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**ВОСПРИЯТИЕ И ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ЛЮТЕРА
В РАННЕЕ НОВОЕ ВРЕМЯ: ВЗГЛЯД ИЗ ИТАЛИИ**

В статье рассмотрено формирование в итальянской историографии образа Лютера и Реформации — достаточно радикального и далекого от понимания лютеранской доктрины. Во-первых, Лютера связывали с Никколо Макиавелли и макиавеллизмом. Флорентийский секретарь упоминается в этой связи (а порой к нему встречаются лишь косвенные отсылки), поскольку именно он был автором концепции, согласно которой отсталось Италии в процессах модернизации привело к упадку религии и, следовательно, падению нравов и морали. Сначала Макиавелли, а затем и Лютер, сыновья сатаны, воспринимались как основные причины упадка нравов. В течение XVIII в. эта идея была поддержана сравнительным анализом с экономическим, социальным и политическим развитием стран, принявших Реформацию.

В контексте римской церкви «лютеранское чудовище» иногда указывается как источник и происхождение всех видов бедствий и упадка церковных обычаев и учения. Поэтому в текстах, связанных с орденом иезуитов, фигуры Лютера и Кальвина рассматриваются как причины «порчи» христианской доктрины и связываются с происхождением янсенизма или любой другой политики, противостоящей папской власти и враждебной религиозным институтам, и, наконец, как зародыш, из которого развились худшие учения современности — от атеизма до либертинизма и Просвещения.

Ключевые слова: Кальвин, Реформация, атеизм, Макиавелли, Гвиччардини, янсенизм, либертинизм, упадок

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*LUTHER'S REPRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS
IN THE EARLY MODERN AGE. THE ITALIAN CASE*

In the present article we shall focus on the early radicalization in Italy of Luther's and the Reformed world's stereotypical image, quite distant from an actual knowledge of the doctrine.

Luther was associated with Niccolò Machiavelli and machiavellism. The Florentine secretary was referred to, and sometimes only hinted at, for the historiographical notion which attributed Italy's backwardness in the process of modernization to the decadence of its religion and coincidentally of its mores and morals. At first Machiavelli and Luther, sons of Satan both of them, were indicated as the main actors of the corruption of customs and, during the 18th century, the analysis was developed with examples supplied by the economic, social and political comparison with the countries where Reformation was adopted.

In the context of the Roman Church, the «Lutheran monster» will occasionally be pointed at as the source and origin of all kinds of disasters, of decadence of customs and doctrine. In different moments and situations therefore, the figure of Luther — and Calvin — became the causes of the doctrinal corruption effected by the Society of Jesus, the origin of Jansenism, of any policy opposing the papal power and hostile to religious institutions, and at last as the germ from which the worst modern doctrines were born: from atheism to libertinism and the Enlightenment.

Key words: Calvin, Reformation, atheism, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, libertinism, Jansenism

In *Atheismus triumphatus*, written between 1606 and 1607, Tommaso Campanella said that Christianity had completely lost ground. It had formerly beautified and occupied the world, and then backed in two corners: Italy and Spain¹. The Orient now belonged to Muhammad as well as most of Africa; and the Septentrion was in Luther's and Calvin's hands.

Campanella thus began to codify the idea that the heresy born of the Catholic womb was limited to Northern Europe. Among insults and unpleasant qualifiers, he also connected the great heresiarchs to Niccolò Machiavelli. While Luther and Calvin occupied Northern Europe, Italy and Spain was permeated by machiavellism. In Campanella's accusation, Machiavelli, Luther and Calvin had in common the political use of religion: imposture.

To be fair, the idea that Luther was the bearer of imposture already emerged in the conviction verdict signed by Emperor Charles after the diet of Worms, in May 1521. Here the verdict's author, papal nuncio Gerolamo Aleandro, wrote of «*simulata predicatione fidei*», a dismantling of faith through the preaching of liberty, of a devil's son and therefore of a lie². But the idea of an unrestrained preaching of freedom did not immediately find credit, certainly not in Italy where the the most popular interpretation was of Luther as the Antichrist.

In the course of this article we will address at least two typical motifs that spread in the Italian culture of the early modern age and are already mentioned in Campanella. The first is related to the idea that Italy was excluded from the spread of Reformation and of reforms. A thought that will persist for a long time in the Italian historiographic tradition, ingrained in the theory that the non-diffusion of reforms caused the backwardness of the country's development. The second theme we'll address is another idea that took root early: from the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformations — in the sources they are always joined — sprang atheistic and libertine thought, which not coincidentally had got entrenched in France. The connection between Lutheranism-Calvinism and libertinism-atheism, both spreading extreme liberty (of thought and customs), would also

¹ Cf.: Campanella T. *L'ateismo trionfato* / Ed. by G. Ernst. Pisa, 2004. P. 5.

