All'Historia* and the Interdict Texts are different, it is not likely that Possevino had a change of heart. It is more likely that he practised

⁴⁸⁹ RPA: 50.

⁴⁹⁰ NR: 14; RPA: 50.

the rhetorical principle of accommodation. Thus, when confuting Machiavelli in the *Apparato All'Historia*, he portrayed necessity as a concept with arbitrary connotations. When confuting Querini and the anonymous doctor in the *guerra delle scritture*, on the other hand, necessity is portrayed as God speaking to the personal conscience, in order to rebut Venetian claims of authority over clerics.⁴⁹¹

Application of moral theology to reasons of state was in fact a significant trait in Jesuit casuistry of the early modern period. Yet, references to personal consciences are also to be found in the writing of Venetian theologians. Sarpi, for instance, held that no Venetian is actually excommunicated by the interdict if conscience does not dictate otherwise, although conscience must not constrict obedience to the prince. In Sarpi's opinion, however, the Machiavellian concept of necessity as the impetus for rulers to act upon, is not valid due to human incompetence to control events. On the contrary, ruling is said to be conducted passively while waiting for the right 'opportunità'. Consequently, as 'necessità' had been replaced with 'opportunità' in the language of Venetian theologians, Possevino was free to operate with the concept of necessity. As he presented a different interpretation of necessity, when compared with that of Machiavelli, the concept was molded to fit Jesuit casuistry.⁴⁹²

Hierarchy in the Temporal State

Possevino regarded temporal authority to imply servitude. The Venetians, on the other hand, considered the temporal authority of the republic to be free from the imposing will of another ruler. In the debates during the Interdict Controversy, two views on the condition of temporal authority, rather than

⁴⁹¹ NR: 14.

⁴⁹² Bouwsma, 1968: 425–426; Bouwsma, 1990: 108 & 255–256; Tutino, 2010: 15; Keenan, 2004: 461–478.

two understandings of the liberty of the Republic of Venice emerge. The condition ascribed to the temporal authority of Venice also determined the argument about its hierarchical position when compared to other authorities.⁴⁹³

The discussion about hierarchy and temporal authorities, during the Interdict Controversy began with the publication of the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia*, in which the anonymous doctor cited Romans 13:1 “every soul should be subjected to the more sublime authorities, since there is no authority except from God.”⁴⁹⁴ The apostle Paul was indeed one of the doctor’s *exempla ad persuadendum*, but he continued to list other *exempla*, such as John Chrysostom (347–407). Chrysostom, the doctor noted, interpreted Paul as follows: “the Apostle did this to show that Christ did not institute his laws to overturn states, but to arrange them better. Showing that these should be obeyed by everybody, also Monks and Priests, not only the laity.”⁴⁹⁵

In Possevino’s opinion the words quoted from Chrysostom are misunderstood by the doctor, since Chrysostom gave heed to the fact that, in the time of the apostles, the Vicar of Christ was the superior authority above the apostles and only God is superior to him. In turn, every temporal authority is thought to be hierarchically subject to the Roman pontiff, and who “has made the *Signoria* of Venice exempt from obedience to the Supreme Pontiff?”⁴⁹⁶ Possevino wrote that if patience and light from God were granted “you could

⁴⁹³ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 45–46. Bellarmino wrote that the doctor depicted the prince of Venice as an absolute monarch, saying that he is the natural lord of his state. “If thus he is, the Republic of Venice has lost its liberty. Neither can one truly call it republic anymore, since it has one lord and a natural lord. He is lord who can do all that he wants, being able to donate, sell, bind and change it.” Bellarmino underscored that it befits the doge of Venice to be natural lord of the state of Venice. But, if the Republic of Venice is a true and free republic, as she says she is, she has not transferred the whole authority to the prince. But she has communicated to him that part which is proper to him and can increase it, diminish it and lift it from the whole and even punish the prince [...] as she already made to the person of Marin Falier and through consequence the doge must be recognised as superior in temporal matters, but limited by God and also by his republic or the *Maggior Consiglio* (Gran Consiglio).”

⁴⁹⁴ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 4. “[...] *omnis anima potestatibus sublimioribus subdita sit, non est enim potestas, nisi à Deo*. Cf. Romans 13:1.

⁴⁹⁵ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 4. “[...] *Facit hoc Apostolus, ut ostendat Christum leges suas non ad hoc induxisse, ut politias evertat, sed ut ad melius instituat. Ostendens quod ista omnibus imperentur, & Monachis, & Sacerdotibus non solum secularibus.*”

⁴⁹⁶ NR: 10. “[...] chi ha fatta essente la Signoria di Venetia dalla ubidienza del Sommo Pontefice.”

peacefully drink this catholic doctrine founded, not on the waves of the sea of Venice but on the Apostolic rock; not fished in the Canal Grande of Venice but in the sea of the doctrine of the holy fathers, sacred canons and councils and even to your greater confusion in the imperial laws."⁴⁹⁷

As for the doctor's references to the words of the apostle Paul, that authority in temporal matters is granted directly by God, Possevino replied that Paul did not speak specifically about the Venetians but rather universally. A similar answer was given to Querini, in which Possevino underscored that it is important to refer to universal claims: 'in universale dica'. This was his conviction, but also Bellarmino's as the latter replied to the doctor in his *Risposta* that the apostle Paul, in the *Letter to the Romans*, talks about universal authority.⁴⁹⁸

As seen, there was a tendency amongst theologians who defended the interdict to refer to a universal and hierarchical order, whereas Venetian theologians referred to particular orders and needs of states. That *every soul should be subjected to the more sublime authorities* was a universal claim to Possevino, which transcended the confines of the Republic of Venice. To the doctor and Querini the words of Paul are valid primarily for the Republic of Venice, since that was the geographical place that was being addressed. Thus, clerics are held to be subject to the temporal ruler in Venice insofar as they were citizens according to the particular order of the Republic of Venice.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ NR: 11. " [...] possi pacificamente bere questa dottrina catholica fondata non nell'onde del mare di Venetia, ma nella pietra Apostolica; non pescata nel canal grande di Venetia, ma nel mare della dottrina de santi padri, de sacri canoni, & concilii, & ancora per tua maggiore confusione nelle leggi imperiali."

⁴⁹⁸ NR: 7-8; Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 8 & 18: Bellarmino wrote that the apostle Paul states that universally subjects obey superiors and when the example of secular princes is added, the apostle Paul speaks of princes who at that time were unfaithful. One cannot intend, Bellarmino affirmed, that the apostle Paul wanted Christians to obey princes concerning laws that appertain to the divine cult or the discipline of the Church, but only to civil laws and temporal matters.

⁴⁹⁹ NR: 27. Bellarmino defended himself, saying that the doctor corrupts the Scriptures as he wishes, since in Saint Paul one does not find the sentence *sunt enim ministri Dei ad tributa* and neither *Dei enim minister est ad vindictam*. It is not permissible to quote the words of the Scripture that are words of God, or to change and alter them, Bellarmino concluded. Saint Paul does not say that the princes are ministers of God to receive tributes, but to procure the public peace and thus Saint Chrysostom and other saints' exhibit those words *ministri enim Dei sunt, in hoc ipsum servientes*. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 19. Cf. Bouwsma, 1968: 420-423.

Possevino, however, denied that the prince is superior to priests, using a strong language: "the one who is not true superior, *his authority is not from God, but from the Devil.*"⁵⁰⁰ It follows that he estimated priests to be of higher rank than lay people, including the temporal prince: "it would be [a] monstrous thing that the clerics should obey the lay people just as it is monstrous that the head should be subject to the feet."⁵⁰¹ Moreover:

For example the Lion is the King of the animals, but not of men and man is made by God to govern all the inferior sensible creatures and he can be called a God amongst them as Moses was called God of the Pharaoh by God himself. But for this reason man – who is of inferior nature to the Angels – is not God and governor of the Angels, rather they govern men and they guard them in this life."⁵⁰²

The *exemplum ad persuadendum* of Aquinas was, furthermore, said to have taught that the angels are superior to man and that the soul is the form of the body. The body needs to obey the soul as its instrument and the temporal good is made by God to serve the spiritual good. Therefore, the temporal realms should serve the spiritual realm as final cause. Not only as efficient cause. On the basis of Aquinas' argument, Possevino advocated an order where spiritual and temporal authorities do not invalidate each other, rather the superior assists the inferior. The superior and inferior elements in the world are preserved together, just as the heart, the brain, and the liver suffice to keep man alive where the intellective soul is necessary. Without which all the rest would remain a corpse. Likewise, the Heaven and the Church are constituted by various hierarchies that preserve union from whence stability and joy derive.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ NR: 27. "[...] chi non è vero superior *eius potestas non est a Deo, sed a Diabolo.*"

⁵⁰¹ NR: 27. "[...] sarebbe cosa monstuosa che gli Ecclesiastici obedissero a laici come monstuoso è che il capo sia suddito dei piedi."

⁵⁰² NR: 28. "[...] per esempio il Leone è Re de gli animali, ma non de gli huomini et l'huomo è fatto da Dio per governare tutte le creature inferiori sensitive, et si può chiamare un Dio di esse come Mosè è chiamato Dio di Faraone dall'istesso Dio, ma non perciò l'huomo è Dio et governatore de gli Angeli, anzi essi governano gli huomini, et li custodiscono in quella vita, essendo di natura inferiori a gli Angeli."

⁵⁰³ NR: 38–40; RTE: 39.

The criterion of *unum* is operative in the reasoning of hierarchies, which contrasts disarray and confusion. Disarray occurred when Lucifer and the devils overruled the celestial order, as they desired to make themselves equal to God. Similarly, Adam and Eve are thought to have been deported from the terrestrial Paradise since they overruled the prescribed rule. Moreover, Possevino ascribed the loss of many kingdoms in Asia and in Africa to the Ottomans, due to the overruling of order. Consequently, the Venetians were warned not to follow these *exempla evitanda*.⁵⁰⁴

The Christian *politia*

Whilst addressing Querini, who had noted that the spiritual authority is gold and like the sun and temporal authority is lead ('piombo') and like the moon, Possevino concluded that the lay patrician failed to determine that temporal authority is not subordinated to the spiritual as he believes it should be. He states that Querini will be shown that spiritual superiority is recorded in the ancient histories of the governments of Assyrians, Medes, Greeks and Romans.⁵⁰⁵

Nonetheless, Possevino acknowledged that it is a true Catholic doctrine that two heads can exist simultaneously, one in spiritual matters and the other in temporal matters. The spiritual is regarded as supreme and the temporal as subordinated to the spiritual, partly on the basis that the soul is regarded as nobler than the body and partly because the end of spiritual authority is held to be leading souls to heaven. As the spiritual authority disposes over means

⁵⁰⁴ RTE: 39.

⁵⁰⁵ RPA: 8, 22 & 42–43. The discussion of the sun and moon is a reference to the medieval allegory *Luminaria duo*, about the *plenitudo potestatis*. The sun signifying pontifical authority, whereas the moon signifies temporal authority. The allegory was used by Pope Innocent III as well as included in the *Liber Extra* by Gregory IX (*sed.* 1227–1241). The allegory of gold and lead is a metaphor employed in the *Decretum Gratiani*, signifying that the origins of the imperial authority and the priestly ministry are both from God but hierarchically ordered differently. Cf. Quaglioni, 2005.

with which the soul reaches heaven, temporal authority is considered as subject to spiritual authority. Just as Christ says: “*that we may not because of temporal goods lose the eternal ones.*”⁵⁰⁶ Against Querini’s claim that the prince is the head in the temporal state, Possevino answers that in the Christian *politia* Christ is head.

He can be seen to echo his thoughts about culture as he maintained that under the head of the Vicar of Christ there are different members who participate in society according to their offices and talents. He wrote that Christ arranged for the *politia* not to be destroyed, but perfected, wherefore man is understood to be able to acquire the habit of perfecting moral virtues.⁵⁰⁷ In a similar fashion, he affirmed that evangelical law has granted perfection to political life and in every town, kingdom and province there are two kinds of persons, ecclesiastical and secular. The ecclesiastical is governed by the supreme spiritual authority and is distinct from the secular authority. Although there are two kinds of persons in a town, both are understood as citizens, not foreigners, but they obey different heads. The temporal authority is subordinated to the spiritual authority and clerics are obliged in conscience *ex vi rationis* – by nature of reason – to serve those civil laws that concern the common good.⁵⁰⁸

It is possible to observe that there were two definitions of ‘citizen’ in circulation in the Interdict Texts. To Sarpi, the anonymous doctor and Querini, citizen implied subjection to the temporal prince and obligation to follow the laws of the prince, hence there can only be one jurisdiction operating in the state. To Possevino, however, citizen implied an inhabitant of a state and whether a citizen is obliged to follow the laws of the temporal authority or the laws of the spiritual authority, is dependent on whether the citizen is a layman or a cleric. The concept of citizenship thus extends a person’s obligation to

⁵⁰⁶ RPA: 23. “[...] *ut per bona temporalia non amittamus aeterna.*” In the Collect after Penetecost in the Tridentine Roman Missal, rather than a biblical quote.

⁵⁰⁷ RTE: 38; RPA: 23–24.

⁵⁰⁸ RPA: 24.

national civil law. Besides, he estimated civil law to be subjected to canon law.⁵⁰⁹

Here Possevino referred to the *Historia Tripartita* testifying that it is the duty of an emperor to submit to the spiritual authority, not voluntarily but necessarily. The *exemplum ad persuadendum* Pope Gelasius I (*sed.* 492–496) was brought into the discussion, as he conceded that the emperor rules the world and not souls. Possevino sarcastically replied to the doctor: “if you understand the Latin [language] you can see that the emperor is subjected to the judgment of the Pope in the mundane things, but the Pope is not [subjected] to the lay Tribunal.”⁵¹⁰

Assistance from Clerics in the Temporal State

Possevino proposed that temporal rulers are to expect assistance from clerics, when it comes to the edification of lay people, drawing on arguments from the Spanish canonists Alfonso de Castro (1495–1558) and Doctor Navarrus (Martín de Azpilcueta (1491–1586)). The latter was highly appreciated by the author of the *Riposta d'un dottore in Theologia*, something that Possevino remarked upon. Thus, the *exemplum ad persuadendum* of the doctor has become an *exemplum ad persuadendum* to Possevino, not because he should happen to agree with the anonymous doctor but on the basis that he believed the doctor to have misunderstood Navarrus. Navarrus is said to have been assisted by the Holy Spirit “in the same manner as the Holy Spirit of the flesh and adulation assisted you. [Navarrus] affirms that the ecclesiastical immunity [is] *de iure divino*.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Bouwsma, 1990: 105. In the twelfth book of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, Possevino stated that since the founding of the Christian Church, the Mosaic law has been resolved into divine law. The divine law is preeminent when compared with other laws. BS, II, XII: 5–10.

⁵¹⁰ NR: 15. “[...] se tu intendi il latino, puoi vedere, che l'imperatore è soggetto in queste cose mondane al giudizio del Papa, ma non il Papa al Tribunale laico.”

⁵¹¹ NR: 13. “[...] come in te, assiste lo Spirito Santo della carne, & dell'adulatione [...] afferma, che l'immunità ecclesiastica *de iure divino*.”

Although Possevino tried to make it impossible for the doctor to keep Navarrus as an *exemplum ad persuadendum*, he also wished to prove the contradictory reading of Aquinas, who, as opposed to the doctor, is held to have proved that a superior is not obliged to submit to the laws of an inferior. Thus, even if a prince, such as Emperor Justinian, should legislate in favour of clerics, such laws, Possevino maintained, would not be valid unless the Supreme pontiff had given his approval.⁵¹²

Such customs of approval from the Roman pontiff were practised in royal courts around Europe, as almost every temporal state is thought to have a mixture of lay and ecclesiastical councillors. For instance, the kings of Spain are said to have been represented on many occasions by cardinals and archbishops in their Council. This also applied to the parliament and senate of France. The German principalities had seven electors, of whom three were clerics. These were the archbishops of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier. The kingdom of Poland is, furthermore, mentioned since it was represented by archbishops and bishops, along with the palatines, castellans and other laymen in committees and diets. Still, Possevino notes, when a problem remains undecided, or if a matter requires bigger authority, such matters are bestowed to the Vicar of Christ and they postpone decision-making until having received his judgment.⁵¹³

To further persuade the Venetians of the benefits of cooperation between laymen and clerics in councils, Possevino drew from history. He wrote that when piety blossomed in Venice, the governing councils included a mixture of clerics and laymen, similar to France and Spain, and when the ancient Venetians were in doubt, they deferred their affairs to the conscience of the Supreme pontiff.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² NR: 13.

⁵¹³ RTE: 52–53.

⁵¹⁴ RTE: 53.

As can be seen, these *exempla imitanda* are portrayed as participants in the Christian Commonwealth, which not only implies acceptance of inferiority amongst the temporal rulers to the spiritual authority but also cooperation between the ecclesiastical and the secular spheres to the benefit of the common good. Contrary to these *exempla imitanda*, however, England was set up as an *exemplum evitandum* for having failed to preserve the Catholic faith. If the Catholic faith had been preserved, King James I would have had the ecclesiastical and lay citizens working together in committees and councils. Neither would, if the true faith had prevailed, Catholic prelates have been succeeded by false bishops, who do not share the apostolic succession.⁵¹⁵

As the Interdict Controversy increased in intensity, Roman theologians were anxious that the Republic of Venice would take England as an *exemplum imitandum*. Such anxiousness cannot be said to have been unfounded, since Venetian theologians favoured an order in which the prince is absolute with an independent legal system. This order also imparted a curriculum of education in Padua with little obligation to the Catholic Church. These traits resembled the action taken in the reformed early modern England. In fact, the *giovani* had also excluded priests from holding positions in councils, just as Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547) once had sidelined the influential Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (c. 1473–1530). To prove his indignation towards the reformed England, Possevino pointed out, in the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, that the daughter of King Henry, Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603), was born out of monstrous incest and she made herself head in place of the Vicar of Christ.⁵¹⁶

Possevino had already addressed the question of Elizabeth as monarch for England in the *Moscovia*. There, he wrote about Elizabeth I: “the woman who now rules England has usurped the Headship and Primacy of the Church of England. [...] The English have spat upon Peter, and Peter’s Successor duly

⁵¹⁵ NR: 45; RTE: 53.

⁵¹⁶ RTE: 15, 53; Bouwsma, 1968: 481; Bouwsma, 1990: 114.

established by Christ Our Lord, and subjected themselves to a woman (for that is all she really is) even in matters of religion.”⁵¹⁷ Possevino further refutes the claim that an English woman, Joan, once sat on the Chair of Saint Peter, but now “they are revering a real woman as Pope in England.”⁵¹⁸ Typically, Possevino noted, books by Englishmen are hostile to the Roman pontiff and the city of Rome and he mentions the following statements in such books: “‘you lost the keys to the kingdoms, which Peter gave to you, through your sins,’ or, ‘the Pope does not keep God’s commandments.’”⁵¹⁹ Possevino replied “they cannot know or rightly say whether the Pope sins or not, and if committing sins were a ground for depriving rulers of their offices, there would be no rulers left in this world.”⁵²⁰

Concluding Remarks

The Venetians considered temporal authority as immediately granted by God *de iure divino*, whereas Possevino can be seen to argue the opposite. As sovereignty in Venice equalled the prince, whose authority was considered absolute, the prince was portrayed as unified in order to represent God. The more mixed, the less godlike. Although Possevino and Bellarmino preferred one monarch to rule the state, as one ruler best resembles God, they made use of the analogy of the body and soul in order to distance temporal authority from ecclesiastical authority, which they considered to be immediately granted by God.

To Possevino, temporal authority is permitted by God but not *de iure divino*, except for the temporal authority of the pope in accordance with Matt 16:18–19. On the whole, authority immediately from God, *de iure divino*, was

⁵¹⁷ *Moscovia*: 98.

⁵¹⁸ *Moscovia*: 104.

⁵¹⁹ *Moscovia*: 101.

⁵²⁰ *Moscovia*: 101.

fundamental for the claims of legitimacy of an independent ruler. This was as important to the Venetian theologians as to Possevino.

The spiritual authority is, moreover, an authority that applies to clerics, who are not obliged to follow civil law. Yet clerics are obliged to follow civil law if such law is directed towards the common good. Possevino considered 'citizen' to mean an inhabitant in a temporal state. It was still the status of the person – layman or cleric – that decided which legal system that person is obliged to follow. In turn, every temporal ruler is obliged to recognise the spiritual ruler as superior to the temporal office and each act of legislation that is directed to clerics must be approved by the head of the clerics.

In the temporal state, clerics were considered a great asset to governing and Possevino exhorted nations within the Christian Commonwealth where cooperation between laymen and clerics had been successful, to the benefit of the common good. These nations were contrasted with the *exemplum evitandum* of England. Because of the difficulty in trying to bring back England to the Catholic faith, a growing anxiousness was spreading amongst the Roman theologians that Venice would follow the same path as England. Due to this, Possevino set up ancient Venetians, who participated in contributing to the common good, as *exempla imitanda* to the Venetians.

Chapter 10. Spiritual and Temporal Authority of Moses and Christ

To Possevino, spiritual authority is granted immediately from God and temporal authority is mediated through spiritual authority. In this chapter, Possevino's *doings* in the discourse of the authorities of Moses and Jesus Christ, during the Interdict Controversy, will be analysed. Ever since classical antiquity, Moses has been made model for religious and political ends. To the Jewish writers Josephus and Philo (c. 20 BC–c. 50), Moses was the first legislator. The Greek geographer and historian Strabo, compared Moses with a legislator in a pagan state. The historian Abraham Melamed writes in an article that the Jewish political thinkers Don Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508) and David De Pomis (1525–1588), treated Moses as the model for the constitution of Venice. Abravanel presented the Council of Ten as the superior council in the Venetian state machinery, similar to Moses' hierarchical system whereby Moses was the sole judge amongst the people of God. When the people disputed amongst themselves, they turned to Moses to seek God's will. On the advice of his father-in-law, Moses chose capable men to serve as judges.⁵²¹

Abravanel thought that the Council of Ten was the sum of the most capable men of Venice and that the mixed-government structure of the Republic was modelled after Moses' system. De Pomis followed suit portraying Venice as the living example of the model of Moses. Both thinkers were familiar with the Myth of Venice, in which the doge was understood to have a similar function to Moses of mediating commandments, where the continuity between Moses and the doge is thought to be secured through Mark the Evangelist.⁵²²

⁵²¹ Lelli, 2019: 40; Henny, 2018: 36; Melamed, 2012: 232–243. Cf. Exodus 18:13–26.

⁵²² To portray Moses as the model for the constitution of a republic, was not very common outside of the Republic of Venice. However, in fifteenth century Florence, Moses was compared with Plato's philosopher-king. Melamed, 2012: 232–243.

In Rome, moreover, Moses was an equally important figure for proving continuity between the Old Testament and the authority of the Roman pontiff. The scholar Fabrizio Lelli writes that in the Vatican, a fresco shows Pope Sixtus IV (*sed.* 1471–1484) sitting alongside Solomon, Moses and the apostle Peter. The Sistine Chapel is allegorised as Solomon’s new temple and Moses and Peter are, in turn, pictured as Judeo-Christian links of continuity with the Roman pontiff. Lelli also mentions that in other frescoes, Moses is portrayed as a *typos* for both Christ and the Roman pontiff.⁵²³

As early modern artworks show, Moses was considered a prefigure of authority. Just as Moses had been a model to prove continuity between the Mosaic law and Venetian justice, Moses was equally important to the Catholic Church to prove continuity between the Old and the New Testament. The role of Moses as prefigure resurfaced during the *guerra delle scritture*, when the anonymous doctor claimed Moses to be in possession of temporal authority and Aaron to be the spiritual leader of the people of God. To the doctor, Moses is a prefigure of subsequent temporal rulers whereas Aaron is a prefigure of spiritual leaders.⁵²⁴

Moses and Typologies

In the *Apparato All’Historia*, Moses was considered a wise governor who was the founder of every discipline. Possevino also discussed errors concerning historical details about Moses by Junianus Justinus and confuted Machiavelli by holding that the laws of Moses were sustained through faith and not through violence. However, he observed that Constantine fought against Maxentius in a manner similar to Moses’ battle against the Pharaoh. It was also mentioned that the intertwining of secular princes and Jewish pontiffs did not begin with Moses, but during the time of the Maccabees and particularly

⁵²³ Lelli, 2019: 35–40.

⁵²⁴ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*: 4.

during the principality of Aristobulus. Prior to this there was no mixture between kingship and priesthood.⁵²⁵

During the *guerra delle scritture*, the arguments were somewhat different. Possevino launched into a defence of the spiritual authority of Moses against the claims of the anonymous doctor that Moses had merely temporal authority. In this discussion, there is a tendency to picture history in a typological fashion, where the main value of examples and types lies in being objects of comparison with the standards of contemporary time. The presented types do not equal the comparative objects of his day, but function as prefigures or exempla.

Possevino reasoned that the Vicar of Christ exceeds the prophets of the Old Testament, whereas the Venetians are at least on par with the violent kings of the Old Testament, such as Rehoboam, Nimrod, and Saul. In contrast, the true king of the Old Testament, Possevino maintains in the *Nuova Risposta*, was he who had been anointed through the commandments of God by the prophets. On the other hand, the reprobated kings were like Saul. Consequently, the contemporary legitimate kings were those who had been approved by the Vicar of Christ, whose authority and dignity exceeds the ancient prophets, whom it befits to anoint kings.⁵²⁶

In his attempts to confute the doctor, Possevino used typology to discuss the office of the apostle Peter. The offices of Abraham and Melchizedek in the Old Testament were set up as types. Abraham was set up as a temporal ruler and Melchizedek as superior by virtue of his priestly office. The public sacrifices are maintained to have been administered by priests as Abraham, in the presence of Melchizedek, surrendered the pre-eminence to offer the sacrifice. Thereby, it fell to Abraham to receive the blessing from Melchizedek to whom Abraham offered tithes and gifts. As follows, since the order in the Old

⁵²⁵ AAH, III, c. 34: 130v.

⁵²⁶ NR: 6. Saul is likewise mentioned by Bellarmino in his *De Controversiis* as an *exemplum vitandum*. Bellarmino, *De Controversiis, De Romano Pont.*, I, cs. 2–7: 253D–260DB; Cf. Turtino 2012: 16.

Testament was less eminent than the New Testament, the Roman pontiff has even greater authority than Melchizedek to bless, curse and excommunicate temporal ruler.⁵²⁷

In the reply to the doctor's claim that the Levites had one Supreme pontiff, who was Aaron, Possevino pointed out that in the books of Exodus and Leviticus the ceremonial precepts were given by God through Moses, not through Aaron. Moses, not Aaron, spoke with God and received the order from God to administer the sacrifices and the divine cult. Thus, Moses had spiritual authority and consecrated Aaron and his sons as Moses wanted Aaron to assist him in governing the people. Subsequently, the descendants of Aaron passed on the Supreme priesthood. Yet, the consecration of Aaron did not deprive Moses of his former dignity.⁵²⁸

Possevino referred to Moses as Supreme pontiff ('Sommo pontefice') in the *Nuova Risposta* which is different from how Moses was described in the *Apparato All'Historia*. Therefore, it has to be concluded that the understanding of the qualities of the figure of Moses were stretched further in the *Nuova Risposta* than in the *Apparato All'Historia*. In fact, the arguments were accommodated to suit the defence of the authority of the Roman pontiff during the Interdict Controversy.

