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# Padre Agostino Gemelli and the crusade to rechristianize Italy, 1878–1959: Part one

## Abstract

Padre Agostino Gemelli (1878-1959) was an outstanding figure in Catholic culture and a shrewd operator on many levels in Italy, especially during the Fascist period. Yet he remains little examined or understood. Scholars tend to judge him solely in light of the Fascist regime and mark him as the archetypical clerical fascist. Gemelli founded the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan in 1921, the year before Mussolini came to power, in order to form a new leadership class for a future Catholic state. This religiously motivated political goal was intended to supersede the anticlerical Liberal state established by the unifiers of modern Italy in 1860. After Mussolini signed the Lateran Pacts with the Vatican in 1929, Catholicism became the official religion of Italy and Gemelli's university, under the patronage of Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), became a laboratory for Catholic social policies by means of which the church might bring the Fascist state in line with canon law and papal teachings. Despite Gemelli's accommodations to the state, he maintained relative autonomy for his university. This allowed the leftwing of postwar Christian Democracy to form at the Università Cattolica during Mussolini's peak years. Thus, the story of Gemelli is more complex than previous scholars have appreciated. My work attempts to give it the meaningful approximation it deserves. By examining Gemelli's ties to the Risorgimento, the Italian Catholic movement, and the culture and society of his native Milan, I reveal him as a man of consequence even before the onset of Fascism. I also lay out conditions of possibility for his ascendancy among Catholics after Mussolini came to power. Reducing the complexity of Gemelli's activity to a manifestation of clerical fascism obscures the fact that he, like many Italian Catholics who formed a consensus of sorts with the Fascist state, retained a cultural, social, and political vision that looked beyond Fascism. The story of Padre Gemelli sheds light on the totalizing worldview of Catholicism that predates political totalitarianism and made it difficult to separate religion entirely from politics in Fascist Italy.

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PADRE AGOSTINO GEMELLI  
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J. Casey Hammond

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in

History

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

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Padre Agostino Gemelli and the Crusade to Rechristianize Italy, 1878-1959: Part One

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2010

James Casey Hammond

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**ABSTRACT****PADRE AGOSTINO GEMELLI  
AND THE CRUSADE TO RECHRISTIANIZE ITALY, 1878-1959: PART ONE**

J. Casey Hammond

Jonathan Steinberg

Padre Agostino Gemelli (1878-1959) was an outstanding figure in Catholic culture and a shrewd operator on many levels in Italy, especially during the Fascist period. Yet he remains little examined or understood. Scholars tend to judge him solely in light of the Fascist regime and mark him as the archetypical clerical fascist. Gemelli founded the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan in 1921, the year before Mussolini came to power, in order to form a new leadership class for a future Catholic state. This religiously motivated political goal was intended to supersede the anticlerical Liberal state established by the unifiers of modern Italy in 1860. After Mussolini signed the Lateran Pacts with the Vatican in 1929, Catholicism became the official religion of Italy and Gemelli's university, under the patronage of Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), became a laboratory for Catholic social policies by means of which the church might bring the Fascist state in line with canon law and papal teachings. Despite Gemelli's accommodations to the state, he maintained relative autonomy for his university. This allowed the leftwing of postwar Christian Democracy to form at the Università Cattolica during Mussolini's peak years. Thus, the story of Gemelli is more complex than previous scholars have appreciated. My work attempts to give it the meaningful approximation it deserves. By examining Gemelli's ties to the Risorgimento, the Italian Catholic movement, and the culture and

society of his native Milan, I reveal him as a man of consequence even before the onset of Fascism. I also lay out conditions of possibility for his ascendancy among Catholics after Mussolini came to power. Reducing the complexity of Gemelli's activity to a manifestation of clerical fascism obscures the fact that he, like many Italian Catholics who formed a consensus of sorts with the Fascist state, retained a cultural, social, and political vision that looked beyond Fascism. The story of Padre Gemelli sheds light on the totalizing worldview of Catholicism that predates political totalitarianism and made it difficult to separate religion entirely from politics in Fascist Italy.



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But, I ask you, sir, is one lying when, in spite of men determined to exile God from the world, one uses the resources, the delicacy, even the subtlety of one's mind to maintain the rule here below of Him who is the way, the truth and the life – *Ego sum via, veritas et vita*.

– Ferdinand Fabre, *The Abbé Tigrane* (1873)

## INTRODUCTION

The new governing class of men who formed the Italian state between 1860 and 1870 made perhaps its greatest political miscalculation by imposing its brand of anti-clerical Liberalism upon the Catholic church and alienating the Roman papacy whose vast temporal domains it had annexed. Although many pious members of the bourgeoisie took the side of the state, they were an elite without popular Catholic support. Other Catholics, mostly educated, middle-class lay men, fiercely loyal to the Roman papacy, organized the Catholic masses through the structure of parishes, under the guidance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in order to prepare the way for a future Italian state that would restore the teaching authority of the church as the fundamental guarantee for the well being of society. When Fascists replaced Liberals at the helm of the state and then signed a concordat with the papacy in 1929 many Italian Catholics believed that this agreement might at last provide the church with a secure degree of influence over the Italian nation and state.<sup>1</sup>

Padre Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. (1878-1959), who famously converted to Catholicism in 1903, made himself an instrument of the popes and their crusade to rechristianize Italy. His life falls exactly within a distinct period of the Roman papacy's attitude toward the modern state. He was born into a family of politically radical and religiously non-observant Milanese shopkeepers in January 1878 only days before the end of the long tumultuous papacy of Pius IX (1846-1878), the pope who made his antagonism with modern culture manifest in the 'Syllabus of Errors' and who followed this up with the dogma of papal infallibility at Vatican I.<sup>2</sup> Gemelli died shortly after the newly elected John XXIII (1958-1963) announced Vatican II. As he passed into history so did the style of the church of

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Bocci, *Oltre lo Stato liberale. Ipotesi su politica e società nel dibattito cattolico tra fascismo e democrazia* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> David Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican. The Popes' Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

which he had been a faithful part. Its new manner of operating, officially adopted at the Second Vatican Council, could at last be called modern insofar as it embraced political democracy and religious pluralism.<sup>3</sup>

Between his birth and death, between Vatican Councils I and II, between the reactionary condemnations of Pius IX and the welcoming *aggiornamento* of John XIII, lies an epic story of struggle and accommodation between the Italian church and state and in this precise period Gemelli lived out his remarkable career. Among his many contributions the most notable was the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, which throughout the 1920s and 1930s became a veritable laboratory for Catholic social policies by means of which the church might bring the Fascist state in line with canon law and papal teachings. The compromise between Catholicism and Fascism demanded by such a project could be condoned on the part of the church as long as none of its essential beliefs were sacrificed.

The story of Agostino Gemelli is noteworthy not only because it highlights the overlap between Fascism and Catholicism, but also because it involves the emergence of support for political democracy among younger members of his university precisely when his own effort to Catholicize the Fascist state reached its peak in the late 1930s. All of this makes Gemelli, despite his clearly remarkable achievements, an ambiguous figure. Expecting historians to reach a consensus about him is impossible; asking them to take note of his importance and his complexity is, on the other hand, reasonable as well as instructive.

Gemelli, as the most important Catholic cultural figure in Italy during the two decades of

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<sup>3</sup> John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

Fascist rule,<sup>4</sup> kept strange bedfellows. He mixed with the highest levels of both the Catholic church and the Fascist state. Gemelli was, for example, a longtime confidante of Achille Ratti (1857-1939).<sup>5</sup> Elected to the papacy as Pius XI in 1922, Ratti patronized the

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel A. Binchy (1900-1989), an Irish scholar, described Gemelli in 1941 as “the outstanding figure in the intellectual life of Catholic Italy.” D. A. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 482. English-language scholars have long drawn upon the brief sketch of Gemelli that appears in Binchy’s substantial and influential work. John Pollard, the English-speaking world’s current authority on the relationship between Catholicism and Fascism, echoes Binchy’s view, calling Gemelli “the leading Catholic intellectual” during the papacy of Pius XI. John F. Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism, 1929-1932*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 25. Maria Bocci, the foremost scholar on Gemelli, adds shading to this description. “[Gemelli] conducted himself as the ‘battering ram’ for Catholic strategy during the Fascist period, as the vanguard of the battle formation arrayed by the Vatican for getting launched – and sometimes perhaps self-launched – in order to conquer new positions in what was, in Gemelli’s eyes, the true and real ‘battle’ the Church had to fight in the contemporary age.” Maria Bocci, *Agostino Gemelli rettore e francescano. Chiesa, regime, democrazia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2003), p. 18. Because my study of Gemelli concerns his Italian context, I adopt the practice of spelling Fascism with an upper case *F* to refer to specifically Italian Fascism. This distinguishes it from fascism with a lower case *f*, which refers to generic fascism. Roger Griffin, ‘Introduction,’ in *World Fascism. A Historical Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1, ed. Cyprian P. Blamires with Paul Jackson (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Gemelli’s acquaintance with Ratti dates to 1903 when he regularly visited the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, of which Ratti was then a *dottore* and would soon be the *prefetto*. Prior to his religious conversion, Gemelli would go there to discuss, often heatedly, matters of faith with the recently ordained Don Giandomenico Pini (1871-1930), then a *scrittore* working under Ratti. Gemelli was introduced to Pini by his best friend, Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930). Pini had been vice president of the Catholic university student group at Pavia in which Necchi was active while he and Gemelli both studied there. As a leader of Catholic university students, Pini closely collaborated with Giuseppe Toniolo (1845-1918), the theorist *Democrazia cristiana* and a leading early proponent of a Catholic university in post-Risorgimento Italy. Ratti was also a longtime collaborator of Toniolo in working toward this latter goal. Toniolo brought Pini under the patronage of Pope Pius X, who, following his election in August 1903, was keen to maintain authority over Catholic university students. Many students were followers of Don Romolo Murri (1870-1944), whose teachings politicized Toniolo’s *Democrazia cristiana* in a way that threatened Catholic unity. Pini was named chaplain of FUCI (*Federazione universitaria cattolica italiana*) in 1907. During the acute crisis of state that followed the First World War, Pini showed solidarity with FUCI leaders who wanted the group to support the anti-Fascist political activity of the new Catholic-based *Partito*

Università Cattolica, of which Gemelli served as rector after founding it in 1921.<sup>6</sup> When Ratti reconstituted the Pontifical Academy of Science in 1936, he named Gemelli as its president.<sup>7</sup> In order to allow Gemelli greater independence from his superiors in the Franciscan order to which he belonged, Ratti offered to raise him to the level of titular archbishop (an offer Gemelli declined).<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Gemelli maintained a cordial relationship with the violent and anti-clerical Roberto Farinacci (1892-1945),<sup>9</sup> Fascist *ras* of

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*popolare italiano* (PPI). This position led to his removal as FUCI chaplain in 1923, the year after Achille Ratti was elected pope. Ratti removed many active PPI members from leadership of organizations within *Azione cattolica* at that time and he would order the dissolution of the PPI itself in 1926. Teofane Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli. Dalla nascita all'professione religiosa: 1878-1904* (Milano: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 1978), p. 88; Maria Cristina Giuntella, 'Pini, Giandomenico,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1980*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1984), pp. 477-480.

<sup>6</sup> "When, a few months after the inaugural ceremony [of Università Cattolica, on December 7, 1921], he ascended the papal throne, he retained an interest in its welfare which never left him to his dying day." Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy*, p. 484. Gemelli was "an advisor much heeded by Pius XI, who sought his opinions on both the life of the Italian church and the vicissitudes of the political situation." Bocci, *Agostino Gemelli rettore e francescano*, p. 18. "Agostino Gemelli – closely tied to Pius XI, upon whose friendship he was always able to make use as support for the Università [Cattolica] del Sacro Cuore." Emma Fattorini, *Pio XI, Hitler e Mussolini* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2007), p. xiii. "The Catholic University was intended by Pius XI to be the intellectual powerhouse of a new, Catholic Italy, providing the intellectual cadres for its 're-conquest' by the Church." John Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy. Religion, Society and Politics since 1861* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> Régis Ladous, *Des Nobel au Vatican. La fondation de l'Académie pontificiale des sciences* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Arcangelo Mazzotti, 'Padre Gemelli intimo,' *Vita e Pensiero* (August-September 1959), p. 616.

<sup>9</sup> "Their relationship remained cordial" (*i rapporti rimasero cordiali*). In January 1944 Farinacci visited Gemelli at Università Cattolica in "a vain attempt to get him to support Salò [i.e., the *Repubblica sociale italiana*, of which Mussolini was the puppet dictator during the German occupation of northern Italy from September 1943 to April 1945], to which Gemelli replied by diverting the conversation, expressing the bad impression made by the execution of Ciano [i.e., Galeazzo Ciano, the former Italian foreign minister, executed by Salò forces on January 11, 1944]. The Fascist *gerarca* replied: 'You did not want Caesar, now you have Nero.' (*Non lo volete Cesare, avete Nerone.*)" Ezio Franceschini, 'Un anno difficile per P. Gemelli e per la sua università: il 1945,' in *Uomini*

Cremona, secretary of the Fascist party and member of the Grand Council of Fascism, whom “to the end... remained intolerant of any deviation from what he considered pure totalitarian Fascism.”<sup>10</sup> In 1939 Farinacci urged Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) to appoint Gemelli to the Fascist-established Accademia d’Italia (which Mussolini declined to do).<sup>11</sup> It is significant that Gemelli had such a relationship with Farinacci rather than with Mussolini.

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*e fatti dell’Università Cattolica* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1984), pp. 30-32. Just as Gemelli’s connection to Achille Ratti can be attributed, however indirectly, to Ludovico Necchi, so can his connection to Farinacci be traced. As a student at University of Pavia, Necchi enjoyed the patronage of Agostino Riboldi (1839-1902), bishop of Pavia. Necchi invited Gemelli to join him in frequenting the bishop’s table, where the company included well-educated priests who taught in the local diocesan seminary, such as Pietro Maffi (1858-1931), *pro-rettore* of the seminary from 1886, founder of the *Rivista di fisica, matematica e scienze naturali* in 1900, archbishop of Pisa from 1903 and director of the Vatican Observatory from 1904; and Giovanni Cazzani (1867-1952), bishop of Cremona from 1914. Cazzani, having served as Riboldi’s secretary in the chancery of the diocese of Pavia, was also closely tied to Necchi’s patron. Cazzani also had a close relationship with Maffi, whose biography, *Il cardinale Pietro Maffi arcivescovo di Pisa* (1931), he wrote and Gemelli printed through his publishing house Vita e Pensiero. Gemelli shared Cazzani’s close attachment to Maffi, toward whom he felt a special debt of gratitude. “Many times at night [Maffi] guided me in reading the phenomena of the stars. I don’t know: but that which was a scientific school, by degrees, left deep marks on my soul, where they had to intensify when God willed that I recognize the truth of Catholicism.” Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli*, pp. 56-58. Gemelli’s link to Farinacci almost certainly runs through Cazzani, whose four-decade tenure as bishop of Cremona (1914-1952) overlapped both ends of Farinacci’s quarter-century rule as Fascist *ras* of that city (1919-1945).

<sup>10</sup> Harry Fornari, *Mussolini’s Gadfly. Roberto Farinacci* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), p. 213. “Mussolini knew he was able to depend blindly upon the orthodoxy of Farinacci, but that orthodoxy was also the most ferocious criticism, shrewd and honest at the same time, of his personal politics and, whether wanted or not, of his regime.” Giuseppe Pardini, *Roberto Farinacci, ovvero della rivoluzione fascista* (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2007), p. 459.

<sup>11</sup> Franceschini, ‘Un anno difficile per P. Gemelli e per la sua università: il 1945,’ p. 30. Gemelli may have cultivated a relationship with Farinacci because of his ability to oppose Mussolini from within the regime. Farinacci, according to Renzo De Felice, “would end up becoming the point of reference for most adversaries within the *regime*, both those on the ‘right’ and those on the ‘left,’ and in this way would end up assuming the role of their political interpreter: the ‘other’ who, for better or worse, could not be ignored.” Quoted by Giuseppe Sircana, ‘Farinacci, Roberto,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 45 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1995), p. 8.

“Farinacci retained a role as the leader of those who styled themselves the ‘Fascists of the first hour’ and so, should the truth be known (it could not be expressed), the opponents of too much Mussolinian guile.”<sup>12</sup> Gemelli was as shrewd as he was willful; he had a long record of achieving his goals regardless of challenges.

Perhaps Gemelli was too clever or subtle to be easily understood by his contemporaries, let alone by later historians. The mixed company he kept during the Fascist years is reflected in the ambiguous judgments made about him in the immediate postwar period. Following the liberation of northern Italy from Fascist rule and German occupation in April 1945, during which partisans executed Farinacci, as well as Mussolini,<sup>13</sup> the Regional Officer for Education under the Allied Commission in Rome, Major A. A. Vesselo, accused Gemelli of having a “fascist mentality” and sought to have him suspended as rector of the Università Cattolica.<sup>14</sup> The moral philosopher Antonio Banfi (1886-1957), who had signed the Manifesto of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals in 1925 and supported the Communist underground starting in 1941,<sup>15</sup> as appointed head of the Purge Commission (*Commissione di epurazione*) at the venerable Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere,<sup>16</sup> accused Gemelli of collusion with the Fascist regime and sought to suspend his membership.<sup>17</sup> In

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<sup>12</sup> R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy. Life under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), p. 235.

<sup>13</sup> Contrary to “eyewitness reports” that Farinacci’s body, along with those of Mussolini and other Fascist leaders, was strung up in a gas station in the Piazzale Loreto in Milan, it was in fact buried in Vimercate immediately after his execution. Fornari, *Mussolini's Gadfly*, p. 215.

<sup>14</sup> Franceschini, ‘Un anno difficile...’, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> Fulvio Papi, ‘Banfi, Antonio,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 5 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1963), pp. 750-754.

<sup>16</sup> Adele Robbiati Bianchi, ed., *L'Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere (secoli XIX-XX), Vol. I: Storia istituzionale* (Milano: Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere, 2007), p. 614.

<sup>17</sup> Ezio Franceschini, ‘Un anno difficile...’, p. 139.



both cases Gemelli was cleared of the charges. These judgments reflect the confused situation in 1944-1945 when Italians were unable or reluctant to create workable definitions of Fascists and Fascist crimes.<sup>18</sup> Consequently vague definitions in the law and loose practice governed sanctions against Fascism,<sup>19</sup> and the general tendency of purge commissions to target figures with the highest profiles rather than the greatest culpability.<sup>20</sup>

Such facts about Gemelli suggest the extraordinary complexity of the man, as well as the time and place in which he lived. Gemelli, it seems, would have done nearly anything not just to preserve, but also to promote his Catholic university and its purposes during the period of Fascist rule. This was indicated as early as August 1926 in an exchange of letters between Gemelli and Alcide De Gasperi (1881-1954), recently brought to light by Alfredo Canavero.<sup>21</sup> De Gasperi, who two decades later as leader of Christian Democracy (*Democrazia cristiana*, the newly reconstituted political party of Italian Catholics) would become Italy's first postwar prime minister, was then secretary of the soon to be dissolved Catholic-based and anti-Fascist *Partito Popolare Italiano*. Canavero writes that Gemelli acknowledged the unhappy consequence he suffered from "legal recognition of the Università Cattolica [by the Fascist government] and his own nomination [by the Fascist government] to the Higher Council for Education (*Consiglio superiore della Pubblica istruzione*)."<sup>22</sup> Gemelli lamented to De Gasperi that he had, in his own words, "earned this

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<sup>18</sup> Roy Palmer Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> The *Decreto legislativo luogotenenziale*, n. 159, issued on July 27, 1944 by the Italian government, was formed after the liberation of Rome. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948*.

<sup>21</sup> Alfredo Canavero, 'De Gasperi, Gemelli e i clerico-fascisti,' in *Nuova Antologia* (January-March 2009), p. 349-361.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354.

undesirable reputation,” namely, the commonly held opinion that he was Fascist.<sup>23</sup>

Gemelli could live with such regret, if that was the personal price of preserving and promoting his university under the Fascist regime. In a June 1939 letter to Mussolini, Gemelli wrote:

I must acknowledge how much I owe you, who have given to our University the opportunity of cultivating Italy in a Christian way (*la possibilità di educare cristianamente la nostra Italia*). To this enlightened goodness of yours I need to attest to you that we have reciprocated in a positive manner: the youth coming out of our University do honor to Italy and to Fascism, as shown above all by the Fascist spirit that animates them in following your directives, [but also] by means of the competitions for jobs from which they emerge as winners and the positions they achieve. Duce, you have in the Università Cattolica a faithful youth, upon whom you can count for the greatness of the Italy renewed by you.<sup>24</sup>

Gemelli’s university had grown to prominence under Fascism. Long afterward Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti (b. 1919) reflected upon Gemelli, whom he remembered well from this period. Andreotti, a graduate of the University of Rome, or La Sapienza, had been president of the *Federazione universitaria cattolica italiana*, or FUCI, from 1942 to 1944. In this capacity he became a protégé of De Gasperi, then sheltered within the Vatican, and of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), who, in notable contrast to his predecessor, Pius XI, kept the rector of the Università Cattolica at a distance.<sup>25</sup> During these years FUCI members increasingly adhered to the democratic ideas of Giuseppe Dossetti (1913-1996) and Giuseppe Lazzati (1909-1986), two young professors of the Università Cattolica who

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>24</sup> Mimmo Franzinelli, *Il clero del duce/il duce del clero. Il consenso ecclesiastico nelle lettere a Mussolini (1922-1945)* (Ragusa: Edizioni La Fiaccola, 1998), p. 179.

<sup>25</sup> Maria Bocci, ‘Giovanni Battista Montini e padre Gemelli,’ *Istituto Paolo VI*, Notizario 58 (December 2009), pp. 81-102.

had their own differences with the authoritarian Gemelli.<sup>26</sup> Andreotti described the rector's mentality as "a type of Catholic Machiavellianism, in which the ends justify the means, although applied with the best intentions,"<sup>27</sup> as it happens, a not inaccurate description of the speaker, Andreotti himself, the Christian Democrat who served as Prime Minister seven times but was indicted – though never convicted - of association with the mafia.<sup>28</sup>

In death, as in life, Gemelli is found among some who are considered holy, others who are demonized. His body is entombed in the chapel of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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<sup>26</sup> By 1942 Andreotti, like his patrons De Gasperi and Pius XII, imagined a democratic order for postwar Italy, even if the one that emerged under their guidance was conservative and pragmatic. Dossetti and Lazzati, more radically democratic, would represent the leftwing of Christian Democracy in opposition to De Gasperi during the early postwar years. Playing a crucial role in fostering democratic beliefs and tying these men together in the early 1940s was Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978), the future Pope Paul VI (1963-1978). Montini was the leading Italian proponent of the Neo-Thomist theories of democracy developed by French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain in the 1920s and 1930s. He had a personal tie to the Università Cattolica through his brother Lodovico (1896-1990), who taught there. Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI. The First Modern Pope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), p. 106. Gemelli's authoritarianism contrasted with Montini's strong democratic bent, which had a growing appeal among the younger generation of university-educated Italian Catholics. Montini, serving as chaplain to FUCI from 1925 to 1933, had vied with Gemelli for influence over these young persons. Nevertheless, when Gemelli, upon the death of his patron Pius XI in 1939, lost his cherished direct access to the papacy, Montini, by then holding high office in the Vatican secretariat of state, would dutifully serve as the primary channel of communication between Gemelli and Pius XII. Maria Bocci, 'Giovanni Battista Montini e padre Gemelli,' *Istituto Paolo VI*, Notizario 58 (December 2009), pp. 81-102. During this same period Andreotti, serving as president of FUCI, became a favorite of Pius XII, who granted him private audiences "without an appointment." Massimo Franco, *Andreotti. La vita di un uomo politico, la storia di un'epoca* (Milano: Mondadori, 2008), p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Giulio Andreotti, *Intervista su De Gasperi*, ed. Antonio Gambino (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1977), p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> Saverio Lodato and Roberto Scarpinato, *Il ritorno del Principe* (Milano: Chiarelettere, 2008); Massimo Franco, *Andreotti. La vita di un uomo politico, la storia di un'epoca* (Milano: Mondadori, 2010).

alongside others who were instrumental to the founding of the university:<sup>29</sup> Contardo Ferrini (1859-1902),<sup>30</sup> Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930),<sup>31</sup> Armida Barelli (1882-1952),<sup>32</sup> Francesco Olgiati (1886-1962)<sup>33</sup> and Ernesto Lombardo (1846-1935).<sup>34</sup> Independent of

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<sup>29</sup> Gemelli insisted on exhuming Necchi's body for reburial in the university chapel in 1934, shortly after the archdiocese of Milan had agreed, also at Gemelli's insistence, to consider Necchi's candidacy for sainthood. The Vatican declared Necchi venerable in 1971. (The first step in the Vatican process of sainthood is the decree of heroic virtues that makes a candidate venerable, followed by beatification and finally canonization.) Ferrini had been declared venerable in 1931, but Gemelli did not have his body translated to the university chapel until he was beatified in 1947. Gemelli also had Barelli's body reburied in the chapel in 1953; the Vatican declared her venerable in 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Filippo Meda, *Universitari cattolici italiani* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1927), pp. 305-334; Marco Invernizzi, *Il beato Contardo Ferrini (1859-1902). Il rigore della ricerca, il coraggio della fede* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2002); Dario Mantovani, *Contardo Ferrini nel I centenario della morte. Fede, vita universitaria e studio dei diritti antichi alla fine del XIX secolo (Pavia, 17-18 ottobre 2002)* (Milano: Cisalpino, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Giorgio La Pira, *L'anima di una apostolo. Vita interiore di Vico Necchi* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1932); Pio Bondioli, *Vico Necchi, fedel servo di Dio* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1934); Nesta De Robeck, *Vico Necchi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1960); Orazio Petrosillo, *Ludovico Necchi* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1995).

<sup>32</sup> Maria Sticco, *Una donna fra due secoli. Armida Barelli* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1967); Giuseppe Lazzati, *Armida Barelli nella società italiana* (Milano: O.R., 1983); Ezio Franceschini, 'L'angelo custode visibile di Padre Gemelli. Armida Barelli (1882-1952),' in Ezio Franceschini, *Uomini e fatti dell'Università cattolica* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1984), pp. 157-174.

<sup>33</sup> Edoardo Clerici, *Monsignor Francesco Olgiati. l'apologista e il polemista* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1972); Gustavo Bontadini, 'Ricordo di mons. Francesco Olgiati a vent'anni dalla morte,' in Franceschini, *Uomini e fatti dell'Università cattolica*, pp. 186-196; *Monsignor Francesco Olgiati nel I centenario della nascita (1886-1986). Atti del convegno di studio su "Mons. Francesco Olgiati nel I Centenario della nascita," Milano, Università Cattolica, 17 maggio 1986* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1986).

<sup>34</sup> Lombardo, a self-made man who rose from cotton mill worker to cotton textile industrialist, financed numerous projects initiated by Gemelli, for which charitable funding he was made a papal count by Pope Benedict XV. He befriended Giuseppe Toniolo, who during his final illness in 1918 stayed in Lombardo's villa in Varallo Sesia (site of *Sacro Monte di Varallo*, one of the most famous places of Christian pilgrimage in Piedmont). Giuseppe Toniolo, *Lettere*, Vol III. 1904-1918 (Città del Vaticano: Comitato opera omnia di G. Toniolo, 1953), p. 170, n. 1. See also: Mario G. Rossi, 'Movimento cattolico e capitale finanziario. Appunti sulla genesi del blocco clericomoderato,' *Studi storici*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April – June 1972), pp. 276-277; Massimo Angelini, 'Sviluppo industriale e società locale. Campomorone nell'ultimo quarto del XIX secolo,' in *Studi e*

their association with Gemelli's university, Ferrini, Necchi and Barelli were, collectively, important figures in the Catholic movement in Italy from the late nineteenth century until the early postwar years. All three are candidates for sainthood in the Catholic church; Ferrini was beatified in 1947, whereas Necchi and Barelli were declared venerable in 1971 and 2007, respectively. Even Gemelli has been proposed as a candidate for sainthood in his native diocese of Milan, although his cause is not actively pursued. At the same time, Gemelli's name lies uneasily in history books. It is often placed among those condemned for their support of Italian Fascism, the original instance of a now universally reviled phenomenon. There is simply no consensus on the sort of company among which the historical Gemelli ought to be laid to rest.

If sainthood has a secular equivalent, it certainly includes outspoken opponents and martyrs of Fascism such as Socialists Giacomo Matteotti (1885-1924) and Carlo Rosselli (1899-1937), Liberals Giovanni Amendola (1882-1926) and Piero Gobetti (1901-1926), Catholics Don Luigi Sturzo (1871-1959) and Alcide De Gasperi (1881-1954) and Communist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). Such courageous anti-Fascists often ended up exiled, confined, crippled or murdered. Other Italians antipathetic to Fascism often expressed their opposition to the regime by withholding active support and retreating into private life, a phenomenon known under the Nazi regime as "inner emigration". In particular, many Catholics and Liberals believed this was the best way to preserve their ideals or institutions. They chose "a kind of passive resistance" and "found it possible to keep the flame of freedom kindled in the privacy of their homes and religious conventicles."<sup>35</sup> Although passive resisters may become venerated as saints, they are, by comparison with militant

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*ricerche 9°. Il paessaggio dell'uomo dai Liguri Langenses alla Rivoluzione industriale* (1993), pp. 65-142.

<sup>35</sup> Charles F. Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies. The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 85.

resisters, less hailed as anti-Fascists.<sup>36</sup> None of those buried in the chapel of the Università Cattolica is lauded as an anti-Fascist, although all of them, with the exception of Ferrini, lived under Fascist rule.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, only Gemelli has been vilified as a supporter of Fascism.

Gemelli was certainly always more genuinely enthusiastic about and faithful to the Catholic church than the Fascist state, yet he is remembered by many historians less for his odor of sanctity than for his coloring as a Fascist supporter. This is puzzling insofar as the claims of Catholic doctrine and Fascist ideology are ultimately incompatible, a point argued by Richard Wolff, who recognizes “the very contradiction between the tenets of Catholicism

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<sup>36</sup> One definition of anti-Fascism in the Italian context focuses almost entirely on its organized political forms, mostly by parties of the Left. It also admits an “existential and popular” form that “results above all from the unbearableness – moral as well as material – of the conditions of life in Fascist Italy.” It excludes, however, “Liberals and Catholics, who for the most part withdrew into private life and the professions, and who concentrated themselves in... Catholic Action (*Azione cattolica*) and FUCI (*Federazione universitaria cattolica italiana*).” Luca Baldissara, ‘antifascismo,’ in *Il Fascismo. Dizionario di storia, personaggi, cultura, economia, fonti e dibattito storiografico*, ed. Alberto De Bernardi and Scipione Guarracino (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 1998), pp. 149-154. On the other hand, another definition acknowledges both that Italian anti-Fascism “varied from a mere state of mind to organized movements that might logically include any non-Fascist political current” and that “those anti-Fascists who chose to stay in Italy tended to engage in a more passive kind of resistance, with the noteworthy exception of the anarchists and Communists.” Charles F. Delzell, ‘Anti-Fascism,’ in *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, Philip V. Cannistraro, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 22-28.

<sup>37</sup> An argument can be made that those buried beside Gemelli, and even Gemelli, were in some sense “anti-Fascist” insofar as they played important roles in Catholic Action (*Azione cattolica*). Despite efforts by the Fascist state to suppress them, groups organized under Catholic Action remained autonomous as guaranteed by Article 43 of the Concordat of 1929. Mario Einaudi argues that Catholic Action “was anti-Fascist by reason of the simple fact of not being Fascist.” Quoted in Delzell, *Mussolini’s Enemies*, p. 106.

and the creed of Mussolini.”<sup>38</sup> Gemelli’s case thus calls for re-examination. Just as the Catholic church’s process of canonization requires an exhumation and examination of the body<sup>39</sup> and a certification that no improper cult has grown up around the candidate,<sup>40</sup> so historians who dig up and study the record of the past have a duty to make judgments that rest on the critical methods of the historical discipline. Much postwar historiography on Gemelli, especially that done in the English language, harshly judges him as a supporter of Fascism, but such conclusions are usually drawn entirely from published sources. Only with the recent work of Maria Bocci have archives been extensively investigated to reveal a more complex picture.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, much of this historiography, especially by English language scholars, analyzes Gemelli in light of the Fascist regime rather than through the lens of the Italian Catholic movement that preceded, co-existed with and survived – indeed supplanted – it. Upon his conversion to Catholicism in 1903 Gemelli joined this movement (a federation of numerous groups) in Milan, Italy’s largest archdiocese and the most important center in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of the contest between a nascent Catholic authoritarianism and an inchoate Christian democracy.<sup>42</sup>

In this respect, my study of Gemelli may be seen as fitting into an expanded frame of

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<sup>38</sup> Richard J. Wolff, ‘Italy: Catholics, the Clergy, and the Church – Complex Reactions to Fascism,’ in *Catholics, the State, and the European Right, 1919-1945*, eds. Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1987), p. 145.

<sup>39</sup> Congregation for the Causes of Saints, ‘*Sanctorum Mater* – Instruction for conducting diocesan or eparchial Inquiries in the causes of Saints’ (May 17, 2007), Appendix: Canonical recognition of the mortal remains of the Servant of God, Art. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 118.

<sup>41</sup> Bocci, *Agostino Gemelli, rettore e francescano*.

<sup>42</sup> Gabriele De Rosa, *Il movimento cattolico in Italia. Dalla restaurazione all’età giolittiana*, revised and updated (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1988); Nicola Raponi, ‘Milano «capitale morale» e Chiesa ambrosiana. L’età del Cardinal Ferrari (1894-1921),’ in A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi and L. Vaccaro, eds., *Diocesi di Milano*, Vol. II (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1990), pp. 759-816; Angelo Majo, *Storia della Chiesa ambrosiana. Dalle origini ai nostri giorni* (Milano: Nuove Edizioni Duomo, 1995).

reference that includes recent revisionist histories by younger Italian scholars who interpret the Risorgimento as a sort of civil war in which the Catholic church was marked as at best a rival and at worst an enemy of the new Italian state.<sup>43</sup> This struggle may be understood as part of the secular-Catholic tension that occurred throughout Europe from the 1860s to the 1880s.<sup>44</sup> In the Italian case, however, this tension persisted into the twentieth century. Ongoing conflict with the Liberal regime<sup>45</sup> made many, if not most, Italian Catholics amenable to the overtures presented to the church by the Fascist regime.<sup>46</sup> This apparently new attitude toward the church on the part of the state culminated in official recognition of the rights of the church and the sovereignty of the pope in the Lateran Pacts signed in 1929. For years militant Catholics had struggled to restore Catholic culture to predominance in Italy and they thought the conditions for this possibility had finally come into existence.

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<sup>43</sup> Guido Formigoni, *L'Italia dei cattolici. Fede e nazione dal Risorgimento all'Repubblica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998); Angela Pellicciari, *Risorgimento da riscrivere. Liberali & massoni contro la Chiesa* (Milano: Edizioni Ares, 1998), *L'altro Risorgimento. Una guerra di religione dimenticata* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2000), *Risorgimento anticattolico. La persecuzione della Chiesa nelle Memorie di Giacomo Margotti* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Maria Bocci, *Oltre lo Stato liberale. Ipotesi su politica e società nel dibattito cattolico tra fascismo e democrazia* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1999); Marco Invernizzi *I cattolici contro l'unità d'Italia? L'Opera dei Congressi (1874-1904). Con i profili biografici dei principali protagonisti* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2002); Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e Stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> A notable exception was Don Luigi Sturzo (1871-1959), secretary of the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, whose uncompromising anti-Fascism resulted in his forced resignation from his party role in July 1923. Luigi Sturzo, *Pensiero antifascista* (Torino: Gobetti, 1925); Giovanni Sale, 'Le «dimissioni» di Don Sturzo da segretario del PPI,' *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 2006, IV, pp. 114-126. Most of the rank and file PPI members shared Sturzo's antipathy toward Fascism. "On 31 July 1923 the Fascist Grand Council declared officially that the PPI was the 'enemy of fascism.'" John Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy. Partito Popolare, 1919-1926* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), p. 170. Nevertheless, many Italian Catholics were considerably less hostile toward Fascism.



Gemelli is best understood in terms of the history of this Catholic militancy. Beyond knowing that Gemelli made compromises with Fascism, it is important to understand how his compromises accorded with the Catholic movement's long term goal of creating an integrally Catholic Italy. A historian who chooses to view Gemelli this way must adopt a religious frame of reference, rather than a strictly political one.

The political frame of reference that most scholars, especially English language historians, have heretofore employed to examine and judge Gemelli, presents a narrower and distorted picture. It ignores or devalues that which Gemelli held as foremost. The Franciscan community of which Gemelli was a member argued for such a new historical perspective on the fiftieth anniversary of his death in 2009:

With regards to every persistent *effort to remove* or *attitude of indifference toward* [italics added] the Catholic life and vision of Gemelli, historical research is now able to present with intellectual honesty and well-grounded arguments the essential reasons of the great and lasting choices made by Fr. Agostino Gemelli, to comprehend and gather in their authentic unity the multiple and original contributions offered by him to the Church, to science and culture, to society and Italian institutions.<sup>47</sup>

With this in mind, my work aims at understanding Gemelli's role within the program developed by Pope Pius XI to remake Italy as an integrally Catholic society.<sup>48</sup> According

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<sup>47</sup> 'Celebrazioni all'Università Cattolica in occasione del 50° anniversario della morte di Fr. Agostino Gemelli,' *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*. An. CXXVIII, N. 1 (January-April 2009), p. 148

<sup>48</sup> While there is a substantial body of literature on *Azione cattolica* (the lay Catholic spiritual movement in Italy) during the papacy of Pius XI, there is little historical scholarship on his political theology. Much of the existing literature is in French, perhaps because of interest in Pius XI's 1926 condemnation of *Action française*, the secular rightwing political movement that had drawn a large Catholic following. Marc Agostino, 'Chapitre II: Le message de Pie XI,' in Marco Agostino, *Le pape Pie XI et l'opinion*

to this program, rooted in the post-Risorgimento period but transformed by the experience of Italian participation in the First World War, “the civil authority should not block the design for returning society to God because only a re-christianization of society could bring back peace and prosperity. Other human institutions have little place in this hierocratic design except as support for it or integration with it.”<sup>49</sup> Gemelli founded the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, the first Catholic university in post-Risorgimento Italy, in Milan in 1921, with the intention of training the *classe dirigente* for this prophesied Catholic state. From its founding – a year before the March on Rome – this university was meant to be the center of a cultural movement with broad social and political consequences. Gramsci recognized it as such; he understood Gemelli’s activity as part of an attempt at establishing a Catholic cultural hegemony.<sup>50</sup> In this sense Gemelli may be called a “Catholic totalitarian” rather than a “Fascist.” Indeed, Pius XI expressed his hopes for “Catholic totalitarianism” – perhaps jesting in his use of this loaded term – when he met Mussolini for the first and only time in 1932.<sup>51</sup> In a speech given a few months before his death Pius XI said, “If there is a totalitarian regime – totalitarian by law and by fact – this is the regime

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(1922-1939) (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991), pp. 71-121; Giorgio Rumi, ‘Il cuore del re. Spiritualità e progetto da Benedetto XV a Pio XI,’ in *Achille Ratti. Pape Pie XI. Actes du colloque organisé par l’École française de Rome en collaboration avec l’Université de Lille III – Greco no. 2 du CNRS, l’Università degli studi di Milano, l’Università degli studi di Roma - «La Sapienza», La Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Rome, 15-18 mars 1989)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1996), pp. 279-292; Bocci, *Oltre lo Stato liberale*; Fabrice Bouthillon, *La naissance de la Mardité. Une théologie politique à l’âge totalitaire: Pie XI (1922-1939)* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2001); Fattorini, *Pio XI, Hitler e Mussolini*.

<sup>49</sup> Fattorini, *Pio XI, Hitler e Mussolini*, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> “[Gemelli’s] interests are purely practical, about conquest of the cultural marketplace by Catholicism, and his activity is directed at securing for the Vatican that *indirect power* over society and over the State that is the fundamental strategic goal of the Jesuits, and [that] was theorized by Roberto Bellarmino [Robert Bellarmine], now a saint of theirs.” Antonio Gramsci, ‘Lotta intorno alla filosofia neoscolastica,’ in *Opere di Antonio Gramsci*, Vol. 5 (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1955), p. 283.

<sup>51</sup> Bosworth, *Mussolini’s Italy*, p. 259.

of the Church, because man belongs totally to the Church.”<sup>52</sup> Gemelli’s brand of *totalitarismo* was inherited in different forms, first from the militant Catholic lay movement of the late nineteenth century, and then from the papal authoritarianism that resolutely subordinated that movement in the early twentieth century. As such, “Catholic totalitarianism” in Italy predates Fascist totalitarianism.<sup>53</sup> Whether one chooses to label him a sort of totalitarian or not, Gemelli all the same ran his university as a determined autocrat. His official title, *Magnifico rettore*, supplied the basis for his nickname, *Magnifico terrore*. He personally hired all thirty-five of the university’s original professors. He divided them between two faculties, namely philosophy (Gemelli wanted to establish neo-scholasticism as the dominant worldview underlying all intellectual activity, replacing both positivism and Crocean idealism) and social sciences (he sought to build upon the social theory of *Democrazia cristiana* and to develop *Medioevalismo* as a model for a modern Catholic society and state that rejects both Liberalism and Bolshevism). He would thus personally supervise the education and training of a future Catholic leadership class.

As instruments for the restoration of Catholic culture in Italy, the faculty and students of the Università Cattolica were expected to strive for Christian perfection of their minds, bodies and souls. Inspired by Pius XI’s encyclical *Quas primas* issued in December 1925,<sup>54</sup> a teaching on the absolute sovereignty of Christ that can also be read as a condemnation of Fascist statism, Gemelli in 1928 established the *Pio Sodalizio dei Missionari della Regalità di Cristo* as a secular institute whose members, both lay and clerical, were expected to lead

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted by Renato Moro, ‘Religion and Politics in the Time of Secularization: The Sacralisation of Politics and the Politicisation of Religion,’ *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (June 2005), p. 81.

<sup>53</sup> “*Totalitarismo*” was coined by Giovanni Amendola in 1923. Emilio Gentile, ‘Totalitarianism,’ in *World Fascism. A Historical Encyclopedia*. Vol. 2, ed. Cyprian P. Blamires with Paul Jackson (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2006), p. 669.

<sup>54</sup> Pope Pius XI, ‘*Quas primas*’ (1925), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 271-279.

consecrated lives of poverty, obedience and chastity.<sup>55</sup> An integral part of the Università Cattolica, this institute counted many professors among its members. Of particular interest is the internal conflict that developed between 1934 and 1938 when a more militant younger generation of professors – influenced by the democratic teachings of French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), whose writings were championed in Italy by Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978), the future Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) – were led by the aforementioned Giuseppe Lazzati to rebel against Gemelli's authoritarianism. They criticized the way in which Gemelli blurred the distinction between religious and secular activity. This was perhaps the only successful challenge to Gemelli's leadership within the university during his four-decade long tenure as rector (1921-1959). Lazzati, supported by Dossetti and other younger lay professors who had joined the *Missionari della Regalità di Cristo*, challenged Gemelli and broke off to form their own secular institute in 1938 under the patronage of the archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster (1880-1954). These same men would later form the left wing of Christian Democracy in the immediate postwar period. Lazzati, who was perhaps as close to Pope Paul VI in intellectual and temperamental terms as Gemelli had been to Pius XI, would serve as rector of Università Cattolica from 1968 to 1983, years that largely coincide with Paul VI's papacy. This episode is important not only because it sheds light on some of the men who played key roles in immediate postwar Christian Democracy, but also because it foreshadows tensions over separation of church and state expressed during the Second Vatican Council (1962-

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<sup>55</sup> Giorgio Rumi, 'Profilo culturale della diocesi ambrosiana tra le due guerre,' in Paolo Pecorari, ed., *Chiesa, Azione cattolica e fascismo nell'Italia settentrionale durante il pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939). Atti del quinto Convegno di storia della Chiesa, Torreglia, 25-27 marzo 1977* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1979), pp. 321-358; Francesco De Lazzari, 'Origini dell'Istituto secolare delle Missionarie della Regalità di Cristo (Assisi: Tipografia Porziuncola, 1988); Daniele Menozzi, 'La dottrina del regno di Cristo tra autoritarismo e totalitarismo,' in Daniele Menozzi and Renato Moro, eds., *Cattolicesimo e totalitarismo. Chiese e culture religiose tra le due guerre mondiali (Italia, Spagna, Francia)* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2004), pp. 17-55.

1965).

In addition to highlighting the integralist Catholic movement as the context for Gemelli's institutional activity during the Fascist period, I recover elements of late nineteenth century Milan as the context for Gemelli's identity-formation process. If it is important to know Gemelli's Catholic background, then it is also important to know his Milanese background. Gemelli's strong identity as both Catholic and Milanese preceded, coexisted with, and outlasted Fascist influence in Italy. Indeed, fundamental historical structures such as "Catholicism, the family, the *paese* and region, patron-client networks" and others, as Richard Bosworth points out, tended to withstand Fascist totalitarianism.<sup>56</sup> Gemelli's biographers, however, leave unexplained some of the most important influences in his life.<sup>57</sup> For example, they tell us *tout court* that Gemelli gained the patronage of famous and influential men while he was still a youth,<sup>58</sup> but they do not explain how this was possible for the son of an apparently ordinary family of shopkeepers in a class-conscious society. They elsewhere tell us *tout court* that Gemelli was related to a famous Risorgimento figure,<sup>59</sup> but they do not explain this man's importance to Italian history or his influence upon Gemelli's education. Insofar as these biographers were immediate heirs to Gemelli's

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<sup>56</sup> R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 242.

<sup>57</sup> Maria Sticco, *Padre Gemelli: appunti per la biografia di un uomo difficile* (Milano: O. R., 1975) [trans. Beatrice Wilczynski, *Father Gemelli: notes for the biography of a great man*, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980)]; Teofane Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli. Dalla nascita alla professione religiosa, 1878-1904* (Milano: Biblioteca Francescana, 1978); Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985).

<sup>58</sup> As a university student Gemelli gained the patronage of Filippo Turati (1857-1932), founder of the *Partito Socialista Italiano* in 1892, and Camillo Golgi (1843-1926), discoverer of the structure of the nerve cell in 1873 and winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1906. After his religious conversion at age twenty-five Gemelli gained the personal solicitude of Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari, the archbishop of Milan (1894-1921), and even that of the pope, Pius X (1903-1914).

<sup>59</sup> Through his mother, Gemelli was related to Agostino Bertani (1812-1886), physician to Garibaldi during the Risorgimento and leading Radical parliamentarian in the newly unified state.

Milan<sup>60</sup> and their readers were men and women familiar with the man and the city,<sup>61</sup> they might have had a tendency to overlook what they felt was obvious. These biographers often provide a narrative without the analysis needed to make it comprehensible to someone from another time and place.

The Milanese biographers tend to take for granted other remarkable features of Gemelli's life and work. Gemelli studied medicine and qualified as a physician before he forsook positivism and Socialism and took up Catholicism in their place. After his religious conversion he continued to carry out innovative scientific research as a Franciscan priest. He advocated the merits of Freudian psychotherapy at a time when the church was hostile to it.<sup>62</sup> He argued for the establishment of psychology as an autonomous science in Italian universities when other scientifically trained men fought over its definition as a branch of either philosophy or physiology.<sup>63</sup> He served in the army twice, first as a conscripted medical orderly before his conversion and again during the First World War as a medical officer. Serving with the General Staff on the Isonzo front, he founded the first psychiatric hospital for the Italian military and the first psychological exams for military pilots. During this period he was also assistant chaplain to the General Staff. But it was during his earlier

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<sup>60</sup> Maria Sticco (1891-1981) was born in Perugia, but joined the faculty of Università Cattolica as a young woman and remained there for the rest of her long life. Giorgio Cosmacini (b. 1931) and Maria Bocci (b. 1964) are both natives and residents of Milan. No information is available on the origins of Teofane Cesana, but it seems very likely that he belongs to the Milan Province of the Order of Friars Minor.

<sup>61</sup> The works of Sticco, Cesana and Cosmacini were published between 1975 and 1985, approximately 25 to 35 years after Gemelli's death. The preface of each book presumes recognition of Gemelli as a figure of important cultural stature. Even Bocci's biography published in 2003 assumes familiarity with the subject.

<sup>62</sup> Daria Colombo, 'Psychoanalysis and the Catholic Church in Italy: the role of Father Agostino Gemelli, 1925-1953,' *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 39, Issue 4 (Fall 2003), pp. 333-348.

<sup>63</sup> Agostino Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neo-scolastica* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1926).

period of service in 1902-1903 while assigned to the military hospital of Milan, located in the former monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, that he experienced the most intense intellectual skepticism and spiritual awakening of his life while in the daily company of two Catholic medical orderlies, the aforementioned Ludovico Necchi, his best friend since boyhood (and later a co-founder of the Università Cattolica), and Arcangelo Mazzotti (1880-1961), then a Franciscan seminarian (and later an archbishop of Sassari, in Sardinia).<sup>64</sup> When the young doctor's faith in Socialism and positivism had disintegrated these two influenced his transition to Catholicism.