² Spini G. *Ritratto del protestante come libertino* // *Ricerche su letteratura libertina e letteratura clandestina nel Seicento*. Firenze, 1981. P. 177.

involve the Society of Jesus and its laxity in the matter of morals by linking it to the context of Lutheran and Calvinist doctrine³.

1. LACK OF REFORMATION BACKWARDNESS OF ITALY

In their first *a latere* considerations of Luther, Italian writers of the sixteenth century mainly focused on the aspects of so-called machiavellism⁴. *In primis*, they pointed out that Lutheran ideas did not spread because the Italian people were tied to the papacy by affection as well as by special economic interests. *Cinquecento* Italy is not a nation. It is a concept of membership, a mixture of geographical (the territories South of the Alps), linguistic (Dante's language) and cultural (the heir to the classical tradition and the descendent of Romans) elements. Many Italians, as in the case of Francesco Guicciardini⁵, were disappointed by the lack of reforms, of course, and by the papacy's failure to reconcile Christianity by reforming a corrupt Church. But most of all they stressed that the Italians' — at least apparent — insensitivity to Luther's doctrinal thinking was due to the close social bond between the curia and the Italian aristocracy.

Paolo Sarpi, by no means inclined to overlook ecclesiastical abuses, had highlighted that the papacy's victory in Italy, had arisen from the close alliance of the Italian political-social context with the Roman curia. According to Sarpi, the presence of the Roman court brought dignity and usefulness (essentially he was referring to money entering the country through the curia). Without dwelling on properly doctrinal issues, Sarpi suggested a strong bond between the papal court, with its nepotism, and the Italian ruling

³ Catto M. All'origine di ogni male: immagini e interpretazioni della Riforma e di Lutero nell'Italia di età moderna // Lutero. Un cristiano e la sua eredità. 1517–2017 / Ed. by A. Melloni. Vol. 2. Bologna, 2017. P. 1105–1117.

⁴ On this concept see: Frajese V. Le categorie della Controriforma. Politica e religione nell'Italia della prima età moderna. Roma, 2011. P. 201–213; Campi A. Antimachiavellismo // Enciclopedia machiavelliana. Roma, 2014. Vol. 1. P. 71–74.

⁵ Guicciardini F. The History of Italy / Trans. by A. Sidney. Princeton, 1984. P. 322: «The Pope at first to extinguish this poisonous doctrine, but he did not employ those remedies and medicines suitable for curing such a malady». See also Seidel Menchi S. Le tradizioni di Lutero nella prima metà del Cinquecento // Rinascimento. 1974. N. 17. P. 31–108. On the subject of the Italian Reformers, see: Firpo M. La Riforma italiana del Cinquecento. Le premesse storiografiche // «Disputar di cose pertinente alla fede». Studi sulla vita religiosa del Cinquecento italiano. Milano, 2003. P. 11–66.

class; he showed how Italian society had cohesively closed ranks around the Pope against the advancing Reformation⁶.

In some respects, his theory was indebted to the most powerful analysis of Niccolò Machiavelli whom Italy's nineteenth century tradition called the Italian reformer⁷. The Florentine secretary had denounced at length the level of corruption in different contexts of Italian life. According to Machiavelli, the political crisis — Italy's lost freedom — had been set off by an absence of virtues. Italian states lacked virtue, strength, drive, political intelligence and even caution and common sense. He was not referring to their rulers only, but broadened the responsibility to all because faults and failures were «in the populations starting with councilors, chancellors, secretaries, and ending with peasants»⁸, and they were deep-rooted.

Seriousness and public solidarity were engrained in religion, Machiavelli maintained, and religion was so frail that it could not warrant solidly established principalities and republics, or drive with its energy their political and military life. In Machiavelli's view, Italy was «ruinata» — ruined — by the weaknesses of Catholicism. From Roman history he had taken the thousand examples needed to explain the importance of religion in a society's life and contrasted them not only with the bad example the behaviour of the Roman court had given the Italians or the nefarious role that the papacy played in the country's unity. He had widened his considerations to an unrelenting critique of Catholicism. In fact, in his eyes not the corruption of customs, but the values transmitted had wrecked the country.

In his «Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy» (*Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*), published in Rome in 1531,

⁶ Sarpi P. Letter to Jacques Leschassier of May 13, 1608 // *Opere* / Ed. by G. Cozzi, L. Cozzi. Milano; Napoli, 1969. P. 252: «even recently, Italians want to safeguard the Roman Curia: the latter, in fact, seems to bring both dignity and advantage to this land, due to the amount of money than comes in through the Curia. And they will stay steady in their opinion as long as the Curia, just as in the past, lets them participate as sons in the grandeur of its fortune, acts as protector of Italian freedom, and does not attempt to dominate despotically».

