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*Original Citation:*

*Availability:*

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/1822595> since 2024-12-20T07:17:12Z

*Published version:*

DOI:10.36253/ds-11817

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**Citation:** Patrizia Delpiano (2021) Enlightenment History and *Antiphilosophie*: Voltaire and Nonnotte in France, Spain and Italy. *Diciottesimo Secolo* Vol. 6: 121-131. doi: 10.36253/ds-11817

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**Data Availability Statement:** All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

**Competing Interests:** The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

**Editor:** Valentina Altopiedi.

Saggi

## Enlightenment History and *Antiphilosophie*: Voltaire and Nonnotte in France, Spain and Italy<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** This article deals with the responses to Enlightenment history that emerged in *antiphilosophique* cultural circles and offers some pointers on the international dimension of this intellectual movement, so far studied mostly within the confines of individual states. Attention focuses on the case of the French Jesuit Claude-Adrien François Nonnotte (1711-1793), author of *Les erreurs de Voltaire*, published in 1762. After describing the essential features of this text, specifically its discourse on history, the article concentrates on its Spanish and Italian translations in order to highlight the European character of *antiphilosophie* and the different uses made of Nonnotte's work in various contexts.

**Keywords.** History, Enlightenment, *antiphilosophie*, Claude-Adrien François Nonnotte, translation.

The historical thought of the Enlightenment, on the one hand, and the reactions to Enlightenment ideas, on the other, have both been the subject of historiographical research, but the two have so far not been linked together in an organic discourse. The objective of this article is to intertwine the two themes by studying the responses to Enlightenment history that emerged in *antiphilosophique* cultural circles, in other words in the culture that in the second half of the eighteenth century instigated a critical, albeit varied, discussion with the world of the Enlightenment.

While the turning point brought about by the Enlightenment in the cosmopolitan and secularist approach to history is well known, albeit disputable, we know little about the extent to which historical discourse pervaded the literature hostile to the Enlightenment, as well as about the understanding, on the part of the *antiphilosophes*, of this historiographic turn and about

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution forms part of the research activities carried out under the 2015 Project of Relevant National Interest (PRIN) entitled *L'eredità dell'Illuminismo. Diritti e costituzionalismo tra rivoluzioni e restaurazioni (1789-1848)* and co-ordinated by Vincenzo Ferrone. The paper was presented and discussed at the 15<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Enlightenment, Edinburgh, 14-19 July 2019 (panel *Between Universal History and National Histories: Building the Past in the Age of the Enlightenment*, organized by Patrizia Delpiano and Niccolò Guasti).

its importance in the intellectual debates of the time<sup>2</sup>. The intent here is also to offer some pointers on the international dimension of *antiphilosophique* culture, so far studied mostly within the confines of individual states.

To launch an initial reflection I thought it useful to present a specific case study. The historical work of Voltaire seems like a good starting point considering the public role played by the *philosophe* and the controversies caused by his literary activity far beyond the borders of France. It will help us therefore to quickly recall his historical works, without dwelling on the complex events surrounding their publication. They are *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), *Histoire des croisades* (1745-1751), *Abregé de l'histoire universelle* (1753), *Essai sur l'histoire universelle* (1754-1758) and *La philosophie de l'histoire* (1765)<sup>3</sup>, all of which were subject to institutional censorship (see the first section) before becoming the polemical target of conservative literary scholars. Of these, I have chosen to examine in detail the case of the French Jesuit Claude-Adrien François Nonnotte (1711-1793), author of *Les erreurs de Voltaire*, published in 1762. After describing the essential features of this text, specifically its discourse on history (see the second section), I will concentrate on its Spanish and Italian translations in order to highlight the European character of *antiphilosophie* and the different uses made of Nonnotte's work in various contexts (see the third section).

## 1. HISTORY AND CENSORSHIP

Voltaire was in fact the author who most attracted the attention of the institutions, ecclesiastical and secular, responsible for controlling the circulation of books

<sup>2</sup> On the relationship between history and Enlightenment, see C. Grell, *L'histoire entre érudition et philosophie. Étude sur la connaissance historique à l'âge des Lumières*, PUF, Paris 1993 and K. O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997. Not all scholars share the notion, which I support, that the Enlightenment brought about a turning point in the field of history with regards to the process of secularisation. More easily shared is instead the idea of a heterogeneity in universal history that does not belong only to the secularised culture of the Enlightenment. On this, see T. Griggs, *Universal History from Counter-Reformation to Enlightenment*, «Modern Intellectual History», 4, 2007, 2, pp. 219-247. On the *antiphilosophie* in France see D. Masseau, *Les ennemis des philosophes. L'antiphilosophie au temps des Lumières*, Michel Albin, Paris 2000 and D.M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.

<sup>3</sup> On Voltaire's historical work see at least the classic F. Diaz, *Voltaire storico*, Einaudi, Turin 1958, and the special issue *Voltaire historien*, of the «Revue Voltaire», 12, 2012, <<https://voltaire-lire.msh-lse.fr/spip.php?article185>> (12/2019).

and ideas in eighteenth-century Europe. And to understand in which contexts a significant response to the historical culture of the Enlightenment matured, it is worth remembering the times and the motivations behind the censures. With regard to the Roman ecclesiastical censorship, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* was placed on the Index of Prohibited books in 1753, two years after its publication, while the *Histoire des croisades* was added in 1754, the *Abregé de l'histoire universelle* and *Essai sur l'histoire universelle* in 1755, and *La philosophie de l'histoire* in 1768<sup>4</sup>.

As for the Spanish Inquisition, after the edict of 1756, which among other texts banned *Le siècle de Louis XIV* and marked an increase in the disfavour with which the *philosophique* texts were regarded, in 1762 all of Voltaire's works were prohibited, existing and future and in any language<sup>5</sup>. Thereafter censors again prohibited individual texts, including the *Essai sur l'histoire générale* (in 1766) and *La philosophie de l'histoire* (in 1766-1767)<sup>6</sup>. In France, *La philosophie de l'histoire* was condemned by the general assembly of the clergy in 1765, while there was no lay censorship of Voltaire's historical works<sup>7</sup>.

It would be pointless to try to identify a chronological primacy of one or the other institution. Certainly, the Roman ecclesiastical censorship generally acted expeditiously (1753-1755), followed by the Spanish Inqui-

<sup>4</sup> Among the numerous works by L. Macé see *Les premières censures romaines de Voltaire*, «Revue d'histoire littéraire de France», 1998, 4, pp. 531-551; Ead., *La réception italienne de l'Essai sur les mœurs: destin contraire ou contrarié?* «Revue Voltaire», 5, 2005, pp. 249-265. On the reactions to the previous work by Voltaire, which were particularly negative in Naples, see Ead. *L'histoire de Charles XII, un manifeste moderne?* «Revue Voltaire», 12, 2012, pp. 31-43.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Defourneaux, *L'Inquisition espagnole et les livres français au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, PUF, Paris 1963, pp. 105-132, which highlights the importance of the edicts of January and March 1756 (ivi, pp. 105-106). On the ecclesiastical and secular censorship (the latter of which was preventive) of Voltaire's production, albeit without specific references to historical works, see also F. Lafarga, *Voltaire en Espagne (1734-1935)*, The Voltaire Foundation, Oxford 1989, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 261, pp. 28-49. The Inquisition's edict, which dates back to August 1762, identified in Voltaire's works «proposiciones respectivo heréticas, erróneas, escandalosas y temerarias, que inducen al deísmo y naturalismo» (ivi, p. 31).