Bellarmino, in his *Risposta* to the doctor, called Moses Supreme priest ('Sommo sacerdote'), but to Possevino's understanding it was rather Aaron who should be called Supreme priest, as he had only spiritual authority. The ascription of the title Supreme pontiff to Moses thus connotes both spiritual and temporal authority. Mere temporal authority, such as that of a lay prince,

⁵²⁷ NR: 10, 15 & 19.

⁵²⁸ NR: 18–19; *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 5; Bellarmino, *De Controversiis, De Romano Pont.*, I, cs. 2–7: 253D–260DB; Cf. Tutino, 2012: 16. Bellarmino similarly referred to Exodus and Leviticus in his *Risposta*, writing that Moses and Aaron were priests of God and that Moses offered incense to God, which was the principal service of the supreme priest. Moses, wrote Bellarmino, consecrated his brother Aaron as supreme priest and the sons of Aaron were made priests. Moreover, Bellarmino wrote that Moses was supreme priest together with Aaron and that he was an even greater authority than Aaron through extraordinary divine arrangement. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 9.

disqualified practice of the priestly office. Possevino cited the book of Hosea and the First and Second Books of Kings to prove that those who interfered in sacrifices and spiritual jurisdiction were reprobated by God. To offer sacrifices to God, consecrate the temple, to bless priestly vestments and to anoint temporal rulers were never a concern for the office of the lay prince.⁵²⁹

Possevino and Venetian theologians sought to portray Moses as a prefigure and an *exemplum imitandum* for their preferred model of authority. Both sides agreed on the supposition that the authority of Moses was temporal, yet Possevino was not content that the authority of Moses should merely have been temporal. To him Moses was also a *typos* for Christ and his Vicar, as Moses is said to have been Supreme pontiff with authority in spiritual and temporal matters. However, Christ was depicted as worthy of greater honour than Moses “just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.”⁵³⁰

In the same manner as Moses passed on authority to Aaron, and consequently to his descendants, Christ passed on authority to the apostle Peter, and consequently to his successors. Neither Christ nor Moses lost the standard of priest. The supposition that the authority of Moses was temporal stands in contrast to the supposition that Christ practised spiritual authority. This supposition was agreed on by both Possevino and Venetian theologians. Still, agreement surrounding the question whether Christ practised temporal authority, as Moses was thought to have done, was not reached between Possevino and the Venetian theologians.⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ NR: 18–19; Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 37. Possevino’s conclusion about the authority of Moses was also contrary to Marcantonio Capello’s teaching, who in the *Delle Controversie tra il Sommo Pontefice...et la Serenissima Repubblica di Venetia*: 86 & 91, argued that it has been proven with testimonies of the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Fathers that Aaron represented God *in spiritualibus* and Moses, as prince, represented God *in politicis*. Therefore they were subjected to Aaron *in spiritualibus* and to Moses as prince *in politicis*.

⁵³⁰ NR: 20; Cf. Hebrews 3:3.

⁵³¹ NR: 20.

The Spiritual Authority of Christ

Venetian theologians during the Interdict Controversy were not in favour of ascribing temporal authority to Christ, whose authority was considered spiritual. The anonymous doctor supposed that Christ recognised Pilate to be his judge and that Christ commanded that it was proper to pay tribute, so that the ministers of the temporal prince would not be offended. The doctor also reasoned that when Christ sent his disciples to fetch the donkey and the colt, he instructed them to say to the owner “*that the Lord has need of these.*”⁵³² If, the doctor proposed, Christ had wanted to exercise the authority of a prince he would not have said *has need of these*, but something like “*because the Lord commands so.*”⁵³³

The doctor did not acknowledge that Christ practised the authority of a temporal prince when he entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. “*Behold your King comes to you, gentle sitting on a donkey and on the foal of a donkey.*”⁵³⁴ The doctor concluded that the realm of Christ is spiritual and eternal, since temporal kings entered with other ceremonies than Christ, who entered Jerusalem whilst sitting on a donkey. The arguments made by the doctor about the authority of Christ and implicitly about ecclesiology, are related to a tradition amongst theologians in the Republic of Venice to favour conciliarist theories. The *spirituali* and the *giovani* favoured conciliarist theories and these movements were known to have kept contact with Protestant theologians in the northern parts of Europe.⁵³⁵

⁵³² *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia: 7.* “[...] *quia Dominus his opus habet.*”

⁵³³ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia: 7.* “[...] *quia Dominus ita praecipit.*” Bellarmino cited the words: *non haberes potestatem adversus me ullam, nisi tibi datum esset desuper* to which he commented that it may seem as if Christ recognised Pilate as judge, but Pilate would not have been able to do anything against Christ, if God had not permitted him. Bellarmino wrote that the authority of Pilate, as a minister of the emperor, was from God, from whom every legitimate authority descends. Pilate judged Christ as a private person of that land which he governed. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 23.

⁵³⁴ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia: 7.* “[...] *Ecce Rex tuus venit tibi, mansuetus sedens super Asinam, & super pullum filium Asinae.*”

⁵³⁵ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia: 7.*

The strong link between Paris, London and Venice manifested during the *guerra delle scritture* in which conciliarist theories were nurtured and like the *spirituali*, the *giovani* were accused of being nicodemites. The common denominator for the affinity between Venetian theologians and those of the Protestant community could be said to emanate from a common tradition marked by nominalist theology and conciliarist theory, since Protestants and Venetians both insisted on favouring the early Church as sole *exemplum imitandum* for the Church. They also trusted in the superiority of a general council above the office of the Roman pontiff and equated the Church with a spiritual congregation of faithful (faith considered as the gift of the Holy Spirit) at the expense of a visible and institutional Church. Sarpi, in his *Trattato e risoluzione sopra la validità delle Scommuniche di Gio. Gersone Parisino*, placed himself within this tradition whilst guarding the teaching of the conciliarist theorist Jean Gerson (1363–1429).⁵³⁶

The precursors to conciliarist theories were Marsilius of Padua and William Ockham, who defended the Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV (Duke of Bavaria: r. 1301–1347, Emperor: r. 1328–1347) against the Avignon popes John XXII (*sed.* 1316–1334) and Benedict XII (*sed.* 1334–1342). In the thinking of Marsilius and Ockham, the affairs of the state were intertwined with ecclesiology. Marsilius, in his *Defensor Pacis*, contended that legislation must be authorised by the unity of citizens and that the Church lacks the accredited authority to have jurisdictional impact on civil government. With regard to the Church, Marsilius and Ockham did not regard the Roman pontiff to have been empowered with authority independently of other bishops. On the contrary, the authority from Christ was given to the successors of the apostles, not just the successor of Peter, and foremost to the Church as a whole. In other words, the *plenitudo potestatis* was not recognised as dwelling solely in the office of the Roman pontiff.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁶ Bouwsma, 1990: 252–261.

⁵³⁷ Oakley, 2003: 64 & 78; Oakley, 2003: 100; Skinner, 2015: 36–37, 124 & 380.

Marsilius opinioned that the head of the Church is Christ, who did not practise jurisdictional authority, wherefore the Church does not have any jurisdictional authority. To Marsilius' notion, the Church is not an institution but rather a congregation of believers, who share faith and participation in the sacraments of the Church. Ockham, for his part, defined the Church as a congregation of believers, which cannot transgress to such a high degree that it becomes heretical. The pope, on the other hand, can become a heretic. In such cases, a general council is authorised to depose a heretical pope.⁵³⁸

Such thoughts were at the heart of the conciliarist theories, which had a considerable impact on the affairs of the Church during the fifteenth century and whose advocates resided in Central Europe. Prominent conciliarist theorists were connected to the University of Paris, such as Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420), Jean Gerson (1363–1429), Jacques Almain (d. 1515), and John Mair (1467–1550). The former two were participants at the Council of Constance, where conciliarist theories were behind the decrees *Haec Sancta* (1415) and *Frequens* (1417). These documents were conciliarist in so far as they regulated that a general council, convened in the name of the Holy Spirit, is superior to the office of the Roman pontiff and that future general councils were to be held at fixed intervals.⁵³⁹

Against the background of the Council of Constance, conciliarist theories had become official ecclesiology. The subsequent convocation of the Council of Basel (1431–1449), was, moreover, in accordance with *Frequens*, but the suspension of the council in 1433 by Pope Eugene IV (1431–1447), in favour of the Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438–1445), proved that the high papalist tradition was parallel to the conciliarist tradition. Just as union with the Orthodox Church was the aim of the Council of Ferrara and Florence, the Council of Basel continued to work towards the same goal and deposed Pope Eugene in favour of Felix V (*sed.* 1439–1449) in 1439. The solemn

⁵³⁸ Oakley, 2003: 101–103.

⁵³⁹ Oakley, 2003: 68–98

promulgation of *Laetentur Coeli* (1439) in Florence, however, diminished the impact of the Council of Basel on Church politics.⁵⁴⁰

Nonetheless, the tradition of conciliarist theories was not terminated by the momentary triumph of Pope Eugene IV. On the contrary, it prevailed and in the beginning of the sixteenth century a council was convoked by the French king Louis XII (r. 1498–1515) at Pisa and Milan (1511–1512) in order to reinvigorate the decrees of *Haec Sancta* and *Frequens*. In turn, Pope Julius II (*sed.* 1503–1511) declared the Council of Pisa to be illegitimate. Instead, Pope Julius convoked the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517) which eventually announced that the office of the Roman pontiff is superior to a general council, which, in turn, was the point of departure for the high papalist tradition.⁵⁴¹

The Temporal Authority of Christ

That Venetian theologians were indebted to conciliarist theories and to thoughts presented in the *Defensor pacis* did not escape Possevino. He argued that everything that Giovanni Marsilio and Paolo Sarpi had written concerning the Interdict Controversy had already been said by Marsilius of Padua. He even called Giovanni Marsilio ‘il Marsilietto Napolitano’.⁵⁴² In the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*, Possevino maintained that while Querini touched upon the topic of Christ not wanting to reign this world, Querini had drawn the same conclusion as the *spirituali* sympathiser Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562). In the *Nuova Risposta*, an implication is made about the doctor’s adherence to “Luther, Calvin, Jan Hus, John Wycliffe, and Jerome of Prague

⁵⁴⁰ Oakley, 2003: 44–51.

⁵⁴¹ Oakley, 2003: 112–115.

⁵⁴² The Dominican apologist Juan de Torquemada (1388–1468), who is an *exemplum ad persuadendum* to Possevino, was one of the harshest critics of Marsilius. NR: 24 & 45; RTE: 5 & 49; RPA: 7; Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, Secunda Pars: 122–170.

and the whole wicked riffraff of heretics, apostates and schismatics [who] already dogmatised wickedly before you.”⁵⁴³ Moreover:

If I should be certain that you were amongst the false theologians of Geneva, I would not proceed through the way of Canons with you, about supreme pontiffs and councils, to show you the supreme authority of the Pope directly in the spiritual things. Not only above all the states and princes of the world, but also the temporal power as superior in instituting lords and empires and to confirm, depose and move them to war when they impede the cult and service of God, the good of the Church, the well-being of souls, the universal peace and the ecclesiastical liberty.⁵⁴⁴

As the quotes show, Possevino connected the teaching of the doctor to a tradition of various heterodox and Protestant persons who had all been condemned by the Catholic Church. As such they were estimated participants in the tradition of heresies that Possevino, in the *Apparato All’Historia*, traces back to Simon Magus. It should be noted that Luther, Calvin, Hus, Jerome of Prague, Wycliffe and Vermigli had stronger affinities with conciliarist theories than the high papalist tradition that followed the tracks of Boniface VIII, where the *plenitudo potestatis* was regarded as residing in the office of the Roman pontiff.

It would be no exaggeration to place Possevino in the high papalist tradition, since he conceded that the pope cannot be deposed by any potency or council even if proven to be a heretic. In such cases, it is only through the sentence of Christ that he is no longer pope. He was also against the supposition that the Church is an invisible congregation of believers, because to him the Church is a visible institution that is led by the Supreme pontiff. This authority is both spiritual and temporal. Important to the high papalist tradition

⁵⁴³ NR: 10 & 48, quote on 48: “[...] già empicamente dogmatizarono prima di te Lutero, Calvino, Gio. Hus, Gio. Vuiclef, Gio. da Praga et tutta la scelerata marmaglia de gli heretici, apostati et scismatici.” RPA: 26.

⁵⁴⁴ NR: 10. “[...] se io sapessi di certo, tu fussi di quelli falsi theologi di Geneva, non procederei teco per via di Canonii, di sommi pontifici & concilii, per mostrarti l’autorità suprema del Papa nelle cose spirituali direttamente, non solo sopra tutti i stati, & principi del mondo; ma ancora la potestà temporale, come superiore in istituire domnii, & imperii, & confirmargli, & deponergli, & muovergli guerra, quando impediscono il culto, & servitio di Dio, il bene della Chiesa, & la salute dell’anime, & la pace universale, & la ecclesiastica libertà.”

was the notion of Christ as a temporal authority, which legitimised the temporal authority of the apostle Peter and, subsequently, the successors of the *sede apostolica*.⁵⁴⁵

When focusing on the temporal authority of Christ, it should be taken into account that within the two distinct factions during the *guerra delle scritture*, one in favour of the interdict and one against it, there were different theological views. This was true even within the Society of Jesus, since Possevino and Bellarmino asserted different views on whether Christ practised temporal authority. Still, the opposing views of the two Jesuits are not readily discernable in the result of the reasoning, but rather *in* the reasoning.

Bellarmino, whose thinking on the topic of authority was based around the theory of *potestas indirecta*, did not believe that Christ practised the temporal authority of a prince in the world. Therefore, the temporal authority that is practised by the Roman pontiff was perceived as mediated and granted through the concessions of another temporal ruler. Interestingly, there is nothing in this reasoning, in Bellarmino's theory, that was discordant with the suppositions by the anonymous doctor on the question of whether Christ practised temporal authority. The latter recognised that Christ did not have a temporal realm: "*my Realm is not of this world, in other words temporal.*"⁵⁴⁶

Possevino replied to the anonymous doctor using biblical references such as Hebrews 2:8 "*you put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under*

⁵⁴⁵ NR: 46.

⁵⁴⁶ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 6. "[...] *Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo, cioè temporale.*" Cf. John 18:36. Bellarmino, *Risposta a un libretto intitolato, Risposta di un Dottore*: 21–23: Bellarmino said that Christ, as human mortal being, did not exercise the temporal power of a prince in this world since he came to suffer, to serve, to teach the world with examples of humility and obedience. Christ exposed the road to paradise to the disobedient and proud. Yet Christ, as human, could if he had wanted taken dominion of all the temporal matters and made himself king or emperor as he wished, since, as St. John says in the eleventh chapter, *omnia dedit ei Pater in manus*. Bellarmino continued to write that Christ – after the resurrection – did not exercise the power of a temporal prince, but one has to add that Christ – after the resurrection – governed the whole world, although not as a temporal prince, but as an eternal prince. In connection with Matthew 28: *Data est mihi omnis potestas in caelo and in terra*, Bellarmino stated that such power is not temporal since it is eternal, but all in all it is above every temporal matter.

him. Therefore also the present time. However at present we do not yet see all things subjected under him.”⁵⁴⁷ The reason why everything is not subjected to Christ, Possevino explained, is that in the time of the apostles as well as at present time, the whole world has not subjected itself to Christ. With regard to subjection to Christ, Venice is said to be amongst the realms of the world that does not realise that its authority is granted by Christ indirectly. Rather, God acts with princes and realms through the Church, which is led by the Vicar of Christ. Even if Christ and his Vicar are not accepted in the whole world, Possevino contended, it would not alter their status because “if the King travels incognito in his Realm whilst not being recognised and the subjects do not obey him, he does not lose authority because of this [...] he does not lack authority due to this, but the due obedience by the subjects [is lacking], such as in the case of the Venetians.”⁵⁴⁸

To prove that Christ had temporal authority, Possevino arranged the arguments to include usage of things material. He rhetorically asked what scourge Christ exercised with the material whip, as he drove out everybody from the Temple court and overturned the tables.⁵⁴⁹ Does it seem to you, Possevino asked the doctor, “that it was effected by spiritual power over the souls and not over the bodies with corporal punishment?”⁵⁵⁰ Hence, power over bodies constitutes a part of the definition of temporal authority which also applies to Christ’s power over the soldiers, who wanted to tie him, as he made them fall to the ground: “do you think that he did this if not in order to prove that

⁵⁴⁷ NR: 32. “[...] *Omnia subiecisti sub pedibus eius. In eo enim quod omnia ei subiecit, nihil dimisit non subiectum ei, adunque, etiam temporalia, nunc autem necdum videmus omnia subiecta ei.*”

⁵⁴⁸ NR: 32–33. “[...] se il Re vada incognito per il Regno, mentre, che non è conosciuto, et non gli ubbidiscono i sudditi non perde per questo l’autorità [...] non perciò non manca l’autorità, ma la debita ubidienza de’ sudditi, come nel caso de Venetiani.” Bellarmino stated that if today a priest was presented to the secular judge, under the guise of a layman, he could be judged by the power with which other laymen are judged, but this does not mean that the priest is submitted to the judgment of laymen, nor was Christ submitted to the judgment of Pilate. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 23:

⁵⁴⁹ NR: 33. With references to Matthew 21:12; Luke 19:45; Joh 2:15.

⁵⁵⁰ NR: 33. “[...] che sia effetto di potestà spiritual sopra le anime et non sopra i corpi con pena corporale?”

he was exempted from their jurisdiction and had power over their bodies.”⁵⁵¹ Even in his death, Christ is said to have died voluntarily which does not imply that he lost his temporal authority.⁵⁵²

The administratively trained Possevino posited that this authority has been transmitted to the Roman pontiff, similarly to a prince who delegates the handling of affairs to vicars. Christ established a vicar of his own, in a similar manner to Moses’ hierarchical system, because Christ has granted the care of the souls to his Vicar. Delegation did not, however, equal surrender of temporal authority to princes, since Christ had procured superiority to mortal princes. Nonetheless, in an answer to Querini’s hypothesis that Christ did not want to rule the world, Possevino can be seen to deduce that Christ did not want the kingdoms of this world, since his arrival was not for ruling but for saving mankind.⁵⁵³

By reason of the superiority of the authority of Christ, Possevino addressed the doctor with a certain dosage of polemics, as he uttered that it should surprise no one, since Christ used the material whip, if the Vicar of Christ would act in imitation of Christ, by scourge with the spiritual excommunication as well as with the temporal scourge. Indeed, the Venetians acted in a similar manner to those changing money in the Temple: “since they wish to introduce and expose their wares against the clerics in the Church of God.”⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵¹ NR: 33. “[...] credi che lo facesse, se non per mostrare che esso era esente dalla loro giurisdizione et haveva potestà sopra i loro corpi?” With reference to John 18:6

⁵⁵² NR: 33; cf. Acts 13:10–11.

⁵⁵³ NR: 36–38; RPA: 26.

⁵⁵⁴ NR: 33: “[...] perché vogliono nella Chiesa di Dio contro gli Ecclesiastici introdurre et esporre le loro mercantie.”

Concluding Remarks

Moses was significant in the authorship of Possevino. That Moses was the originator of every discipline was the main concern in the *Apparato All'Historia* given that this text focuses on strategies for education in the disciplines of geography, *historia humana* and *historia naturalis*. Exceptions to this manner of referring to Moses are found in Possevino's comparison between Moses and Constantine and in his rebuttals of the history writing of Junianus Justinus and Machiavelli's argument that the Mosaic law was sustained through violence.

During the *guerra delle scritture* Moses was no longer depicted as the originator of every discipline, but rather as Supreme pontiff. The authority of Moses is not merely temporal but also spiritual wherefore Moses is positioned at the highest possible rank within the spiritual sphere on earth. This claim was stretched beyond the view of the anonymous doctor, who considered Moses to have been solely a temporal ruler. Yet, since the doctor and Venetian theologians held temporal authority to be superior to spiritual authority, in the state of Venice, Moses was equally positioned by the doctor at the highest hierarchical rank.

Bellarmino attributed the title Supreme priest to Moses. This implies spiritual authority. Contrary to the title Supreme pontiff, which Possevino attributed to Moses, the title Supreme priest was deprived of any claims of temporal authority. In this sense, Bellarmino did not consent to the claims of continuity between Moses and the Roman pontiff as Possevino wished to prove. To Possevino it was Aaron who was Supreme priest with no temporal authority.

The figure of Christ played a minor role in Possevino's writings during the *guerra delle scritture*. Christ functioned as legitimiser of the authority that applied to the Roman pontiff and to clerics, as he gave authority to the apostle Peter and his successors. Thus, Moses and Christ, in Possevino's Interdict

Texts, encompassed spiritual and temporal authority, which in turn was instituted in the office of the Roman pontiff. This view was not only opposed by Venetian theologians but also by his confrere Bellarmino, who did not consider Christ to have practised temporal authority.

Chapter 11. The Authority of the Roman Pontiff

In Possevino's thinking, God grants immediate authority to the spiritual ruler, who is superior to the temporal. Besides, Moses and Christ both practised spiritual and temporal authority. In this chapter, I will investigate Possevino's thoughts on the authority of the Roman pontiff. The war of words during the Interdict Controversy about the nature of the authority of the Roman pontiff was, however, far from a novelty as it was merely an intervention in the prolonged altercations between theologians of the high papalist and the conciliarist traditions. The historian Francis Oakley has aptly stated that regardless of tradition, the idea of unity in the Church was equally important. Oakley mentions that high papalists considered unity to be established in the subordination of Christians to the Roman pontiff, whereas for the conciliarist theorists unity was granted by the association (*congregatio*) of the members of the Church. These two different stances were prevalent during the *guerra delle scritture*, for it is around those stances that the discourse on the authority of the Roman pontiff resided. The form was rhetorical with considerable usage of exempla.⁵⁵⁵

Debates about the Authority of the Roman Pontiff

It was central to the anonymous doctor that Christ did not found a temporal monarchy. Rather, Christ founded a spiritual monarchy. The authority promised by Christ to Peter, through the metaphor of the keys, is considered to be solely spiritual.⁵⁵⁶ In a similar manner to Marsilius and Ockham, the doctor

⁵⁵⁵ Oakley, 2003: 65.

⁵⁵⁶ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 9. The same interpretation is applied with regard to Matt 28:18: "all Power in heaven and on earth is given to me" and to the Hymn of the Church, *A solis ortus cardine*, which contains the passage "he who bestows the heavenly kingdoms does not rescue the mortal [kingdoms]." The hymn referred to, *A solis ortus cardine*, was written by Coelius Sedulius (d. 450). It is one of Sedulius's most famous hymns included in the Roman Breviary. Cf. Sedulius, 2013: 198–199, & 204.

portrayed the authority of the Roman pontiff as purely spiritual, whose jurisdictional authority is limited. In the doctor's opinion, the authority "*that you gave to Saint Peter the Power to bind and loose the souls*" referred not to jurisdictional authority but to the authority to excommunicate.⁵⁵⁷

Bellarmino, for his part, defended the unlimited jurisdictional authority to govern the Church, since authority to bind and absolve implies authority to legislate. For Bellarmino, spiritual authority was superior to temporal authority wherefore he trusted in the ability of the pontiff to intervene with full authority in temporal matters. Like Possevino, Bellarmino did not refrain from accusing the doctor of sharing the ideals of Marsilius of Padua, John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, and the Waldensians.⁵⁵⁸

Whether Christ founded a spiritual or temporal monarchy was fundamental to the kind of authority that the doctor and Bellarmino ascribed to the Roman pontiff. Although they agreed that the authority of Christ is spiritual, they were nevertheless discordant about the authority of the Roman pontiff. This authority is spiritual, according to the doctor, since the authority of Christ is spiritual. To Bellarmino, on the other hand, the authority of the Roman pontiff is both spiritual and temporal. It is spiritual in as much as the authority of Christ is spiritual. It is temporal, in as much as the temporal authority over the Papal States has been granted through concession *de iure gentium*.⁵⁵⁹

Bellarmino's reasoning freed him from conceding to the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine as a legitimiser of sovereignty over the Papal States. Instead, he trusted that the donation by the Frankish kings of the land

⁵⁵⁷ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 10. "[...] *qui Beato Petro Potestatem animas ligandi, atque solvendi tradidisti.*" Cf. Matt 18: 15–17.

⁵⁵⁸ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 27–34: Bellarmino wrote of the anonymous doctor that he diminished the authority of the Supreme pontiff, so that the pope is perceived as a mere priest or curator with no jurisdiction at all. Bellarmino added that it would seem as if the doctor wanted to renew the heresy of the Waldensians, of Wycliffe, of Marsilius of Padua, and that of Jan Hus "who today are embraced by all modern heretics." Bellarmino noted that Peter was granted authority to bind and absolve, in other words to command and make laws. Against the doctor's opinion that Christ gave limited authority to the apostles, Bellarmino replied that this stance is a heresy committed "by him who removes every jurisdiction from the pope."

⁵⁵⁹ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 65–66.

that constituted the Papal States was historically authentic. He also trusted the authenticity of the establishment of Charlemagne as emperor by Pope Leo III. He asserted that Pope Leo had possession of Rome when he inaugurated Charlemagne, but not that the pope gave Rome to Charlemagne. Rather Charlemagne is said to have received the imperial title from Leo since the Roman people had asked for an emperor. He, moreover, considered the idea that Charlemagne bought the title from Empress Irene (r. 780–802), or Emperor Nicephorus (r. 802–811), to be fiction, orchestrated by the gnesio-Lutheran Matthias Flacius Illyricus believing that it is justified to call the opinions of Flacius and the anonymous doctor heresy in history and temerity in theology.⁵⁶⁰

Previously, the doctor in his *Risposta* had written that Pope Leo had been expelled from the Apostolic See by the Roman people, though he was restored through the intervention of Charlemagne. Consequently the Roman people, who were badly governed by Byzantine Empire, called for Charlemagne to be emperor, and he in turn purchased the imperial title from Empress Irene or Emperor Nicephorus I. Thus, the doctor concluded, Pope Leo III did not possess the Western Empire and could not have given it to Charlemagne, who was already in possession of it *iure belli*.⁵⁶¹

The target of the doctor's reasoning was, however, not Bellarmino, but theologians who had contended that the Roman pontiff was a natural prince with a mandate to allocate the Western Empire to Charlemagne. The same theologians are addressed when the doctor posited that some persons suggested that when Pope Alexander VI (*sed.* 1492–1503) divided the Indies, between the kings of Spain and Portugal, he was able to do so since he was the natural temporal prince of the Indies.⁵⁶² They are mistaken, the doctor responded, because Pope Alexander was not acting as master of the Indies, but

⁵⁶⁰ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 29–31.