⁷ De Sanctis F. *Storia della letteratura italiana*. Vol. 2. Napoli, 1879. P. 41.

⁸ Cantimori D. *Niccolò Machiavelli: Il politico e lo storico* // Machiavelli, Guicciardini, le idee religiose del Cinquecento / Ed. A. Prosperi. Pisa, 2013. P. 41.

Machiavelli expressed his preference for the pagan world and its values⁹. He opposed the Christian virtues to the values of Imperial Rome which constituted a *modus vivendi*¹⁰. As noted, the Florentine secretary indicated in Christianity the cause of Italian political decadence (2, 2)¹¹; and in his *Principe* (1532), where the faultline between Christianity's positive morals and utilitarianism — the fox and the lion — of political action became clear, Machiavelli wrote that only ecclesiastical princes «have states and do not defend them; and they have subjects and do not rule them; and the states, although unguarded, are not taken from them, and the subjects, although not ruled, do not care, and they have neither the desire nor the ability to alienate themselves»¹².

Against the Roman Church, Machiavelli raised two powerful arguments. The first showed that the evil example of the Roman court was the reason why Italy has «lost all piety and religion»; in the presence of the Church and its priests, «we Italians [...] have become irreligious and wicked». The second accused the Church of the country's divisions «although [it] has its place of residence in Italy and has held temporal power there, it has not been so powerful nor has it possessed enough skill to be able to occupy the remaining parts of Italy and make itself ruler of this country and, on the other hand, it has been so weak that, for fear of losing control over its temporal affairs, it has been unable to bring in someone powerful to defend against anyone in Italy who had become too powerful» (1,12–2)¹³.

The remedy he proposed was to send the Roman court to Switzerland, the only place where people lived «with respect to religion and military institutions, as the ancients did». The care the Roman

⁹ Berlin I. Sulla ricerca dell'ideale. Brescia, 2007. P. 43. See also: Dotti U. La rivoluzione incompiuta. Società, politica e cultura in Italia da Dante a Machiavelli. Torino, 2010.

¹⁰ Machiavelli N. Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio / Ed. by C. Vivanti. Torino, 2000. P. 138–143 (With what people the Romans had to combat, and how obstinately they defended their liberty).

¹¹ Cf.: Vivanti C. Niccolò Machiavelli. I tempi della politica. Roma, 2008; Skinner Q. Virtù rinascimentali. Bologna, 2006. P. 207–270.

¹² Machiavelli N. Il Principe / Ed. by F. Chabod. Torino, 1961. P. 54. And also: Delle istorie fiorentine, VIII, 17: «he who in wars and perils is a friend of the Pope will have company in victories and in ruins be alone».

¹³ Machiavelli N. Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio... (How important it is to take account of religion, and how Italy, lacking in religion thanks to the Roman church, has been ruined).

empire had reserved to its *religio*, «because there can be no greater indication of the ruin of a state than to see a disregard for its divine worship», had lacked so much «thanks to the Roman Church» that Italy was «ruined».

The pagan world had taught to praise worldly honour and, to achieve this, it had built a religion of fierce rituals, of devotion also expressed as the cult of men who had shown a high civil valour, such as captains of armies and princes of republics. The cult of «fortezza» — fortitude — in ancient religion, its celebration of the greatness of spirit and body, were contrasted with the models Christianity offered, its unworldly saints, its contempt of worldly matters: «Moreover, under the old religions none obtained divine honours saved those who were loaded with worldly glory, such as captains of armies and rulers of cities, whereas our religion glorifies men of a humble and contemplative, rather than of an active life. Accordingly, while the highest good of the old religions consisted in magnanimity, bodily strength, and all those other qualities who make men brave, our religion places it in humility, lowliness and contempt for the things of this world» (2, 2)¹⁴.

That system of values had weakened Italian society so much, Machiavelli thought, that it made way for the wicked since the other men — the non wicked — were busy in the quest for Paradise, busy «suffering blows» instead of «avenging them». According to Machiavelli therefore, Christianity had furthered *sloth* and its power had corrupted civil life.

Religion, so important for a robust society and civilization, with Christianity (as well as any other religion for which salvation is the main purpose) became a decadence and destroyed civic life. A clever and, in many respects, original interpretation of the Italian crisis in the *Cinquecento* that would persist for many centuries in Italian historiography. It would take slightly different shapes, and still link Italy's economic and social backwardness to its lack of religious reforms.