In November 1903 Gemelli entered the Franciscan convent at Rezzato, near Brescia. This was precisely when the church passed from the pontificate of the subtle and progressive reign of Leo XIII to that of the saintly reactionary Catholicism of Pius X, who formally launched the campaign against so-called Modernists in the church with the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* in 1907. The first decade of Gemelli's life in the church, during which he received formation as a Franciscan priest and was ordained in 1908, thus unfolded under the most restrictive papacy of the twentieth century. This did not prevent Gemelli from finding favor among conservative members of the hierarchy. In 1909, with the personal support of Pius X, he founded the *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica*, in which he promoted Thomist philosophy as the intellectual foundation of an integrally Catholic culture. During these years he became known for his attempts to use modern science to explain miraculous cures at Lourdes and other shrines. He traveled widely and frequently among European universities, especially in Germany, to further his study of histology and experimental psychology. In 1914 he received an Italian academic degree in psychology. Although the crusade against Modernism required caution and circumspection in a

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<sup>64</sup> Guido Rombi, *Chiesa e società a Sassari dal 1931 al 1961. L'episcopato di Arcangelo Mazzotti* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2000).

scientifically and liberally minded novice, during this period Gemelli, in contrast to some of the well-educated clergy who had been his earliest champions, became an aggrandized figure in the church.

After the death of Pius X in August 1914, the new pope, Benedict XV put an end to anti-Modernist purges and Gemelli quickly sought and gained his support to launch a new Catholic cultural journal, *Vita e pensiero*, aimed at a wider audience of educated Italian Catholics. The papacy of Benedict XV, “the unknown pope” as John Pollard has called him,<sup>65</sup> was dominated by the First World War, during which Gemelli served at the front with the general staff. He seems to have had an unerring instinct for the powerful and got to know General Luigi Cardona (1850-1928), the Italian Commander-in-Chief on the Isonzo in 1917. That same year Gemelli succeeded in having the entire Italian military consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, thus earning the favor of much of the Italian church hierarchy. Once again Gemelli turned a crisis to advantage.

In the spring of 1918, after Soviet surrender of Russian Poland to Germany and Austria, Benedict XV named Ratti, former prefect of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan and acquaintance of Gemelli since 1903, as Apostolic Visitor to Warsaw, in which capacity Ratti witnessed not only the frightening menace of Soviet Bolshevism, but just as importantly the alarming subjection of Catholicism to Polish nationalist purposes.<sup>66</sup> Gemelli and Ratti formed a much closer and lasting bond in 1921 when Ratti became archbishop of Milan and Gemelli founded the Università Cattolica there. Ratti immediately became Gemelli’s most

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<sup>65</sup> John F. Pollard, *The Unknown pope. Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the pursuit of peace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999).

<sup>66</sup> Ratti ascended to the papacy in 1922 with firsthand knowledge of how European nationalist movements attempted to instrumentalize Catholicism. This experience certainly bore upon his condemnation of the ultra-nationalist *Action française* in 1925.



important patron. Within a year Ratti had become Pope Pius XI and Mussolini had marched on Rome. The complete change of circumstances opened up new networks of contact and influence and Gemelli spun the necessary connections. These contacts must explain how Gemelli managed in 1927, against much resistance, to obtain the military hospital in Milan as the seat for his university. Gemelli was bent upon acquiring this site because of its centuries of close association with Ambrose, the patron saint of Milan. The university is his lasting monument. Today it is the largest non-state university in Europe, with an enrollment of 40,000 students. Its graduates include prime ministers of the Republic of Italy and cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. But even without the foundation of the university Agostino Gemelli would deserve serious attention as an experimental psychologist (both for his innovative laboratory work and for his successful effort to prevent the complete suppression of his discipline in Italian universities during the Fascist period) and as a Catholic publisher and polemicist (one who feverishly promoted a religious orthodoxy strictly in line with the teachings of the recent popes). He was the prodigious, even frenzied, author of over 2,000 published titles,<sup>67</sup> although the quality of his writing was sometimes criticized.<sup>68</sup>

This is not a biography of Gemelli; it makes no effort to tell his story in a single continuous narrative. I nevertheless have a strong appreciation for biography and narrative as perhaps the most deeply human modes of conveying historical knowledge. Since Gemelli destroyed his private papers (even reclaiming and burning his correspondence with friends and relatives) a critical biography of Gemelli based on existing archival sources of data is

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<sup>67</sup> Edoarda Preto, ed., *Bibliografia di Padre Agostino Gemelli* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1981).

<sup>68</sup> Some unsympathetic faculty members of the Università Cattolica criticized Gemelli's published writing as "hurried, bungled, pseudoscientific." Maria Sticco, *Father Gemelli: notes for the biography of a great man*, trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), p. 166.

formidably difficult. My work attempts to think about Gemelli in historical terms. It assumes no familiarity with the man or his context. It thus provides a sort of historical anthropology of late nineteenth century Milan and a study of the extraordinary, rich and complicated Catholic milieu in which Gemelli operated. If Carl Schorske's *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, "with its acutely felt tremors of social and political disintegration," produced innovative thinkers who consciously developed an "a-historical culture,"<sup>69</sup> Gemelli's late nineteenth century Milan, amidst tensions that would soon explode in the violent riots of May 1898, generated socially and politically progressive journalists who prudently appealed to *ambrosianità*, the city's ancient tradition of civil and religious values. I study this as well as other factors, both concrete and abstract, which shaped Gemelli as a person and from which he drew to create his own identity – both private and public. These include cultural symbols, historical references, intellectual assumptions, institutional structures, social networks and personal relationships.<sup>70</sup> My study of Gemelli takes a similar approach to that found in the new Italian historiography on the Risorgimento. Working in this field, Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg seek a history inspired by a variety of disciplines and new methodologies:

anthropology, cultural and gender studies, analysis of texts (written, visual or musical), exploration of the imaginary, juxtaposition. The goal of this new orientation is to make the deep culture of the Risorgimento come alive; to discern the mentality, the feelings, the emotions, the trajectories of life, the personal and

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<sup>69</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. xvii.

<sup>70</sup> While English language historians have produced excellent social histories on Milanese workers and shopkeepers during this period, these works are too specialized to provide a lively sense of late nineteenth century Milanese culture beyond certain political and economic concerns. Louise A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881-1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Jonathan Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan, 1886-1922* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

political projects of the men and women who took part in the Risorgimento.<sup>71</sup>

In a similar way, I try to make the historical Gemelli more conceivable as a human being by placing him inside specific venues, among identifiable persons and within particular institutions. My attempt to understand Gemelli led me to discover the social network that made late nineteenth and twentieth century Milan and Italy an enlarged, face-to-face community. I found myself, as it were, in a large Victorian house. Every door I opened contained yet another set of personalities of whom I had no knowledge but who came to life as essential contacts, friends, opponents, supporters, detractors, patrons and clients of Agostino Gemelli. As a result, my work links the various personalities to each other and reconstructs relationships and networks, connecting them also to wider influences and higher levels in both church and state. The old Italian saying “*ci vuole sempre un’aggancio*” [you always need a contact] applied in Gemelli’s Milan and in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Gemelli knew where to find them, how to use them and how, when conditions changed, to replace them. My work thus exemplifies what Lawrence Stone called prosopography, which he defined as “the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives.”<sup>72</sup> This allows the historian “to make sense of political action, to help explain ideological or cultural change, to identify social reality, and to describe and analyze with precision the structure of society and the degree and nature of the movements within it.”<sup>73</sup> In the case at hand it reveals that the men and milieu surrounding Gemelli were tinged with *ambrosianità*. Gemelli’s identity, even as a Catholic, was more Milanese than it was Italian.

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<sup>71</sup> Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg, ‘Per una nuova storia del Risorgimento,’ in *Storia d’Italia. Annali 22. Il Risorgimento*, eds. Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2007), p. xxiii.

<sup>72</sup> Lawrence Stone, ‘Prosopography,’ in *Daedalus*, Vol. 100, No. 1 (Winter 1971), p. 46.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

His strongest attachments, ties that withstood vicissitudes of church and state, were formed in Milan.

Of great importance, but never before adequately studied, is the connection that Gemelli sought to establish between himself and the figure of Ambrose (c. 337-397), the great fourth century bishop of Milan and patron saint of that city. During his religious conversion in 1903 and for long afterward Gemelli symbolically drew upon the collective Milanese memory of St. Ambrose in order to enhance his own status and authority both in the church and in the city. Ambrose is extraordinarily important for having established the enduring principle of distinction between church and state. A twentieth century scholar of Ambrose, referring to the fourth century in which this bishop was both a religious and civil authority, put it thus:

The Church had now become a force, not only for the guidance and support of the State, but also for the criticism and correction of the State. It now dared – as hitherto it had never dared – to intervene decisively in temporal matters, and to insist that the public acts of the Emperor or of the Government should conform to the canons approved by the Christian reason and conscience. This new development, which was destined to affect profoundly the course of history, was brought about mainly through the agency of the robust personality of Ambrose.<sup>74</sup>

Gemelli demonstrated a precocious acumen in human affairs by identifying himself with Milan's patron saint during his conversion in 1903. His association with Ambrose endures to this day in the fabric of Milan. Gemelli could not, however, have foreseen a certain irony that would develop out of his identification with Ambrose. Gemelli is remembered today as

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<sup>74</sup> F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 500.

someone who confused religious and civil authority, rather than rather than as someone who distinguished them. Although Gemelli would have considered himself a cultural figure rather than a political figure, the relationship between church and state, and the political implications of this relationship, lie close to the heart of Gemelli's historical importance. That Gemelli made certain compromises with Fascism is clear. Whether and how Gemelli confused Catholicism with Fascism is an important question that I wish to take up.

Forming a judgment on Gemelli's behavior during the Fascist era is complicated not only by the ambiguity of the evidence, but also by the strong, sometimes overpowering, concern about politics that motivates so much historical writing about that period. In this regard the case of Gemelli raises certain questions. What is the best way to understand someone who acted in a politically charged climate, but was guided by principles and ends that were primarily religious rather than political? What is gained and lost by privileging a political perspective in such an analysis? How do conclusions differ when the subject is measured according to the doctrine and discipline of his church rather than the politics and ideologies of parties to which he did not belong but with which he necessarily engaged? Is the subject more clearly understood within the religious context that circumscribed him more tightly, or within the political context that fits him more loosely? Such questions are complicated by the fact that religious and political phenomena, though distinguishable in theory, are rarely – for the religious person – separable in practice. Nevertheless, political and religious perspectives reveal the subject in meaningfully different ways. An accurate understanding of Gemelli cannot be reached without thoughtful and knowledgeable consideration of the religious perspective. Gemelli, after all, saw himself as putting religious concerns above all others. He placed himself entirely in the service of popes, who from the start recognized his unusual importance and took a direct interest in him. If Gemelli dedicated himself to the idea of a Catholic university that would form a lay leadership class for a future Catholic

Italy, then he remained deftly attuned to pertinent papal teachings and pronouncements throughout the tumultuous and violent first-half of the twentieth century.

Although Padre Agostino Gemelli belonged to the camp that helped shape the conservative authoritarian evolution of the Roman Catholic Church during the first part of the twentieth century, there was another, very different movement embodied in his contemporary Angelo Roncalli (1881-1963),<sup>75</sup> elected pope just short of his seventy-seventh birthday in year before Gemelli died. Roncalli, a fellow Lombard, was much more sensitive to the intensifying dynamic of the twentieth century. As Pope John XXIII, he called the Second Vatican Council and generated an extraordinary shift of emphasis in Catholicism's cultural expression,<sup>76</sup> though, as we see under the present Pope Benedict XVI, not a permanent one.

Despite his anti-democratic views, Gemelli was in other ways progressive. He certainly maintained an active lifelong interest in new developments in science and technology. Moreover, his university succeeded brilliantly in producing a *classe dirigente* for postwar Italy; his own protégé, Amintore Fanfani (1908-1999), was five times prime minister of postwar Italy and leading proponent of the “opening to the left” after the election of John XXIII allowed the ruling *Democrazia cristiana* to shift in that direction.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, Gemelli's worldview was largely a legacy of the Risorgimento and the militant Catholic response to it. The sphere in which his sense of order, hierarchy and authority operated was vastly diminished in postwar Italy. Perhaps Gemelli's outmoded character has also

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<sup>75</sup> F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 500.

<sup>76</sup> John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> Vincenzo La Russa, *Amintore Fanfani* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2006); Giovanni Michelagnoli, *Amintore Fanfani. Dal corporativismo al neovolontarismo statunitense* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2010).

influenced the moral judgments passed upon him by postwar historians.

My descriptive study of Gemelli and his world thus takes the following shape. There is, first of all, an imaginative reconstruction of the city of Milan at the end of the nineteenth century. Gemelli cannot be understood as just an Italian, but must be appreciated in his Milanese particularity. One chapter studies the physical and cultural space of the Piazza del Duomo, where Gemelli was born and raised, interpreting it as the long contested ground of religion, politics and commerce as well as the very heart of modern Italy. Another more conventionally biographical chapter covers Gemelli's youth by considering the influences of his middle-class family life and state education, steeped in the Liberal values of the Risorgimento, as well as his most important school friendship with Necchi, a Catholic youth who defied those values. Two other chapters contextualize the way in which Gemelli attached his religious conversion in 1903 to Ambrose, the popular patron saint of Milan, and to the Basilica Sant' Ambrosio, the ancient church that still laid claim as the symbolic heart of the Lombard capital. When Gemelli embraced the Catholic church he did so by wrapping himself in an Ambrosian cloak that even his anti-clerical compatriots could admire. Another chapter traces the origins of the Neo-Guelphist concept of a Catholic nation or state in the nineteenth century, connects this concept to the Neo-Scholastic teachings on church and state under Pope Leo XIII, and analyzes the various doctrinally informed political positions of Milanese Catholics at the end of the nineteenth century. An epilogue highlights Gemelli's historical importance by relating his activities and his institutions, especially his university, to papal principles and strategies for ensuring the authority and influence of the Catholic church during a period of drastic social and political developments. This epilogue provides the outline for what will be Part II of my history of Gemelli – his role in the crucial shift from implicit papal support for authoritarian governments on the part of Pius XI to explicit papal support for democratic ones on the part

of Pius XII. Of special interest is Pius XI's condemnation of *Action française* in 1926 and the subsequent growing influence of Maritain's democratic ideas upon the younger faculty of the Università Cattolica in the 1930s. Finally, an extended bibliographical essay on Gemelli discusses his treatment, as well as his neglect, by postwar historians. It argues for a more cautious attitude toward the category of "clerical fascism" into which Gemelli has been placed by some historians without much investigation.

This then is, in effect, the first part of a much larger "Life-and-Times" study of a remarkable and influential figure, Padre Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., founder and rector of the Catholic University of Milan, but in a more general sense a proponent of one of the great currents of ecclesiastical politics in the twentieth century: the current that rejects much of the world as it is and sees salvation in a struggle to restore all of society to Christian values and Christian discipline. In that sense a study of Gemelli, his successes and his failures, may be of wider than antiquarian interest when Pope Benedict XVI attempts softly but steadily to reverse the "aggiornamento", the reforming impact of the Second Vatican Council. Gemelli would have understood and approved the projects of the present pope.



## **Chapter 1: GEMELLI IN HISTORY**

Gemelli is a polemical figure in postwar Italian historiography. The reductive portraits of him drawn for the sake of argument nevertheless add up to a composite of contrasting images that allows one to surmise the man's great complexity. English language historiography on Gemelli for the same period is simply impoverished. Much of it altogether omits him. That which mentions Gemelli tends, with little if any analysis of him, to conclude that he was a "clerical fascist." Gemelli merits both greater notice and more detailed study. Indeed, the same could be said of many Italian Catholic figures during the Fascist period. Fausto Fonzi highlighted this problem in the historiography a generation ago when he asked "whether real historiographical progress is constituted by the substitution of ever more precise and shaded distinctions achieved by specialized historical research... for the preceding indistinguishableness and mixing-up of Catholics of differing and even opposed orientations."<sup>78</sup> If such distinctions were apparent or important to Catholics who lived in Fascist Italy, then they should be a matter of interest to historians of Italian Fascism. As the leading Catholic cultural figure during the two decades of Fascist rule, Gemelli especially deserves to be removed from the shadows.

### **Italian Language Historiography**

Italian language historians are familiar with Gemelli. He is usually found in their general histories of modern Italy.<sup>79</sup> "Padre Agostino Gemelli has drawn the attention of

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<sup>78</sup> Fausto Fonzi, *I cattolici e la società italiana dopo l'unità*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Roma: Edizioni Studium, 1977), p. 177.

<sup>79</sup> I exclude multi-volume histories of modern Italy and consider only single-volume histories in order to render a more valid comparison with English language scholarship

historians,” claims Maria Bocci, “above all for the relations that he, as rector of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, maintained with Fascism.”<sup>80</sup> It is thus striking that some recent general histories mention Gemelli primarily, if not exclusively, for his activity during the pre-Fascist period; in fact, these works never mention that Gemelli was a supporter of Fascism.<sup>81</sup> Other recent general histories that place Gemelli in the Fascist period give seemingly opposed views of him. Danilo Veneruso claims that the group at Università Cattolica under Gemelli’s leadership accepted “a presentation of Fascism as temporal expression of Catholicism,”<sup>82</sup> while Sergio Romano asserts that Gemelli and his university provided a relatively open space in which intellectuals could operate during the Fascist period, just as long as they superficially conformed to Fascism. “After taking oath to the Fascist regime [as required of all teachers by the ruling party], [the Università Cattolica] acquired the ability to continue its own research, above all its own teaching activity.”<sup>83</sup> Giuseppe Carlo Marino suggests both views might be valid. He contends that Fascist opposition to “bourgeois mentality” (*spirito borghese*) as a form

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on the same subject, which is all single-volume. Gemelli is mentioned in Alberto De Bernardi and Luigi Ganapini, *Storia d’Italia, 1860-1995* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 1996); Sergio Romano, *Storia d’Italia dal Risorgimento ai nostri giorni* (Milano: Longanesi, 1998); Valerio Castronovo, Renzo De Felice and Pietro Scoppola, *L’Italia del novecento* (Torino: UTET Libreria, 2004); Danilo Veneruso, *Storia d’Italia nel novecento*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Roma: Edizioni Studium, 2004); and Aurelio Lepre and Claudia Petraccone, *Storia d’Italia dall’Unità a oggi* (Bologna: Mulino, 2008). Gemelli is not mentioned in Giampiero Carocci, *Storia d’Italia dall’unità ad oggi* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1975); and Simona Colarizi, *Storia del novecento italiano* (Milano: Biblioteca universale Rizzoli, 2000).

<sup>80</sup> Maria Bocci, ‘Gemelli, Agostino,’ in *Dizionario del Fascismo*, Vol. 1, eds. Victoria De Grazia and Sergio Luzzatto (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2003), p. 577.

<sup>81</sup> Alberto De Bernardi and Luigi Ganapini, *Storia d’Italia, 1860-1995* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 1996); Castronovo, De Felice and Scoppola, *L’Italia del novecento*; Lepre and Petraccone, *Storia d’Italia dall’Unità a oggi*.

<sup>82</sup> Veneruso, *Storia d’Italia nel novecento*, p. 163.

<sup>83</sup> Romano, *Storia d’Italia dal Risorgimento ai nostri giorni*, p. 271.

of cultural decadence went to the core of “the Università Cattolica of Padre Gemelli,” one of “the sectors most *filofascista* of the Catholic culture.”<sup>84</sup> Yet Marino also notes that the Ministry of Education investigated Gemelli in 1932 because of “the extreme ease with which the library of the Milanese university [i.e., Università Cattolica] allowed the reading of various works that did not conform to the cultural direction and propaganda of the regime.”<sup>85</sup> Gemelli responded by assuring the Ministry that no anti-Fascist materials ever had been or would be made available to students; Marino maintains that such “cowardly” bending to the regime was done with expectations of “material advantages” in return.<sup>86</sup> Such divided opinion about Gemelli is also revealed in many Italian language monographs on the Fascist period,<sup>87</sup> as well as in numerous books and articles of which Gemelli is the subject.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Giuseppe Carlo Marino, *Le generazioni italiane dall'Unità alla Repubblica* (Milano: Tascabili Bompiani, 2006), p. 529.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 553.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 553.

<sup>87</sup> On Catholicism and the papacy during the Fascist period, see: Carlo Falconi, *I papi del ventesimo secolo* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1967) [trans. Muriel Grindrod, *The Popes in the Twentieth Century. From Pius X to John XXIII* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967)]; Sandro Rogari, *Santa Sede e fascismo. Dall'Aventino ai Patti Lateranensi* (Coreggio Emilia: Arnaldo Forni, 1977); Mariangiola Reineri, *Cattolici e fascismo a Torino 1925-1943* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1978); Renato Moro, *La formazione della classe dirigente cattolica (1929-1937)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979); Mimmo Franzinelli, *Il clero del duce/il duce del clero. Il consenso ecclesiastico nelle lettere a Mussolini (1922-1945)* (Ragusa: Edizioni La Fiaccola, 1998); Emma Fattorini, *Pio XI, Hitler e Mussolini. La solitudine di un papa.* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2007). On intellectuals during the Fascist period, see: Luisa Mangoni, *L'Interventismo della cultura. Intellettuali e riviste del fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1974); Paolo Ranfagni, *I clerico-fascisti. Le riviste dell'Università Cattolica negli anni del regime* (Firenze: Cooperativa Editrice Universitaria, 1975); Gabriele Turi, *Il fascismo e il consenso degli intellettuali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1980); Arcangelo Leone De Castris, *Egemonia e fascismo. Il problema degli intellettuali negli anni Trenta* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981); Mario Isnenghi, *L'Italia del fascio* (Firenze: Giunti, 1996); Patrizia Dogliani, *L'Italia fascista* (Milano: Sansoni, 1999); Giorgio Boatti, *Preferi di no. Le storie dei dodici professori che si opposero a*

Despite Gemelli's complexity and the divisions in historical opinion about him, some Italian scholars draw surprisingly reductive portraits of him. A thumbnail description of Gemelli's character comes from Gustavo Bontadini (1903-1990), one of the first graduates to receive a *laurea* from Università Cattolica and a professor of philosophy at

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*Mussolini* (Torino: Einaudi, 2001). On eugenics, racial laws and anti-semitism, see: Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Torino: Einaudi, 1993) [trans. Robert L. Miller, *Jews in Fascist Italy: A History* (New York: Enigma Books, 2001)]; Giorgio Israel and Pietro Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998); Roberto Maiocchi, *Scienza italiana e razzismo fascista* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1999); Alberto Cavaglion and Gian Paolo Romagnani, *Le interdizioni del duce. Le leggi razziali in Italia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Torino: Claudiana, 2002).

<sup>88</sup> Monographs on Gemelli as a cultural figure (rather than as an experimental psychologist) include: Domenico Tarantini, *L'Università del Medioevo. Padre Gemelli e l'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* (Genova: Volontà, 1962); Giorgio Rumi, 'Padre Gemelli e l'Università cattolica,' in Giuseppe Rossini, ed., *Modernismo, fascismo, comunismo. Aspetti e figure della cultura e della politica dei cattolici nel '900* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1972); Maria Sticco, *Padre Gemelli. Appunti per la biografia di un uomo difficile* (Milano: O. R., 1975) [trans. Beatrice Wilczynski, *Father Gemelli: notes for the biography of a great man* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980)]; Teofane Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli. Dalla nascita alla professione religiosa, 1878-1904* (Milano: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 1978); Ezio Franceschini, 'Un anno difficile per Padre Gemelli e per la sua Università: il 1945,' in Ezio Franceschini, *Uomini e fatti dell'Università cattolica* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1984); Franco Molinari, 'La figura di padre Gemelli (1878-1959) fondatore dell'Università cattolica di Milano, attraverso i rapporti della polizia fascista,' in *La Scuola cattolica*, No. 114 (1986); Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985); Mimmo Franzinelli, 'Il magnifico rettore e il munifico dittatore,' in Domenico Tarantini, *L'Università del Medioevo. Padre Gemelli e l'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ragusa: Collana Anteo, 1990); Maria Bocci, *Oltre lo Stato liberale. Ipotesi su politica e società nel dibattito cattolico tra fascismo e democrazia* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1999); Roberto Maiocchi, 'Agostino Gemelli critico dell' "eugenica" tedesca,' in *Vita e pensiero*, No. 2 (2000); Maria Bocci, *Agostino Gemelli rettore e francescano. Chiesa, regime, democrazia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2003); Maria Bocci, 'Gemelli, cultura e antropologia per un nuovo italiano,' in *Identità italiana e cattolicesimo. Una prospettiva storica*, ed. Cesare Mozzarelli (Roma: Carocci, 2003), pp. 407-480. Monographs on Gemelli as a cultural figure by non-Italian historians are virtually non-existent. A rare exception is Helmut Goetz, 'Agostino Gemelli e il giuramento del 1931,' in *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, No. 59 (1979).

that university in the postwar period. Recalling Gemelli's "authoritarian and centralizing tendency" and his "enjoyment of being in command," he described the rector as "Fascist by nature" ("*naturaliter* fascista").<sup>89</sup> This must be reconciled, however, with Bontadini's claim that Gemelli also enforced the strictest interpretations of Catholic orthodoxy at his university.<sup>90</sup> A more subtle description comes from Ezio Franceschini (1906-1983), who taught at Università Cattolica from 1936, joined the Resistance in 1943, and served as rector of that university from 1965 to 1968. "If by Fascism one means authoritarianism, order, discipline, imperiousness (even) in action and rule, yes, Padre Gemelli was Fascist. But these were not the most contemptible aspects of Fascism."<sup>91</sup> Referring to Bontadini's epithet, Maria Bocci concludes, "Such judgment, which just gathers some distinctive traits of Gemelli's psychology, has been picked up by numerous scholars who have transliterated the authoritarianism of his temperament into a convinced adherence to

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<sup>89</sup> Gustavo Bontadini, 'Gemelli, Agostino,' in *Dizionario storico del movimento cattolico in Italia 1860-1980*, Vol. II, eds. Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini (Torino: Marietti, 1982), p. 229. Bontadini's use of the term "authoritarian" to describe Gemelli may lead some scholars to relate it with Teodoro Adorno's theory of the authoritarian personality. Adorno and his colleagues tried to locate in the general population (they used people in Northern California and Southern Oregon) a personality type likely to become fascist or to join extreme right-wing movements. "A basically hierarchical, authoritarian, exploitative parent-child relationship is apt to carry over into a power-oriented, exploitively dependent attitude toward one's sex partner and one's God and may well culminate in a political philosophy and social outlook which has no room for anything but a desperate clinging to what appears to be strong and a disdainful rejection of whatever is relegated to the bottom." T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), p. 971.

<sup>90</sup> Bontadini, 'Gemelli, Agostino,' p. 228.

<sup>91</sup> Ezio Franceschini, 'Un anno difficile per Padre Gemelli e per la sua Università: il 1945,' in Ezio Franceschini, *Uomini e fatti dell'Università Cattolica* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1984), p. 154. Franceschini was approved by the Allied Commission as one of three faculty members to determine whether Gemelli should be removed as rector during the anti-Fascist purges in 1945. The Allied Commission accepted their decision to clear Gemelli. Franceschini later served as rector of Università Cattolica, during 1965-1968.

the dictatorship.”<sup>92</sup> Bocci’s work on Gemelli is laudable, but in this instance she seems to overlook the possibility that other scholars may judge Gemelli through a constellation of factors, of which his “Fascist” temperament is only one.

The contentious nature of scholarship on Gemelli and the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore is part of a much larger debate that took place in Italy during the postwar period. As Giuseppe Galasso points out, “Polemics on the political and ideological implications of historical writing prevailed at that time in political-cultural discussion and concerns. One commonly spoke of historiography as Liberal, Catholic, Marxist (or Gramscian), Secular or some other type.”<sup>93</sup> In 1990 Mimmo Franzinelli pointed out these partisan perspectives in histories concerning Gemelli and his university.<sup>94</sup> In 1997, by which time the Cold War (which had motivated much of the polemics in this historiographical debate) was over, Giorgio Rumi called for a breakthrough in the polemic about Gemelli

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<sup>92</sup> Maria Bocci, ‘Gemelli, Agostino,’ p. 578.

<sup>93</sup> Giuseppe Galasso, *Storici italiani del novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), p. 24. Among English language historians, Charles Dalzell pointed out this polemic a generation ago. “Three major historiographical currents have dominated the field since the war. The older liberal-democratic school is challenged increasingly by Marxist (Italian style) and Catholic currents.” Charles F. Dalzell, *Italy in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1980), p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Speaking of Domenico Taranti’s 1962 essay on Gemelli and Università Cattolica, Franzinelli writes, “[Taranti] was not aroused by historiographical claims, but rather by the wish to oppose – a couple of years after the death of Padre Gemelli – the construction of a mythology that aspired to raise the dynamic Franciscan to an ideal dimension, beyond the down-to-earth context (constructed even by intrigue and opportunism) that was congenial to him.” Mimmo Franzinelli, ‘Prefazione,’ in Domenico Tarantini, *L’Università del medioevo. Padre Gemelli e l’Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* (Ragusa: Collana Anteo, 1990), p. 10. Tarantini himself contends that “Padre Gemelli and the Università Cattolica were not, during the Fascist period, an isolated phenomenon, but one of the many means by which the Church supported Fascism, while using it for its own ends.” Domenico Tarantini, *L’Università del medioevo. Padre Gemelli e l’Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* (Ragusa: Collana Anteo, 1990), p. 45.

and his university.<sup>95</sup> Rumi contends that historiographers were locked in two opposing camps that mirrored Italian politics: Catholic apologists, who credited Gemelli with the professional, scientific and civil achievements of his university, and Secularist or Marxist adversaries who persisted in focusing on the compromising relationship between the university and the governing regime, whether the earlier Fascist one or the later Christian Democratic one.<sup>96</sup> The apologetic position is strikingly exemplified by Roberto Zavalloni.<sup>97</sup> To a lesser degree, it is perhaps represented by Rumi himself. He poses the pertinent question and gives a Catholic answer:

And if, as has been written, the Christian must at least approach the suburbs of the City of God, then could not the errors, the ambiguities and the silences of the men of the [Università] Cattolica be seen as the price paid, or the ransom incurred, in order to realize their steadfast plan to bring society, indeed, history itself, back within the sphere of the Church? It is a hard question; but the affirmative reply has certainly been that which many Catholics have given in the postwar years and continue to give today.<sup>98</sup>

Rumi thus argues is that Gemelli's support for the regime was merely instrumental.

“Mussolini and his Fascist movement were supported to the degree that they were useful

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<sup>95</sup> Giorgio Rumi, ‘Padre Gemelli e l’Università Cattolica tra storia e storiografia,’ in *L’Università Cattolica a 75 anni dalla fondazione. Riflessioni sul passato e prospettive per il futuro. Atti del 65° corso dei aggiornamento culturale dell’Università Cattolica. Milano, 30 gennaio-1° febbraio 1997* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1998).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 51. Indeed, this polemic was part of a much larger one between Catholics and Marxists over the history of modern Italian Catholicism. See also: Paolo Pecorari, ‘Un contributo al dibattito storiografico sui cattolici italiani dopo l’Unità,’ in Paolo Pecorari, *Economia e riformismo nell’Italia liberale. Studi su Giuseppe Toniolo e Luigi Luzzatti* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1986), pp. 11-27.

<sup>97</sup> Roberto Zavalloni, *Padre Gemelli, educatore sociale* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1960).

<sup>98</sup> Giorgio Rumi, ‘Padre Gemelli e l’Università Cattolica,’ in *Storia Contemporanea*, (December 1971), p. 903.

to very precise principles, schemes and values.”<sup>99</sup> This thesis is refuted by Paolo Ranfagni, who exemplifies the adversarial side of the polemic.

The combination of the dictatorship and the consequent banishing of parties and the torpedoing of the PPI [*Partito popolare italiano*]... allowed the professors of the Milanese university [i.e., Università Cattolica], both in university life and in publications, a more rapid and penetrating contribution to a culture that was definitely in decline, on which it was unquestionably more easy to operate.<sup>100</sup>

Ranfagni argues that Gemelli was in full political accord with the regime’s destruction of democratic institutions insofar as it smoothed the way for him and his university to advance their project of restoring Catholicism as the foundation of Italian society.

As an exception to Gemellian scholarship in which polemic informs all content, Rumi cites the 1985 biography by Giorgio Cosmacini.<sup>101</sup> A self-avowed ideological and cultural Socialist, Cosmacini was the first to draw attention to continuities and discontinuities between Gemelli’s younger positivist and Socialist identity and his mature Catholic, or more specifically, Franciscan one. Cosmacini reaches this subtle conclusion:

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 901.

<sup>100</sup> Paolo Ranfagni, *I clero fascisti. Le riviste dell’Università Cattolica negli anni del regime* (Firenze: Cooperativa Editrice Universitaria, 1975), p. 25.

<sup>101</sup> Cosmacini, *Gemelli*.



That the *identity* of Gemelli emerges not from reciprocal elision, but from internal dialectic between his *alterities*, is a historiographical problem that remains open to whoever seeks not to judge the man, but to try to understand him.<sup>102</sup>

Such discernment is perhaps intended as a starting point for future biographers because Cosmacini clearly imposes a judgment upon Gemelli. In fact, Cosmacini readily joins the ongoing polemic, taking as a foregone conclusion that Gemelli was a Clerico-Fascist. He asks only what sort of Clerico-Fascist Gemelli was.

It can be argued whether for Gemelli... the term *clericofascismo* (which in the historiographical terminology is juxtaposed to that of *afascismo* and *antifascismo* in differentiating the attitude of the Catholic world toward the regime) indicates only an instrumental use of the Fascist regime as a base for launching the Catholic state, or [rather] the practical outcome of a cultural elaboration in which Catholicism and Fascism are complementary.<sup>103</sup>

Cosmacini clearly intends to mark a distinction between his two indications of *clericofascismo*, but there may not be one. If complementarity is a condition in which component instruments of contrasting or even contradictory strategies have a greater effect than any instrument on its own, then complementarity indeed sometimes existed between Catholic doctrine and Italian Fascism. A Catholic could rightfully make use of Fascist policy to further Catholic interests if, and only if, such a condition existed. Cosmacini suggests that an overlap between some Catholic principles and some Fascist

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

policies (e.g., that families should “predispose young men to believe and to obey and young women to be mothers of many children and perfect housewives”<sup>104</sup>) manifests “the legitimacy of the thesis of complementarity, in the thought of Gemelli, between Catholicism and Fascism.”<sup>105</sup> Well, yes, but in this case instrumentality and complementarity go hand in hand. Neither should be confused with synthesis. There may indeed have been Italian priests who sought a synthesis between Catholicism and Fascism, but this could only be achieved by damaging Catholic doctrine and thus, presumably, Catholic interests. Very few priests supported the Salò Republic, in which a far less compromising form of Fascism was practiced.

Cosmacini shows unusual discernment about his subject, but his research is based largely on published sources. His sources reveal more about the complexity of Gemelli’s identity than about the subtlety of his Fascist support. Mimmo Franzinelli recognizes the difficult and delicate relationship between Gemelli and the Fascist regime, both engaged in “a game of opportunism, of shrewdness, of mental reservations and of instrumentality.”<sup>106</sup> Gemelli was an “authoritative supporter of Fascism to the degree that it conceded increasing space to the Church,” but was “careful to take distance as soon as the reversals of war broke up the popular consensus.”<sup>107</sup> Maria Bocci’s recent archival research, which extends far beyond the Fascist era published speeches of Gemelli that seem to be the only primary sources some historians have used to determine

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>106</sup> Mimmo Franzinelli, *Il clero del duce/ il duce del clero. Il consenso ecclesiastico nelle lettere a Mussolini (1922-1945)* (Ragusa: Edizioni La Fiaccola, 1998), p. 15.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

his attitude toward Fascism, shows that the “Fascist supporter” label may be an oversimplification in Gemelli’s case.<sup>108</sup> Among other things, Bocci has brought to light numerous police records that reveal constant surveillance of Gemelli starting in the late 1920s and consistent distrust of his motives on the part of the Fascist regime.<sup>109</sup> In sum, Italian historians have not removed Gemelli from polemical debate, but some have shown awareness of his personal and situational complexity.

### **English Language Historiography**

Despite the importance that Italian historians attach to Gemelli, English language historians often ignore him.<sup>110</sup> He is usually omitted from their general histories of modern Italy,<sup>111</sup> their specialized histories of Fascist Italy,<sup>112</sup> as well as their histories of

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<sup>108</sup> Maria Bocci, *Agostino Gemelli rettore e francescano*.

<sup>109</sup> Mimmo Franzinelli names Gemelli as someone who denounced others, but not as someone who was denounced by others. Mimmo Franzinelli, *Delatori. Spie e confidenti anonimi: l’arma segreta del regime fascista* (Milano: Mondadori, 2001). It is perhaps noteworthy that Gemelli formally submitted his denunciations to the Royal Prefect of Milan in his own name, whereas those who denounced him to the secret police, OVRA (*Organizzazione di Vigilanza Repressione dell’Antifascismo*), usually did so anonymously. *Denuncia* seems to be a well-defined type of activity. Not every report on the behavior of others to a public authority is considered as *denuncia*.

<sup>110</sup> The only studies of which he is the subject are two short works that examine him as an experimental psychologist. Henryk Misiak and Virginia M. Staudt, ‘Agostino Gemelli,’ in *Catholics in Psychology. A Historical Survey* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 126-152; Daria Colombo, ‘Psychoanalysis and the Catholic Church in Italy: The Role of Father Agostino Gemelli, 1925-1953,’ *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 (2003), pp. 333-348.

<sup>111</sup> Gemelli is not found in Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2008); Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny. A History of Italy since 1796* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008); or Spencer M. Di Scala, *Italy. From Revolution to Republic, 1700 to the Present*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2009). Gemelli does, however, appear briefly in Christopher Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London: Methuen & Co

European Fascism.<sup>113</sup> He occasionally appears in papal histories and biographies,<sup>114</sup>

histories of the *Partito Popolare Italiano*,<sup>115</sup> and works on Italian anti-Semitism.<sup>116</sup>

Ltd, 1967); and Denis Mack Smith, *Italy, A Modern History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969).

<sup>112</sup> For example, Gemelli is not found in Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Fascism in Italy: Its Development and Influence* (London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1969); Alan Cassels, *Fascist Italy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985); John Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995); Alexander De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Jonathan Dunnage, *Twentieth-Century Italy: A Social History* (London: Longman, 2002); Philip Morgan, *Italian Fascism, 1915-1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>113</sup> There is no mention of Gemelli in Roger Eatwell, *Fascism. A History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1995); Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); or Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

<sup>114</sup> For papal histories and biographies in which Gemelli appears, see: Philip Hughes, *Pope Pius the Eleventh* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932); J. Derek Holmes, *The Papacy in the Modern World, 1914-1978* (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Peter Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII. Shepherd of the Modern World* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985); Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI. The First Modern Pope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993); Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); John Pollard, *The Unknown Pope. Benedict XV (1912-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999).

<sup>115</sup> For histories of the PPI in which Gemelli appears, see: John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy* (London: Croom Helm, 1977); John Pollard, 'Italy,' in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, eds. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Tiziana di Maio, 'Between the Crisis of the Liberal State, Fascism and a Democratic Perspective: The Popular Party in Italy,' in *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918-1945*, vol. 1, eds. Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wohnout (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>116</sup> A lack of familiarity with Gemelli is indicated when he is called "Father Francescini [*sic*] Gemelli, the anti-Jewish rector of the Catholic University of Milan" in Frank J. Coppa, *The Papacy, the Jews, and the Holocaust* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), p. 184. One literary scholar recently portrayed Gemelli as a prominent anti-Semite. Wiley Feinstein, *The Civilization of the Holocaust in Italy. Poets, Artists, Saints, Anti-Semites* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003). On the other hand, a historian writing on a related subject mentions Gemelli sympathetically. Susan Zuccotti briefly notes the help he extended to one of his assistants, a priest who led Jews and others to safety in Switzerland. Susan Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows. The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 248. Aaron Gillette calls Gemelli "one of the fiercest Catholic

Sometimes a glimpse of him is caught in monographs and scholarly articles pertaining to the Fascist era.<sup>117</sup> In nearly all instances, his complex character gets sketched in just one or two lines. Such flattened portraits rarely depict him as anything but a supporter of Fascist policies. This seems to have begun with D. A. Binchy, whose monumental study *Church and State in Fascist Italy* (1941) remains an important reference for present-day historians.

An intimate friend of Pius XI, president of the Pontifical Academy of Science, founder and first Rector of the University of the Sacred Heart, he is the outstanding figure in the intellectual life of Italy. In his political views he has passed from a very critical support of the Partito Popolare to an equally uncritical support of Fascism. Nor would it be fair to ascribe his enthusiasm for the régime to mere considerations of prudence or necessity. While his position certainly requires him to be *persona grata* with the Fascist leaders, his intense patriotism doubtless induces him to overlook many of their failings in return for their services to Italy. Be that as it may, not a few of his public pronouncements, oral and written, with their

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anti-Semites.” Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 75.

<sup>117</sup> Gemelli appears in the following specialized works on Catholicism and Fascism: Richard Webster, *The Cross and the Fasces* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960); Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973); John Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism, 1929-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Frances Hetherington, ‘Biographical Index,’ in *Catholics, the State, and the European Radical Right, 1919-1945*, eds. Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1987); John Pollard, ‘“Clerical Fascism”: Context, Overview and Conclusion,’ *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2007); John Pollard, ‘Fascism and Catholicism,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R. J. B. Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Gemelli also appears in the following works on Fascist culture: Edward R. Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience. Italian Society and Culture, 1922-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). For mention of Gemelli during the postwar purges, see also: Roy Palmer Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

apparent identification of Catholicism and *Italianità* (in the Fascist sense), are calculated to create serious embarrassment for his co-religionists in other lands.<sup>118</sup>

Binchy's portrait of Gemelli set a lasting impression. Richard Webster drew upon it in his seminal postwar study of Catholic politics and Italian Fascism. He names Gemelli as one of the leading "Clerico-Fascists" at the time of Mussolini's fall from power in 1943.<sup>119</sup> Webster also calls Gemelli "an old friend of Fascism."<sup>120</sup> John Pollard, the leading English language scholar on the relationship between Catholicism and Fascism, often mentions Gemelli in his work.<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, Pollard seems to draw rather uncritically from Binchy and Webster. Pollard's early work portrays Gemelli as little more than a supporter of the "corporatist, imperialist and racialist policies of the Regime in the mid- and late 1930s."<sup>122</sup> In a recent study on the general phenomenon of "clerical fascism" in interwar Europe, Pollard points out that the term "clerico-fascist" was used "in the Italian political context to designate individual members of the clergy who were supporters of Fascism, like Franciscan friar Agostino Gemelli, rector the Catholic

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<sup>118</sup> D. A. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 482.

<sup>119</sup> Richard A. Webster, *The Cross and the Fasces. Christian Democracy and Fascism in Italy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 162.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>121</sup> John Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism, 1929-32* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); *Ibid.*, 'Italy,' in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); *Ibid.*, *The Unknown Pope. Benedict XV (1912-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999); *Ibid.*, "'Clerical Fascism': Context, Overview and Conclusion,' *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2007); *Ibid.*, *Catholicism in Modern Italy. Religion, Society and Politics since 1861* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); *Ibid.*, 'Fascism and Catholicism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R. J. B. Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>122</sup> Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism*, pp. 25, 34.

University of Milan.”<sup>123</sup> The English doyen of modern Italian history, Denis Mack Smith, claims that Gemelli “approved” both “the racial laws and the fascist attempt to monopolize youth education.”<sup>124</sup> Aaron Gillette writes: “Gemelli would develop a close association with [Guido] Landra,<sup>125</sup> each reinforcing the other’s conviction that it was possible to remain both Catholic and fascist anti-Semite.”<sup>126</sup> Tracy Koon states that Gemelli “was one of the strongest links between church and state during the Fascist period.”<sup>127</sup> Roy Palmer Domenico names Gemelli as a prime example “among the many influential churchmen who publicly supported the regime.”<sup>128</sup> In a similar vein Richard Bosworth refers to Gemelli as little other than “an informant of the Fascist secret police.”<sup>129</sup> Victoria De Grazia offers an image consistent with the others, although more

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<sup>123</sup> Pollard, “‘Clerical Fascism’: Context, Overview and Conclusion,’ p. 433. Elsewhere, Pollard offers a narrower definition of “clerico-fascism” in the Italian context, applying it only to certain *Partito Popolare Italiano* deputies, namely, those “fourteen clerico-fascist candidates [who] stood in Mussolini’s ‘big list’ in the 1924 elections, and later formed the *Centro Nazionale Italiano* as a permanent focus of Catholic political support for Fascism.” John Pollard, ‘Clerico-Fascism,’ in Cyprian P. Blamires, ed. With Paul Jackson, *World Fascism. A Historical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2006), p. 137.

<sup>124</sup> Denis Mack Smith, *Italy, A Modern History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 443.

<sup>125</sup> Guido Landra (1913-1980) was the first director of the Office of Racial Studies set up in the Ministry of Popular Culture in 1938. See: Aaron Gillette, ‘Guido Landra and the Office of Racial Studies in Fascist Italy,’ *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 16. No. 3 (2002), pp. 357-375.

<sup>126</sup> Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, p. 75.

<sup>127</sup> Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight. Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 120.

<sup>128</sup> Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948*, p. 62.

<sup>129</sup> R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini’s Italy. Life under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (New York: Penguin, 2006), p. 106. A report dated April 3, 1933 and submitted under the name of Arturo Bocchini (1880-1940), the head of Italian police (*Capo della Polizia*), to the private secretary of Mussolini (*Segreteria particolare di S. E. il Capo del Governo*), states that Gemelli, in a letter dated February 3, 1933, had informed the political office of the Royal Prefect of Milan that two students, Giuseppe Boretti and Eugenio Giovanardi,

shaded. She acknowledges Gemelli as the leading “Catholic modernizer” in the mid-1920s,<sup>130</sup> but notes that the “new female role models and new moral codes” provided by the Catholic church – and developed with the help of social scientists at Gemelli’s university – were brought into play as “ideological fallbacks when fascism’s own secular logic supporting the subordination of women failed to convince.”<sup>131</sup> All in all, these scholars draw an image of Gemelli that is barely more developed and no more substantial than that offered by Binchy nearly seventy years ago.

There are rare exceptions to this boilerplate image of Gemelli. Neither Adrian Lyttelton nor Michael Ledeen mention Gemelli’s support of Fascism and instead both cite a 1929 instance in which Gemelli publicly denounced the political philosophy of Giovanni Gentile,<sup>132</sup> the author of the 1925 Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals and the leading

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mailed Communist propaganda (*alcuni fogli dattilografati di propaganda comunista*) to three other students of the Università Cattolica. Boretti and Giovanardi were sentenced to *confino* for five years. This report is reproduced in Franzinelli, *Delatori*, p. 314-315. In his masterful biography of Mussolini, Bosworth mentions Gemelli solely for an incident in 1910 when Mussolini organized a counter-demonstration at the local church in Emilia-Romagna where “the crusading priest, Agostino Gemelli, was intending to preach to the faithful on the extra-scientific virtue of cures at Lourdes.” R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Hodder, 2002), p. 77.

<sup>130</sup> De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 218.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>132</sup> Michael Ledeen, *Universal Fascism. The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972), p. 46; Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power. Fascism in Italy 1919-1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 420-421. In a later work Lyttelton cites Gemelli as the prime example of a Catholic leader who failed to condemn the Racial Laws of 1938. Adrian Lyttelton, ‘Introduction,’ in *Liberal and Fascist Italy 1900-1945*, ed. Adrian Lyttelton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).



theorist of Fascist doctrine in its totalitarian form.<sup>133</sup> Owen Chadwick's description of Gemelli, although appearing as just a footnote in 1998, is the lengthiest in English since Binchy's and offers a substantially different picture. It is derived not from the portrait by Binchy, but from the biographical sketch by Gustavo Bontadini in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*.<sup>134</sup> It merits being quoted in its entirety:

The university of Milan was helped by gaining state recognition in 1924 (once the Fascists came to power) but its first rector, and rector for life, was the most unusual head of a Catholic university, the Franciscan Edoardo Gemelli. He was the child of middle-class anticlericals and son of a Freemason. He started life as a Socialist propagandist in North Italy, and all his life retained Marxist ideas about social justice. He was converted, in some unknown way, while doing military service. He was a leading member of Luigi Sturzo's Italian People's Party and was not an obvious choice to be rector of a new Catholic university. He ruled the university like a dictator, a mode of governance that did not attract professors. But during the Fascist regime he helped the university by being close enough to the Vatican to be able to resist Fascist demands from time to time.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Giovanni Gentile, 'L'essenza del fascismo,' in *Critica Fascista illustrata nella dottrina e nelle opere*, ed. Luigi Pomba (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1928), pp. 97-118. Indeed, Gemelli's opposition to the Gentile's philosophy was so strong that he proposed launching a Catholic encyclopedia to counter the *Enciclopedia Italiana* of which Gentile was editor. Luisa Mangoni, *L'Interventismo della cultura. Intellettuali e riviste del fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1974), p. 188. Gemelli nevertheless consented to contribute the articles "Psicologia sperimentale," and "Neotomismo" to Gentile's encyclopedia, published in 1936.

<sup>134</sup> It is curious that Chadwick chose to use a French source. Gustavo Bontadini, 'Gemelli,' in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, Vol. 23, ed. Roger Aubert (Paris: Letouzy et Ané, 1984), pp. 327-328.

<sup>135</sup> Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 538n.

Chadwick omits Bontadini's acknowledgement that "in other areas [outside of the university *per se*], he had to yield to the injunctions of the [Fascist] party." (*En d'autres domaines, il dut céder aux injonctions du parti.*)<sup>136</sup> The less accusatory glances at Gemelli made by Chadwick, Lyttelton and Ledeen remain, however, exceptions in English language historiography. On the whole, English language historians have tended to vilify Gemelli as the archetypical Clerico-Fascist. An enterprising journalist taking their cue might even bang out a sensational best-seller with a titillating title like *Mussolini's Monk*.