<sup>6</sup> Defourneaux, *L'Inquisition espagnole*, cit., pp. 171-172.

<sup>7</sup> See G. Minois, *Censure et culture sous l'Ancien Régime*, Fayard, Paris 1995, pp. 181-229, who also underlines the conflicts between the French secular and ecclesiastical censorship institutions in the face of the culture of the Enlightenment. The general assembly of the clergy raised the alarm against «les mauvais livres» in the 1750s. In 1765, apart from Voltaire's *La philosophie de l'histoire*, it condemned, among others, the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (ivi, p. 187). See also F. Weil, *Livres interdits, livres persécutés, 1720-1770*, The Voltaire Foundation, Oxford 1999, who points out the censorship of other works by Voltaire by the Paris Parliament, from the *Lettres philosophiques* to the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (ivi, pp. 125-128). On the alliance between censors and writers also with regards to various texts related to the *philosophique* movement, see R. Birn, *La censure royale des livres dans la France des Lumières*, Odile Jacob, Paris 2007.

sition (1756-1762). Nevertheless, when individual texts are focused on, the timing of the interventions is seen to be changeable, as they obviously would be, considering the haphazard way in which books would be denounced and then evaluated by ecclesiastical censors: *Le siècle de Louis XIV* was first condemned by the Roman censors (1753) and then by the Spanish Inquisition (1756), but in the instance of the *La philosophie de l'histoire* the Spanish censure was pronounced in 1766, and the Roman one two years later<sup>8</sup>.

It is more profitable, then, to ask whether among the censors charged with passing judgment on books there was a prevailing view on the specific nature of the historical genre and an awareness of an attack on the *ancien régime* which passed in part through history. As far as the ecclesiastical institutions were concerned, such reflections are absent in the initial interventions. The censors treated Voltaire's historical production much like other texts, assessing it in the light of individual or isolated propositions, whether scandalous, heretical or insulting.

To begin with the Roman Index of Prohibited Books, when censoring *Le siècle de Louis XIV*, Tommaso Emaldi pointed to three concerns: offence against religion, an attack on the institutions and customs of Catholicism, and criticism of the papacy that was redolent of Protestantism. The censor reflected on the categories used by the *philosophe* when discussing «carmina, epistolae» and other «sulfuris ejusdem libellos» deemed especially dangerous to young people and women unaware of the poison they imbibed<sup>9</sup>, but he made no mention of the text's historical genre.

As regards the *Histoire des croisades*, the censor (Filippo Maria Sacchi) underlined, among other things, the «semina seditionis in Romanum Pontificem» and the denial of miracles. When pointing out the «animum historicis et indolem ipsam historiae» he used the term «historia» and in his condemnation made generic reference to scandalous, reckless and seditious theses detrimental to ecclesiastical jurisdiction and to the expression of attitudes typical of the «tolerantium sive indifferentiarum»<sup>10</sup>, but he did this without noting a new historiographical orientation.

And little changed with the censoring of the *Abrégé de l'histoire universelle* and the *Essai sur l'histoire universelle*. The censor, Carlo Maria Nicola Fabi, stressed the notoriety that Voltaire had earned in the republic of letters and his elegant literary style, two characteristics that made his anti-religious ideas more credible and hence more dangerous, especially to so-called unwary readers<sup>11</sup>.

The awareness of a new method of doing history can be discerned, as far as Roman censorship is concerned, in the 1768 condemnation of *La philosophie de l'histoire*, which even in its title established a close link with Enlightenment culture. When censoring the text, Ambrogio Erba actually referred to a «historia philosophice tractata». He did not attribute the authorship to Voltaire, despite rumours circulating that it was his, but the context he alluded to was clear. The author of this work – we read in Erba's conclusion – found contradictions in the sacred books and mocked their divine inspiration, as well as the miracles. Apart from his numerous errors – from the denial of the immortality of the soul to doubts about the universal flood, from the praise of the wicked emperor Julian to derision aimed at the Holy Fathers – he also propagated natural religion and the «promiscuam omnium religionum tolerantiam», citing writers such as d'Argens, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Toland: here the link between *histoire philosophique* and tolerance was made clear<sup>12</sup>.

Turning now to the Spanish Inquisition, we see that the court condemned historical (and geographical) works in general without making specific comments on the nature of historical texts, referring instead to the presence of arguments contrary to dogma and offensive to the Catholic religion and the inquisitorial court itself<sup>13</sup>. Voltaire's historical texts did not escape this evaluation: *Le siècle de Louis XIV* was censored in 1756 for having insulted the pope and the cardinals<sup>14</sup>, and his entire production, historical texts included, was therefore condemned (in 1762, as mentioned) for containing theses that led to deism<sup>15</sup>. The ecclesiastical courts that had read and condemned Voltaire's historical volumes naturally focused their attention on religious questions: Voltaire's history, they concluded, appeared disrespectful towards the institutions of the Catholic Church and dangerously inclined to support deism and religious tolerance.

However, it behoves us to look beyond the Index and the Inquisition and browse through the pages of

<sup>8</sup> Defourneaux, *L'Inquisition espagnole*, cit., pp. 171-172. On ecclesiastical censorship procedures, marked by their slow pace and random application, see, for Spain, Lafarga, *Voltaire en Espagne*, cit., p. 30 and for Italy P. Delpiano, *Church and Censorship in Eighteenth-Century Italy: Governing Reading in the Age of Enlightenment*, Routledge, London 2018, pp. 83-89: 86. (first Italian ed. 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede [henceforth ACDF], Index, Protocolli 84 (1753-1754), folios [henceforth ff.] 193r-200r.

<sup>10</sup> ACDF, Index, Protocolli 84 (1753-1754), ff. 458r-459r.

<sup>11</sup> ACDF, Index, Protocolli 85 (1755-1757), ff. 301r-305r.

<sup>12</sup> ACDF, Index, Protocolli 89 (1767-1770), ff. 327r-328v.

<sup>13</sup> Defourneaux, *L'Inquisition espagnole*, cit., p. 111.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> Ivi, p. 125.

the literature developed for the purpose of refutation. Although there were ample links between institutional censorship and *antiphilosophique* literature, it was in fact principally in the public space that a more general understanding of the dangers of the *histoire philosophique* matured. These dangers concerned the idea of a natural and tolerant religion, as well as a contrast between the universal vision and the national vision of history and the alleged anti-patriotism inherent in Voltaire's historical works.

## 2. THE LAWS OF HISTORY: NONNOTTE VERSUS VOLTAIRE

The Jesuit Claude-François Nonnotte occupied a prominent place in *antiphilosophique* literature. He was born and died in Besançon but was active elsewhere during his lifetime, including Amiens, Lyon, Paris and Turin. His *Les erreurs de Voltaire* was published anonymously for the first time in Avignon in 1762 by Antoine-Ignace Fez, «imprimeur du Saint Office», which fact validates the aforementioned links between censorship and book production. The work, which was republished several times, is of great importance due to the significant reflection on history that it put forward<sup>16</sup>.

There are works on Nonnotte, beginning with Marc Serge Rivière's contributions concerning his reflection on history<sup>17</sup>, and there is no lack of different interpretations of his intellectual position. In 1997 Dieter Gembicki reconstructed the controversy surrounding Nonnotte's *Essai sur les mœurs* in which he called the author an «homme des Lumières» for his role in the public debate<sup>18</sup>. In 2017 Olivier Ferret placed Nonnotte among the *antiphilosophes*: in particular, he analysed the arguments between Voltaire and Nonnotte, which appeared in the various editions of *Erreurs*<sup>19</sup>, and he has also

worked on the reception of the *Essai sur les mœurs* in Élie Fréron's «Année littéraire»<sup>20</sup>.