⁵⁶¹ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 8–9.

⁵⁶² In 1493, Pope Alexander issued four bulls which restricted Portuguese freedom of movement in East Asia. A settlement between the rival monarchies of Portugal and Spain was reached in 1494 with the Treaty of Tordesillas. According to this treaty, an imaginary border was drawn to define territorial affiliation. Coben, 2015: 142–162; Villamar, 2020:15–29.

was elected arbitrator by the kings of Portugal and Spain in order to ease the discord.⁵⁶³

The Authority of the Roman Pontiff and the Analogy of the Two Swords

The disagreement between Venetian and Roman theologians, took another turn when Possevino entered the *guerra delle scritture* as his theological position was more distant from the doctor than that of his confrere, who assumed that the authority of Christ was merely spiritual. Instead, he believed that Christ left his spiritual and temporal authority to Peter. He complained about the ignorance of the Venetians, whom he believed were cheated by Satan, since they were reluctant to recognise the whole authority of the Vicar of Christ: “what should be done? [...] should the Pope then only be holding his hands on his belt [i. e. remain idle] and be satisfied to excommunicate you and your Venetians who mock excommunications and allow harmful members into the Church?”⁵⁶⁴

Possevino did not believe that the Roman pontiff was content to hold his hands on his belt, but rather opinionated that he had two swords at his disposal. The image of the two swords represents the spiritual and temporal authority of the Roman pontiff. Its biblical foundation is Luke 22:38, where it is said: “behold here two swords [and Christ responded] it is enough.” The implications of Luke 22:38 were elaborated upon by Bernard of Clairvaux in his letter to Pope Eugene III, where Eugene was told that he has two swords

⁵⁶³ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 8. On this topic, Bellarmino, in his *Risposta*, voiced that Pope Alexander VI did not give the Indies to the realms of Castile and Portugal but that he permitted preachers to enter these new lands. He sent them armed people that would defend the preachers, as well as the new Christians. Pope Alexander as head of Christianity anticipated the danger of war between the Christian princes, so he wanted the king of Castile to navigate only the Western Indies and the king of Portugal to the Eastern Indies. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 29–30. ⁵⁶⁴ NR: 28 & 41–42, quote on 42: “[...] che s’hà da fare? [...] hà dunque da stare il Papa con le mani a cintola e contentarsi solo, di scomunicar te et tuoi venetiani che vi burlate delle scomuniche e permettere membri dannosi nella Chiesa?” With regard to the hymn *A solis ortus cardine*, Possevino held that neither Christ nor his vicars wanted to abandon that which they possessed, in other words the authority to bind and loose.

at his disposal. This letter was acknowledged by Possevino to present sufficient grounds to ascertain that the Roman pontiff is entitled to the two swords, although he rarely uses the temporal sword.⁵⁶⁵

In his *Moscovia*, Possevino had already written that the Roman pontiff does not seek excessive glory since “in reality he defers to the secular rulers, who have received their swords from God to exercise temporal sway over their subjects for an appropriate time, although he is by far the greatest amongst them.”⁵⁶⁶

The temporal sword was a concern of the *ius gladii*, which was not just a question of punishment but also concerned the right to execute subjects. The question of the temporal sword of the Church was debated long before the Interdict Controversy, but, as with several debates in the history of the Church, it resurfaced during the *guerra delle scritture*. Although the Venetian theologians, during the Interdict Controversy, had affinities with conciliarist theorists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the anonymous doctor proclaimed a significant break with conciliarist theorists such as Jacques Almain (1480–1515) and John Mair (1467–1550). To Almain and Mair, the *ius gladii* must reside with the body of people, but to the doctor, who referred to Romans 13:4 (which says that God’s servant does not carry the sword in vain), it is the secular princes who carry the sword. Therefore, the prince of Venice has a legitimate right to punish subjects.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ NR: 18. “[...] *ecce duo gladij hic [...] sufficit.*” Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 20–21: Bellarmino also discussed this topic in his *Risposta*. Saint Bernard wrote thus to Pope Eugene: *uterque ergo Ecclesiae & spiritualis scilicet gladius, & materialis, sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero, & ab Ecclesia exerendus est. Ille Sacerdotis, is militis manu, sed sane ad nutum Sacerdotis, & iussum Imperatoris.* In other words, the spiritual and material swords belong to the Church. The Church exercises the spiritual sword through the hand of the priest. The material sword is exercised through the hand of the soldier commanded by the emperor, but with the nod of the priest. This doctrine of Saint Bernard, Bellarmino continued, was authenticated by Pope Boniface in *Extravagante Unam Sanctam*.

⁵⁶⁶ *Moscovia*: 101.

⁵⁶⁷ NR: 29; Skinner, 2015: 256–263.

Possevino, for his part, interpreted Romans 13:4 differently from the doctor as he underscored that Paul spoke universally about authority. Accordingly, lay people are obliged in conscience to obey lay princes, who only have authority – in just causes – over corporeal bodies. They are even more obliged to obey the shepherd, since spiritual authority is superior to temporal authority. He reasoned that when pasturing the sheep, the temporal stick is to be used to castigate the sheep who commit injustice and do not fear excommunications. Such a shepherd who lacks these prerogatives appears to be a shepherd, not of sheep, but of untamed ferocious savages and fugitives freed from every punishment.⁵⁶⁸

Nonetheless, he surmised that the intention of the Roman pontiff is to avoid using the temporal sword. Nevertheless, when conscience deems it necessary the pope is able to impose a temporal scourge and command Catholic princes to take up arms to castigate rebellious princes, who threaten the Church and disturb the common good. Had it not been out of imitation of the meekness of Christ, the Roman pontiff, Possevino affirmed, would have already used the temporal sword to the destruction of the Venetians.⁵⁶⁹

In the Interdict Texts, Possevino can be seen to persuade through typologies and analogies. The typology of Moses was set up to prove continuity between Moses, Christ, and the Roman pontiff and the swords were set up to persuade the reader of the rightful spiritual and temporal authority of the Roman pontiff. Amongst Possevino's many analogies, there is one that describes the Vicar of Christ as a prince and a surgeon. The image of the Roman pontiff as prince was there to contrast the monarchical, unified, and supreme status of the Roman pontiff with the mixed governmental constitution of Venice. The image of the surgeon was there to persuade the reader of the validity of the

⁵⁶⁸ NR: 29 & 37.

⁵⁶⁹ NR: 30.

interdict, as the surgeon is said not err when cutting off a rotten part of the body.⁵⁷⁰

Symbols of authority are also found in the Interdict Texts, as Possevino noted that the papal tiara symbolises spiritual and temporal superiority. Whereas the ducal ‘corno’ symbolises inferior temporal authority. If the doge of Venice had temporal authority granted immediately by God and the spiritual authority of the pope should have been granted indirectly, Possevino contended, the pope would have been obliged to give the papal tiara to the doge and, in turn, receive the ducal ‘corno’ from him.⁵⁷¹

Moreover, in defence of the supremacy of the office of the Roman pontiff, against Venetian theologians, he provided biblical passages that concern the history of the early Church. The purpose was twofold, first, to prove the foundations of the office of the Roman pontiff, and second, to accommodate arguments of the debates about the validity of the Venetian interdict.

In the days of the early Church after the resurrection of Christ, the apostles are said to have enjoyed temporal authority, but they did not exercise it to a great extent due to two factors. First, the apostolic authority was not recognised amongst Jews and gentile emperors. Second, the first Christians were tender in their faith and were therefore in need of examples of meekness rather than acts of temporal authority from the Vicar of Christ. In addition, Possevino emphasised that at the time the Supreme pontiff was a poor fisherman and that as such, he did not speak with the magistrates of the Roman Empire. Instead, Peter knew how to steer his boat against every storm and to keep independent of human authority.⁵⁷²

Although the first apostles did not often practise temporal authority, Possevino put forth some exceptions in order to prove that temporal authority was actually exercised in the early Church. The first example regards Peter,

⁵⁷⁰ NR: 34 & 40.

⁵⁷¹ NR: 9.

⁵⁷² NR: 34; RTE: 17.

as Vicar of Christ who caused the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, deaths that were not merely spiritual according to Possevino since they succumbed to a mortal death. He commented: “although not with the sword, that is of little of importance; but it is sufficient to me that such sentence by Saint Peter, as Vicar of Christ and prince of the Church, caused mortal death with the prophetic spirit to those miserable ones.”⁵⁷³ He believed that Christ delegated his authority fully to Peter and that anyone who impeded it would not only fall into excommunication but also be punished corporally.⁵⁷⁴

Having concluded that the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were mortal, hence temporal, Possevino added that their crime was not of spiritual nature. On the contrary, their theft of that which had been offered to God, along with their subsequent lies about the price for which they had sold one piece of the land, are considered to have entitled Peter to practise his legitimate temporal authority on Ananias and Sapphira.⁵⁷⁵

Further examples that Possevino acknowledged to prove that temporal authority was carried out in the early Church regard Simon Magus – originator of all heresy – and Elymas the sorcerer. Like Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, according to the Acts of the Apostles 8:9–24, tried to contaminate the gifts of God with money. In return, Peter had him expelled and admonished him to repent. That the apostles carried out both spiritual and temporal authority in the early Church was also argued for by referring to the biblical passage where Saint Paul blinded Elymas (Acts 13:8–12). One common feature in these two examples is that Simon Magus and Elymas are both described as magicians. As noted previously, Possevino situated magic within the sphere of a fallacious culture.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷³ NR: 34. “[...] se bene non con la spada, che poco importa; ma basta a me, che cotale sentenza di S. Pietro come vicario di Christo, et principe della Chiesa con quello spirito profetico cagionò a quelli infelici la morte corporale.”

⁵⁷⁴ RTE: 17.

⁵⁷⁵ NR: 34.

⁵⁷⁶ RTE: 18.

In short, the example of the story of Ananias and Sapphira is presented to prove that the apostles practised temporal authority in the early Church, but they also function as *exempla evitanda* to those who tried to interfere with the divine cult. They are *exempla evitanda* in particular since Possevino posited that the Venetians interfered with the divine cult when prohibiting the building of churches and pious places from funds that testators and donors had freely conferred to the Church. Consequently, the Venetians, just like Ananias and Sapphira, committed sacrilege as they withheld that which belonged to God. To put it differently, the example of Ananias and Sapphira was accommodated to suit circumstances, persons, place, and time.⁵⁷⁷

Even though the exercise of temporal authority within the early Church was considered rare, the more influence on society the Church had, the more execution of temporal authority there was. In Possevino's thinking, differences in circumstances, persons, places, and times have brought about different practices. Thus, the apostle Peter practised temporal authority to a lesser degree than Pope Paul V. Due to the same factors, Pope Paul need not perform miracles as in the days of Peter. In his contemporary days, the ordinary authority suffices, Possevino maintained. Therefore, miracles are no longer required to bear witness to the truth of the Christian religion.⁵⁷⁸

Possevino propounded that with the establishment of the Christian religion in society, constituting the Christian Commonwealth, execution of temporal authority by the Roman pontiff would cause no scandal and impediment to the faith. In the days of Peter, however, the Christian religion had not yet grown into a commonwealth. In those days, miracles were amongst the most proper means to prove the truth of the Christian religion. In his contemporary days, he recognised the use of the temporal sword as a proper means to preserve unity in the Christian Commonwealth. If the Venetians could not accept the validity of the interdict and repent, he warned, Pope Paul would act in

⁵⁷⁷ NR: 34.

⁵⁷⁸ NR: 35.

imitation of Pope Julius II who led the papal armies against Venice in 1509 in the League of Cambrai.⁵⁷⁹

Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff

Regarding papal authority, Possevino added an argument that is not presented in his rebuttal of the opinions of the anonymous doctor, namely that of the infallibility of the Roman pontiff ('l'infalibilit  del Romano pontefice'). Possevino cited the words of Pope Eugene IV, assuming that the words are infallible: "*Ministers and Priests of God are to be immune from such burdens and requirements, as were the Fathers of the old law when the whole people laboured. [...] Neither should the secular authorities burden clerics with such requirements, and nor should clerics assent to them without license from the Roman Pontiff.*"⁵⁸⁰

Possevino signaled that the words of Pope Eugene are infallible, which presents interpretive keys to the reading of his works. Within the context of the Interdict Controversy, however, the acknowledgment of the doctrine of infallibility of the Roman pontiff is probably best interpreted as a manner of discrediting conciliarist theories. Possevino placed Querini as well as the anonymous doctor and Sarpi within the conciliarist tradition, which is a tradition that Possevino did not mention by name. Sarpi, for his part, did not need any Roman theologian to place him in that tradition, since he placed himself in that tradition through his defence of Jean Gerson. When addressing Querini, Possevino wrote that Querini's comrades had written in the vein of Marsilius of Padua and the *Magdeburg Centuries* and that Venetian councillors allow

⁵⁷⁹ NR: 35.

⁵⁸⁰ RPA: 40–41, longer quote on 41 than translated above: "[...] *Ministros, & Sacerdotes Dei ab huiusmodi oneribus, & exactionibus immunes esse debere, sicut fuerunt apud Patres veteris legis, cum populus universus laboraret; Leviticis ad divina Ministeria deputatis, ob Dei reverentiam, immunitas data est: quod postea sanctionem* [According to the error occurred in printing, *sanctione* is intended] *legis statutum est temporibus Christianis, & sub excommunicationis poena sancitum, ne potestates saeculares audeant Clerum talibus exactionibus praegravare, & ne Clerus ipsis assentiant sine licentia Romani Pontificis.*"

themselves to be inspired by books written by William of Ockham and Jan Hus.⁵⁸¹

The question of infallibility had been debated amongst high papalist theologians and conciliarist theorists long before the Interdict Controversy. The concern was ecclesiological during the Interdict Controversy, just as it had been in the fourteenth century. Against the background of the poverty controversy amongst the Franciscans, in favour of keeping the rule of poverty intact, the Avignon Curia made use of the conception of infallibility. As the historian Martin Ossikovski has shown, the Carmelite friar Guido Terreni (c. 1260–1342) presumed that when the Roman pontiff is guided by the Holy Spirit and makes statements, together with the council of cardinals, on questions of faith and doctrines of the Church such statements are infallible and cannot be nullified by subsequent pontiffs. To Terreni, there was no difference between the infallibility of the Roman pontiff and the infallibility of the Church, since the Roman pontiff represents the Church and is guided by the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸²

Contrary to the thinking of Terreni stood Marsilius of Padua, who trusted that the institutional Church is infallible, but that the Roman pontiff is not, when deciding on questions of faith and doctrine. The representative of the Church was not the Roman pontiff, in Marsilius' opinion, but rather a general council under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, both Terreni and Marsilius trusted the Church to be infallible, despite the fact that their views on its representative body made them discordant.⁵⁸³ To William of Ockham, however, the institutional Church is not infallible, whereas the Holy Spirit is. According to Ockham it is due to the guidance of the Holy Spirit that faith and

⁵⁸¹ RTE: 5. RPA: 7.

⁵⁸² Ossikovski, 2010: 300–303.

⁵⁸³ With regard to the early Church, Ossikovski clarifies that Terreni pictured the meeting of the apostles in Jerusalem to be a model for the structure of the assembly between the Roman pontiff and the cardinals or the Roman pontiff presiding over a general council. To Marsilius, the meeting of the apostles in Jerusalem was a model for the structure of a general council where the Roman pontiff would be no more than an ordinary participant. Ossikovski, 2010: 307–308.

doctrine remain true. Although the latter was not controversial, the lack of trust in the conditions that would preserve infallibility in the institutional Church lent an anti-authoritarian character to Ockham's ecclesiology. Adoption of such an ecclesiology would have been devastating to Possevino's cultural project for the Christian Commonwealth. In fact, it is plausible that fear of adoption of such an ecclesiology, amongst the Venetians, prompted Possevino to put emphasis on the infallibility of the Roman pontiff through the words of Pope Eugene.⁵⁸⁴

Pope Eugene IV was a Venetian by birth, an accommodated *exemplum ad persuadendum* carefully chosen by Possevino to loosen the dichotomy between Rome and Venice, in the same manner that the ancient Venetians were discussed as *exempla imitanda* to contemporary Venetians. Thus, by expressing *benevolentia* to Venice, Possevino attested that the problems that surrounded the Interdict Controversy were not related to Venice as such, but to the lack of due respect for the Vicar of Christ amongst the Venetian people, especially those who burdened clerics with taxes and civil obligations.

Constantine and the Authority of the Roman Pontiff

Another recurrent question of medieval origin, during the Interdict Controversy, was the Donation of Constantine. In the *Nuova Risposta*, Possevino implied a connection between the doctor, on the one hand, and critics of the Donation of Constantine, on the other. He wrote to the doctor: "maybe you should wish to quibble with words by saying that the Pope does not have authority in this way from God immediately: but in the Papal States from Constantine; to which I will respond to you further down and I hope to sufficiently prove to you that the Pope has his power immediately from God, even without the donation of Constantine."⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ Ossikovski, 2010: 309–311.

⁵⁸⁵ NR: 5. "[...] forse vorrai cavillare, con dire, che a questo modo il Papa non ha la potestà da Dio immediatamente: ma da Constantino nelli stati della Chiesa; al che ti rispondo più basso,

It is possible to sense a certain weariness in the words of Possevino on the Donation of Constantine, because it had been much debated during the previous centuries. To Possevino the authority of the pope is not dependent on the Donation of Constantine. Nonetheless, in the *Moscovia*, he acknowledged that Constantine transferred the seat of his empire to the pope with the words: “he [Constantine] was inspired by God to place Rome under the control of the Vicars of Christ.”⁵⁸⁶ In the *Nuova Risposta*, Possevino once more acknowledged the authenticity of the donation: “I cannot see how the Pope, made by God in the person of Saint Peter [...] lord of Rome, and his successors, through the free transfer of Constantine, should not have imperial authority.”⁵⁸⁷

Constantine was an *exemplum imitandum* to Possevino, whom he depicts as having acted according to his conscience and followed the truth. When explaining that Constantine confessed to being obliged to renounce the city of Rome and territories that comprise the Papal States in favour of the Roman pontiff, Possevino referred to Gratianus’s *Decretum*.⁵⁸⁸ Moreover, in the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*, he commented that Christ commanded

& spero di provarti sufficientemente, che il Papa ha la potestà immediate da Dio, etiandio senza la donatione di Constantino.”

⁵⁸⁶ *Moscovia*: 81.

⁵⁸⁷ NR: 31. “[...] io non vedo come il Papa fatto da Dio nella persona di S. Pietro [...] signore di Roma et i suoi successori per la libera cessione di Constantino non habbino l’ autorità imperiale.”

⁵⁸⁸ NR: 25. *Decreuit* and *De Elect[ione]*. *Decreuit* refers to the first words of *Decretum Gratiani decreti prima pars dist. 88, cap. 1*, whereas the *De Electione* refers to a part of *Decretalium Gregorij IX*. However, in the marginal notes to the *Nuova Risposta*, Possevino advised studying further passages from Gratianus’s *Decretum*. In *Decretum*, Constantine is quoted saying “And so we have decided that just as our earthly imperial power, so shall the most holy Roman Church to honoured. And higher than our empire and earthly throne shall the most sacred chair of Saint Peter be exalted, giving it power, the dignity of glory, strength, and imperial honouring.” *Decretum Gratiani: decreti prima pars*, Dist. 96, cap. 14: 295. “[...] *Et sicut nostram terrenam imperialem potentiam, sic eius sacrosanctam Romanam Ecclesiam decrevimus veneranter honorari, & amplius quàm nostrum imperium, & terrenum thronum, sedem sacratissimam B. Petri gloriosè exaltari: tribuentes ei potestatem, & gloriae dignitatem, atque vigorem, & honorificentiam imperialem.*” A reference, in the marginal notes to the *Nuova Risposta*, presents a further argument that Constantine granted the Western Empire to Pope Sylvester, as a token of recognition of the supremacy of the Vicar of Christ. *Decretum Gratiani: decreti prima pars*, Dist. 96, cap. 13: 295. “[...] *Constantinus Imperator coronam, & omnem regiam dignitatem in urbe Romana, in Italia, & in partibus occidentalibus Apostolico concessit. Nam in gestis B. Sylvestri (quae beatus Papa Gelasius in Concilio lxx. Episcoporum è Catholicis legis commemorat, & pro antiquo usu multas hoc imitari dicit Ecclesias...*” Cf. *Decretum Gratiani: decreti prima pars*, Dist. 96, cap. 14: 295.

that Constantine should restore to Sylvester, Supreme pontiff, and to other successors that part which his Divine Majesty had ordered for the decoration and decorum of his Church. The pagan imperial title, moreover, first used by Emperor Augustus (r. 27 BC–14), is held to have been shared with the Roman pontiff through the act of divine providence. This argument could mean that Possevino thought that the Roman pontiff came to share the imperial title with Constantine in the same manner that Licinus (r. 308–324) had shared the imperial title with Constantine.⁵⁸⁹

Possevino thus recognised the much debated donation, which placed him in opposition to the cardinals Bellarmino and Baronio who both disputed the utility of the donation. Bellarmino did so to avoid putting papal supremacy at stake as he considered the temporal sovereignty of the Roman pontiff not to be *de iure divino* but *de iure gentium*. Baronio, on the contrary, considered the temporal sovereignty of the Roman pontiff to be *de iure divino*. Since his philological training prevented him from acknowledging the authenticity of the donation, he rather supplied evidence for papal supremacy *in temporalibus* from the biblical passage of the Gospel of Matthew 16:18–19. Possevino, for his part, disagreed with the conclusions of the cardinals as he was less convinced by the methods of philology and more inclined to follow the prescriptive tradition of ecclesiastical history that held Constantine’s donation to be authentic.⁵⁹⁰

Limits of Papal Authority

Another recurrent question during the Interdict Controversy that stems from medieval Church history was the question of investiture of bishops. In the *Moscovia*, Possevino had emphasised that bishops cannot be confirmed by temporal rulers. In the *Nuova Risposta*, he proposed that neither emperors nor

⁵⁸⁹ RPA: 27.

⁵⁹⁰ Mazetti Petersson, 2017: 65–66.

kings have authority to nominate or appoint the pope, since the pope is above Church councils as well as lay princes, and the superior is not judged by the inferior. If lay princes are proven to have nominated a pope, this was only through permission in order to avoid schisms. After having conducted a nomination, the emperors and kings are to renounce such future prerogative.⁵⁹¹

To Possevino, the Apostolic See is charged with the immense power that God granted to Christ, in accordance with the words of Jeremiah: “*I established you today above the peoples, above the kingdoms, in that you should tear and destroy, edify and plant.* [A power so immense that *the gates of Hell will not prevail against it*].”⁵⁹² The Roman pontiff is, furthermore, elected not by men but by the Holy Spirit, who in the conclave represents the Church and unifies the Christian Commonwealth.

The emphasis on the superiority of the Roman pontiff, in Possevino’s exposition, renders an outcome where a distinct hierarchy is noticeable, with the Roman pontiff at its apex and other spiritual and temporal lords descending in submission. This model denies the temporal prerogative, even of the Roman pontiff, to be natural, as temporal authority is not regarded to have been a part of the original creation. In that sense, Possevino would agree with the anonymous doctor that Pope Alexander VI was not the natural temporal lord over the Indies. Pope Alexander would still be perceived as the temporal superior over the parts of the Indies that confessed to the Catholic faith, through the wielding of Christ’s temporal authority. In turn, the Roman pontiff is thought to have delegated temporal authority to either the Portuguese king or the Spanish monarchy by accepting either of them as temporal lords. Note that acceptance of a temporal lord equals mediated authority from the pope, who has received the authority immediately from God. The establishment of

⁵⁹¹ *Moscovia*: 93–94; NR: 46; cf. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 14: Bellarmino claimed that if the bishop judges an inferior clergyman or the pope judges a bishop, it is God who judges through his servant.

⁵⁹² RPA: 54. “[...] *constitui te hodie super gentes, super Regna, ut evellas, & destruas, aedifices, & plantes.*”

a temporal realm is presumed to be valid as long, as it is approved and confirmed by God and his Vicar, or else it is unjust.⁵⁹³

Possevino acknowledged that the Roman pontiff, after having distributed temporal authority to a ruler, functions as an adviser and supreme judge. In Possevino's consideration, this was the structure of the councils of France and Poland. Even Emperor Charles V, he affirmed, would adjourn difficult questions in his council in order to ask for the advice of the Roman pontiff stating that the Roman pontiff is necessary to maintain order in the world. Thus, "when the West, the East, or any part of the Christian world falls into error, as has often happened, if there is no Visible Head of the Universal Church, who can pronounce on questions of faith? Who can confirm those chosen by chapters or nominated by rulers? Who will eradicate schisms? Who (I might add) has sufficient authority to restore amity amongst rulers?"⁵⁹⁴ Moreover, Possevino wrote that Satan "is extremely angry because the See (not the heretics) preserves the unity of the Church and duly performs the Divine mysteries."⁵⁹⁵

Given the immediate prerogative of temporal authority, the pope is said, in the *Nuova Risposta*, to sometimes be necessary to expel or remove a tyrant ruler, just as he would expel a tyrant bishop or cleric who has committed criminal acts. Possevino even contended that the pope could lawfully "grant a rightful invasion and occupation of the Land of those who deny his authority: but his great paternal meekness prevents him by imitating God Our Lord *who [...] does not want anyone to perish, but conceals their sin on account of [their] repentance.*"⁵⁹⁶

The ability of the Roman pontiff to exercise authority over temporal concerns when a ruler proves to be unworthy was also touched upon in the

⁵⁹³ NR: 40 & 46.

⁵⁹⁴ *Moscovia*: 93. See NR: 40 & 46.

⁵⁹⁵ *Moscovia*: 101.