### **Clerico-Fascist as Historiographical Category**

Cataloguing Gemelli as a supporter of Fascism *tout court* serves as little more than an expedient for those who are not truly interested in the complexity of the relationship between Italian Catholicism and Fascism. Labeling him as a "Clerico-Fascist" or a "clerical fascist," whether in a narrow Italian context or a broader European one, is questionable as long as these categories remain undefined or contested. The rudimentary state of Clerico-Fascism as historiographical category is suggested by the fact that it does not appear in the *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, compiled by leading international scholars only a generation ago.<sup>137</sup> A few years later, Richard Wolff and Jörg Hoensch questioned the validity of "clerical-fascism" as a category for a general European phenomenon. They traced the origins of the term to the specific Italian context in which it was coined by Don Luigi Sturzo, leader of the Partito Popolare Italiano, and attributed

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<sup>136</sup> Bontadini, 'Gemelli,' in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, p. 327.

<sup>137</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

its wider use, at least among English language scholars, to Charles Gulick's *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler* (1948).<sup>138</sup> Gulick analyzes at length what he calls "the clerical-fascist police state" under chancellors Engelbert Dollfuss and Kurt von Schuschnigg.<sup>139</sup> Wolff and Hoensch note that there were many "accommodations and agreements between the clergy and movements of the radical Right" in interwar Europe, but question whether "these affinities, however numerous" are "alone sufficient proof to argue the existence of a coherent 'clerical-fascist' ideology."<sup>140</sup> Differences between Catholic teaching and basic tenets of generic fascism, such as "the role of the state, education of youth, and racial theory," they note, "were sufficiently fundamental to call into question the judiciousness and forging of 'clerical' and 'fascist' into a new word."<sup>141</sup>

Even in the strictly Italian context, Wolff argues, "clerical-fascism" is empty of real content. He traces its origins to Sturzo in an interview that appeared in the Torinese newspaper *La Stampa* on February 2, 1924. Although the majority of PPI parliamentarians were at that point anti-Fascist, some of the most conservative (and rich) ones, who had viewed the Liberal regime as the upholder of the social and economic hierarchy, now supported the Fascist government as bulwark of that order. Such men

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<sup>138</sup> Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch, 'Introduction,' in Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch, eds., *Catholics, the State, and the European Radical Right, 1919-1945* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1987), p. xi.

<sup>139</sup> Charles A. Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler. Vol. II: Fascism's Subversion of Democracy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948).

<sup>140</sup> Wolff and Hoensch, 'Introduction,' p. xi.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

were, in a sense, “clericals” (as were all PPI members),<sup>142</sup> and if they had been “*clerical-moderati*” under Giolitti, they were now “*clerico-fascisti*” under Mussolini.<sup>143</sup>

Discussing the Italian context, Richard Wolff argued that “the term ‘clerical-fascist’ ... remains polemical and, in fact, not very useful.”<sup>144</sup>

Pollard, whose work is more recent, also reveals ambiguity in the term’s narrower sense. He notes its use, as mentioned above, for “individual members of the clergy who were supporters of Fascism,”<sup>145</sup> but elsewhere he offers a different definition that applies only to certain deputies within the *Partito Popolare Italiano*:

Fourteen clerico-fascist candidates stood in Mussolini’s ‘big list’ in the 1924 elections, and later formed the *Centro Nazionale Italiano* [CNI] as a permanent focus of Catholic political support for Fascism. By the time the CNI had disbanded, it had helped prepare the ground for the agreement between Mussolini and Pope Pius XI in 1929 and helped save several Catholic banks.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Despite its claims of being an aconfessional party the PPI included large numbers of clergy among its membership, which made the PPI a *de facto* clerical party. Thus, it was easy to perceive a member of the PPI as “clerical,” regardless of whether he fell to the left or the right of the political spectrum in secular terms. Sturzo maintained that “clericals” had existed at least since the creation of the unified Italian state.

<sup>143</sup> Richard J. Wolff, ‘Italy: Catholic, the Clergy, and the Church – Complex Reactions to Fascism,’ in Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch, eds., *Catholics, the State, and the European Radical Right, 1919-1945* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1987), p. 144. See Pietro Scoppola, *La Chiesa e il fascismo. Documenti e interpretazioni* (Bari: Laterza, 1971), pp. 89-96.

<sup>144</sup> Wolff, ‘Italy: Catholic, the Clergy, and the Church – Complex Reactions to Fascism,’ p. 145.

<sup>145</sup> John Pollard, “‘Clerical Fascism’: Context, Overview and Conclusion,’ *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2007), p. 433.

<sup>146</sup> John Pollard, ‘Clerico-Fascism,’ in Cyprian P. Blamires, ed. With Paul Jackson, *World Fascism. A Historical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2006), p. 137.

Pollard's early work claims that these Clerico-Fascist politicians were a spent force after Mussolini reached a concordat with the Vatican in 1929, which is also the consensus view of Italian historians. Gemelli's influence within the Catholic culture, on the other hand, grew even greater after 1929. Indeed, it continued to increase concurrently with Mussolini's influence over the political culture, at least until Mussolini was removed from power in Rome in July 1943. Certainly, Gemelli's cultural influence had political repercussions, but his influence was distinct from that of CNI members. Hence, Pollard's narrowest definition of "clerico-fascist" might be the best one.

Italians have put the term to greater use for a longer time, but with no clearer result. In 1982, when the single-volume *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* was published in the United States without any entry for "Clerico-Fascism," the three-volume *Dizionario Storico del Movimento Cattolico in Italia, 1860-1980* appeared with a five-page entry for it:

The expression '*clerico-fascismo* has come into a certain favor in contemporary historiography, especially in studies on the relations between the Church and Fascism, despite its vague definition at present.... *clerico-fascismo*, as historical-political category, is often applied to the extent of comprising all Catholics who were not anti-Fascist.... In order to capture the specificity of the *clerico-fascista* area [of operation], it is appropriate not to stretch it out of all proportion to the point of including persons or spheres or activity

that, operating outside of political anti-Fascism, promoted ‘Catholic interests’ in the attempt to press the regime along the lines of the Catholic restoration [of Italian culture].<sup>147</sup>

An Italian definition of Clerico-Fascism given in 1998 suggests no greater clarity had been achieved in the intervening period. “The most informed historiography has insisted upon the necessity not to confound it, on the one hand, with Catholic and ecclesiastical consensus with Fascism, which was certainly more vast and articulated, nor with Catholic Fascism on the other.”<sup>148</sup> Mimmo Franzinelli, the current leading Italian scholar on the subject of Clerico-Fascism, distinguishes Clerico-Fascists *per se*, namely, Catholic parliamentarians who supported the Fascist party in the 1920s, from other Italian Catholics who shared the Clerico-Fascists’ views into the 1930s and beyond. He refers to the latter group as “supporters of Clerico-Fascist ideals.”<sup>149</sup> This is a subtle distinction, but nevertheless a meaningful one, insofar as the category Clerico-Fascism remains both vague and contentious.

The broader category of “clerical fascist” will also remain problematic as long as scholars struggle to reach agreement on the concept of fascism *per se*. Robert Griffin is in the vanguard of those claiming to have achieved such a consensus, “though it is a consensus

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<sup>147</sup> Andrea Riccardi, ‘I clerico-fascisti,’ in *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1980*, Vol. I/1 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), p. 79.

<sup>148</sup> Alfonso Botti, ‘clericofascismo,’ in *Il Fascismo. Dizionario di storia, personaggi, cultura, economia, fonti e dibattito storiografico*, ed. Alberto De Bernardi and Scipione Guarracino (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 1998), p. 216.

<sup>149</sup> Mimmo Franzinelli, ‘Clerico-fascismo,’ in *Dizionario del fascismo*, Vol. 1, eds. Victoria De Grazia and Sergio Luzzatto (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2003), p. 298.

that is inevitably partial and contested.”<sup>150</sup> Robert Paxton observes that no interpretation or definition “has obtained universal assent as a completely satisfactory account of a phenomenon that seemed to come from nowhere, took on multiple and varied forms, exalted hatred and violence in the name of national prowess, and yet managed to appeal to prestigious and well-educated statesmen, entrepreneurs, professionals, artists, and intellectuals.”<sup>151</sup> It is interesting that Paxton omits clerics from this list of presumably civilized persons, as well as from another one that he provides. “Fascists could never attain power without the acquiescence or even active assent of the traditional elites – heads of state, party leaders, high government officials – many of whom felt a fastidious distaste for the crudities of fascist militants.”<sup>152</sup>

If the term “fascism” covers a range of ambiguities, then “clerico-fascism,” as a subcategory, does so even more. The latter term is indeed problematic; it seems to imply an equivocal position by a member of an ecclesiastical body toward a perplexing political movement. John Pollard in recent years has made valuable contributions toward defining clerical fascism as a historical phenomenon, but he calls for further study of it.<sup>153</sup> Until

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<sup>150</sup> Roger Griffin, ‘Introduction,’ in *World Fascism. A Historical Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1, ed. Cyprian P. Blamires with Paul Jackson (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2006), p. 1; Ibid., ‘The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies,’ *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 37, no. 1 (January 2002), pp. 21-43.

<sup>151</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Knopf, 2004), p. 8.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>153</sup> Pollard, “‘Clerical Fascism’: Context, Overview and Conclusion,’ pp. 433-446. Referring to Italian Catholic politicians who supported Fascism, Pollard notes, “the Clerico-Fascists have received scant attention from historians.” John Pollard, ‘Conservative Catholics and Italian fascism: the Clerico-Fascists,’ in Martin Blinkhorn,

historians have a clearer understanding of clerical fascism, they might be more circumspect in applying it as a label. Philip Morgan, in his study of popular attitudes toward Fascism, says something about the sociological concept of consent that is applicable here. “Concepts are valid as analytical tools, but their usefulness is in illuminating reality, not in replacing it.”<sup>154</sup> Certainly, a fuller and more judicious treatment of the term “clerico-fascism” is needed in the case of Gemelli. While Gemelli’s support for Fascism in his public utterances was sometimes loud, the depth and breadth of it have yet to be fathomed by English language historians.

Gemelli always maintained a distinction between Catholicism and Fascism, even as he found more reasons to praise the regime when the rest of Europe tottered toward chaos in the 1930s. The distinction that he sought to keep between religion and ideology is apparent in an early protest he made against Fascism. In 1923, while expressing gratitude to the government of Mussolini for enacting educational reforms that granted freedom of teaching in the schools, a precondition for a Catholic university, Gemelli publicly criticized Mussolini’s Minister of Public Instruction, the philosopher Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944),<sup>155</sup> for basing the reforms on his idealistic conception of freedom, in which

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ed., *Fascists and conservatives: the radical right and the establishment in twentieth-century Europe* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

<sup>154</sup> Philip Morgan, “‘The years of consent’? Popular attitudes and resistance to Fascism in Italy, 1925-1940,” in Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligott, eds. *Opposing Fascism. Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 164.

<sup>155</sup> Gemelli nevertheless retained a cordial relationship with Gentile until the latter’s murder by partisans in 1944.



the ethical state is absolute and superior to religion.<sup>156</sup> This seems to have been an act of boldness on the part of Gemelli, given that the Catholic university he founded in 1921 still awaited legal recognition of its constitution from the Ministry of Public Instruction, which it did not receive until October 1924.

Gemelli's political views at this time were likely to have concurred in large part with those of Filippo Meda (1869-1939), the PPI parliamentarian with whom he had the longest and closest association. Cooperation between the two men dates from at least 1903. Meda, who had been a strong supporter of the militant *Fascio democratico cristiano* founded in Milan by Gemelli's best friend Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930) in 1899, had also served as Minister of Finance from 1916 to 1919, thus becoming the first intransigent Catholic to serve in a government since the 1874 *non expedit* statement of Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). Meda was also a co-founder of the Catholic university, which he served as legal counsel until his death in 1939. He chose not to run for parliamentary re-election in April 1924 and he never again held public office. Remaining in parliament would have forced Meda to make choices that could only have been perceived as either anti-fascist or, in Sturzo's reproachful term, clerico-fascist. As lawyer for the new university that still awaited necessary approval from the state, Meda could not afford to offend either Catholic or Fascist sensibilities. After briefly supporting the Fascists for instrumental purposes, he turned against them. The crucial relationship between Gemelli and Meda suggests that Gemelli was at most a tactical or opportunistic supporter of

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<sup>156</sup> Agostino Gemelli, 'L'Università Cattolica e la riforma Gentile' (inaugural speech for 1923-24 academic year, read on December 8, 1923), in *Idee e battaglia per la coltura cattolica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1942), p. 84.

Fascism at this early date. When Meda lost his leverage with the regime, Gemelli shrewdly turned to Stefano Cavazzoni (1881-1951), another Milanese Catholic, who had been a founding member of Necchi's *Fascio democratico cristiano* in 1899, Sturzo's PPI in 1919, and the clerico-fascist *Centro nazionale italiano* in 1923. Deeply inspired by Catholic corporatism, Cavazzoni served briefly as Minister of Labor in Mussolini's first cabinet.

Pollard, who has studied the conservative Catholic politicians whom Sturzo was the first to label clerico-fascists, recently attempted to define clerical fascism more broadly with reference to twentieth-century movements throughout Europe. "The term 'clerical fascist' may be attached as a label to individuals, members of the clergy or laity, who were 'fellow travelers,' or in Italy, 'flankers,' of Fascism. Some became fully paid up members of fascist movements. Others remained outside, or belonged to separate movements that gave support to fascism."<sup>157</sup> Pollard makes a further distinction.

"Sometimes 'clerical fascism' took the form of pragmatic, opportunistic and temporary alliances between fascists and politicians of a Christian inspiration, but at other times, it involved the commitment to fascist party allegiance."<sup>158</sup> Gemelli seems to be a case of alliance rather than allegiance. Despite his "vociferous" support for Mussolini by the 1930s, Gemelli was never a card-carrying member of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista*. Thus, the clerical fascism of which Gemelli has been accused must be understood in

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<sup>157</sup> Pollard, "'Clerical Fascism': Context, Overview and Conclusion," p. 433.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.

terms of how and why he supported Fascism from outside the party, and whether he did so primarily for pragmatic and opportunistic reasons.

Clerical fascism as practiced by Italian Catholic clergy as a whole seems to be even less studied than the clerical fascism of lay groups of Italian Catholics.<sup>159</sup> Some notable work has been done on lay clerical fascism in specific regions, though surprisingly little on Milan, which was the largest and most important center of lay Catholic political activity.<sup>160</sup> Pollard indicates the need for more historical research on Italian Catholic politicians who supported Fascism.<sup>161</sup> Italian Catholic intellectuals who supported Fascist policies formed the subject of a major study over thirty years ago by Paolo Ranfagni, who focused on scholarly publications issued by Gemelli's university in the 1930s.<sup>162</sup> More recently, Jorge Dagnino has studied the intellectuals of *Azione Cattolica* during the Fascist period.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> See Pietro Scoppola, *La Chiesa e il fascismo. Documenti e interpretazioni* (Bari: Laterza, 1971).

<sup>160</sup> Bartolo Gariglio, *Cattolici democratici e clerico-fascisti. Il mondo cattolico torinese all prova del fascismo (1922-1927)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976); Mariangiola Reineri, *Cattolici e fascismo a Torino, 1925-1943* (Torino: Loescher, 1978); Alberto Monticone, ed., *Cattolici e fascisti in Umbria (1922-1945)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1978); Giorgio Vecchio, *I cattolici milanesi e la politica. L'esperienza del Partito popolare, 1919-1926* (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1982); Dario Franceschini, *Il Partito popolare a Ferrara. Cattolici, socialisti e fascisti nella terra di Grosoli e don Minzoni* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1985); Mauro Forno, *Rinnovamento cattolico e stabilità sociale. Chiesa e organizzazioni cattoliche astigiane tra le due guerre* (Torino: Gruppo Abele, 1997).

<sup>161</sup> John Pollard, 'Conservative Catholics and Italian fascism: the Clerico-Fascists,' p. 31.

<sup>162</sup> Paolo Ranfagni, *I clerico-fascisti. Le riviste dell'Università Cattolica negli anni del regime* (Firenze: Cooperativa editrice università, 1975).

<sup>163</sup> Jorge Dagnino, 'Catholic Modernities in Fascist Italy: the Intellectuals of *Azione Cattolica*,' in Matthew Feldman, Marius Turda and Tudor Georgescu, eds., *Clerical Fascism in Interwar Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 117-130.

The study of clerical fascism as a wider European phenomenon, according to John Pollard, is still in its early stages.<sup>164</sup> He suggests that new research might bear more fruitful findings than Roger Griffin's thesis that a key part of the appeal of generic fascism is its ability to fill the spiritual needs of a secularized society.<sup>165</sup> Griffin contends that the "psychological basis of fascism" is a "perversion" of "the human need for self-transcendence," that is, of the need to "invest actions with the sense of fulfilling a 'higher' purpose or mission."<sup>166</sup> Pollard points to the millions of Europeans who, already adhering to traditional forms of Christianity, "were attracted to fascism precisely because it seemed to fulfill and advance their religious aspirations."<sup>167</sup> If Griffin's thesis is valid, then it seems able to pertain only to (presumably) anti-clerical fascists who had unmet spiritual needs. Pollard suggests that fascists could not have ascended to power without support from non-fascists who sought their own ends through the fascist movement, a thesis shared by Bosworth.<sup>168</sup> Paxton similarly observes, "Fascist movements could never grow without the help of ordinary people, even conventionally good people."<sup>169</sup>

Griffin has recently taken up Pollard's challenge to study clerical fascism as a concept.

He defines it as follows:

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<sup>164</sup> Pollard, "'Clerical Fascism': Context, Overview and Conclusion," p. 444.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 186-187.

<sup>167</sup> Pollard, "'Clerical Fascism': Context, Overview and Conclusion," p. 443.

<sup>168</sup> Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy*.

<sup>169</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Knopf, 2004), p. 13.

The ideology and political praxis of clerics and theologians who *either* tactically support fascism as a movement or regime while maintaining a critical distance from its totalising, revolutionary, and basically secular objectives, *or* integrate elements of fascist values and policies into the way they conceptualize their mission on earth as devout believers in a divinely ordained world.<sup>170</sup>

Offering this as a “generic concept,” Griffin allows for two species of clerical fascists distinguished by his use of *either/or*. What is confusing about this conceptualization is Griffin’s claim of a single psychological basis for generic *fascism* (“a neurologically based mischannelling of the human drive for self-transcendence”),<sup>171</sup> yet two clearly different psychological bases for generic *clerical fascism*. Fascism did not shape the *Weltanschauung* of a cleric, such as Gemelli, who supported it for tactical reasons while remaining outside of it. The term clerical fascism has limited usefulness when applied to both types of cleric, especially given its pejorative connotation. Roger Eatwell flatly states, “Fascism has become a latter-day symbol of evil, like the Devil in the Middle Ages.”<sup>172</sup> The term thus tends to evoke judgment before it elicits understanding. Although scholars like Griffin and Pollard are doing serious conceptual work in this area, some historians seems to apply the clerico-fascist label as a way of constructing an Other against which norms are measured.<sup>173</sup> Given the extent to which Gemelli, as the archetype for Italian clerical fascism, remains unknown or misunderstood among English

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<sup>170</sup> Roger Griffin, ‘The “Holy Storm”: “Clerical Fascism” through the Lens of Modernism,’ in Matthew Feldman, Marius Turda and Tudor Georgescu, eds., *Clerical Fascism in Interwar Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 5.

<sup>171</sup> Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, p. 188.

<sup>172</sup> Roger Eatwell, *Fascism. A History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1995), p. xvii.

<sup>173</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952).

language historians, the sociological typing of clerical fascism is perhaps less useful for understanding him than the biographical studies of individual men categorized as such. A deeper understanding of their motivations and methods will illuminate the underlying reality of such a concept.

Although Gemelli's reputation as a clerical fascist seems fixed in the historiography, more needs to be done to specify this term. Aside from the work of Bocci, little in depth study has been done on Gemelli's motivations. I propose to analyze Gemelli's clerical fascism by using a sort of biographical approach, which Pollard suggests is useful insofar as "Clerico-Fascism [of Italian Catholic politicians]... was very much a movement of influential individuals and cliques."<sup>174</sup> Pollard also states the need to go beyond biography and produce "closely detailed studies of Catholic politics."<sup>175</sup> Biography nevertheless serves as a prolegomena for such further studies. My research on Gemelli shows the complexity of clerical fascism even on the scale of the individual. It is time to exhume Gemelli for re-examination.

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<sup>174</sup> Pollard, 'Conservative Catholics and Italian fascism: the Clerico-Fascists,' p. 32.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

## Chapter 2: PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

Edoardo Gemelli was Milanese, born and raised in the Piazza del Duomo. At the time of his birth in 1878 Milan was not just any city in Italy, it was *the* city in Italy (“*la città più città d’Italia*”),<sup>176</sup> the most progressive and dynamic one. It was becoming the “showcase of a new Italy, in choices for the future and in ways of life, both political and cultural, and also – it might be added – in convulsions of religious life.”<sup>177</sup> Milan manifested at least a rhetorical challenge to both the political and the religious authority of Rome by naming itself the “moral capital” of Italy. And the Piazza del Duomo was not just any quarter of Milan, but its radial point. The Duomo, as the focal point of this piazza, was, then as now, the “fundamental point of reference”<sup>178</sup> for this metropolis. To be on this spot where time and space intersected in *fin-de-siècle* Milan meant that you were part of the great changes taking place in the world and that you stood at the node from which progress pulsed to the rest of Italy.

As the bustling center of the most modern city in Italy, the Piazza del Duomo nevertheless bore aspects of a long and venerable history. To be a Milanese born and raised in the Piazza del Duomo in the late nineteenth century meant not only being an

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<sup>176</sup> Milan was thus described by Giovanni Verga (1840-1922) in a letter he wrote in 1872 to Luigi Capuana (1839-1915), urging the latter to join him there. Both men were notable Sicilian writers who lived in Milan in the late nineteenth century, Verga from 1872 to 1893, Capuana from 1877-1882. Quoted in Olga Ragusa, *Verga’s Milanese Tales* (New York: S. F. Vanni, 1964), p. 15.

<sup>177</sup> Rosanna Pavoni and Cesare Mozzarelli, ‘Introduzione,’ in Rosanna Pavoni and Cesare Mozzarelli, eds., *Milano 1848-1898. Ascesa e trasformazione della capitale morale* (Milano: Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> Amadeo Bellini, ‘Un ritratto: Luca Beltrami,’ in Rosanna Pavoni and Cesare Mozzarelli, eds., *Milano 1848-1898. Ascesa e trasformazione della capitale morale* (Milano: Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, 2000), p. 273.

elect member of present-day society, but also being part of a rich continuum that reached deep into the past. Among the many vocations that Gemelli was to take up in his long life – physiologist, Socialist propagandist, Franciscan priest, experimental psychologist, publisher, military chaplain, university rector, papal advisor – that of historian can also be added.<sup>179</sup> The degree to which he was familiar with historical facts about his Milanese surroundings is, however, difficult to establish. What is certain is that he was aware of being *ambrosiano*, a Milanese heir to the legacy of Ambrose, the city's patron saint. Also certain is that Gemelli, in his prodigious activity, evinced a strong sense of the time and place in which he lived. If Gemelli felt himself to have a historical destiny, then this was at least in part because he was Milanese, born and raised in the Piazza del Duomo.

The Milanese sense of connection to the city's past, present and future was expressed by Carlo Romussi (1847-1913), who wrote a book about it in 1893, and by Felice Cavallotti (1842-1898), who penned the preface to that book.<sup>180</sup> Both men were leading members of Milanese social and political networks based on Freemasonry and Garibaldian ideals, networks that embraced Gemelli and his extended family. In cultivating this historical

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<sup>179</sup> Among the 2,157 published books, articles and reviews authored by Gemelli, one of the most popular was his critical history of Franciscan spirituality, *Il Francescanismo* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero: 1932), which has appeared in nine editions in Italian, as well as single editions in Hungarian (1933), Croatian (1933), English (1934), German (1936), Flemish (1938), Spanish (1940), Portuguese (1944), and Czech (1948), but not in French or in Polish, the languages of the two largest Catholic countries in Europe other than Italy. Edoarda Preto, ed., *Bibliografia di Padre Agostino Gemelli* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1981).

<sup>180</sup> Carlo Romussi, *Milano ne'suoi monumenti*, 2 vols., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1893).



consciousness Cavallotti expressed both a sense of purpose and a means by which it could be achieved.

Never in the period through which Milan traverses toward its splendid future has there been a moment more urgent and more clear for disentangling, while there is still time, what remains of the testimony of the centuries to its history, from the fables, from the flatteries, from the superstitions and from the legends in which historians and chroniclers of the past enveloped it. If a similar work were attempted later, many of the criteria and the elements would arrive at less. Nor could such a work be pursued well and effectively, except by someone who would have paired the mastery of new methods of inquiry to both a vivacious love and an extended study of matters about the town as well as to a certain intuition of *ambrosianità* that is like the key interpretation of tradition for the language of many of our monuments, and [by someone who would have paired] to the acumen of modern criticism a lively feeling of artist and poet.<sup>181</sup>

Here lies an important means by which a future historian could make sense of Gemelli, who was just a local boy at the time this *prefazione* was written, but would become a major Italian figure in the new century about to begin. To understand Gemelli one must appreciate his *ambrosianità*, his Milanese character that binds him to the legacy of Ambrose, the city's patron saint.

A town whose medieval lineaments are still alive will often preserve a demarcated parcel of land that is immediately and indisputably identifiable as its heart. In Milan, this is the Piazza del Duomo. But it was not always the civic center. This same plot of land

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<sup>181</sup> Felice Cavallotti, 'Prefazione,' in Carlo Romussi, *Milano ne'suoi monumenti*, Vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1893), p. 3.

originally lay at the limits of the walled Roman city, then known as *Mediolanum*, and served as the *pomerio*, sacred earth upon which the pagan Romans proscribed both building and ploughing.<sup>182</sup> By the early fourth century A.D., the Roman city had expanded to such extent and in such way that this site became its locus of activity and served as its *forum*. A representative of the emperor Constantine appeared on this spot in 313 to read the Edict of Milan, forever investing this ground with an important legacy of politics and religion.<sup>183</sup> This event, a fact recorded in countless shelved books around the world, was a more tangible memory to late nineteenth century Milanese who remembered it as having taken place “more or less on the same site as the present day Piazza del Duomo.”<sup>184</sup> The earliest Christian basilica built here was replaced in the mid-fourth century with a new one, Santa Tecla, built on adjacent land.<sup>185</sup> Shortly thereafter, the new bishop of *Mediolanum*, Ambrose (c. 337-397) had a baptistery constructed next to it. On this spot, during the Easter vigil of 387, Ambrose baptized one of Christianity’s greatest converts, Augustine.<sup>186</sup> By this time, the basilica was recognized as the city’s vital center.

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<sup>182</sup> Enrico Cattaneo, *Il Duomo nella vita civile e religiosa di Milano* (Milano: Nuove Edizione Duomo, 1985), pp. 9-10.

<sup>183</sup> H. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

<sup>184</sup> Carlo Romussi, *Sant’Ambrogio. I Tempi – L’Uomo – La Basilica* (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1897), p. 1.

<sup>185</sup> Margherita Migliarini, *Alle origini del Duomo. La basilica e il culto di Santa Tecla* (Milano: NED, 1990).

<sup>186</sup> The fourth-century remains of the *Battistero di San Giovanni alle fonti*, beneath the pavement immediately in front of the present Duomo, were discovered during sewer excavations in 1870, but not recognized until 1914 as belonging to the baptistery in which Augustine received the sacrament. Carlo Ferrari da Passano and Anna Maria Roda, *I Battisteri paleocristiani del Duomo di Milano* (Milano: Nuove Edizioni Duomo, 1996), pp. 5, 12.

For more than a thousand years, Santa Tecla stood here, rebuilt after invasion in 452 and fire in 1075; another basilica, named Santa Maria Maggiore, was built facing it in 836.<sup>187</sup> Both Santa Tecla and Santa Maria Maggiore served as the bishop's church: the former in the summer and the latter in the winter. After Santa Maria Maggiore fell into decay in the mid-fourteenth century, Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402), accumulating the plenitude of power that would lead to his investiture as the first Duke of Milan,<sup>188</sup> spearheaded the popular effort that began in 1386 to replace Santa Maria Maggiore with a magnificent new cathedral that the people, conscious of their civic history as a *comune*, affectionately called *il Duomo*. This name, derived from the Latin *domus*, or house – as distinguished from the Latin *cathedra*, or chair, which refers more specifically to the seat of the bishop – indicates the proprietary feeling that the Milanese have always had for this church. They soon referred to the construction site surrounding the project as the *Piazza del Duomo*.<sup>189</sup> The citizens of Milan, led by a select group of local notables who formed the *Fabbrica del Duomo* for the purpose of financing, constructing and maintaining the structure, began on this spot to erect a Gothic cathedral intended to rival those of the most powerful kingdoms, duchies and bishoprics of Europe. It sits atop the former site of Santa Maria Maggiore; Santa Tecla was demolished in 1458 to make way for its

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<sup>187</sup> Maria Teresa Fiorio, *Le Chiese di Milano* (Milano: Electa Editrice, 1985), p. 235.

<sup>188</sup> Jane Black, *Absolutism in Renaissance Milan. Plenitude of Power under the Visconti and the Sforza 1329-1535* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 69. See also: Marco Fossati and Alessandro Ceresatto, 'La Lombardia alla ricerca d'uno Stato,' in Giancarlo Andenna, Renato Bordone, Francesco Somaini and Massimo Vallerani, eds., *Comuni e signorie nell'Italia settentrionale: la Lombardia* (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torninese, 1998), pp. 483-572.

<sup>189</sup> Alberico B. Belgiojoso, Antonio Grandi, Domenico Rodella and Antonio Tosi, *Piazza del Duomo a Milano* (Milano: Gabrielle Mazzotta, 1982).

expanding size.<sup>190</sup> Perhaps it is worth noting that Milanese ambition, in this case, exceeded Milanese capability. “From the outset the undertaking was far beyond the experience of the local architects and masons involved in its construction.”<sup>191</sup> The Milanese were thus obliged to call upon other Europeans from the north to help them erect the great cathedral by which they meant to honor God, but also to flatter themselves.

The cathedral remained under construction for nearly 600 years. Starting from its eastward pointing apse, it was intermittently built forward so that the last part to be completed would be its west façade. About halfway through this long process, during seven decades spanning the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a momentous coherence developed between the Duomo and the two archbishops named Borromeo. Carlo Borromeo (1538-1584),<sup>192</sup> scion of a Milanese family of outstanding wealth and nobility,

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<sup>190</sup> Fiorio, p. 235.

<sup>191</sup> John Musgrove, ed., *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture* (London: Butterworths, 1987), p. 499.

<sup>192</sup> A critical biography of Carlo Borromeo has yet to be written in English. An intrepid scholar volunteering for this task would have to set aside time to sift through the 35,971 letters addressed to Carlo Borromeo and the 24 volumes of draft copies of letters sent by him, all held in the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*. Carlo Marcora, ‘The Resources of the Ambrosiana for the Study of Borromeo,’ in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), pp. 300-312. Among the handful of Borromeo biographies published in the twentieth century and available in English is one worth special mention, even if it does not stand up to present-day standards of scholarship. The author of *Life of St. Charles Borromeo* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1943) was Cesare Orsenigo (1873-1946), a provincial Lombard priest and friend of Achille Ratti (1857-1939). In 1930, Ratti, by then Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), named Orsenigo as papal *nuncio* to Germany when the post was vacated by Eugenio Pacelli (1876-1958), whom Pius XI had appointed as Cardinal Secretary of State; Pacelli would later succeed Ratti as Pope Pius XII (1939-1958).

was barely twenty years old when called to Rome by his uncle Pope Pius IV (1559-1565). Control of the Duchy of Milan, contested by French and Hapsburg monarchs since 1498, had come into the settled possession of Spain with the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.<sup>193</sup> Carlo, remaining in Rome, was appointed as administrator for the see of Milan in 1560, ordained as priest in 1563 (on the Feast of St. Ambrose), and appointed

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Orsenigo held the office of *nuncio*, amidst controversy and criticism, from 1930 until the spring of 1945 when the collapse of the German state caused his nunciature to lose official status. Reviewing the translated edition of Orsenigo's work in October 1943, a critic wrote: "Archbishop Orsenigo's biography of St. Charles was written about thirty-five years ago to commemorate the tercentenary of the saint's canonization. It appeared regularly for more than two years as a series of articles in a monthly review under the direction of Monsignor Achille Ratti, then prefect of the Ambrosian Library and later Pope Pius XI." William J. Gauche, [untitled review], *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 367-368. Two things are notable about this translated biography of Borromeo. First, its publication in the United States more than three decades after it had first appeared in Italy, suggests that Orsenigo needed to improve his image with the American public during the Second World War. Second, the choice of Agostino Gemelli to write a preface to the book suggests that his public image in the United States may also have needed a boost by 1943. See also: Domenico Sella, 'Sotto il dominio della Spagna,' in Domenico Sella and Carlo Capra, eds., *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796* (Torino: UTET, 1984), pp. 61-102; Fernando Vittorino Joannes, *Vita e tempi di Carlo Borromeo* (Brescia: Camunia, 1985); *San Carlo e il suo tempo. Atti del Convegno Internazionale nel IV centenario della morte (Milano, 21-26 maggio 1984)*, 2 vols. (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1986); John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988); Danilo Zardin, 'Carlo Borromeo,' in Franco Della Peruta, ed., *Milano Moderna* (Milano: Elio Sellino, 1993), pp. 1121-1140; Angelo Turchini, 'Milano e la provincia ecclesiastica da Carlo a Federico Borromeo,' in Paolo Pissavino and Gianvittorio Signorotto, eds., *Lombardia Borromaica, Lombardia Spagnola, 1554-1659*, Vol. 2 (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1995), pp. 811-844; Franco Buzzi and Danilo Zardin, eds., *Carlo Borromeo e l'opera della «Grande Riforma». Cultura, religione e arti del governo nella Milano del pieno cinquecento* (Cinsello Balasamo (Milano): Silvana Editoriale, 1997); Paolo Biscottini, ed., *Carlo e Federico: la luce Borromeo nella Milano spagnola* (Milano: Museo diocesano, 2005). On Orsenigo, see: Monica M. Biffi, *Mons. Cesare Orsenigo. Nunzio apostolico in Germania (1930-1945)* (Milano, NED, 1997); *Ibid.*, *Il Cavaletto per la tortura. Cesare Orsenigo, ambasciatore del papa nella Germania di Hitler* (Roma: Città nuova, 2006).

<sup>193</sup> J. H. Elliot, *Europe Divided, 1559-1598*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000).

archbishop of Milan in 1564.<sup>194</sup> By the time he arrived in Milan in 1565 this diocese had not had a resident bishop for eighty years.<sup>195</sup> As archbishop of Milan (1560-1584) Borromeo defended his episcopal authority with equal measure against Spanish viceroys and Roman popes.<sup>196</sup> Carlo strictly interpreted the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) that placed all entities with spiritual purposes under the local bishop,<sup>197</sup> even though this led to frequent confrontations with, among many others, the laic *Fabbrica del Duomo*.<sup>198</sup> He attempted to update the design of the cathedral's still unfinished west façade from the old-fashioned Gothic style to the Late Renaissance style that had become representative of a revitalized Rome.<sup>199</sup> Although the Tridentine reforms called for a regularized Roman liturgy across all dioceses of the church,<sup>200</sup> Carlo gained exceptional recognition for Milan's ancient and distinctive Ambrosian liturgy.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Zardin, p. 1122.

<sup>195</sup> John B. Tomaro, 'San Carlo Borromeo and the Implementation of the Council of Trent,' in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 69.

<sup>196</sup> "Throughout his long and active tenure in Milan, Borromeo worked to refine and promote the Tridentine reform, which in his mind was the reorganization of the dioceses of Christendom under the guidance of the bishops.... Popes and princes were to provide inspiration, motivation, and support, but they were not to meddle in the activities of the bishops nor question the soundness of the shepherd's judgment." Tomaro, p. 72.

<sup>197</sup> "No activity in the diocese was outside the bishop's sacramental, juridical, or moral control." Tomaro, p. 71.

<sup>198</sup> Cattaneo, pp. 99-102.

<sup>199</sup> Belgiojoso et al., p. 34.

<sup>200</sup> "The papal bull *Quod a nobis* proposed the revised Roman Breviary of 1568 as the only model universally valid in the Roman Catholic Church unless there was a pre-existing rite of at least 200 years standing...." Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 10.

<sup>201</sup> "While he revived and defended the distinct Ambrosian liturgical and musical use at Milan, he elsewhere imposed the post-conciliar standard of the Roman rite against all opposition." A. D. Wright, 'The Borromeo Ideal and the Spanish Church,' in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and*

He clearly understood both the ecclesiastical importance and the popular veneration of his greatest predecessor in this see. New choir stalls for the Duomo, on which work began in 1572, were commissioned to be “decorated, *inter alia*, with scenes from St. Ambrose’s life.”<sup>202</sup> Carlo explicitly adopted the figure of Ambrose as “the model dearest to him.”<sup>203</sup> As Simon Ditchfield points out, “Borromeo was seen by contemporaries as a new Ambrose.”<sup>204</sup>

Carlo’s reforming episcopacy was soon followed – and its “Caroline standards of ecclesiastical and religious life” were reinforced – by the even longer episcopal tenure of

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*Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 190. See also: Angelo Paredi, *Storia del rito ambrosiano* (Milano: Edizioni O.R., 1990); Cesare Alzati, ‘Carlo Borromeo e la tradizione liturgica,’ in Cesare Alzati, *Ambrosiana ecclesia. Studi su la chiesa Milanese e l’ecumene cristiana fra tarda antichità e medioevo* (Milano: NED, 1993), pp. 307-321. On the Ambrosian liturgy itself, see: *The Ambrosian Liturgy. The ordinary and canon of the Mass according to the rite of the Church of Milan*, trans. E. G. Cuthbert and F. Atchley (London: Cope and Fenwick, 1909); Ernesto Teodoro Moneta Caglio, *Intendere la messa. Dogma, storia, spiritualità nella liturgia ambrosiana della messa* (Milano: Ancora, 1939); Cesare Alzati, *Ambrosianum Mysterium: The Church of Milan and its liturgical tradition*, trans. George Guiver, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 1999, 2000).

<sup>202</sup> Ditchfield, p. 41. See also: Carlo Romussi, *Il Duomo di Milano nella storia e nell’arte*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milano: Società Editrice Sonzogno, 1908), p. 76; ‘Ciclo della vita di S. Ambrogio,’ in Angelo Paredi and Anna Maria Brizio, *Sant’Ambrogio nell’arte del Duomo di Milano* (Milano: Veneranda fabbrica del Duomo di Milano, 1973), pp. 89-231.

<sup>203</sup> Adriano Prospero, ‘Clerics and Laymen in the Work of Carlo Borromeo,’ in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 115.

<sup>204</sup> Ditchfield, p. 96. Ditchfield’s evidence is an early biography, *Vita del Beato Carlo Borromeo* (Milan, 1602), which seems to be an early translation into Italian of that written by Agostino Valiero, *Vita Caroli Borromei, card. S. praxedis archiepiscopi Mediolani* (Verona, 1586).

his younger cousin Federico Borromeo (1595-1631).<sup>205</sup> Federico was long a beloved figure and is still remembered in his native Milan for his self-sacrificing charity during the bubonic plague that devastated that city in 1630. He is also acclaimed for founding the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, the first public library on the European continent, in 1603.<sup>206</sup> This venerable institution preserves his chronicle and testimony of the plague, handwritten in Latin.<sup>207</sup> At the height of the plague, 50,000 desperate souls,<sup>208</sup> or what must have been a substantial proportion of those who had so far survived a disaster that halved the city's population,<sup>209</sup> gathered in the Piazza del Duomo. It was an enormous crowd for a piazza made smaller by two large blocks of medieval residences that then stood near the front of the cathedral.<sup>210</sup> Chanting psalms, they marched in procession toward the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, the ancient church originally built by Ambrose as his intended burial place, located in the nearby piazza of the same name. Shortly thereafter, the remains of Carlo Borromeo, who had succored the Milanese during an earlier plague, were disinterred from within the Duomo and carried in procession to places of prayer throughout the city.<sup>211</sup> Among Milanese Catholics, the veneration of Carlo, canonized in Rome while his cousin was the archbishop of Milan, is second only to that of Ambrose.

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<sup>205</sup> Wright, p. 189.

<sup>206</sup> Franco Buzzi and Roberta Ferro, eds. *Federico Borromeo fondatore della Biblioteca ambrosiana. Atti delle giornate di studio 25-27 novembre 2004* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2005).

<sup>207</sup> Federico Borromeo, *La Peste di Milano del 1630*, ed. Armando Torno, trans. Ilaria Solari (Milano: Rusconi, 1998).

<sup>208</sup> Belgiojoso et al., p. 37.

<sup>209</sup> The population of Milan in 1629 was roughly 130,000; by 1631 it was about 66,000. Domenico Sella, 'Premesse demografiche ai censimenti austriaci' in *Storia di Milano*, vol. 12 (Milano: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la storia di Milano, 1959), p. 460.

<sup>210</sup> The *Coperto dei Figini* would remain standing until 1864, the *isolata del Rebbecchino* until 1875.

<sup>211</sup> Belgiojoso et al., p. 37.



After the period of the Borromeos, little if any work of importance was completed on the cathedral until the Napoleonic era. Crowning himself King of Italy in the sanctuary of the Duomo in 1805,<sup>212</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) placed upon his own head the Iron Crown of Lombardy, the same ancient diadem once used to crown Charlemagne.<sup>213</sup> At the same time, Bonaparte imperiously ordered completion of the cathedral's west façade. Just as everything old is new again, a design in the Gothic style, now back in vogue, was chosen for the final work on the façade, completed in 1813. Due to a stringent budget, however, the Late Renaissance elements, installed by Carlo Borromeo on the lowest portion of the façade, were left in place,<sup>214</sup> thus giving the Duomo façade its peculiar hodgepodge appearance. Later in the nineteenth century the Duomo hosted another Napoleon on another grand occasion. In 1859, following the defeat of Austria in

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<sup>212</sup> "At Milan on May 26<sup>th</sup>, the immense white marble Duomo, with its towering pillars and fretted roof, was the scene of a coronation even more impressive than that in Nôtre Dame." J. M. Thompson, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 274.

<sup>213</sup> "It has been supposed (Eckhel, *Doct. Num. Vet.* Vol. viii, p. 80) that Constantine adopted the diadem, wishing to liken himself to Alexander the Great, on whose coins an effigy of a very similar character may be seen, but according to the authority of St. Ambrose (*de Obitu Theod.* 47, 48) the empress Helena, at the time when she is supposed to have discovered at Jerusalem, about 326, the fragment of our Saviour's cross, together with two of the nails (one of which was used for the bridle of his horse, the other for his diadem), sent to her son Constantine a *diadem studded with gems*, which as been identified with the iron crown of Lombardy at Monza cathedral." William Smith and Samuel Cheetham, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities. Being a continuation of 'The Dictionary of the Bible,'* Vol. II (Hartford: The J. B. Burr Publishing Co., 1880), p. 1285. See also: Graziella Buccellatti, ed., *The Iron Crown and Imperial Europe*, 2 vols. (Milano: Editoriale Giorgio Mondadori, 1995, 1999); Valeriana Maspero, *La corona ferrea. La storia del più antico e celebre simbolo del potere in Europa* (Monza: Vittone, 2003).

<sup>214</sup> Ashton Rollins Willard, *History of Modern Italian Art* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), pp. 311-313.

the Battle of Magenta, Napoleon III (1808-1873) marched into the Milan cathedral alongside his ally, the Piedmontese king, Vittorio Emanuele II (1820-1878), to celebrate a grand *Te Deum*.<sup>215</sup> This Latin hymn of praise, part of the Matins, or morning office of prayer, has long been recited also in extra-liturgical ceremonies, such as those marking military victory.<sup>216</sup> Since the early Middle Ages the *Te Deum* had been attributed to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.<sup>217</sup> The two saints were said to have spontaneously composed it and sung the lines alternately at Augustine's Easter vigil baptism on this site in 387.<sup>218</sup>

*Te deum laudamus: te dominum confitemur.*

*Te æternum patrem: omnis terra ueneratur.*<sup>219</sup>

The recitation of this ancient hymn of praise would seem, with a bit of imagination, to have mingled the two illustrious monarchs present at that moment with the memory of

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<sup>215</sup> Paolo Pinto, *Vittorio Emanuele II. Il re avventuriero* (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1995), pp. 296-297.

<sup>216</sup> Michel Huglo, 'Te Deum,' in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13 (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2003), p. 771.

<sup>217</sup> In the Roman Breviary published after the Council of Trent, the *Te Deum* is found under the title 'Hymnus SS. Ambrosii et Augustini.' *Breviarum romanum. Editio princeps (1568)*, eds. Manlio Sodi and Achille Maria Triacca (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1999), p. 43-44.

<sup>218</sup> H. T. Henry, 'Te Deum,' in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vo. XIV (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), p. 468.

<sup>219</sup> "We praise Thee, O God: We acknowledge thee to be the Lord.

All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting."

*The Roman Breviary. Reformed by the order of the Holy Œcumenical Council of Trent; published by order of Pope St. Pius V.; and revised by Clement VIII., Urban VIII., and Leo XIII. Together with the offices since granted and the martyrology*, trans. John, Marquess of Bute, K.T. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1908), p. 12.

the two great saints fixed to this site's ancient past.<sup>220</sup>

The enormous rosy mass of the Milan cathedral, covered with a host of intricate spindly spires, like a bristling marble porcupine, sits majestically at the center of the Piazza del Duomo. There is nothing else quite like it. The American writer Mark Twain, touring through recently unified Italy in 1867, described it thus:

At last, a forest of graceful needles, shimmering in the amber sunlight... - the Cathedral! We knew it in a moment.... Wherever you stand in Milan, or within seven miles of Milan, it is visible – and when it is visible, no other object can chain your whole attention. Leave your eyes unfettered by your will but a single instant and they will surely turn to seek it. It is the first thing you look for when you rise in the morning, and the last your lingering gaze rests upon at night. Surely, it must be the princeliest creation that ever brain of man conceived.<sup>221</sup>

Work was still underway on the cathedral even during Twain's visit. He described holy relics within the Duomo, including the remains of St. Carlo Borromeo, "robed in costly habiliments covered with gold embroidery and starred with scintillating gems,"<sup>222</sup> as well as osseous matter of more questionable provenance – "two of St. Paul's fingers and one of St. Peter's; a bone of Judas Iscariot (it was black) and also bones of all the other

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<sup>220</sup> By the 1890s improved historical methods had caused scholars to reject authorship of the *Te Deum* to either Ambrose or Augustine. Henry, p. 469. See also: A. E. Burn, *The Hymn Te Deum and Its Author* (London: Faith Press, 1926).

<sup>221</sup> Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1869), pp. 171-172.

<sup>222</sup> Twain, p. 178.

disciples.”<sup>223</sup> As for the cathedral’s exterior, Twain notes: “It has one hundred and thirty-six spires – twenty-one more are to be added. . . . It is estimated that it will take a hundred and twenty years yet to finish the cathedral.”<sup>224</sup> Only six years later, the Duomo was the site of another liturgy celebrated in great pomp that bound Milan’s past to its present. This was the funeral mass of the revered herald of Italy’s cultural Risorgimento, Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873). His masterpiece historical novel *I promessi sposi*, from its first edition in 1825,<sup>225</sup> immortalized the seventeenth century plague in which Federico Borromeo perished while ministering to afflicted Milanese. Indeed, Manzoni, in the course writing this novel, frequented the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana* to consult Federico Borromeo’s manuscript testimony of the plague. Seeking to give it a lively language, Manzoni rewrote the novel, abandoning the standard literary Italian of the Accademia della Crusca used in the 1825 edition. In its place he created a synthetic new lexicon, borrowing liberally from Tuscan dialect and contributing invaluable to the modern Italian language, the spread of which was greatly assisted by the popularity of his novel in its new edition of 1840.<sup>226</sup> It “quickly [became] a classic” that is “embedded by now in the fabric of Italy’s national life.”<sup>227</sup> Manzoni’s funeral mass in the Duomo was a mark of recognition for his contributions to the life of Milan and all of Italy. To have a

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p. 180. In fact, the cathedral would be completed in just short of a hundred years.

<sup>225</sup> Alessandro Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi; storia milanese del secolo XVII*, 3 vols. (Milano: Presso Vincenzo Ferrario, 1825-27). Although the 1825 date appears on the frontispiece of the first volume, it did not appear in public until 1827.

<sup>226</sup> Maurizio Vital, *La Lingua di Alessandro Manzoni* (Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1986).

<sup>227</sup> Sandra Berman, ‘I promessi sposi (1827/1840-1842),’ in Gaetana Marrone, ed., *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, Vol. 2 (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1137-1140.

*Requiem* performed in the Duomo was a signal honor. Meanwhile, the final touches on the cathedral's construction proceeded intermittently, interrupted by the two world wars that wracked Milan in the twentieth century. In 1959 Gemelli's *Requiem* would be performed in the Duomo by Archbishop Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978), the future Pope Paul VI (1963-1978). The Duomo was officially completed with the installation of the last of its bronze doors in 1965.

If the Catholic church was the first on this site to express its authority in monumental terms, other powers vying to occupy the vital center of Milan, both literally and figuratively, followed its example and flanked the cathedral with their own edifices. Temporal rulers staked out the south side. Early palaces<sup>228</sup> housed first the Visconti and Sforza dukes of Milan and then, after 1535, the Spanish Hapsburg governors of Lombardy. Following the War of Spanish Succession in 1713, the Austrian Habsburgs assumed power in Lombardy.<sup>229</sup> They replaced the crumbling agglomeration of medieval palace structures on the southern edge of the Piazza del Duomo with the Neo-classical Palazzo Reale. Its clean lines and low profile appear conspicuously restrained next to the Duomo; the stateliness of the palace was obviously not intended to compete in visual terms with the majesty of the cathedral. An expansive front courtyard opens on to the piazza, but two enclosing wings cut it off from all passing traffic. This lends the palace an air of aloof exaltedness, even as it asserts its presence at the center of the city's life. It

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<sup>228</sup> The bishop's palace had already stood for centuries immediately east of the Cathedral, before the Piazza del Duomo even existed. It still claims this site today.