A constant theme in the Italian interpretation of religious reforms, was the evil role played by the Catholic religion in the development of Italian society. The lack of a circulation of ideas, due

¹⁴ Machiavelli N. Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio... P. 141.

to the repressive inquisitional system and the practice of a superficial, pietistic, precept-driven and empty Catholicism are elements that, for instance, also appear in «Di una riforma d'Italia, ossia dei mezzi di riformare i più cattivi costumi e le più perniciose leggi d'Italia» (Coira, 1767–69), two volumes by Carlo Antonio Pilati (1733–1802) of Trent, which were soon translated in French, English and German. Though Pilati claimed to be a Catholic, he was familiar with the Protestant world and German culture¹⁵, and also felt some sympathy for them. His criticism concerned the Christian education system that made people «lazy, shy, lonely, wretched, miserly, sad, melancholic, stupid, incapable of any thing and action» while «as Christians we should be good citizens, good subjects and good men».

But the most original and prescient element of his thinking was his urging a struggle against the power of the Church and the clergy, since he believed that the practical superiority and the wealth of the countries where the Reformation had passed resulted from having swept superstitions away. It was in the «cities of Germany where part of the people are raised in the sect of Luther and part in the faith of the Roman Church» that he found the reason for this. While Lutherans «deprived of ecclesiastical benefits are forced to do business and thus wealthy and good citizens succeed», Catholics «due to the abundance of spiritual prebends, live in poverty and dissolution»¹⁶. The Reformation was being layered with interpretations and meanings related to the vision of the overall historical development of the West: an aspect that, though already present in Machiavelli's pages, would be deeply entrenched in the literature of the Risorgimento.

The «Renaissance» would have been the «Italian reform» and the age of the Italian development, the detested «Counter-Reformation», with its repression, discipline and immobility, would also take a positive aspect for Italy insofar as it re-evaluated the role of the Church. The Church would become the actual and political subject which would ensure the country's stability, while wars, bloodshed and revolutions raged in Europe. Luther was the symbol

¹⁵ Venturi F. *Settecento riformatore*. La Chiesa e la Repubblica dentro i loro limiti. Vol. 2. Torino, 1976. P. 250–325.

¹⁶ Venturi F. *Settecento riformatore*... P. 267.

of arrogance and pride¹⁷, his entire doctrine was a theological error, but his reform was primarily the cause of wars and destructions born of the loss of universalism and of the political-social disorder that resulted from such a loss. The Counter-Reformation and the Church, and with them the Jesuits, would become the strongholds which should be credited at least for shielding seventeenth-century Italy from religious divisions and religious wars that had caused bloodshed in the rest of Europe¹⁸.

With the *Risorgimento* and its subsequent historiography, the traditions against the temporal power of the Church and the role it played in Italy's lack of modernity would be revived. The lack of an Italian reform and the presence of the Church's constructive action were more and more coloured with the traits of the historical delays Italy had accumulated when compared to «protestant» nations, as a likely explanation of its political, economical, social and moral backwardness: the decadence of Italian customs, the clergy's corruption, the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy as a political and conservative power, hypocrisy, indifferentism, conformism and even «jesuitism», and the Church's use of spiritual tools to foster ignorance, superstition and an easy devotionism in the population.

2. LUTHERAN REFORM AND THE ORIGIN OF LIBERTINISM AND ATHEISM

In 1593 the *Bibliotheca selecta* of Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) was printed. It included the best of what was available in the cultural landscape of the sixteenth century within a triumphant vision of Catholicism, in an age that seemed superior and richer in knowledge than the past. According to the jesuit, but his opinion was shared by many others¹⁹, Catholicism was greater because of the new

¹⁷ Cf.: Niccoli O. Il mostro di Sassonia. Conoscenza e non conoscenza di Lutero in Italia nel Cinquecento (1520–1530 ca) // Lutero in Italia. Studi storici nel V centenario della nascita / Ed. by L. Perrone. Casale Monferrato, 1983. P. 5–25. In the same volume cf.: Menozzi D. La figura di Lutero nella cultura italiana del Settecento. P. 161–206 and the important introduction of Miccoli G. «L'avarizia e l'orgoglio di un frate laido...». Problemi e aspetti dell'interpretazione cattolica di Lutero. P. VII–XXXIII.

¹⁸ Croce B. Storia dell'età barocca in Italia. Bari, 1953. P. 9–14.

¹⁹ Chabod F. Giovanni Botero // Scritti sul Rinascimento. Torino, 1967. P. 336–337.

and extraordinary acquisitions of knowledge of the New World, the political and military victories, the progress made by the Church thanks to the new religious orders and their missionary activity, of which the Society of Jesus was the main protagonist. The age appeared superior also because of the eradication of discord and of heresy, since the only legitimate liberty was the one that developed along with virtue and piety.

The *Bibliotheca selecta* was not only a specular model of the forbidden culture, a *vademecum* of good reading for a good christian. It also offered suggestions for the *expurgatio* of works which would end in the *Index*, and it obviously endeavoured to counter condemned authors' works and doctrines. In its hundreds of pages, in book VIII «de theologia et atheismis haereticorum»²⁰, we find a long and detailed description of Luther's and Calvin's opinions qualified as atheist. The review deals not only with the origins of their doctrines, setting and arguing them in the context of older heresies, but also with the fine doctrinal points of the Eucharist, free will, the Holy Trinity, the attributes of God and the Purgatory.