⁵⁹⁶ NR: 40. "[...] potrebbe [...] dare la giusta invasione et occupatione delle Terre di coloro che negano la sua potestà: ma la sua molta mansuetudine paterna lo trattiene imitando Dio Nostro Signore *qui [...] neminem vult perire, sed dissimulat peccata eorum propter penitentiam.*"

Moscovia. In this work, the allegations that the Roman pontiff is Antichrist, since he has deposed emperors and kings from their thrones, are refuted. He replied to the allegations saying that “the Roman Popes have never tried to acquire control for themselves in the realms from which they have expelled [...] wicked monarchs and where they have helped to bring pious and Christian rulers to the throne.”⁵⁹⁷

In the *Nuova Risposta*, moreover, he discussed his objections to the opinions of the anonymous doctor that kings have denied the authority of the pope to decide on controversies amongst princes. He, for his part, asserted that Pope Zachary (*sed.* 741–752) deposed the king of France from his office as he was no good and subsequently chose Pippin (c. 715–768), the father of Charlemagne, as king of France. The intervention by Pope Zachary, Possevino stated, exceeded being a judge amongst quarrelling princes.⁵⁹⁸

Regarding the imperial title of Charlemagne, Possevino was concordant with Bellarmino’s opinion that Charlemagne did not receive Rome and the Papal States upon his imperial coronation. Instead, the Roman Empire was thought to have been transferred from Byzantium to the Franks, *a Graecis ad Francos*, but not from the Papal States to the Franks. During the reign of Charlemagne, Possevino noted, his prerogative was not *de iure proprium Regum*, as Gratianus had claimed, but according to apostolic concession due to the merits of goodness of Charlemagne.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁷ *Moscovia*: 100. Possevino mentioned that Pope Gregory II (*sed.* 715–731) deposed the Greek Emperor Leo III, an iconoclast; Zachary deposed Childeric III (r. 743–751), king of France; Gregory VII deposed the Roman Emperor Henry IV; Innocent III deposed Emperor Otto IV (r. 1209–1215), and Innocent IV (*sed.* 1243–1254) deposed Emperor Frederick II (r. 1220–1250).

⁵⁹⁸ NR: 39.

⁵⁹⁹ NR: 39–46. If, Gratianus has said otherwise, Possevino added, it might be that Gratianus was wrong in this specific distinction of his *Dectrum*. To this Possevino offered Cesare Baronio as an *exemplum ad persudadendum*, because he had questioned Gratianus on this matter in his *Annales Ecclesiastici*. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 39: Bellarmino wrote that the illustrious and most learned Cardinal Baronio, in the ninth Volume of the *Annales Ecclesiastici* page 323, demonstrated, with clear documents, that Gratian was mistaken and that there was never a privilege granted to the emperor to elect the Supreme pontiff.

Gratianus had remarked that Charlemagne's prerogative to nominate a pope was *de iure proprium Regum*. In Possevino's opinion, the Roman people were not entitled to temporal authority since such authority resided with the monarch due to the popular wish for a king.⁶⁰⁰ He exemplified that if the *Sig-
noria* of Venice or a bishop should be driven away by the fury of the people, *furore populi*, this would not entail that they were deprived of authority and jurisdiction. On the contrary, it would entail disobedience amongst the subjects. This view was opposed to the conciliarist theorists Almain and Mair, but also opposed to the view of Suárez who accepted that the body of people could forcefully remove a king. To Possevino's view such deposition, within the Christian Commonwealth, could only be executed by the pope.⁶⁰¹

Possevino also defied Querini's declaration that the pope and his counsellors aspire to an absolute authority above the Venetians. The assertion of Querini should be interpreted against the background of Sarpi's thinking, where claims of temporal authority equal claims of sovereignty with only God as superior. In that sense, temporal authority is absolute. Nonetheless, Possevino replied that if the pope would aspire to an absolute authority above the Venetians there is no doubt that everybody would have to resist this uniformly and defend the liberty of Venice. But he testified that he had seen the letters that the pope sent to the Venetian senators surrounding the interdict, ascertaining that no such claims are to be discerned in those letters. On the contrary, to ascribe such ambition to the Roman pontiff was judged by Possevino as a novelty, in other words heresy. Instead, he attributed the misconception of the ambitions of the Roman pontiff to stem from Querini's trust in less cautious theologians of Venice.⁶⁰²

Finally, no clear demarcation between the spiritual and the secular spheres is observed in Possevino's reasoning, only that authority of the Roman

⁶⁰⁰ See Skinner, 2015: 259–260.

⁶⁰¹ NR: 39.

⁶⁰² RPA: 6–7.

pontiff is pivotal for the Christian Commonwealth. Once the Catholic Church is established in society, the spiritual and secular come together and all aspects of society in the commonwealth are thought to be submitted to the goals of the Catholic Church. The unifier in the Christian Commonwealth is the Roman pontiff, who represents the Church and is the superior authority in the commonwealth. Moreover, the confines of the institution of the Church mark the confines of the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff. To Possevino's thinking there is no such thing as an invisible Church on earth which transcends the borders of the institutional Church. The *Ecclesia militans* is equal to the visible Church and the commonwealth is not represented where there is no representation of the visible Catholic Church. In fact, the scholar Luigi Balsamo has succinctly said that Possevino hastened to make princes understand that there was no other reason of state than the reason of God.⁶⁰³

Concluding Remarks

The ascribing of temporal authority to Christ was fundamental to legitimise the Vicar of Christ as temporal ruler, as such authority was thought to have passed from Christ on to Peter and his successors. According to Possevino, no other temporal authority has received its authority in this manner and therefore no other temporal authority ought to make claims of either equality or superiority to the Vicar of Christ. Temporal authority is, moreover, connected to the legal right to punish and to deprive subjects of their lives. To hold the *ius gladii* equals exercising such authority.

To Almain and Mair, the *ius gladii* resides with the body of people, whereas to the anonymous doctor and Possevino the *ius gladii* resides with the temporal monarch. The doctor would not, however, acknowledge clerics to be entitled to the *ius gladii*, whereas to Possevino there was simply no such thing

⁶⁰³ Balsamo, 2006: 205.

as merely spiritual authority as those who possess spiritual authority also possess temporal authority.

The temporal sword of the Roman pontiff was understood as stabiliser in the Christian Commonwealth, practised by he who is unifier and supreme judge. To Possevino, the Roman pontiff is hierarchically superior to any temporal ruler in the Christian Commonwealth. His capacity as temporal authority is distributed to other temporal rulers by means of concessions. Still, Possevino did not draw a clear demarcation between the two spheres. Rather, he pictured them as comingling in the commonwealth, where obedience to the Vicar of Christ was the putty that held the *respublica Cristiana* together.

Possevino denied the rights of lay princes and ecumenical councils to depose popes. Christ alone had the mandate to depose a heretical pope. Popes are, however, regarded to have the capacity to depose not just bishops and priests from the offices, but also lay princes. Possevino ascribed another quality to the office of the Roman pontiff, namely that of having infallibility. The words of Pope Eugene IV on immunity for clerics from public obligations, are estimated as infallible. Pope Eugene was, furthermore, a carefully chosen *exemplum ad persuadendum* in order to resolve the dichotomy between Roman and Venetian theologians during the Interdict Controversy, as he was a Venetian by birth.

Chapter 12. Authority and Clerical Exemption

To Possevino's thinking, during the Interdict Controversy, Moses, Christ, and the Roman pontiff are bestowed with both spiritual and temporal authority, which is also said to be applicable to clerics in general. This had implications for the debate on clerical exemption from judgment, according to civil and criminal law, as well as from paying tribute to the temporal ruler. This debate will be analysed in this chapter. The debate was centred on whether clerics living within the confines of the Republic of Venice were regarded to be under Venetian jurisdiction or under the jurisdiction of the pope. The debate was sparked by the fact that two clerics were arrested by Venetian authorities on charges of having violated the Republic, which was disliked at the court of Rome.

From the Venetian perspective, the Republic's laws of prohibiting the construction of new Church buildings and consent to judge criminal clerics in civil courts were in accordance with the legitimate capacities of an independent state. Paolo Sarpi, for his part, depicted the pope as having deprived the Italian peninsula of its liberty and chaining it to tyrannical shackles. From the Roman perspective, however, the enforcements of Venetian law threatened ecclesiastical liberty.

The debate on ecclesiastical immunity during the Interdict Controversy can be looked upon as an extension of the concern for *libertas* during the medieval period. The term *libertas* was tied to the medieval Church, as it signified royal patronage of a monastery. *Libertas* also came to connote freedom from secular interference during the Gregorian reform movement. The Venetian concept of *libertas*, nonetheless, stemmed from classical antiquity, when it meant freedom from the imposing will of another ruler.

During the medieval period, *libertas* was coupled with the concept of ecclesiastical immunity. This came about as a consequence of the study of *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, which is a compilation of Roman and Byzantine laws

that was brought to light during the reign of Emperor Justinian and rediscovered in the West by medieval legal commentators. The concepts of liberty and immunity were by no means fixed, as the *guerra delle scritture* shows that they were still debatable during the Interdict Controversy.

In the anonymous doctor's reply against clerical exemption from civil justice, arguments are drawn from legal history, showing that there was no distinction in the early Church in the court of law, as Emperor Justinian was the first to grant to clerics the right to be judged by their peers in matters appertaining to civil law. In criminal acts, the doctor writes, Justinian is thought to have determined that clerics were to be judged by the temporal authority. This was contrary to the medieval principle of *privilegium fori* that disconnected clerics from verdicts according to civil or criminal law.⁶⁰⁴

Judgment and Legislation

Possevino considered the Venetian government to have put its hand into the harvest of another, *in messem alienam*. He explained that after the War of the League of Cambrai, ecclesiastical liberty was restored and Venice promised Pope Julius II not to meddle with ecclesiastical persons and goods anymore. Yet little by little the Venetians usurped the ecclesiastical liberty once more. Liberty is presented in the sense of fulfilling one's privileges and prerogatives, which stood in striking contrast to the understanding of Venetian defenders from whom liberty implied freedom and independence of state. For Venice, then, liberty is a freedom *from* external intervention in the state, whereas for Possevino liberty is a freedom *to* act according to the privileges given by God or some other authority.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁴ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 4–5. The *Corpus Iuris Civilis* also brought about studies of concepts such as territory, jurisdiction, and empire during the medieval period. Cf. Elden, 2013: 213–241.

⁶⁰⁵ NR: 9; RPA: 23; cf. Norwich, 2003: 390–402; William Bouwsma draws the conclusion that for Sarpi this latter conception of liberty was merely license. See Bouwsma, 1968: 424–442.

To Possevino, enforcement of Venetian law not only sought to diminish ecclesiastical liberty, but also to annihilate canon law and annul previous pacts, customs and conventions. As with many topics in his writings, Possevino presupposed that changes in decisions and law that appear to be to the detriment of the Catholic Church were novelties, and as such heretical. With regard to the Venetian laws of 1602–1605, which aimed to limit clerical influence in Venice, he contested their legitimacy since he considered them to be contrary to natural law and opposed to the agreement amongst people that pacts are to be kept (*pacta sunt servanda*).⁶⁰⁶

Contesting legitimacy that was to the detriment of the Catholic Church also applied to the imprisonment of clerics. Possevino expressed astonishment that peace and justice should depend on whether the two clerics are castigated by the Venetian Republic or not. Authority to pardon them of those crimes and to leave them unpunished is not wished for, but rather that they should be examined and castigated according to their jurisdictional adherence.⁶⁰⁷ Authority to judge clerics is regarded as residing with the Roman pontiff, but with bestowed license from the pontiff clerics are able to be judged by the lay court. Nonetheless, if judgment of a cleric is conducted in a lay court, *coram iudice laico*, judgment should be according to canon law. The reason being that there is a distinction between the capacity to legislate, and the capacity to judge. Legislation, in this sense, belongs to the sovereign, whereas judgment can be delegated when the verdict will be in accordance with the law that is stipulated by the sovereign. Ecclesiastical immunity, however, is not thought to be granted through privileges of lay princes. On the contrary, Possevino affirms that ecclesiastical immunity was introduced by natural reason and canon law.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ RPA: 50.

⁶⁰⁷ RPA: 22.

⁶⁰⁸ NR: 29; RPA: 50. Bellarmino argued that the exemption of clerics, apart from *iure divino*, is *de iure humano* since this exemption is found in many canons, in civil laws and has a very long consuetudo. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 44.

Canon law is a compilation of laws that Possevino acknowledged to be sacred as opposed to the laws of kings which are estimated to be profane laws that, in turn, cannot be regarded as sacred. In order for them to be legitimate, they are in need of being approved by the Vicar of Christ. With regard to this supposition, Possevino turned to the anonymous doctor saying that “if you are not ignorant you should know that there is [a] difference *between the sacred and the profane*.”⁶⁰⁹

Possevino also noted that imperial laws are exceptions from profane laws where the laws stipulated by a temporal ruler could be called sacred. In order for sets of the imperial law to be given the status of sacred law, the imperial power needs to be confirmed and anointed by the Church. On this basis, laws by an anointed emperor are not divinely inspired, as the sacred canons are estimated to be, but sacred by virtue of acknowledgement of the Church. The imperial title, in turn, is considered to be dependent on whether the imperial candidate has been acknowledged, and preferably been anointed by the Catholic Church. On such terms, Possevino had claimed that Ivan IV could not be considered an Emperor or Caesar since “if the Prince [Ivan IV] tried to call himself Caesar, everyone would know that this title meant only Tsar, not Caesar, and that it was an oddity borrowed from the Tatars in an effort to approximate the title held by other kings.”⁶¹⁰

The threefold distinction of laws – canonical, imperial and profane laws – is taken from Emperor Constantine’s alleged speech at the Council of Nicaea in 325, where the source of the elaboration of the threefold distinction of laws is Gratian’s *Decretum*. There, Constantine is quoted as saying: “no one can

⁶⁰⁹ NR: 11. “[...] se non sei ignorante, devi sapere che differenza sia *inter sacrum, & profanum*.” NR: 11–12 & 26. Possevino used the expression *per quamdam participationem* to illustrate sacredness of imperial laws. In addition, the references contain notes from canon law that clerics are not supposed to collect possessions or be involved with secular affairs, if not for the sake of the care of orphans and widows. The references, also speak about differences between public and ecclesiastical laws and that clerics are to be judged by the ecclesiastical tribunal and not according to civil law.

⁶¹⁰ *Moscovia*: 129.

judge you [clerics], because you are reserved to the judgment of God himself.”⁶¹¹ And, “you are Gods, constituted by the true God: Go and discuss your issues amongst yourselves: since it is not dignified that we should judge Gods.”⁶¹² In fact, both Possevino and Bellarmino reasoned around this phrase and both emphasised that Constantine intended clerics to be ‘gods’ directly, whereas lay princes are thought to be ‘gods’ by consequence of mediated authority.⁶¹³

Ecclesiastical Immunity and Legal History

The exceptional position that clerics are thought to have, in the discourse about clerics as gods, was presented with Emperor Constantine as *exemplum ad persuadendum*. To the anonymous doctor, however, clerics are not ascribed to a position of exemption from judgment by temporal authority. Instead, the doctor referred to the apostle Paul, as *exemplum ad persuadendum*, suggesting that clerics do not hold the *ius gladii*. Rather, they are to be castigated by the temporal ruler: “for he carries the sword not without cause, because to punishment he is the minister of God. Behold the authority of the temporal Prince to punish *with suffering of blood*.”⁶¹⁴ The doctor inferred that all persons, priests included, are subjects to the temporal prince, since legitimate princes have authority according to *iure divino* and no one is exempted from obedience to the prince.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹¹ *Decretum Gratiani: decreti secunda pars*, Causa 11, quaestio 1, c. 5: 544. “[...] *Vos à nemine diiudicari potestis: quia ad Dei solius iudicium reservamini*”; NR: 26.

⁶¹² *Decretum Gratiani: decreti secunda pars*, Causa 11, quaestio 1, c. 41: 553. “[...] *Vos Dij estis, à vero Deo constituti: Ite, & inter vos causas vestras discutite: quia dignum non est, ut iudicemus Deos*”; NR: 26. Supposedly, Constantine paraphrased Psalm 82, where God is said to judge amongst gods. The Psalm also reads “Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the most High.” Psalm 82:6 (KJV).

⁶¹³ NR: 26; *Decretum Gratiani: decreti prima pars*, Dist. 88, c. 1: 265; Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 16–17.

⁶¹⁴ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*: 6. “[...] *non enim sine causa gladium portat, Dei enim minister est ad vindictam. Ecco l’auttorità del Prencipe secolare di punire pena sanguinis.*”

⁶¹⁵ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*: 5–6.

Priests in antiquity, the doctor wrote, were subjects to the secular prince and the one who believes that ecclesiastical exemption is *de iure divino* is not to be excused, since such opinion lacks prudence and is too daring and calumnious. Since the doctor disqualified such *ius* found in legal history he, instead, proposed that exemption of clerics is according to *iure humano*. If clerics should enjoy any exemption, they enjoy it by virtue of princely privileges that can be withdrawn or enlarged as princes find fit.⁶¹⁶

In the history of the early Church, the doctor held, *iure privilegio* made in favour of clerics is not to be found, as there was no distinction in the court of law. This is because Emperor Justinian was the first to grant to clerics that they could be judged by their prelates in matters appertaining to civil rights. In criminal acts, on the contrary, Justinian is thought to have determined that clerics were subjects to the prince and his ministers.⁶¹⁷

Possevino, for his part, consented to the affirmation that Emperor Justinian made many constitutions regarding privileges of clerics. As will be seen, his interpretation of Justinian's precepts was altogether different from the conclusions given by the doctor. Against the supposition by the anonymous doctor that Emperor Justinian was the first to grant ecclesiastical immunity, Possevino cited passages from canon law where Constantine is shown to have approved of exemption of clerics, proving that Constantine was the precursor to Justinian in granting immunity.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁶ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 10–14. The doctor summed up his writing saying that clerics are not exempted *iure divino* according to writings by the apostle Paul, Domingo De Soto and Diego de Covarrubias. Bellarmino held that exemption of ecclesiastical persons solely *iure humano* is wrong. He equated the position of the doctor with slander against all princes, as if all were Machiavellians who granted or removed exemption to clerics according to what is useful for the reasons of state. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 38 & 43.

⁶¹⁷ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 4.

⁶¹⁸ NR: 27: Bellarmino wrote that the opinion that prior to Justinian there was no privilege of exemption in the Church is false. Emperor Constantine, who lived two hundred years prior to Justinian and being the first emperor who clearly made profession as Christian, declared clerics free from common land of the *respublica*. This one can read in the epistle by Constantine *ad Avilinum*. This Eusebius recites in Book 10 to chapter 7 of *Historia Ecclesiastica*. This privilege is in Emperor Theodosius's codices, which are more ancient than Justinian's *Corpus*. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 38–39.

Unlike the doctor, Possevino contended that Justinian acted on behalf of the Church in order to repress insolences by heretics and evil Christians. Thus, Justinian is believed to have set out to assist ecclesiastical authority in a manner which is contrary to the decrees against ecclesiastical liberty by the Venetians. The reason why Justinian acted on behalf of the Church, Possevino asserted, was not due to lack of respect for the Roman pontiff, but that lay people lacked obedience towards clerics. Yet Justinian is not said to have been the first to formulate this liberty of ecclesiastical immunity. Justinian is thought to have merely confirmed a previous custom, necessitated by schismatic Christians, through the wickedness of the times.⁶¹⁹

Regarding Emperor Justinian, Bellarmino's opinion of Justinian was more ambivalent than Possevino's in the *Nuova Risposta*. Justinian, according to Bellarmino, usurped great authority in wanting to judge the cases of clerics, not only in temporal but also in spiritual matters. As follows, the benevolent attitude given to Justinian in the *Nuova Risposta* is more glaring than in Bellarmino's *Risposta*. It is also more glaring than the treatment given to this emperor in the *Apparato All'Historia*, where Justinian is described as partly an *exemplum imitandum*, partly an *exemplum evitandum*. As long as he was a Catholic, Possevino wrote in the *Apparato All'Historia*, Justinian reigned blissfully. When he turned into a heretic he was taken away by a sudden death and thus liberated the Church from a great fear. That Justinian became a heretic is unmentioned in the *Nuova Risposta*, where the description of Justinian has been accommodated, without providentialist rhetoric, to the debate of ecclesiastical immunity. There, he is portrayed as a good Christian emperor altogether.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁹ NR: 20–22. Bellarmino said that Frederick Barbarossa withdrew the law of Justinian and everything else that is contrary to the liberty of the Church. Furthermore, Bellarmino wrote, Justinian in his Constitutions said that the secular judge cannot judge a clergyman, if he is not already stripped of his clerical dignity. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 8–12.

⁶²⁰ AAH, IV, c. 5: 153v; NR: 20–22.

Possevino agreed with the doctor that the canon of clerical exemption is not *de iure divino*, as it is not explicitly stated in Holy Writ. Rather, it is according to natural reason and canon law. Obedience to the sacred canons is, however, regarded as *de iure divino*. The conclusion to this argument reads that if the sacred canons command ecclesiastical immunity, such a commandment is from Christ. Moreover, it is not regarded as necessary that the whole of *ius divinum* is explicitly declared in the Gospel, since there are many things that the apostles have taught from the dicta of Christ that are not included in the Gospel. Accordingly, Possevino argued that the teaching of the Church is not to be reduced to biblical statements, but must be complemented by oral instructions passed down (*tradebat*) through the apostolic tradition. These teachings are *de iure divino positivo*.⁶²¹

When discussing the apostolic tradition Possevino referred Basil of Caesarea (330–379), who attested to the legitimacy of the apostolic tradition in his writing *De Spiritu Sancto*, as an *exemplum ad persuadendum*. Possevino condescendingly turned to the doctor saying “thus the Greek text by Saint Basil proves this, if you do not understand the Greek [text] look at the Latin version.”⁶²² Nevertheless, Possevino himself, as seen above, referred not the Greek text, but to a Latin translation of the text.

Clerical Exemption from Paying Tribute

As with the question of judging clerics according to civil, criminal or canon law, the question of clerical exemption from paying tribute to the temporal

⁶²¹ NR: 47–48. Possevino finds support that such obedience is approved of in the Gospel of Luke 10:16 “*the one who listens to you, listens to me; the one who rejects you, rejects me,*” as well as the Gospel of Matthew 18:17 “*if he should not listen to the Church, he is as much as a Pagan and a Publican to you.*” Possevino further mentioned that “*indeed Jesus made many other signs, which are not written in this book.*” Cf. John 20:30. In addition, 2 Thessalonians admonishes to “*hold fast to the traditions.*” Cf. 2 Thess 2:15.

⁶²² NR: 48. “[...] così lo prova il testo greco di S. Basilio, se non intendi il greco vedi la versione latina.”

ruler was by no means a novelty during the Interdict Controversy. The Republic of Venice had already begun to tax ecclesiastical income and property in the fifteenth century. Yet the debate, whether such a measure was legitimate or not, had already been dealt with by emperors Constantine, Theodosius I (r. 379–395), and Justinian, only to be further discussed in the medieval period. In fact, the topic stems from the passage in the Bible when Christ said to his apostles to render “unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”⁶²³

As seen previously in this study, debates concerning the prerogatives of temporal vis-à-vis spiritual authority reached its climax during the thirteenth century when quarrels between Pope Boniface VIII and Philip IV of France broke out. Crucial issues in this quarrel concerned the right to tax clerics and to judge criminal clerics. The bull *Unam Sanctam*, which was promulgated in 1302 by Pope Boniface, functioned as an implicit model in many of Possevino’s arguments when replying to the anonymous doctor and Antonio Querini. He underscored, just as Boniface had done, that the Church is one holy body with one head and that those who divert from the Church will not see eternal life.

He contended that spiritual authority is superior to any authority of the temporal ruler and spiritual authorities can only be judged by other spiritual authorities except the Roman pontiff, who can be judged by God alone. This is precisely what *Unam Sanctam* declares. He agreed with Pope Boniface that the spiritual authority held jurisdiction over clerics. Accordingly, no temporal authority can tax ecclesiastical property or burden clerics with taxes and civil obligations. Clerics are not thought to be members of society in the temporal sense, but obliged to obey their jurisdictional head who is the Vicar of Christ.

Possevino can be seen to maintain the argument put forward in the *Apparato All’Historia* that the royal office must be kept distinct from the priestly

⁶²³ Matt 22:21 (KJV).

office, which is the basis upon which Possevino propounded that it does not befit princes to demand clerics to pay tribute and taxes, nor pay tokens of obedience. On the contrary, it is considered that it befits clerics to edify the lay people as natural reason teaches that clerics should assist the temporal and lay sphere.⁶²⁴

Taxing clerics was therefore estimated as illegitimate. Yet he acknowledged that pontiffs at times have granted Venetians permission to receive tithes from the clerics out of apostolic grace in order to assist, *nomine subsidij*. He dealt with ecclesiastical immunity from paying tribute to the temporal ruler in the same manner as he dealt with exemption from being judged according to civil and criminal law. Namely, that clerics are not obliged to pay tokens of obedience to temporal authority since clerical exemption from paying taxes is stated in Holy Writ. As such, it is *de iure divino*.⁶²⁵

He wrote that if Christ paid tribute to the temporal ruler it was only because he did not want to cause a scandal. In the same manner Christ and his apostles observed ceremonies of the Mosaic law, although they were not obliged to do so. They did not want to cause a scandal in front of the Jews.⁶²⁶ However, Possevino appended that Christ did not observe those Jewish customs that proved to be false traditions. Christ is said to have wanted to show that he was the master of the Sabbath, rather than subject to observance of the Sabbath and Jewish laws.⁶²⁷ Therefore, Possevino noted, as Christ was not obliged to pay tribute, and neither was his family of apostles, the Vicar of Christ is not obliged to pay tribute, nor is his family of clerics.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁴ NR: 12.

⁶²⁵ NR: 7 & 36.

⁶²⁶ NR: 29 & 35. Bellarmino noted that Aquinas said that a tribute is like a salary that one gives to princes for the fatigue of governing the people, but a salary is not given to God. The princes are not ministers of God to receive the tributes. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 20.

⁶²⁷ NR: 35.

⁶²⁸ NR: 35–36. Bellarmino wrote that Marsilius of Padua delights the doctor, who said that Christ paid tribute *non condescensione sed necessitate coactus*. This heresy, Bellarmino added, was condemned by Pope John XXII in *Extravagante licet*. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 24–25.

In the discussion about clerical exemption from paying tribute to temporal authority, Possevino also elaborated with a typological interpretation, as the ordained members are portrayed as having their typological counterparts in the Tribe of Levi. He remarked that the Levites were not assigned to temporal land, since God wanted them to be his family. Therefore, God separated them with specific privileges from other tribes, families, civil obligations, and tithes.⁶²⁹

Possevino advanced that the origin of the custom of paying tithes to priests, can be traced to the time when God commanded Joshua to arrange for the establishment of a portion to be paid to the Levite tribe. Thus, these goods were not to be used by kings or lay people, not even as an excuse for the contribution to the poor. The doctor, on the other hand, wrote that Constantine made clerics exempt from the lay forum, due to excessive kindness rather than conviction of truth. This is rejected by Possevino, who thought that Constantine's motive for making clerics exempt from paying tribute to temporal authority, depended on his assent to the notion that such exemption was *de iure divino*, rather than pertaining to the *foro laico*. Nonetheless, Possevino expressed that he would like the Venetians to imitate the excessive kindness towards clerics shown by Constantine, since it would merit more praise than their present contumacy.⁶³⁰

The topic of clerical exemption was much debated in Possevino's reply to the doctor, but it was brought up anew in his first reply to Querini's *Aviso*. In the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, the Donatists were set up as *exempla ad dissuadendum* to the Venetians, and Possevino worked around the method of offering alternative readings to the bad examples. He advised Querini to read Optatus (d. 397), bishop of Milevis – presumably in *Against the Donatists* – who examined the question about ecclesiastical liberty and clerical exemption and concluded that clerics need not be faultless in order to

⁶²⁹ NR: 36.