The perspective adopted here, however, is somewhat different because the purpose is, on the one hand, to address the specific problem of *antiphilosophique* criticism in the field of history and, on the other, to highlight the international dimension of *antiphilosophique* culture. Like many *antiphilosophique* works published in France, Nonnotte's text was published in several translations, all during the 1770s: a Spanish one in 1771-1772, various editions and reprints in Italian (1773, 1774, 1778) and a German translation, published in Mannheim by Akademische Buchhandlung in 1777<sup>21</sup>. The work therefore found success both in France and abroad partly, if not primarily, thanks to Voltaire's actions, which, as d'Alembert noted, ended up attaching notoriety to a man of letters who would otherwise have been condemned to oblivion<sup>22</sup>.

Before considering the salient points of the work – analysed here in the first two anonymous editions of 1762 and 1766 and the sixth of 1770, on which the Spanish and Italian translations were based – it should be noted that the differences in the French versions are not significant, at least as they relate to the problem addressed here. The Amsterdam edition of 1766 was «corrigée, augmentée, avec la réponse aux éclaircissements historiques de Mr de Voltaire»: in addition to the answer and clarifications addressed to Voltaire, a new chapter was added entitled *De la morale des philosophes*, an invective against his «discours sur la nature du plaisir», deemed a dangerous expression of epicureanism<sup>23</sup>. The Lyon edition of 1770, which bore the author's name, was «revue,

in *Dictionnaire des anti-Lumières et des antiphilosophes*, vol. II, pp. 1136-1139.

<sup>20</sup> See Id, *Larvatus prodire. La réception de l'Essai sur les mœurs dans l'Année littéraire*, «Revue Voltaire», 5, 2004, pp. 195-218, who points out Fréron's silence on the *Essai*, a silence aimed at starving it of publicity, while he was distributing Nonnotte's works.

<sup>21</sup> *Die Irrthümer des Herrn von Voltaire*, Akademische Buchhandlung, Mannheim 1777.

<sup>22</sup> D'Alembert considered the possibility of not responding to the criticisms from «un abbé Foucher», who had written against «la préface de l'Encyclopédie» to avoid giving him a public role: «Y répondre ce seroit le tirer de l'obscurité, comme on en a tiré Nonnotte». See letter from d'Alembert to Voltaire, Paris, 23 May 1767, letter no. D14195, in *Electronic Enlightenment Scholarly Edition of Correspondence*, Digital correspondence of Voltaire, general editor N. Cronk, letter editor: T. D. N. Besterman published online: 2008, <[https://www.e-enlightenment.com/item/voltfrVF1160124a1c/?srch\\_type=letters&all=nonnotte&lang\\_main=all&r=1](https://www.e-enlightenment.com/item/voltfrVF1160124a1c/?srch_type=letters&all=nonnotte&lang_main=all&r=1)> (12/2019).

<sup>23</sup> [C.-F. Nonnotte], *Les erreurs de Voltaire, nouvelle édition corrigée, augmentée, avec la réponse aux éclaircissements historiques de Mr de Voltaire*, 2 vols, La Compagnie des libraires, Amsterdam 1766, vol. II, ch. X, pp. 86-98. There is also a different arrangement to the two chapters and some additions. The text was republished in Lyon, by the Imprimerie Jaquenod père et Rusand, in 1767 and 1770, 2 vols.

<sup>16</sup> Nonnotte joined the Jesuit order in 1730. After the suppression of the Company in France (1764), he returned to Besançon, where he died in 1793. [C.-F. Nonnotte], *Les erreurs de Voltaire*, Antoine-Ignace Fez, Paris 1762, 2 vols.

<sup>17</sup> M.S. Rivière, *The Reactions of the Anti-Voltaire Lobby to «Le Siècle de Louis XIV»*: Guyon, Nonnotte, Berthier and Fréron, in *The Channel in the Eighteenth Century: Bridge, Barrier and Gateway*, ed. by J. Falvey and W. Brooks, The Voltaire Foundation, Oxford 1991, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 292, pp. 217-242: 231-241.

<sup>18</sup> D. Gembicki, *La polémique autour de l'Essai sur les mœurs (de Bury, Verney, Nonnotte)*, in *Voltaire et ses combats*, ed. by U. Kølving and Ch. Mervaud, The Voltaire Foundation, Oxford 1997, vol. II, pp. 1289-1344. On the structure of the work, see D. Gembicki, *Nonnotte critique de Voltaire*, «Revue Voltaire», 5, 2004, pp. 187-194.

<sup>19</sup> See O. Ferret, *Les erreurs de Voltaire*, in *Dictionnaire des anti-Lumières et des antiphilosophes (France, 1715-1815)*, ed. by D. Masseau, Honoré Champion, Paris 2017, vol. I, pp. 506-511 (with a brief reconstruction of the history of the text's publication); Id., *Nonnotte, Claude-François*,

corrigée et considérablement augmentée»: it reprinted the 1766 text, but the second volume included, as the title made clear, a new *Avant-propos*, a *Table des matières* and most importantly the *Bref de Clément XIV à l'occasion de l'ouvrage intitulé les Erreurs de Voltaire*, which was written on 7 April 1768 and reproduced in Latin and French<sup>24</sup>. In this *breve* the pope mentioned that he had received a copy of Nonnotte's book and had greatly appreciated it; in the same letter he invited the Jesuit to quickly complete his confutation of the *Dictionarium philosophicum*, which he duly did by having his *Dictionnaire philosophique de la religion* published in 1772<sup>25</sup>.

Nonnotte's approach of blunt criticism was unequivocal. He argued that there was no general refutation of Voltaire's work, save that of Claude-Marie Guyon's *L'oracle des nouveaux philosophes* (Bern 1759), to which he made reference<sup>26</sup>. It is true, in fact, that up to then only a few short pamphlets<sup>27</sup> and some *Lettres critiques* by Gabriel Gauchat had appeared<sup>28</sup>. Nonnotte, however, proposed a critical examination of Voltaire beginning, not coincidentally, from the *Collection complète* of his works, which was published in Geneva by Cramer in 1756 in 18 volumes and whose authorship was beyond doubt. Attention centred on the *Mélanges* (volumes 1-5 and 18 of the *Collection*) and on the *Histoire générale* (volumes 11-17), that is, on the *Essai sur les mœurs* and *Le siècle de Louis XIV*, which in the *Collection* were merged under the title *Essai sur l'histoire générale et sur les mœurs et les esprits des nations*<sup>29</sup>.

Nonnotte did not target Voltaire the man, but Voltaire the author, whose talent and culture he readily

acknowledged. For him, the point at issue was that the *philosophe* abused his talent, particularly when writing about religion, which he generally treated as a form of superstition. He had made the fight against Christianity his chief objective, and indeed the image of Voltaire the anti-Christian is the guiding thread of Nonnotte's work.

Nonnotte detected a deist (that is, not an atheist) in Voltaire, and for him, a Jesuit – as for many conservative writers of the time – deism was nothing more than a tendency that «fronde tous les cultes de Religion», and so led to atheism<sup>30</sup>. This tendency, he claimed, was evident in all of Voltaire's literary production, including the *Mélanges*, but it was particularly notable in the historical writings. Hence Nonnotte divided his work into two parts: the first concerned the historical errors found in the *Histoire générale*, while the second dealt with errors of dogma present in the *Mélanges*.