It is hard to say what the jesuit Possevino had in mind when he accused of atheism the Lutheran doctrine and Luther (always placed next to Calvin). It was certainly distant from the theological meaning of our contemporaneity²¹.

The word *àtheos*, frequent in Greek culture, was rare in the Latin language of the medieval tradition²². Until the early sixteenth century, translators of Greek texts into Latin and compilers of Greek-Latin

²⁰ Possevino A. *Bibliotheca Selecta qua agitur de ratione studiorum in historia, in disciplinis, in salute omnium procuranda*. Roma, 1593. P. 452–457. This is a continuation of the work already published in Vilnius in 1586 under the title «De Atheismis Lutherani, Melanchtonis, Calvini, Bezae...». On the subject of the atheism of the Reformers in Catholic works from the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries see: Spini G. *Ritratto del protestante come libertino...* P. 177–188.

²¹ Lecaldano E. *Senza Dio. Storie di atei e di ateismo*. Bologna, 2015. P. 54–55. See also: Filoramo G. *Ipotesi Dio. Il divino come idea necessaria*. Bologna, 2016. P. 145–182.

²² See: Bianca C. *Per la storia del termine «atheus» nel Cinquecento: fonti e traduzioni greco-latine // Studi filosofici*. 1980. N. 3. P. 71–104; Frajese V. *Ateismo // Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*. Per Adriano Prosperi / Ed. by G. Dall'Olio, A. Malena, P. Scaramella. Vol. 1. Pisa, 2010. P. 114–118.

dictionaries rendered the Greek adjective *atheos* with the Latin *impius* and *impietas*. Only at the turn of the sixteenth century did the ensuing Latin *atheus* and its translations in the vernacular appear. Our aim here is to focus on the epistemology of the word atheism, i.e. on a concept variously defined and redefined again to fit the context, always in a relational position with something else and depending on the nature of the religion in which it is constituted. Therefore atheism appears as an elastic concept able to mutate throughout history so as to indicate in a vaguely derogatory sense Christians and Jews — for their worship of Heaven or of an imageless God or for refusing the official cult of the State — and eventually to become the synonym of whoever denied God's existence and the Judeo-Christian view of nature and of man's fate²³.

In Possevino, atheism seems closer to the denial of some aspect of orthodox doctrine, to the political vision of the «Godless», and hence of the Church, the Pope and the Councils' authority on the life of the state and of its citizens.

A connection between atheism and Luther is a recurrent pattern in the whole modern age, more intense in the eighteenth century when the «plague of atheism», as Michel de Certeau wrote²⁴, was the symptom of the traumatic birth of modernity. In 1714 the theologian Costantino Roncaglia (1677–1737) gave to the printers in Lucca «Effetti della pretesa riforma di Lutero e Calvino e del giansenismo». A popularizer of Bossuet and the publisher of Noël d'Alexandre's *Historia ecclesiastica*, Roncaglia pointed out in atheism not only «the center of every heresy», but also the eighth effect of the Reformation: «my object, therefore, is to make known that in them was atheism and that they have also taught it to others by taking away from God what is suitable and attributing to him many

²³ See several examples in: Harnack A. von Mission et expansion du christianisme dans les trois premiers siècles. Paris, 2004. P. 342–343; and, more generally: Bremmer J. N. Atheism in Antiquity // The Cambridge Companion of Atheism / Ed. by M. Martin. Cambridge, 2007. P. 11–26.

²⁴ Cf.: Certeau M. de La possession de Loudun / Ed. by L. Giard. Paris, 2005. P. 193. The expression refers to the famous episode of demonic possession that occurred in Loudun beginning in October 1632. See also: Pastine D. L'immagine del libertino nell'apologetica cattolica del XVII secolo // Ricerche su letteratura libertina e letteratura clandestina nel Seicento. Firenze, 1981. P. 143–173.

things that are repugnant, which is the same, so as to really deny him»²⁵. The Reformation was *alleged* because, in fact, it was the evidence of something much older and devilish.

Nicola Spedalieri seemed more explicit in his *De' Diritti dell'uomo* (1791). There, the doctrine of free examination, the rejection of the Church's authority, was indicated as the road along which had led from Protestantism to deism and atheism²⁶. The book was written in revolutionary times and wanted to suggest an analogy between the reformers and the followers of Enlightenment, that the former the forerunners of the latter. In the evolution of political and social behaviour, the reformers were now the *philosophes*, both of them bearers of corruption and subversion in the Church and in society, with tragic consequences for civic life²⁷. Denying the possibility of public happiness outside of the Church and religion, Spedalieri drew a straight line that from Protestantism, and through Socinianism, went to deism and atheism²⁸, placing it therefore among the principal heresies that had corrupted the truth.