⁶³⁰ NR: 25; RTE: 16; *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 5.

enjoy ecclesiastical liberty. He also recommended Querini to read the seven volumes of *ad Parmenianum de schismate donatistarum* by Optatus and *Contra partem donati* by Augustine. The latter is said to have been concordant with Optatus in proving that Emperor Constantine, when condemning the heretics, surrendered judgment to Pope Miltiades (*sed.* 311–314) as sole and competent judge, despite the appeal by Donatists to the emperor. Here, Possevino can be seen to expand on the topic to involve a rhetorical dichotomy between Donatists and the Roman pontiff as he called the chair (‘catedra’) of the Donatists, as opposed the Apostolic See, the chair of pestilence that guards not the gates of heaven but of hell.⁶³¹

Clerical Exemption and Venetian Sources

Contrary to the *exemplum ad dissuadendum* of the Donatist movement, which considered ecclesiastical liberty to hinge on the faultless character, *ethos*, of clerics, Possevino set up Venetian popes as *exempla ad persuadendum* in order to defend ecclesiastical liberty. In the *Risposta del Signor Paolo Anafesto*, it is noted that Querini had narrated that the Roman pontiff consents to the correction of ecclesiastical persons by magistrates and councillors of the Republic of Venice. That secular ministers from the Council of Ten should correct and even punish clerics are judged to be novelties by Possevino. Novelty is again a code word for heresy, and novelty was, as Bouwsma explains, what Rome wished to avoid.⁶³²

As mentioned previously in this study, testimonial evidence as an instrument to prove a supposition through representation of historical events, is of significant importance in illustrating actions in accordance with the good, the true and the unified. When defending ecclesiastical liberty against Querini,

⁶³¹ RTE: 44–45. The Donatist movement, during the fourth century, also functioned as an *exemplum ad dissuadendum* in the *Moscovia*. See *Moscovia*: 28 & 56. As with many topics during the *guerra delle scritture*, Possevino leaned on the content of Bellarmino’s *Risposta*. This also applied to the discourse of the Donatists. See Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 14–18.

⁶³² RPA: 11–12. Bouwsma, 1990: 102.

Possevino imbedded testimonial evidence in his rhetoric as he revealed that a bull by Pope Gregory XII (*sed.* 1406–1415) addressed to Vito, the bishop of Pula in Dalmatia, arrived in his hands. This bull reads that transgressors discovered in the diocese of Castello, in Venice, should not be named and shamed due to their presumed sodomite failure, irregular judgment, and digressions. Their habit and tonsure are, the bull affirms, to be preserved and neither are they to be judged at the secular forum. The bull also praises Doge Michele Steno (r. 1400–1413) for having adjourned court procedure by virtue of his reverence of the clerical order.⁶³³

Behold the testimony, Possevino exclaimed, of a pontiff and a Venetian citizen who acted like the ancient Venetian dogi, when they paid respect to the ecclesiastical order. Doge Michele Steno thus became an *exemplum imitandum* for having transferred the accused clerics to their superiors. Not that the crimes should remain unpunished, but that they should be judged according to their status as clerics. Pope Gregory XII was, furthermore, an accommodated *exemplum ad persuadendum* as he was a Venetian by birth and, as Possevino wrote, a citizen of Venice. Possevino noted that Pope Gregory, in his bull, did not complain about punishment of the defiled, but that the pope was anxious to see serious crimes committed by clerics castigated, but judged according to the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff. It is expected of the Venetians, Possevino maintained, that clerics be sent to the nuncio of his holiness, just as the ancient Venetians had done in order preserve peace for the benefit of Venice, the Italian peninsula, and the entire Christian Commonwealth.⁶³⁴

Another accommodated *exemplum ad persuadendum* for Possevino, was Pope Eugene IV (*sed.* 1431–1447). The basis, moreover, for the choice of Pope Eugene as an *exemplum ad persuadendum* was twofold. First, he is regarded as being consistent with the ancient Venetians who supported the

⁶³³ RPA: 12–13.

⁶³⁴ RPA: 13–16.

supremacy of the Roman pontiff. Second, he contested the conciliarist movement in the fifteenth century when he transferred the Council of Basel to Ferrara and Florence, to gain control of the negotiations of a union between the Orthodox Christians and the Catholic Church. Possevino remarked that Pope Eugene, in a letter to Doge Francesco Foscari (r. 1423–1457), after having praised the grandness, nobility and wealth of Venice, wrote that the Venetians forsake the saving of souls and omit to guard ecclesiastical liberty.⁶³⁵

Possevino's reference to Pope Eugene was not only intended as an argument in favour of ecclesiastical liberty. It was also an argument in favour of the high papalist position against conciliarist theories that were adopted by the *giovani* of Venice, who depicted the Church as an invisible union of faithful Christian believers.⁶³⁶ As opposed to Querini, whom Possevino implied to embrace the tradition of conciliarist theories, the Mantuan Jesuit emphasised that the Church, to the horror of the Republic of Venice, is visible in her eighteen general councils that have been held after Christ's ascension to Heaven.⁶³⁷

The first four councils (Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon) are thought to have established the hierarchy of the Church, whereby the general councils are portrayed as the Senate of the Church, as opposed to the Venetian Senate, with the capacity to decide various lawsuits.⁶³⁸ In all councils, provincial councils included, matters of faith are considered to have been treated without lay judges. Such matters refer to decision-making about dogma, the reform of the Church, and abrogation of decrees of lay people that are contradictory to the order that Christ established in his Church.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ RPA: 16–17.

⁶³⁶ This position was, of course, akin to Lutheran ecclesiology. Possevino spotted this, but as the scholar Romano Canosa has notified, the Venetian inquisition was kept busy trying to track down the spread of Lutheran books in the Republic of Venice during the sixteenth century. Canosa, 1987: 16–71. Cf. Logan, 2013: 309–325.

⁶³⁷ The councils held by the Apostles, such as that in Jerusalem in the year 49, are not included. Cf. Acts 15 and Gal 2.

⁶³⁸ RTE: 45. I have opted to interpret the word *causa* as "lawsuit" and not as "cause", since Possevino set up an analogy of the general councils to that of legislation and the decision-making in the Venetian Senate.

⁶³⁹ RTE: 45–46.

As seen, the arguments given by Possevino were based on testimonial evidence. This, however, also applied to Querini as he proved his conviction on the authority of Venice to punish clerics who have committed crimes. Querini affirmed that he had witnessed many letters by different popes in the Venetian archives that confirm Venice's right to punish clerics. Letters written by Sixtus IV, Innocent VIII (*sed.* 1484–1492), Alexander VI, and Paul III. Querini underscored that Venice had not refrained from exercising this authority and that if Venice in other times was thought to have been subordinated to the pontiffs, it was merely as a sign of respect and not *de facto*.⁶⁴⁰

Possevino replied to Querini that Paul V asked the Senate to see the letters, but he did not find ground for Venice's right to judge clerics. Additionally, Possevino expressed, apart from the fact that the Senate lacks privileges, it is most certain that the pontiffs have not given free faculty to Venice to exercise judgment. No concession granted to Venice has been overlooked, Possevino said, as they are registered in the registers of the apostolic *Camera*. Whoever reads the decrees, constitutions, and letters by pontiffs in the Venetian archives, Possevino observed, will discover that Querini is wrong. He concluded that no document entitles the Venetian Senate to punish clerics. The defenders of the Venetian cause are, however, said to fall into the Lutheran error that the Church should be invisible. In other words, nothing.⁶⁴¹

Well aware of the fact that the Interdict Controversy was no internal affair, but that debates that surrounded the excommunication of the Republic of Venice reached far and wide, Possevino replied to Querini that in circles of erudite persons, in universities, and colleges, the Venetian claim to superiority above clerics became a laughing stock. If, he posited, the Republic of Venice has such superiority, it should not have to be bothered with approval of the

⁶⁴⁰ RTE: 38.

⁶⁴¹ RTE: 41–44.

Vicar of Christ. To Possevino's estimation, however, Querini could not be bothered with the truth.⁶⁴²

Concluding Remarks

The background to the debate on clerical exemption, was the accusation by Venetian authorities of crimes committed by two clerics in Venice. In these circumstances, the laws that were stipulated by the Venetian Senate allowed for the judgment of criminal clerics by the civil courts. To stipulate such laws that resulted in limitations of clerical prerogatives was in accordance with the capacities of the free and independent state that the Republic of Venice claimed to be. From a Roman perspective, however, such laws were looked upon as an attempt to diminish ecclesiastical liberty. As noted, Possevino presented liberty in the sense of freedom *to* act according to one's privileges and prerogatives, whereas liberty, to the Venetian theologians, implied freedom *from* external intervention in the state.

He objected to the Venetian laws and contended that they were illegitimate, as they opposed natural law as well as the custom that pacts are to be kept. To him, Venice was not sovereign above clerics, wherefore clerics could not be judged according to Venetian law. Still, with license from the Vicar of Christ, the civil court of Venice was acknowledged to be able to judge clerics in accordance with canon law and not criminal law. In order to defend ecclesiastical liberty, Possevino habitually set up *exempla ad persuadendum* such as Pope Gregory XII, who was an *exemplum ad persuadendum* for having declared that criminal clerics are to be judged by their own jurisdiction as opposed to civil justice.

Possevino based his arguments concerning the legitimacy of clerical exemption from paying tribute to the temporal authority on the notion that clerics, insofar as they are spiritual authorities, are hierarchically superior to

⁶⁴² RPA: 12.

the temporal prince. Thus, the superior clerics are not considered to be obliged to show tokens of obedience to the hierarchically inferior temporal prince. Taxing ecclesiastical goods is estimated as usurpation. Yet, Permission to tax ecclesiastical goods can still be granted by the pope out of apostolic grace.

Chapter 13. Authority to Decide on Catholic Practice

In recent chapters, two aspects of ecclesiastical liberty have been analysed: clerical exemption from judgment by civil and criminal law and exemption from paying tribute to temporal authority. In this chapter, a third aspect of ecclesiastical liberty will be analysed, namely, the right to administer institutions for Catholic practice. As a matter of fact, during the pontificate of Gregory VII ecclesiastical liberty already involved income and ecclesiastical possessions, including discretion as to whether taxes should be paid to the local temporal authority, and whether donations, landowning and emphyteuses of ecclesiastical possessions were legitimate.

Ecclesiastical property and landowning were amongst the formal causes that Pope Paul V addressed in his bull of excommunication of the Republic of Venice in 1606. The Venetian Senate had decreed a law in 1602 which made it difficult for church property, leased on emphyteuses' contracts, to be returned to clerics if improvements had been made by previous lay leaseholders. Subsequently, in 1603, the Venetian Senate prohibited construction of new Church buildings within Venetian territory, except when permission was granted by the government. In 1605, the Venetian Senate decreed yet another law that regulated the leasing of land to the Church. According to the law of 1605, the Church was able to lease land by lay owners for no more than two years whereupon the land was to be sold to other laymen.

Venetian Laws and Liberty of State

In the debates that took place during the Interdict Controversy, a huge amount of trust was placed in law. Law was, as Bouwsma says, a means to institutionalise conflict where tension between sin and justice tended to lose focus amongst lawyers in favour of engagement with contradictions in human behaviour and changes in society. Legal affairs were dealt with in the vernacular

and abstract concepts in Latin were dropped by early modern lawyers. Legislation came to apply to the sovereign alone and law became the organising principle in early modern societies. In the discussions between Querini and Possevino, two views on former acts of legislation are discernible. Querini exemplified that Siena, Genoa, Portugal, Spain, and Germany decreed similar laws to the Venetian laws, whereas Possevino refuted these assertions. That which was at stake was the accusation of introducing novelty. Querini sought to prove continuity between the Venetian laws and those promulgated in other places in preceding times, to an equal degree to Possevino's attempts to prove the opposite.⁶⁴³

One reason behind the Venetian law of the early seventeenth century, was heavy costs due to the decline in trading income and due to the heavy expenditures during the food crisis in 1590 and 1591. This spurred Venice to secure revenues and tax income of land and property. Such items included maritime equipment, maintenance of roads, bridges, fortifications and fortresses of the city as well as dryings and diggings. Querini claimed the contribution of clerics in public matters was minor and that their property ownership weakened public finances. In Querini's opinion, regulations of ecclesiastical property was a necessary measure as the Republic ran the risk of being deprived of its goods due to the increase in landownership by the Church. Still, he considered the Senate to have legislated in such a manner that the laws did not concern clerics, but laymen over laypersons and their belongings. The prince of Venice is described as having acted as a father to his family, in whose interest it is to preserve the belongings of his family for the defence of the state.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴³ RPA: 45–47; Bouwsma, 1990: 138–147.

⁶⁴⁴ RPA: 34–35 & 43.

In his reply to Querini, Possevino contended that the prince of Venice is not master ('padrone') of either free subjects ('sudditi liberi') or 'ingenui'.⁶⁴⁵ The reference in the debate, to master and subjects, alludes to the system of *patria potestas* in classical antiquity where the master of the house and head of the family (*paterfamilias*) had judicial, economic and moral power over the family for as long as he lived. This power included the right to dispose of the family property, and to expose and sell his children.⁶⁴⁶ Against Querini's claim that the prince of Venice is master of free subjects and 'ingenui', Possevino argued that the father of the family is master of all his belongings ('robba'), which does not apply to the prince of Venice. On the contrary, he considered the prince of Venice to be obliged to follow the law rather than being entitled to dispose freely of property on Venetian soil. One such law that the prince is obliged to follow is the *fideicommissum*, where one can deprive another of belongings and donate them to yet another through testament, to constitute primogeniture – exclusive right by the eldest child to inherit – and to keep back taxation ('fisco') of confiscations without the consent of the temporal authority.⁶⁴⁷

Possevino held that the *fideicommissum* is to be carried out without the involvement of the prince, unless the prince would want to find himself guilty of tyranny. Here the donations and concessions to the sacred order are not

⁶⁴⁵ The distinction between free subjects and 'ingenui' is found in Roman law and custom, where a free subject (*libertinus*) was born a slave (*servus*) but had been freed by his master. An *ingenuus* was, on the other hand, a subject who was born free (*ingenuitas*) hence not a slave. The Italian word 'ingenui' is plural stemming from the Latin noun *ingenuus* that is linguistically related to *ingenium*, which is Possevino's point of departure for his elaboration on talents, but it is not to be confused with this noun. Both words come from classical antiquity and refer to an implanted disposition. Yet, *ingenuus* is a fixed concept in Roman law whereas, *ingenium* is a philosophical concept. RPA: 35; Berger, 1953: 501; Lintott, 2002: 555–565.

⁶⁴⁶ The rights of the *paterfamilias* over his family, however, became less absolute during the reign of Emperor Justinian as he made sure that a person who either became priest, nun, or acquired a high rank governmental position became free from the *patria potestas*. During the medieval period, workers for a landowner were recognised as a part of the landowner's *familia*. Berger, 1953: 620–621.

⁶⁴⁷ RPA: 35. *Fideicommissum* was regulated by private law, which is a law that governs the relations between persons. During the early modern period, *fideicommissum* was equivalent to bequeathing a benefit to a beneficiary in perpetuity including inheritance. In classical antiquity, *fideicommissum* signified a request to carry out payment or transfer of property to an heir by the testator. See Eckert, 2005; Berger, 1953: 532.

thought to prove that the people should be impoverished or that the authority of princes is diminished. Neither does Possevino consent to the supposition, which Querini brought forward, that the acquisitions of clerics should weaken the public finances of the Republic of Venice. This, he wrote, Querini cannot truthfully say since if the accounts of subsidies and tax collection, given that license from the pope to tax ecclesiastical property is obtained, are brought together, it will be discovered that the Venetian Republic would have had bigger revenue than if these assets would be possessed by the state of Venice.⁶⁴⁸

In true political governments, Possevino noted, subjects may defend their belongings even against princes when they usurp their subjects. In connection with this, he set up the punishment of he who usurped the vineyard of Naboth as an *exemplum evitandum*.⁶⁴⁹ Thus, the prohibition in the entire dominion was not regarded as licit, wherefore the defence of the law of prohibiting construction of pious places due to the lack of space and public safety is said to be invalid, since in the Veneto region there is no lack of large spaces, on which to build church buildings and pious places.⁶⁵⁰ The prohibition is thought to be invalid with regard to the city of Venice, because God is presumed to have increased the terrestrial space of the city of Venice so that outlets of the lagoon are connected with minor canals other than those of central Venice. Moreover, Possevino did not consider public peace and safety to be at risk when new buildings that promote the divine cult are constructed. Instead, he warns of new places of gathering that threaten to become substitutes

⁶⁴⁸ RPA: 35–38.

⁶⁴⁹ RTE: 22; Cf. 1 Kings 21:1–29. Ahab, king of Samaria, wanted the vineyard of Naboth. Naboth was stoned and the vineyard was seized by Ahab. God planned to bring death to Ahab for his evil-doing and sent Elijah to tell Ahab of the coming disaster. Ahab, however, humbled himself before God, wherefore God waited to bring disaster on Ahab and brought it on his son instead.

⁶⁵⁰ RTE: 22–23. Possevino wrote that the foundation above the Arena was dug out, implying the Arena of Verona, which was located outside the city walls. An earthquake in 1117, however, tore the Arena down and a new foundation was built inside the city walls, as the stones were transported to the new foundation.

for Church buildings and monasteries which might stimulate new customs and new thoughts and pave the way for the spread of fallacious culture.⁶⁵¹

Possevino wrote that this had already taken place, implying the affinity of the *giovani* with Lutheran ideas, since the most simple-minded nobles have been introduced to frauds under various pretexts of good faith. They are persuaded, he added, to embrace novelties and sinister inclinations with notable detriment to public liberty. Not only is the *giovani* in general accused, but Querini is personally accused by Possevino of having agreed with heretics who claim that labouring should not be conducted unless the Scripture says so. Consequently, Querini is depicted as setting the traditions of the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church aside and to have affirmed that clerics would want to remove the liberty of others, and that ecclesiastical liberty should consist of operating freely and licentiously. Possevino replied that granting liberty to clerics will not remove the liberty of others. On the contrary, the liberty that Querini asserts is regarded as a seeming liberty and a laughing stock.⁶⁵²

Emphyteusis, Donations and Transfers of Goods

It is possible to observe a resumption of Renaissance humanist thought on the political body as naturally free in the reasoning of Querini, where a limited amount of freedom of action was not estimated as sufficient for gaining the status of liberty.⁶⁵³ Although Possevino held the enforcements of law to be a novelty and that the laws considered emphyteuses, Querini was not inclined to look upon the matter from this angle. To him, Venice had not introduced any novel ideas but rather had introduced restrictions through law that were necessary due to the changing needs of society. Querini also denied that the

⁶⁵¹ RTE: 23. The increase of terrestrial space applies to the canal of Giudecca, at San Giorgio Maggiore, at Fondamenta Lizza fusina, on Murano, and in Chioggia.

⁶⁵² RPA: 23 & 28–29.

⁶⁵³ Skinner, 2015: 6–7 & 315.

laws involved emphyteuses, as they only prohibited preemption to purchase property before it was offered for public sale.⁶⁵⁴

As noted previously in this study, an emphyteusis refers to a permanent and hereditary right to full enjoyment of property or full use of land, conceded by the state to a private owner, such as the Church, in exchange for payment of a rent that stipulated that the property or land be maintained to a settled standard. The land could be divided through a *libellus*, a contract, as well as being transferred from a dependent fief to a fief with allodial right. Thus, in a similar manner to the construction of Church buildings and *fideicommissa*, Possevino affirmed that ecclesiastical assets cannot be annihilated since neither the lay prince nor the subordinate judge are entitled to legislate property that belongs to the superior spiritual authority. In a similar manner to clerical exemption from judgment by temporal authority, the temporal ruler of Venice is not considered to be able to judge on matters that regard ecclesiastical assets if not according to the sacred canons.⁶⁵⁵

In connection with this argument, Possevino added a comment, driven by *pathos*, arguing that one can edify ‘loggie’, gardens and palaces and lend one’s property for the consolation and commodity of the terrestrial body. In death, however, man is granted seven spans of earth (‘sette palmi di terra’) without license from the temporal prince, and “will he not be able to construct a Church, a Home to God, for [the] service of his Soul that is to live in eternity?”⁶⁵⁶

Maintenance of property was, however, not just a matter of emphyteusis, but also a matter of donation, which is claimed by Possevino to be a natural right. Just as it is natural for men to be free, donation consists of a capacity to receive inheritance and gifts that serve the construction and maintenance of

⁶⁵⁴ RPA: 49.

⁶⁵⁵ RPA: 49–50.

⁶⁵⁶ RPA: 54. “[...] non potrà edificare una Chiesa, una Casa à Dio, per servitio dell’Anima sua, la quale in eterno hà da vivere.”

Church buildings and monasteries. Donations to clerics were nonetheless contested by Querini, who thought them to be made through force or fraud and therefore rightfully prohibited through Venetian law. To Possevino, donations to clerics were made out of spontaneous will, therefore the restriction of preserving assets by clerics, is supposed to be nothing other than usurpation. Moreover, he took notice of the fact that some laymen have neglected maintenance of property, as when the prescribed time of the lease had passed, they are said to have brought about a bundle of calculations ('conti') of improvements to persuade the ecclesiastical landlord to abandon his right. As a result they were given the right to enjoyment of ecclesiastical property. Rather than improving the property, they merely built a simple cabin ('casotto') on the property. They claimed that it was necessary to restore the ancient plants but only whitewashed a piece of a wall, pretended to dry the marshes and improve the grounds but simply dug some ditches over the property.⁶⁵⁷

Against Querini's affirmations, Possevino asserted the independence of clerics as their assets in Venice are not held to be composed of gifts from Venetian officials. On the contrary, the assets are thought to have been gifts from ancient pious members of the Republic who sought to embellish the divine cult. In particular, the poor are held to be victims of the new laws, as they are seen to be steadily aggravated by new burdens. The nobles, on the other hand, are believed to be discontent with their ancient parsimony with which the Republic of Venice grew prosperous. In these days, Possevino wrote, the wealthy nobility has turned away from their ancient exempla. They seized the opportunity to usurp the assets of the Church as they kept transferring ecclesiastical belongings to their own houses, making Venice a tyrannical state.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ RTE: 53–54; RPA: 29 & 44.

⁶⁵⁸ RTE: 13–14 & 36; RPA: 45.

Religious Institutions

The antidotes to void squares that stimulate new customs, the spreading of heresies, and depraved morals are institutions dedicated to the divine cult. These institutions are contrasted with the palaces of the nobility, who are regarded to have constructed palaces to their own pomp and delight. Possevino contrasts such decoration made for the cult and weakness of the bodies, with the decorations of Church buildings that serve the divine cult.⁶⁵⁹

The one who admires the buildings of the more wealthy monasteries should know that the monks themselves have made them out of their own expenditure, and not through public taxes, to the benefit of the divine cult. This, Possevino asserted, is the case with the Benedictine abbeys of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, Santa Giustina in Padua, and the Praglia Abbey in Teolo. The Benedictines who served at these abbeys are *exempla imitanda* to Possevino and he praised them for having contributed to the care of the poor. He also commended those who gathered in great numbers outside of San Giorgio Maggiore every Friday. The nuns and monks are described as praying day and night to God for the salvation of the Republic of Venice and living moderately in their refectories, sleeping on straw.⁶⁶⁰

Although Possevino depicted religious life as central to Catholic culture, it was subject to change in that religious orders are sometimes replaced with other orders, sometimes reformed and sometimes extinguished. On this topic, the principle of accommodation was applied. He noted that there is a season for everything and that the decline of one order, having fulfilled its purpose, will lead to the benefit of another order, which is better adapted to the requirements of contemporary times. For instance, the orders founded by Dominic (1170–1221) and Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226) supported the Church in times opportune, but divine providence is considered to have worked for the renewal of a more perfect poverty through the Capuchins.

⁶⁵⁹ RTE: 13–14.

⁶⁶⁰ RTE: 13–14.

Where, Possevino asked, “did the Saints Dominic and Francis go in order to receive the confirmations of the rules? Did they perhaps come to Venice or did they go to the emperor or to kings for this [purpose]?”⁶⁶¹

Other orders, such as the Humiliati, are regarded to have been so lax that it was necessary for the pope to totally disassemble them, whereas other orders are said to have been successfully reformed. Possevino mentioned Cardinal Baronio, who restored the divine cult of the abbey of San Gregorio in Rome. Similarly, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1621) is said to have renewed the Abbey of Tre Fontane with a most exquisite building where the three fountains of the three drops (‘salti’) are. Thus, Aldobrandini and Baronio are presented as *exempla imitanda* due to their successful improvements of abbeys, whereas the laymen who were abbots *in commendam*, through their sons or nephews, were regarded as usurpers of revenues to the benefit of their own patrimony. The system of *in commendam* was yet another aspect of ecclesiastical liberty that the Gregorian Reformation wished to outdo, which returned as a topic of debate during the Interdict Controversy.⁶⁶²

As opposed to the laymen who are appointed as abbots *in commendam*, Possevino presented Andrea Lippomano, cleric and patron of the priory of the Teutonic Order at Santa Mary Maddalena in Padua, as an *exemplum imitandum*. Lippomano witnessed the decline of the Teutonic Order and considered that their revenues would be better utilised if he provided enforcement to a college of consecrated people, instead of contributing to serve his lay relatives’ enjoyments. Thus, Possevino wrote, Lippomano, through the license of the pope, left his benefice of Santa Maria Maddalena to the Society of Jesus.

⁶⁶¹ RTE: 34–35, quote on 34: “[...] andarono i Santi Domenico, & Francesco per ricevere la confirmatione delle Regole loro? Vennero forse a Venetia, ò andarono all’Imperatore, ò a i Rè per questo?”

⁶⁶² RTE: 36–38. To appoint laymen as abbots *in commendam* was introduced during the eighth century; they often placed their vassals to supervise financial interests. The Concordat of Worms, in 1122, abolished the right of laymen to be appointed abbots *in commendam*. Yet, laymen continued to be involved in the *in commendam* system, for instance, through the Order of Santo Stefano in Tuscany. See Angiolini, 1991: 875–899 & Livingstone: 2006.