However, the author dedicated the bulk of his analysis to history, a decision that he clarified as follows: «Cependant on peut dire que dans ses *Mélanges* de littérature et de philosophie, il n'a fait encore que s'essayer contre la Religion. C'est dans son *Histoire générale* qu'il l'attaque d'une manière plus vive, plus réfléchie & plus odieuse». In the *Mélanges*, he went on, Voltaire expressed some «saillies de libertinage» and «ostentation d'un certain goût philosophique», while in the *Histoire générale* «c'est un enchaînement continu de calomnies, d'imputations fausses, d'exagérations outrées, de déguisements artificieux, employés pour l'outrager»<sup>31</sup>.

Nonnotte's aim therefore was to refute «errors». He started by drawing a clear distinction between what was true and what was mistaken and ergo false. Analysing his reasoning in detail is important because it enables us to discern his fears, which by and large are to be inferred from what he wrote. Following what he called «la suite de la religion pendant dix-sept siècles»<sup>32</sup> offered by Voltaire, the Jesuit gave his attention to the subject of Christianity and political power from the age of the Christian persecutions to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He identified Voltaire's points of reference, in whose works the authors who were «les plus méprisables et les plus suspects, dès qu'ils sont ennemis de la Religion, deviennent des oracles». He saw a sort of hierarchy in the references: «Les Païens & les Musulmans sont toujours sûrs de faire foi contre les Chrétiens, de même que les Protestans contre les Catholiques»<sup>33</sup>. Driven by «cette malignité anti-chrétienne, il vous présente une longue

<sup>24</sup> C.-F. Nonnotte, *Les erreurs de Voltaire, sixième édition, revue, corrigée et considérablement augmentée, avec un Avant propos pour le second tome, une table des matières, & un bref de N.S.P. le Pape Clément XIII*, 2 vols, V. Reguilliat, Lyon 1770. There is an anastatic reprint of this edition, Gregg International Publishers, Westmea 1971, 2 vols. There were also several editions in the nineteenth century, including the one produced in Besançon, 3 vols (Gauthier frères, 1823).

<sup>25</sup> [C.-F. Nonnotte], *Dictionnaire philosophique de la religion*, no publisher, no place 1772, 4 vols.

<sup>26</sup> C.-M. Guyon, *L'oracle des nouveaux philosophes*, no publisher, Bern 1759.

<sup>27</sup> See in particular the work by the lawyer Richard de Bury, *Lettre de M. de B... à Monsieur de Voltaire au sujet de son Abrégé de l'histoire universelle*, J. Nource, London 1755. Regarding this see Gembicki, *La polémique*, cit. and Rivière, *The reactions*, cit.

<sup>28</sup> G. Gauchat, *Lettres critiques ou analyse et réfutation de divers écrits modernes contre la religion*, 19 vols, Claude Hérisant, Paris 1755-1763, vol. IV, 1756, *Lettre XXXVI sur l'histoire universelle*, pp. 1-48; ivi, *Lettre XXXVIII sur l'histoire du Siècle de Louis XIV*, pp. 115-145. Gauchat repeatedly mentions the disappearance of Providence from Voltaire's historical work and accused the *philosophe* of bias also because of his positive view of the Chinese religion and civilisation. On Gauchat see A. Straudo, *Labbe Gauchat: un apologiste des Lumières*, «Dix-huitième siècle» 34, 2002, pp. 277-288.

<sup>29</sup> Ferret, *Les erreurs*, cit., p. 507.

<sup>30</sup> Nonnotte, *Les erreurs*, II, cit., p. 36.. All the quotations are taken from the anastatic reprint of the 1770 edition (see above, n. 23).

<sup>31</sup> Ivi, *Discours préliminaire*, vol. I, pp. I-XLVIII: XIV-XV.

<sup>32</sup> Ivi, p. XXXV.

<sup>33</sup> Ivi, p. XV.

suite de tableaux historiques; & ces tableaux sont toujours infidèles. Tout ce qu'on peut concevoir de désordres plus horribles & plus odieux est attribué aux Chrétiens».

However, Voltaire did not apply the same negative tinge to «les Mahometans, et les Payens» but, instead, accredited idolaters and infidels with virtues such as wisdom, reason and equity<sup>34</sup>. In short, he did not find the great men and heroes among Christians and, Nonnotte noted, Protestants were praised only when juxtaposed with Catholics. Thus the Jesuit concluded that Voltaire's history was anti-Christian and anti-Catholic: he aimed at «déchirer la Religion Catholique»<sup>35</sup>. It seemed to Nonnotte that history was one of the lines of attack that Voltaire had opened on Christianity and religion, and the establishment of this link between history and criticism of Christianity makes manifest the Jesuit's awareness of the emergence of a significant historical divide linked to a new way of looking at the past that completely excluded Providence and the supernatural dimension.

There is good reason to insist on the nexus between anti-Christianity and history since it was Nonnotte himself who highlighted this risky combination and recognised it as the thread linking the events described by Voltaire. Beginning with the contrast with pagans, Nonnotte accused Voltaire of having argued that «les Payens étoient bien plus sages, en laissant à chacun la liberté de penser, comme il voudroit, sur les matières de Religion»<sup>36</sup>. And further proof of this contempt for Christianity was Voltaire's willingness to give voice to the cults and customs of other peoples: Nonnotte was aghast that Voltaire could enter «dans l'esprit d'un Hottentot stupide, ou d'un aveugle Musulman»<sup>37</sup>. He accused the *philosophe* of dwelling on the (alleged, in his view) fanaticism of Christians during the crusades and religious wars in France, and of writing appreciatively of Muhammed, described as «un genie sublime», of the Qur'an, whose law Voltaire maintained was «sage», and of the government of the Turks, depicted as «doux, modéré, equitable»<sup>38</sup>.

In Nonnotte's account, Voltaire's disdain for Christianity, his instinctive warm feelings for other countries and concomitant coldness towards France were firmly intertwined. He was guilty of debunking some French myths, including that of the Pucelle d'Orléans, which he wrote of in terms of imposture and – more importantly for Nonnotte – sought to «évanouir le merveilleux

de l'histoire» while «les Français se croioient invincibles avec elle»<sup>39</sup>. Nonnotte thus stressed how the spiritual element («merveilleux» referred to anything inexplicable and miraculous) had been left out of Voltaire's reconstruction of the past. Moreover, he pointed out how Voltaire criticised the age of Louis XIV, which he and the French in general considered «comme un des plus beaux siècles», thanks to the discoveries of philosophy and the progress of science: here Voltaire «se sent bien plus de l'homme né à Londres & protestant, que de l'homme né a Paris & élevé dans la religion catholique»<sup>40</sup>.

In the relevant chapter, *De la nation française*, Nonnotte returned to the question, showing how much Voltaire had chosen to highlight the shadows of that century, especially those relating to the Church and religion: «On peut dire, sans crainte, que M. de Voltaire, né François et Catholique, n'aime pas plus la Nation que sa Religion: il n'épargne pas plus l'une que l'autre»<sup>41</sup>. On the other hand, the *philosophe* did not love any particular religion because, on closer inspection, his true position was indifference, an indifference associated with universal tolerance: «Son gout décidé», Nonnotte affirmed, «est pour l'indifférence & la tolérance universelle»<sup>42</sup>.