While dealing with other aspects and looking at the issue from another point of view, the considerations led the Catholic controversies to the same conclusions and to point out in Lutheran heresy the source of the unbelief of the eighteenth century. In the works of Alfonso Maria de Liguori (1696–1787), the counter-reformistic elements of Lutheran representation are still alive²⁹, but the more salient issues of the century appear more explicitly as unyoking the visible

²⁵ Roncaglia C. Effetti della pretesa riforma di Lutero e Calvino e del gianesismo. Lucca, 1714. P. 202. The other seven effects of the Reformation concerned the variation, confusion and discord on the dogmas, slander against the saints, the spirit of defamation and lies, the deprivation of customs, and slander against the princes.

²⁶ Spedalieri N. De' diritti dell'uomo libri VI. Ne' quali si dimostra che la più sicura custode de' medesimi nella Società civile è la religione cristiana. E che però l'unico Progetto utile alle presenti circostanze è di far rifiorire essa religione. Venezia, 1797. Vol. 2. P. 266.

²⁷ Menozzi D. La figura di Lutero... P. 163. See also Delpiano P. Liberi di scrivere. La battaglia per la stampa nell'età dei Lumi. Roma; Bari, 2015. P. 158–159.

²⁸ On the connection between socinianism and deism see: Addante L. Dall'eresia al libertinage e al deismo: vecchie e nuove prospettive sugli esiti del radicalismo religioso italiano // Ripensare la riforma protestante. Nuove prospettive degli studi italiani / Ed. by L. Felici. Torino, 2016. P. 173–198.

²⁹ Menozzi D. La figura di Lutero... P. 155.

Church from the invisible one. It is not just a matter of recalling the long genealogy of that heresy but of claiming the authority of the Roman Church and the immutability of its doctrine. It was an attack against the reformed — and jansenist — world, and especially against deists and materialists, so abundant in Italy. To the latter, Liguori had dedicated many works, such as «Breve dissertazione contra gli errori dei moderni increduli, generalmente oggidi nominati materialisti e deisti published in 1756 and Verità della fede contro i materialisti che negano l'esistenza di Dio, i deisti che negano la religione rivelata, ed i settari che negano la Chiesa cattolica essere l'unica vera» published in 1767.

Liguori's main effort addressed the thought that came from books, those «somber» books that were published beyond the Alps and introduced «the reckless habit of reasoning nonsensically about the dogmas of the holy religion»³⁰. Those books had led to the spread of free thought, the corruption of mores, religious indifferentism and disbelief and, last but not least, to question the principle of authority.

3. THE JANSENIST POLEMICS AGAINST THE JESUITS

The idea that lutheranism, and religious reforms more generally, was the continuation of old heresies and the origin of modern «heresies», claiming autonomy of conscience, religious freedom, questioning spiritual and temporal authority lingered in the seventeenth-century religious conflict, and involved the Society of Jesus. The religious order, bound to the Papacy by a special vow of obedience, found itself accused by the jansenists of being nothing more than a form of reformed heresy, and perhaps even more radical. Its adversaries focused on its laxism (its tendency to alleviate the rigour of doctrine and of its application with an interpretation which allowed for the greatest possible freedom of choice). The polemics probably peaked in notoriety with Blaise Pascal who, in the *Fifth Letter of the Provinciales* (1656), lampooned the Jesuits' «*obliging and accommodating conduct*»³¹, their bland and benign interpretation of morals.

³⁰ Emanuele da Domodossola *Dissertazione in forma di dialoghi intorno a vari dogmi cattolici per dimostrarne la loro verità contro li così detti spiriti forti, e specialmente li seguaci degli errori del signor di Voltaire*, edizione prima romana notabilmente migliorata ed accresciuta. Roma, 1784–1785 (quoted in Delpiano P. *Liberi di scrivere...* P. 154).

³¹ Pascal B. *Le Provinciales* / Ed. by C. Carena. Torino, 2008. P. 91.

In 1757 the jansenist priest Nicole Mesnier published «Problème historique qui des jésuites ou de Luther et Calvin ont le plus nuit à l'église chrétienne², with the long subtitle *La solution de ce problème découvrira la véritable cause des maux qui affligent l'église et le royaume de France et le seul moyen efficace qu'on puisse prendre pour les faire cesser*». Despite being put in the Index of forbidden books on May 17th 1759, it was translated in Italian³² and published in Lausanne in 1763. The author explicitly connected Luther and Calvin's heresy to the Society of Jesus, asking the rhetorical question — who caused the greatest damage to the Church? — about morals, practice, sacraments, as well as the relationship with the authority that the Jesuits had spread. Inspired by Bossuet (but adding Calvin to his reflections), Mesnier launched a systematic comparison of which, as we know from the long footnotes, the real target of was the Society of Jesus. He appears very well informed about all the inner polemics of the *Societas*, the contentious relations between the jesuits and the papacy, and the anti-jesuitic Catholic literature that, from the dominican theologian Melchor Cano onwards, had drawn attention to «Jesuit heresy»³³, or to the controversial positions taken during the Council of Trent.