<sup>229</sup> Domenico Sella and Carlo Capra, eds., *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796* (Torino: UTET, 1984).

is a *domus* for viceroys, not for the people. Completed between 1771 and 1778, the Palazzo Reale was designed by Giuseppe Piermarini (1734-1803), the same architect responsible for the nearby La Scala opera house – the history of which would become closely tied to the nineteenth-century composer Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901); the *Requiem* he composed for Manzoni was performed at La Scala in 1874. The new Palazzo Reale would house just one governor before Austria's imperial power was eclipsed by revolution. Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Este (1754-1806) governed the Duchy of Milan from 1770 until Napoleon's revolutionary forces entered his territory in 1796 and upset the *ancien régime*, even in its guise as the relatively enlightened Hapsburg administration.<sup>230</sup> Ferdinand was brother of the reforming emperor Joseph II (1741-1790), whose prior rule, along with that of his mother, empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780), is credited with having fostered the Milanese sense of industry and efficiency.<sup>231</sup> The new palace then housed various Napoleonic governors, both republican and imperial, between 1796 and 1814. Following Napoleon's final defeat, it became the residence of restored Austrian viceroys. When Lombardy annexed itself to Piedmont, following the Battle of Magenta in 1859, the palace was passed to the House of Savoy, whose royal visits to Milan became increasingly rare. Vittorio Emanuele II, limiting his expenditures in the aftermath of the First World War, ceded this property to the Italian state in 1919.<sup>232</sup>

If the repose of the Palazzo Reale after 1859 indicated that Milan was no longer the

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<sup>230</sup> Silvia Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'ancien régime. Ricerche sulla situazione amministrativa e giudiziaria* (Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1971).

<sup>231</sup> Carlo Capra, 'Il settecento,' in Sella and Capra, eds., pp. 433-556.

<sup>232</sup> Antonio Morassi, *Il Palazzo Reale di Milano* (Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1936).

capital of a state, then the opulent emporium christened Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, rising opposite the palace, on the northern flank of the cathedral, signified that Milan had become the capital, so to speak, of Italy's third estate.<sup>233</sup> The Galleria thus became the symbol of the latest power to assert its ascendancy in architectural form on the Piazza del Duomo. It was, however, a cautious third estate that did not make explicit claims of political sovereignty for itself. The propertied and professional classes (or at least the more conservative among them) pledged to support the Piedmontese monarchy as the locus of sovereignty in the newly unified nation.<sup>234</sup> In return, the monarchy was expected to protect the interests of these classes under Italy's liberal constitution.<sup>235</sup> The local governing body of Milan, the *Consiglio comunale*, composed largely of a coterie of entrepreneurial nobles and ennobled entrepreneurs who had grown accustomed to promoting their own interests under Austrian rule, dedicated their palatial monument to the king and proudly inscribed themselves as its benefactors. The inscription reads, "A

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<sup>233</sup> During the forty years following Italian unification in 1860 Milan's ruling elite was a relatively small, yet complex grouping of "aristocrats, landowners, merchants, industrialists, public functionaries, and professionals." Marco Meriggi and Louise Tilly, 'Notables, Bourgeoisie, Popular Classes, and Politics: The Case of Milan at the End of the Nineteenth Century,' *Social Science History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 275-287.

<sup>234</sup> Right-wing members of these classes were almost by definition monarchists; left-wing members often adhered instead to republicanism. Christopher Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967), p. 13.

<sup>235</sup> The relationship between liberalism and modernization in post-Risorgimento Italy is not straightforward. Reviewing Alberto Banti's work on late nineteenth century modernization of agriculture in the lower Po Valley of the Emilia region, John Davis notes "the important point is that the capitalist values of the Emilian landowners were not necessarily accompanied by any strong sympathy for liberalism: if anything, they were impatient with the failure of liberal politics to provide more effective stimulus for economic development. The conclusion that modernity and liberalism were not interdependent undermines the central assumption of the sociology of modernization." John A. Davis, 'Rethinking the Risorgimento?', in Norma Bouchard, ed., *Risorgimento in Modern Italian Culture* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), p. 37.

VITTORIO EMANUELE II. I MILANESI.”<sup>236</sup> The new political elite thus claimed to represent the entire social spectrum of the city. Various attempts have been made to explore or define the category of men who created and ruled the newly unified Italian state.<sup>237</sup> What is certain is that university-trained professionals and civil servants assumed an increasingly large role after 1860 as aristocrats generally retreated.<sup>238</sup> Perhaps it was a sign that civic patronage by only a handful of the richest individuals had become a thing of the past when the Galleria was financed by a two million lire public lottery subscription.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> “To Victor Emmanuel II. From the Milanese.”

<sup>237</sup> They seem to have been a hybrid formed from different social classes, melded more by a shared ideal of a national state than by a common background. Adrian Lyttelton calls for a “wider and more flexible definition” of the social class that ascribed to the ideology of Italian Liberalism. Adrian Lyttelton, ‘The Middle Classes in Liberal Italy,’ in John A. Davis and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento. Essays in honour of Denis Mack Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 218. Marco Meriggi notes that the ruling class of men who thought in national terms after 1815 was formed by a younger generation of nobles and bourgeois fused within voluntary associations and universities. Marco Meriggi, ‘Società, istituzioni e ceti dirigenti,’ in Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia d’Italia, Vol. 1: Le premesse dell’unità. Dalla fine del settecento al 1861* (Roma: Laterza, 1994), pp. 119-228. Giovanni Montroni indicates the ascendancy of the professionals and civil servants and the retreat of aristocrats in the civic sphere after 1861. Giovanni Montroni, ‘Le strutture sociali e le condizioni di vita,’ in Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia d’Italia, Vol. 2: Il nuovo stato e la società civile, 1861-1887* (Roma: Laterza, 1995), pp. 329-426.

<sup>238</sup> The universities in post-Risorgimento Italy were “not serious centres of culture but more like factories for turning out professional qualified doctors and lawyers.” Denis Mack Smith, ‘Francesco De Sanctis: the politics of a literary critic,’ in John A. Davis and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 268. See also: Maria Malatesta, ed., *Society and the Professions in Italy, 1860-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Susan A. Ashley, *Making Liberalism Work: The Italian Experience, 1860-1914* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

<sup>239</sup> Raffaele Carrieri, *Milano 1865-1915* (Milano: Edizioni della Chimera, 1945).



Far grander and more ostentatious than the vice-regal palace, this bourgeois emporium forsook the former's Neo-classical style for an over-the-top Renaissance Revival look. Despite a surface style inspired by the past, its structural form, an iron and glass arcade, was the result of new technology that allowed buildings to soar higher. Just as the fourteenth century Milanese envied the Gothic cathedrals of northern Europe and sought to raise the largest such one in all Christendom, so their nineteenth-century descendants, having seen or heard about the enormous iron and glass commercial arcades in Britain, France and Belgium, aspired to erect the largest and loftiest one of all in the center of Milan. Once again, Milanese ambition exceeded Milanese capability. The *Consiglio comunale* awarded the construction contract to a British firm, City of Milan Improvements Company Limited, established expressly for this purpose. Unlike the vice-regal palace, this bourgeois emporium was very much intended to compete visually with the cathedral. Cruciform in shape and domed at the intersection, the church-like Galleria faces the Duomo with a grand portal that is a veritable arch of triumph soaring thirty-two meters high. The winning entry in the 1863 competition for a redesign of the Piazza del Duomo, awarded to architect Giuseppe Mengoni (1829-1877), called for the construction not only of the Galleria on the north side, but a Palazzo dell'Unità d'Italia on the west side and a Loggia Reale on the south side.<sup>240</sup> The latter two projects were never constructed. In 1865 the Italian monarch laid the cornerstone of the Galleria, the

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<sup>240</sup> Ernesto Brivio, 'Piazza del Duomo' in Giulia Benati and Anna Maria Roda, eds., *Il Duomo di Milano, Dizionario storico artistico e religioso* (Milano: Nuove Edizioni Duomo, 2001), p. 439.

commercial monument dedicated to him by the Milanese bourgeoisie.<sup>241</sup> Its shopping arcade opened in 1867 while Mengoni's plans for developing the rest of the piazza remained on the table. When the British company went bankrupt in 1869 the Galleria was acquired by the *Comune di Milano*. The sites of two planned commercial buildings fronting the piazza, the Palazzo dei Portici Settentrionali along its north side and the Palazzo dei Portici Meridionali on the south, were soon sold to private developers, such as the newcomer Philip Haas, a Vienna-based rug and furniture magnate who had opened his first shop in Milan only eleven years earlier. These two porticoed edifices, also executed in the Renaissance Revival style, were completed in 1875. But the triumphal arch remained only a drawing on paper because the *comune* lacked funds to build it. The architect Mengoni, refusing to abandon his great plan, personally assumed the financing at tremendous cost. The arch went up. Mengoni's grand design was realized. During a final inspection in 1877 the vain architect fell to his death from scaffolding that covered the soaring portal. Some say he leaped, driven to despair by his debts.

The nineteenth-century Italian writer Luigi Capuana (1839-1915), suggests that the Galleria had, in a sense, displaced the Duomo as Milan's vital center by 1881:

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<sup>241</sup> Also in 1865, Ferdinando Bocconi (1836-1908) established his retail chain *Magazzini Bocconi* in Via Santa Radegonda, also on the north side of the Piazza del Duomo. In 1902 he would endow and the foundation of a private university in Milan dedicated to instilling the knowledge and values of enterprise, the *Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi*. The university is named in the memory his son, Luigi Bocconi (1869-1896) who had been killed in the Battle of Adowa. The flagship of the original Bocconi chain of stores, which have since been renamed *La Rinascente*, remains located on the north side of the Piazza del Duomo.

It is the heart of the city. People flock there from all parts, continuously, according to the occasion and the time of the day, and they flow from its four mouths, I was going to say, into the aorta and arteries of the great organism, so much is its resemblance to the functions of the heart evident.... The Duomo, stern, gigantic, half hidden in the shadow, with its hundred spires and its fantastic openwork of lace, watches with an eye of compassion all that bourgeois frippery of arcades, windows, patios, balconies, dormers, and columns piled upon columns that hold up the vault of the great arch and the haughty cornice of the pediment.... That vast edifice created by the intemperate fantasy of the architect Mengoni enlarges our imagination, breathes life into us: we feel it palpitating with the anxiety of our man-made needs, with the longings of our sensual enjoyments, with the agitations of every kind that stimulate the dizzying productions of industry, of art, of science; we see it take on the aspect of a temple, no less sacred than the Duomo. Here one celebrates and sacrifices incessantly, with pomp, with magnificence, to the great God of modern society, to *Work*.<sup>242</sup>

From the day it opened, the Galleria indeed may have drawn larger regular crowds than the Duomo. Business and leisure blended easily in the Galleria, the upper floors of which held space for offices and apartments while the ground floor was reserved for shops. For many Milanese, the most fashionable, compelling consumer goods had become the new holy relics, and the rite of sipping coffee and aperitifs while exchanging gossip and discussing deals had become the new divine liturgy. The Galleria had indeed, for these people, displaced the centrality of the Duomo in some functional, if not spatial, sense.

An argument can be made, however, that the heart of modern Milan is the Piazza del Duomo itself. The public square, bordered by the Duomo, the Palazzo Reale, the Galleria

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<sup>242</sup> Luigi Capuana, 'La Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II' in *Milano 1881*, ed. Carla Riccardi (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 1991), pp. 47-60.

and the Portici Meridionali and Settentrionali, acquired its vastness only in the late nineteenth century. Although plans for its enlargement had been proposed since the Napoleonic era, the piazza assumed its present dimensions, 215 meters by 135 meters (the size of three soccer fields), only after 1859. “The city, already dedicated to feeling itself the moral capital of the [Italian] kingdom, the efficiency and the enterprise of the population adding up to native pride, called for an end to the ancient piazza and entertained the idea of giving Milan a grand and dignified piazza fit to celebrate the unity of Italy.”<sup>243</sup> An irregularly shaped space had long been preserved in front of the Duomo as the cathedral construction yard. Here gathered the massive procession during the plague of 1630. Two large blocks of centuries-old residences standing on the site of the present-day Piazza del Duomo narrowed the approach to the cathedral until the second half of the nineteenth century. Between these two blocks marched Napoleon III and Vittorio Emanuele II to celebrate the *Te Deum* in the Duomo after the Battle of Magenta in 1859. One of the blocks, the Coperto dei Figini, was built with fine materials rescued from Santa Tecla after the latter had been demolished in 1458 to make way for the Duomo. It served the aristocratic element of Milan, with shops and cafes under its portico, until it was in turn demolished in 1864 to make way for the Galleria.<sup>244</sup> The other block, known as the Isolata del Rebecchino, was a jumbled popular quarter lying immediately south of the Coperto dei Figini. It remained until 1875, when it was hurriedly razed to enlarge the piazza to its present proportions for the impending visit of

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<sup>243</sup> Brivio, p. 441.

<sup>244</sup> Some of the shops and cafes relocated from the Coperto to the Galleria, including the still existing Ristorante Biffi as well as the cafe run by Gaspare Campari (1828-1882), concocter and bottler of the famous aperitif whose label carries the family name.

German Emperor Wilhelm I (1797-1888), whom Vittorio Emanuele II would host in the Palazzo Reale. In 1877 the first public demonstration of the newly invented light bulb was given in the Piazza del Duomo. In 1883, the first central station in Europe to generate power for electrical lighting, primarily serving the shops of the Galleria and the theater of La Scala, commenced operation in Via Santa Radegonda on the north side of the Piazza del Duomo.<sup>245</sup> In 1885 the vast public square itself was illuminated. When the horse-drawn tramway appeared in Milan in 1880, its terminus was the Piazza del Duomo. Modern technology thus reinforced the centrality of the piazza in the medieval design of the city.

The heroic bronze equestrian statue of Vittorio Emanuele II near the center of the Piazza del Duomo was unveiled in 1896. Real horses, on the other hand, began to disappear from the piazza when the tramway was electrified that same year. In 1898, hydroelectric power replaced coal at the original central station in Via Santa Radegonda. There would now be less dung in the street and less soot in the air. Concern for public hygiene was followed by attention to urban design.<sup>246</sup> The removal from the piazza of electric trams in 1926<sup>247</sup> and shrubbery in 1928 in order to allow the public square to hold large crowds during the Fascist era seem to have been regulated by the urban planning priorities for

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<sup>245</sup> Maria Grazia Tolfo and Paolo Colussi, eds., *Storia di Milano*, <http://www.storiadimilano.it/citta/milanotecnica/elettricit/radegonda0.htm>; <http://www.storiadimilano.it/citta/milanotecnica/elettricit/elettricit.htm>

<sup>246</sup> Diane Ghirardo, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>247</sup> The antique electric trams that ply the streets of central Milan today, designed by Peter Witt in Cleveland, Ohio, replaced the original fleet of Edison designed electric tramcars in 1928.

Rome set in 1925 by Benito Mussolini (1883-1945): “isolate the significant monuments by eliminating the insignificant, and structure the vistas through the city to accentuate the inherent historical resonance with contemporary political aspirations.”<sup>248</sup> A wing of the Palazzo Reale was partially demolished to make way for the only twentieth-century edifice fronting the piazza, the relatively small, slender, porticoed twin structures known as the Arengario, completed in 1939 for the purpose of providing Mussolini with a venue for delivering speeches in Milan.<sup>249</sup> In 1943 Allied air raids on Milan bombed the Piazza del Duomo, inflicting severe damage on the Arengario, the Palazzo Reale, the Galleria and even the Duomo, though all have long since been repaired as much as possible to their original appearance. The Metropolitana, Milan’s underground rail system, of which the Duomo station is a major node, commenced construction in 1957 and started operating in 1964. Small cavities sprinkled around the perimeter of the piazza now lead

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<sup>248</sup> Terry Kirk, ‘Framing St. Peter’s: Urban Planning in Fascist Rome,’ *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (December 2006), p. 763.

<sup>249</sup> One of the designers of the Arengario was Giovanni Muzio (1893-1982), of the architectural firm *Portaluppi, Muzio, Magistretti e Griffino*. Inspired by feelings of *italianità* after the First World War, Muzio led the return to Neo-Classicism in Italian architecture. Muzio, or at least his style, was apparently favored by Mussolini. In 1926 Gemelli, as rector of the recently founded Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, secured as seat for his university the sixteenth-century cloisters of the former *Monastero di Sant’Ambrogio*, which had been converted into a military hospital after its suppression by Napoleonic forces in 1796. Gemelli invited Muzio to redesign the venerable structure for its new purpose. In 1926 Muzio also designed the *Monumento ai caduti* dedicated to the memory of those fallen in the Great War. Also known as the *Tempio della vittoria*, it is a thoroughly secular monument that was constructed in Piazza Sant’Ambrogio at the entrance to the newly acquired seat of the Università Cattolica in 1928. Agnoldomenico Pica, ed., *Architettura moderna in Milano* (Milano: Edizioni Ariminum, 1964); Fulvio Irace, *Giovanni Muzio, 1893-1982* (Milano: Electa, 1994); Terry Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy*, Vol. 2 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), pp. 69-72. The location of the *Monumenti ai caduti* and the timing of its construction suggest that it was a condition set by military and civil officials for transferring the property of the *Ospedale militare* to the Università Cattolica in 1926; at the entrance to the Catholic university would forever sit a thoroughly secular monument in the style of a pagan temple.

down to the trains.

Alterations since the 1890s pertain mostly to the flat foot-trod surface of the piazza, leaving the configuration of the imposing architecture that borders it essentially the same as it appeared when Edoardo Gemelli was born just steps to the south of it on January 18, 1878<sup>250</sup> – and as it would still appear eight decades later when a *Requiem* was celebrated for him in the Duomo after his death on July 15, 1959. Architecture, called “frozen music” by Goethe (“*Baukunst eine erstarrte Musik nenne*”),<sup>251</sup> might also be described as frozen time, insofar as it fixes a material form in the temporal continuum. But just about everything else in the world evolves fluidly. Despite its preservation, we do not see the Piazza del Duomo as Gemelli saw it. The larger context within which it is viewed today has changed too much. The Piazza del Duomo now imparts the sense of a bygone era. But when Gemelli was a boy the place exuded a feeling of newness and change: it had been recently enlarged and freshly paved, and new edifices, up-to-date in design and construction, bordered much of its perimeter. In the Piazza del Duomo of the late nineteenth century one might easily have sensed the future as well as the past.

The main point to be gathered from this extended description of the architecture and history of the Piazza del Duomo is that Gemelli, like any child of his time who lived in this prestigious revitalized district, even in one of its more ordinary middle-class

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<sup>250</sup> Gemelli’s birthplace was Via Cappellari, 4, just behind the southeast border of Piazza del Duomo; its postwar architectural style suggest that the original building may been among those destroyed during the 1943 wartime bombing raids.

<sup>251</sup> Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1984), p. 284.

dwellings, was likely to have developed a sense of being close to, even a part of, what was most important in Milan and, by extension, in Italy. Gemelli may have been born with only a bronze spoon in his mouth, but his cradle, so to speak, was golden. The very spot on the new map of Italy into which he was born and raised was laden with some of the grandest architecture and most venerable history to be found on the entire peninsula. A boy could easily derive a sense of privilege from being at home amidst the grandiosity and centrality of the piazza and the monumental structures that line it, even before he had fully comprehended the historical events, as well as the contemporary conditions, that imparted particular significance to this public space and architecture. There is, however, an apparent disjointedness between the politics and livelihood of Gemelli's family. Their Garibaldian ideals implied a deep concern for social injustices that result from rule by a self-interested bourgeois elite, yet his family's enterprise in the Piazza del Duomo catered to this same bourgeois elite. One can only guess how conscious Garibaldian democrats felt about being partner to such an arrangement. If they took pride in the role they performed there, perhaps it was simply because they thought of themselves as quintessentially Milanese, or even quintessentially Italian, insofar as "Italian" was a new thing to be and this piazza put them at the very heart of modern Italy.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> The Gemellis and Bertanis were hardly the only political Radicals who chose to reside in the Piazza del Duomo. Filippo Turati (1857-1932) and Anna Kuliscioff (c. 1857-1925), founders of the *Partito Socialista Italiano* in 1892, lived during this same period in an elegant apartment in the Portici Settentrionale, the same arcade in which Gemelli's maternal grandfather, Francesco Bertani, operated his *pasticceria*. Their apartment was the leading salon for Radicals and Socialists in Milan. The young Gemelli would be welcomed into this circle by Turati and Kuliscioff in 1896.



### **Chapter 3: GEMELLI, BERTANI, NECCHI**

Every biographer of Padre Agostino Gemelli mentions his family of origin, but none have examined the degree to which his great-uncle Agostino Bertani, hero of the Risorgimento, provided the young Gemelli with a model for academic and professional achievement as an alternative to the shopkeeping exemplified by his father and grandfather. The relationship to Bertani furthermore helps explain how certain doors were opened to Gemelli, who, as the son of a shopkeeper, became the young protégé of such notable figures as Camillo Golgi (1843-1926), one of the most renowned scientists in Europe after his discovery of the neuron structure in 1873, and Filippo Turati (1857-1932), founder of the *Partito socialista italiana* in 1892 and operator during this period of a smart salon frequented by noted intellectuals. Similarly, every biographer duly notes Gemelli's friendship with Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930), his classmate in *liceo* from 1889 and co-founder of the Università Cattolica in 1921, but none question the degree to which Gemelli was such a loner that virtually all of his other relationships with men took on the character of alliances rather than personal bonds.

#### **Innocente Gemelli and Caterina Bertani**

In the extraordinary metropolitan core of Milan Edoardo Gemelli was born to two rather ordinary Milanese citizens. Despite a relative abundance of noble titles in this part of Italy, his immediate family had none. Although his family was comfortably established in Milan, their roots in that city did not run deep. Indeed the same could be said of many Milanese at that time. The city's increasing prosperity through most of the nineteenth century drew growing numbers of migrants, especially from the province of Milan and

the surrounding region of Lombardy. Edoardo's father was an ambitious newcomer whose status as *esercente*, or shopkeeper, rested on his measure of economic success. His maternal lineage reveals a great-grandfather of similar circumstances. Both of his parents were in this sense typical of Milan's rapidly forming middle class.<sup>253</sup>

Innocente Gemelli (1851-1923) was the son of a prosperous tenant farmer in Bascapè,<sup>254</sup> located in provincial Pavia, about 20 km southeast of Milan. Coming of age during the Risorgimento and forsaking the *status quo* in the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, Innocente rejected both Catholic religion and Austrian imperialism.<sup>255</sup> His father and

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<sup>253</sup> Adrian Lyttelton offers a helpful distinction between the middle class and the bourgeoisie. "Italian authors have tended to distinguish the bourgeoisie proper (holders and users of capital) from the middle classes or *ceti medi*: strictly speaking, one should translate this as 'middle orders'. The reference is more to status than to economic function." Adrian Lyttelton, 'The Middle Classes in Liberal Italy,' in John A. Davis and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento. Essays in honour of Denis Mack Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 218.

<sup>254</sup> Maria Sticco, *Padre Gemelli: appunti per la biografia di un uomo difficile* (Milano: O. R., 1975) p. 5. Another biographer names Calvairate, an agricultural suburb of Milan, as the birthplace of Innocente Gemelli. Cf., Teofane Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli: dalla nascita alla professione religiosa: 1878-1904* (Milano: Edizioni biblioteca francescana, 1978), p. 12. Given that the graves of Innocente and his wife are in Bascapè, this *comune* seems the more likely birthplace.

<sup>255</sup> Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797-1855) critically analyzed, among other things, the relationship between church and state in *Delle cinque piaghe della santa chiesa* (Lugano: Veladini e Comp., 1848). The cooperation between throne and altar during the Restoration period in Italy is a theme in much contemporary historical research. See: A. J. Reinerman, *Austria and the Papacy in the Age of Metternich*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1979); Roger Aubert et al., *The Church Between Revolution and Restoration*, trans. Peter Becker (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). A recent revisionist history calls for greater understanding of the tensions between church and state during the Restoration, criticizing historians who "accepted uncritically" the "liberal opinion" that "depicted Restoration Italy as dominated by a conservative alliance of 'throne and altar' which sustained clerical privileges and religious corruption." Lucy

mother, Angelo Gemelli and Caterina Verganti, on the other hand, supported the *status quo*, as did most agricultural workers. Innocente instead adopted Garibaldian views (i.e., broad principles of “humanitarianism and cosmopolitanism” practiced as democracy, national autonomy and anti-clericalism)<sup>256</sup> and Freemasonry (“the idea of universal brotherhood, cosmopolitan humanitarianism, the myth of progress, the exhaustive elaboration of a civil religion imbued with a laicism that often crossed over into the most intransigent anti-clericalism”),<sup>257</sup> which were shared at that time by other ambitious young men in Lombardy.<sup>258</sup> Taut relations with his parents were finally torn when, having passed the age of twenty, he further abandoned his family’s agricultural traditions and moved to central Milan to start a new life as a shopkeeper. The filial bond remained split for some years thereafter and seems never to have fully healed.

At twenty-five, Innocente married Caterina Bertani (1853-1942), the daughter of an established confectioner, Francesco Bertani, who operated a popular *pasticceria* in the

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Riall, *Risorgimento: the history of Italy from Napoleon to nation state* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 54. For discussion of the variety of conditions that helped shape the relationship between church and state in different parts of Italy during the Restoration, see: Carlo Castiglioni, *Gaysruck e Romilli, Arcivescovi di Milano* (Milano: Editrice Ancora, 1938); Luigi Bulferetti, ‘La Restaurazione,’ in *Nuove questioni di storia del Risorgimento e dell’unità* (Milano: Marzorati, 1961), pp. 387-456; Guido Verucci, ‘Chiesa e società nell’Italia della Restaurazione (1814-1830) in *Restaurazione in Italia: strutture e ideologie; atti del XLVII Congresso di storia del Risorgimento italiano (Cosenza, 15-19 settembre 1974)* (Roma: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1976), pp. 173-211.

<sup>256</sup> Alfonso Scirocco, *Garibaldi, Citizen of the World*, trans. Allan Cameron (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. xi.

<sup>257</sup> Fulvio Conti, *Storia della Massoneria Italiana dal Risorgimento al Fascismo* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2003), p. 8.

<sup>258</sup> Camillo Brezzi, ‘Orientamenti della massoneria intorno al 1870’ in *Chiesa e religiosità in Italia dopo l’Unità (1861-1878)* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1973), pp. 307-340.

Palazzo dei Portici Settentrionali,<sup>259</sup> the long row of elegant porticoed shops adjacent to the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II along the north side of the Piazza del Duomo. The Bertani family lived in the shadow of the Galleria, in Via Silvio Pellico.<sup>260</sup> If Innocente did not follow the pattern of opinion and occupation set by his own father, he easily fit that of his father-in-law. Francesco Bertani, who began life in a small town in provincial Milan, Abbiategrasso, 22 km southwest of the capital, migrated to the city as a young man and set up shop. He too shared Garibaldian and Freemasonry principles.<sup>261</sup> He too had married a native Milanese, Carolina Orlando, after moving to the city. The fact that Caterina was the daughter of Francesco Bertani, with whom Innocente shared commercial and civic interests, seems likely to have been a motivating factor in his marriage decision. Despite the utter lack of religious interest on the part of Innocente Gemelli and the Bertani family, he and Caterina were married in the Duomo on June 6, 1876 and their first child, born January 18, 1878, was baptized in the neighborhood parish, San Satiro,<sup>262</sup> just off the southwest corner of the Piazza del Duomo.<sup>263</sup> The baby was christened Edoardo Francesco Angelo, named after his godfather and two grandfathers.<sup>264</sup> Twenty-five years later, when he was born again, so to say, as a monk,

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<sup>259</sup> “Bertani Francesco – port. settent., bott. 15-16.” G. Savallo, *Guida di Milano pel 1889* (Milano: Agenzia Savallo, 1889), p. 559.

<sup>260</sup> Teofane Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli, dalla nascita alla professione religiosa: 1878-1904* (Milano: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 1978), p. 13.

<sup>261</sup> Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 15.

<sup>262</sup> This church structure, dating to the ninth century, is named for St. Satyrus, brother of St. Ambrose.

<sup>263</sup> Cesana, pp. 11, 13.

<sup>264</sup> The order of names hints at a continued estrangement between Innocente and his father; according to the Italian tradition that was commonly followed in 1878, a firstborn son should be named foremost after his paternal grandfather. Giorgio Raimondo Cardona, ‘I nomi della parentela,’ in *La famiglia italiana dall’ottocento a oggi*, ed. Piero

he would be given the name Agostino.<sup>265</sup>

If young Edoardo Gemelli derived an identity from, or a sense of relatedness to, the splendid and dynamic environment of the Piazza del Duomo in which he grew up, he was just as likely to have gained a sense of self from his mother and father, in whose more modest *domicilio* he was nurtured. Because he was raised in the nursery of their home before replanting himself in the larger city, it is worthwhile considering Innocente Gemelli and Caterina Bertani in their various parts: the way in which they earned a living, the personalities they manifested, the role models they emulated, and the political and religious beliefs to which they ascribed.

Innocente Gemelli was the proprietor of a “*grande caffè*” at the corner of Via Dogana and Via Cappellari, upstairs from which he lived with his young family. The establishment took its name, “*Caffè della Dogana*,” from its location.<sup>266</sup> It lay in the southwest corner of the Piazza del Duomo, just behind the Palazzo dei Portici Meridionali. Innocente acquired this business with the financial backing of his father-in-law. More than a place to sip a coffee or an *apértif*, it was a place to dine.<sup>267</sup> It was, in fact, “*un locale alla*

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Melograni (Bari: Laterza, 1988), p. 314. On the other hand, Innocente and Caterina may have preferred the name Edoardo for its more aristocratic flavor.

<sup>265</sup> Cesana, pp. 12-13.

<sup>266</sup> Savallo, p. 557.

<sup>267</sup> The annual *Guida di Milano* published by Savallo lists, among other things, all businesses in the city, with addresses and names of proprietors. The volume for 1889 has 65 listings under the category *Caffè ristoranti*, which includes not only the *Caffè Biffi* and *Caffè Campari*, both located in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, but also the following one: “*Dogana (della) di Gemelli Innocente – via Cappellari, 4, prospic. le vie Dogana e Carlo Alberto.*” Savallo, p. 557.

*moda*,” that is, a place to see and be seen.<sup>268</sup> Francesco Bertani, as well as his daughter Caterina, would have taught Innocente a thing or two about operating a fashionable shop in central Milan. A helpful understanding of how the Gemelli family earned its livelihood can be gained from Jonathan Morris’ study of shopkeeping in Milan in the late nineteenth century.<sup>269</sup> In the post-Risorgimento years the city swelled with migrants, like Innocente, from smaller *comuni* in the Lombardy provinces. The dynamism of Milan is suggested by the near doubling of its population, which grew from 262,00 in 1867 to 493,000 in 1897.<sup>270</sup> Many migrants were apt to open eating and drinking establishments because few special skills were needed to run them. Migrants owned and operated about two-thirds of such establishments in 1881 and three-quarters of them in 1901.<sup>271</sup> The main entry barriers were access to private financing, which Innocente secured from his father-in-law<sup>272</sup>, and acquisition of basic literacy. The Commercial Code of Milan required that a shopkeeper maintain three sets of books: a stock register, a daily record of all transactions and a file of business correspondence.<sup>273</sup> Innocente had presumably become both literate and numerate through his primary schooling in Bascapè. If these entry barriers were not prohibitive for Innocente, neither were they for other migrants. The number of eating and drinking establishments in Milan doubled between 1881 and

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<sup>268</sup> Cesana, p. 16.

<sup>269</sup> Jonathan Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan 1886-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>270</sup> B. R. Mitchell, ed., *European Historical Statistics* (New York: Facts on File, 1980), p. 87.

<sup>271</sup> Morris, p. 49.

<sup>272</sup> Confectioneries, such as that run were Bertani, were generally much more profitable than cafés during this period. Morris, p. 53.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

1901.<sup>274</sup>

Although this rapid increase in the number of ostensibly similar businesses in Milan indicates growing competition, Innocente Gemelli's venture may have been relatively insulated. If, as seems likely, his *caffè* served alcoholic drinks, then he would have needed a selectively issued license from the city administration; consequently, the number of cafés "in which wine, beer, spirits and other types of drink were sold or consumed" increased by only 29.7% during the last two decades of the century.<sup>275</sup> Gemelli's business may also have been relatively insulated from general economic downturns because of its location within (although at the periphery of) the wealthiest commercial zone of the city. As rising rents and slum clearances forced the working class from the city center, the *contrada*, or district, of the Piazza del Duomo became increasingly upper class.<sup>276</sup> Certainly some, maybe even most, of the people who dined at the *Caffè della Dogana* were better off than the Gemellis.<sup>277</sup> Caterina assisted her husband at work. She was pleased to be linked even in this way to the swank and aristocratic patrons of the *caffè*. "In old age, Caterina recalled with vivacity the times of the 'Dogana', not forgetting the visits of King Umberto I and his retinue; also the Prince

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-68.

<sup>277</sup> Its reputation as a stylish venue would have limited the heterogeneity of its clients. Italian cafes in general were, however, places where different social classes mixed. "In Italy one could find workers, employees, and professors at neighbouring tables." Adrian Lyttelton, 'The middle classes in Liberal Italy,' in John A. David and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 228.

of Naples, the future King Victor Emanuel II, was seen more than once.”<sup>278</sup>

The severe economic depression throughout Europe of the early 1890s led to the bankruptcy of their *caffè*,<sup>279</sup> a disaster from which Innocente and, even more so, Caterina never fully recovered. It failed during the years when Edoardo attended *ginnasio* and *liceo*.<sup>280</sup> Evidence suggests, in addition, that the downfall of the “*Dogana*” may have been related to incorrect bookkeeping, rather than merely economic hard times, and a charge of fraud was brought against Innocente.<sup>281</sup> Criminal charges of ‘simple bankruptcy’, punishable by imprisonment, could be made against failed shopkeepers who had not kept the three required sets of books in compliance with the Commercial Code.<sup>282</sup> Innocente was, in the end, acquitted in a trial concluded in 1895.<sup>283</sup> He had a reputation as a risk-taker,<sup>284</sup> but he seems to have maintained some balance between ambition and honesty. Both he and his wife were considered to possess “great rectitude.”<sup>285</sup> One must admire them for such virtue. In a society where most shopkeepers were only a notch above the working class there must have been strong temptation to do anything to keep from slipping. Innocente and Caterina consequently suffered a marked decline in their economic circumstances, upon which much of their social status rested. They lost the prestige attached to owning a *caffè* and maintaining a *domicilio* in the Piazza del Duomo.

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<sup>278</sup> Cesana, p. 16.

<sup>279</sup> Morris, p. 121

<sup>280</sup> Cosmacini, p. 16.

<sup>281</sup> Cosmacini, p. 16.

<sup>282</sup> Morris, p. 123.

<sup>283</sup> It was “a bankruptcy for which he was not responsible and for which he was fully absolved when he underwent a trial in 1895.” Cesana, p. 25.

<sup>284</sup> Cosmacini, p. 16.

<sup>285</sup> Cesana, p. 14.



Bankruptcy forced them to move to a less regarded district and into a more modest apartment, about two kilometers to the west.<sup>286</sup> Caterina felt herself “declassed.”<sup>287</sup> She was forever preoccupied with regaining her lost footing.<sup>288</sup>

A composite of scanty references to Innocente Gemelli and Caterina Bertani in published works reveals them as ambitious and willful, even difficult, personalities.<sup>289</sup> These sources say far more about her than they do about him, suggesting that she played a dominant, even domineering, role in the family. Innocente was not, however, a timid man; as mentioned, he was willing and able to go his own way at the cost of estrangement from his parents for several years to come. Caterina suffered a breach in her own family that was permanent. When she was an adolescent, her mother abandoned her father, leaving him with four children. An emotional disturbance, perhaps related to this early tragedy, is reflected in Caterina’s unbalanced treatment of her own two children. Although she showed an exceptional attachment to her firstborn,<sup>290</sup> Edoardo, she held her second born, Luigi, in contempt almost from his birth. Only fourteen months separated the two sons. This distressing maternal flaw is depicted by one of Gemelli’s more sympathetic biographers. Toward Luigi, who seems to have been a perfectly normal child, Caterina held “a negative attitude that, with time, reached

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<sup>286</sup> The address is Via Pace, 23. Cesana, p. 22. It is located near the *Rotonda della Besana*, an early eighteenth century religious structure built on the site of what had been, until 1782, the burial ground for the poor who died in the *Ospedale Maggiore*. It was then deconsecrated and served a variety of civic functions, including a barracks and a hospital for the chronically ill.

<sup>287</sup> Cesana, p. 25.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>289</sup> See: Cesana; Sticco; Cosmacini.

<sup>290</sup> Sticco, p. 6.

hardheartedness and opinions that were unjust and offensive.”<sup>291</sup> Caterina kept Luigi out of the home starting from a young age; he was sent away to be schooled in the countryside and the family largely forgot about him.<sup>292</sup> At any rate, Edoardo and his father also must be called to account for participating in this neglect of Luigi, even if they treated him less cruelly than did Caterina.

There may be a rational, rather than an emotional, explanation for this family dynamic. Italian culture has long been strongly centered on the family, and Italian families have often favored either the eldest or the most able son. In a system known as “impartible inheritance,” a family preserved its wealth by “designating just one son as heir.”<sup>293</sup> Although this custom is rooted in the agricultural economy, it would not have been unusual to find it transmitted within a family that had migrated to the city. “Although cultural values may have been the product, over the centuries, of certain economic forces, working in a matrix of the then existing household systems, by their very nature they do not change overnight.”<sup>294</sup> Raising an urban family with migrant roots, Innocente and Caterina may have concentrated their resources upon Edoardo to elevate him, and thus the family, in society. If they could economize by sending Luigi to the provinces where the cost of schooling and boarding was cheaper, so be it. On the other hand, the Gemelli household seems not to have sacrificed much, except poor Luigi. Innocente and Caterina

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<sup>291</sup> Cesana, p. 16.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-32.

<sup>293</sup> David I. Kertzer, ‘Living with Kin,’ in *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1789-1913*, Vol. II, eds. David I. Kertzer and Mario Barbagli (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 47.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

cared well for Edoardo and still had enough left over for luxuries. One biographer speaks of “the ease and elegance his family provided: fine linens, elegant clothes,” etc.<sup>295</sup> If Luigi had been sent to the countryside for entirely selfish reasons, then Caterina may have been impelled to alienate her feelings toward her younger son in order to justify her callous decision.

Caterina was clearly headstrong and vain. One biographer of Gemelli writes, “She had a firm and decisive will, verging on obstinacy; fond of cutting a fine figure, tending to prodigality – ‘money is made for spending and this brings happiness’ – as she used to say.”<sup>296</sup> Another biographer describes Gemelli’s mother as “*molto severa*: she demanded decorum, correctness, order, meticulous neatness in clothes, in books, in the way things were kept in drawers, and as regards all things.”<sup>297</sup> It is difficult to know whether Caterina was, on this score, merely an obsessive personality or rather a zealous imitator of certain aristocratic practices. Anthony L. Cardoza writes that the Italian nobility in the post-Risorgimento period practiced “an approach to child-rearing that unabashedly stressed hierarchy, discipline and obedience.”<sup>298</sup> A more critical biographer of Gemelli describes her thus: “An ambitious person with an elevated conception of herself, very attentive to appearances, that is, the image of herself and of her family reflected by the mirror of her social class.”<sup>299</sup> Conspicuously missing from this composite portrait are

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<sup>295</sup> Sticco, p. 24.

<sup>296</sup> Cesana, p. 16.

<sup>297</sup> Sticco, p. 6.

<sup>298</sup> Anthony L. Cardoza, *Aristocrats in Bourgeois Italy. The Piedmontese Nobility, 1861-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 137.

<sup>299</sup> Cosmacini, p. 55.

any warm and gentle traits. Her affection for her favored son seems at best qualified as “possessive.”<sup>300</sup> There are no photographs of Caterina in any of Gemelli’s published biographies, nor do any of Gemelli’s biographers provide a physical description of her. This last point is interesting because beauty rarely goes unnoticed. In sum, it is hard to imagine Caterina Bertani as possessing many characteristics that matched either the feminine or maternal ideal of her time.<sup>301</sup>

### **Agostino Bertani**

Caterina’s high-handed manner may have resulted from having precociously taken charge of the Bertani household after her mother ran off,<sup>302</sup> or perhaps from habitually exerting herself in the insecure and unstable middle class social order of Milan. She was, however, likely to have considered herself a “somebody” simply because of her family name. It was famous in Milan not only because of her father’s popular and eponymously named *pasticceria* adjacent to the Galleria, but also because of his celebrated kinsman Agostino Bertani (1812-1886). This Risorgimento patriot and Radical parliamentary leader<sup>303</sup> was an intimate of Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869),<sup>304</sup> Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-

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<sup>300</sup> Sticco, p. 6.

<sup>301</sup> “The nineteenth century represented the beauty of women much more by marks of the spirit than of the body.” Michela De Giorgio, *Le italiane dall’unità a oggi. Modelli culturali e comportamenti sociali* (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1992), p. 147. De Giorgio’s work focuses far more on feminine ideals than maternal ones.

<sup>302</sup> Cesana, p. 16.

<sup>303</sup> Alessandro Galante Garrone, *I radicali in Italia (1849-1925)* (Milano: Garzanti, 1973).

<sup>304</sup> See: Giuseppe Armani, *Carlo Cattaneo* (Milano: Garzanti, 1997); Franco Della Peruta, *Carlo Cattaneo politico* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2001).

1872)<sup>305</sup> and Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882).<sup>306</sup> He was also a friend to both Benedetto Cairoli (1825-1889)<sup>307</sup> and Francesco Crispi (1819-1901),<sup>308</sup> two prime ministers from the party of the Historic Left, as well as to Adriano Lemmi (1822-1906),<sup>309</sup> a rich Livornese businessman of Jewish descent who financed Risorgimento operations and

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<sup>305</sup> See: Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Roland Sarti, *Mazzini: A Life for the Religion of Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997).

<sup>306</sup> See: Scirocco; Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>307</sup> Benedetto Cairoli, a leading representative of the Historic Left of Italian Liberalism, was twice prime minister of Italy (March-December 1878; July 1879-May 1881). He led a company of troops, composed largely of students from Pavia, in the 1860 Expedition of the Thousand, organized by Agostino Bertani. His father was Carlo Cairoli (1776-1849), professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Pavia, where his students included Agostino Bertani. When the younger Cairoli assumed the prime ministership for the first time in March 1878, Bertani saluted his “*fraterno amico*” with his famous speech, “«*L’Italia aspetta*», in which he recognized not only the possibility, but moreover the conditions of agreement between monarchy and democracy.” Marziano Brignoli, ‘Cairoli, Benedetto,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 16 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1973), pp. 365-372; Bruno Di Porto, ‘Bertani, Agostino, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 9 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1967), p. 457.

<sup>308</sup> Francesco Crispi, another leading representative of the Historic Left, was also twice prime minister of Italy (July 1887-February 1891; December 1893-March 1896). Seeking resolute action to complete unification of Italy after 1860, especially as concerns Venice and Rome, Crispi and Bertani were notable for their attacks on the wait-and-see policy of the government. During the period when Florence was the seat of the new national government, Crispi, Cairoli and Bertani were among the founders of *La Riforma*, the Garibaldian newspaper dedicated to discussion of social problems. Bruno Di Porto, ‘Bertani, Agostino, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 9 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1967), p. 456. See also: Arturo Carlo Jemolo, *Crispi*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1970).

<sup>309</sup> “Bertani belonged to freemasonry, of which the grand master, [Adriano] Lemmi, was a close friend.” Di Porto, p. 457. Bertani would also have known Lemmi from contributions made by the latter to organizing the Expedition of the Thousand in 1860. Lemmi served as “a sort of a link between intransigent republican followers of both Mazzini and Cattaneo, and Garibaldians who were ready sacrifice their institutional preferences in order to complete unification of the country and to realize a program of political and social reform.” Fulvio Conti, ‘Lemmi, Adriano,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 64 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1967), pp. 345-348.

later became, as Garibaldi had before him, the Grand Master of Freemasonry in Italy.<sup>310</sup> Bertani served as chief surgeon to Garibaldi's troops in 1859 and organizer of Garibaldi's Expedition of the Thousand in 1860. He treated Garibaldi's wounds at the Battle of Aspromonte in 1862. Seven years later he was called to attend Mazzini upon his deathbed. In his old age Bertani edited the works of Cattaneo.<sup>311</sup> He seems to have befriended every hero of the Risorgimento except Cavour, with whom he differed fundamentally over democratic ideals. Given Caterina's penchant for status, it is hard to imagine that she did not put on airs and seek advantage because of her family connection to this great man.

If Caterina took pride in her blood ties to Agostino Bertani, the degree of consanguinity was not acute. One of Gemelli's biographers refers to Caterina as a "*pronipote*" or great-niece of the famous man, meaning that Caterina's paternal grandfather was a brother of Agostino Bertani.<sup>312</sup> If Agostino Bertani, born in 1812, was the oldest son<sup>313</sup> among seven children,<sup>314</sup> then Caterina's grandfather (if he was indeed a younger brother of

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<sup>310</sup> "Only with the grand mastership of Adriano Lemmi (1885-95) did the Grande Oriente d'Italia – or at least its leadership – take on a more trenchantly anti-Catholic, atheistic and anti-Christian orientation." Martin Papenheim, '*Roma o morte: culture wars in Italy*,' in Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 213.

<sup>311</sup> "After the death of Cattaneo, whom he aided as physician and friend, [Agostino Bertani] took custody of his important historical documents related to the provisional government of Lombardy in 1848; he collected all of Cattaneo's writings, ordering them systematically, and edited them for publication." Di Porto, p. 458. See also: *Opere edite ed inedite di Carlo Cattaneo, raccolte e ordinate per cura di Agostino Bertani. Scritti letterari, artistici e varii*, 3 vols. (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1881-1883).

<sup>312</sup> Sticco, p. 6.

<sup>313</sup> Jessie White Mario, *Agostino Bertani e i suoi tempi* (Firenze: G. Barbèra, 1888), p. 7

<sup>314</sup> White Mario, p. 15.

Agostino Bertani) could not have been more than forty years old at the time of her birth in 1853. Though not impossible, it seems an unusually young age for a middle class Milanese to have become a grandfather.<sup>315</sup> The age of majority was twenty-one years, though it was possible to marry sooner. The line of relation between Caterina and Agostino Bertani is described by another biographer of Gemelli simply as “*mezzi parenti*,” an imprecise term that can be used variably for distant relations.<sup>316</sup>

Caterina Bertani was unlikely to have known her famous relative well or met him often, if at all. After the failure of the 1848 Milan uprising, of which he had been an active supporter, Agostino Bertani fled into exile before the advance of the reoccupying Austrian army. He thus left Milan five years before Caterina was born. He never returned to live there.<sup>317</sup> He chose instead to stay mostly in Genoa and later, after it became the national capital in 1870, in Rome. After unification was largely completed in 1860, Bertani frequently served in the *Camera dei deputati*, the parliament of the newly established Kingdom of Italy, where, among the Historic Left, he became a leading Radical who defended the interests of farmers and workers. In 1882, when the shift from a property to a literacy requirement expanded the parliamentary franchise, Bertani, having been drafted as a candidate by the *collegio di Milano*, was elected with the help of Milanese workers to represent that body in parliament.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Until the First World War the average age at which a man married was between the ages of twenty-seven and twenty-eight. De Giorgio, p. 325.

<sup>316</sup> Cosmacini, p. 15.

<sup>317</sup> White Mario, p. 77.

<sup>318</sup> Di Porto, p. 456

None of Gemelli's biographers mention any member of his immediate family meeting the famous Bertani. Caterina and her family may have attained greater proximity to his ashes or his effigy after his death in Rome on April 10, 1886. Perhaps they attended the cremation of his body in the *Cimitero monumentale* of Milan, "the showcase of the Milanese entrepreneurial class,"<sup>319</sup> on May 4, 1886,<sup>320</sup> or the unveiling of the monumental sculpture of his likeness that was dedicated to his memory near the *Giardini pubblici* in Milan on April 30, 1888.<sup>321</sup> A newspaper illustration of the latter event indicates the sort of popularity that Bertani maintained in his native city; hundreds of men, mostly in middle-class bowler hats rather than upper-class top hats or working-class caps, are thickly gathered around a marquee decorated with patriotic tricolor streamers.<sup>322</sup> Speeches were delivered by notable figures, including both the mayor of Milan and the president of the University of Genoa.<sup>323</sup> The latter, Riccardo Secondi (1832-1903), was also a noted scientist and Senator; the former, Gaetano Negri (1832-1902), who also a Risorgimento veteran and author of published histories. Edoardo would have heard these men repeatedly praise his relative as a comrade of the great Risorgimento figures Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cattaneo, and as a great scientist, doctor, citizen, soldier and legislator in his own right. They described Bertani's life in nearly clerical, Mazzini-like terms as one of tireless self-sacrifice. He seems to have foregone the love and attendant

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<sup>319</sup> Sandra Berresford, *Italian Memorial Sculpture, 1820-1940: a legacy of love* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2004), p. 79.

<sup>320</sup> Adolfo Mangini, ed., *Effemeridi italiane o le date principali della storia d'Italia dal 476 al 1892* (Livorno: Tipografia di Raff. Giusti, 1893), p. 148.

<sup>321</sup> Originally set at the mouth of the present-day Largo Donegani, the monument was later moved to Piazza Fratelli Bandiera where it stands today.

<sup>322</sup> *Illustrazione italiana*, April 30, 1888.