More generally, Voltaire infringed what the Jesuit defined as «les loix de l'histoire», which were predicated on balance and the ability to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the protagonists of past events. Voltaire, however, did not take nuances into account. He was thus defined a «historien infidèle» because «il ne montre les Chrétiens que par leurs défauts & leurs vices; & les Payens, les Mahometans & les hérétiques, que par leurs bonnes qualités & par leurs talents»<sup>43</sup>. Voltaire's history was therefore false, because he did not maintain an attitude of neutrality but was ideologically biased. «Son historie générale», Nonnotte reflected, «n'est qu'un satire, où le fiel & la calomnie sont presque toujours à la place de la vérité»<sup>44</sup>.

«Tolérance universelle» was the key concept of Nonnotte's critique, which established a clear link between it and the concept of freedom of thought: Voltaire eulogised «les philosophes tolerans» who «laissent volontiers à chacun la liberté de penser comme il vaudra»<sup>45</sup>. It was to this concept of tolerance that Nonnotte connected Voltaire's openness to the history of others (that is, of other worlds) and the absence (which he deemed negative) of a priori defence of his own history. This was a

<sup>34</sup> Ivi, pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>35</sup> Ivi, p. xix.

<sup>36</sup> Ivi, p. xiv.

<sup>37</sup> Ivi, p. xi.

<sup>38</sup> Ivi, pp. 75 and 226.

<sup>39</sup> Ivi, p. 203.

<sup>40</sup> Ivi, pp. 391-397.

<sup>41</sup> Ivi, II, pp. 220-228: 225.

<sup>42</sup> Ivi, *Discours*, p. xix.

<sup>43</sup> Ivi, pp. xviii-xix.

<sup>44</sup> Ivi, p. ix.

<sup>45</sup> Ivi, p. xx.

crucial point: Nonnotte reflected on this very issue when writing in the *Discours préliminaire*, a consideration *De la manière de penser sur les Français* adopted by Voltaire. It is worth reading his words, which came under discussion on the character of different peoples that Nonnotte took up again in other parts of the work:

*On peut encore observer qu'il ne fait guère plus de cas de la Nation, que de la Religion. On trouve dans ses écrits une affectation continuelle à rabaisser les François, & à les mettre au-dessous des étrangers; il ne nous représente la plupart de nos plus grands hommes, & de nos plus beaux génies, que comme il nous a représenté les Héros Chrétiens, & les Pères de l'Eglise. Est-ce par un mépris véritable qu'il a pour sa Nation? Est-ce pour se mettre lui seul dans un rang particulier, & au-dessus de tous les autres Auteurs François?*<sup>46</sup>

And he continues:

*L'homme équitable sera toujours offensé de la manière dont sont ordinairement traités les François: il verra avec peine qu'ils ne sont presque jamais que dans le fond des tableaux, & comme des ombres qui ne servent qu'à relever les traits brillants, sous lesquels il fait paroître les étrangers: il se fera un devoir de rendre justice au génie de Newton; mais il ne traitera pas de Philosophe romancier Descartes, l'homme à qui, malgré ses erreurs, la Philosophie raisonnable a le plus d'obligation [...]. Il se croira obligé d'être pour le moins aussi équitable envers sa Nation, que le sont les Anglois eux-mêmes, malgré leur rivalité*<sup>47</sup>.

The accusation was clear: instead of offering a balanced defence of France and the French, Voltaire showed scant respect for the laws of history and displayed a conspicuous predilection for foreigners. The Jesuit did not fail to identify other weak points in Voltaire's historical thought, which ended up calling into question the authority of sovereigns by exalting equality among men, and was also full of contradictions<sup>48</sup>. All in all, Voltaire's history was anti-Christian, anti-French, false and biased. Nonnotte used the term «histoire générale», which he took from volumes 11-17 of Voltaire's *Collection*. Although the adjective «universel» also appeared there, it was not used in reference to history but to the concept of «tolérance universelle»<sup>49</sup>, which Voltaire was accused of favouring. «National/e» was not present as an adjective, but «nation» was, and in some cases also «patrie» in reference to France and other European states like Great Britain. Nonnotte thus demonstrated an accurate

grasp of the fact that Voltaire offered a new form of historical reflection, which he openly lambasted. Nevertheless, he himself set out a sort of counter-history, as his manuscripts on the vicissitudes of Franche-Comté show, revealing a particular interest in local history or, rather, in the history of his homeland, which would be well worth investigating<sup>50</sup>.

Lastly, the reading public deserves a mention, as Nonnotte himself referred to it, demonstrating that he shared the awareness of some of his contemporaries of the emergence of new social groups interested in history. As the Roman censors thought, Voltaire's works seemed dangerous mainly to those who, despite being able to read, were not particularly familiar with the written word and were therefore unable to spot the dangers hidden in the books. Such people, Nonnotte wrote, «n'ont pas assez de lumières et de connoissances, pour sentir le défaut des raisonnemens que fait si souvent cet ecivain» or «sont trop inapliqués pour se donner la peine d'examiner, de méditer, de réfléchir», and were all inclined to allow themselves to «séduire par le plaisir»<sup>51</sup>.

### 3. ANTIPHILOSOPHIE AS A EUROPEAN MOVEMENT

Turning now to the circulation of Nonnotte's book outside of France, it is clear that studying the translations of such a text makes it possible, on the one hand, to grasp the international dimension of the *antiphilosophique* movement and, on the other, to identify any variants and different political and cultural uses made in different contexts.

Let us begin with the Spanish translation, published in two volumes in Madrid by the Imprenta de Pedro Marin in 1771-1772<sup>52</sup>. The translator was the Mercedary monk Pedro Rodríguez Morzo, a preacher, royal theologian, and translator of another anti-Voltaire text we have already mentioned, namely Claude-Marie Guyon's *El oráculo de los nuevos filosofos*, published in two volumes in Madrid in 1769 by the Imprenta de D. Gabriel Ramirez. In effect, the translation of Nonnotte's work was presented as a continuation of Rodríguez Morzo's

<sup>50</sup> Ferret, *Nonnotte*, cit., p. 1138.

<sup>51</sup> Nonnotte, *Les erreurs*, cit., *Discours préliminaire*, pp. xxix-xxx.

<sup>52</sup> *Los errores historicos, y dogmaticos de Voltaire, impugnados en particular por Mr. El abad Nonote y traducidos al espanõl por el R. P. M. Fr. Pedro Rodriguez Morzo, Padre de la Provincia de Castilla del Real Orden de la Merced, Predicador de Su Magestad*, Pedro Marin, Madrid 1771; *Libro nuevo: los errores dogmaticos de Voltaire, que impugnò en francesel abbad Nonnote y traduce al espanõl el R. P. M. F. Pedro Rodriguez Morzo del real orden de la Merced, Padre de la Provincia de Castilla, Theologo de Cámara de su Alteza el Serenissimo Ñeñor ufante D. Gabriel, y Predicador de Su Magestad, &fc.*, Pedro Marin, Madrid 1772. On this translation see Lafarga, *Voltaire*, cit., pp. 51-54.

<sup>46</sup> Ivi, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>47</sup> Ivi, pp. xxviii-xxix.

<sup>48</sup> Ivi, pp. xxi-xxvii.

<sup>49</sup> Ivi, p. xix.

anti-Voltaire literary activity<sup>53</sup>. The fact that translating the work, despite it being a confutation, actually ran the risk of increasing the circulation of the *philosophe*'s ideas did not go unnoticed, and there were those who considered it a dangerous operation. When the translator requested a publication licence from the Real Academia de la Historia, which from 1769 had become one of the main institutions responsible for book censorship, it was mentioned that reading the works of Voltaire was prohibited and that «challenging him is useless, because doing so will release a poison whose dangerous activity the majority of the Nation ignores or should ignore». The institution issued the license and requested some revisions and the addition of notes of clarification<sup>54</sup>.