Mesnier assigned the reader the complex and crucial task of making a choice. Who had damaged the Church more, the reformers or the jesuits? Those who had established an alleged Reformation, overthrowing the dogmas of the Church? Or those who had introduced «laxity» in all the articles of the Church and in its morals? And again «but who, therefore, seems to you most guilty, those who degrade a legitimate authority or those who form an imaginary one; those who take away from the Pope what he has, or those who give him what doesn't belong to him, those who regard him as a man or those who elevate him to God?»³⁴.

³² *Problema storico in cui si domanda chi abbia più nociuto alla Chiesa cristiana o i gesuiti, o Lutero e Calvino*. Losanna, 1763. Published also with some additions and omissions, under the title *Esame storico delle massime, e dottrine de' gesuiti e di Lutero e Calvino*. Venezia, 1767.

³³ See: Mongini G. *Maschere dell'identità. Alle origini della Compagnia di Gesù*. Roma, 2016.

³⁴ *Problema storico in cui si domanda chi abbia più nociuto alla Chiesa cristiana o i gesuiti, o Lutero e Calvino...* P. 149.

The jansenist's allegations were, in many respects, the usual catalogue of anti-Jesuitism in the Catholic world³⁵, made even more intense in these years of great controversy against the Society of Jesus, the prelude to its expulsion from the major European states and its subsequent suppression (1773). Jesuits were accused of denying Christ's authority, of exalting papal authority purely in the interest of their order, of rejecting and distorting the Scriptures — and not only the Old Testament but also the New one — more than the two reformers, of keeping the faithful away from the Sacred Scripture by hiding and forbidding it, by describing it «as a somber book, able to mislead them; and as dangerous for the theologians themselves», and by so doing letting them «rot... in the ignorance which weakens the true duties that give the traditions of men back to the Laws of God »; and last, of having transformed the Church into a political body. The Society of Jesus was thus pointed out as the main cause of Christianity's moral and political decadence.

The rhetorical structure, incidentally, did not differ much from that used by the jesuits themselves, who at times drew parallels between the Epicureans and the reformers³⁶ and at times went on and on with a long list of terrifying events linking the reformed heresies of the early modern age to Quesnel and to the Minister of Finance Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, as in the case of the missionary Pedro Antonio de Calatayud³⁷. The same scheme had also been applied by the Roman court to the principles which

³⁵ Generally see: *Les Antijésuites. Discours, figures et lieux de l'antijésuitisme à l'époque moderne* / Ed. by P.-A. Fabre, C. Maire. Rennes, 2010.

³⁶ Such as «*Libri tres de continentia Christiana adversus Epicuræos hujus temporis, impios Lutheri et Calvini asseclas*» (Duaci, ex typographia Balthazarij Belleri, 1638) written by the jesuit Jean Bourgeois (1574–1653). Cf.: Somervogel C. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*. Vol. 2. Bruxelles; Paris, 1891. Coll. 34–35.

³⁷ *Tratado en que se vuelve por la indemnidad, decoro y justificacion de la S. de Clemente XIII en órden a la Consulta del Consejo Extraordinario de 30 de abril de 1767, y se refutan 13 Propositiones de Wiclef, Juan Hus, Luthero y Quesnel, que tienen afinidad con algunas del Señor Fiscal Campomanes, autor de ella y ellas*. Cf.: Somervogel C. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie...* Vol. 2. Coll. 534–535. On the author, who died in exile in Bologna on February 27, 1773 see the entry: Gil E. // *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* / Ed. by Ch. O'Neill, J. M. Domínguez. Roma-Madrid, 2001. Vol. I. P. 599–600.

underpinned Savoy's ecclesiastical policy, accused of being inspired by that of Calvin and Luther³⁸. In short, all that was evil and dark, subversive of order and tradition, all that questioned authority was brought back to sixteenth-century heresies.

To Pietro Tamburini (1737–1827), a jansenist professor of Pavia, it was obvious that the Protestant world and the Society of Jesus were united by the desire to destroy the Church and ecclesiastical discipline: there was a perfect identity between the spirit of Luther's reform «tending to destroy, not to build» and the behaviour of the jesuits who, with «new systems» both in terms of customs and on the issue of faith, had eroded ecclesiastical discipline. In turn Giuseppe Piatti refuted Tamburini's writing by stressing the fact that jansenist theories about indulgences had revived old doctrines that went back to John Wyclif and Hus and forward to Calvin and Luther³⁹; and Francisco Gustà noticed the analogy between the jansenist Tamburini's and Luther's idea of marriage⁴⁰.