<sup>323</sup> *Discorsi pronunciati per l'inaugurazione del monumento ad Agostino Bertani avvenuta in Milan il 30 Aprile 1888* (Genova: Pietro Martini, 1888).



responsibilities of a family in order to dedicate himself entirely to a greater purpose.

“How much abnegation he placed in the exercise of the most delicate and difficult duties...!”<sup>324</sup> “He was.... second to no one in that spirit of sacrifice reinvigorated in him by love for all the suffering of the earth, for all of humanity.”<sup>325</sup> “The events of the country and the wind of a new era blowing for Italy took Bertani away from the assiduous treatments of the [medical] art, which he always professed as a priesthood....”<sup>326</sup> Bertani was an exceptional politician for his time, insofar as he was popular with the masses, respected by intellectuals and apparently uncorrupted by power.<sup>327</sup> The large turnout of an admiring public, the adulatory speeches by prominent leaders, and the example of Bertani’s wholehearted commitment to a noble cause would have made an impression on a ten-year old boy and set a high standard of achievement for him. Edoardo Gemelli would, however, reach young adulthood before he steeled his discipline in like manner.

The political views of Caterina and Innocente were more flexible than those of their famous kinsman. Agostino Bertani famously criticized structural inequities in society.

He “recognized as legitimate and unavoidable the claims of the proletariat against the

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid., p. 9

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>327</sup> “Professional politicians [in the post-Risorgimento period] were unfortunately a class apart and remote from the real life of the country. They were a small group of people who were ignored or even despised by intellectuals and the creators of material wealth.” “Politics under the Left were becoming corrupt, even more corrupt than before, because the new generation of politicians were men on the make more than their patrician predecessors from the Right.” Denis Mack Smith, ‘Francesco De Sanctis: the politics of a literary critic,’ in John A. Davis and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 252, 263.

unjust bourgeois society.”<sup>328</sup> Caterina and Innocente, as members of the shopkeeping class in the wealthy center of Milan, were probably more prudent in expressing their Garibaldian sentiments, heeding the opinions of their patrons. Business proprietors whose livelihoods depended on selling to the *aristocrazia*, or upper classes, had “a considerable interest in the political protection of their customer base.”<sup>329</sup> Moreover, little evidence suggests that Caterina was a charitable character. It is hard to imagine her actively or passionately involved in Bertani’s causes on behalf of the working class. If Caterina and Innocente were radical democrats, they were probably less ardent and consistent than Bertani in expressing their beliefs.

Likewise, Caterina and Innocente were less coherent than Bertani in their religious beliefs and practices. Agostino Bertani’s attitude to Catholicism rested on his conviction that “the positivists will demolish existing religions and perhaps others that are yet to come in the future.”<sup>330</sup> On the other hand, he recognized the futility of trying to stamp out all belief in some sort of God.<sup>331</sup> Although a loyal supporter of Mazzini, Bertani evidences no sign of having shared Mazzini’s fundamentally religious character. Bertani’s views on religion seem to have reflected the nineteenth century positivist education he received. The lack of coherence between religious beliefs and practices in Gemelli’s immediate family may have been due to the more limited education of his parents and their lack of catechism. Caterina and Innocente were at most mildly anti-clerical Garibaldians. They

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<sup>328</sup> Bruno Di Porto, *Agostino Bertani* (Roma: P.R.I, 1963), p. 22.

<sup>329</sup> Morris, p. 44

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

had no religious interests, but married in the church and had both of their sons baptized and confirmed as a matter of convention. “It can be asserted that they understood religion simply as an expression of some formal exterior acts that it was advantageous to comply with.”<sup>332</sup>

Less than resolute followers of Agostino Bertani as a religious and political role model, Caterina and Innocente seem, on the other hand, to have steered their eldest son undeviatingly along the course of academic and professional achievement that Bertani had set. Edoardo, under parental guidance or pressure, entered the same prestigious secondary school in Milan that Bertani had attended and then traced Bertani’s steps to the same university and into the same faculty and profession. If the Gemellis had talent and ambition, the Bertanis seem to have provided the role models for realizing it.

Agostino Bertani attended the *Liceo di Porta Nuova* from 1827 to 1829. This institution had been established in Milan as part of the Napoleonic reforms and was patterned on the new type of secondary school that Napoleon had introduced in France, the *lycée*, intended to produce an educated elite serving the interests of the state. In 1865, amidst Risorgimento enthusiasm, public schools in Italy were renamed after local or national figures and *Liceo di Porta Nuova* became *Liceo Giuseppe Parini*.<sup>333</sup> (Milan’s other

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<sup>332</sup> Cesana, p. 14.

<sup>333</sup> Giuseppe Parini (1729-1799), from a family of modest means, took clerical vows at an early age in order to secure an education. As an acclaimed poet, he was appointed professor of rhetoric and fine arts in Milan’s venerable *Scuole Palatine*, a precursor of the *Liceo di Porta Nuova*. (The earliest foundation of the *Scuole Palatine* can be traced to the fourth century A.D., when Milan was the capital of the Western Roman Empire; St.

Napoleonic era school modeled on the *lycée*, the *Liceo di San Alessandro*, which had evolved from an institution inaugurated by Federico Borromeo in 1609, was at the same time renamed after Parini's contemporary Cesare Beccaria.)<sup>334</sup> Innocente and Caterina sent Edoardo to *Parini* for his education from 1888 to 1896, five years of *ginnasio* followed by three years of *liceo*.<sup>335</sup> It was the school for the sons of aspiring and successful members of the middle class. "To send a son to study there meant, for many, to show off one's social status or to certify one's advancement in society."<sup>336</sup> Edoardo by this time almost certainly had achieved a higher level of education than his father or either of his grandfathers. As shopkeepers and tenant farmers, even prosperous ones, they were unlikely to have received much education beyond elementary school. Perhaps their more modest achievements in society had been predetermined by their fate as younger or unfavored sons. By the same token, the social elevation of Agostino Bertani,

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Augustine was an early professor of Rhetoric in these schools before his conversion to Christianity.) Parini was also a school reformer and superintendent under the Habsburgs. He was appointed to the municipal council during the Napoleonic period, but served only briefly because of his outspoken views. His most important literary work, the lengthy satirical poem *Il giorno* (published in parts in 1763, 1765 and posthumously in the first complete edition of his works, 1801-04) "expresses the indignant protest of moral conscience against a perverse system that allows extravagant privileges to the very few while neglecting the basic needs of the people." Peter Bondanella and Julia Conway Bondanella, eds. *Cassell Dictionary of Italian Literature* (London: Cassell, 1996), p. 425.

<sup>334</sup> Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), the Enlightenment penal reformer, was maternal grandfather of the Milanese literary giant Alessandro Manzoni.

<sup>335</sup> A *ginnasio* was attached to *Liceo di Porta Nuova* in 1859. This *ginnasio* was a successor to the *Scuole di Brera* that had been established by Carlo Borromeo in 1572 and run by the Jesuits until that religious order was suppressed in 1773; it had been the first *ginnasio* in Milan introduced under the reforms of Maria Teresa in the 1774. It served as the highest level of secondary education in Milan until the advent of the *liceo*, at which point the *ginnasio* became the preparatory school for the *liceo*.

<sup>336</sup> Cosmacini, p. 16.

and even that of Edoardo Gemelli, may have been the lucky consequence of having been a firstborn and favored son.

After Agostino Bertani completed his studies at the *liceo* in 1829, he entered the University of Pavia, located 35 km south of Milan. “He selected without hesitation the profession of medicine and surgery, about which he was passionate,”<sup>337</sup> according to his friend and biographer, Jessie White Mario (1832-1906),<sup>338</sup> an English woman who met Bertani while she served as a nurse to Garibaldi’s soldiers in Italy. Within Pavia’s Faculty of Medicine, from which he graduated in 1835, Bertani was the “most loved student”<sup>339</sup> of Bartolomeo Panizza (1785-1867), a professor of anatomy who did important work in neurology. Bertani may have been the student who left the most lasting impression on Panizza, but another one of Panizza’s pupils, Camillo Golgi (1843-1926), who would be awarded a Nobel Prize in Physiology in 1906 in recognition of his studies on the structure of the nervous system,<sup>340</sup> left the most lasting mark on science.

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<sup>337</sup> White Mario, p. 25.

<sup>338</sup> Jessie White Mario also served as a propagandist for Mazzini in England. She seems to have befriended as many heroes of the Risorgimento as did her subject Bertani. Married to Alberto Mario (1825-1883), a comrade of both Garibaldi and Mazzini, she wrote substantial biographies, in Italian, of both these men, as well as of Cattaneo and others. Her importance is suggested by the fact that Bertani and Cattaneo left their archives in her possession. Elizabeth Adams Daniels, *Jessie White Mario. Risorgimento Revolutionary* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1972).

<sup>339</sup> White Mario, p. 25.

<sup>340</sup> Golgi shared the prize that year with Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934), who also made important discoveries related to the structure of the nervous system. Eric R. Kandel, *In Search of Memory. The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).

After Edoardo matriculated at Pavia in 1897 and enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine, he studied under Golgi (1843-1926) and became one of his outstanding laboratory assistants. Golgi showed great favor to Edoardo no doubt because of the youth's skillful work in conducting experiments, but perhaps his bond with Edoardo was reinforced by the youth's relationship to Bertani, the beloved student of Golgi's old teacher. A close relationship between Golgi and Panizza would, however, become fixed in public expression: Golgi would eventually be buried next Panizza in the *Cimitero Monumentale* of Pavia.<sup>341</sup>

Other similarities in the paths taken by Agostino Bertani and Edoardo Gemelli seem to be more than coincidental. They might be explained as parts of a common template for medical students in nineteenth-century Lombardy, but the particularity of these resemblances suggests that Gemelli consciously adopted Bertani as his role model. Both men chalked up remarkably similar achievements at a young age: they undertook a course of studies abroad, translated an important German scientific work into Italian, and founded a notable scholarly journal. Bertani, who would become a leader in combining science and government to improve sanitation in Italy, left Milan in 1838 at age 26 for a year in Munich, Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Paris and other European cities, "furnished with letters of introduction for leading scientists," to study hospitals, prisons and asylums.<sup>342</sup> The same year, he completed the translation of a major German text on

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<sup>341</sup> Paolo Mazzarello, *The Hidden Structure, A Scientific Biography of Camillo Golgi*, trans. and ed. Henry A. Buchtel and Aldo Badiani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 356.

<sup>342</sup> White Mario, p. 37.

surgery that became widely used in the medical schools of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia.<sup>343</sup> In 1842, at age thirty, he founded the *Gazetta medica di Milano* as part of an effort to disseminate “every question or news item that, from near or far, touches upon medical interests, decorum, culture.”<sup>344</sup> Edoardo, who sought to reconcile science and religion both to enrich Italian culture and to assert the authority of Catholic doctrine, delayed his professional life as a scientist until he had completed his priestly formation at age thirty in 1908. Two years before that he had translated a notable recent German work on biology and evolution.<sup>345</sup> In 1909 he founded the *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-scolastica Italiana* as a vehicle to challenge the intellectual basis of the secular worldview that prevailed among many Italian intellectuals. He visited scientists and universities in Bonn, Frankfurt, Cologne, Munich, Vienna, Louvain, Amsterdam and Paris between 1907 and 1911.<sup>346</sup> Another interesting similarity is that both Bertani and Gemelli served in the same hospital in Milan. Edoardo, while performing military duty in 1902-1903, was assigned as a medical orderly to the *Ospedale Militare di Sant’Ambrogio*, the same institution that Bertani had directed during the Milan uprising of 1848. This hospital, located in Piazza Sant’Ambrogio, was housed in the former monastery that, prior to being suppressed by Napoleonic forces in 1796, had for centuries been annexed to the ancient basilica that stands next to it, also named after St. Ambrose, its fourth century founder.

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<sup>343</sup> J. M. Chelius, *Manuale di chirurgia*, 4 vols. (Milano: Rusconi, 1836-1838). No translator is listed for this text, although Jessie White Mario attributes the translation to Agostino Bertani. White Mario, 37. The original text appears to be: J. M. Chelius, *Handbuch der Chirurgie* (Heidelberg: Groos, 1822).

<sup>344</sup> White Mario, p. 40.

<sup>345</sup> Erich Wasmann, *La biologia moderna e la teoria dell’evoluzione*, trans. Agostino Gemelli (Firenze: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1906). [Erich Wasmann, *Die Moderne Biologie und die Entwicklungstheorie*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1904).

<sup>346</sup> Cosmacini, p. 109.

### **Ludovico Necchi**

In the Piazza Sant' Ambrogio Gemelli experienced events and formed relationships that would shape the rest of his life. While assigned to military duty as an orderly in the *Ospedale Militare di Sant' Ambrogio* Gemelli underwent his most painful and prolonged period of intellectual and spiritual doubt, which ended only with his religious conversion in 1903. At his side throughout this time, also fulfilling his military obligation as an orderly in the same hospital, was his friend, Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930), a pious and militant young Catholic. Gemelli and Necchi lived and worked in close quarters with a handful of seminarians, both diocesan and Franciscan,<sup>347</sup> also conscripted to serve as orderlies in the military hospital. Immediately adjacent to the hospital stood the venerable Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, where Gemelli, upon his conversion, returned the sacraments of the Catholic church. Gemelli formed so meaningful an attachment to the ancient monastery and basilica in the Piazza Sant' Ambrogio that he would, despite extensive travel in Europe and frequent visits to Rome in years to come, bind himself to this place for the rest of his life and beyond.

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<sup>347</sup> There are two basic types of Catholic clergy, or priests. A diocesan priest, also called a secular priest, serves a particular diocese and is under the authority of the bishop appointed to govern that diocese (such priests in Italy have the title *don*). A religious priest is a member of a religious order, such as the Franciscans (such priests in Italy have the title *padre*); he belongs to a province of the religious order and is under both the direct authority of head of the monastery or convent in which he lives and the indirect authority of the superior of that province. The territory of a religious province generally exceeds the territory of a diocese. All priests make vows of obedience and chastity; religious priests make an additional vow of poverty.



One might argue that Gemelli's attachment to this piazza was deeper and longer lasting than his attachment to nearly any living person. The only intimate personal bond that he maintained unbroken from boyhood onward was that he shared with Necchi, who, in contrast to Gemelli, had a gift for friendship. He was affably known to many as just "Vico." The two met as boys at *Regio Ginnasio Parini* in 1889 and maintained a fast friendship and close cooperation that lasted until Necchi's death in 1930. In Necchi, Edoardo found both the fraternity that he seems not to have shared with other boys (including his own brother), and the serenity that his mother was constitutionally unable to provide him. Above all, Necchi helped to introduce, or re-introduce, Edoardo to the Catholic church, the teachings of which informed all that he thereafter thought and did.

Gemelli had a longer uninterrupted relationship with Necchi, despite the latter's premature middle-aged death, than he had with either his own father or mother. The filial tie snapped in a fit of parental wrath when he entered the monastery in 1903. After suffering the bankruptcy of her husband's business and the loss of her prestigious address in the city center, Caterina placed all hope for the recovery of her social status upon her eldest son. At great cost, considering the family's reduced circumstances, she outfitted a doctor's office for Edoardo in their modest apartment in Via Pace, after he had graduated from the faculty of medicine and while he was still fulfilling his year of military duty.<sup>348</sup> Edoardo, as the oldest son, was expected to live with his parents and care for them in their old age. With this map of the future laid before him, Edoardo, immediately upon his discharge from the military, instead went – perhaps even fled – into the monastery.

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<sup>348</sup> Cesana, p. 26.

He did not inform his parents of his decision until it had become a realized fact.

Caterina, her dreams dashed, believed that her maternal devotion and generosity had been callously rejected. She cut all communication with Edoardo and compelled her husband to do likewise. She became a sort of Miss Havisham character, preserving the doctor's office, unused and undisturbed, within her home for many years thereafter.<sup>349</sup> It is not unreasonable to suppose that Edoardo chose to join a religious order<sup>350</sup> at least in part to escape from having to live with this woman who, however well-meaning and doting, was clearly impetuous and domineering. His parents made no attempt to restore their relationship with him until he became the rector of the newly founded Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in 1921. They appeared unexpectedly one morning to receive the eucharist from him as he performed mass in the university chapel.<sup>351</sup> Innocente died a year later, but Caterina carried on for another twenty-one years. Once back in his life, she interfered in bothersome and embarrassing ways and was best kept at a distance.<sup>352</sup> Her character and habits were more or less fixed. Edoardo, now Padre Agostino Gemelli, was wont to say resignedly of her in these later years: "She is woman set in her ways. Let her do as she will."<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>350</sup> As a member of the Order of Friars Minor (*Ordo fratrum minorum*), Gemelli was required to live in religious community. The more secular life of a diocesan priest would have allowed him to live in his family home or take in his mother upon her becoming widowed.

<sup>351</sup> Cesana, p. 24.

<sup>352</sup> Sticco, pp. 188-189.

<sup>353</sup> Cesana, p. 29.

Vico came from a family more elevated in terms of culture and social status than that in which Edoardo was raised. His father, Luigi Necchi (1842-1882), was a Milanese of comfortable middle-class origins. He had volunteered at the age of seventeen to fight for the independence of Lombardy from Austria and its annexation to the Piedmont kingdom of Victor Emanuel II. He fought at Solferino in 1859 and at Custoza in 1866.<sup>354</sup> After the last named battle, he was promoted from infantry lieutenant to captain, at which rank he remained for the rest of his career. His mother, Cecilia Frisiani (1854-1904), was a member of the *nobile* class,<sup>355</sup> which included both untitled younger sons of noblemen and untitled members of the land-owning gentry. She had a “polished upbringing,”<sup>356</sup> which may mean little more than having received “the teaching of good manners and comportment at home,” as was customary for daughters of the *aristocrazia*, or the families of high social position, both titled and untitled.<sup>357</sup> She was a niece of the astronomer Paolo Frisiani (1797-1880),<sup>358</sup> who was a friend of Alessandro Manzoni,<sup>359</sup> both men were members of the *Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere*.<sup>360</sup> Cecilia thus belonged to an extended family that had at least one member whose social links

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<sup>354</sup> Pio Bondioli, *Vico Necchi, fedel servo di Dio* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1934), p. 3.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>357</sup> Cardoza, pp. 147-48.

<sup>358</sup> Paolo Frisiani was an astronomer at the Brera Observatory. Agostino Guzzardella, ‘Frisiani, Paolo,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1998), pp. 571-572. The Brera Observatory was established in 1764 by the Jesuits and located since 1773 in the *Palazzo di Brera*. This palazzo, as mentioned above, was built by Carlo Borromeo in 1572 to house the Jesuit *Scuole di Brera*, forerunner of the *Ginnasio Parini* at which Gemelli first met Necchi.

<sup>359</sup> Bondioli, p. 4.

<sup>360</sup> Adele Robbiati Bianchi, ed., *L’Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere (secoli XIX-XX), Vol. I: Storia istituzionale* (Milano: Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere, 2007). The seat of the *Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere* since 1812 has been the *Palazzo di Brera*.

reached the highest cultural, if not social,<sup>361</sup> echelons in Milan.<sup>362</sup> Cecilia's name appears on the official list of noble and titled families of Lombardy in 1895; her eldest brother, also named Paolo Frisiani, is listed as having inherited the ranks of both *Nobile* and *Patrizio*.<sup>363</sup> Neither rank is a title *per se*, but both indicate that the Frisiani family was descended from established property-owning stock.<sup>364</sup> By drawing their incomes from property, the Frisiani family was properly bourgeois, unlike Gemelli's middle class family whose cash stream was derived from their own productive work. The Necchi name, on the other hand, does not appear anywhere on the official list of noble and titled families (nor does the name of Captain Necchi's mother, Giulia Puricelli). Vico's father was relatively well educated, having attended the *Imperiale e reale ginnasio di Porto Nuova* in Milan under Austrian rule.<sup>365</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that Vico's mother, like Edoardo's mother, had married a man of marginally lower social status. A plausible explanation for this is that Cecilia Frisiani, like Caterina Bertani, had a deficit of qualities

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<sup>361</sup> The Manzoni's "were small fry in Milan compared to the superb patricians of the city, the Borromeos, the Trivulzios, the Belgiojoso's." Archibald Colquhoun, *Manzoni and His Times* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd, 1954), p. 22.

<sup>362</sup> Nesta Di Robeck, *Vico Necchi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1960), p. 15.

<sup>363</sup> *Elenco ufficiale (definitivo) delle famiglie nobili e titolati della Lombardia* (Roma: Giuseppe Civelli, 1895), p. 168.

<sup>364</sup> "The Frisiani family, of ancient Milanese nobility, boasted among its ancestors the *valvassori della Motta* [i.e., minor feudal nobility] and owned land in Milan in Piazza Sant' Ambrogio, in Chiavenna [province of Sondrio], and in Carate Brianza [province of Monza and Brianza]." Pio Bondioli, *Vico Necchi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milano: Vita and Pensiero, 1944), fn. 1, p. 4.

<sup>365</sup> Renamed *Ginnasio Giuseppe Parini* in 1865, the same school would educate his son Vico. Bondioli (1934), p. 4.

that would have made her more easily marriageable to men of higher social standing.<sup>366</sup>

Evidence will bear this out.

Despite differences in the class origins of the Gemellis and the Necchis, the two families shared similar political and religious opinions and comparable economic status. Luigi and Cecilia, like Innocente and Caterina, held views that were liberal and patriotic.<sup>367</sup> In the new Italian state that had annexed virtually all papal domains, confiscated much ecclesiastical property and challenged religious authority, such views were, almost by definition, anti-clerical. Nevertheless, Luigi and Cecilia did not hold these views so dogmatically as to preclude formal participation in the sacraments of the church. They were married in the Basilica di Sant' Ambrogio in October 1875,<sup>368</sup> took up residence in the adjacent Piazza di Sant' Ambrogio,<sup>369</sup> and baptized their first born, Ludovico, in the same historic church shortly after his birth in November 1876.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> “Daughters of the bourgeoisie and lesser bourgeoisie, kept imprisoned under tight control of the family and nearly kept segregated by the walls within their own family home have no places similarly suitable for finding a marriage partner [as do daughters of the working class, who go to the market, the laundry, etc.]” Marriages for such women, throughout the nineteenth century, were negotiated by third parties. Fate played no role in picking partners. Age, social and economic status, location, religion, level of education and occupation were factors for which some degree of affinity was sought. De Giorgio, pp. 310-311.

<sup>367</sup> Di Robeck, p. 15.

<sup>368</sup> Their nuptial mass was performed by Monsignor Francesco Maria Rossi (1800-1883), the provost of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio. Mons. Rossi spearheaded the restoration of the ancient basilica in the second-half of the nineteenth century. Bondioli (1934), p. 7.

<sup>369</sup> The house, immediately north of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, was demolished to create space for the war memorial, *Monumento ai Caduti*, completed in 1928. This monument stands just outside the main entrance to Università Cattolica. Bondioli (1934), p. 2.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Vico's early years were anything but stable. His father was posted with his regiment in Sicily, often accompanied by his mother. They would leave Vico in the care of his godmother, a pious great-aunt, Giulia Frisiani, the widow of a man named Zuchetti,<sup>371</sup> and her adult daughter, Paola Zuchetti, an Ursuline nun who, in an old-fashioned custom allowed to some nuns, lived with her mother<sup>372</sup> in the Frisiani villa in Carate Brianza,<sup>373</sup> about 20 km north of Milan. In 1879 Vico rejoined his parents in Milan. His mother gave birth to a girl in the summer and his father was ordered back to Sicily in the fall. Vico was again packed off to Carate Brianza and placed under the care of his great-aunt Giulia and cousin Paola. Between May and July 1882, disease carried off first Vico's baby sister and then his father. Vico was sent to nearby the nearby province of Bergamo to begin his education after Christmas 1883, starting the semester late, at a boarding school run by the Somaschi order of priests.<sup>374</sup> Shortly thereafter, in March 1884, his widowed mother married Federico Gaetano Villa (1837-1907),<sup>375</sup> an artist of similar political and religious views. Ludovico was transferred for the next two years to another

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<sup>371</sup> Orazio Petrosillo, *Ludovico Necchi* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1995), p. 18.

<sup>372</sup> Di Robeck, p. 16.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>374</sup> The *Collegio di Celana*, established by a directive of Carlo Borromeo in 1579. Bondioli (1934), p. 15.

<sup>375</sup> Federico Gaetano Villa taught sculpture at the *Accademia delle Belle Arti di Brera*, which had been established under Maria Teresa in 1773 with its seat in the Palazzo di Brera. Gaetano Villa sculpted the mausoleum for the Necchi-Frisiani in the *Cimitero Monumentale di Milano* after the death of Luigi and his infant daughter. Bondioli (1934), p. 23. Cecilia Frisiani thus married the man whom she had commissioned to create the tomb of her husband and child. Gaetano Villa's work included the funerary sculpture for the tomb of Agostino Bertani, also buried in the *Cimitero Monumentale di Milano*. That Necchi's stepfather received the commission for Gemelli's relative, who had died six years before Necchi and Gemelli met for the first time, is just one small example of the cozy world of late nineteenth-century Milan. Also buried in the same cemetery were Carlo Cattaneo and Alessandro Manzoni. See: *Monumenti funebri del Cimitero Monumentale di Milano* (Roma: Antonio Villardi Editore, undated).

boarding school closer to Milan, also run by the Somaschi order.<sup>376</sup> That both colleges were run by priests and that both are closer to Carate Brianza than either is to Milan suggests that Giulia Frisiani and her daughter had selected them. In summer 1886 Vico was ill with measles; Giulia's daughter Paola, who cared for him during his illness, contracted the virus from him and died. He missed a year of school. His studies then resumed in Milan at the elementary school of *Collegio San Carlo*,<sup>377</sup> located near his mother and stepfather's home in Corso Magenta.<sup>378</sup> Vico's early upbringing and schooling, interrupted by family upheavals and extended illness, was erratic, to say the least. The most constant element seems to have been its religious influence, due to the pious great-aunt and cousin who had sent him to Catholic schools and otherwise watched over him more closely during his early years than did his own parents. The volatility he experienced was compounded by the uneven temperament of his mother, a corpulent woman who was prone to illness and never convalesced from her chronic conditions of anxiety, nervousness and hysteria.<sup>379</sup> "There was nothing easy in Cecilia's nature."<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> The *Collegio Rotondi di Gorla*, the origins of which are also connected with Carlo Borromeo. Bondioli (1934), p. 17.

<sup>377</sup> Founded in 1869 and named after Carlo Borromeo.

<sup>378</sup> Petrosillo, p. 22. The headmaster of *Collegio San Carlo* was Don Luigi Grasselli, a close friend of Achille Ratti, who a generation earlier had attended the college. "Achille Ratti passò al seminario liceale di Monza per i due primi corsi, poi per il terzo al collegio arcivescovile urban di S. Carlo per ivi prepararsi agli esami di licenza liceale, da lui superati brillantemente nel liceo milanese Giuseppe Parini." Angelo Novelli, *Pio XI (Achille Ratti) MDCCCLVII-MXMXXII* (Milano: Casa editrice "Pro familia", 1923), p. 29.

<sup>379</sup> Petrosillo, p. 20.

<sup>380</sup> Di Robeck, p. 45.

The economic status of Vico's family was probably not drastically different from that of Edoardo's family when the two boys met in 1889, or even later after the bankruptcy of Edoardo's father. This is suggested by the fact that both boys attended the same school, *Parini*. Although this school provided what was regarded as the most modern secondary education in Milan, the higher born Milanese *aristocrazia*, as rule, did not send their sons to study there. As an exclusive state-run school, *Parini* prepared the sort of productive and patriotic young men who were required to serve the interests of the new Italian state. Given that such youths were drawn largely from the middle class, *Parini* was a middle class institution and its fees were within middle class means. Vico's mother and stepfather sent him to *Parini* primarily because they sought to rid him of his precocious religious affinities, but secondarily because they could afford to send him there.<sup>381</sup> Gemelli remembered that when he first met Vico, "he was not rich."<sup>382</sup> Such a degree of wealth was relative in late nineteenth century Milan. Vico's family did not own great agricultural estates or successful industrial enterprises, but they lived comfortably in a well-heeled district. What wealth his family possessed was being dissipated at such a rate that by the time Necchi reached university he was dependent upon a charitable scholarship intended for "young men of good families" (*giovani di famiglie di civile condizione*) for the completion of their studies.<sup>383</sup> Necchi and Gemelli lived in a society where at least a few privileges were extended to help keep the bourgeoisie bourgeois.

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<sup>381</sup> Petrosillo, p. 24.

<sup>382</sup> Agostino Gemelli, 'La Vita Interiore di Ludovico Necchi,' *Vita e Pensiero* a. XVI, fasc. 3, p. 131.

<sup>383</sup> Bondioli (1944), p. 91.



Edoardo was in his second year of *ginnasio* at *Parini* when Vico transferred into his class. It was the fall of 1889. A year earlier, Innocente and Caterina had enrolled Edoardo as a first-year student in the *ginnasio* and at the same time placed him in *Convitto Nazionale Longone*. The latter, a residential college annexed to *Parini*, was one of a network of about 40 similar *convitti* established shortly after 1860 by the newly unified Italian state to challenge the church's historic monopoly on education and to train a cadre of intellectually elite students whose loyalty and service would be ordered instead toward the state. The basic purpose of each such *convitto* was "to instill an immense love for the Italian homeland" ("*infondere un amore immense alla patria italiana*").<sup>384</sup> Article 1 of the rules for *Longone*, issued in 1861 by the Ministry of Public Instruction, states: "The *Convitto Nazionale Longone* of Milan strives for the civil, moral and physical education of the youth, in order to turn out conditioned and sturdy citizens."<sup>385</sup> Such education did not, however, completely omit religion. Article 28 of the original rules for *Longone* stipulates that the "Spiritual director is committed to the religious instruction of the pupils. On holy days he will give explanations of the Gospel and the catechism in the chapel. He will prepare the boarders for all practices of religion, but not using coercion of any sort."<sup>386</sup> The boarders at *Longone* had access to a chapel ("with a new marble altar and an organ")<sup>387</sup> and a chaplain (most of whom had a surprisingly short

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<sup>384</sup> Carlo Felice Bissanti, *Leggi, decreti, regolamenti riguardanti i Convitti Nazionali del Regno dal 1859 al 1899* (Taranto: Tipografia del Commercio, 1899), pp. 13-14.

<sup>385</sup> Bissanti, p. 29.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>387</sup> *Monografia del Convitto Nazionale Longone in Milano, 1884* (Milano: Giacomo Agnelli, 1884), pp. 32-33.

tenure – six of them in the seven years between 1877 and 1884).<sup>388</sup> These chaplains all held the title *Sacerdote*, or priest, implying that they were members of the Catholic clergy. This raises the question of their degree of obedience to the pope and their standing within the church, given the antagonism at that time between the Italian state and the Roman papacy, if not that between the state and the Catholic church as a whole. Nothing is said about the Catholic liturgy being performed in the chapel, raising the question whether the chaplains may have been laicized priests, that is, ex-priests, who continued to carry the title “*sacerdote*” (since ordination into priesthood is a sacrament that cannot, short of extraordinary circumstances, be undone). Until the relationship between church and state was re-established in 1929, state schools would not offer positions to priests in good standing with the church, but they “were ready to receive apostate priests with open arms.”<sup>389</sup>

Edoardo boarded at *Longone* during all eight years that he studied at *Parini*. Enrollment figures at these two institutions during Edoardo’s first year of *ginnasio* were presumably similar to what they would be five years later during his first year of *liceo*. In the fall of 1893, *Longone* boarded 97 boys, of whom 58 studied in *ginnasio*, 30 in *liceo*, and 9 in elementary school.<sup>390</sup> That same fall, *Parini* registered 351 boys in its *ginnasio* (taught

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>389</sup> D. A. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy* (Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 369.

<sup>390</sup> Ministero di agricoltura, industria e commercio, direzione general della statistica, *Istruzione secondaria classica e tecnica e convitti maschili e femminili, anno scolastico 1893-94* (Roma: Stabilimento Bontempelli, 1896), Tav. XI, p. 145. For the handful of *Longone* residents who were too young to enroll at *Ginnasio-Liceo Parini*, the *Collegio Longone* taught elementary-level courses. Bissanti, p. 96.

by eleven instructors)<sup>391</sup> and 184 boys in its *liceo* (taught by seven instructors).<sup>392</sup> This student-to-teacher ratio suggests limited attention to individual students. The vast majority of *Parini* pupils were “outside students,” or day students who did not board at *Longone*; these students probably came from within the city of Milan. On the other hand, the 1884 enrollment list of 163 names for *Longone* shows only about one-third of the students as Milanese, about one-half as provincial Lombardians, about one-tenth as coming from outside of Italy (mostly Swiss, but a few from Buenos Aires and even one from Jerusalem), and about one-sixteenth as coming from major Italian cities outside Lombardy (Genoa, Rome, Florence, etc.).<sup>393</sup>

Why Innocente and Caterina placed Edoardo in *Longone* is a matter of conjecture, though not difficult to guess. It could not have been for convenience. Both *Longone* and *Parini* were located inside the same palazzo in Via Fatebenefratelli,<sup>394</sup> but it stood less than a

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<sup>391</sup> Ministero di agricoltura, industria e commercio, Tav. I, p. 13.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., Tav. III, p. 49.

<sup>393</sup> *Monografia del Convitto Nazionale Longone in Milano, 1884*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>394</sup> This palazzo dates back to 1573, when Carlo Borromeo founded the Jesuit *Collegio dei nobili* as a residential college intended for sons of the “*classe dirigente*” who would study at the *Scuole di Brera* that he had established the previous year. The Barnabite *Collegio Longone*, also for sons of the nobility, moved into this palazzo two years after the Jesuit order was suppressed in 1773 and the *Collegio dei nobili* was closed. Davide Daolmi, ‘I Balli negli allestimenti settecenteschi del Collegio Imperiale Longone di Milano,’ in Giovanni Morelli, ed., *Creature di Prometeo: il ballo teatrale: dal divertimento al drama: studi offerti al Aurel M. Milloss* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1996), pp. 3-86. This palazzo would house *Convitto nazionale Longone* and *Ginnasio-Liceo Parini* until World War II. After the allied bombing of Milan in August 1943 destroyed the police headquarters, the *Questura di Milano* moved into this palazzo (the college and school had temporarily removed to the provinces) and has since remained at this address, Via Fatebenefratelli, 11. The present day *Liceo Ginnasio Parini* is located nearby in Via Goito, 4. The present site of the *Convitto Nazionale Longone* is located at Via degli Olivetani, 9, near the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

kilometer from the Gemelli's apartment in Via Cappellari, just off the Piazza del Duomo, where Innocente and Caterina still lived when Edoardo began boarding there. Edoardo could easily have walked from home to his classes at *Parini*.

Prestige seems to have been a motivating factor in choosing *Longone*. Edoardo's parents clearly sought to mix him among a better class of boys, if not those of the Milanese aristocracy, then those of the upper bourgeoisie. Although *Collegio Longone*, the forerunner of *Convitto Nazionale Longone*, had been established by the Barnabites in 1723 as *Collegio dei Nobili* and its distinguished alumni included Alessandro Manzoni, the Milanese aristocracy had stopped sending their sons to *Longone* after 1815, when it began accepting commoners who did not even have the status of *nobile*, let alone an inherited title.<sup>395</sup> Innocente and Caterina already accrued prestige simply from having their son enrolled in *Parini*, but they apparently sought more. Cecilia Frisiani, who belonged to a higher social class than the Gemellis, sent her son to *Parini* as a day student. But then she and her husband, Federico Gaetano Villa, lived next to *Parini*, at Via Fatebenefratelli, 13,<sup>396</sup> Villa was an instructor at the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera*, located at the nearby *Palazzo di Brera*. On the other hand, Cecelia Frisiani may not have had the means for boarding a son at *Longone*. Vico would attend university at Pavia on scholarship,<sup>397</sup> and by the time he received the *laurea* his family's villa in Carate Brianza would be sold, suggesting a decline in economic circumstances.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Daolmi, pp. 7-10.

<sup>396</sup> Bondioli (1934), p. 18.

<sup>397</sup> Di Robeck, p. 99.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

It is significant that Edoardo was admitted to *Longone* on a competitive scholarship granted on the basis of financial need.<sup>399</sup> A rough idea of this need can be guessed from a couple of figures. The annual boarding fee at *Longone* in 1884 was 800 *lire*, with upwards of 400 *lire* in accessory expenditures.<sup>400</sup> By comparison, the average taxable income of a Milanese café owner in 1890, based on the *ricchezza mobile* (a tax on the income of movable wealth, that is, on the means of production, which excluded income from land and wages), was also about 800 *lire*.<sup>401</sup> Although it can be assumed that *Caffè della Dogana*, given its prime location, drew revenues larger than those of the average café in Milan, these figures nevertheless suggest that Edoardo was surrounded at *Longone* by boys from very much richer families.<sup>402</sup> Indeed, other boarders had family names recognized for outstanding commercial success, such as Bocconi (department stores) and Frette (luxury fabrics).<sup>403</sup> It is plausible that Edoardo's parents hoped that he would become integrated among and assimilated to such boys. It is not difficult to imagine Caterina Bertani having this ambition for her son.

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<sup>399</sup> Cesana, p. 19.

<sup>400</sup> *Monografia del Convitto Nazionale Longone in Milano, 1884*, p. 32.

<sup>401</sup> Morris, p. 53.

<sup>402</sup> The college administration sought to allay parental concerns about the comfort and well being of its boarders: "The baths, recently installed, allow for the personal cleanliness of the students, even in winter.... The dietary treatment is carefully determined [according to standards set by the *Consiglio d'Amministrazione*]. The house wine is made with grapes selected from the best locations in Asti. Hence, a condition of health continually flourishes; so much that the college has gone unscathed by the terrible evils that especially in these recent times assail boys, and in 23 years there has never been verified a single death in the college." *Monografia del Convitto Nazionale Longone in Milano, 1884*, fn. 2, p. 32.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

One other likely motivation for boarding Edoardo is that the Gemellis expected *Longone* to shape and develop their son's character, perhaps even toughen him up. By the time they enrolled Edoardo in 1888, the institution had become a military college *de jure* as well as *de facto*. Not established as a military college *per se*, *Longone* was from the start governed by routine and discipline and its inmates were required to wear uniforms of "military fashion."<sup>404</sup> Its name had since been changed to *Convitto Nazionale Militare Longone*, reflecting the new direction it took in 1885, the same year in which the Italian military began its imperialist adventures.<sup>405</sup> Each of the five *convitti nazionali* that were put under military supervision that year was "run by a colonel or lieutenant colonel, named by the Ministry of War, in concert with the Ministry of Public Instruction."<sup>406</sup> It seems that the sense of purpose of the *convitti* had slackened by the 1880s. In 1882, the state increased funding for the *convitti*, yet also felt it necessary to emphasize that "the *Convitto* is not to be considered as an institution that is accessory to the *Liceo*, to the *Ginnasio* or to other schools, nor is it simply a hostel, but it derives its purpose from its own existence as the extraordinarily noble (*noblissimo*) goal of educating and giving to the country young men raised in those virtues that will have to be exercised in public life and in the family."<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Bissanti, p. 32.

<sup>405</sup> In January 1885, a battalion of Bersagliere sailed from Naples to occupy Massawa in Eritrea.

<sup>406</sup> Bissanti, p. 175.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

Presumably, *Longone* was concerned with instilling a heightened sense of discipline when Edoardo entered. The revised rules of 1882 for the *convitti nazionali* remained in effect. Article 1 was expanded to state:

The *Convitti Nazionali* are opened by the State to young men, imparting to them a moral, intellectual and physical education, able to render them worthy citizens of a free and civil homeland.

For such purpose, the activity of everyone charged to high and noble and office must converge.

Moral education must aim to form character, developing the sentiment of the proper duties, love of virtue, of family, of homeland and of the institutions that govern it.

Intellectual education through study will form citizens capable of every civil discipline, and of benefit and decorum to society.

Physical education, by gymnastic and military exercises, completes the other two and prepares for the homeland men who are sturdy and ready to defend it.<sup>408</sup>

The effect of the college's moral emphasis is questionable. In later years Gemelli bitterly recalled the utter failure *Longone* to provide its residents with a moral education.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>409</sup> Gemelli, p. 131.

*Longone* offered classes in addition to those for which its members were automatically enrolled in *Parini*. Some were obligatory and free of charge: rights and duties of citizens; drawing; penmanship; gymnastics; fencing; military drills; target shooting; and dancing.<sup>410</sup> Others were optional and required additional fees: foreign languages (i.e., those not taught at *Parini*); vocal and instrumental music; horsemanship; and swimming.<sup>411</sup> A boy on scholarship, such as Edoardo, may have had to forgo the optional courses.

Edoardo was, in point of fact, very much in want of some sort of improvement when he first met Ludovico Necchi in 1889. Describing the situation years later, in a rare fragment of autobiography, Gemelli records memories that imply, probably unintentionally, that he had been a “mama’s boy” and “teacher’s pet” who became overwhelmed by the informal rough-and-tumble that characterized much of the life within the all boys college and school. He seems to have felt misunderstood by everyone at both *Parini* and *Longone*. His diffidence (which he insists was the result of having taken to heart Christian precepts as taught by his beloved elementary school teacher) and his defective eyesight were, in his opinion, the underlying reasons for his introverted social behavior and poor academic performance.

Accustomed to the spiritual warmth of a family and an [elementary] school in which I had constituted the object of every concern and then transported into that college and into that [*ginnasio*] where none of the masters paid attention to me, anyone can imagine what

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<sup>410</sup> *Monografia del Convitto Nazionale Longone in Milano, 1884*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.



sort of reaction that environment caused. Indeed, I encountered two teachers who did not realize that my excessive timidity was the result of an education that was very Christian and very reserved, and that myopia prevented me from reading what they wrote on the blackboard; they resolved that I was feeble-minded; they left me alone, except when they cruelly seized upon me in mockery that elicited hilarity from classmates. Thus, in that school, where teachers ignored me and classmates ridiculed me because of my inhibitory modesty and excessive timidity, I ended up isolating myself from everyone and keeping closed within me tender feelings and longings.... [It was] a gloomy school, [there were] some desks that were ornate and constricting of any movement; I climbed to the last row, where I could be beyond the reach of the teachers and thus far away from their attacks and their judgments that I deemed unfair, [where I could be] free to disengage myself from school and to abandon myself, during the long hours of lessons, to dreams and fantasies that were the escape by which I withdrew from the tedious life of a college and a school [that were] neither attractive nor instructive.<sup>412</sup>

Considering the success Gemelli later achieved under a series of lofty intellectual mentors, the reader is left pondering Gemelli's claim that he had failed to convince his *ginnasio* instructors that he possessed even an average intelligence. Indeed, Gemelli would have already demonstrated his knowledge and aptitude in the rigorous written and oral examination that was required to compete for a scholarship at *Longone*.<sup>413</sup> Gemelli's version of events brings to mind the legendary anecdote about St. Thomas Aquinas as a seemingly slow-witted pupil at the University of Paris, where he had been nicknamed "Dumb Ox" by his classmates. Albertus Magnus, one of the most learned masters of his

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<sup>412</sup> Gemelli, pp. 131-132.

<sup>413</sup> *Regolamenti per i convitti nazionale*, Parte 4. 'Posti gratuiti e semigratuiti,' in Bissanti, pp. 103-105.

time, recognized what others did not when he prophesied: “You call him a Dumb Ox; I tell you this Dumb Ox shall bellow so loud that his bellowings will fill the world.”<sup>414</sup>

Gemelli would change from a timid boy into an intimidating man who took up a vocation like that of Aquinas, namely to labor exhaustively to reconcile faith and reason, but he maintained enough modesty, at least in this instance, not to have made a direct comparison between himself and Aquinas. On the other hand, the reader can accept these memories at their face value to mean nothing more than that Gemelli’s genius still lay undiscovered and his need for companionship remained unfulfilled.

Vico was two years older than Edoardo when he transferred into the same second-year class at *Regio Ginnasio Parini* in 1889. The frequent upheavals in Vico’s young life had caused him to fall behind in his schooling. He was, however, a disciplined student. Edoardo’s first recorded memory of Vico is that “he answered very much to the point” when called upon by the professor of Latin and that “he was always well-prepared for class; he appeared self-assured. I took an immediate liking to him because he was self-possessed, open, straightforward, yet dignified.”<sup>415</sup> It was not, however, an unqualified attraction. Vico’s possession of admirable character traits provoked envy in Edoardo, whose awkwardness and ignorance brought him nothing but mockery and humiliation. “I ended up regarding this youth with a certain envy, both for the position he had gained in the school and for that serenity of life that I unfortunately did not have, troubled as I was

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<sup>414</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933), p. 74.

<sup>415</sup> Gemelli, p. 132.

from the jeering of classmates and from the unfair rebukes of professors.”<sup>416</sup> The ambiguity in his feelings soon vanished, however. Vico’s good nature won over Edoardo completely:

While from my more immediate fellows, those of the *collegio*, I met nothing but the mockery that irritated me, I found him friendly and helpful.... While the mockery and the depravity made me shun the fellows of the *collegio*, I used to look forward to classes with the day students in order to come into touch again with the serenity and the kindness of Ludovico Necchi.<sup>417</sup>

Gemelli attributes Vico’s “serene composure” to the spiritual direction he received as a youth from the Jesuit Guido Mattiussi (1852-1925), “the priest who gradually worked on his spirit, guiding it at the same time to the conquest and the dominion of himself and to a solid cultural and religious formation.”<sup>418</sup> That Vico, as a student in an elite state school that was by definition anti-clerical, dared to put himself under the personal direction of a priest – and not just any priest, but a Jesuit, a member of the religious order that most strongly supported the papacy in its struggle against the encroachments of the Italian state – was a subject of scandal at *Parini*, the curriculum of which included no religious instruction whatsoever. What elicited much curiosity was the rumor “that it was this Jesuit who instructed [Necchi] how to present a *bella figura* in school.”<sup>419</sup> Mattiussi, a significant influence as spiritual director to well educated Catholic youths in Milan,

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid. p. 133.

would later become better known in the Italian Catholic world for his unyielding dogmatism.

It should be pointed out that Necchi did not meet Mattiussi until the fall of 1893,<sup>420</sup> which was four years after Gemelli first met Mattiussi at *Parini*. Yet Gemelli claims that Necchi had been a remarkably balanced and self-possessed boy from the first time he laid eyes upon him in 1889. Gemelli reveals that under Vico's calm surface dwelt an anxious character.

Padre Mattiussi taught Necchi to attain an early conquest, namely, that over himself. Anyone who did not know intimately the dear friend would have deemed him to be of a uniform spirit, serene, tranquil by nature. In reality, ever since those early years he showed himself to have inherited from his father the heat of a restless temperament and from his mother the restless spontaneity of character; but, in stages, with an intense effort that had its first and most important triumphs in those years and was continued until adulthood, he was able to win that uniformity and serenity that was the secret of his success in personal apostleship.<sup>421</sup>

If Edoardo and Vico became fast friends upon meeting in 1889, the reader is left questioning the original basis of that friendship. Perhaps Necchi possessed a precocious maturity and affability that immediately attracted the undeveloped and unsocial Gemelli, and perhaps Necchi's character then strengthened further under the direction of Mattiussi. Gemelli reveals, however, that the young Necchi from the beginning exhibited a

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<sup>420</sup> Petrosillo, p. 27.

<sup>421</sup> Gemelli, p. 134.

restlessness at odds with the rest of this portrait. If so, then Edoardo and Vico may have been as alike in their emotional uneasiness as they were unlike in other ways.

What is more important than the original attraction between the two boys is the bond that kept their friendship intact through four decades: the remaining seven years at *Parini*, all five years of university, the following year of military conscription, and the twenty-seven years after that. Such a lasting friendship, at the most basic level, must have a shared sympathy. Both Edoardo and Vico came, as we have seen, from homes that were comparable in terms of political and religious views, and not vastly different in terms of wealth or income. Both boys were troubled by anxiety. Both had a mother of unusually difficult temperament. Both effectively grew up as an only child. Both effectively were without a family shortly after leaving university. These last few factors put them outside the perceived ideal, if not norm, of large Italian families, in which there is a nurturing and self-sacrificing relationship of love between mothers and children such as to make Italian veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary more comprehensible.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> “About 40% of women born between 1851 and 1871 had seven or fewer children (and five was the average number of children that statistics assigned to Italian women).” “The nineteenth century duties of mothers, dedication and sacrifice, repeated invariably by religious and secular principles, is explained by the consciousness that the mother and child relationship is tied by a fragile thread to existence. It is difficult to interpret how much the maternal awareness of the tenuous earthly ties to children weighs upon the daily interactions and styles of instruction. In the mid-nineteenth century many manuals directed at parents lament that the authority figures in the family, mothers especially, have “put down the whip.” De Giorgio, p. 358. De Giorgio’s work says more about women’s choice whether or not to have children than how women raised them.

Whatever bond of sympathy existed between Edoardo and Vico seems to have been reinforced by their opposite dispositions. Necchi's uneasiness allowed him to empathize with others; his openness toward others and patience with them won him many intimate friendships. Throughout his life, holding positions of leadership in both the diocese and the *comune* of Milan, he excelled at building consensus among men. Edoardo's uneasiness, expressed as timidity when he was a boy, became manifested by assertive, even bullying, behavior in adolescence and adulthood. At *Longone* he became "insubordinate" and "rebellious."<sup>423</sup> At university he "replied discourteously to his superiors and played cruel pranks on his fellows, some of whom loved him dearly while others could not stand him."<sup>424</sup> As a priest he practiced scrupulous obedience to his superiors. He was genial and even gracious with persons whose station in life was low, but he did not always know how to deal with members of the so-called better classes.<sup>425</sup> "As much as he tried to control himself, all the more would he discharge his unmanageable instinct in another way: reproaches that were disproportionate to the cause; unpleasant truths thrown in the face, without any respect."<sup>426</sup> Gemelli never forgot the sting of being mocked and humiliated as a boy, yet he was unable, as a grown man, to spare others the same kind of pain.