The Society of Jesus, in turn, founded a college that welcomed students from everywhere.⁶⁶³

The merits of Jesuits are portrayed in the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta* which, of course, had partly to do with Possevino's own membership in the order. The portrayal of the advantages of Jesuit presence on Venetian soil had also partly to do with the hostility against them, within the confines of the Republic. Querini's *Avviso* had brought up negative sentiments about the Jesuit Colleges in the Republic of Venice. According to the testimony given in the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, Querini affirmed that every student who entered a Jesuit College was obliged to swear an oath and profess to follow its superior in every event, to the defence of the order and its constitutions. Such loyalty to the Jesuit order was estimated by Querini to cause division, uprising, and competition with public authority and to rival the loyalty that each student needed to show to the Republic.⁶⁶⁴ Possevino replied that the young boys gather on Saturday either to feast for an hour, or they gather to calm down for an hour after having served God. Accordingly, he did not consider this to cause either division, uprising or competition with the public authority, since prayers and sacraments, which they attended to, were authorised by bishops or the pontiff and did not apply to lay authority. Thus, Possevino noted, "we strain out a gnat and swallow a Camel."⁶⁶⁵

He returned to the saying of straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel, as he wrote that the young and old people of Venice join in uncontrolled arguments in cliques and foyers ('ridotti'), participate in games and in infamous and abominable sleazes. He described the pursuit of fallacious culture in Venice and verdicts that Venetians vilified that which is praiseworthy

⁶⁶³ RTE: 36. Cf. Grendler, 2017: 115.

⁶⁶⁴ RTE: 33.

⁶⁶⁵ RTE: 34. "[...] coliamo un pulce, & inghiottiamo un Camelo."

and in the end the cancer of depraved customs would devour everything. Yet, he added that “it should please God if I am a false soothsayer.”⁶⁶⁶

In the defence of the denigrated Jesuits, Possevino reminded Querini of how the first Jesuits came to Venice and that the Venetian Senate was the first in Italy – the Spanish parts of the Italian peninsula excluded – to grant them permission to found a college. This was done at Padua and at Venice in a ‘casa professa’, as they declined the more spacious San Salvador. Possevino added that the house of ‘le Zitelle’, number 250, was founded by Benedetto Palmio ‘of their society’. Thus, without revealing his membership in the Society of Jesus. In this house, Possevino narrated, many hundreds of virgins preserved the integrity of faith and many young women were safe from the insults of youthful deception, and older women were rescued from the anger of malicious husbands. He continued to demonstrate that Jesuits had established one house for catechumens and another for aid to those Muslims and Jews who had received baptism. It is further told that Jesuits had served at the Lazzaretto assisting the dying, and had often been called to prisons by the Council of the Ten, where whole nights were spent comforting the tortured who, Possevino put forth, needed to pass away through justice.⁶⁶⁷

In this defence of the Society of Jesus, Jesuits are said to have assisted the dying. “Did not”, Possevino asked, “the most Serene Doge Grimani die in their arms, who always wanted them as confessors? Did not the Patriarch Zane [*sed.* 1601–1605] do the same until he passed away? Did not the holy office of the Inquisition measure them to be most secure assistants in purging the contagious books and in directing the souls?”⁶⁶⁸ All the same, Possevino complained that the Republic of Venice had permitted slander against Jesuits to be

⁶⁶⁶ RTE: 34. “[...] piaccia a Dio, ch’io sia falso indovino.”

⁶⁶⁷ RTE: 24–27. Quote on 24: “[...] della Compagnia loro.” Benedetto Palmio was, as noted earlier on in this study, of importance to Possevino when he decided to join the Society of Jesus. Possevino had heard Palmio preaching and thereupon decided to join the Jesuits.

⁶⁶⁸ RTE: 25–26. Non morì nelle mani loro il Serenissimo Doge Grimani, il qual sempre gli volle per confessori? Non fece il medesimo Patriarca Zane insino che spirò? Non gli provò il santo officio dell’Inquisitione per securissimi coadiutori nel purgare i libri infesti, & nell’indirizzo dell’anime?”

spread. Some claimed them to be Spaniards, some claimed them to be Papists, and others claimed that they were mixed up in affairs of state. Such talk is regarded as unverified and he compared the slander against Jesuits to the calumniated Christ, who was accused of having “seduced the crowd, who prohibited obedience to princes, who drank wine, who ate with sinners, who was possessed by the demon.”⁶⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Possevino admitted that some Jesuits had not been able to tolerate the rules of the consecrated life and had apostatised. He probably had the ex-Jesuit Giovanni Marsilio in mind, when he said that those who have apostatised have become heretic ministers and embraced the doctrine which leads to atheism. In fact, atheism is a concept used in the *Bibliotheca Selecta* to denominate the supposed followers of Arianism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anabaptism. Hence, in the discourse of the merits of Jesuits, Possevino once more put Marsilio and other *giovani* within a tradition in Venice that had an affinity for Protestant theology. The *Tractatus de Libertate Christiana* (1520) by Martin Luther is moreover said to be a cause for the detriment of the Holy Roman Empire in Germany. Such a detriment is estimated to endanger Venice if its citizens follow the course of the German Lutherans.⁶⁷⁰

Protectors and Opponents of the Catholic Faith

In connection with the defence of the Society of Jesus, Possevino introduced examples of their institutions for cultivation and preservation of the Catholic faith outside of the Republic of Venice. Praise was given to the emperor Ferdinand I (r. 1556–1564) for having consolidated the Catholic faith when he founded four Jesuit Colleges in four different provinces. Praise was likewise given to the duke of Bavaria for having preserved the Catholic faith when he

⁶⁶⁹ RTE: 26. “[...] che seduceva le Turbe, che proibiva l’ubidienza a Principi, che beveva vino, che mangiava con peccatori, che haveva il Demonio.”

⁶⁷⁰ RTE: 12 & 29; BS, II: 8: 508–563.

founded colleges at Ingolstadt, at Munich, at Landsberg am Lech and at Regensburg. The same goes for the archduke of Gratz for having driven out heresy with the assistance of Jesuit Colleges at Gratz of Styria.⁶⁷¹

The missionary activities of the Jesuits are also mentioned, along with notable Jesuits who participated in settling controversies.⁶⁷² The missionaries are said to have left friends and home to sail off to Japan, China, and India completing an eighteen thousand-mile journey, armed with only poverty and a sincere desire for the salvation of souls, without hope to ever see their families and friends again. Possevino's admiration for these missionary Jesuits is shown in how he employed an agricultural allusion, through the word 'pian-tato', stating that "they have planted the banner of the Cross and [...] having planted colleges."⁶⁷³

Possevino added his own narrative notes, under the pseudonym Teodoro Eugenio of Famagosta, of his diplomatic assignments in the service of the Catholic Church. It is narrated that Antonio Possevino was sent to John III (1537–1592) of Sweden by Pope Gregory XIII (*sed.* 1572–1585) as ambassador, since the king had asked the pope for a capable ambassador of the Apostolic See. In due course, he commented, the king converted to the Catholic faith, abjured the heresies, and conducted a sacramental general confession of his whole life. The confirmation of his son Sigismund in the Catholic faith followed, and Sigismund eventually, as king of Poland, founded some seminaries.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷¹ RTE: 26–27. Establishment of Jesuit Colleges is further attributed to kings and bishops of Poland and Lithuania.

⁶⁷² RTE: 31. Possevino mentioned Alfonso Salmerón (1515–1585), one of the first ten Jesuits, who was sent by the Apostolic See to the nuncio of Scotland and Ireland ('Hibernia'); Andrés de Oviedo (1518–1577) in order to assist Ethiopia; Francis Xavier (1506–1552) to convert the oriental Indies; Petrus Canisius to assist Emperor Ferdinand I who wanted him as counsellor; Diego Laínez (1512–1565) to disassemble the assembly in Poissy – Huguenot revolt during the French Wars of Religion – and then to the Council of Trent; Lorenzo Maggio (1531–1605) to reconcile Queen Catherine of Austria (1533–1572) with her husband Sigismund II August of Poland (1520–1572), and Benedetto Palmio and Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509–1580) who were sent to settle the controversies born in the Republic of Genoa.

⁶⁷³ RTE: 27–28. Quote on 28: "[...] hanno piantato lo stendardo della Croce, & [...] piantato havendo collegij."

⁶⁷⁴ RTE: 31–32.

He also mentioned his appointment to the major task of settling the truce of Jam Zapolski in 1582 between Stefan Báthory and Ivan IV. It is said that during the negotiations, the Muscovite ambassadors were received three times in Venice under the escort of Possevino. After the truce, colleges and seminaries were founded, as well as the diocese of Wenden. It is further stated that more diplomatic missions were assigned to Possevino, which resulted in the accord between Emperor Rudolf II and Stefan Báthory. The narrative also includes his diplomatic mission in Transylvania and in France, where he cooperated with King Henry IV.⁶⁷⁵

In his defence of the Society of Jesus, Possevino proposed to Querini that he should read Henry IV's *Risposta*, which was printed in Venice in 1606, and in which the king of France replied to the allegations against Jesuits by the Huguenot members of the Parisian Senate. The background to the *Risposta* of Henry IV was the construction, on the order of the king, of a marble pyramid that was engraved with an inscription that Possevino considered a sinister sentence against the Jesuits. However, when the pyramid was demolished by the same king a couplet was written that ended with the lines: "*Babylon has already fallen, so the Huguenots will fall.*" The Venetians, who relied on the support of the French king, were thus admonished to take King Henry as an *exemplum imitandum* and not look elsewhere.⁶⁷⁶

King Henry IV was set up as an *exemplum imitandum*, but the Calvinists in France, Possevino pointed out, used the same excuse as the new aristocracy

⁶⁷⁵ RTE: 32.

⁶⁷⁶ RTE: 21–29. Quote on 28: "*Iam cecidit, Babylon sic Hugunota cadet.*" The longer story about the marble pyramid to which Possevino referred, regards an incident when King Henry IV, in 1594, went to his mistress's house, the house of Gabrielle d'Estrées (1573–1599), where several noblemen were gathered to receive the king. One nobleman, Jean Châtel (1575–1594), drew a knife on the king and although he attempted to kill him, the king escaped with a wounded lip and the loss of a tooth. Châtel was seized and pleaded guilty. However, as Châtel had been educated by Jesuits, they were accused of having instigated the actions of Châtel. Henry IV had only recently converted to Catholicism and prior to that fought for the Huguenots against Catholics. Châtel was executed and the Jesuits expelled from France. A monument, called a pyramid, was built on the site of the attempted murder. On a marble tablet the inscription read "to attest the crime and the punishment of the Jesuits, and the hatred of the French towards them." In 1603, Henry IV recalled the Jesuits and decided that the monument should be torn down. See Galignani, 1825: 74–75.

of Venice, namely that reforms are necessary. Such reform, and not the type of reforms of monasteries that Possevino lauded, are regarded as a deformation of the true faith. The new aristocracy are thought to have loosened the ties with the ancient aristocracy that Doge Grimani was a part of, contrary to the *giovane* Doge Donà who is held to have imitated the exercise of false jurisdiction over monks by French ministers. These ministers are said to have imposed tributes upon people and also encouraged Charles IX (r. 1560–1574) to usurp the authority to excommunicate, seeking to make him head of the Church. The ministers are considered to be both headless and brainless, in other words not united with the Roman pontiff and lacking in reason.⁶⁷⁷

Possevino quoted Doge Marino Grimani (r. 1595–1605), who said that he could not impede the course of the Venetian ministers, since he did only have his vote and not such authority. His conscience is said to have forbidden him to vote in favour of the political programme of the *giovani*. Although Grimani formally passed the laws extending the prohibition in his dominion, Possevino affirmed that he proved piety to the Church as he left his mortgaged goods to the Church, such as San Giuseppe di Castello.⁶⁷⁸

Possevino remarked that another temporal ruler, Constantine, who was baptised by Pope Sylvester, built many churches in Rome. There, the pillars and rich marbles of the tyrant emperors have made way for Constantine's buildings and provisions to the Apostolic See of fixed incomes and various temporal fiefdoms, not only in Italy or in Europe but also in Africa. After Constantine, Possevino maintained, Theodosius, Marcian (r. 450–457), Charlemagne and Louis the Pious (r. 813–840) defended the Church, wherefore

⁶⁷⁷ RTE: 14–15.

⁶⁷⁸ RTE: 12–13 & 18. Doge Grimani employed the artist Paolo Veronese to draw the altar-piece of San Giuseppe di Castello. This church became the final resting place for Doge Grimani and his wife, the dogaressa, Morosina Morosini (1545–1614). See Norwich, 2003: 511.

God increased the earthly and celestial incomes of the Church. Therefore, Possevino pronounced, their memories remain as examples, *exempla imitanda*, for posterity.⁶⁷⁹

In contrast with the *exempla imitanda*, the Lombard king Aistulf (d. 756) was brought forward as an *exemplum evitandum*, of someone who wanted to revoke the validity of the donations of his predecessors to the Roman Church. Possevino once more worked within the frame of providentialist rhetoric, claiming that Aistulf was eternally damned through the just judgment of God as he died a sudden death whilst hunting. In fact, dying a sudden death is understood to be a punishment for sinful living in as much as the deceased would have no time to confess sins and consequently is deprived of the subsequent absolution. A sudden death is thus considered to be an unworthy death, as long as the deceased does not die the death of a martyr.⁶⁸⁰

To further contrast *exempla imitanda* amongst temporal rulers, Possevino commented upon Querini's praise of Henry VIII of England, as an *exemplum imitandum* for Venice, since the king of England had written a repudiation of Luther's views on the sacraments. The autograph of that book signed by his hand, Possevino wrote, is kept in the Vatican Library, but the evil spirit entered in this layman who wished to reform the Church. Querini, in his *Avviso*, had pointed to the close ties between Venice and England, which

⁶⁷⁹ RTE: 18–21.

⁶⁸⁰ RTE: 19; Neelakanta, 2014: 85. Other emperors of whom Possevino wrote that had persecuted the Apostolic See include Henry IV, Henry V (r. 1111–1125), Frederick I Barbarossa, Otto IV and Frederick II. Nevertheless, Possevino remarked, Henry V and Frederick I were reconciled to the Church before their deaths. Bellarmino also made use of providentialist rhetoric when he discussed the *vita* of Stanislaus, bishop and martyr. Bellarmino wrote that Gregory VII excommunicated King Boleslaw II (r. 1076–1079) of Poland, because the king did not do penance, God castigated him and the king was despised by his people and detested by foreigners. Since the king did not convert, God added a second scourge in that the realm rebelled against the king. Not even this was sufficient, as God added his third scourge and thus the king went out of his mind ('fuora di se'). He wandered about ('errando') in the forests with his dogs by his side and fell dead unexpectedly, whereupon he was devoured by his own dogs. The same happened to Ludovico Bavaro (r. 1328–1347), Holy Roman Emperor, who despised the censures of Pope John XXII (*sed.* 1316–1334) and Pope Benedict XII (*sed.* 1334–1342). One day he fell off his horse and died unexpectedly, without having the time to have been absolved from sins and censures as Giovanni Villano writes. God is the same now as he was then, and he has the same omnipotence that he had then. Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 53–54 & 56–57.

was a tie that was kept tight through the friendship between Paolo Sarpi and the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Henry Wotton. Possevino's attitude towards England was, however, hostile in both the *Apparato All'Historia* and in his Interdict Texts.⁶⁸¹

Possevino, when discussing England in the *Nuova Risposta*, wrote that there are many good religious orders, who through the decades have intrepidly supported the Catholic faith in England. Nevertheless, Henry VIII is thought to have been no less than the Huguenots of France because he killed monks instead of reforming them. Instead of bringing order to the churches, he deprived them of their belongings and deprived the pope of practicing temporal authority in England.⁶⁸²

King Henry is also said to have had a legitimate and most serene wife, Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536), but he consulted corrupted theologians in order to wed Anne Boleyn. In contrast with Catherine, Anne is described as an infamous and incestuous woman. As a result, Henry is considered to have deservedly suffered his false wife's shameful dishonesties and eventually he put her to death. Using providentialist rhetoric, Possevino claimed that even Henry himself passed away through a painful death. In his *Moscovia*, however, Possevino presented a slightly different picture of Anne Boleyn, saying that Henry VIII falsely called her his wife and as she was taken in adultery Henry put her to death. Possevino added, however, that her "only real adultery had consisted of going to bed with the adulterous king, who had forsaken his own chaste wife."⁶⁸³

⁶⁸¹ AAH, VII, c. 5: 215v–216r; AAH, VII, c. 5:215v; RTE: 15. Paolo Sarpi was a friend of England, and of Wotton, and not surprisingly his treatise about the faults of the Council of Trent was printed and published anonymously in England. In addition, the *Beneficio di Christo* had been well received at the court of Edward VI (r. 1547–1553), son of Henry VIII. See Tutino, 2010: 119; McNair, 1987.

⁶⁸² NR: 43.

⁶⁸³ *Moscovia*: 98; RTE: 15.

Institutions and Culture

The discourse of the opponents of the Catholic faith, such as Aistulf, Henry VIII and Huguenot ministers are *exempla evitanda*, as their break with the Church and their measures against Catholic culture are recognised as acts of tyranny. Tyranny in the state is also a trope familiar to Renaissance humanists, who drew from Aristotle and Cicero for whom tyranny was estimated as the least desirable regime. Monarchical and republican regimes were rivals in winning the favour of thinkers of political theory. Cicero considered monarchy to be prone to degenerate into tyranny and therefore into enslavement.⁶⁸⁴

Contrary to enslavement stands culture, to which Possevino sought to contribute. To him, culture hinged on unity with the Roman pontiff even though the constituent parts of this culture were diverse. More than in any other volume written by Possevino, the second part of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* illustrates just how broad the aspects that fitted into his conception of culture were. There, the disciplines of jurisprudence, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, architecture, music, history, poetry and rhetoric are all constituents of culture. As culture hinges on unity with the Roman pontiff, other disciplines are subordinated to theology. A shift is, nonetheless, noticeable from the pedagogical guides to learning to the texts written during the *guerra delle scritture*. In the latter, Possevino was less advisory on sketching out the contours of a good education and more inclined to repeat the juridical prerogatives of the Roman pontiff on whom his cultural project hinged.⁶⁸⁵

This shift was triggered by the acute crisis of the Interdict Controversy, but also by the increased complex relations with England and Scotland, the Scandinavian countries, and Protestant Germany that, as time went by, faded further away from the fold of the Church in Rome. As the study of the Interdict Controversy reveals, the Republic of Venice, through the influence of the *giovani*, had begun to take steps in the same direction as the above-mentioned

⁶⁸⁴ Skinner, 2015: 102; 256–257 & 315.

⁶⁸⁵ BS, II, XII–XVIII.

nations. This was precisely what Possevino wished to avoid and therefore he addressed the members of the *giovani* movement in his texts, claiming to want to rescue the ‘patria’ from assuming a tyrannical regime.

A shift in Venice is also noticeable since the *giovani* had interpreted the idea of a mixed government of republicanism and oligarchy as a perceived monarchy in tune with the developing absolute monarchy of James I. Consequently, the *giovani* fought to outmanoeuvre the Church as landowner on Venetian soil in favour of the perceived prince. Landowning rendered state control over Church buildings but also control over the institutions of care, such as hospitals, hostels that received pilgrims as well as colleges and schools. These institutions were an important part of Jesuit activities on Venetian soil.⁶⁸⁶

The care for the sick and the poor is observable in the authorship of Possevino, but his texts are not to be regarded as specifically directed towards these. On the contrary, the texts often address topics that were intended to be read by the learned parts of society. The purpose of reaching erudite people was twofold. First, it aimed to keep the ruling authorities and the people steadfast in Catholic culture by suggesting *exempla imitanda* and *exempla ad persuadendum*. Second, it aimed to persuade the ruling authorities and the people to avoid departure from Catholic culture by setting up *exempla evitanda* and *exempla ad dissuadendum*. In turn, it would have to be concluded that Possevino presumed that changes in society and confessional shifts were due to decisions made by the ruling élite rather than by the illiterate parts of society.

Amongst Possevino’s concerns were the rebellion amongst the Venetian nobility against the order of the ancient Venetians. He considered that too much had been said about the crimes of Marcantonio Brandolin Valdemarin, the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Sant’Eustachio in Nervessa in Treviso, and Scipione Saracino, the canon of Vicenza, and too little had been said about

⁶⁸⁶ RPA: 32.

those of the nobility who are held to be molesters ('stupratori') of virgins. He expressed his fear that the ancient order, where clerical exemptions were granted, were on the verge of being turned upside down. Thus, despite condemnations made against aristocrats, in the tribunal of the patriarch of Venice, Possevino complained that they were generally regarded as immune and, as such, acquitted from crime. Since the aristocracy was influential in the Republic, he feared that their inclination to heretical teaching and wicked vices would spread to the public schools, where no alternative institutions of education would remain to offer a Catholic culture. Instead of being dispelled, he judged that the *giovani* nobility were exalted by men of letters as they wished to shake themselves loose of the yoke of the law of Christ. He concluded that they longed to be lifted from spiritual submission in order to satisfy their desires, but by doing so they put the 'patria' and their souls in danger.⁶⁸⁷

Concluding Remarks

Institutions encompassed not only Church buildings, but schools, hospitals, and hostels. These institutions were vital components for the practice of the Catholic faith and for the refined Catholic culture that Possevino projected in his writings. To him, the Venetian laws of the seventeenth century, which sought to regulate ecclesiastical property and landowning, threatened Catholic culture and ecclesiastical liberty.

Possevino renounced Querini's inference that the prince of Venice is the master of his subjects, in other words a *paterfamilias*. Instead, he argued that a *paterfamilias* is he who is the master of all his belongings. In turn, the prince of Venice was regarded as being subject to law, such as the *fideicommissa* under private law, emphyteuses and transfer of goods. Ecclesiastical assets and their revenues are presented to be under canon law and therefore

⁶⁸⁷ RPA: 36–37; For an excerpt of the apostolic letter, concerning the imprisonment of Brandolin Valdemarin, abbot of Nervesa, and Scipione Saracino, Canon of Vicenza, see Cappelletti, 1849: 515.

protected by the Roman pontiff. This third aspect of ecclesiastical liberty is thus looked upon in the same manner as whether clerics were to be judged according to civil and criminal law and whether clerics were to pay tax to the temporal ruler. In other words, whatever appertains to the ecclesiastical sphere is to be measured according to canon law unless the spiritual authority decides otherwise.

In connection with the Venetian laws of the seventeenth century, both Querini and Possevino endeavoured to prove that they presented no novel ideas. According to Possevino, the biggest threat to the practice of Catholic culture in Venice was the *giovani*. In his rebuttal of them, he elaborated with various exempla and providentialist rhetoric as he underscored the adherence of the *giovani* to the supposed novel ideas of Protestants and Huguenots. Manifestly, he commended good reforms by religious orders and improvements to abbeys in accordance with the principles of accommodation. On the other hand, criticised bad reforms such as those by the Huguenots in France and the Reformation in England. This was undertaken in order to persuade in favour of a Catholic culture versus a fallacious culture, which he assumed would be the result for any country that cut ties with the Roman pontiff.

Chapter 14. Validity of the Interdict and the Venetian Past

To Possevino, spiritual authority is immediately granted by God and is superior to temporal authority. However, by setting up Moses as a type for the Roman pontiff, he argued that Jesus Christ and his Vicar have temporal authority. It has also been concluded that he sought to convince his opponents of the right for spiritual authorities to judge clerics accused of criminal acts, inculcating the *privilegium fori*. He further affirmed that clerics are not obliged to pay tribute to the temporal ruler. Moreover, ecclesiastical institutions such as Church buildings, pious places, schools directed by clerics, hospitals run by the Church, and properties and activities in favour of Catholic culture were, according to his notion, to be conducted and decided over by the spiritual authority. All these topics were also debated by the anonymous doctor, Antonio Querini and Roberto Bellarmino. Debates about the validity of the interdict will now be scrutinised, as well as the different arguments about the Venetian past.

Debates about the Validity of the Interdict

The arguments that appertain to the validity of the interdict are fourfold. The first regard whether sin can be proven amongst the Venetians to the extent that the interdict is justified. The second concerns whether the Interdict Controversy concerns faith or conduct. Third, whether the interdict is valid or not. Fourth, whether the interdict is to be acknowledged or not. The anonymous doctor, Bellarmino and Possevino all discussed these questions in their *risposte* at various degrees.

Commencing with the first question, the anonymous doctor, in the *Risposta d'un dottore in theologia*, can be seen to signal that every Christian is free to follow the opinion that one finds proper, even though one may be a Catholic. To follow the teaching of a Church authority, such as the apostle

Paul, against the stream is not regarded as a sin. Consequently, as Venice is thought to have followed the teaching of Paul, the doctor did not find Venice guilty of any sin or obstinacy. Hence, the excommunication is invalid.⁶⁸⁸

That excommunication presupposes sin and obstinacy was a new and false opinion to Bellarmino. He admitted that mortal sin is presupposed, but not that any sin suffices to excommunicate. Rather, the cardinal concluded that the committed sin must be evaluated by the Roman pontiff. In this sense, the interdict is not described as caused by sin as such. But through disobedience against the judgment of the Roman pontiff, who pronounced that Venetians had committed sin when legislating against the interests of the Catholic Church and imprisoning clerics.⁶⁸⁹ In agreement with Bellarmino, Possevino supposed the Venetians to have committed mortal sin and disobedience against the Vicar of Christ. The reasoning lacked the intellectual nuances that his confrere managed to present as he merged the alleged violations into a tirade, in which the Venetians are held to have enacted against ecclesiastical liberty, sacred canons and ecumenical councils.⁶⁹⁰

The second topic, applies to whether the Interdict Controversy is a question of faith or conduct. To the doctor, the controversy was solely about conduct – only advancement of biblical proof could alter it from conduct to faith – and as it was not about faith, no sin is thought to have been committed. Hence, the excommunication is invalid. Instead, the one who observes the civil law is considered to act meritoriously. This form of thought about the controversy, is illustrative of the influence of the tradition of the *spirituali* on

⁶⁸⁸ The arguments by the doctor are similar to those uttered by Martin Luther that no authority, pope or bishop, has the right to demand that the law be followed if the person is unwilling to accept the content of the law. Marcantonio Capello held a similar view in his letter to Possevino. *Lettera del Padre Antonio Possevino Giesuita al Padre Marc'Antonio Capello*: 8; *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 12; cf. Witte, 2003: 731.

⁶⁸⁹ The doge was presented by Bellarmino as a monarch. To him, it was not the Republic of Venice in its totality that is prince but the doge. Thus, the office of the doge seems to equal the monarch. It was equally the doge whom Bellarmino found guilty of public persecution of churches and cloisters. Bellarmino wrote that the persecution by the doge was similar to the persecutions of the Church by the *exempla evitanda* Emperor Valens (328–378) and the Arian Vandal king Huneric (420–484). Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 48.

⁶⁹⁰ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 34 & 50; NR: 50.