The Spanish translation, which, as said, was based on the 1770 French edition, did not include the papal breve, but the dedications were of particular interest. The first volume was dedicated to a state official, Thomas Saez de Parayuelo, and the second to Saint Serapio, a soldier of Irish origin who took part in the thirteenth-century crusades and then worked in Spain as a Mercedarian to free slaves, before dying in Algeria in 1240 – slain by the «Mohammedan Salinm», according to the text. The martyr was presented as a bastion of Catholicism who fought against both «African perfidy» and «the Rousseaux, the Voltaires» of his time<sup>55</sup>. The translation had only a few sporadic notes, including one that defined the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre as a «day of excessive mortality of the Huguenots in France»<sup>56</sup>.

The first volume of the translation was faithful to the French edition, except for the addition of the *Prólogo del traductor* and the elimination of chapter VII, which was dedicated to Locke; the Spanish version thus contained twenty-eight chapters instead of twenty-nine. It was in fact the translator's prologue that gave the Spanish text its distinctive character. The translator – who declared that he was writing to defend the religion and

«the purity of our Holy Faith» – quoted an encyclical by «our Most Holy reigning pope, Clement XIV» directed at the pestilential atheism («*Cum summis*». *De pontificatus initi ratione et de universali iubilaero*, 12 December 1769) and mentioned the unstinting commitment of the French clergy, without forgetting the censuring of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* by secular institutions such as parliament<sup>57</sup>. The prologue left no doubts about the fact that the translator's intention was not to disseminate Voltaire's principles but, on the contrary to combat his «most implacable hatred» of religion, to open a breach in order to let out «the poison contained in his books», thus educating a public of «innocents» on the dangers of «impiety and irreligion».

Nevertheless – and this was the interesting point, which guided the use of the work, reassuring the readership – to his mind, strong defences were not necessary in Spain because there were «many conservatives, to be able to count on the tenacity and constancy of our Spaniards in everything concerning dogma and religion». In Spain, in fact, the true faith remained immutable, despite the «impetuous torrents, that flow from the infested mountains, and from the countries that tolerate libertinage and impiety»<sup>58</sup>. As in the Italian peninsula, in Spain the danger was presented as coming from «foreigners»<sup>59</sup>. Hence the invitation to the Spaniards to resist a movement coming from outside Spain, following the example of the sovereign, Charles III, and his religious faith.

There followed a brief history of Spain and the creation of its Catholic identity, which focused on three key moments. The first was linked to the «great Recaredo», the king of the Visigoths from 586 to 601, who converted to Catholicism. The second flourishing moment of «our Monarchy» was that of Ferdinand III of Castile (1217-1252), said to have introduced happiness to almost all the country's provinces by «expelling or making render tribute all the Saracens in his dominions». And the third moment was that of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, who were able to subjugate the *moriscos*, thereby obtaining, «in exchange for this most Catholic action, the innumerable multitude of new vassals in the New World that they discovered»<sup>60</sup>.

If the state-managed Spanish translation thus appears to have served the purpose of reinforcing the Catholic identity of the Iberian peninsula, partly in an anti-Islamic way, and was in this sense an answer to the re-evaluation of the historical role of the Arabs advanced

<sup>53</sup> *Los errores historicos* vol. I, *Prólogo del traductor*, no page numbers, but p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> These were the words of the censor, José Guevara Vasconcelos. See E. Velasco Moreno, *Las censuras de la Real Academia de la Historia (1746-1772)*, in *Instituciones censoras. Nuevos acercamientos a la censura de libros en la España de la Ilustración*, ed by F. Durán López, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid 2016, pp. 113-158: 136, who considers the role played by the Academy in the censorship of books. I thank the author for informing me about and sending me her work.

<sup>55</sup> The dedication reads *Al inclito y clarecido martyr, nuevo Machabeo de la ley de García San Serapio, Del Real Orden de la Merced, Redempcion de cavtivos* and was part of the plan to spread the cult of the saint, who was canonised in 1743 by Benedict XIV, in order to highlight its Iberian identity.

<sup>56</sup> *Los errores*, 33, note a. There are four notes in the entire first volume, all included to provide information on personalities or to correct dates: see also *ivi*, p. 70, note a; p. 270, note a; p. 312, note a.

<sup>57</sup> *Libro nuevo, Prólogo del traductor*, pp. I-XVII: VII.

<sup>58</sup> *Los errores, Prólogo del traductor*, no page numbers.

<sup>59</sup> On this element and the metaphor of the «torrent» and «flood», see Delpiano, *Church*, cit., p. 161.

<sup>60</sup> *Libro nuevo, Prólogo del traductor*, no page numbers.

by men of letters such as Voltaire<sup>61</sup>, the circulation of Nonnotte's work in the Italian peninsula was more complex. Incidentally, it should be noted – at least in order to point out the important role played by periodicals in the dissemination and translation of parts of foreign works – that *Les erreurs de Voltaire* was reviewed in the «Efemeridi letterarie di Roma» in 1772<sup>62</sup>. The first Italian translation, however, was undertaken by the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and can be linked to the new historicity regime which marked the Tuscan state in the second half of the eighteenth century, and which led the government to rethink the construction of the local past and at the same time (and this is what interests us here) encouraged it to pay attention to the consumption of historical works<sup>63</sup>.

The publishing operation can also be included in the particular relationship that Tuscan culture developed with Voltaire, because of which the Italian translation of some of his works, was blocked, as was – under pressure from the Tuscan bishops – the publication of the *Questioni sull'Enciclopedia*<sup>64</sup>. More generally, the operation was a project aimed at orienting editorial production, having in view the formation of an enlightened public opinion within precisely established borders. And it should not be forgotten that the translation of Raynal's *Histoire philosophique* dates back to the same period, the first volume being printed in Siena in 1776 in a version entirely unfaithful to the original, given the heavy-handed editing aimed at softening the sense of the text<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> See, in this issue, the article by N. Guasti, *Between Arabic Letters, History and Enlightenment: The Emergence of Spanish Literary Nation in Juan Andrés*, pp. 149-159.

<sup>62</sup> Praise was directed towards the French edition published in Lyon in 1770 by V. Reguilliat in two volumes, along with the papal breve. «Efemeridi letterarie di Roma» I, no. XI, 14 March 1772, Gregorio Settari, Roma 1772, pp. 85-87.

<sup>63</sup> S. Landi, *Note sul consumo di storia in Toscana nella seconda metà del Settecento*, in *La pratica della storia in Toscana. Continuità e mutamenti tra la fine del '400 e la fine del '700*, ed. by E. Fasano Guarini and F. Angiolini, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2009, pp. 169-190, which, in reference to Tuscany, which had passed to the Lorraine dynasty in 1737, raises the problem of the consumption of history by a middle class.

<sup>64</sup> The unpublished translation of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire* by the Calabrian men of letters Giuseppe Ramirez (requested by Domenico Stratico, on behalf of the Tuscan government), is mentioned by S. Landi, *Naissance de l'opinion publique dans l'Italie moderne*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes 2006, pp. 183-193. On the rejection of approval for the publication of Voltaire's *Questions*, among other works like d'Holbach's *Morale universale*, see S. Landi, *Editoria, potere, opinione pubblica in Toscana nell'età delle riforme: il caso senese*, «Ricerche storiche», 20, 1990, pp. 295-338: 323-324. On the circulation of Voltaire's works in the Italian peninsula, see S. Rotta, *Voltaire in Italia. Note sulle traduzioni settecentesche delle opere voltairiane* (1970), in Rotta, *Montesquieu e Voltaire in Italia: due studi*, ed. by F. Arato, STEM Mucchi, Modena 2016, pp. 179-271; and L. Macé, *L'édition clandestine dans la Toscane des Réformes: le cas de Voltaire*, «La lettre clandestine», 7 1999, pp. 237-257.