Gemelli seems to have had unusual difficulty accepting other persons as his equal. He had a number of close collaborators who supported him in various ways for many years,

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<sup>423</sup> Sticco, p. 11.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.* p. 221.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222.

but rarely did he esteem any of them as his peers. An ingrained notion of hierarchy seems to have allowed him to look only up or down. Throughout his long life he rarely joined groups; his pattern was instead to form a new group of which he would then make himself its authoritarian leader. On the other hand, he completely subordinated himself – and found ways to ingratiate himself – toward the small number of men who were his religious or ecclesiastical superiors. He necessarily maintained friendly relationships with the financial supporters of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore,<sup>427</sup> but his biographers reveal no friendships on a par with that which he shared with Ludovico Necchi. Gemelli seems to have achieved more things in his life by forcing his will upon others than by inspiring them with his love. At the Università Cattolica, where he held the title *Magnifico rettore*, his nickname was *magnifico terrore*. Indeed, he sometimes carried his bluster to the point of appearing a buffoon.

There are only two other persons with whom Gemelli shared decades of close acquaintance that approximated a sort of parity: Armida Barelli (1882-1952)<sup>428</sup> and Arcangelo Mazzotti, O.F.M. (1880-1961).<sup>429</sup> Mazzotti, son of tenant farmers in

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<sup>427</sup> Cosmacini, p. 201.

<sup>428</sup> Maria Sticco, *Una donna fra due secoli. Armida Barelli* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1967); Laura Rozza, 'Barelli, Armida,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), pp. 30-33; Giuseppe Lazzati, ed., *Armida Barelli nella società italiana* (Milano: Edizioni O. R., 1983); Angelo Majo, *Armida Barelli* (Milano: NED, 1989); Maria Bocci, 'Una 'distrazione' storiografica significativa: il caso di Armida Barelli,' *Annali di Storia moderna e contemporanea* 9 (2003), pp. 429-443.

<sup>429</sup> Guido Rombi, *Chiesa e società a Sassari dal 1931 al 1961. L'episcopato di Arcangelo Mazzotti* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2000).

provincial Brescia,<sup>430</sup> was a Franciscan seminarian when he was conscripted as a medical orderly alongside Gemelli and Necchi in the *Ospedale militare* during 1902-1903.

Gemelli names Mazzotti and Necchi as the two men most instrumental in his conversion; both were at his side when he celebrated his first mass in 1908. Thereafter both Gemelli and Mazzotti often resided in the same Franciscan monastery in Milan. Gemelli drafted Mazzotti, as he did Necchi and Barelli, in many of his projects during the 1910s and 1920s. Gemelli chose Mazzotti as his spiritual advisor and recommended him to Barelli for the same purpose.<sup>431</sup> For years to come Mazzotti performed this role for both Gemelli and Barelli (two hardheaded characters who could not have been easy for him), though his visits to Milan were infrequent after he was appointed Archbishop of Sassari in 1931; Mazzotti remained in that Sardinian archdiocese for the rest of his life.

Barelli was a pious unmarried laywoman of independent means from a cultured family domiciled in a late eighteenth-century palazzo on Milan's prestigious Corso Venezia. She was perhaps the only relatively rich bourgeois with whom Gemelli had a long and close bond, in which case it is interesting to note that Gemelli often employed her as a fundraiser. It is also interesting to note that she was a woman; Gemelli's experience at *Longone* seems to have alienated his affections toward bourgeois men. But Barelli's father, named Napoleone, was, like Gemelli's father (and Necchi's too), an ex-Garibaldian. This suggests that the Barelli family did not share the conservative politics of many other Milanese families of comparable wealth. She met Gemelli in 1910 and

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<sup>430</sup> Rombi, p. 3.

<sup>431</sup> Rombi, pp. 10-11.



quickly became a close collaborator in many of his activities, including the founding and operating of Università Cattolica. In 1917, with the support of the archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari (1850-1921), she established the local diocesan branch of *Gioventù Femminile Cattolica*. In 1918 she was appointed national president of this group by Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922), who tasked her with establishing a branch in every Italian diocese. Under her direction, *Gioventù Femminile Cattolica* became an essential source of permanent fund-raising for Università Cattolica.

The difference between Gemelli's enduring relationship with Necchi and that with Barelli is perhaps indicated by his behavior in the presence of each of them in the final hours of their lives (both Necchi and Barelli succumbed to terminal illnesses). With Barelli he jested,<sup>432</sup> but with Necchi he turned mournful.<sup>433</sup> Perhaps Necchi's premature death at age fifty-three accounts for this difference, but it might also be the case that Gemelli felt a deeper emotional attachment to Necchi. Almost certainly Gemelli was the originating force behind Necchi's candidacy for sainthood; the first formal step in that process occurred in 1933 when Ildefonso Schuster (1880-1954), the archbishop of Milan (1929-1954), accepted Necchi's cause. The following year Gemelli had Necchi's remains translated to the chapel of the Università Cattolica, where he intended his own tomb to be built. Gemelli likewise had Barelli's body translated to the chapel for burial the year after her death in 1952. Gemelli would be laid to rest among them in 1959.

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<sup>432</sup> Maria Sticco, *Father Gemelli: Notes for the biography of a great man*, trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), p. 222.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Shortly after Gemelli died his long serving confessor discreetly offered a few of his thoughts about the old autocrat. Mazzotti suggests that Gemelli refused to accept spiritual direction from anyone else and would thus demand that the archbishop of Sassari make return trips to Milan – by no means an easy journey – on numerous occasions.<sup>434</sup> Mazzotti further suggests that Gemelli never outgrew his hurtful outbursts at others. Underneath Gemelli's blustery imperiousness, Mazzotti explains, beat the "heart of a child" (*anima di fanciullo*), and one that was wont to play surprisingly juvenile pranks.<sup>435</sup> Gemelli, converted to Catholicism, readily took on inordinate burdens that would likely have given pause to experienced men twice his age. On the other hand, even after he had risen to commanding heights within Italian Catholic culture Gemelli remained in some ways unchanged from the lonely boy who sought effective forms of defending his ego.

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<sup>434</sup> Arcangelo Mazzotti, 'Padre Gemelli intimo,' *Vita e pensiero*, XLII (August-September 1959), pp. 615-616.

<sup>435</sup> Mazzotti, p. 617.

#### Chapter 4: PIAZZA SANT'AMBROGIO – THE SAINT

The only place in Milan that can challenge the Piazza del Duomo for its historical significance and even lay rival claim to being the city's symbolic heart is the Piazza Sant' Ambrogio. Separated by only a kilometer, they are strikingly different in appearance. Compared with the majestic rectangle of Piazza del Duomo that announces itself as the ruling center of things, Piazza Sant' Ambrogio is a small, amorphous crossroads of insignificant streets. Most of the surrounding edifices, residential rather than governmental or commercial, are relatively modest in their construction – more hand-laid brick and stucco than monumentally carved stone. The two piazzas share only one visible similarity of note: at the center of each is a historic church with a Lombard Romanesque roof.<sup>436</sup>

Piazza Sant' Ambrogio is named for the early Christian bishop of Milan, Ambrose (340-397), the patron saint of the city, whose legacy has long imbued the history and culture of that city. Among other things, the Ambrosian liturgy is still performed at every mass, and the opera season at La Scala, which retains a preeminent position in the social life of the city, still opens on the Feast of St. Ambrose (December 7). This day is also

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<sup>436</sup> The façades of both churches share a similar basic outline. “The single gable roof appears to be a favorite in Lombardy and may be taken as characteristic of the Lombard Romanesque. In the case of St. Ambrose, as well as some others, the division of the church into nave and aisles is indicated in the façade.... So rooted is the form of a single gable in Lombard Romanesque that when it came to the design for the present cathedral of Milan, the façade, in violation of every principle of Gothic architecture, was drawn with a single gable, though the aisles are considerably lower than the nave.” Joseph Cullen Ayer, *The Rise and Development of Christian Architecture* (Milwaukee: The Young Churchman, 1902), p. 18.

celebrated in Piazza Sant' Ambrogio with a traditional Christmas fair.<sup>437</sup> The people of Milan still refer to themselves as *ambrosiani*, and the adjective *ambrosiana* is synonymous with *milanese*, as seen in the preamble to the body of laws that govern the present-day Lombard capital: "The city and community of Milan, renewing the millennial *ambrosian* [italics added] constitutional history that has known and tested statutory liberty in the forms of the free Comune, political liberty as regained in the Resistance and the principle of autonomy in the Republican constitution, gives itself this statute as the fundamental law of its organization."<sup>438</sup> The legacy of Ambrose endures among Milanese more than it does among any other group of people.<sup>439</sup> Ambrose did not found a religious order that venerates his memory and tradition, as did, for example, Francis of Assisi, whose order became named after him and has since branched out to include the *Ordo Fratrum Minorum* that Gemelli would join in 1903. One might compare the Milanese attachment to St. Ambrose with the Irish feeling for St. Patrick. Both saints dwelled within the vastness of the Roman Empire at about the same time (Ambrose's death is fixed at the close of the fourth century; the two extant writings of Patrick can be traced to sometime in the fifth century). The life of Ambrose, however, is documented

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<sup>437</sup> Since the second half of the nineteenth century Piazza Sant' Ambrogio has been the site of a popular traditional Christmas market (*mercato natalizio*), known as the *Fiera degli Obei Obei*, held annually on December 7, the Feast of St. Ambrose. "Obei, obei" is said to mean "o belli, o belli," as exclaimed in Milanese dialect by children who eye the toys and sweets.

<sup>438</sup> 'Preambolo,' *Statuto del Comune di Milano* (October 3, 1991).

<sup>439</sup> There seems to be no monograph on the popular legacy of Ambrose in Milan. A recent collection of essays commemorating the XVI centenary of the death of Ambrose includes some that examine Ambrose's legacy at a higher level of culture, but the other essays in this collection mostly seek to recover knowledge of the Roman city of which he was Archbishop. See: Marco Rizzi, ed., *La città e la sua memoria: Milano e la tradizione di sant' Ambrogio* (Milano: Electa, 1997).

far more extensively than that of the largely legendary Patrick.<sup>440</sup> This early bishop of Milan bequeathed to history a voluminous body of writing. His texts reveal the force of his independent thought in measured words, as well as the complexity and subtlety of his teaching that draws from classical sources in order to enrich biblical texts.

Ambrose had crucial symbolic importance for Gemelli, who would have his Catholic university seated nowhere but the site most closely associated with this saint. This study of Gemelli thus merits consideration of the rich Ambrosian tradition that Milanese, such as Gemelli, have long derived from the saint and his basilica. Gemelli drew from this collective memory to construct a useful identity for himself. He was not the only eminent Lombard cleric of his generation who tapped into the long history of the Milanese episcopate to do something like this; long before he became Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), Angelo Roncalli (1881-1963) drew upon the tradition of Carlo Borromeo for similar purposes. In this regard, John Headley notes: “In the act of perception there is

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<sup>440</sup> “If we say today that three persons were born respectively in York, Lyons, and Milan, we tell an enormous amount about them. We tell their language, probably their religion (if any), and in some degree their upbringing, education, and outlook as well as the fact that one would describe himself proudly as an Englishman, another as a Frenchman, the third as an Italian, and so on. (I say nothing of the vulgar belief that there is such a thing as a ‘national character’.) But if we say that three persons came respectively from Eboracum, Lugudunum, and Mediolanum, we tell very much less. We imply simply that, like practically everyone else born in a Western Roman city, they all alike spoke Latin, were of much the same religion and education (if any), read the same books if they read any books at all, and we imply little in the way of patriotism. When we use the modern place-names we stress the differences between the three. When we use the Roman place-names we stress the similarities between them.” E. A. Thompson, *Who Was Saint Patrick?* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), p. 11. See also: R. P. C. Hanson, *The Life and Writings of the Historical Saint Patrick* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983); M. T. Flanagan, ‘Patrick,’ in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 43 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

inevitably involved a transfer of needs and desires for the purpose of appropriation.<sup>441</sup>

Gemelli recorded little of his own thoughts on Ambrose<sup>442</sup> and none on his appropriation of him. Indeed, Gemelli assiduously avoided commenting on anything of a personal nature. His abhorrence of such things, not unusual among Lombards, led him to have all of his personal correspondence destroyed before his death. Yet the evidence clearly indicates Gemelli's conscious appropriation of ambrosian symbols. As a result it is necessary to reconstruct a context from which Gemelli may have drawn elements for his profound appreciation of Ambrose and the basilica that bears his name.

Gemelli's religious conversion was marked by his returning to the sacraments in the crypt of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, where lie the relics of St. Ambrose. His conversion was not sudden and unexpected, like that of Paul being struck on the road to Damascus. It followed an extended bout of painful skepticism, but came with awareness that his choice would excite public controversy and opposition. It is certain that Gemelli chose Basilica Sant' Ambrogio as the site of his rejoining the Catholic communion. It is almost certain that he thereby intended for himself and for other Milanese to identify his conversion with the city's venerated patron saint. Seeing Gemelli's conversion in this light raises the question of how Ambrose was perceived in *fin-de-siècle* Milan.

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<sup>441</sup> John M. Headley, 'Introduction,' in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 27.

<sup>442</sup> Gemelli's published writing on Ambrose is limited to three short articles. See: Agostino Gemelli, 'S. Ambrogio e s. Agostino,' *Vita e Pensiero*, anno XVI, fasc. 7 (1930), pp. 392-400; Agostino Gemelli, 'Iniziando la celebrazione del centenario di S. Ambrogio,' *Vita e Pensiero*, anno XXV, fasc. 12 (1939), pp. 565-573; Agostino Gemelli, 'Prefazione,' in *Sant' Ambrogio nel XVI centenario della nascita* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1940), pp. ix-xi.

### **Saint Ambrose**

The past century has produced voluminous new scholarship on Ambrose and his historical context, none of which was available to either Gemelli or his late nineteenth-century contemporaries.<sup>443</sup> During the same time the loss of religious memory<sup>444</sup> and the demythologization of popular culture<sup>445</sup> seem to have diminished popular knowledge of Ambrose even among Milanese. According to Dario Fo, the Lombard cultural figure and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1997, ordinary Milanese no longer know much, if anything, about St. Ambrose, even though this figure has a continued presence in Milanese popular culture:

It will seem absurd that Ambrose, primate of the city of Milan, to which he gave the greatest prestige, before whom emperors, popes and bishops knelt, is found to be almost unheard-of in that city and the whole of Italy.... But does this saint not merit greater attention? Where did he come from, where was he born, how was he made bishop? For what reason did he, in his time, enjoy such fame to the point of being known, respected and feared by Germanic barbarians and Greek scholars?<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Giuseppe Visonà, ed., *Cronologia ambrosiana; bibliografia ambrosiana (1900-2000)* (Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2004).

<sup>444</sup> Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *La Religion pour Mémoire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993) [*Religion as a Chain of Memory*, trans. Simon Lee (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000)].

<sup>445</sup> Marco Fincardi, *La terra disincantata. Trasformazioni dell'ambiente rurale e secolarizzazione nella bassa padana* (Milano: Edizioni Unicopli, 2001).

<sup>446</sup> Dario Fo, *Sant'Ambrogio e l'invenzione di Milano* (Torino: Einaudi, 2009), p. 3.

Fo may be speaking primarily for Milanese like himself who are representative of a secularized culture.<sup>447</sup> Nevertheless, he relates the recent difficulty he had finding, even in the major bookstores of Milan, any titles on St. Ambrose that remained in print. This certainly was not always the case. Primary sources related to Ambrose – the preserved body of his fourth-century writings (treatises, sermons, hymns, letters, etc.) and the early fifth-century hagiography by Paulinus, *Vita S. Ambrosii* – were, all in the original Latin, among the earliest books printed in late fifteenth-century Milan.<sup>448</sup> A translation of Paulinus' biography into the vernacular soon followed.<sup>449</sup> The Maurists edited the works of Ambrose and the biography by Paulinus, all of which were published in Paris between 1686 and 1690 and reprinted many times thereafter.<sup>450</sup> Abbé Jacques-Paul Migne (1800-1875) reproduced the Maurist editions of Ambrose in his *Patrologia Latina*, first printed in 1844-1845.<sup>451</sup> Paolo Angelo Ballerini (1814-1897)<sup>452</sup> also edited the works of

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<sup>447</sup> Fo, having longstanding ties to Communist politics and culture, has always been out of sympathy with the Catholic church.

<sup>448</sup> *Sancti Ambrosii episcopi Mediolanensis De Officiis: liber primus* ([Milan]: Per Christofori Valdarfer Ratisponensem., 1474); *Vita Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis: episcopi secundum Paulinum episcopum nolanum ad beatum augustinum episcopum* (Mediolani: Impressum per magistrum Videricum scinzenzeler teutonicum, opera & impresa domini Philippi Lauagniae, 1488).

<sup>449</sup> *La vita et li miracoli del beatissimo Ambrosio patrono de li milanesi* (Mediolani, 1492).

<sup>450</sup> Paolino di Milano, *Vita di s. Ambrogio*, ed. and introd. Michele Pellegrino (Roma: Editrice Studium, 1961), p. 25. For the Maurist editions, see: Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis episcopi, *Opera, ad manuscriptos codices Vaticanos, Gallicanos, Belgicos, &c. necnon ad editiones veteres emendata, studio et labore monachorum Ordinis S. Benedicti, è congregatione S. Mauri*, 2 vols. (Parisiis: typis & sumptibus Johannis Baptistae Coignard, 1686-1690).

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25; For the Migne editions, see: Sancti Ambrosii, mediolanensis episcopi, *Opera omnia*. Vols. 14-17 of *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: Migne, 1845). For more on the work of Abbé Migne and his achievement in collecting and editing a complete edition of patrology, see: A. G. Hamman, *Jacques-Paul Migne. Le retour aux pères de l'église* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1975); A. Mandouza and J. Fouilheron, eds., *Migne et le renouveau des études patristiques*.



Ambrose and the biography of Paulinus, relying heavily on the Maurists; his work was published in Milan between 1875 and 1886, allegedly with many printing errors.<sup>453</sup>

Except for seminary-trained clergy, few Milanese in the late nineteenth century were likely to have read the writings of Ambrose or the biography by Paulinus, especially in Latin. Nevertheless, these primary sources informed much of what was otherwise known about Ambrose. A larger, though still relatively small, number of educated Milanese would have read one of the contemporary Italian biographies of Ambrose.<sup>454</sup> These

*Actes du colloque de Saint-Flour, 7-8 juillet 1975* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985).

<sup>452</sup> Paolo Angelo Ballerini was archbishop of Milan from 1859 to 1867. The Austrian Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia coincidentally indicated him as its preferred candidate to replace the recently deceased archbishop Bartolomeo Carlo Romilli (1795-1859) on the same day as the Battle of Magenta (June 4, 1859). Piedmontese and French armies joined forces in that clash to defeat their Austrian enemy and put an end to its rule of Lombardy. Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) named Ballerini to the see of Milan three weeks later, but the civil authorities of the Kingdom of Sardinia, as the new rulers of Lombardy, were offended by the pope's appointment of an Austrian-favored candidate to an Italian see. Refusing to issue a *placet*, they prevented Ballerini from taking up his office in Milan. Ballerini finally relinquished the see in 1867. Luigi Nazari di Calabiana (1808-1893), an aristocratic candidate favored by the House of Savoy, was named to replace Ballerini. Calabiana, a senator in the Kingdom of Italy, became an outspoken opponent to the dogma of papal infallibility during the First Vatican Council in 1870, though he submitted to the council's final decision. See: Carlo Cattaneo, *Monsignor Paolo Angelo Ballerini: Arcivescovo di Milano e patriarca latino d'Alessandria d'Egitto: le tappe di una vita (1814-1897)* (Locarno: Edizioni Pedrazzini, 1991); Ennio Apeciti, *Alcuni aspetti dell'episcopato di Luigi Nazari di Calabiana, arcivescovo di Milano (1867-1893). Vicende della Chiesa ambrosiana nella seconda metà del 1800* (Milano: NED, 1992). Calabiana is noteworthy to the story of Gemelli insofar as he was the early patron of Achille Ratti (1857-1939), who, as Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), became the most important patron of Agostino Gemelli when the latter served as rector of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore from its founding in 1921.

<sup>453</sup> Paolino di Milano, p. 26. For Ballerini's work, see: *Sancti Ambrosii mediolanensis episcopi, ecclesiae patris ac doctors Opera omni / ad mediolanenses codices pressius exacta, curante Paulo Angelo Ballerini, Aloisio Nazari e comitibus a Calabiana in metropolitana sede Ambrosii successori dicata* (Mediolani: E Typographia Sancti Joseph, 1875-1883).

<sup>454</sup> See: Abel-François Villemain, *Sant'Ambrogio, arcivescovo di Milano. Sua vita estratti de'suoi scritti, del signor Villemain*, trans. Antonio Lissoni (Milano: Pirotta,

works were as likely as not to have been translated from French, an indication of the revival in Catholic thought, scholarship and publishing that took hold in France during the nineteenth century and influenced similar activity in Italy.<sup>455</sup> The majority of Milanese would have known Ambrose through less formal channels. For example, the extraordinary series of paintings executed at the Brera Academy by Lodovico Pogliaghi (1857-1950) in late nineteenth century form a vivid narrative of the life of Ambrose that can still arrest a viewer's attention today.<sup>456</sup> Old tales and antique images transmitted both truth and legend in comparable doses.<sup>457</sup> The Ambrose enshrined in collective memory was a man of strong faith and character, remembered for his great achievements. Besides certain of his acts attributed as miracles, these included his role in the conversion

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1853); Louis Pierre André Baunard, *La storia di Sant'Ambrogio, del signor Abate Baunard*, trans. Giacomo Scurati (Milano: Presso la Libr. Arciv. Boniardi-Pogliani, 1873); Carlo Locatelli, *Vita di s. Ambrogio, compilata da Carlo Locatelli* (Milano: S. Majocchi, 1874); Charles Jacques Albert Broglie, *S. Ambrogio e il suo tempo* (Milano: Giuseppe Palma, 1897).

<sup>455</sup> See: Sandro Fontana, *La Controrivoluzione cattolica in Italia (1820-1830)* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1968); Bernard Reardon, *Liberalism and Tradition: Aspects of Catholic Thought in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Claude Savart, *Les catholiques en France au XIXe siècle: le telmoignage du livre religieux* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985).

<sup>456</sup> Pogliaghi was creator of two central bronze doors of the Duomo - 'I dolori e i gaudi della Vergine' and 'L'incoronazione della Vergine' (1906-1908) – and the altar piece in the chapel of the Università Cattolica – 'Il Sacro cuore di Gesù' (1921). Comitato per le onoranze a Lodovico Pogliaghi, *Lodovico Pogliaghi. Presentazione di Achille Marazza* (Milano: Istituto tipografico editore, 1959); Flaminio Gualdoni and Riccardo Prina, eds., *Lodovico Pogliaghi. L'accademia e l'invenzione* (Varese: Lativa, 1997). Pogliaghi was a colleague of Ludovico Necchi's stepfather, the sculptor Federico Gaetano Villa, at the *Accademia di Belli Arti di Brera* in Milan.

<sup>457</sup> See: Carlo Romussi, *Sant'Ambrogio. I Tempi – L'Uomo – La Basilica* (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1897); Achille Ratti, 'Il più antico ritratto di S. Ambrogio,' *Ambrosiana. Scritti vari pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di s. Ambrogio* (Milano: L. F. Cogliati, 1897); Cynthia Hahn, 'Narrative on the Golden Altar of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan: Presentation and Reception,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 53 (1999), pp. 167-187.

of Augustine, his defense of orthodox Catholicism against heretical “Arianism,” his exertion of spiritual influence upon the secular rule of Western co-emperors Gratian (375-383) and Valentinian II (375-392) and that of Eastern emperor Theodosius (379-395).

It is unlikely to have escaped Gemelli’s mind, even before his own conversion, that Augustine was the greatest convert in the history of the Latin church and that Ambrose was the greatest bishop in the history of Milan (as well as one of the greatest bishops in the history of the Latin church).<sup>458</sup> Any life of Augustine is sure to mention that Ambrose was instrumental in his intellectual and spiritual transformation. On the other hand, Augustine was only a minor character in the life of Ambrose. The bond between these two men that has entered common lore is primarily due to Augustine having recorded it. In biographies of Ambrose, from the earliest to the most recent that preceded Gemelli’s conversion, Augustine is little more than a footnote. Paulinus mentions Augustine only in the prefacing remark of his early fifth-century *Vita Ambrosii*. Similarly, Augustine merits brief mention in the sixth and final volume of the Duc de Broglie’s *L’Église et l’empire Romain au IV siècle* (1866).<sup>459</sup> This volume, which is

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<sup>458</sup> During the period of his painful collapse of belief in positivist ideology that led his religious conversion, Gemelli was advised by Ludovico Necchi to read Augustine’s *Confessions*. Maria Sticco, *Father Gemelli, notes for the biography of a difficult man*, trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), p. 18.

<sup>459</sup> Albert de Broglie, *L’Église et l’empire Romain au IV siècle*, 6 vols. (Paris: Didier et Cie., 1866). The sixth volume, subtitled *La politique de Saint Ambroise*, was translated into Italian and published twice under different titles: Alberto de Broglie, *La politica di S. Ambrogio*, trans. Paolo Vacani (Milano: Tip. Eusebiana, 1888); and Albert de Broglie, *Sant’Ambrogio ed il suo tempo*, trans. Paolo Vacani (Milano: Giuseppe Palma, 1897).

really a 528-page history of Ambrose, compresses Augustine's conversion into just a few words.<sup>460</sup>

In the most important record of the life of Augustine, namely, the autobiographical *Confessions*,<sup>461</sup> his conversion is the central event and emotional climax.<sup>462</sup> Although Augustine mentions Ambrose only a few times in *Confessions*, he attributes to the bishop a providential role in his abandonment of the Manichean metaphysics of Faustus and his eventual adoption of the Christian doctrine of salvation. The passage is worth quoting at length:

And so I came to Milan to Ambrose the bishop, known throughout the world as among the best of men, devout in your worship. At that time his eloquence valiantly ministered to your people 'the abundance of your sustenance' and 'the gladness of oil' and the sober intoxication of your wine. I was led to him by you, unaware that through him, in full awareness, I might be led to you. That 'man of God' received me like a father and expressed pleasure at my coming with a kindness most fitting in a bishop. I began to like him, at first indeed not as a teacher of the truth, for I had absolutely no confidence in your Church, but as a human being who was kind to me. I used enthusiastically to listen to him preaching to the people, not with the intention which I ought to

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<sup>460</sup> Broglie, *L'Église et l'empire Romain au IV siècle*, Vol. 6 (Paris: Didier et Cie., 1866), pp. 191-192, 196.

<sup>461</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>462</sup> A new and revisionist study, examining Augustine's conversion as an intellectual event rather than a spiritual one, argues that Augustine did not convert to Christianity while in Milan in 386, but rather to Platonism, and only later, in the mid-390s, converted to Christianity. Brian Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion. The Journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

have had, but as if testing out his oratorical skill to see whether it merited the reputation it enjoyed or whether his fluency was better or inferior than it was reported to be. I hung on his diction in rapt attention, but remained bored and contemptuous of the subject-matter. My pleasure was in the charm of his language. It was more learned than that of Faustus, but less witty and entertaining, as far as the manner of his speaking went. But in content there could be no comparison. Through Manichee deceits Faustus wandered astray. Ambrose taught the sound doctrine of salvation. From sinners such as I was at that time, salvation is far distant. Nevertheless, gradually, though I did not realize it, I was drawing closer.<sup>463</sup>

Just as Augustine searched passionately for absolute truth, first in Manicheism, then in Neoplatonism, and finally in Christianity, Gemelli followed a comparable route in search of the same end, first embracing positivism, followed by a brief desperate skepticism that he escaped only when he entered fully into Catholicism. Gemelli was almost certainly conscious of the parallels, whether accidental or intentional, between his own life and that of Augustine. Choosing the crypt of Ambrose as the site of his conversion in 1903, Gemelli invited comparison between himself and Ambrose's famous other convert. Just as Augustine brought his prodigious classical learning to bear upon Christian scripture and tradition, so did Gemelli intend to demonstrate the compatibility of the natural sciences and Catholic doctrine. The fact that Gemelli's intellectual and spiritual autobiography, *'Il mio contributo alla neoscolastica italiana'* (1926) can be read as a narrative of his own conversion invites further comparison with Augustine as the author

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<sup>463</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, V. xiii (23), trans. Chadwick, p. 87-88.

of *Confessions*.<sup>464</sup> Augustine's conversion would, however, have meant little to Gemelli before his positivist faith had crumbled. Until that point, he is unlikely to have read either Augustine's *Confessions* or, for that matter, any biography of Ambrose. Nevertheless, Gemelli did not have to read about Augustine's conversion in order to know about it. If Augustine's conversion actually figured little in the life of Ambrose, it is nevertheless a popular part of the Ambrose legend among the Milanese.

Augustine, it may be further argued, provided Gemelli with a successful example of how to tap into the popular sanctity of a Catholic hero. Augustine attached himself to the figure of Ambrose in at least two enduring ways. First, he left a written account of his connection to the bishop in *Confessions*. Second, he encouraged Paulinus, who had served as deacon to Ambrose, to record the bishop's life and works. The result, mentioned above, was *Vita Ambrosii*. This early Latin hagiography, a primary source for popular knowledge of Ambrose, was effectively dedicated to Augustine by its author, Paulinus. Its opening words are: "*Hortaris, uenerabilis pater Augustine....*"<sup>465</sup>

"Venerable Father Augustine, you urge me to set in writing the life of the most blessed

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<sup>464</sup> Augustine's *Confessions* may be taken as the literary archetype for conversion narratives. See: Pierre Courcelle, *Les confessions de Saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1963); Sante de Sanctis, *Religious Conversion, a bio-psychological study* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., 1927); Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Massimo Leone, *Religious Conversion and Identity, The semiotic analysis of texts* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>465</sup> Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* in *Le fonti latine su sant' Ambrogio*, trans. and ed. Gabriele Banterle (Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 1991), p. 28.

Ambrose, bishop of the church of Milan....”<sup>466</sup> The enduring material form of a book, whether *Confessions* or *Vita Ambrosii*, thus binds Augustine to Ambrose. Later generations could not read the life of one of them without knowing his connection to the other. Fifteen hundred years later, Gemelli would attach himself to the figure of Ambrose in a lasting material way by locating his university in the monastery complex attached to Ambrose’s basilica. One cannot visit Basilica Sant’Ambrogio without encountering Gemelli’s university and vice versa. Furthermore, Gemelli’s university perpetuates the legend that a courtyard within its cloisters is the very garden in Milan in which Augustine experienced his conversion.<sup>467</sup> The memory of this garden is derived from a passage in *Confessions*: “*Hortulus quidam erat hospitii nostri....*”<sup>468</sup> “Our lodging had a garden.... The tumult of my heart took me out into the garden where no one would interfere with the burning struggle with myself in which I was engaged, until the matter could be settled.”<sup>469</sup> Gemelli’s probable use of Augustine as a model for creating his own new Catholic identity is a question that deserves further study. The question at hand, however, is Gemelli’s probable understanding of Ambrose.

Late nineteenth century Milan witnessed a surge of interest in Ambrose. Skeletal remains believed to be his were discovered beneath the altar of Basilica Sant’Ambrogio in

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<sup>466</sup> Paulinus of Milan, *The Life of Saint Ambrose* in *Ambrose*, trans. and ed. Boniface Ramsey (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 196.

<sup>467</sup> Associazioni Amici dell’Università Cattolica, ‘L’Università Cattolica fra spiritualità, storia e archeologia: una guida per i visitatori’ (Milano: Istituto Giuseppe Toniolo di Studi Superiori, undated), p. 11.

<sup>468</sup> Sant’Agostino, *Le Confessioni*, VIII, 8.19, trans. and ed. Giuliano Vigini (Milano: Edizioni San Paolo, 2001), p. 200.

<sup>469</sup> Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII, viii (19), trans. Chadwick, p. 146.

1864.<sup>470</sup> Two other sets of bones found alongside these were believed to be those of Gervasius and Protasius, two Roman soldiers martyred in Mediolanum during the persecutions of Nero.<sup>471</sup> The remains believed to be those of the two soldiers, sanctified by the act of martyrdom,<sup>472</sup> were first discovered by Ambrose himself in 386 as he searched for relics to make holy the basilica he was then constructing as his own eventual burial place.<sup>473</sup> In 1871 these three sets of remains were positively identified (not without dissent) by a group of presumed experts as those of Ambrose, Protasius and Gervasius.<sup>474</sup> This news was disseminated through books<sup>475</sup> and newspapers, as well as

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<sup>470</sup> Luigi Biraghi, *I tre sepolcri santambrosiani scoperti nel gennajo 1864* (Milano: Tip. e libreria arcivescovile ditta Boniardi-Pogliani di E. Besozzi, 1864).

<sup>471</sup> “Originally the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius were placed in a cavity immediately beneath the centre of the altar, while those of Ambrose occupied a smaller cavity on the left of the other. In the ninth century, however, when the floor of the sanctuary was raised and the splendid golden altar set up, the remains of the three saints were removed by Archbishop Angliberto, and laid together in a porphyry sarcophagus, above the cavities wherein they were originally enclosed. This sarcophagus, discovered in 1864, was opened on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, 1871. At the present time the relics of Ambrose and the two martyrs are preserved in an ornate silver shrine in the crypt of the church – still below the high altar, where Ambrose centuries ago had desired to rest.” F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 492.

<sup>472</sup> “Martyrdom appears as the outstanding form of Christian sanctity” in early Christian communities. Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, *The Christian Centuries, Vol. 1: The First Six Hundred Years*, trans. Vincent Cronin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 124.

<sup>473</sup> “He moved them after only two days from the shrine of Saints Felix and Nabor, where they had been unearthed, into the new basilica which he had built for himself; and he placed them under the altar, where his own sarcophagus was to have stood. By this move, Gervasius and Protasius were inseparably linked to the communal liturgy, in a church built by the bishop, in which the bishop would frequently preside. In that way, they would be available to the community as a whole.” Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 37.

<sup>474</sup> Agostino Riboldi, *Descrizione delle reliquie dei ss. Ambrogio, Gervasio e Protasio e dei loro ornamenti* (Milano: Osservatore cattolico, 1874).

<sup>475</sup> Luigi Biraghi, *I tre sepolcri santambrosiani scoperti nel gennajo 1864* (Milano: Tip. e libreria arcivescovile ditta Boniardi-Pogliani di E. Besozzi, 1864); Anonymous, *Cenni storici sulla sepoltura ed invenzione dei corpi dei santi Ambrogio vescovo e dottore*,



word of mouth, given that leading members of Milan society were invited to witness the examination that identified the remains.<sup>476</sup> These relics were the focal point of popular and widely publicized celebrations held in Milan for the fifteenth centenary of the death of Ambrose in 1897. In the spring of that year, following a period of display before thousands of pilgrims in Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, they were borne in elaborate procession to the Duomo. They were placed on the cathedral altar, directly above the

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*Gervaso e Protaso martiri, nella Basilica ambrosiana di Milano* (Milano: Andrea Nicora, 1873); Agostino Riboldi, *Descrizione delle reliquie dei ss. Ambrogio, Gervasio e Protasio e dei loro ornamenti* (Milano: Osservatore cattolico, 1874); Louis Baunard, *Storia di sant' Ambrogio. Con cenno storico sulla invenzione e riposizione delle s. reliquie ambrosiane*, trans. Giacomo Scurati (Milano: Libreria arcivescovile Boniardi-Pogliani, 1873); Anonymous, *Sul rito ambrosiano. Omaggio al grande padre e patrono s. Ambrogio nella solenne deposizione delle ss. Reliquie sue e dei santi martiri Gervaso e Protaso* (Milano: Tamburini di G. Bonomi, 1874).

<sup>476</sup> The investigation of the remains identified as those belonging to Ambrose, Gervasius and Protasius was conducted in August 1871 by Angelo Dubini (1837-1902), a prominent research physician at the *Ospedale Maggiore* in Milan, Emilio Cornalia (1824-1882), a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at University of Pavia and director of the *Museo di Storia Naturale* in Milan, and Don Agostino Riboldi (1839-1902), then a professor of mathematics and physics in the archdiocesan seminary of Monza (1861-1877) and author of a two-volume work on physics published in 1871 and 1872. See: Anonymous, *Cenni storici sulla sepoltura ed invenzione dei corpi dei santi Ambrogio vescovo e dottore, Gervaso e Protaso martiri, nella Basilica ambrosiana di Milano* (Milano: Andrea Nicora, 1873); Agostino Riboldi, *Descrizione delle reliquie dei ss. Ambrogio, Gervasio e Protasio e dei loro ornamenti* (Milano: Osservatore cattolico, 1874). Among Riboldi's students at Monza was Achille Ratti. See: Giorgio Vecchio, 'Achille Ratti, il movimento cattolico, lo Stato liberale,' in *Achille Ratti. Pape Pie XI. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome en collaboration avec l'Université de Lille III – Greco no. 2 du CNRS, l'Università degli studi di Milano, l'Università degli studi di Roma - «La Sapienza»*, *la Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Rome, 15-18 mars 1989)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1996), p. 79. As bishop of Pavia (1877-1901) Riboldi became mentor to the priest-scientist Pietro Maffi (1858-1931) and later patron of Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930). Through Necchi, Gemelli would meet Riboldi and more importantly Maffi, the latter of whom was an important influence on the intellectual development of Gemelli while he studied at Pavia and a powerful supporter of Gemelli in later years when Maffi was a leading cardinal in the Italian church. Maffi was a chief candidate for the papacy in the conclave of 1914 that elected Benedict XV. Teofane Cesana, *Fra Agostino Gemelli. Dalla nascita alla professione religiosa, 1878-1904* (Milano: Edizioni Biblioteca Franciscana, 1978), pp. 55-58. Cf., fn. 6 in Ch. 1 'Introduction' (above).

tomb of another sainted bishop of Milan, Carlo Borromeo, before being conveyed back to the basilica several days later and redeposited in the crypt.

The major events related to this fifteenth centenary celebration were scheduled for May; smaller events were scheduled for August (presumably for the Feast of St. Augustine, August 28, which also marked the fifteenth meeting of the *Opera dei congressi*, the umbrella organization of the Italian Catholic movement, in Milan, August 29 – September 4), November and December (closing the centenary celebration on December 7, the feast day of St. Ambrose).<sup>477</sup> The celebration was extensively reported during May 1897 in the *Corriere della Sera*.<sup>478</sup> Although the organized events during that month lasted only seven days, the *Corriere* highlighted them in the local news for nearly two weeks. Partially driving this story was the conflict that arose when Catholics petitioned for a public procession in which the relics of Ambrose, Gervasius and Protasius would be

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<sup>477</sup> ‘Sant’ Ambrogio,’ *Corriere della Sera* (April 4-5, 1897).

<sup>478</sup> The *Corriere della Sera* had a circulation nearly as large as (and eventually to exceed) that of another Milan-based newspaper, *Il Secolo*, which was still the largest circulating newspaper in Italy in 1897. The *Corriere* was the organ of the Historical Right (*Destra storica*), that is, the Liberal monarchist supporters of Cavour, who in 1897 might also be identified as Moderates and the bourgeois ruling class; *Secolo* was the voice of the Historical Left (*Destra sinistra*), that is, the democratic and republican heirs to Mazzinian and Garibaldian ideals. In 1897 this last group included the Radicals and Democrats whose following was strong among the middle class employed in the professions and commerce. Gemelli was at this time more likely to have been a reader of *Secolo*, which had more anti-clerical views than the *Corriere*. “Moderate” and “Clerical” were far from coterminous, but those labeled as such often made concessions to each other when both felt threatened by a third group, such as the Socialists. It would be interesting to know how *Secolo* reported the *feste santambrosiane*, but I have been unable to access copies of *Secolo* for 1897. See: Valerio Castronovo, ‘Stampa e opinione pubblica nell’Italia liberale,’ in Valerio Castronovo, Luciana Giacheri Fossati and Nicola Tranfaglia, *La stampa italiana nell’età liberale* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1979), pp. 107-113.

carried from the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio to the Duomo.<sup>479</sup> The Prefect of Milan turned the matter over to the *Questura*, responsible for public order. The *Questura* was immediately presented with another petition from Freemasons and anti-clericals, who demanded a counter-procession.<sup>480</sup> The *Corriere* supported the latter demand for several reasons:

First of all, for the love of liberty; next, for the service it would render to the office of municipal statistics, for whom it would be possible to compare the number of Milanese who are Catholic with those who are Freemasons; third, for the sympathy that we have for personal openness, which, as allowed to the Catholics to wind through the streets in red tunics of the confraternities, must be granted to the Freemasons to do the same in masonic aprons and with trowels; and finally, because a fine masonic procession would be a novel amusement to which we would gladly treat ourselves.<sup>481</sup>

In line with the *Corriere's* call for evenhanded treatment, the Freemasons and anti-clericals were allowed to form a counter-procession (but not, as they had requested, to hold it on the same day as the Catholic procession).

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<sup>479</sup> It was not the first occasion in recent times that a solemn procession planned in Milan to honor Ambrose had met with problems. In 1874 the municipal government denied a petition by Catholics to hold such a procession to translate, or bear, the rediscovered relics of Ambrose from his basilica to the Duomo and back. The event, in which scores of bishops and clergy participated, was forced to take place in the middle of the night. The relics were carried to the Duomo at 3:00 am on May 11 and returned to the basilica at 2:00 am on May 15. "Although it was pitch black and the citizenry was asleep, there were fifteen guards from the *questura* and many carabinieri surrounding the coffin." Carlo Romussi, *Sant' Ambrogio. I Tempi – L' Uomo – La Basilica* (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1897), footnote pp. 86-87.

<sup>480</sup> 'Per il XV Centenario di Sant' Ambrogio,' *Corriere della Sera* (May 8-9, 1897).

<sup>481</sup> 'La processione' *Corriere della Sera* (May 10-11, 1897).

The *Corriere* was, however, less evenhanded in reporting the two events. The newspaper gave incomparably more column space to the Catholic procession and events leading up to it, but throughout its reporting runs a droll current. Coverage included the comings and goings at the basilica where the relics were displayed for several days leading up to the procession date. “At the entrance to the church were a great number of street vendors selling sweets, oranges, flatbreads, *gelati*, sacred objects, devotional books, rosaries, scapulae with the image of St. Ambrose, commemorative medals appropriately coined, leaflets, pictures, etc.”<sup>482</sup> “Inside the basilica there was a great amount of pickpocketing.... Many persons, especially women, were heard wailing about the disappearance of their purses.”<sup>483</sup> The *Corriere* seemed especially amused to report that many newspaper boys did brisk business selling certain booklets. Bearing attractive covers with the title ‘Life, Miracles and Death of St. Ambrose, Told by Cardinal Andrea Ferrari’ (*Vita, miracoli e morte di Sant’Ambrogio, narrati dal cardinale Andrea Ferrari*) and stamped with portraits of the patron saint and the current archbishop of Milan,<sup>484</sup> the pages of these booklets were in fact printed with nothing but the propaganda of Socialists,<sup>485</sup> who at that time vied with Catholics in appealing to the masses. One

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<sup>482</sup> ‘Le feste per il XV centenario di Sant’ Ambrogio,’ *Corriere della Sera* (May 10-11, 1897).

<sup>483</sup> ‘Le feste Santambrosiane,’ *Corriere della Sera* (May 13-14, 1897).

<sup>484</sup> Andrea Carlo Ferrari (1850-1921) was raised to cardinal and appointed to the archiepiscopal see of Milan in 1894, following the death of Luigi Nazari di Calabiana. Carlo Snider, *L’episcopato del cardinale Andrea C. Ferrari*, 2 vols. (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1981, 1982).

<sup>485</sup> ‘Le feste Santambrosiane’ (May 13-14, 1897).

almost admires the cleverness of whoever matched the alluring book covers with the remaindered texts.

The *Corriere* also seems amused by the nimble dance performed by civic authorities. The Catholics had calculatedly invited officeholders of the *Comune di Milano* to participate in the procession, but such authorities were reluctant to oblige, wishing, as much as possible, to keep it a purely religious event without any political overtones.<sup>486</sup> It was difficult, however, to keep religion and politics separate in this case because the Catholic procession was sanctioned to include the “*gonfalone civico*,” the enormous municipal banner that bears Milan’s historical emblem, an ancient image of St. Ambrose.<sup>487</sup> The *gonfalone* was preserved in the *Museo Civico di Milano* and was required to be carried by municipal civil servants; in this case, the mayor assigned a squad of firemen as honor guard.<sup>488</sup> It should be noted that Milanese firemen, like other groups of civil servants in late nineteenth-century Milan, were outfitted with military-like parade uniforms: shiny helmets decorated with emblems and feathers, double breasted tunics with twin rows of glittering buttons, fringed epaulets, sword belts with decorative buckles and dress swords tucked into scabbards that hung at the hip.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> It remains to this day the official *gonfalone* of the *Comune di Milano*: “The historic *gonfalone*, decorated by the gold medal of the Resistance, and depicting St. Ambrose, bishop elected by the people, is the *gonfalone* of Milan.” ‘Fundamental Principles,’ Article 4.1, *Statuto del Comune di Milano* (October 3, 1991).

<sup>488</sup> ‘Le feste Santambrosiane’ (May 14-15, 1897).

<sup>489</sup> Raffaele Carrieri, *Milano, 1865-1915* (Milano: Edizioni della Chimera, 1945), p. 47.

The procession drew a mass of onlookers when it was held on Friday, May 14. As reported in the *Corriere*, “The crowd, in every street, at every window, on every balcony, was enormous.” (“*La folla in tutte le vie, a tutte le finestre, su tutti i balconi era grandissima.*”)<sup>490</sup> If the crowd was *grandissima*, the procession was *lunghissima*. It departed Basilica Sant’ Ambrogio at eight o’clock in the morning, but its rearguard did not enter the Duomo, only a kilometer distant, until more than two hours later:

The procession turned out picturesque and interesting, beginning with invited participants and the *gonfalone civico* of St. Ambrose carried by twelve municipally-employed porters and encircled by firemen in full dress uniform and by eight tuba players in ceremonial garb; following were the crosses of the parishes, with the confraternities, the parish priests and other clergy, the major seminary and the chapters of Sant’ Ambrogio and the Metropolitan, etc. Then came Monsignor Comi, mitred canon of Sant’ Ambrogio, and the chapter of the Duomo. Thereafter the sepulchers containing Sts. Gervasius and Protasius, under a baldaquin held up by elegant young men in white tie and tails.... Then under another baldaquin came the sepulcher holding the remains of St. Ambrose, followed by twenty bishops in the richest *paludamenti*.... Then followed the choristers of the seminary. After these came Cardinal Ferrari [of Milan], Cardinal Sarto [of Venice]<sup>491</sup> and Cardinal Svampo [of Bologna].... Closing the procession were another group of invited participants, a cordon of police and *carabinieri*, and behind these, the crowd, among which were women reciting the rosary, beads in hand.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> ‘La processione di ieri,’ *Corriere della Sera* (May 15-16, 1897).

<sup>491</sup> Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto (1835-1914) would become Pope Pius X (1903-1914).

<sup>492</sup> ‘La processione di ieri,’ (May 15-16, 1897).

The *Corriere* wanted its readers to understand that this enormous crowd was composed of “*curiosi e non devoti*,” in other words, the turnout was not an expression of popular piety so much as one of mere curiosity.<sup>493</sup> The crowd exhibited not “the pondering of those who implore,” but rather “the chattering of those who are curious, inquiring about every detail and interested more in the exterior appearance of the rich *paludamenti* and the miters bombarded with precious stones than in the informing idea of the procession.”<sup>494</sup> Regardless of its motivations, the crowd was peaceful and the event passed without incident, a fact that the newspaper repeats so many times as to suggest that it expected otherwise.

The *Corriere* mocks the speeches delivered inside the Duomo that day, noting that “there were only a few, but they were neither brief and nor felicitous.”<sup>495</sup> The only praiseworthy exception was that of Milanese banker and city councilor, Cesare Nava (1861-1933).<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Cesare Nava, one of the Catholic magnates of Milan, was an accomplished architect, who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries restored a number of ancient Christian churches as well as the archiepiscopal palace of Milan, yet he became much better known as a banker and politician. He was an elected councilor of the *Comune di Milano* from 1895 to 1899, the president of Banco Ambrosiano from 1897 until his death, a parliamentary deputy from 1909 and he was among the first Catholics to be appointed to a ministerial post in the Italian government, holding the portfolio for *Terre liberate del nemico* (“Lands liberated from the enemy”) in the first cabinet of Francesco Saverio Nitti (June 1919-May 1920). He was named a senator in 1921. He was later a member of the short-lived *Centro Nazionale Italiano* (1924-1930), a political party composed of conservative Catholics who formed a parliamentarian alliance with the Fascists, and he served as Minister of National Economy under Mussolini (1924-1925). Mario Pessina, ‘Nava, Cesare,’ in *Dizionario storico del movimento Cattolico in Italia*, III/2, eds.