Venetian intellectuals since scriptural evidence was also at the heart of the confutation in the *Beneficio di Christo* of human works as meritorious in the process of salvation.⁶⁹¹

Bellarmino, for his part, explicated that the Venetian *Signoria* have confused *de moribus* with *de fide*, since rebellion against the pope is understood as a concern of faith. The action of Henry VIII, when he made himself head of the Anglican Church, is depicted as also concerning faith.⁶⁹² To Possevino, moreover, the controversy was solely a question of loyalty to the superiority of the Roman pontiff.⁶⁹³

Regarding the third topic, the doctor pondered whether the sentence of the pope was worth nothing *de iure divino*, as if the interdict proclamation was written in water or in the air. Bellarmino, however, surmised that whether the controversy concerns *de iure divino*, *de iure divino positivo*, or *de moribus* is for the pope to judge. Whether the Venetians had sinned or not is presumed to be a matter not for the *Signoria* to decide, but for the pope to judge, just as it appertained to the priest to judge if one was leprous or not in the Old Testament. Possevino, for his part, opinioned that the interdict is according to Church tradition, which did not render any novelty, since the interdict is founded on already established natural, divine and apostolic laws. Instead, the doctrine against the authority of the pope taught by Luther, Calvin, Wycliffe, Hus and Jerome of Prague – and embraced by the Venetians – is assumed to be a novelty. Hence, heretical.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹¹ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 12.

⁶⁹² Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 53–54.

⁶⁹³ NR: 8–9 & 50. Possevino wrote that Pope Paul V allotted time to listen carefully and with patience to the Venetian ambassador Francesco Duodo, before publishing the interdict at Saint Peter's. Duodo did not, Possevino said, give the pope any reasons not to go ahead with the interdict. In addition, Possevino named Francesco Duodo as one of four ambassadors to the Apostolic See. RTE: 8. In fact, Francesco Duodo (1518–1592) was a Venetian admiral who participated in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and died in 1592. Pietro Dudo (1554–1610), on the other hand, was involved in discussions with Pope Paul V, as Venetian ambassador to the Apostolic See, in 1606. The other ambassadors were Nicolò Molin, Giovanni Mocenigo, and Nicolò Contarini. See Benzoni, 1993.

⁶⁹⁴ *Risposta d'un Dottore in Theologia*: 12; Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 49–50; NR: 24.

The fourth topic concerns acknowledgment of the interdict, which the doctor did not accept. He reassured the people of Venice that they did not need to fear scandal and reprisals, as the people of Venice have always been a Catholic people who now, more than ever, profess to remain so. The one who neglects going to Mass, at least on Sundays, however, commits a sin. Scandal, on the other hand, is applicable to the clerics, including the Jesuits, who had parted from the city of Venice and thereby omitted to defend the liberty of their natural prince. The Venetians are admonished not to separate themselves from the prince of Venice, so that there will be reason to say “*the children of my mother have fought against me.*”⁶⁹⁵ In lieu, Venetian clerics and lay people alike are admonished to readily give their lives for their prince, who is understood to attend to the evil interests of the Church as such remedies are *de iure divino*.⁶⁹⁶

Unsurprisingly, Bellarmino reacted to the doctor’s appraisal of the Venetian clerics by calling them a new kind of saint who wished to lay down their lives for the prince, who compels them to commit sacrilege and disobedience to the Vicar of Christ.⁶⁹⁷ In Possevino’s opinion, moreover, the doctor gave a pestilential advice in his letter to his friend, who is a priest, as the priest is advised not to observe the pontifical interdict. Therefore, the doctor is viewed to deserve the punishment stated in canon law: “*a Cleric who is understood to be idle to flatters and betrayals is to be degraded from office.*”⁶⁹⁸

Furthermore, in the written exchange with Querini, it is possible to note that Possevino’s arguments were accommodated, as he produced a distinction between a professional and a non-professional theologian with regard to suitability of reading. The distinction reads that if a man of letters is likewise a

⁶⁹⁵ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*: 13: “[...] *filijs matris meae pugnaverunt contra me.*”

⁶⁹⁶ *Risposta d’un Dottore in Theologia*: 13–14.

⁶⁹⁷ Bellarmino, 1606[a]: 53–54.

⁶⁹⁸ NR: 50–52. Quote on 53: “[...] *Clericus, qui adulationibus, & proditionibus vacare comprehenditur, ab officio degradetur.*”

governmental adviser, he should read Eutropius (363–387), implying his summary of *Roman History*. If an adviser is a theologian, however, he is prompted to read the first and second opuscles of Aquinas, the reason being that a non-professional theologian would hardly comprehend the theological arguments of Aquinas. The meaning of this admonition can be interpreted as a means to dissuade Querini from discussing theology, but it could also be interpreted as in line with the notion of cultivating those talents that God has granted to each person and, in turn, not to cultivate that which is not stimulated by God.⁶⁹⁹

With regard to the rhetorical framework of Possevino's authorship, the distinction between laymen and clerics results in a different set of arguments. The arguments directed to Querini were accommodated to the patrician layman, whereas arguments directed to the anonymous doctor were accommodated to a theologian who had enjoyed a similar education to Possevino himself. As to the question of the validity of the interdict, it is obvious that Possevino treated the arguments given by the anonymous doctor theologically, whereas the arguments that aim to rebut Querini were to a larger extent based on historical and contemporary events that involve Venice and Roman pontiffs.

Possevino affirmed to Querini that neither should holy things be given to dogs, nor pearls to swine if they, who do not accept the interdict but keep Church buildings open and celebrate Mass, are against the empire of God and his Lieutenant.⁷⁰⁰ The pope is said to have appointed members of the Republic with cardinalates as he wished to consult them on important ecclesiastical matters, but an ugly voice is heard from the *Consiglio dei Pregadi*: "Priests,

⁶⁹⁹ RTE: 11.

⁷⁰⁰ RTE: 51.

out!”⁷⁰¹ Such anticlericalism is noted to have been present also during the pontificate of Sixtus V, which caused him to write “*now their time has come*” to his nuncio in Venice.⁷⁰²

The Venetian Past as *exemplum imitandum* and *exemplum evitandum*

In contrast with the uncompromising words of Sixtus V, a dissolution of the demeanours, which caused the interdict, is suggested as an alternate source of *exempla imitanda* to the Venetians. These *exempla* are the ancient Venetian clerics, who are portrayed to have founded governmental and ecclesiological structures for the Venetian people in the early days of the Republic. This description acknowledges the possession of both spiritual and temporal authority by clerics and underscores that the structures of the Republic of Venice were not founded by the Venetian Senate, but by the approbation of the Roman pontiff. Whenever there were quarrels in the Venetian community, priests are said to have taken recourse to the pontiff, which, Possevino inferred, can be read about in any history.⁷⁰³

The portrait of ancient Venice is presented with the aim to persuade in favour of preserving unity in the Catholic Church. In this fashion, Possevino wrote that the small islands that constitute the city of Venice were annexed by the ancient Venetians as they fled from Rome, due to the fury of the Barbarians. The Venetian islands were a part of the Roman Empire and the Adriatic Gulf is said to have been granted to Venice, due to concessions of the Roman pontiff. Here, two *exempla ad persuadendum*, Pietro Giustiniani and Marco Antonio Sabellico (1436–1506), are brought forward for having narrated the origins of Venice and the events of the governmental shift from a bishop-centred government to the government of a doge. Giustiniani is reported to have

⁷⁰¹ RTE: 10–11. Quote on 11: “[...] fuora i Preti.” Besides, it was Pope Pius V who encouraged Possevino to author *Il Soldato Cristiano* in 1569. Cf. SC: 7.

⁷⁰² RTE: 11: “[...] iam venit hora eorum.” Cf. RTE: 40.

⁷⁰³ RTE: 41; RPA: 8–9; NR: 49.

said that upon the election of the first doge, Paolo Anafesto, three ambassadors were sent to the pope for confirmation of the election. The ancient Venetians are presented as *exempla imitanda* as they recognised the supreme authority of the pope.⁷⁰⁴

Another *exemplum ad persuadendum* from the election of the first doge, is the patriarch of Grado, Christophorus (*sed.* 682–717), for having spoken about two ‘patria’. In the ancient Republic of Venice, Christophorus had described that one ‘patria’ was eternal where the patriarch was shepherd and leader (‘Pastore e Duce’) and in the temporal ‘patria’ he was counsellor (‘consigliere’). In fact, the words that are referred to as those of Patriarch Christophorus are an adequate summary of Possevino’s ideals of governmental structures. Here, clerics are counted as sole spiritual and temporal authorities in the ecclesiastical sphere. In the secular sphere, which is purely temporal, clerics are viewed as counsellors to the benefit of the common good.⁷⁰⁵

Modern thoughts stand in stark contrast with ancient thoughts and customs and along these lines the modern Venetians are presented as *exempla evitanda*, whereas the ancient Venetians are thought of as *exempla imitanda*. One significant difference between the ancient and modern Venetians, to which Possevino drew the reader’s attention, is the perception of freedom. The first Venetians, in Possevino’s opinion, were not free when they departed from their native houses and transferred to the lagoons, but were submitted *in temporalibus* to the Byzantine emperors. Although they were submitted to the Byzantine emperors, the settlement in the lagoons was not regarded to have

⁷⁰⁴ RPA: 10. The quoted words by Sabellico in RPA: 9: “[...] *aderat* (dice il Sabellico), *publico Consilio Christophorus Graden. Antistes, vir in Venetis, & gravitate morum, & vita sanctitate venerabilis; is cum nihil obscurè appareret, novum regimen ab insulanis desiderari, in hunc modum dicitur pro concione effatus. Divina providentia factum arbitror, viri Veneti, ut cum duplex sii patria omnibus tribute, temporalis* [the quotes reads “*temporalia*” but according to the para-text ‘Errori occorsi nel stampare’ “*temporalis*” is intended] *haec, quam in terris habemus, perennis altera, ac semper duratura: in hac quaerenda sim vobis Pastor, & Dux, in illa retinenda Consiliarius.*” The quoted words by Giustiniani in RPA: 9: “[...] *Missique sunt statim Romam ad Deodatum Pontificem Legati Petrus Candianus, Michael Participatus, & Theodosius Ipatus, ut instituendi, eligendique Ducis, Pontifex, Apostolica auctoritate ius Venetis perpetuo confirmaret.*”

⁷⁰⁵ RPA: 9–10.

been legitimate had it not been through the authority of the Roman pontiff. License from the Catholic Church for a vassal, such as the Byzantine emperor, to bestow the Venetians with land is preconditioned by papal concession.⁷⁰⁶

In turn, the ancient Republic of Venice is praised for having defended Roman pontiffs, as a token of their loyalty to Rome, in times when emperors, oriental and occidental alike, sought to afflict the Vicar of Christ and to subjugate Venice. These Venetians, Possevino explicated, were most obedient to the Roman Church in the wars of the Orient, through the acquiring of the Holy Land, from the disobedient people in Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. Possevino proved hesitant to put trust in the claims of Venetian historiography of supremacy over the Adriatic Sea, as he considered history to show that Venetians had usurped some parts of their land and had been granted some parts from the Roman Empire. Some parts are held to have been granted to them by the Apostolic See though not immediately from God.⁷⁰⁷

Venetian historiography, which told of the events that made the Republic of Venice supreme ruler on the Adriatic Sea, was thus modified by Possevino to prove the rank of Venice within the ordered hierarchy with the Vicar of Christ at its apex. Whatever assets the Republic of Venice had at their disposal, Possevino affirmed that Venice obtained them through privileges from emperors and Roman pontiffs. When modifying Venetian historiography to the events of the Peace Treaty of 1177, he can be observed to accentuate the solemn concession by Pope Alexander III, in the token of a ring, as crucial for the supremacy over the Adriatic Sea. However, providentialist rhetoric is applied when he remarks on an ecclesiastical ring, which is said to have been preserved as a precious relic in the Church of San Marco that had recently been stolen. This, he announced, may be a sign that the apostle Peter has granted Venice the ultimate divorce.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁶ RPA: 25–30.

⁷⁰⁷ NR: 6–7; RPA: 25–30; about the Fourth Crusade, see Logan, 2013: 175–180.

⁷⁰⁸ NR: 49; RPA: 38.

The mediation of the doge, during the negotiations between Pope Alexander and Emperor Barbarossa, was downplayed as Possevino suggested that Barbarossa professed obedience towards Pope Alexander III, as successor to Saint Peter, prior to the Treaty of Venice in 1177. In fact, it was downplayed to the extent that Possevino made a reservation about the credibility of the ducal mediation at all using the phrase: “if their histories are true.”⁷⁰⁹

The project of turning Venice into an *altera Roma*, where the events of 1177 played a major part was discarded by Possevino. He cannot be said to have consented to the elements of Venetian Catholicism that contested the authority of the pope. The *renovatio* programme was also built upon the role of Mark the Evangelist, which was another aspect of the Myth of Venice that Possevino commented upon during the Interdict Controversy. The language was *pathos*-driven when the devotion by Venetians to their patron saint was discussed. In the *Nuova Risposta*, the relationship between Mark and the apostle Peter is portrayed as that of master and disciple and the relationship between Venice and Rome is depicted as that of a daughter to a parent. This is what Possevino envisioned Mark to have thought about Venice during the Interdict Controversy:

I know that Saint Mark, [...] if he should live amongst us, would have been surprised to see this, his most noble daughter prostituted and exposed to the lechery of such perverse schismatic error and false doctrine taught to her by this modern Theologian. And to see this most noble [piece of] silver dragged in dross [impurities floating on a molten metal], that this much noble vineyard has produced unripe fox-grapes of false doctrine in place of a most sweet [doctrine].⁷¹⁰

Possevino connected Mark the Evangelist to the Republic of Venice, particularly in the *Nuova Risposta*. In 1597, however, in the work *Ragionamento di*

⁷⁰⁹ NR: 9. “[...] se sono vere, le loro historie.”

⁷¹⁰ NR: 55. “[...] so che S. Marco, se vivesse tra di noi [...] si maraviglierebbe di vedere quella sua nobilissima figliuola prostituta et esposta alla libidine di così perverso errore scismatico et falsa dottrina insegna tale da questo moderno Theologo et di vedere quello nobilissimo argento voltato in scoria che quella vigna così nobile habbia prodotto di una dolcissima labrusche acerbe di falsa dottrina.”

Antonio Possevino Mantovano della Compagnia di Giesù fatto nella prima sinodo provinciale di Aquileia tenuta in Udine, another picture of Saint Mark which is less accommodated to capture the good will of the Venetians, was presented. In the *Ragionamento*, he reflected on ways to enhance and spread the Catholic faith. He did this against the backdrop of a Synod held in Udine in 1596, where it was decided that the Roman liturgical rite would be implemented in the archdiocese of Aquileia.⁷¹¹

When discussing the patron saints of the diocese of Aquileia, the *Ragionamento* mentions Hermagoras, the first bishop of Aquileia who was a disciple of Mark, who, in turn, was a disciple of Peter and in antiquity Aquileia is held to have been the second most splendid See in Europe after Rome itself. In the *Ragionamento*, Possevino acquiesced that Mark was protector of Venice when it was founded, as well as over the patriarchate of Grado. Nonetheless, the demon is said to have worked through Attila the Hun (c. 406–453), who desolated Aquileia, and through the patriarch of Aquileia who refrained from conciliation with Rome during the Schism of the Three Chapters. Due to these factors, Possevino concluded that Saint Mark had abandoned his protection of the Venetian *terraferma*.⁷¹²

⁷¹¹ RAG: 1–14. The text bears the stamp of Possevino as it discusses *exempla* and warns of Turks and Protestants. The *Ragionamento* also touches upon the succession of the evangelist Mark. According to Aquileian history, Saint Mark founded the diocese of Aquileia and was succeeded by Bishop Hermagoras in the year 50. Possevino wrote that the patriarchate of Venice was born from Aquileia, but he did put more emphasis on the significance of Mark as founder of the diocese of Alexandria in Egypt.

⁷¹² RAG: 14. Possevino referred to the Schism of the Three Chapters in the sixth century (around the time of Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553) when Macedonius, patriarch of Aquileia, refused to condemn Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428); Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393–458) and Ibas of Edessa (c. 435–457) as persons, which went against the wish of Emperor Justinian worked. This led to the expulsion of the patriarchate of Aquileia from the Catholic Church. Moreover, the patriarchate of Grado was born when the patriarch of Aquileia, Paulinus (*sed.* 557–571), fled to Grado during the Lombard invasion of Aquileia in 568. In 606, the patriarch reconciled with Rome. Yet, opposers to the reconciliation with Rome reinstated a patriarch at Aquileia, with Lombard protection. The schism subsequently came to an end in 698 when Aquileia was reunited with Rome. In 1451, the patriarchate of Aquileia in Grado was transferred to Venice as Lorenzo Giustiniani (*sed.* 1451–1456) became the first to hold title of patriarch of Venice. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, "Aquileia"; Cf. Salzman, 2007: 220–224; Edwards, 2007: 381–383; Uthemann, 2007: 477–479; Rousseau, 2008: 27.

Portraits of Venice

The portraits of Venice in Possevino's Interdict Texts are varied, as both praise and blame of the Republic and its people are presented. The praises function as *captatio benevolentiae*, such as in the *Nuova Risposta* where a speech in praise of the Republic of Venice is produced:

I have great opportunity to boast that we, in our Italy, have one such noble city. Miraculously founded above the waves of the Adriatic Sea, though without ever being covered by the same waves. That ever since the beginning of her foundation she should have always maintained and preserved her freedom intact.⁷¹³

Venice's councillors are said to have followed in the footsteps of Hortensius (114–50 BC), Demosthenes (384–322 BC) and Cicero (106–43 BC). Thus, Venice is connected with the most praiseworthy ideal that Renaissance culture knew, namely classical antiquity. Venice is represented as an example of the ancient Roman Republic to the adornment and splendour of the Italian peninsula. The aristocratic government of Venice is equated with that of the Roman optimates and the people – *populares* – are recognised for their love of the Venetian government. Venice is also perceived as a blossoming republic for 800 years in which no commerce took place with either schismatic groups, Turks, or Jews.⁷¹⁴

The praise of Venice is set within the frame of providentialist rhetoric, where the piety and devotion to the Catholic Church by the ancient Venetians are thought to have been the reason for the former well-being of Venice. The ancient Venetians are also *exempla imitanda*, whose examples Possevino hoped would resurface amongst present-day Venetians. In a *pathos*-driven

⁷¹³ NR: 53. "[...] io hò grandissima occasione di gloriarmi che nella nostra Italia habbiamo una così nobile città miracolsamente fondata sopra l'onde del mare Adriatico senza però mai essere coperta dall'istesso onde; che sino dal principio della sua fondatione habbia sempre mantenuta et conservata la sua libertà intatta."

⁷¹⁴ Cf. NR: 54. "[...] con la prudenza et suo buon governo habbia rappresentato a gli occhi humani un'esemplare dell'antica Rep. Romana. [...] sia sempre stata l'ornamento et lo splendore della nostra Italia [...] hoggidi vediamo ancora così nobile thesoro conservarsi in essa città."

tone, he lamented that the piety of the Venetian ancestors had been forgotten. Instead, that which is left of the ancient piety is said to intermingle with friendship and conjunctions with heretics, causing disregard of the Council of Trent, violation of ecclesiastical immunity, and permission for the publication of impious books that lacked approval from the Holy Office. Nevertheless, he would like Venice once more to be the principal member of the Christian Commonwealth, reunited with Christ's Vicar on earth.⁷¹⁵

The benevolent portraits of Venice were, moreover, contrasted with less flattering verdicts, such as the warning that Venice will be as Sodom which ignored the proper devotion to God. Instead, it arrogantly took pleasure in overindulgence. In the authorship of Possevino, it is noteworthy that biblical allusions are often employed rhetorically. The mentioned allusion to Sodom is such an example. Another example of this can be seen in the *Moscovia* where Babylon is mentioned. This discussion regarded a confutation of critics of the Roman pontiff, who had equaled present day Rome with Babylon. Possevino assented that Rome was once rightfully called Babylon "when it was ruled by pagan Emperors as the result of the universal errors of all the peoples."⁷¹⁶ However, he concluded that Rome is not pagan anymore and, as it is the centre of the Catholic Church, its status is undiluted rather than squalid.⁷¹⁷

Furthermore, in the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, similarities between Babylon and Venice are drawn as the patriarch of Venice, Matteo Zane, is said to have uttered that he saw Venice become a Babylon. In a warning that Venice might become a Babylon, Possevino, in the *Nuova Risposta*, used the phrase *piaccia a Dio* in the subjunctive – meaning it should

⁷¹⁵ NR: 53–55; RTE: 39.

⁷¹⁶ *Moscovia*: 101.

⁷¹⁷ NR: 56.

please God – three times to mark his passages of main importance. For instance: “it should please God that it should not be true that the old and senators of that Republic did imitate those perverse and wicked elders of Babylon.”⁷¹⁸

The elders of Babylon were those who tried to dishonour the chaste Susanna and separate her from her spouse, whereas the Catholic Church is analogous to Susanna. The spouse is analogous to Christ and, consequently, the Vicar of Christ. The elders are set up as *exempla evitanda* to the Venetians, who were considered to have turned their eyes away from looking at the Heavens and ignored their duty to administer justice. Thus, they are looked upon as having turned to mundane interests and reason of state. Correspondingly, Possevino hoped that the Republic of Venice would not lose their famous liberty, which was what happened to the miserable elders of Babylon. To see Venice follow the example of Babylon, he affirmed, “should not please God.”⁷¹⁹

Another biblical quote is taken from the book of Isaiah, which reads: “it should please God that it should not yet be true of Venice that which Isaiah says of Jerusalem: *your unfaithful Princes*.” In connection with this quote, Possevino can be seen to wonder whether this prophecy had not already come to pass as clerics, and Jesuits in particular, had left Venice. The *Riposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, moreover, says: “is this not a sign similar to that which the City of Jerusalem had? From where also the Angels escaped, they said: *we depart from here, we have taken care of Babylon and it is not healed*.”⁷²⁰

Although not explicitly mentioned, it would seem as if the reasoning about the biblical analogies implies references to the *renovatio urbis* in which

⁷¹⁸ NR: 56, first quote: “[...] non piaccia a Dio.”; second quote: “[...] piaccia a Dio che non sia vero, che i vecchi et senatori di quella Republica non imitino quelli perversi et malvagi vecchi di Babilonia.” Cf. Addition to Daniel 13:9; RTE: 25.

⁷¹⁹ NR: 56. “[...] non piaccia a Dio.”

⁷²⁰ NR: 56. First quote: “[...] piaccia a Dio che non sia vero ancora di Venetia quello che dice Isaia di Gerusalemme: *Princepes tui infideles*.” Cf. Isaiah 1:23. RTE: 40. Second quote: “[...] non è questo un simile presagio, quale la Città di Gierusalemme hebbe? Dalla quale, & gli Angioli fuggendo dissero, *Abeamus hinc curavimus Babylonem, & non est sanata*.” Cf. Jeremiah 51:9.

Doge Gritti sought to display Venice as an *altera Roma* and as a New Jerusalem. In fact, Possevino can be seen to connect Venice and Rome and thus acknowledged elements of official Venetian historiography, but with nuances that refer to pagan and barbarian Rome rather than the Christianised Rome. In a similar vein, Venice as the New Jerusalem is portrayed in a less flattering way than the praises of the city during the dogeship of Gritti, as Possevino accounted for the decay of Jerusalem rather than its glory.

In the *Risposta di Teodoro Eugenio di Famagosta*, moreover, an analogy about Jerusalem is used, which relates to the exile of the Jesuits from Venetian territory. The analogy connects the Christians who left Jerusalem when the temple was destroyed with the Jesuits, who had been exiled from Venice. The Jesuits are said to have fled from Venice just as the good Christians retreated to the city of Pella when Jerusalem was desolated by the Roman army. Possevino suggested that the Jesuits had been sheltered by the Supreme pontiff, just as the early Christian community was sheltered by the apostle Peter. Whereas the Roman emperors Vespasian (r. 69–79) and Titus were unwilling to protect Christians, in a similar fashion the Venetian Senate was considered to be unwilling to protect the liberty of the Church.⁷²¹

Possevino went from praise of the ancient Venetians to blame of contemporary Venetians for their supposed increase in ambition, greed and stubbornness as the Venetian dominion grew larger. The result of such vices was considered to be the filling of the Venetian squares with heresies and schisms, the loss of Venetian dominion in the Levant and Cyprus as well as the loss of barbicans on the *terraferma*.⁷²² Although the Turks caused the loss of dominion, it is the laxity of moral, comingling with heretics, and the fallacious culture of the Venetians that paved the way for invasions. Here, the Byzantine

⁷²¹ RTE: 40.

⁷²² RTE: 39–40. Here Possevino mentioned the loss of islands, as well as Corone and Methoni, towns in the Messina region in the Peloponnese in Greece.

Empire is presented as an *exemplum evitandum*, portraying the fall of Constantinople in 1453 within the frame of providentialist rhetoric as a punishment for the schism with Western Christianity “and I say the same of other former catholic provinces, now dominated by heretics and schismatic [persons].”⁷²³

Orthodox Christians were met with mistrust and Greeks in the city of Venice were thought to be convinced of the falsehood of the Council of Ferrara and Florence. Greeks are described by Possevino as opposing the word of God, because of their denial of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son and for their rejection of the primacy and authority of the Apostolic See.⁷²⁴ The patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory III (*sed.* 1443–1450) is set up as an *exemplum imitandum* for having contributed to the unity between Eastern and Western Christianity, whereas the archbishop of Philadelphia, whom Possevino called the false patriarch of Constantinople and head of the schismatic Greeks who assumed the title of eparch, is set up as an *exemplum evitandum*.⁷²⁵ Nonetheless, Possevino made a reservation, writing that: “I do not however speak of Greeks that are (as I am) Catholics and Orthodoxes.” Obviously, Possevino’s alias Teodoro Eugenio was intended to be a Greek who followed the Latin rite, as was customary on Venetian islands, since in the 1603 edition of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* Greeks who lived on the

⁷²³ NR: 55. “[...] et l’istesso dico di altre province già catholiche hora dominate da heretici et scismatici.”

⁷²⁴ RTE: 46; NR: 55; BS, I, VI: 421–456; *Moscovia*: 28.

⁷²⁵ RTE: 47. The eparch, Possevino wrote, had one of his books printed in Venice, which was disseminated amongst Greek inhabitants of Venice and on its islands in the Levant. The book is said to contain grave errors against the form of the sacraments, wherefore the Inquisition wanted its author to correct the writing. This, the eparch supposedly refused to do. Aside from the book by the archbishop of Philadelphia, Possevino admonished his readers to evade an alleged interpolation of *Against Eunomios* by Basil of Caesarea, which was printed in Venice by Aldus Manutius. It is claimed that Basil defended the Holy Trinity but some Greeks adjusted (‘sfalsarono’) the text in that the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son became denied. This staggering fact, Possevino noted, is discovered if the older text, which Cardinal Bessarion left in the library of San Marco, is consulted.