<sup>65</sup> On the translation of Raynal's text, see S. Landi, *Censura e legittimazione del discorso politico. La traduzione toscana dell'Histoire des deux*

The translation of *Les erreurs*, carried out by the canon Pio Bonso Bonsi, brother of Secretary of State Carlo Bonsi<sup>66</sup>, was published in Florence by Francesco Moücke, episcopal printer, in 1773. It followed the French edition of 1770, from which it took the *Avant-propos* of the second volume, the *Table des matières* and Clement XIII's breve, all of which were placed at the end of the same volume. The book was dedicated to Cardinal Luigi Maria Torrigiani, under whose patronage it was published, and to the «Chiesa cattolica apostolica romana» of which, it was stated, the cardinal was «uno de' più luminosi ornamenti». The translation was presented not in defence of Christianity or Catholicism, but rather of the «Chiesa santissima», against «satirici motteggi» and the «ciniche derisioni dei moderni pensatori». There was also a mention of the «santissimo» Pope Clement XIII and his commendation of Nonnotte's work<sup>67</sup>.

The project had the full consent of the censor of the Grand Ducal government and editor of the «Novelle letterarie», Giuseppe Pelli Benvicenni, who, in a diary entry of June 1773, greeted the translation positively:

*Mi sono stancato di star dietro al Dizionario della ragione di Voltaire facendone il sunto, in questi fogli, e segnando-vi il mio giudizio articolo per articolo. Labate Nonnotte, autore degli Errori di Voltaire, e del Dizionario filosofico della religione, ha in quest'ultimo specialmente preso sopra di sé l'assunto di confutare detta opera, quantunque non poco sia stato beffato dal medesimo Voltaire. Vi è il canonico Bonso Pio Bonsi, il quale ha lavorata una traduzione italiana dell'opere di detto abate la quale si stampa, sicché noi saremo più facilmente in grado di vedere gli sbagli, e tutti gli altri difetti del filosofo di Ferney. È vero che il mio disegno non era quello di combattere contro Voltaire, ma è vero ancora che il Dizionario della ragione è più un libro contro la religione che altro; che non si può parlare di lui senza detestarlo; e che io non sono abile a vestir le divise di teologo, e come filosofo sopra la maggior parte delle cose bisogna che chini la fronte, e mi ritiri nel silenzio. In questa obbligazione, perché dunque baloccarci a rileggere, e ad esaminare un libro che non m'istruisce, che poche volte diverte, e che anche stimando Voltaire si può separare dagli altri suoi scritti, e tenerlo in poco conto?*<sup>68</sup>

*Indes dell'abate Raynal*, «Cromohs», 9 2004, pp. 1-13, <[http://cromohs.unifi.it/9\\_2004/landi\\_raynal.html](http://cromohs.unifi.it/9_2004/landi_raynal.html)> (12/2019).

<sup>66</sup> P.D. Giovannoni, *Le strutture ecclesiastiche a Firenze a fine Settecento*, «Annali di Storia di Firenze», VIII, 2013, pp. 195-245: 202.

<sup>67</sup> *Gli errori di Voltaire opera scritta in lingua francese dall'abate Nonnotte e trasportata nella toscana favella da Bonso Pio Bonsi canonico fiorentino*, Francesco Moücke, Firenze 1773, 2 vols. The dedication *Allementissimo sig. cardinale Luigi Maria Torrigiani* is on pages V-IX. I have not been able to trace the permission to publish in the State Archive of Florence: Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Consiglio di Reggenza, 619-628.

<sup>68</sup> Giuseppe Pelli Benvicenni's *Efemeridi* can be consulted in the Florence National Library (<http://pelli.bncf.firenze.sbn.it/it/progetto.html>), series II, vol. I, 100-101, 24 June 1773. On Pelli see R. Pasta, *Profilo di*

It should be noted that the Italian version of Nonnotte's work was but one expression of the broader critical confrontation with *philosophique* culture, a clash to which the translation completed in those same years (1773-1776), again by Bonso Pio Bonsi, of the *Dizionario filosofico della religione* (edited shortly before by Nonnotte, as said) bears witness, and where the position of the Florentine canon with regard to Voltaire is even more explicit<sup>69</sup>. That the translation of Nonnotte's *Erreurs* was part of the political-cultural project of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany is also demonstrated by the fact that its circulation was promoted through the «*Novelle letterarie*», whose 20 August 1773 edition made known the publication of the first volume<sup>70</sup>, while the third volume of the *Errori di Voltaire* was announced along with the first volume of the *Dizionario filosofico*<sup>71</sup>. The two works also followed the same circuit of translations, being afterwards published in Venice by Guglielmo Zurletti in 1774 and in Naples, at the expense of Antonio Cervone, in 1777<sup>72</sup>.

The second edition of *Gli errori di Voltaire* was in fact published in Venice by Zurletti in 1744, again in two volumes and without annotations<sup>73</sup>. It kept faithfully to the Florentine translation, albeit with a different layout and without quoting the translator, but with some special features. First of all, an irreverent image of Voltaire appeared immediately, even before the title, in an engraving entitled *Le lever de philosophe de Ferney* signed by the Venetian engraver Giovanni Battista Brustolon; this was copied from a caricature by the Frenchman Jean Hubert that had circulated in *antiphilosophique* publications for some time<sup>74</sup>. It was followed

by Clement XIII's breve in Latin and Italian, and then a commendation by the reformers of Padua. The list of topics was at the end of the first volume with references that gave the book some autonomy (the Florence edition, like the subsequent Naples one, instead had a single index at the end of the second volume.) Many efforts were made to make the work accessible to a broader public: for example, in the *Discorso preliminare*, the titles of the sections (which in the Florence and Naples editions were placed to the side, as in the French original) divided and shortened the text, simplifying it graphically, while some references to the works of Voltaire were included in notes (and not to the side, as in the Florentine edition).

All French terms, which had been left in the original in the Florentine edition (and later in the Neapolitan one) were translated, thus «*Mélanges*» becomes «*Zibaldoni*». The second volume then added a part relating to the *Analisi dello Spirito delle leggi*, taken from the seven letters by Gabriel Gauchat criticising Montesquieu, published in his aforementioned monumental work, *Lettres critiques*. The second edition thus anticipated a partial translation of Gauchat's text, which was translated in full into Italian in the 1780s<sup>75</sup>.

What in the title was called the «third edition» was also published in Venice by Zurletti in 1778, in two volumes. In reality it was a reprint, as it was moreover presented by the Reformers of the Padua office, who granted the licence to reprint the book<sup>76</sup>. The volumes reflected almost completely the layout of the 1774 edition, and the same order of distribution of the texts, starting with Clement XIII's breve. The sole difference was the absence of Voltaire's image, which had been present in the 1774 edition.

Some mention at least must be made of the edition brought out in Naples in 1778, which had the text from the Florence edition translated by Bonso Pio Bonsi, but had a different layout: the papal breve was again at the end of the second volume, but there was no dedication to the Florentine cardinal Torrigiani. The work comprised three volumes<sup>77</sup>: the first two containing Non-

un lettore, in R. Pasta, *Editoria e cultura nel Settecento*, Olschki, Firenze 1997, pp. 193-223 and *Scritture dell'io tra pubblico e privato*, ed. by R. Pasta, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma 2009.