All the forces united against Luther and the Protestant world were fighting among themselves. While the jansenists accused the jesuits of moral corruption, the seeds of which came from the Lutheran doctrine, the jesuits in turn believed that the jansenist doctrine was the expression of free thought, the germ of atheism, an expression of Protestantism and therefore of anti-royalist tendencies. In the Italian context with no place for reform, the accusations against the *philosophes* — the reformers' heirs — eventually included the remnants of the jansenist spirit.

The *Giornale ecclesiastico di Roma* pointed in many articles at the common origin of jansenist and Enlightenment thought. The prestigious journal asserted that the Protestant rupture and unbelief were connected, and at Calvin and Luther as those who had «plagued the Universe»⁴¹. Luther was indicated as the one who had spread

³⁸ Stella P. Il giansenismo in Italia. I preludi tra Seicento e primo Settecento. Vol. 1. Roma, 2006. P. 208 nt 33.

³⁹ Piatti G. La cattiva logica del giansenista D. Pietro Tamburini. Torino, 1795. P. 77–78.

⁴⁰ Gustà F. Gli errori di Pietro Tamburini nelle prelezioni di etica cristiana. Foligno, 1804. On Francisco Gustà see Batllori M. Francisco Gustà apologista y crítico. Barcelona, 1943.

⁴¹ Cf.: Ricuperati G. Politica, cultura e religione nei giornali italiani del '700 // Cattolicesimo e Lumi nel Settecento italiano / Ed. by M. Rosa. Roma,

everywhere the «feral poison», and his perverse errors, among the lowly populace as well as the Princes, without forgetting that all of it came from Machiavelli, «from this heinous Writer's maxims that directly tend not only to destroy all religion but to dissolve all human society as well»⁴². In 1796 already, a preface of volume XII of the *Giornale ecclesiastico* drew in many pages the genealogy of the oldest doctrines (Beghards, Beguines and «Fratricelli») that had generated lutherans and calvinists, quietists and jansenists, and therefrom «the libertines, epicureans, atheists, deists etc. who either do not believe in anything or like to show they do not»⁴³. Luther's and Calvin's disciples had fathered all «the unbelievers who, in the previous century and much more in the present one, have plagued and plague the Universe». Organized in associations or «coteries under the name of lodges», the unbelievers «who want to be called philosophers» demanded freedom and man's natural equality, and the annihilation of all religions.

According to the author, another category of men stemmed from that same «vitiated root»: the hypocrites, that is to say the jansenists, «most conceited men who pretend to aspire to the primitive Christians' purity and to the Church's ancient discipline, in order not to observe the modern one just as they would not observe the ancient one were to be re-established». Enemies not only of ecclesiastical power but also of social power, and most expert in sowing discord between them. The worst innovators were those who, though remaining in the Church, «call for the Reformation, perpetually hold forth against the Roman Church and against the despotism they call papal and episcopal»⁴⁴.

Involved at various levels in the catholic debate, in a fight in which anti-Enlightenment «constituted in many respects a return (or a pursuance) of the Counter-Reformation»⁴⁵, the *philosophes*, although they were deemed the reformers' heirs, paid a very different attention to religious reform. Their battle against «fanaticism» — and emotional religiosity, in human history

1981. P. 49–76.

⁴² *Giornale Ecclesiastico di Roma*. T. XV. Roma, 1795, 11 april.

⁴³ *Giornale ecclesiastico di Roma*. T. XI. Roma, 1796. P. 1.

⁴⁰ *Giornale ecclesiastico di Roma*. T. XII. Roma, 1797. P. V.

⁴⁵ Delpiano P. *Liberi di scrivere...* P. 177.

a bearer of corruption and anarchy — moved against religion *tout court*, regardless of whether it was Roman, reformed or pagan. For the Enlightenment which championed the idea of tolerance, Reformation and the Catholics' opposition to it were the beginning of the blooshed that had persisted in Europe for much too long a time. Horrible conflicts, especially for those who aspired to peace, had gone from the battlefields into the theological schools.

In Roman Catholicism, the accusation of Lutheranism, or, rather, of having originated in Lutheran doctrines / heresies, of evolving from Lutheran heresy, had thus been used by all involved, as the worst insult to be wielded at the enemy of the day: jansenists, jesuits, Savoy reforms, libertines, and finally *Illuministes*. But for the philosophers all Churches were one, they all occupied the space of backwardness and the common origin of the evils of war. The political-religious disintegration, and the ongoing fierce conflicts that had arisen, were born of the Reformation, but the Church of Rome shared the responsibility and the guilt. Tolerance defeated religions and wars.

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