Venetian islands are portrayed as following the Latin rite and thereby appended to the unity of the Church.⁷²⁶

Implementation of a Catholic Culture

The sign that the Venetians had left the customs of their ancient predecessors is said to have occurred in the year 1333, when they acquired the town of Ceneda as a fief. The acquiring of Ceneda is considered the beginning of the Venetian expansion on the *terraferma*, which was followed by the annexing of Istria and Dalmatia on Hungarian territory, and the Friuli region in the territory of the patriarch of Aquileia.⁷²⁷

Possevino asserted that the pope enabled the Venetians to – using an agricultural metaphor – put their scythe in the fields as they annexed Padua from the Carraresi, Verona from the Scaligeri as well as Brescia, Bergamo, and Crema from the Duchy of Milan. Even though the Venetians were not regarded as illegitimate rulers on the *terraferma*, their acquisitions are assumed to have increased vices and caused adoption of fallacious culture, as they departed from the models of the ancient Venetians who were loyal to the pope.⁷²⁸

The expansion on the *terraferma* is brought forward as one of the reasons for the abandonment of their ancient models and for the adoption of a modern and fallacious culture. The account of the trust in the alchemistic experiment of Marco Mamugnà Bragadin (1545–1591) – who, just as Possevino's alias Teodoro Eugenio, was exiled from Cyprus after the Siege of Famagusta in 1571 – is, moreover, demonstrative of the trope that Venice had

⁷²⁶ RTE: 46: "[...] non parlando però io de Greci (com'io sono) catolici, & ortodossi."; BS, 1603, I, VI: 267–274.

⁷²⁷ RPA: 26 & 42. Possevino can be seen to position himself in accordance with the bishop of Ceneda, Leonardo Mocenigo (*sed.* 1599–1623) and Pope Clement VIII who saw Ceneda as a fief to Rome as opposed to Paolo Sarpi. Still, Possevino did not persist that Ceneda is ruled by the bishop *in temporalibus*, which is what Bishop Mocenigo considered, and directly answerable to Rome, but rather that the Venetians are entitled to steer Ceneda as vassals to Rome and through concession by the pope. See Cozzi, 1962: 176–239.

⁷²⁸ RPA: 42.

accepted a fallacious culture. Possevino's presentation of Bragadin's experiments during the recovery from the strains of the Black Death is less than flattering as alchemy as seen in the analysis of the *Apparato All'Historia* is considered to adhere to fallacious culture. Bragadin is said to have left the public with a big dump of glass, full of finite matter, instead of gold, with which he endeavoured to double the armies against the Turks. The public is, however, reported to have been deluded by Bragadin's experiments. In the end, Possevino noted – using providentialist rhetoric – Bragadin was hanged in Munich.⁷²⁹

Other proposed reasons for the adoption of fallacious culture, were the installation of two Calvinist chancellors at the University of Padua, the closing of the Jesuit school, the permission for the 'Marrani' (Jews) to live in the Ghetto and allowing Calvinists and the Dutch 'Quintinisti' to preach in Venice. The *giovani* were also amongst the surmised causes for the growth of vices in the Republic, since they are described as thistles from the seeds of impiety, spread by Marsilius of Padua. The 'Marsilietto' from Naples, Giovanni Marsilio, is presumed to have grown from the seeds that Marsilius spread and together with Sarpi, Marsilio is accused of having repeated heresies and historical falsities that originate from Marsilius and the *Magdeburg Centuries*. These presumed heresies include the notion that the Church is invisible.⁷³⁰

In the *Moscovia* Possevino had already given testimony that in the Court of Moscow, Tsar Ivan IV assumed that all Catholics had lapsed into heresy and could all be denominated as 'Romans'. Against this background, Possevino accentuated that in order to avoid good Catholics being confused with heretics, the words 'Apostolic' and 'Roman' ought to be added to the name of the Catholic Church. Here, Querini was reproached for having called the Catholic Church merely 'the holy Church', on the basis that Protestants

⁷²⁹ RTE: 6. For their trust in Bragadin, the *savi* are characterised as the officials of Zoan who had become fools. Cf. Isaiah 19:13.

⁷³⁰ RTE: 5 & 49.

claimed to be members of the invisible Catholic Church that has a visible head.⁷³¹

The visible head, in other words the Roman pontiff, is frequently referred to by Possevino with conspicuous reverence. The notion of this office as superior to every other power except God results in an understanding of the authority of the pope that is akin to medieval papalism, where accents were strong on papal *plenitudo potestatis*. That Possevino nominated the allies of the Papal States as vassals, was in line with medieval papalist thinking and he can be seen to insist that it is due to the vassals and their armed defence of Venice that the Venetians were formidable to their enemies, rendered its houses safe and made it blossom in commerce. Since the Venetians was estimated to dwell in modern thoughts, the pope had no option but to draw them back to their homes.⁷³²

In this sense, modern thoughts are the sum of the errors that caused the interdict. Therefore, it refers to ecclesiological errors, such as the presumption of the Church as a *congregatio fidelium*; jurisdictional errors, such as the conviction that every temporal ruler has authority *de iure divino*; political errors, such as the advocacy of the independence and freedom of national states as well as doctrinal errors, such as the teaching of the mortality of the intellectual soul. The advocates of the latter teaching are called *Pomponatij*, who are believed to have sowed their doctrine in the minds of Venetians to the attraction of German Protestant students. Additionally, the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, in Venice, is described as a place where seduction and abuse of young people take place. Even the Gondoliers in the canals are said to publicly profane with vile sins.⁷³³

⁷³¹ RPA: 10, 29–30; *Moscovia*: 27.

⁷³² RPA: 30.

⁷³³ RTE: 30 & 48–49. Possevino called to mind that Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti de Nuce, papal nuncio to Venice and thereafter elected Pope Innocent IX (*sed.* 1591), proposed, in the *Collegio* that precautions should be taken, as three or 300–400 German students at Padua sought to spread their doctrine to various towns.

As was customary for Possevino, the frame of a fallacious culture included curbing the impact of harmful books. Venetian book printing is held to have violated the seventh rule of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* as well as the decrees of the Council of Trent that forbade the printing of obscene and amorous books. Some books from Venice are considered to be filled with insertions of spiritual sonnets with enticement to carnal concupiscence. Heaven has been confused with hell, Possevino wrote, since greed and preservation of particularly goods of the state are understood to be the impetus to print such books. Book printers of fallacious literature are said to be more concerned with earning profits and earning earthly compensations than serving the will of God. The Venetians were thus admonished to change course and instead of cultivating customs that would bring them further away from a strict Catholic culture, they were invited to obey the Roman pontiff with filial compliance.⁷³⁴

Finally, Possevino must be said to have believed that no real unity can be attained in Christianity unless it is united with the head of the Catholic Church. The Roman pontiff was regarded as the putty that held the Christian Commonwealth together. Only when states, nations and people are united with the visible Catholic Church, with the Roman pontiff at the apex, can the Catholic culture, which Possevino wished to implement, be realised. He, however, conveyed that if his task of persuading the Venetians to make peace with the pope proved unsuccessful, he would nonetheless be content with his efforts. Those who fail to make peace with the pope, he explicated, will become witnesses after death of the terrible punishment that God has prepared for the ministers of the demon. These ministers will fill hell.⁷³⁵

⁷³⁴ RTE: 48–50. The reluctance amongst the Venetian *giovani* to accept the decrees stipulated at general councils were discussed by Possevino, who underscored the importance of councils for the unity of the Church. He explained that the archbishop of Candia (Crete), Tommaso Contarini (*sed.* 1597–1604), tried to conduct a synod of seven Catholic bishops in Venice. This is said to have been done in order to return Venice to its pristine state of religion, but it was impeded by the Senate. Likewise, bishops on the *terraferma* are held to have wanted to introduce reforms that were determined during the Council of Trent, such as improvements for novitiates, to no avail.

⁷³⁵ RTE: 54; RPA: 5.

Concluding Remarks

Possevino narrated that in the early days of the Republic of Venice, it was governed by clerics, spiritually and temporally, and thereupon a doge was initiated whose election was confirmed by the pope. The patriarch of Grado, Christophorus, is set up as an *exemplum ad persuadendum* for having illustrated the two 'patrie' of society, where the first is eternal and the bishop is shepherd and leader. The other is temporal in which the bishop function as counsellor.

The modern Republic of Venice was said to be in danger of becoming like the Byzantine Empire in whose remains fallacious culture prevailed. The modern Venetians were warned that vices and disloyalty to Rome eventually would lead to a fall that made the Byzantine Empire, Sodom, and Babylon perish. The turning point, when the ancient regime of Venice was replaced by a modern state was thought to be when Venice acquired territory on the *terraferma* during the fourteenth century. This coincided with the lifetime of Marsilius of Padua. Marsilius was said to have spread seeds that lived on in the works of Giovanni Marsilio. The emphatic statements about the printing of obscene and heterodox books, the comingling in Venice between Catholics, Protestants, Calvinists, Greeks and Jews along with the closing of Jesuit schools and their subsequent exile, lead to the conclusion that Venice had succumbed to fallacious culture.

The final straw that broke the camel's back was of course the interdict itself, which manifested the exclusion from the Catholic Church and the Christian Commonwealth, since the interdict meant that the *Serenissima* had no rank within the cosmic hierarchy as it was without head. The consequences of the interdict meant that there was no possibility of implementation of any good culture for those who lacked unity with the Roman pontiff. In short, Possevino methods were akin to a Roman censor and the tools were rhetorical, in that moral examples were accommodated to circumstances, persons, place, and

time. His main *doing in texts*, however, must be concluded to have been the implementation of Catholic culture.

Conclusions

The problems that Possevino addressed in his writings were manifold as they contained various levels of early modern debates. These problems were never separated from the challenges that the early modern Catholic Church experienced, such as the Protestant Reformation, the religious wars in France, the rivalry between France and the Hapsburg monarchies, the threat of invasion of Europe by the Ottoman Empire, the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine, the debate on whether natural reason can determine that the human soul is immortal, questions that pertained to missionary activities in the ‘New World’, the difficulties in synchronizing society with the Julian Calendar, and debates about the prerogatives of the Roman pontiff vis-à-vis independent states. These topics and many more constituted the background to Possevino’s authorship.

From the publication of the *Bibliotheca Selecta* to the Interdict Controversy, spanning from 1593 to 1607, a certain number of *doings* by Possevino have been recognised in this study. According to this scheme, conventional codes of linguistics are presumed to decode the intentions of texts whilst situating them within contexts of structures and values. Intention, then, is the author *doing* something *in writing*.

What, then, was Possevino doing in his writings and by which set of criteria did he evaluate the disciplines of history and geography in the *Apparato All’Historia*, and what was the purpose of such evaluation? First and foremost, the evaluation of disciplines in the *Bibliotheca Selecta* is dependent on the term culture. Fundamental to this term is the anthropological assertion that

man is given talents by God, the agriculturist. Each talent corresponds to vocation and provides the common good with specialisation and *pietas*. The cultivation of the talents is, however, thought of as an act of free will. This notion of culture separates itself from Renaissance humanism where the educational system in the *studia humanitatis* encouraged students to become polymaths, rather than specialists in one field. In addition, imitation of models from classical antiquity, so dear to Renaissance humanists, is not without reservations in Possevino's exposition as he underscored that style and content are in need of being accommodated to circumstances, persons, place, and time.

Education is a constituent of Possevino's definition of culture, but culture is a term with a wider range as it embraces other aspects of life. It concerns moral behaviour, government of state and constitutions of societies. Above all, culture has to do with activity and engagement in life, and it is shaped around the principles of ministry for early modern Jesuits, in that the end of their ministry and teaching was to help souls get to heaven as well as to contribute to the common good. The authorial aim of Possevino should be looked upon as his contribution to the establishment of the cultural project of the Society of Jesus. Consequently, culture becomes a vital interpretative key to Possevino's authorship.

On a social level, culture is possible within the borders of the Christian Commonwealth whose borders equal the borders of the visible Catholic Church. The Christian Commonwealth, in relation to culture, is best explained as an active space, where talents are cultivated and where readers, defined as persons with various duties in society, constitute a Republic of Letters that in turn shares a canon and participates in a tradition. Thus, culture should be understood as set within a tradition and Possevino can be seen to enforce his own tradition within the Christian Commonwealth by applying a methodological approach that resembles the procedure of a Roman censor purging books.

Given Possevino's own participation in a Jesuit tradition, he attacked rival traditions that propagated contradictions to the cultural project of the Society of Jesus. This rival culture is described, in the study, as fallacious culture, which is not to be understood as Renaissance humanism, but as a culture that is diabolical. The wicked spirits, or false deities in pagan culture who sow diabolical seeds are set up antithetically to God the agriculturist, and Simon Magus, predecessor to heresies, is set up antithetically to Simon Peter.

As Possevino attacked the canon of a rival tradition, he used the neo-classical method that identifies fallacies, often in content, of books from classical antiquity. Like an early modern censor, Possevino attempted to preserve that which is good and useful in books and to replace the rest with decreed literature. Thus, culture provides a general structure for the evaluation of the other disciplines that are included in the *Bibliotheca Selecta*.

In the evaluation of the discipline of geography, the superordinate criterion is unity (*unum*). Moses is described as the first geographer and the first chronologist, making him the point of departure for the study of geography. The Hebrew language is thought of as the language, which people spoke before the edification of the Tower of Babel and name giving was according to convenience. Hence unity and harmony, when the world was still young, are important terms to explain the *doings* of Possevino.

Unity and harmony are terms that are also applicable to the fixing of dates, as the *Anno Domini*, *anno mundi*, *ab urbe condita* and calculation according to Greek Olympiads are harmonised and depicted as complimentary, whereas the *Hijra* is rejected as incompatible with the biblical-antique traditions. The Julian calendar and Spanish era are rejected as they are not compatible with the *Anno Domini* whereas the Four Monarchy Theory, according to a Protestant narrative – in which divine providence is thought to have guided the invisible Church of believers and the Protestant Reformation is considered as the culmination of God's plan – is discarded since such a theory would entail neglecting the visible Church and the Christian Commonwealth.

The discourse of geography thus intends to prove unity in fixing dates as well as to prove, through genealogies, adherence to the same kernel and the same proto-religion. By sorting out and establishing acceptable chronologies from those who disturb the harmony, Possevino was sorting out conditions for a cohesive Catholic culture valid for the Christian Commonwealth, and just as culture is thought of as an active force, geography does not simply refer to a passive space but to human activity.

In the evaluation of history, the good, the true, and the unified are evaluative criteria. These are prevalent in the excerpts of Lucan's manual to write history as well as in the reproduced criteria by Melchior Cano and Justus Lipsius. History reading has a pronounced end, which is to foster virtues. Therefore, the readers of history are called upon to practise discernment of spirits when reading. This, however, applies to all reading as Possevino did not differentiate between profane and spiritual reading.

The guide to reading history shows Possevino's tendency to operate as a censor who purged texts, as in the *Apparato All'istoria* he worked on a canon of approved texts by applying a rhetorical frame of deliberative oratory with much emphasis on *ethos*. Within this frame, exempla are important as the objects of evaluation are sorted out as *exempla imitanda*, *exempla ad persuadendum*, *exempla evitanda*, or *exempla ad dissuadendum*. Some ambiguous texts are considered useful if purged of errors, bad morals, or critical comments about the Catholic Church. The analysis of the evaluation in the *Apparato All'Historia*, illustrates that Possevino, just as with the fixing of dates, wished to validate concord between pagan and Christian authors. Herodotus was an *exemplum imitandum* to Possevino in that good morals are estimated be drawn from reading his *Histories*. Reading is educational in a wider sense in that it intends to shape characters: *pietas*.

As opposed to the evaluation of Greek and Roman historians, where the neo-classical method was operational, Possevino evaluated contemporary historians with the scope to determine their place within fallacious culture. He

confronted rival traditions that founded history-writing on Annio of Viterbo's *Commentaria* and the interpretation of the Four Monarchy Theory by Melancthon and Sleidan. The evaluation leads up to the rejection of the *Magdeburg Centuries*. The rival tradition where Protestant history writing is canonical is set up as an *exemplum ad dissuadendum* and its moral precepts, ecclesiology and explanations of historical events are *exempla evitanda*. Again, Possevino can be seen to operate as a Roman censor in his zeal to refine a cohesive Catholic culture.

One major difference between the tradition that Possevino adhered to and the rival ones, when discussing political theory, was that Machiavelli and Sarpi argued in favour of sovereignty of independent states and in the case of Sarpi, of absolute monarchy. The variety of topics that are dealt with in this study have a common denominator. Namely, that criteria of the transcendentals are practised in the evaluation. The authorial intention was to sort out authorised literature from the detrimental, with the aim to establish a canon valid for the Christian Commonwealth. These procedures were deeply linked to the Jesuit project of shaping a cohesive Catholic culture, as culture and cultivation are concepts that encompass all aspects of life and all human activity.

Possevino can be seen to regard spiritual authority to be granted immediately by God, and thereby *de iure divino*. Temporal authority is permitted by God and is not *de iure divino*. The temporal state, in Possevino's *Nuova Risposta*, is limited to earthly affairs and is described as a consequence of the fall of man and subject to servitude. This is to be compared with the *Apparato All'Historia*, where he elaborated on the common good and the end of the temporal state, which is to render happiness through the practice of virtues. The superordinate transcendental in that discourse is *bonum*. Nonetheless, different accents on the temporal state are brought forth during the Interdict Controversy as *unum* is the superordinate criterion for the discussion of the nature of temporal authority.

Given the different points of departure with regard to the nature of temporal authority, between Venetian and Roman theologians, the question of hierarchy was treated differently. The Venetians considered temporal authority to have been granted immediately from God, and as the Republic of Venice claimed to be an independent state, Venetians considered the temporal prince as hierarchically superior to any other authority in their state. Possevino, on the contrary, regarded temporal authority to be mediated through the Roman pontiff and, as such, part of a universal hierarchy. In connection with the question of superiority in this hierarchy, the analogy of body and soul was used in order to prove that the spiritual authority is superior to temporal authority.

To Possevino, the two authorities adhere to different spheres, one ecclesiastical and one secular, which do not invalidate each other as they are on different hierarchical levels, and clerics are thought of as contributors to the common good. Clerics as well as laymen are treated as citizens, but whether one is obliged to observe the jurisdiction of the temporal authority is determined by the status of the citizen. Laymen are acknowledged to be under the jurisdiction of the temporal authority, whereas clerics are recognised to be under the jurisdiction of the spiritual authority.

In order to legitimise authority, Possevino could be observed to favour the model of Moses. Moses is treated typologically during the Interdict Controversy, whereas Possevino presented Moses as originator of every discipline in his *Bibliotheca Selecta*. The model of Moses has been accommodated to the conflict of 1606 and 1607, as Moses is depicted as Supreme pontiff with spiritual and temporal authority. Of the figures of the Old Testament, Moses is placed in a hierarchical position that is superior to the spiritual authorities of Aaron and Melchizedek and superior to the temporal authority of Abraham. In short, Moses is treated as a *typos* for the pope.

Christ, just like Moses, is treated as a spiritual and temporal ruler and thus functions as a legitimiser of the temporal authority of the Roman pontiff. Possevino cited the mandate granted by God to Christ that everything in

heaven and earth shall be submitted to Christ. That Christ used the whip to drive out money changers from the Temple court, that he commanded the soldiers – who were to arrest him – not to bind him and that he eventually permitted them to imprison him were put forward as arguments in order to prove the temporal authority of Christ.

Possevino adhered not just to a Jesuit tradition, but also to a high papalist tradition that posited that the authority of the Roman pontiff was superior to a general council and that the deposition of a heretical pope could only be conducted by Christ himself. He argued against a rival tradition of conciliarist thought, built on the ideas of William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua, where the Church is described as a congregation of believers and not equal to the visible borders of the Catholic Church.

The ecclesiology that Possevino defended was based on the notion that the Church on earth, *Ecclesia militans*, equals the visible Catholic Church that is governed by the pope. With the discussion of the topic of the authority of the pope, the arguments in Possevino's Interdict Texts reach a crescendo which strikes a climax with the pronouncement of papal authority, as both spiritual and temporal. The first pope, Peter, is described as having received both authorities by Christ and Possevino contended that the temporal sword was exercised by Peter when Ananias and Sapphira were put to death and when Simon Magus was expelled from the Christian Community. To dispose of the temporal sword further implies the legal right to punish subjects, *ius gladii*, and through the temporal sword the Roman pontiff brings stability to the Christian Commonwealth. Thus, the Roman pontiff is portrayed as the superior authority of the visible Catholic Church and the equally visible Christian Commonwealth that share the same borders. The Roman pontiff, moreover, is regarded as the unifying element who holds these entities together, which, in turn, included both clerics and lay people.

Although clerics and lay people are described as complementary components of the Christian Commonwealth, Possevino recognised clerics to be

under the jurisdiction of the spiritual authority, *privilegium fori*, and not under the jurisdiction of the temporal. To Possevino, clerics are exempted from being judged according to civil and criminal laws. Instead of accepting the temporal ruler as sovereign, clerics are to be judged according to canon law. To support his view, he affirmed that ecclesiastical immunity was authorised by Constantine and Justinian.

Close to the topic of exemption from judgment according to civil and criminal laws, stood the topic of exemption from paying tribute to the temporal ruler. This question was a matter of principle, as paying tax on revenues implied showing tokens of obedience to the taxcollector. Without concessions from the Roman pontiff, tax collection from ecclesiastical goods was estimated as usurpation by Possevino as clerical exemption was held as being *de iure divino*. He argued that both the Levites and Christ, with his family, were exempted from civil obligations and tithes. In a similar manner, the clerics, in their capacity under the jurisdiction of spiritual authorities, were to be exempt from paying taxes.

To preserve ecclesiastical immunity was considered as safeguarding ecclesiastical liberty against oppressive temporal laws. To Possevino and Roman theologians, liberty referred to the freedom to act according to one's privileges and prerogatives without being imposed by the temporal ruler. To the Venetians, liberty referred to freedom, in the independent state, from the imposing will of external rulers. Another aspect of preserving ecclesiastical liberty regarded debates on the authority to decide on institutions for Catholic practice. Such institutions included Church buildings, schools, hospitals and hostels. Laws that regulated ecclesiastical property and landowning were considered a threat to the practice of the cohesive culture that Possevino sought to encourage. Instead, ecclesiastical assets and institutions were considered to be regulated by canon law.

In the discourse of institutions, the clash with a rival tradition, the *giovani*, was possible to observe. Possevino, himself a part of the *vecchi* tradition,

worked around historical *exempla* and providentialist rhetoric to prove that the *giovani* had adopted novel ideas from Protestants, Huguenots and the English reformers, thus determining that the *giovani* tradition practised fallacious culture. The alchemic experiments by Bragadin Mamugnà, the spread of heterodox books, the closing of the Jesuit school at Padua as well as the comingling of Catholics, Protestants, Calvinists, Greeks, and Jews form part of the fallacious culture.

Turning to the last topic in the analysis of Possevino's contribution to the *guerra delle scritture*, it was notable that the rhetorical tool of accommodation is practised. In the *Nuova Risposta*, Mark the Evangelist is portrayed as a disciple of the apostle Peter and a protector of Venice. Therefore, Venice should, just like Mark, acknowledge its discipleship to the Roman pontiff. In the *Ragionamento*, however, Mark the Evangelist has been accommodated to fit circumstances after the Synod of Aquileia, whereas the *Nuova Risposta* was an Interdict Text, written with the purpose of persuading the Venetians to accept the validity of the interdict and to repent.

Mark is amongst the *exempla imitanda* in the *Nuova Risposta*, as are the ancient Venetians who favoured governmental and ecclesiological structures in which bishops were shepherds and leaders in the first 'patria' and in the second, bishops were counsellors. The ancient Venetians are said to have been under the care of the Roman pontiff, who confirmed elections of the dogi. The thought that Venice prospered under the care of the Roman pontiff and that it decayed when becoming distanced from his guidance – as Venice acquired territory on the *terraferma* and became a modern state – is in accordance with providentialist rhetoric that Possevino made use of in his texts.

The answer to the question of what the ecclesiological and political ambitions were in the texts that Possevino authored during the Interdict Controversy, is, in short, to offer structures that were valid for the Church and for society. The Church is thought of as visible and governed by the Roman pontiff. Temporal society is thought of as inferior to the Church where clerics

contribute to governmental counselling, run institutions of education, and assist the sick and the poor. The sum of the Catholic communities constitutes the Christian Commonwealth, whose borders Possevino equated with the visible Church. Thus, Church and society share a top-down hierarchy with the Roman pontiff as supreme authority. The ecclesiological and political ambitions in the Interdict Texts by Possevino must therefore be said to provide structures that maintain unity in the Church and in the commonwealth where unity equals obedience to the Roman pontiff.

Finally, there are aspects of continuity and discontinuity in the authorship of Possevino, when comparing the *Apparato All'Historia* with the Interdict Texts. In both objects of comparison, Possevino operated as a Roman censor by sorting out and censoring texts in order to refine a canon of approved texts for a circle of readers. The tools at hand are providentialist rhetoric – reading providence out of history – and the elaboration of historical exempla, which, with a strong emphasis on *ethos*, are consistent means in the task of persuasion.

Nevertheless, it must be said that topics and emphases in the argumentation are altered when comparing the *Apparato All'Historia* to the Interdict Texts. Although history is continuously referenced in these texts, it is possible to observe that important figures for the reading of history, which are elaborated in the *Apparato All'Historia*, are absent in the Interdict Texts. Some historical figures, however, are recurrent but the descriptions of these are altered in the Interdict Texts.

Moses is portrayed as the instigator of all disciplines in texts from the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, whereas in the *Nuova Risposta* he is used as a *typos* for the office of the Roman pontiff. The apostle Peter is set up against Simon Magus in the *Apparato All'Historia*, but in the Interdict Texts, Peter, and especially the office that he passed down to his successors, is fundamental for the presented arguments. The Scottish strategy that is practised in the *Apparato All'Historia* is absent in the Interdict Texts. The government of states is

thought to enable happiness in the *Apparato All'Historia*, whereas in the Interdict Texts the temporal state is considered as merely permitted by God and its authority is perceived as inferior to the spiritual, just as the body is inferior to the soul. On the other hand, necessity and fate are strictly discarded in the *Apparato All'Historia*, whereas in the Interdict Texts necessity becomes connected to conscience and is therefore accepted.

Yet by acknowledging that Possevino operated within a rhetorical framework in his texts, where the principle of accommodation is strategical, the contradictions become less contradictory. Against this understanding, its historical exempla are in need of adaptation to the varying nature of debates and intended readers. Accommodation thus provides the means to persuade, whereas the authorial intention of Possevino should be defined in terms of persuasion in favour of a cohesive Catholic culture that corresponds to approval of Catholic doctrine, unity in faith and obedience to the Roman pontiff, as well as practising works of good morality. Finally, on the structural level, the aspects of continuity are fairly consistent in the authorship of Possevino. The goal remains the same, although conflicts, people, contexts, and times change. The goal is to help souls get to heaven and to perform contributions for the common good, which add to a cohesive Catholic culture.

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