<sup>69</sup> *Dizionario filosofico della religione nel quale si stabiliscono e si confermano tutti i punti della religione combattuti dagli' increduli, ed in cui si risponde e si soddisfa a tutte le loro obiezioni. Scritto in lingua francese dall'autore degli Errori di Voltaire e trasportato nella toscana favella da Bonso Pio Bonsi canonico fiorentino*, Francesco MoÛche Stampatore arcivescovile, Firenze 1773-1776, 4 vols. See the *Avvertimento sopra il fine, che s'è proposto l'autore di quest'opera, e sopra l'uso che se ne può fare*, vol. I, pp. xv-xxiii.

<sup>70</sup> «*Novelle letterarie*», IV, no. 34, Stamperia Allegrini, Pisoni, e Comp., Firenze 20 August 1773, columns 529-531. The journalist notes that Bonsi's translation «makes available from here to the Alps an antidote against irreligion».

<sup>71</sup> «*Novelle letterarie*», no. 6, 11 February 1774, columns 25-28.

<sup>72</sup> The *Dizionario* was published several times over in Venice, always in four volumes (1774, 1779 and 1792).

<sup>73</sup> *Gli errori di Voltaire. Opera del sig. abate Nonnotte, edizione seconda italiana dopo la sesta francese. Vi si aggiungono sette lettere critiche del signor abate Gauchat sopra il libro intitolato Lo spirito delle leggi*, Guglielmo Zerletti, Venezia 1774, 2 vols.

<sup>74</sup> Hubert's engraving dated back to around 1772 and was used, for example, by Fréron. See G. Hagpar, *L'immagine caricaturale di Fréron: Vol-*

*taire s'en est chargé*, in *Elie Fréron. Polémiste et critique d'art*, ed. by S. Barthélemy, A. Cariou, and J. Balcou, Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes 2001, pp. 124-146.

<sup>75</sup> *Lettere critiche o analisi, e confutazioni di diversi scrittori moderni contro la religione del signor abate Gauchat, traduzione dal francese*, Paolo Giunchi, Roma 1783-1787, 11 vols.

<sup>76</sup> *Gli errori di Voltaire, edizione terza italiana dopo la sesta francese. Vi si aggiungono sette lettere critiche del signor abate Gauchat sopra il libro intitolato Lo spirito delle leggi*, Zerletti, Venezia 1778, 2 vols.

<sup>77</sup> *Gli errori di Voltaire opera scritta in lingua francese dall'abate Nonnotte e trasportata nella toscana favella da Bonso Pio Bonsi canonico fiorentino*, a spese di Antonio Cervone, Napoli 1778, vol. I e II. *Voltaire fra l'ombra versione dell'abate Giulio Nuvoletti per servire di seguito all'opera dell'ab-*

notte's *Gli errori*, while the third reproduced the Italian translation of another *antiphilosophique* work, namely *Voltaire parmi les ombres* (1775) by the Dominican Charles-Louis Richard, which had been translated in 1777 (it bore the approval by Filippo Angelico Becchetti, Dominican of the Casanatense, dated 7 March 1777)<sup>78</sup>. The book was printed on the initiative of the abbot Vincenzo Lupoli (1737-1800), professor of sacred canons in Naples and author of a manual of ecclesiastical law published in 1777<sup>79</sup>. Lupoli had been in correspondence with Nonnotte at least since 1779 and had acted as a linguistic mediator between the French author and Alfonso Maria de' Liguori, bishop of Sant'Agata de' Goti since 1762.

It is therefore around Lupoli that traces are found of one of the European networks that linked theologians such as Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier, former French Jesuits stationed in Rome like Mathurin Germain Le Forestier (1697-1780), and Italian bishops like Salvatore Spinelli, then bishop of Catanzaro, as well as Alfonso de' Liguori<sup>80</sup>. At the same time, he played an important role in the *Amicizia cristiana* association which, from the mid-1770s onwards, actively worked to spread good literature – including Nonnotte's books – in defence of religion and for *antiphilosophique* purposes<sup>81</sup>.

To return to Nonnotte's work, whereas the Spanish translation had both a religious and ethnic value, aimed at combining the defence of Catholicism and that of nation-building, the story was different in the Italian peninsula, where the book was not oriented

towards a patriotic and political discourse. In this context, the different editions did not result from tensions between states and Church in the age of jurisdictionalism, as happened instead with other translations<sup>82</sup>. The same one translation circulated in different editions and reprints, as was typical of *ancien régime* publishing, and – after the Florentine edition – ended up in an assemblage of *antiphilosophique* texts designed to defend the role of Catholicism and the papacy in the years of the crusade launched by the Roman Church through the promotion of translations of *antiphilosophique* texts<sup>83</sup>.

In conclusion, much remains to be done to bring to light the international dimension of *antiphilosophique* culture. And much remains to be done to reconstruct the relationship between universal history and national history in the age of the Enlightenment, a relationship that has emerged here as a crucial factor in the study of how the critique of *philosophique* history was laying the foundations of a historiography that made the defence of religion and of patriotism coincide, and also of how those paths were not necessarily consistent in the various contexts of Europe.

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bate Nonnotte *Collaggiunta in fine di un ragionamento sull'irreligione del Barone di Haller*, vol. III (a spese di Antonio Cervone, Napoli 1778).

<sup>78</sup> *Voltaire fra l'ombra versione dell'abate Giulio Nuvoletti* had already been published in Rome by Paolo Giunchi in 1777, as well as in Genoa by Felice Repetto in 1777.

<sup>79</sup> On Lupoli, born in Frattamaggiore (Naples), who was ordained as a priest in Aversa on 20 September 1760 and moved to Naples in 1764 before being made bishop of Cerreto Sannita in 1792, see the entry by C. di Villarosa, in *Biografia degli italiani illustri*, ed. by E. De Tipaldo, vol. I, Tipografia di Alvisopoli, Venezia 1834, pp. 283-285. On his role in the dissemination of Nonnotte's work, see the letter from Vincenzo Lupoli to Nonnotte (then in Lyon), Napoli, 2 October 1779, in Archives diocésaines de Besançon, Fonds du Grand séminaire, fasc. 48. For the aforementioned links, see the other two letters by Lupoli kept there: Napoli, 30 January 1779 and 4 March 1780.

<sup>80</sup> The correspondence between de' Liguori and Nonnotte dates back to March 1778. It was de' Liguori who contacted the former Jesuit after the publication of his works in Italian in Naples. On the role of Lupoli, who was a common friend, see A. M. Tannoia, *Della vita ed istituto del venerabile servo di Dio Alfonso M. Liguori*, vol. III, Vincenzo Orsini, Napoli 1802, pp. 49-57.

<sup>81</sup> The works of Nonnotte appear, alongside those of Alfonso de' Liguori, in the library of the *Amicizie cristiane*. R. De Mattei, *La Biblioteca delle «Amicizie». Repertorio critico della cultura cattolica nell'epoca della Rivoluzione*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2005, p. 309 (with reference to *Les erreurs and the Dictionnaire*).

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<sup>82</sup> With regard to this, see P. Delpiano, *Éduquer à la lecture antiphilosophique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le Traité de la lecture chrétienne de Nicolas Jamin, entre France et Italie*, «La Révolution française. Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire de la Révolution française», 12, 2017, <<http://lrf.revues.org/1764>> (3/2020).

<sup>83</sup> Delpiano, *Church*, cit., pp. 161-221.