After having read, amidst great applause, the telegram sent by the pope,<sup>497</sup> and having cried out, “*Viva Ambrogio e viva Milano!*”, he said that these two names are indivisible; that all the citizenry rallied around the relics of the saint; that all partisanship dissolved before him. He censured the civil authorities “who, not feeling the need to participate in the *feste santambrosiane*, cannot be called exemplars of the real Milanese people;” he challenged the idea of one newspaper that had wanted to honor Ambrose only as a citizen, neglecting that he was a saint; and he closed by expressing hope that the union between Ambrose and Milan grows and consolidates, and produces the religious pacification that alone can be the salvation of Milan and Italy.<sup>498</sup>

The complimentary coverage of Nava’s speech is one of the few snippets of plainly positive reporting of the event that appeared in the *Corriere*. The respectful journalistic treatment of Nava by the *Corriere* reflects the fact that he was at the head of an effort to form an electoral alliance between conservative Catholics and Moderates, namely, the more conservative and less anti-clerical elements among the Liberals who formed the newspaper’s readership. The interests of these two groups, overlapping only in part, were threatened by Radicals and Democrats among the leftwing of the Liberal party, as well as

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Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1984), pp., 589-590; Mario Taccolini and Pietro Cafaro, *Il Banco Ambrosiano: una banca cattolica negli anni dell’ascesa economica lombarda* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1996); Carlo Bellavite Pellegrini, *Storia del Banco ambrosiano. Fondazione, ascesa e dissesto 1896-1982* (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 2001).

<sup>497</sup> Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903).

<sup>498</sup> ‘La processione di ieri’ (May 15-16, 1897).



by Socialists, three groups that shared overlapping interests of their own. Nava was perhaps too necessary a player in the conservative Liberal cause to be made light of.

The anti-clerical counter-procession received less extensive and less amusing coverage from the *Corriere*. Held two days later on Sunday, May 16, “it turned out to be much more imposing than expected, clearly finding some attraction among the citizenry, not so much because of those strictly religious ceremonies, as because of assertions of partisanship on the part of the intransigent clericals.”<sup>499</sup> In other words, the anti-clerical demonstration was motivated not so much against the religious nature of the Catholic procession as against the clerical politics of those who participated in it. This claim is somewhat disingenuous. Giving the lie to it is the report on the hortatory of Palmiro Premoli (1856-1917):<sup>500</sup> “He delivered a most vibrant speech against the displays of the clericals, but especially against that which took place on Friday, which qualified as nothing but ‘an anachronism.’”<sup>501</sup> In other words, he excoriated the religious procession as something straight out of the Middle Ages. A few of his listeners sought to continue the anti-clerical demonstration by marching on the residence of the archbishop. This casts doubt upon the idea that anti-clericals were motivated merely by outrage at intransigent Catholic partisanship. By contrast, the *Corriere* reported no anti-Masonic,

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<sup>499</sup> ‘Le fest santambrosiane’ (May 17-18, 1897).

<sup>500</sup> Palmiro Premoli was a journalist, author and member of the Freemasons. He wrote books on Italian language, geography and history, as well as anti-clerical topics. He was also a translator of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in to Italian. See: Harriet Beecher Stowe, *La capanna di zio Tom*, trans. Palmiro Premoli (Milano: Casa Editrice Sonzogno, 1903).

<sup>501</sup> ‘Le fest santambrosiane’ (May 17-18, 1897).

anti-Liberal or anti-Socialist speeches or demonstrations on the part of Catholics during the course of the *feste ambrosiane*.

The anti-clerical groups, perhaps having fewer traditions than Catholics to draw upon, hosted a more austere procession. Nevertheless, they made meaningful use of their own saints and martyrs. Their procession commenced at the Garibaldi monument, wound through the Piazza del Duomo, and ended at the monument to those who fell at the Battle of Mentana. The *Corriere* reported flags, brass bands, “many citizens” (as opposed to the “crowds” who attended the Catholic procession) and representation by “about twenty-five Radical associations.”<sup>502</sup> This did not include any Socialist ones. Three days earlier, the same newspaper reported that the Socialists had held a meeting at which they voted “to abstain from any counter-demonstration to the Catholic procession.”<sup>503</sup> Among the Radical groups represented in the anti-clerical procession were Democrats (*Democratia italiana* and *Fascio radicale Carlo Cattaneo*), Freemasons (*Grande Oriente di Lombardia* and *Loggia Carlo Cattaneo*<sup>504</sup>) and artisans and workers such as leather tanners (*Conciatori di pelli*), blacksmiths and mechanics (*Fabbri e meccanici*), yarn dyers (*Tintori in filati*) and the Worker’s Club (*Circolo operaio*).<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Cattaneo, despite any values he shared with Freemasons, was never a member of their order and declined the offer to be named as a grand master when Garibaldi offered it to him in 1868 (Garibaldi’s second choice, Mazzini, also never a Freemason, likewise declined). Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana dal Risorgimento al Fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003), p. 64. Freemasons nevertheless used Cattaneo as a symbol of their democratic values and named lodges after him. Conti, p. 206.

<sup>505</sup> ‘Le feste Santambrosiane’ (May 17-18, 1897).

These reports provide a basis for drawing inferences about the figure of Ambrose, the attitude of the Milanese toward his memory, and the climate surrounding the *feste santambrosiane*. First of all, the celebrations occurred amidst heightened political, social and economic tensions among Radicals, Democrats, Socialists and Catholics, especially the intransigent Catholics who were unwilling to accept Liberal principles; Moderates, whose views were represented by the *Corriere*, excited few crowds in a positive way and occupied a shrinking middle ground. Secondly, the events show that all parties understood the power of symbols. It is interesting that those who called the Catholic expressions “anachronistic” and wrapped themselves in the mantle of progress – the committee organizing the counter-procession referred to its supporters as “those who wish that the world move forward” (*quanti desiderano che il mondo progredisca*)<sup>506</sup> – had nevertheless developed and deployed their own secular saints and martyrs. Moreover, the anti-clericals planned their procession route to wind through the Piazza del Duomo, a location notable above all for the cathedral. Anti-clericals could repudiate the Duomo as the cathedral of the archbishop and claim it instead as the greatest architectural heritage of the citizenry. Catholics, on the other hand, understood the symbolism of having the *gonfalone civico* carried in their procession; they sought to have their procession legitimized by more powers than just that of the church. Finally, the figure of Ambrose was too deeply rooted in Milan to be debunked. The collective memory of the early bishop held a firm place, even if it represented a dual role, in the hearts and minds of many, if not all, Milanese. His image on the *gonfalone civico* manifests his duality as pastor of souls and protector of citizens. At least some anti-clericals, as mentioned in one

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<sup>506</sup> ‘La processione di ieri’ (May 15-16, 1897).

of the *Corriere* columns, could neither deny the store of goodwill toward the city's patron saint, nor ignore it. If they could not beat him as a canonized saint, they would appropriate him as a secular hero.

The fifteenth centenary of Ambrose's death gave occasion for numerous publications related to him and his basilica. Among the scores of new books on topics of Lombard history announced in the *Archivio storico lombardo*<sup>507</sup> in 1897 there were 32 titles related to Ambrose.<sup>508</sup> By comparison with other giants of Milanese history, 11 new titles were related either Carlo or Federico Borromeo, 43 were devoted to Alessandro Manzoni, 16 titles dealt with Leonardo da Vinci,<sup>509</sup> 64 others concerned the topic "*Risorgimento Italiana*."<sup>510</sup> The same source in 1898 named only 22 titles related to Ambrose, 10 to the Borromeos, 39 to Manzoni, 21 to Leonardo da Vinci, but 85 to the *Risorgimento*

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<sup>507</sup> *Archivio storico lombardo*, the quarterly journal of the *Società storica lombarda*, published since 1874, was founded by the conservative patriot and popular historian Cesare Cantù (1804-1895), a Catholic who maintained balanced loyalties to both church and state. Mario Berengo, 'Cantù, Cesare,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1975), pp. 336-344.

<sup>508</sup> 'Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (dicembre 1896 – marzo 1897)' in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XIII, Anno XXIV, pp. 185-214; 'Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (marzo – giugno 1897),' in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XIV, Anno XXIV, pp. 434-474; 'Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (luglio – dicembre 1897),' in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XVI, Anno XXIV, pp. 365-410.

<sup>509</sup> Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was Tuscan by birth, but adopted by Milanese as their own because of his work in their city during the two decades he was employed by Ludovico il Moro. Martin Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>510</sup> 'Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (dicembre 1896 – marzo 1897)' in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XIII, Anno XXIV, pp. 185-214; 'Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (marzo – giugno 1897),' in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XIV, Anno XXIV, pp. 434-474; 'Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (luglio – dicembre 1897),' in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XVI, Anno XXIV, pp. 365-410.

*Italiana*.<sup>511</sup> The shift in the balance of titles from Ambrose to the Risorgimento in 1898 can be explained in large part by that year being the fiftieth anniversary of the *Cinque giornate*, the Milan uprising against Austrian rule that took place in 1848.

One of the biggest and most lavish volumes published for the fifteenth centenary was a collection of essays on the works and legacy of Ambrose by a team of international, although mostly Italian, scholars.<sup>512</sup> In the introductory essay, Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari, archbishop of Milan (who, upon being installed in this see, took as his middle name that of his Borromeo predecessor), acknowledged other works prepared for the same occasion, but praised this volume in particular, saying it “would be able, not only because of the stunning form of its outward appearance, but even more because of the importance of its arguments and the rigorous scientific treatment of the same, to remain among the learned as another monument of our piety toward the great Doctor of the Church.”<sup>513</sup> The emphasis on “rigorous scientific treatment” of the historical issues can be understood as part of the effort to achieve accurate and documented scholarship, an increasingly important criterion demanded by a reading public that had become ever

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<sup>511</sup> ‘Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (dicembre 1897 – marzo 1898)’ in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XVII, Anno XXV, pp. 235-258; ‘Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (marzo – giugno 1898),’ in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XVIII, Anno XXV, pp. 405-428; ‘Bolletino di bibliografia storica lombarda (giugno – dicembre 1897),’ in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XX, Anno XXV, pp. 410-455.

<sup>512</sup> *Ambrosiana. Scritti vari pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di S. Ambrogio. Con introduzione di Andrea C. Cardinale Ferrari arcivescovo di Milano* (Milano: L. F. Cogliati, 1897). A contemporary review of this volume was published in *Archivio storico lombardo*, serie terza, Fasc. XVII, Anno XXV (March 31, 1898), pp. 205-220.

<sup>513</sup> Cardinale Andrea C. Ferrari, ‘Introduzione,’ in *Ambrosiana*, p. xiv.

more historically conscious during the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>514</sup> Elsewhere in his introduction, Ferrari identifies the problem that contemporary historians faced when they tackled the subject of Ambrose:

The distance of time has not failed to produce its natural effects, and Ambrose shares the fate of men who have played a great part on the stage of human events. On the trunk of historic truth grow luxuriant boughs, from which smaller limbs sprout and the flowers of legend bloom. The popular imagination, with its products, compensates for the defect of precise memory, fills the lacunae, idealizes the concrete realities in symbol, and the ideas and symbols translate what really happened: it is the apotheosis as effected by the people, the eternal poet.<sup>515</sup>

Having praised the value of critical historical writing, Ferrari thus describes in elegiac terms the process by which legends (as opposed to myths) are born. Scientific history must contend with popular memory, and Ferrari knows that in some instances, over the long course of time, the latter inevitably wins. If material documentation is missing, then aggrandized tales that sprout from a kernel of truth are preferable to oblivion. Among the scholars exhibiting critical methods in this volume were two who would come to have enormous influence over Gemelli in years to come. Don Achille Ratti (1857-1939), historian, linguist and paleographer at the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, who authored numerous studies on Carlo Borromeo and the church of Milan,<sup>516</sup> and Ratti's lay friend Contardo Ferrini (1859-1902), an internationally acclaimed scholar of Roman and

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<sup>514</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1952).

<sup>515</sup> Cardinale Andrea C. Ferrari, 'Introduzione,' p. xx.

<sup>516</sup> Philip Hughes, *Pope Pius the Eleventh* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1937), pp. 6-32.

Byzantine Law at the University of Pavia.<sup>517</sup> Both were early proponents of a Catholic university for Italy. Both were also men whom Gemelli would meet prior to his religious conversion in 1903. Initiatives undertaken by Ratti and Ferrini in the 1890s would lay the groundwork for the eventual founding of the *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* in 1921. Ratti, by that later date a cardinal and Ferrari's successor as archbishop of Milan, would speak at the university's inauguration. Elected pope a few months later, Ratti, as Pius XI (1922-1939), would become the most important patron of Gemelli and his university. As for Ferrini, he would be beatified in 1947, some four decades after his premature death, by Ratti's successor, Pius XII (1939-1958). This would prompt Gemelli to have Ferrini's remains entombed in the university chapel, intended as his own place of burial. Gemelli would thus create a symbolic parallel with Ambrose's transfer of the relics of Sts. Gervasius and Protasius to the fourth-century basilica that he had built as, among other things, his own final resting place. The similarity is matched with proximity: the distance between Gemelli's chapel and Ambrose's basilica, separated by centuries in time, is a matter of only yards or meters in space.

Edoardo Gemelli was still six years away from embracing the Catholic faith during the celebrations of Ambrose in 1897, making it unlikely that he would have read the volume published under the auspices of Cardinal Ferrari. There is a greater chance that he encountered a series of articles on Ambrose that appeared that same year in *Rendiconti*, the scholarly journal published by the *Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere*.

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<sup>517</sup> P. Camponeschi, 'Ferrini, Contardo,' *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 47 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), pp. 187-191.

Gemelli, at this point in his life, would have especially admired the intellectual credentials held by certain members of the *Istituto Lombardo* who pursued knowledge independently of church teaching or patronage. Members of the *Istituto* with whom Gemelli would soon come in contact after matriculating in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Pavia in the fall of 1897 were mostly scientists rather than men of letters. They included<sup>518</sup> Camillo Golgi (1843-1926), Gemelli's mentor at Pavia, whose discovery of the neuron, or nerve cell, structure in 1873 made him perhaps the most famous living Italian scientist at the end of the nineteenth century and would lead to his receiving a Nobel Prize in 1906;<sup>519</sup> Swiss histologist Rudolf Albert von Kölliker (1817-1905), whose pioneering work in cell theory had led to Golgi's discovery and with whom Gemelli would have a memorable meeting at the eminent congress of the *Anatomische Gesellschaft* held in Pavia in 1900;<sup>520</sup> Achille Visconti (1836-1911), chief physician at the *Ospedale Maggiore* in Milan and president of the *Associazione medica lombarda*, who would be one of the judges, along with Golgi, to award Gemelli the institute's prestigious Cagnola prize for 1903;<sup>521</sup> Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), founding theorist

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<sup>518</sup> 'Membri e soci del R. Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere, 1897' in *Rendiconti (Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere)* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1897), appendix, pp. i-xxvii.

<sup>519</sup> Cesana, p. 46; Agostino Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1932), p. 13. See also: Paolo Mazzarello, *The Hidden Structure. A Scientific Biography of Camillo Golgi*, trans. Henry A. Buchel and Aldo Badiani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>520</sup> Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica*, pp. 10, 12. See also: 'Rudolph Albert von Kölliker,' in *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Scientists*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. John Daintith (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009); R. W. Guillery, 'Observations of Synaptic Structures: Origins of the Neuron Doctrine and Its Current Status,' *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 369, No. 1458 (June 29, 2005), pp. 1281-1307.

<sup>521</sup> Cesana, p. 71.



of the biological origins of criminal behavior and professor of psychiatry at the University of Turin, where Gemelli would attend his lectures while still a student at Pavia;<sup>522</sup> and Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), whose philosophy of materialist and evolutionary monism had tremendous influence over Gemelli and the scientific world of which he was a part during his student years.<sup>523</sup>

Among the men of letters in *Istituto Lombardo* were at least two who would also influence Gemelli, albeit briefly and indirectly, during the next few years. These included Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), the British popularizer of evolutionary theory<sup>524</sup> and Antonio Fogazzaro (1842-1911), the modernist Catholic writer whose novels would be banned by the church for their unorthodox application of evolutionism toward an understanding of Catholicism, among other things.<sup>525</sup> Another member, also a man of

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<sup>522</sup> Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica*, p. 12. See also: Mary Gibson, *Born to Crime: Cesare Lombroso and the Origins of Biological Criminality* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002); David G. Horn, *The Criminal Body: Lombroso and the anatomy of deviance* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>523</sup> Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica*, p. 13. See also: Mario A. Di Gregorio, *From Here to Eternity: Ernst Haeckel and scientific faith* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

<sup>524</sup> Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica*, p. 12. See also: Mark Francis, *Herbert Spencer and the Invention of Modern Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

<sup>525</sup> Gemelli, in one of his earliest works on biology published after his conversion, appreciatively quotes Fogazzaro. See: Agostino Gemelli, *I nuovi orizzonti della biologia. L'attuale movimento neovitalista* (1906). This fact is point out by Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 91. Fogazzaro's novel *Il santo* (1905), a literary appeal for religious renewal, was placed on the Vatican's Index of Prohibited Books (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*) shortly after it appeared. Lucia Strappini, 'Fogazzaro, Antonio,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 48 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), pp. 420-429; Stefano Bertani, *L'ascensione della modernità: Antonio Fogazzaro tra santità ed evolucionismo* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2006).

letters, but one whose influence on Gemelli ran deeper and longer, was the above-mentioned Contardo Ferrini, who exemplified to Gemelli a life of rigorous intellectual accomplishment and heroic Catholic virtue.<sup>526</sup>

Most of the above named members of the *Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere* who had helped shape the positivist worldview from which Gemelli would apostatize in 1903 would be dead before the outbreak of the First World War. Their demise was preceded by the disintegration of their nineteenth-century ideology. Positivism, as formulated by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) to establish scientific theory as the sole means of explanation,<sup>527</sup> had been losing its grip upon secularized intellectuals for some years prior to Gemelli's religious conversion.<sup>528</sup> When Gemelli matriculated at Pavia in 1896 the positivist certainties he most cherished were already beginning to crumble. This would open the way for him within a few short years to embrace the counter-ideology of

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<sup>526</sup> Cesana, pp. 46-47. Yet another member of the *Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere* at this time was Monsignor Antonio Ceriani (1828-1907), distinguished scholar of oriental languages and prefect of the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana* since 1870. Ceriani, under whom Ferrini studied languages, was the mentor of Achille Ratti. Ratti would succeed Ceriani as prefect of the *Ambrosiana* upon the latter's death in 1907. Fausto Parente, 'Ceriani, Antonio Maria,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 23 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1979), pp. 737-743.

<sup>527</sup> Auguste Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830-42) in *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, ed. Gertrude Lenzer, trans. Harriet Martineau (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

<sup>528</sup> David F. Lindenfeld, *The Transformation of Positivism: Alexius Meinong and European Thought, 1880-1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980); Pierre Duhem, *Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science*, trans. and eds. Roger Ariew and Peter Barker (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996); J. Blackmore, R. Itagaki, and S. Tanaka, eds. *Ernst Mach's Vienna, 1895-1930; or, Phenomenalism as Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).

Catholicism, with its anti-positivist theology and metaphysics that were not necessarily anti-modern, but could be.<sup>529</sup>

The series of articles on Ambrose that appeared in *Rendiconti* during the first-half of 1897 was written by one of the most senior members of the *Istituto*, Amato Amati (1831-1904). A civil servant and scholar of pedagogy and cultural dissemination, Amati was an unlikely candidate for the task of writing any critical history about Ambrose.<sup>530</sup> Amati, it should be noted, was also a veteran of the *Cinque giornate* (as the Milan uprising of 1848 is known) and a resolute supporter of the unified Italian state; as a member of the *Associazione costituzionale* in Milan, he also belonged to the Historic Right.<sup>531</sup> It is a matter of interest to weigh the attitude toward the state held by any Italian who, in the late nineteenth century, wrote about the great early bishop of Milan. The *feste ambrosiane* celebrated in 1897 occurred during a long period of unresolved tension between the Italian state and the Catholic church, especially its papacy.<sup>532</sup> Virtually all papal territory, stretching from north of Naples to south of Venice, had been annexed by the state during its unification of the Italian peninsula between 1860 and 1870. The pope during that time, Pius IX (1846-1878), retreated to the Vatican, whence he issued strident demands for recognition of the papacy's temporal sovereignty, a necessary condition, he insisted,

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<sup>529</sup> Gerald McCool, *The Neo-Thomists* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994); Daly, Gabriel. *Transcendence and Immanence. A study in Catholic modernism and integralism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

<sup>530</sup> Renzo De Felice, 'Amati, Amato,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 2 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960), p. 669.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> A. C. Jemolo, *Church and State in Italy, 1850-1950*, trans. David Moore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960); Hubert Jedin, ed., *The Church in the Modern World*, trans. John Dolan (New York: Crossroad, 1993).

for maintaining papal independence.<sup>533</sup> The state, however, had officially ignored all such claims by him and his successors and would continue to do so up to the signing of the Concordat of 1929. Moreover, until 1918 Catholic citizens of Italy remained under the *non expedit*, namely, a papal injunction – albeit an inconsistently enforced one – not to participate in the Italian state.<sup>534</sup> Another widespread political tension at this time, overlapping with that between church and state, was that between centralizers and decentralizers of state power.<sup>535</sup> In 1897 all major political groups in Milan, unhappy about the wealth and the productivity of their city being drained by the state to support policies they opposed, were joined in support of decentralization.<sup>536</sup> They had also found common ground in opposing the authoritarianism of Prime Minister Francesco Crispi (1819-1901), who fell from power when his military adventurism ended disastrously in Ethiopia in March 1896. Currents of distrust running beneath this apparent unity would, however, soon surface in the *Fatti di Maggio*, as Italians refer to the violent state suppression of the bread riots that occurred in Milan in May 1898.<sup>537</sup> It was in this climate of tension between church and state, as well as between *comune* and *stato*, that Amati's articles appeared.

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<sup>533</sup> David Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: the popes' secret plot to capture Rome from the new Italian state* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

<sup>534</sup> Christopher Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967), p. 515.

<sup>535</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 186.

<sup>536</sup> Fausto Fonzi, *Crispi e lo "Stato di Milano"* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1965).

<sup>537</sup> Louise Tilly, 'I Fatti di Maggio: the Working Class of Milan and the Rebellion of 1898,' in Robert J. Bezucha, ed., *Modern European Social History* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), pp. 124-158; Marco Meriggi, 'Lo "Stato di Milano" nell'Italia unita: miti e strategie politiche di una società civile (1860-1945),' in Duccio Bigazzi and Marco Meriggi, eds., *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi. La Lombardia* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2001), pp. 25-26.

Amati's articles drew praise from the *Corriere della Sera*, the newspaper of the Historic Right. Its editors recognized that critical scholarship on Ambrose could help close the gap between those who thought of him in religious terms and others who thought of him in strictly secular or patriotic terms: "It is to be deplored that no one *in Italy* [italics added]," the editors wrote, "has thought to give us a true and complete historical-critical work on Ambrose and his times, without injecting religious or anti-religious biases, without being concerned with the saint who is in heaven, but thinking solely of the man who was on earth."<sup>538</sup> Other Europeans may have written such works, but the *Corriere* praised Amati for being the first Italian (or, to be more precise, the first person "in Italy") to have taken up the task. The editors thus implied that the fourth century Ambrose is in some historical sense Italian and, as such, he is both capable of symbolizing Italian unity and worthy of modern Italian scholarship. The *Corriere* does not mention that Amati was Milanese, as were all the other Italian authors of recent critical works on Ambrose whom Amati cites.

In the first article Amati acknowledges that some recent studies of Ambrose "have a scientific value, written according to the needs of modern criticism."<sup>539</sup> As examples, he cites lengthy works by foreign authors Albert de Broglie (1866)<sup>540</sup>, Theodor Förster

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<sup>538</sup> 'Due opuscoli su Sant' Ambrogio,' *Corriere della Sera*, 18-19 May 1897.

<sup>539</sup> Amato Amati, 'Sant' Ambrogio. Genealogia, cronologia, carattere e genesi delle idee,' *Rendiconti. Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere*, Serie II, Vol. XXX, February 1897, p. 312.

<sup>540</sup> Albert de Broglie, *L'Église et l'empire romain au IV siècle*, 6 vols. (Paris: Didier et Cie., 1866). See fn. 24.

(1884)<sup>541</sup> and Raymond Thamin (1895),<sup>542</sup> as well as [published] lectures by Italian authors Romualdo Bonfadini (1883),<sup>543</sup> Achille Ratti (1896),<sup>544</sup> Luigi Grasselli (1897),<sup>545</sup> Filippo Meda (1897)<sup>546</sup> and Carlo Romussi (1897).<sup>547</sup> Here Amati cites the recent Italian works on Ambrose that both preceded his own and also, in his estimation, achieved the standards of “modern criticism.” This obscures the reason why the *Corriere* praised Amati as having been the first “in Italy” to achieve this standard in such a work that is “true and complete” and “without... religious or anti-religious bias.” Indeed, these other Italians did not write “complete” works on the life and times of Ambrose, but neither did Amati. It is significant that the Italian authors cited by Amati, all Milanese, include both pious Catholics and secular Liberals. This shared interest in the figure of Ambrose, as well as the membership composition of the *Reale Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere*, suggests a sophistication among Milan’s intellectual elite capable of superseding sectarian differences. The prerequisite for being accepted into this scholarly community

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<sup>541</sup> Theodor Förster, *Ambrosius, Bischof von Mailand; eine Darstellung seines Lebens und Wirkens* (Halle: Verlag von Eugen Strien, 1884).

<sup>542</sup> Raymond Thamin, *Saint Ambroise et la morale chrétienne au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle; etude comparée des traits “Des devoirs” de Cicéron et de saint Ambroise* (Paris: G. Masson, 1895).

<sup>543</sup> Romualdo Bonfadini, *Milano nei suoi momenti storici* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1883).

<sup>544</sup> Achille Ratti, ‘La Chiesa ambrosiana,’ in *Conferenze di storia milanese, tenute per cur del Circolo filologico milanese nel Marzo e nell’Avrile 1896* (Milano: Fratelli Bocca editori, 1897), pp. 73-216. For English translation, see: Achille Ratti, ‘The Ambrosian Church of Milan,’ in *Essays in History, written between the years 1896-1912*, trans. Edward Bullough (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1934), p. 1-111.

<sup>545</sup> I am unable to ascertain the work by Grasselli.

<sup>546</sup> Filippo Meda, ‘La politica di s. Ambrogio,’ in Filippo Meda, *Bassorilievi* (Siena: Tip. editrice s. Bernardino, 1897), pp. 425-450.

<sup>547</sup> Carlo Romussi, *Sant’Ambrogio. I Tempi – L’Uomo – La Basilica* (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1897). See fn. 22.

was presumably adoption of critical standards rather than any particular sectarian commitment.

Before continuing discussion of Amati's articles, a brief digression on the Italian authors cited by Amati is needed. It is important to understand the relationship between these authors and Gemelli in order to demonstrate his probable awareness of how they represented Ambrose, prior to Gemelli's own appropriation of ambrosian symbols starting in 1903. Between the Ambrosian celebrations in 1897 and his religious conversion six years later, Gemelli would embark upon a remarkable passage from the center of the Milan's circle of Socialists<sup>548</sup> and positivists to that of Milan's Catholic activists and intellectuals. Indeed, Gemelli during this period would form rudimentary links to some of the authors of these Italian works on Ambrose, just as he would also come under the influence of certain members, both secular and Catholic, of the *Istituto Lombardo*, as mentioned above.

As for the secular Liberal authors whom Amati mentions, Romualdo Bonfadini (1831-1899), a noted journalist and parliamentarian, was a longstanding supporter of Cavour's scheme for a liberal monarchy.<sup>549</sup> More important, as concerns Gemelli, was Carlo Romussi (1847-1913), a Radical journalist, who served from 1896 as editor of *Il Secolo*,

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<sup>548</sup> By the spring of 1897 Gemelli had shifted from the Radical wing of Liberal politics to which his family belonged to the Socialist camp then emerging from that wing under the leadership of his new political patron, Filippo Turati (1857-1932). Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985), pp. 18-19.

<sup>549</sup> Bruno Di Porto, 'Bonfadini, Romualdo,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 12 (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970), pp. 3-5.

the largest circulating newspaper in Italy at that time (soon to be eclipsed by *Corriere della Sera*) with a democratic and republican readership that formed the Extreme Left of Italian liberalism.<sup>550</sup> Gemelli's close ties to the Radical circles in which Romussi moved will be discussed below.

As for the Catholic authors, Ratti is already mentioned above as one of the scholars whose work was published in the volume introduced by Cardinal Ferrari.<sup>551</sup> Ratti is notable for having remained aloof from internecine Catholic politics during the period of *non expedit*, when advocates of intransigent and conciliatory attitudes toward the state vied for Catholic support. Ratti nevertheless had close ties with clergy who were known or perceived to be conciliatorists, such as Mons. Antonio Maria Ceriani (1828-1907),<sup>552</sup> his mentor at the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, and Archbishop Nazari Di Calabiana (1808-1893),<sup>553</sup> his earliest patron from boyhood, who also held state office as an appointed

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<sup>550</sup> Romussi would be arrested and imprisoned under martial law following the Milan bread riots of May 1898, along with other Radicals, Socialists and Catholics toward whom the unstable government of Antonio Rudini (1839-1908) was opposed. These included Socialist political leaders Filippo Turati (1857-1932) and his partner Anna Kuliscioff (ca. 1857-1925), Socialist journalist Paolo Valera (1850-1926) and intransigent Catholic journalist Don Davide Albertario (1846-1902). Christopher Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London: Methuen, 1967), p. 191. In the fall of 1897 Gemelli was introduced to Turati by Kuliscioff, who taught obstetrics at Pavia, though Gemelli may not have needed the introduction. Turati was personally acquainted with Gemelli's great-uncle, Agostino Bertani (the two men shared a written correspondence); furthermore Turati and Kuliscioff lived in an apartment in the Portici Settentrionali, upstairs from the *pasticceria* operated by Gemelli's grandfather, Francesco Bertani. Turati would bring Gemelli into the *Partito Socialista Italiano* and become the first of a series of important men whom Gemelli attracted as mentors and patrons.

<sup>551</sup> *Ambrosiana*. See fn. 77.

<sup>552</sup> See fn. 91 above.

<sup>553</sup> See fn. 17 above.



Senator.<sup>554</sup> Don Luigi Grasselli was a translator of Federico Borromeo and the headmaster of *Collegio San Carlo*.<sup>555</sup> Grasselli's place in the society of cultivated men in *fin-de-siècle* Milan, for which Edoardo Gemelli had been prepared and into which he was now stepping, might be further posited by his renown as the intrepid mountain climbing partner of Ratti.<sup>556</sup> Grasselli's status as head of *Collegio San Carlo* further tied him to Ratti, who had studied there briefly as a youth, and to Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930), another alumnus of the college who, like Ratti, also exercised a unique influence upon Gemelli. Necchi was Gemelli's best friend from childhood, his companion when he returned to the sacraments in the crypt of St. Ambrose, and a close collaborator in the founding of the Università Cattolica.<sup>557</sup> Filippo Meda (1869-1939) would also collaborate closely with Gemelli in years to come. As protégé of Don Davide Albertario (1846-1902), the leading propagandist of Catholic intransigence toward the Italian state, out of whose shadow he was about to emerge, Meda was an early advocate of Catholic political organization. In the early 1890s he took up in earnest the charge "preparation in abstention" (*preparazione nell'astensione*), coined in 1880, to encourage Catholics to achieve political maturity outside the state apparatus. Through participation in local elections, which the popes did not forbid, Catholics could prepare themselves to

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<sup>554</sup> Carlo Falconi, *The Popes in the Twentieth Century. From Pius X to John XXIII*, trans. Muriel Grindrod (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), pp. 156-158.

<sup>555</sup> The school, founded in 1869, is named after the Carlo Borromeo and located in a palazzo opposite *Santa Maria delle Grazie*, on whose refectory wall is painted Da Vinci's masterpiece 'Il Cenacolo,' or 'Last Supper.'

<sup>556</sup> The new route by which they descended from Mont Blanc on the Italian side in 1890 was named *Via Ratti-Grasselli*. Józef Kowalczyk, 'Achille Ratti nunzio apostolico in Polonia. Diplomazia da sesto grado superiore,' *L'Osservatore Romano* (October 26-27, 2009).

<sup>557</sup> Orazio Petrosillo, *Ludovico Necchi* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1995).

participate effectively in the state when, at some future time, the *non expedit* would be lifted. Meda struggled to form an electoral alliance between intransigent adherents of Christian democracy, such as himself, who fell in the middle or to the left of the political spectrum, and conservative Catholics on the right, such as Cesare Nava and Carlo Ottavio Cornaggia Medici (1851-1935). Unlike many older Catholics who had reached adulthood before the creation of the Italian state, Meda accepted its institutional, especially parliamentary, form and anticipated a Catholic infiltration of it.<sup>558</sup> Meda would develop an increasingly closer association with Necchi starting from the Catholic Congress held in Milan in the fall of 1897. When the project for a Catholic university in Italy began in earnest after the First World War, Meda, by then an important minister in the Italian government, would work closely with Gemelli and Necchi toward its founding and would provide it with legal counsel for the rest of his life.<sup>559</sup>

It cannot be known whether Gemelli read any of the works on Ambrose by these contemporary Milanese authors, but it can be established that he had personal connections to most of them before his conversion. A link to Amati is more difficult to

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<sup>558</sup> Alfredo Canavero, 'Meda, Filippo,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 73 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2009), pp. 2-8.

<sup>559</sup> Following Italy's intervention in *la Grande Guerra* in May 1915, Meda would become the first Catholic to hold cabinet level office in Liberal Italy. During the political turmoil that followed the war and immediately preceded the Fascist's March on Rome, Meda would thrice be offered the prime ministership, refusing each time. Also refusing cooperation with the Fascists, or for that matter with the group of Catholic politicians known as Clerico-Fascists who formed a parliamentary alliance with them, Meda would withdraw from politics altogether in 1924. Alfredo Canavero, 'Meda, Filippo,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1980*, Vol. II, (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), pp. 354-363; Alfredo Canavero, *Filippo Meda. L'intransigente che portò i cattolici nello Stato* (Milano: Centro Ambrosiano, 2003).

verify, though it is probable that Amati, a veteran of the *Cinque giornate*, was acquainted with Gemelli's great uncle Agostino Bertani, a hero of that event.<sup>560</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that Amati was a senior member of the *Istituto Lombardo*, whose membership included men whom Gemelli admired and some whom he would soon meet, suggests the possibility that Gemelli had some degree of familiarity with Amati and his work. As one late nineteenth century Milanese said about his city, "Here, all cultured persons know each other...." (*Qui tutte le persone educate si conoscono....*).<sup>561</sup>

Adopting what he deemed an objective scholarly approach to his subject, Amati views Ambrose through the lens of a late nineteenth-century Italian positivist. He begins by making a point about all these other works on Ambrose: none of them investigates the life of Ambrose before he became bishop. Indeed, an inspection of these works confirms Amati's observation. Recognizing a need for further critical scholarship along these lines, Amati suggested going about it with methods comparable to those used by the

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<sup>560</sup> Amati's history of the eleventh century rise of the *Comune di Milano*, in which the people threw off the yoke of rule by their archbishop, offers this event as the precursor of the *Cinque giornate* and the entire Risorgimento. "*La insurrezione del 1848 fatta ragione dei tempi, non fu che una gloriosa ripetizione di quella compiuta dai padri nostri nel 1042.*" Amato Amati, *Il Risorgimento del Comune di Milano. Studio storico su documenti patrii editi e inediti* (Milano: A. Lombardi, 1865), p. 154. "*Che l'Italia in questa guerra dello straniero, dimenticata ogni ira, sciolto ogni partito, si raccolga in un solo spirito, e sarà libera ed una. Che Roma imiti la Milano del secolo XI, e come questa già grand ecol suo episcopato, si levò più splendida sulle rovine di esso e fece rifiorire l'antico Comune, quella distruggendo un pontificato che già crolla, rifatta capitale d'Italia, restituirà la Nazione alla sua antica grandezza.*" *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>561</sup> Roberto Sacchetti, 'La vita letteraria' in Carla Riccardi, ed., *Milano 1881* (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 1991), p. 82. It is an observation that the author quickly gathered himself very early in the course of reading for this dissertation.

positivist criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, that explain all human activity as the outcome of physical causes:

Biographical criticism deems very interesting the period in the life of a distinguished man during which he conceived, nurtured and grew those ideas that have rendered his name worthy of memory, and, where historical sources are lacking, [biographical criticism] studies the methods of researching the origins of his family, the possible crossings of blood, the climatic influences, even the physical traits,<sup>562</sup> calling upon the aid of philology, psychology, physiology, biology and affiliated sciences.<sup>563</sup>

While Amati acknowledges the importance of “ideas,” he suggests that they come into being by some form of cross-fertilization between the brain and another physical source. He thus denies the possible role of any immaterial factor in the formation of ideas. By extension, he implicitly denies the possibility of any sacramental life.

One would not expect someone as evidently positivist as Amati to be sympathetic toward figures whom the church recognizes as saints, yet his view of the early bishop is adulatory. This is clearly because he interprets Ambrose, rather anachronistically, as representing views consonant with late nineteenth-century claims of the Liberal state against the papacy. In his second article, he presents Ambrose as dedicated to making the

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<sup>562</sup> Amati alludes to Cesare Lombroso’s theory of physiognomy as fate. The book in which Lombroso introduced this theory, first published in 1876, was in its fifth edition in 1897. Cesare Lombroso, *L’Uomo delinquente* (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1897).

<sup>563</sup> Amati, ‘Sant’ Ambrogio. Genealogia, cronologia, carattere e genesi delle idee,’ p. 313.

church “pure, free and one.”<sup>564</sup> Amati reaches this conclusion after having investigated the words and deeds of Ambrose to answer the following set of questions: “Has the Church the right to possess property? Can it exercise temporal power? Is it autonomous in every way from civil authority? Can it oppose the State by violent means when it sees itself as persecuted? Can it invoke the secular arm against dissidents in matters of faith? Does it have the right of supremacy over the State?”<sup>565</sup> Although the historical church has often spoken and acted as if the answer to these questions were yes, Amati draws arguments from writings by and about Ambrose, in order to reply to each of these questions with a resounding no. He then contrasts the ancient bishop of Milan with the long line of successors to the see of Rome. “Ambrose not only did not demand, but did not seek temporal power. The Roman pontiffs, on the contrary, declared it indispensable to the existence of the Church.”<sup>566</sup> “St. Ambrose forbid the clergy from taking part in

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<sup>564</sup> Amato Amati, ‘Detti e atti di s. Ambrogio relativi alla Chiesa pura, libera ed una,’ in *Rendiconti. Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere*, Serie II, Vol. XXX, April 1897, p. 589.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., p. 590.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., p. 602. Amati omits all mention of Carlo Borromeo, the greatest successor to Ambrose’s see and a fervent advocate of episcopal jurisdiction. “Borromeo’s opposition to temporal interference in the ecclesiastical administration and his efforts to restore sovereignty to it were no different from his efforts to resist Rome’s interference in diocesan operations, and they were prompted by the same motives. In no sense did Borromeo minimize the importance of either the prince or the pontiff. Cooperation between the bishop and the viceroy, as between pope and the prince, was an essential ingredient in Borromeo’s plan to rebuild the Roman Church. Still, Borromeo’s first concern was to restore the authority of, and respect for, the episcopal office. In his struggles against both temporal and ecclesiastical authorities Borromeo achieved only a qualified success. At his death the episcopal office had new stature, but the bishop’s authority was effectively harnessed and employed by Rome.” John B. Tomaro, ‘San Carlo Borromeo and the Implementation of the Council of Trent,’ in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 73. “Immediately after his death, Rome employed the figure

matters of the State, except in extraordinary cases, unless the civil power pleads for it, only for the love of the Fatherland (*patria*) and in the interest of the prince. The Roman pontiffs assert that they are called upon to govern things both spiritual and temporal, that they have both the crosier and the sword, that they are incomparably superior to every sovereign in the world.”<sup>567</sup> Amati specifically refers to medieval popes Gregory VII (1073-1085) and Innocent III (1198-1216), who, “armed with excommunication, that was double-edged, both spiritual and temporal, raised the people against emperor and king.”<sup>568</sup> By contrast, “St. Ambrose did not excommunicate [Roman Emperor] Theodosius and did not expel him from the church.”<sup>569</sup>

Amati thus uses the historical papacy to score points against the contemporary papacy. Toward this same end he also employs the historical Ambrose, a figure who remained admired, despite church-state tensions in late nineteenth century Italy, by Milanese both secular and Catholic. Amati’s real targets are Pius IX (1846-1878) and Leo XIII (1878-1903). Pius IX had been dead for nearly twenty years, but he remained very much alive in the collective memory. Few had forgotten either Pius IX’s refusal to abandon claims to former papal territory that had been absorbed by the new Kingdom of Italy, or his excommunication of everyone associated with the annexation of it, including Victor

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of Borromeo to emphasize the importance of the episcopal office. But Rome interpreted Borromeo’s work to show that he was a model bishop because he was a loyal servant of Rome. Borromeo’s concept of the bishop as an intermediate and independent authority between Rome and the faithful was disregarded.” *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>567</sup> Amati, ‘Detti e atti di s. Ambrogio relativi alla Chiesa pura, libera ed una,’ p. 602.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 605.

Emanuel II.<sup>570</sup> Leo XIII likewise refused to surrender claims to this territory, but more importantly he refused to surrender ancient ecclesiastical rights that were under attack by the modern state. In order to preserve the autonomy of the church in particular spheres, indeed, to exert its authority, Leo XIII issued numerous encyclicals on the relationship between church and state during his long pontificate.<sup>571</sup> The basic principles that guided

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<sup>570</sup> Pius IX announced the excommunications in his apostolic letter *Cum catholica ecclesia* (March 26, 1860). He would, however, lift the excommunication on Victor Emanuel II as the king lay on his deathbed in January 1878; Pius IX would himself die less than a month later. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican*, pp. 123-136.

<sup>571</sup> See: John Courtney Murray, 'Leo XIII: Separation of Church and State: The General Structure of the Controversy,' *Theological Studies* 14 (March, 1953), pp. 1-30. The fundamental principles underlying church-state relations in the teaching of Leo XIII are derived from the New Testament: "Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God." (Romans, 13:1); and "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." (Matthew, 22:21) There is no clear separation of church and state in these encyclicals, which insist upon recognition of church authority by the state. "The State, constituted as it is, is clearly bound to act up to the manifold and weighty duties linking it to God, by the public profession of religion. Nature and reason, which command every individual devoutly to worship God in holiness, because we belong to Him and must return to Him, since from Him we came, bind also the civil community by a like law. For, men living together in society are under the power of God no less than individuals are, and society, no less than individuals, owes gratitude to God who gave it being and maintains it and whose ever-bounteous goodness enriches it with countless blessings. Since, then, no one is allowed to be remiss in the service due to God, and since the chief duty of all men is to cling to religion in both its teaching and practice – not such religion as they may have a preference for, but the religion which God enjoins, and which certain and most clear marks show to be the only one true religion – it is a public crime to act as though there were no God. So, too, it is a sin for the State not to have care for religion as a something beyond its scope, or as of no practical benefit; or out of many forms of religion to adopt that one which chimes with the fancy; for we are bound absolutely to worship God in that way which He has shown to be His will. *All who rule, therefore, would hold in honor the holy name of God, and one of their chief duties must be to favor religion, to protect it, to shield it under the credit and sanction of the laws, and neither to organize nor enact any measure that may compromise its safety.*" [Italics added] Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* (1885), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, N.C.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 108-109.

Leo XIII's teaching on this subject in the late nineteenth century were, in fact, those established Ambrose in the late fourth century.<sup>572</sup>

The Italian state had attempted to settle the so-called "Roman Question" of the pope's temporal sovereignty by means of the Law of Guarantees after annexing Rome in 1871, but this legislation, which was imposed on the papacy by the authority of the state, was rejected by the Vatican, which claimed a sovereign authority of its own. Not a single Italian government during the entire Liberal period officially recognized papal sovereignty. The Fascist government would be the first to do so, although it did so cynically. Its claims against the papacy would be substantially similar to those made by Romussi, except for its much greater use of inflamed rhetoric. Achille Ratti, as church leader during period of the Fascist state, would face an even greater struggle than did his two predecessors in the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>572</sup> "We may even say that Ambrose contributed to defining a distinction between Church and state where one had hardly existed before. It was a distinction that needed to be made because, as the history of the fourth century demonstrated, the orthodoxy and moral probity of the Empire could not always be taken for granted. In articulating this distinction Ambrose helped to break in the West the pattern that had existed there for half a century, since Constantine, and that would continue for better or worse in the East.

"Not that this distinction meant that the Church and state were unrelated to one another and had no responsibilities toward one another. At certain times the distinction might even come close to disappearing. Ideally, the Church's responsibility, as borne out by the manner in which Ambrose dealt with the emperors, was to instruct and judge the state, to set the moral and doctrinal perimeters within which the state might legitimately act. And, ideally, the state's responsibility was to foster and protect the true religion proclaimed by the Church in such a way as not to infringe upon its independence. Ambrose treated Gratian and Theodosius in particular as if they were to some extent co-workers with him in caring for the Church." Boniface Ramsey, *Ambrose* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 48.



Further challenging the popular belief that Ambrose asserted ecclesiastical supremacy over secular rulers, Amati attempts to debunk not only the popes, but also one of the most authoritative late nineteenth-century biographers of Ambrose, namely, Albert de Broglie,<sup>573</sup> an Orleanist, a liberal Catholic, and a supporter of Gallican, as opposed to Ultramontane, rights in the church.<sup>574</sup> Lord Acton (1834-1902), who respected the historical methods used by Broglie, referred to him as “the most accomplished layman among French Catholics.”<sup>575</sup> Broglie’s six-volume work on late antiquity, *L’Église et l’Empire romain au IVe siècle*, went through five editions between 1856 and 1882.<sup>576</sup> Amati is especially concerned with Broglie’s political claims about Ambrose that appear in the sixth and final volume, the only one translated into Italian; this translation was

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<sup>573</sup> Charles-Jacques-Victor-Albert, 4<sup>th</sup> duc de Broglie (1821-1901) was a French politician who held various ministerial posts in the cabinet of Marshal Patrice de MacMahon (1808-1893), the Chief of State of France (1873-1875) and the first president of the Third Republic (1877-1879). (MacMahon is himself a noteworthy character in this story because of his having secured the French victory over Austrian forces at Magenta in 1859, thus adding Lombardy to Piedmont as the basis for the Kingdom of Italy.) Broglie, as a politically conservative monarchist, was generally on the losing side of politics as they evolved in his lifetime. He retired from politics in 1885 and turned to writing, a talent that he had already long practiced and that he may have inherited from his maternal grandmother, Mme de Staël (1766-1817). Alan Grubb, *The Politics of Pessimism: Albert de Broglie and Conservative Politics in the Early Third Republic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996).

<sup>574</sup> It is paradoxical that Carlo Borromeo’s interpretation of Tridentine ecclesiology would lend support to Gallicanism. Marc Venard, ‘The Influence of Carlo Borromeo on the Church of France,’ in John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), pp. 208-227.

<sup>575</sup> John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, ‘Ultramontanism,’ in Lord Acton, *Essays on Church and State*, ed. Douglas Woodruff (London: Hollis and Carter, 1952), p. 59.

<sup>576</sup> Albert de Broglie, *L’Église et l’empire romain au IVe siècle*, 6 vols. (Paris: Didier, 1856-1866). See fn. 24.

published twice, in 1886 and 1897.<sup>577</sup> The discussion centers on the famous utterance of Ambrose in response to the Arian conflict over possession of the basilicas in Milan in the year 386: “*Imperator enim intra Ecclesiam, non supra Ecclesiam est*” (“the emperor is in the Church, not above the Church”).<sup>578</sup> Amati begins his interpretation of this dictum with a summary of the historical belief that he ultimately seeks to shatter:

It is asserted, the principle that the Church prevails over the State is contained for the first time in the sentence formulated by St. Ambrose during the Arian persecution of 386: *The emperor is in the Church, not above it*. The first example of preponderance, of supremacy of the ecclesiastical authority over the civil powers is given by St. Ambrose in 390, when he compelled the emperor Theodosius the Great to public penance, expelling him from the temple, and afterward having him held under the penalty of excommunication for eight months, imposing on him the terms of restitution.<sup>579</sup>

Amati claims that this view, gathered “from writers of much authority, including the Duke de Broglie,” depends on an excessively broad interpretation of Ambrose.<sup>580</sup> Amati refers in particular to the following statement found in the conclusion of the sixth volume, in which Broglie paraphrases Ambrose:

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<sup>577</sup> I am unable to identify the 1886 edition of the translation, cited by Amati, though there is an 1888 edition of the same: Alberto de Broglie, *La politica di S. Ambrogio*, trans. Paolo Vacani (Milano: tip. Eusebiana, 1888). The 1897 edition of this translation was published under a different title: Albert de Broglie, *Sant’Ambrogio ed il suo tempo*, trans. Paolo Vacani (Milano: Giuseppe Palma, 1897).

<sup>578</sup> Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Episcopi, ‘Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicas tradendis,’ in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, Vol 16, col. 1018B.

<sup>579</sup> Amati, ‘Detti e atti di s. Ambrogio relativi alla Chiesa pura, libera ed una,’ p. 604.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 604.

Ambrose used a forceful expression to characterize the new relations of the two powers that he more than anyone had caused to prevail: “The Church, he said, is not in the empire: it is the emperor who is in the Church.” All the public right of the Middle Ages comes from this axiom, of which Gregory VII and Innocent III, interpreting it flexibly, will be the ultimate and bold commentators.<sup>581</sup>

Taken at face value, Broglie might be seen as interpreting Ambrose as a founding father of medieval political theory<sup>582</sup> or even as a distant ancestor of the modern theory of papal sovereignty set forth by Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821).<sup>583</sup> But Amati has not been fair to Broglie. He ignores what the duke had also written, in the same volume, about the sovereignty of secular rule. Regarding the legendary confrontation between Ambrose and Theodosius, in which the bishop refused to administer the sacraments to the emperor until the latter became penitent for the massacre he had inflicted upon the citizens of Thessalonica (an event that did not directly concern the rights of the Catholic church, let alone those of the church of Milan), Broglie writes, “Careful, even in this bold display of

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<sup>581</sup> Broglie, *L'Église et l'empire romain au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. 6 (Paris: Didier et cie., 1868), p. 441.

<sup>582</sup> John B. Morrall, *Political Thought in Medieval Times* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

<sup>583</sup> Joseph-Marie, comte de Maistre, *Du Pape*, 2 vol. (Lyons: Rusand, 1819). For English translation, see: de Maistre, *The Pope considered in his relations with the church, temporal sovereignties, separated churches, and the cause of civilization*, trans. Aeneas McD. Dawson (London: C. Dolman, 1850). Maistre, although a conservative monarchist like Broglie, differed significantly from the Orleanist and Gallican position of Broglie insofar Maistre was a Legitimist and Ultramonianist. Maistre, a Savoyard by birth, was an acquaintance of Broglie's grandmother, Mme. De Staël. See: Richard A. Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre. An Intellectual Militant* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); Franck Lafage, *Le comte Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). Itinéraire intellectuel d'un théologien de la politique* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1998).

priestly power, not to encroach upon the independence of political sovereignty, he did not want in the least to order the emperor to do anything that he had not freely accepted; he wanted everything to adhere to the spontaneous obedience of conscience, and to affect nothing that had even the appearance of the exterior exercise of force.”<sup>584</sup> A careful reading of Broglie shows that he, in fact, agrees with Amati that Ambrose set no precedent for claiming ecclesiastical sovereignty over secular rule.<sup>585</sup>

The reason for Amati’s misreading of Broglie is uncertain. Nevertheless, Amati accuses Broglie of exaggerating the claims of Ambrose, and by extension, those of the church:

Either I am deceived or the duke has gone too far when he makes St. Ambrose say: ‘the Church is not in the State.’ It seems like a plot, a conspiracy of historians intending to depict St. Ambrose as something entirely opposite to what he was. He said and repeated that the Church not only

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<sup>584</sup> Broglie, p. 317.

<sup>585</sup> Perhaps it was criticism such as Amati’s that influenced Broglie to state his position more clearly two years later when he published an abridged and revised version of the sixth volume of *L’Église et l’empire au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (as part of the popular series “Les Saints” edited by Henri Joly in the late nineteenth century). “Absolutely nothing said by Ambrose approximates the desire, often attributed to him by some historians, to take advantage of public indignation in order to elevate the authority of the priesthood over that of the Empire.” Albert de Broglie, *Saint Ambroise*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Paris: Le Coffre, 1899), pp. 154-155. Broglie’s earlier work certainly implied that Ambrose did not claim ecclesiastical sovereignty over secular power. In his later work, Broglie not only makes this point explicit, but also goes one step further to disabuse his readers of mistaken claims to the contrary by “some historians.” Broglie’s popular abridged history of Ambrose went through eight French editions and two in English (and remains an entertaining read today). See: The Duc de Broglie, *Saint Ambrose*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Margaret Maitland (London: Duckworth & Co., 1906).

recognizes Caesar, but pays tribute to him, and does not complain about him even when he imposes restrictive measures, particular burdens, and so forth.”<sup>586</sup>

Amati does not paraphrase Ambrose, as does Broglie in the above instance (which is a possible cause of misinterpretation), but rather Amati quotes Ambrose verbatim and interprets him so narrowly that the bishop’s words apply only to the particular case at hand and bear no general meaning. In this case, “*Imperatur enim intra Ecclesiam est*” means that the emperor is a Christian essentially no different than any other Christian; “*Imperatur non supra Ecclesiam est*” means that the emperor’s power over the church is restricted only in those precise matters which concerned the bishop Ambrose and the emperors Valentinian and Theodosius: the emperor “cannot force the orthodox [Catholic] bishop to surrender temples of the orthodox [Catholic] community for use by Arians and pagans; he cannot order the Christian Church to do things contrary to the religion of Christ; he may not, in the temple, be seated higher than the bishop; he is a son of the Church in matters of faith; he must present himself at the confessional if he seeks the absolution of his sins.”<sup>587</sup> By implication, the secular ruler’s power over the church remains unrestricted in all other matters.

Amati criticizes the excessively broad interpretation of Ambrose that he finds in Gregory VII, Innocent III, just as he criticizes Broglie for his apparent agreement with these popes. But Amati’s excessively narrow interpretation of Ambrose is silent about at least

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<sup>586</sup> Amati, ‘Detti e atti di s. Ambrogio relativi alla Chiesa pura, libera ed una,’ p. 604.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid., p. 605.

one question of church sovereignty that was perhaps a greater problem in his own time than in the Middle Ages: the suppression of religious orders and the sequestration of monastic property, for which the Italian parliament passed laws in 1866.<sup>588</sup> Amati attempts to portray Ambrose's beliefs as compatible with those of the Risorgimento state, thus tapping into the store of goodwill held by late nineteenth-century Milanese for their patron saint. Such anachronistic argument is open to debate. Amati seems to be on firmer ground when he discusses Ambrose's historical position on ecclesiastical and secular sovereignty. Given that Amati, in order to enhance the legitimacy of his own interpretation of Ambrose, feels compelled to criticize one of his subject's most authoritative biographers and to say that Broglio is just one among others for whom such criticism is due, suggests that the Ambrose of legend, that is, the Ambrose who demanded submission of the emperor Theodosius, still held sway in the collective memory. It is interesting that Amati, who clearly favors the sovereign claims of the Italian state to those of the church, should also want to claim Ambrose for his side. Amati's appeal to Ambrose is more comprehensible when placed in the context of the instrumental alliance between Moderates and Catholics amidst the political, economic and social tensions that already troubled Milan in 1897 before the riots of the following year. In this context, it may have been part of an effort to lessen these tensions by upholding the authority of Ambrose (even through a polemical argument that seems likely to have antagonized many Catholics).

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<sup>588</sup> Giacomo Martina, 'La situazione degli istituti religiosi in Italia intorno al 1870,' in AA. VV., *Chiesa e religiosità in Italia dopo l'Unità d'Italia (1861-1878)*, vol. III, t. 1 (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1973), pp. 194-335.

In a third article, Amati discusses Ambrose's thought on private property. He criticizes recent biographies and conference papers that overlook what Ambrose wrote on this subject, given its relevance in the late nineteenth century when state attempts to introduce land reform had made private property a fiercely contested issue in Italy.<sup>589</sup> He also chastens authors who, while treating Ambrose's thought on this subject, interpret the bishop as favoring their own cause:

To obscure, to twist, to alter the thought of great men on questions of enormous moment, for whatever reason, is vain, foolish and sometimes dishonest. Those biographers of St. Ambrose who believed it was an act of prudence to omit any mention of his principles of social economy were just as wrong as those commentators on Ambrosian works who, with efforts of more than erudition, replaced or tried to replace some word or phrase in the text with other words or phrases more to their liking.<sup>590</sup>

Ambrose's teaching on private property, according to Amati, differs from that of both the Lombard episcopate and the Lombard socialists.<sup>591</sup> Here, Amati alludes to a debate that

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<sup>589</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 169.

<sup>590</sup> Amati, 'Detti e atti di s. Ambrogio relativi alla Chiesa pura, libera ed una,' p. 766.

<sup>591</sup> The debate on private property, especially insofar as it pits the Catholic hierarchy against the Socialists, must be contextualized by the challenge to the latter set by Leo XIII, who taught "every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own" in his encyclical *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891). The opening words of this document convey a powerful sense of the contemporary tensions. "That the spirit of revolutionary change, which has long been disturbing the nations of the world, should have passed beyond the sphere of politics and made its influence felt in the cognate sphere of practical economics is not surprising. The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable, in the vast expansion of industrial pursuits and the marvelous discoveries of science; in the changed relations between masters and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses; in the increased self-reliance and closer mutual combination of the working classes; as also, finally, in the prevailing moral degeneracy. The momentous gravity of the state of things now obtaining fills every mind

flared when Cardinal Ferrari, speaking on the Feast of St. Ambrose, December 7, 1896, hurled an anathema upon Socialists<sup>592</sup> and thereby elicited a response from Enrico Ferri (1856-1929), a leading Socialist deputy in parliament (as well as a disciple of Cesare Lombroso and a friend of Filippo Turati). Ferri responded by quoting a passage from *De officiis*, Ambrose's major work on Christian ethics: "*Natura [igitur] jus commune generavit, usurpatio jus fecit privatum*"<sup>593</sup> ("Nature [therefore] begat the right of common ownership, usurpation made the right of private ownership"). Amati acknowledges that socialist principles of a sort exist in Ambrose's texts. Locating another passage from *De officiis*, Amati picks out the words "*in medio omnes utilitates ponere*"<sup>594</sup> and translates them as "*mettere in comune tutte le utilità*" ("place in common all that is useful"). Amati concludes that "St. Ambrose is the first socialist teacher, like it or not."<sup>595</sup> Amati makes an important distinction, however, between Ambrose's teaching on property and that of nineteenth-century socialists. "The socialism of St. Ambrose has for its basis the fulfillment of a duty; modern socialism sees only the seizing of a right.... It is not the socialism of St. Ambrose."<sup>596</sup> Discussing the problem of property, Amati demonstrates an appreciation for historicity when he acknowledges "different times" call for "different measures" and he reveals a positivist faith when he states, "The last word, I believe, will

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with painful apprehension; wise men are discussing it; practical men are proposing schemes; popular meetings, legislatures, and rulers of nations are all busied with it – actually there is no question which has taken a deeper hold on the public mind." Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* in Claudio Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, N.C.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 241-261.

<sup>592</sup> 'Sant' Ambrogio all' Istituto Lombardo,' *Corriere della Sera*, May 21-22, 1897.

<sup>593</sup> Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Episcopi, 'De officiis ministorum libri tres,' in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 16, col. 0063A.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. XVI, 0063A.

<sup>595</sup> Amati, 'Detti e atti di s. Ambrogio relativi alla Chiesa pura, libera ed una,' p. 781.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 783.



be given by science.”<sup>597</sup> Despite his positivist admission of only material causes, Amati praises the ethics practiced by Ambrose and disregards of any attribution which the bishop made to a supernatural being as the source of his principles:

St. Ambrose... felt in his veins Greek blood that carried him by thought to the highest peaks of speculative philosophy; but in the moment of applying the theory, he became again pure Roman, magistrate, statesman. For himself and for his own things he was inflexibly faithful to his socialist principles; but when it was a matter of dealing with others, with generalities, he was very temperate, and did not demand things contrary to the laws that were in force.<sup>598</sup>

Amati thus attempts to rise above the contemporary fray. Similar to the way in which he makes Ambrose attractive to both clericals and anti-clericals by depicting him as a virtuous bishop who would have opposed papal claims of sovereignty and temporalism, Amati makes Ambrose admirable to both Socialists and Catholics by portraying him as having the heart of Filippo Turati and the mind of Leo XIII. In the spring of 1897, when Milan was already rife with class tensions that would explode into violence just one year later in the *Fatti di Maggio*, it was perhaps prudent, even wise, to align himself with Ambrose. As Amati concludes: “It is not without reason that the epithet *ambrosiano* corresponds with the concept of goodness of heart, generosity of ideas, honesty and plain speaking. It is not without reason that Milan excels *ab antico* in works of charity.”<sup>599</sup>

The liberal patriot Amati thus sounds remarkably like the Catholic lay leader Nava, who,

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<sup>597</sup> Ibid., p. 783.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid., p. 783-784.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid., p. 784.

while speaking in the Duomo during the *feste ambrosiane* in May 1897, equated the celebration of Ambrose with the celebration of the Milanese spirit (“*Viva Ambrogio e viva Milano!*”) and spoke of this unifying spirit as the salvation of Milan and Italy. If the goodness of Ambrose were as evident and unimpeachable as Amati suggests, then an appeal to ambrosian principles might stand as good a chance as any to transcend partisan differences.

Among the recent Italian studies of Ambrose mentioned by Amati, the one most likely to have been read by Edoardo Gemelli in 1897 is probably that by Carlo Romussi.<sup>600</sup> At the time of its publication, Edoardo had at least a couple of connections with its author. Romussi was the new editor of the Radical newspaper *Il Secolo*, which was dedicated to the democratic interests of “the new urban and rural middle classes (professionals, shopkeepers, tenant farmers, proprietary-farmers)” and “artisans and workers not yet part of socialist organizations.”<sup>601</sup> Its tone was distinctly anti-clerical, but not stridently so.<sup>602</sup> It enjoyed the largest circulation of any newspaper in Italy at that time.<sup>603</sup> Romussi was preceded as editor by his longtime colleague Ernesto Teodoro Moneta (1833-1918),<sup>604</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Carlo Romussi, *Sant’Ambrogio. I Tempi – L’Uomo – La Basilica* (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1897). See fn. 22.

<sup>601</sup> Valerio Castronovo, Luciana Giacheri Fossati and Nicola Tranfaglia, *La stampa italiana nell’età liberale*, (Bari: Laterza, 1979), p. 70.

<sup>602</sup> Maria Combi, *Ernesto Teodoro Moneta, premio nobel per la pace 1907* (Milano: U. Mursia & C., 1968), p. 51.

<sup>603</sup> See: ‘La lotta per la supremazia fra *Il Secolo* e il *Corriere della Sera*,’ in Valerio Castronovo, Luciana Giacheri Fossati and Nicola Tranfaglia, *La stampa italiana nell’età liberale*, (Bari: Laterza, 1979), pp. 107-113.

<sup>604</sup> Ernesto Teodoro Moneta, as a youth, experienced an adventurous period of patriotic activity that included his participation in both the *Cinque giornate* (1848) and Garibaldi’s *Spedizione dei Mille* (1860) before he joined *Il Secolo*. His outspoken support for

who had held the editorship of *Il Secolo* from the year after the newspaper's founding in 1866 until his retirement in 1896. Moneta also happened to have participated in the Expedition of the Thousand, of which Edoardo's great-uncle Agostino Bertani had been Garibaldi's chief organizer. In addition, Edoardo had attended *Liceo Parini* with Moneta's son, Luigi Moneta Caglio (1875-1945),<sup>605</sup> who also counted Ludovico Necchi among his close friends.<sup>606</sup> In fact, by 1897, under Necchi's influence, the young Moneta had already become involved in the Catholic movement and joined such established figures as Don Davide Albertario and Filippo Meda in forming the nucleus of a Catholic political party.<sup>607</sup> It is likely that Edoardo Gemelli, through Moneta Caglio, had some degree of familiarity with Romussi. It is also likely that Edoardo was acquainted with Romussi by dint of his kinship to Bertani. Romussi was a close comrade of Felice Cavallotti (1842-1898),<sup>608</sup> a swashbuckling journalist, popular literary figure, and

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Mazzinian and pacifist ideals would earn him the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1907. Maria Combi, *Ernesto Teodoro Moneta, premio nobel per la pace 1907* (Milano: U. Mursia & C., 1968). Gemelli's mentor at Pavia, Camillo Golgi, would win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1906. Gemelli, before the age thirty, would thus be acquainted with not one, but two Nobel Prize winners.

<sup>605</sup> Luigi Moneta Caglio took the family name of his mother, Ersilia Caglio (1845-1899), from whom he inherited an aristocratic title awarded to her family during the Napoleonic rule of Lombardy. Like Gemelli, he was drawn back into the church through the influence of Necchi; Moneta Caglio was among the original members of the *Fascio democratico cristiano* founded by Necchi in Milan in 1899. His son, Ernesto Teodoro Moneta Caglio (1907-1995), became a noted scholar of Ambrosian chant, the oldest form of liturgical chant in the Latin church, and attended Vatican Council II as a liturgical consultant. Michel Huglo, *Fonti e paleografia del canto ambrosiano* (Milano: Scuola tip. San Benedetto, 1956).

<sup>606</sup> Pio Bondioli, *Vico Necchi, fedel servo di Dio* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1934), p. 42.

<sup>607</sup> Combi, fn. p. 189.

<sup>608</sup> Felice Cavallotti was a skillful, eloquent and popular deputy in the Italian parliament as well as a published writer in various genres. Under his leadership, the Radical party grew in strength and numbers. His sharp tongue and pen frequently incited its targets to challenge him to duels, which proved his undoing. He was struck down by Ferruccio

parliamentary Radical.<sup>609</sup> Cavallotti, in turn, was an intimate of Bertani in the Chamber of Deputies, in which body the two men shared their deeply held Garibaldian ideals. Upon the death of Bertani in 1886, Cavallotti assumed leadership of the parliamentary Radicals. Given the political sympathies and personal connections shared by Romussi and Gemelli, it is reasonable to conclude that Gemelli may very well have been receptive to Romussi's view of Ambrose.

Romussi cuts through the legends about Ambrose to get closer to the historical man. For example, he dismisses tales about Ambrose as someone who violently enforced his dogmatism:

Milanese raised in families that preserve traditions have heard recounted the warlike feats of St. Ambrose and they remember... the places that in his time were witnesses of great and bloody battles between Arians and Catholics. Even in the churches there exist documents that, with the authority of time and age, persuade you to believe them. On the contrary, St. Ambrose never

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Macola (1861-1910), a conservative journalist and parliament deputy; killing Cavallotti destroyed Macola, whose public career was soon finished and whose remorse eventually drove him to suicide. See also: Raffaele Colapietra, *Felice Cavallotti e la democrazia radicale in Italia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1966); Alessandro Galante Garrone, *Felice Cavallotti* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1976); Alessandro Galante Garrone, 'Cavallotti, Felice,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 22 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1979), pp. 794-803; Luigi Polo Friz, ed., *Felice Cavallotti. Atti del convegno, 7 marzo 1998, Arona* (Novara: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano; Comitato di Novara; etc., 2000).

<sup>609</sup> Cavallotti wrote the preface for Romussi's book on Milanese monuments. See above Ch. 2, fn. 6.

raised a hand against an enemy; it is true that he combated the Arians, but by words, and he overcame them by persuasion and love.<sup>610</sup>

Romussi rejects another violent legend about Ambrose. The figure of the bishop had long appeared on coins and in sculptures and paintings, as well as on the *gonfalone civico di Milano*, with a handheld whip in for the lashing of Arians. The very whip used by Ambrose for this purpose was even said to be among the relics preserved in the Duomo. This legend would, according to Romussi, be corrected by the emerging historical sciences:

Criticism must establish the truth; and this flows not from copying what is written in books, but from documents that are researched. That Ambrose never engaged in material combat is beyond dispute; his weapons were prayers and tears, they were the moral authority that he had over the people and thanks to which he was able to bring emperors into accord.... It must be concluded that Ambrose never used a whip. In times closer to his own he was represented with a whip as the material symbol of his work against the Arians and the tyrants of every race, who were the true scourge.<sup>611</sup>

Romussi attempts not only to detach Ambrose from old tales, but also to connect him with present realities, such as the unfair sharing of the Italian state's economic burden.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Romussi, p. 25.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>612</sup> Bolton King and Thomas Okey, *Italy To-day*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, 1904), pp. 137-141; Francesco Saverio Nitti, 'The Financial Situation in Italy,' in *Scritti di economia e finanza*, Vol. II (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1960), pp. 219-227.

This inequity was compelling a growing number of Lombards, both urban and rural, to support the Socialist movement.<sup>613</sup> Romussi cites *De Nabuthae*,<sup>614</sup> a written homily in which the fourth century bishop admonished the wealthy class of Mediolanum.<sup>615</sup> With reference to the Old Testament story of the farmer Naboth, whose possessions are seized by the covetous King Ahab, Ambrose spoke: “O rich, how far do you extend your greed? Do you dream of being the only ones on earth? By what right do you push away from the breast of nature him who nature has made your fellow man? The earth is the common good of both the rich and the poor: so why do you claim possession of it for yourselves?”<sup>616</sup> Romussi, like Amati, draws upon the collective memory of Ambrose to score a contemporary point, but respects history in doing so:

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<sup>613</sup> Louise Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881-1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>614</sup> Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Episcopi, ‘De Nabuthae Jezraelita liber unus,’ in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 14, cols. 731A-756C.

<sup>615</sup> Past appeals to Ambrose were sometimes redeployed in nineteenth century Italy. For example, Pius IX issued the encyclical *Respicientes* to protest the usurpation of Rome by the troops of Victor Emanuel II in 1870. In this encyclical Pius IX recalled the use to which Ambrose’s homily *De Nabuthae* had been drawn upon earlier by Pius VII to protest Napoleon’s annexation of Rome in 1809: “Obeying the laws of Our office and conscience, We followed the example of Our predecessors, particularly Pius VII whose problems were much like Our own. We borrow his words here: ‘Let us recall with St. Ambrose “the saintly man Naboth who owned a vineyard and was petitioned by a royal demand to give up his vineyard, so that the king, after cutting down the vines, might sow lowly vegetables. Naboth answered him: “Be it far from me to surrender the inheritance of my predecessors”.’” Pius IX, ‘Respicientes’ (1870), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1740-1878* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath, 1981), p. 395.

<sup>616</sup> Romussi, p. 44.

We do not claim to pass Ambrose off as a present-day socialist; he was simply a logical scholar of the Gospel.<sup>617</sup> He believed that the ideal plan of God is a single family, a common inheritance, an equal enjoyment, an equal brotherly share at the banquet of providence, and that the avaricious upset this design with claims of selfish enjoyment.<sup>618</sup>

Romussi, like Amati, thus draws upon the memory of Ambrose to make an implicit appeal for peace across party lines. This raises the question of whether Milanese Socialists retained any connection to Ambrose, and if so, what form it took. Romussi, like Amati, is a representative of the Historic Left, whose members were influenced by Mazzini and Garibaldi. By 1897 these two Risorgimento heroes had been dead for more than ten or twenty years, but their views of the First International and the Paris Commune of 1871 would have been remembered. Mazzini condemned Socialists for their espousal of atheism, materialism and class warfare.<sup>619</sup> Garibaldi seems to have been more ambivalent. Lucy Riall interprets him as having been “entirely in favor of the Paris Commune.”<sup>620</sup> While readily acknowledging that Garibaldi sympathized with any movement seeking justice, Alfonso Scirocco qualifies this with the claim that Garibaldi

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<sup>617</sup> It is odd that Romussi refers to Ambrose as a “scholar of the Gospel,” rather than “scholar of the Bible,” given that Ambrose makes reference, in this instance, as in many of his homilies, to the Old Testament. Marcia Colish, *Ambrose’s Patriarchs. Ethics for the Common Man* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

<sup>618</sup> Romussi, p. 44. These principles, as stated by Romussi, are perfectly consistent with those found in the papal encyclical *Rerum novarum*.

<sup>619</sup> Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 217.

<sup>620</sup> Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 355.

disapproved of eliminating private property and inheritance.<sup>621</sup> Men such as Amati and Romussi were struggling for the intermediate ground between intransigent supporters of the papacy, who mostly supported property rights, and Socialist overthrowers of the existing order, who sought to abolish such rights. Their appeal to Ambrose is better understood in this context. Romussi, as a member of the Historic Left, was unlikely to view Catholics as political allies, but he must have recognized that his camp overlapped with Catholics in defense of property rights. Romussi lavishes praise on the ancient bishop. “Every act of his life was in accord with his words.”<sup>622</sup> He preached against riches, and in practice he gave all his money to the poor and his fixed property to the church. He preached virtue, and in practice he lived austere and serenely as he fought unceasingly on behalf of justice. He never performed a single act “that was not governed by a moderating reason, an infinite mildness, a sweet and most pure perfection, all of which gives us reason for the irresistible appeal that he exercised on his contemporaries and that has lasted through the centuries.”<sup>623</sup> Romussi even raises Carlyle’s explanatory principle that “the history of all that man has accomplished on earth is, basically, the history of great men.”<sup>624</sup> Romussi denies that Carlyle’s principle carries the force of law, but he believes exception may be made in the case of Ambrose.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Alfonso Scirocco, *Garibaldi, Citizen of the World*, trans. Allan Cameron (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 379.

<sup>622</sup> Romussi, p. 56.

<sup>623</sup> Romussi, p. 58.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, Thomas Carlyle, *On heroes, hero-worship & the heroic in history* (London: James Fraser, 1841). First translated into Italian in 1849, a second edition of this work appeared in 1897. See: Thomas Carlyle, *Gli eroi*, trans. Maria Pezzè Pascolato (Firenze: G. Barbèra, 1897).

<sup>625</sup> Romussi, p. 58.



As a Radical and Democrat, Romussi is impelled to balance his praise for a great man with that for ordinary men. “It is the historic destiny of the Milanese to carry out progress, not thanks to particular men, but thanks to the masses.”<sup>626</sup> Romussi seems to use “progress” in the sense it was given by the organizers of the anti-clerical procession, who had opposed “clericals and moderates” to “those who seek progress in the world.”<sup>627</sup> This notion of progress was emphasized by Cattaneo earlier in the century and had become an article of faith for positivists. Romussi credits “the people” with first having established the *Comune di Milano* (the self-governing city), then having courageously defended Milan against Barbarossa and now having guided the city to “these days of peace.”<sup>628</sup> Certainly, Romussi was aware of the tension in the air in 1897, but by comparison with the medieval sieges and sackings of Milan, the current climate of the city was one of relative peace. Romussi praises the Milanese for continuing the work of Ambrose, whose greatness remains among them. Ambrose “is truly praiseworthy for having bestowed the Milanese character. He is the image on banners, the cry in battle, the figure on coins, and his name is on the lips whenever a gracious word is expressed about Milan.”<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>626</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>627</sup> ‘Le processione di ieri,’ (May 15-16, 1897).

<sup>628</sup> Romussi, p. 59. Romussi omits the long intervening centuries of rule by the Visconti, the Sforza, the Spanish and the Austrians, during which the Milanese were not, of course, self-governing. He stops short of calling the people “*ambrosiani*,” but his praise of the people as the saviors of Milanese liberty is redolent of the preamble to the *Statuto del Comune di Milano*, which uses *ambrosiana* as an adjective to describe the city’s constitutional history.

<sup>629</sup> Romussi, p. 60.

The Ambrose of Amati and Romussi is a man for all Milanese – if not as patron saint, then as civic hero.<sup>630</sup> They present him in a way that is virtually irreproachable. Both of these Liberals, representing the Historic Right and the Historic Left, respectively, echo the view of the forementioned Catholic lay leader Cesare Nava: to be Milanese is to be *ambrosiano*. Indeed, if there were any cultural tradition that was shared by virtually all Milanese it was that of Ambrose.<sup>631</sup> This seems to have been recognized even by Cesare Correnti (1815-1888), an “intransigently secular” Milanese leader in the Risorgimento, who, as Italy’s Minister of Public Instruction in the late 1860s and early 1870s, strove to

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<sup>630</sup> One nineteenth-century Milanese who attached no value to Ambrose as a patron saint was Carlo Cattaneo, who was dogmatic about the substance of what is useful: “In the satisfaction of his vast desires, man has no other guide than experience and reason.” (*l'uomo nel soddisfacimento dei suoi vasti desideri non ha altro guida che l'esperienza e la ragione.*) Carlo Cattaneo, ‘Assunto primo della scienza diretto naturale di G. D. Romagnosi,’ in Norberto Bobbio, ed., *Scritti filosofici*, Vol. I (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1960) p. 7; first published under initials “C. C.” in *Antologia* (Firenze), VII, n. 20, August 1822, pp. 202-212. In an essay of 1839 Cattaneo used the historic past tense when speaking of Ambrose as symbol and patron saint of the Milanese: “*Il padre della chiesa, di cui quella basilica porta il nome, fu [emphasis added] per tanti secoli l'emblema del nostro popolo, e il suo patrono nei consigilii del municipio e sui campi vittoriosi di Legnano, di Bicocca e di Parabiago.*” Carlo Cattaneo, ‘Del ristauo di alcuni edificj di Milano’ in Piero Treves, ed., *Scritti letterari*, Vol. I, ed. (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1981), p. 319; first published anonymously in *Politècnico*, I (1839). The implication is that patron saints are a thing of the past, no longer considered either effective or appropriate. By 1897 Cattaneo had been nearly thirty years in the grave, but his opposition, if not antipathy, toward patron saints still lived among Freemasons and anti-clericals. The Catholic procession bearing Ambrose’s relics to the Duomo in May of that year shows, however, that Cattaneo’s positivistic belief about experience and reason as the sole means of satisfying human desires had not yet prevailed sixty years after he had declared it.

<sup>631</sup> The post-Risorgimento Milanese were not alone in making their patron saint into the focus of a civic religion; the Sienese did the same with their patroness, St. Catherine of Siena. Referring to the 1887 visit of King Umberto, Queen Margherita and Prime Minister Francesco Crispi to the sanctuary of this saint in Siena, Gerald Parsons writes, “Clearly, the figure of Catherine had the capacity, at least temporarily, to transcend the contemporary discord between the civil and religious spheres in Italy and to bring church, monarchy and liberal prime minister together.” Gerald Parsons, *The Cult of Saint Catherine of Siena. A Study in Civil Religion* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 41-47.

introduce laic values into the culture.<sup>632</sup> “The genius of Milan,” stated Correnti, “is civil Christianity.” (*Il genio di Milano è il Cristianesimo civile.*)<sup>633</sup> The Freemason and anti-clerical demonstration in protest against the public procession of Ambrose’s relics suggests that Milanese who opposed “anachronism” with “progress” were beyond the possibility of being reconciled with the figure of a Catholic saint, perhaps even in a secularized version. On the other hand, not every Freemason and anti-clerical was an agitator against Catholic tradition, as evidenced by Innocente Gemelli and Caterina Bertani, who continued *pro forma* participation in the Catholic sacraments despite their ideological commitments. It is not an easy thing to purge traditional symbols of either content or form. This is further evidenced by the use of secular saints and martyrs in the counter-procession held by Freemasons and anti-clericals. If Risorgimento patriots of radical democratic views upheld the figure of Ambrose in 1897 as a moral exemplar and public conciliator, then it seems reasonable to conclude that Edoardo Gemelli was conscious of the possibility that he could moderate criticism of his religious conversion, and even gain a modicum of sympathy from his fellow Milanese (although members of his immediate circle of Socialists and positivists, depending on the narrowness of their views, may have been exceptions) by linking his own identity to that of the city’s patron saint.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> Luigi Ambrosoli, ‘Correnti, Cesare,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 29 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1983), p. 476-480.

<sup>633</sup> Quoted in Fausto Fonzi, *Crispi e lo “Stato di Milano”* (Milano: Giuffrè editore, 19656), fn. 9, p. xv.

<sup>634</sup> A story from the founding of Gemelli’s university suggests the powerful connotations that Ambrose’s name had among early twentieth century Milanese. When the planning of the university was underway in 1919, some members of the founding committee hesitated about using the term “Sacred Heart,” redolent of Christian mysticism, in the

## Chapter 5: PIAZZA SANT'AMBROGIO – THE PLACE

Gemelli's identification with St. Ambrose provided him, and later his university, with perhaps the best possible – and certainly the longest established – credential of Milanese Catholicism, if not Milanese culture in general. The initial link was forged in the early months of 1903 when Edoardo Gemelli was a conscripted orderly in the *Ospedale militare* in Piazza Sant' Ambrogio. In this former monastery, which for centuries had been annexed to Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, he overcame all rational obstacles to religious faith. He marked his embrace of Catholicism by returning to the eucharist in the crypt of the basilica, before the relics of St. Ambrose, on Holy Thursday, just before the start of the Easter triduum.<sup>635</sup> Two decades later when he founded the first Catholic university in

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proposed name, *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore*. “After half a century of anti-clericalism... [this] would appear a reckless and zealous gesture.” As a conciliating alternative, it was suggested that the university be named instead *Ambrosiana*, in honor of St. Ambrose. The founders ultimately, even defiantly, chose the original proposed name. Francesco Olgiati, *L'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore*, Vol. I (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1955), pp. 427-430. Filippo Meda, serving as legal advisor to Gemelli while also holding a post as Minister of Finance in the final government of Giolitti (June 15, 1920-July 4, 1921), had advised: “it smacks of the monastic and the mystical, which reconciles poorly with a scientific and practical orientation for higher studies” (*c'è un certo sapore di conventuale e di ascetico che mal si concilia con un indirizzo scientifico e pratico di studi superiori*). Alfredo Canavero, ‘Filippo Meda e la fondazione dell'Università Cattolica,’ in Guido Formigoni, ed., *Filippo Meda tra economia e società e politica. Relazioni del convegno di studio (Milano, 14-15 dicembre 1989) promosso dall'Archivio per la Storia del Movimento sociale cattolico in Italia, con un bibliografia degli scritti di Filippo Meda* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1991), pp. 244.

<sup>635</sup> Given that Gemelli had received the sacrament of baptism as an infant and those of confirmation and the eucharist as a boy, his conversion in 1903 was, in fact, a return to the sacraments. Insofar as Gemelli underwent a change in his understanding of the world and in his form of commitment to it, his experience was indeed a religious conversion. It is significant that Gemelli chose to return to the sacraments at Easter and in the presence of the relics of St. Ambrose. Gemelli thereby created a parallel between himself and St. Augustine. This last figure, who reconciled the intellectual culture of his own time with

post-Risorgimento Italy, Gemelli, it seems, would have it located nowhere but upon this hallowed and historical ground.

If Gemelli's construction of a Catholic identity were indeed a conscious process that aimed at transcending time and space, then it is worth considering not only how Ambrose was represented in the Milanese memory at the turn of the century, but also how the place tied through the centuries to the memory of this saint and named in his honor – the piazza and the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio – were also construed by *fin-de-siècle* Milanese.

The meaning attached to the piazza and its basilica at that time might be drawn, at least in part, by examining the role they played in certain products of nineteenth century Italian culture that remained popular at the dawn of the new century.

A starting point for this consideration is the image of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio in certain operatic and literary compositions from nineteenth-century Milan. These works provide images with which young Edoardo is likely to have been familiar. Just as the writings of Amato Amati (1831-1904) and Carlo Romussi (1847-1913) indicate that Ambrose was a figure of symbolic importance even for political Liberals who were altogether out of sympathy with Catholicism as a religion, so do the operas of Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)<sup>636</sup> and the poetry of Giuseppe Giusti (1809-1850)<sup>637</sup> reveal that Basilica

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Christian doctrine, had been baptized into the church by Ambrose during the Easter vigil in 387 A.D.

<sup>636</sup> Giuseppe Verdi, the composer best known for his Italian Romantic operas, stood out among the great men of the cultural and political Risorgimento for the longevity and

Sant' Ambrogio was a rich place in the imagination of Liberal artists out of sympathy with clericalism, if not Catholicism. Some knowledge about these artists is needed to discern the meaning of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio in their work.

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adaptability of his genius. "For the ability to grow, to change, to adapt one's self without loss of integrity is the essence of being alive, and men instinctively respect and admire it. Among the great figures of nineteenth-century Italy only Verdi had this quality. Manzoni's creative urge exhausted itself early, and Vittorio Emanuele's good start soon dwindled into pretense. Political events passed Mazzini by; death cut off Cavour's career and came too late to save Garibaldi from marring his. Verdi alone continued into the new age after 1860 still adding to his glory." Frank Walker, *The Man Verdi* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 573. See also George Martin, *Verdi, His Music, Life and Times* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963); David R. B. Kimbell, *Verdi in the Age of Italian Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Julian Budden, *Verdi* (London: Dent, 1985); George Martin, *Aspects of Verdi* (London: Robson Books, 1989); Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, rev. ed. 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Verdi. A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>637</sup> Giuseppe Giusti, born to politically well-connected Tuscan gentry, began writing satirical poetry, often with political content, while studying law at the University of Pisa. His earliest poem was 'La guigliottina a vapore' (1833), about an imaginary "steam-powered guillotine" invented for efficient execution of anyone who troubled the civil authorities. Having achieved a literary reputation while practicing law in Florence, he left in 1844 for Rome, Naples and Milan. He sympathized with the revolutions of 1848, but he tended toward moderation in both politics and religion. Disillusioned with the Tuscan parliament, he withdrew from it in 1849 and soon thereafter died of a consumptive illness. Giusti's work mocks the injustice and foolishness of all men, regardless of their political or religious allegiances. He is frequently compared with Giuseppe Parini (1729-1799), the great satirical poet of the previous century, whose work he edited (and after whom is named the prestigious state-run *ginnasio-liceo* attended by Edoardo Geminelli). Zeffiro Ciuffoletti and Domenico Proietti, 'Giusti, Giuseppe,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 57 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2001), pp. 173-182; Gaetana Marrone, *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 861-862. For primary sources on Giusti, see: Giuseppe Giusti, *Epistolario di Giuseppe Giusti*, 2 vols., ed. Giovanni Frassi (Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1859); *Ibid.*, *Vita di Giuseppe Giusti, scritta da lui medesimo*, ed. Guido Biagi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1886). Secondary sources: Giosuè Carducci, 'Della vita e delle opere di Giuseppe Giusti' in Giosuè Carducci, ed. *Le Poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Firenze: G. Barbèra, 1862); Susan Horner, *The Tuscan Poet: Giusti and His Times* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1864); Gaetano Ghivizzani, *Giuseppe Giusti e i suoi tempi* (Reggio nell'Emilia: G. Barbieri e Comp., 1882); E. M. Clerke, 'The Tuscan Béranger,' in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (January 1885), pp. 53-69.

Neither Verdi nor Giusti was Milanese, or even Lombard, by birth: Verdi was born in a village near Parma, across the Po River from Lombardy; Giusti was born near Pistoia in Tuscany and spent much of his relatively short adult life in Florence.<sup>638</sup> Both, however, formed important connections to Milan as young men. Verdi's phenomenally long career began and ended in Milan; his name is forever associated with the Teatro alla Scala, which premiered more of his twenty-eight operas than any other stage.<sup>639</sup> Giusti, whose lifespan was less than half that of Verdi's, visited Milan for a month in the autumn of 1845 as guest of Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), with whom he developed a cherished friendship. "I stayed for a good month in the home of Alessandro Manzoni, in the midst of that dear family." (*Mi trattenni un bel mese in casa di Alessandro Manzoni, in mezzo a quella cara famiglia.*)<sup>640</sup> The literary master greatly admired the work of the young poet.

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<sup>638</sup> While in Florence for the March 1847 premiere of his opera *Macbeth*, Verdi received a visit Giusti. The poet, in his words, urged the composer "to accompany with your noble harmonies that high and solemn sorrow which fills the heart of the Italian nation," thus perhaps attempting to persuade Verdi to resume the sort of work exemplified by his earlier works *Nabucco* (1842) and *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata* (1843). Julian Budden, *Verdi* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd, 1985), p. 41.

<sup>639</sup> Francesco Degrada, *Verdi e la Scala* (Milano: Edizioni del Teatro alla Scala: Rizzoli, 2001).

<sup>640</sup> Giuseppe Giusti, *Vita di Giuseppe Giusti, scritta da lui medesimo*, ed. Guido Biagi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1886), p. 77. As a guest in Manzoni's home, Giusti met important Catholic literary figures such as Tomasso Grossi (1791-1853) and Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797-1855). Grossi had taken the initiative in establishing an epistolary relationship with Giusti two years earlier by writing him a letter of praise. "Your lordship knows that I am one of his admirers. What a pleasing novelty to come into contact with someone who has as many of them as there are those who attend to our language, who have the advantage of intellect!" (*Sappia V. S. che io sono un suo ammiratore. Che bella novità da venir a contare ad uno che ne ha tanti, quanti sono quelli che intendono la nostra lingue, hanno il bene dell'intelletto!*) Letter from Tomasso Grossi to Giuseppe Giusti, October 11, 1843, in *Epistolario di Giuseppe Giusti*, Vol. 1, ed. Giovanni Frassi (Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1859), p. 366.

As Manzoni expressed in his first letter to Giusti before having met him: “When someone, as a gift, gave me for the first time to read some verses by *a certain* Giusti, I do not know which was the greater pleasure: to read extraordinarily beautiful verses, or to see the birth of an Italian glory.”<sup>641</sup>

Neither Verdi nor Giusti were extraordinarily driven by political or religious impulses. Their primary devotion seems to have been the humanism of their art. In the spheres of politics and religion their beliefs were moderate and their behavior prudent, despite what the public sometimes read into their work. Giusti’s poetry could indeed be read as that of a passionate Liberal, but his attitude became tempered by the revolutionary events of 1848. Drafted and elected to the Tuscan assembly that year, he recoiled from his bitter experience with that body and withdrew from politics.<sup>642</sup> He was, by his own admission,

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<sup>641</sup> “*Quando uno, per farmi un regalo, mi dette la prima volta a leggere de’ versi d’un certo Giusti, non so se sia stato maggiore per me il piacere de legger de’ versi bellissimi o quello di veder nascere una gloria italiana.*” Letter from Alessandro Manzoni to Giuseppe Giusti, November 8, 1843, in *Epistolario di Giuseppe Giusti*, Vol. 1, p. 397. Manzoni and Giusti began an epistolary relationship in autumn 1843 after Giusti had asked for Manzoni’s comments on some of his poetry. Manzoni appreciative reply was tinged with admonition: “...in those poems that from one angle I love and admire so much, I deplore bitterly that which concerns religion...” (*in quelle poesie che da una parte amo e ammiro tanto, deploro amaramente ciò ch’è tocca la religione....*) Letter from Alessandro Manzoni to Giuseppe Giusti, November 8, 1843, in *Epistolario di Giuseppe Giusti*, Vol. 1, p. 398. Giusti, chastened, replied: “I had a complete change of heart and made it my duty to respect art, the public and myself. From that moment I have removed from my writings all witticisms that could offend modesty, all personal bias, all sarcasm against religion.” (*...mutai corda affatto e mi feci un dovere di rispettare l’arte, il pubblico e me stesso. Da quell moment tagliai fuori dai miei scritti ogni facezia che potesse offendere il pudore, ogni personalità, ogni sarcasmo contro la religione.*) Letter from Giuseppe Giusti to Alessandro Manzoni, [April 1844], in *Epistolario di Giuseppe Giusti*, Vol. 1, p. 416.

<sup>642</sup> Gaetano Ghivizzani, *Giuseppe Giusti e i suoi tempi* (Reggio nell’Emilia: G. Barbieri e comp., 1882), pp. 23-24.



not cut out for it. “The whole district can bear witness to the fact, that having taken it into their heads to compose a law and to compose a poem were one and the same thing, they insisted on having me here. Please God they may change their minds, and send me home again!”<sup>643</sup> Moreover, his political attitude set him at odds with many, if not most, of his fellow Tuscan legislators. “I declared my own intention of keeping aloof, since over-hasty judgments appear to me both unjust and imprudent. I was not listened to, because the man who belongs to no party is disliked by all, and is bastinadoed by the reds as well as by the blacks and yellows.”<sup>644</sup> He ended up sharing Manzoni’s respectful, even faithful, stance toward the traditional religion, if not toward certain ideologies derived from it, such as clericalism or temporalism.<sup>645</sup> Both Manzoni’s historical principle of divine providence and his moral admonition to trust in it are reflected in

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<sup>643</sup> Letter of Giuseppe Giusti to Atto Vannucci [October 1848], in Susan Horner, *The Tuscan Poet Giuseppe Giusti and His Times* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1864), pp. 292. Atto Vannucci (1810-1883), seminary educated and ordained priest, was a Tuscan literary scholar and political figure. During a trip to Paris in 1843, he met Italian exiles and became attached to Mazzini’s Young Italy. Along with Giusti, he was elected to the Tuscan legislative assembly in 1848. If the events of that year moderated Giusti, they radicalized Vannucci. He left the priesthood and went into exile abroad when the Austrian Duke Leopold II returned to Tuscany in 1849. He returned in 1854 and later served in the Italian Chamber of Deputies and Senate.

<sup>644</sup> Letter of Giuseppe Giusti to Atto Vannucci (November 11, 1848), in Horner, p. 297. Giusti refers to socialists as “the reds” and to Austrian imperialists as “the blacks and yellows.” Black and yellow were the colors of the flag of the Austrian Empire (1804-1867); Austria called itself an “empire” in reaction to Napoleon Bonaparte’s proclamation of the French Empire in 1804. “In 1804 Francis II, the last Holy Roman Emperor, saw his Imperial title threatened by the ambitions of Napoleon and invented for himself the title ‘Emperor of Austria.’” A. J. P. Taylor, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 9. See also: Joachim Whaley, ‘Austria, ‘Germany’, and the Dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire,’ in Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, eds., *The Hapsburg Legacy. National Identity in Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 3-12.

<sup>645</sup> Ghivizzani, p. 65, fn. 2, p. 65.

Giusti's letters and poetry.<sup>646</sup> Giusti's trust in providence should not, however, be mistaken for resignation, an attitude that his poetry mocks.<sup>647</sup>

Verdi expressed similarly moderate and prudent political and religious views. He was careful not to offend civil authorities on the Italian peninsula before 1848. He dedicated the published piano score of *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843) to the Austrian ruler Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla<sup>648</sup> (whom, given Verdi's birthplace, was effectively his sovereign), even though this opera was interpreted as a patriotic work that fired the spirit of Risorgimento politics. Here a distinction needs to be made between the cultural Risorgimento and the political Risorgimento, even though the former inspired the latter in practice. Verdi was initially an ardent admirer of the

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<sup>646</sup> Giusti's trust in providence is indicated in his letters: "Europe appears to me just now like a great caldron, a chaotic mess of discordant elements, boiling up all together, and from whence, some day or other, a better state of things will emerge. But what may we not see before the pudding is ready? Let us trust in Providence, who watches over the caldron. I, for one, have not much confidence in those who want to handle the ladle." Letter of Giuseppe Giusti to Alessandro Manzoni (September 1, 1845), in Horner, p. 186. "God knows best what He has ordered." Letter of Giuseppe Giusti to Tomasso Grossi (June 25, 1846), in Horner, p. 186. This trust is also shown in his poetry: "My trusting soul turns, Lord, to your paternal bosom and finds repose in an effect that is not of this world." (*Signor, fidando, al tuo paterno seno / L'anima mia ricorre, e si riposa / In un effetto che non è terreno.*) 'La fiducia in Dio' (1837), in Giuseppe Giusti, *Le poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, ed. Giosuè Carducci (Firenze: G. Barbèra, 1862), p. 482.

<sup>647</sup> "Tell me, my Father; would it be true that you want us to become so resigned as to put up with the foreigner in our home, like a hairshirt to pay for sins, and to leave the future in the care of God, as if the matter were not up to us?" (*Dite un po', Padre mio; sarebbe vero / Che ci volete tanto rassegnati / Da giulebbarci in casa il forestier o/ Come un cilizio a sconto de' peccati, / E a Dio lasciare la cura del poi, / Come se il fatto non istesse a noi?*) 'La rassegnazione' (1846) in Giusti, *Le poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, p. 298-302.

<sup>648</sup> *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata. Drama lirico in quattro atti di Temistocle Solera. Posto in musica ed umilmente dedicato a Sua Maestà la Principessa Imperiale Maria Luigia Arciduchessa d'Austria, Duchessa di Parma, Piacenza e Guastalla, & da Giuseppe Verdi* (Milano: G. Ricordi, 1843).

revolutionary-minded republican Mazzini. Until the end of his days he shared Mazzini's Romantic belief in "a nation united by culture and language."<sup>649</sup> Verdi's political beliefs were, however, shaped by the failure of the 1848 uprisings. He thereafter switched his political support to the diplomatically-minded monarchist Cavour, recognizing that "Piedmont set the pattern for Italy not only in military leadership but in its political and economic development."<sup>650</sup> A Romantic artist, Verdi was also an unusually practical man.<sup>651</sup>

Like Manzoni and Giusti, Verdi was anti-clerical in a political sense; unlike them, he was religiously agnostic. He showed a disinterested respect for the Catholic faith, if not the Catholic clergy. Verdi was in this sense a conservative, an upholder of order and the tradition that sustains it. Thus he was upset, at least initially, by the iconoclastic *Scapigliatura* movement among disaffected younger Milanese artists.<sup>652</sup> These

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<sup>649</sup> Julian Budden, *Verdi* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd, 1985), p. 48.

<sup>650</sup> George Martin, *Verdi. His Music, Life and Times* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963), p. 331. See also: Franco Della Peruta, 'Verdi e il Risorgimento,' in Franco Della Peruta, *Uomini e idee dell'Ottocento Italiano* (Roma: FrancoAngeli, 2002), pp. 217-236.

<sup>651</sup> Verdi invested heavily in extensive agricultural landholdings in provincial Parma and thus took a keen interest in the economic and financial policies of the state.

<sup>652</sup> The movement named *Scapigliatura* [i.e., "dishevelled"] was baptized as such in 1858 by Carlo Righetti (1828-1906), under the pen name "Cletto Arrighi" in the introduction to a novel that he planned to write:

"In all the great and rich cities of the uncivilized world exists as certain number of individuals of both sexes – it could be said, a certain *race of people* – between the ages of twenty and thirty-five at most; almost always full of genius; more advanced than their time; free as the eagle of the Alps; ready for good as much as for bad; restless, afflicted, turbulent – whom – and for certain terrible contradictions between their condition and their status, that is, between what they have in their head and what they have in

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their pocket, and for their particular eccentric and disordered manner of life, and for... many, many other reasons and many other consequences the study of which will form precisely the purpose and the moral of my novel – merit being classified in a new and particular subdivision of the great civilized family, as those who form a caste *sui generis*, distinct as can be from others. (*In tutte le grandi e ricche città del mondo incivilito esiste una certa quantità di individui di ambo i sessi – v'è chi direbbe: una certa razza di gente – fra i venti e i trentacinque anni non più; pieni d'ingegno quasi sempre; più avanzati del loro secolo; indipendenti come l'aquila delle Alpi; pronti al bene quanto al male; inquieti, travagliati, turbolenti – i quali – e per certe contraddizioni terribili fra la loro condizione e il loro stato, vale a dire fra ciò che hanno in testa, e ciò che hanno in tasca, e per una loro particolare maniera eccentrica e disordinata di vivere, e per... mille e mille altre cause e mille altri effetti il cui studio formerà appunto lo scopo e la morale del mio romanzo – meritano d'essere classificati in una nuova e particolare suddivisione della grande famiglia civile, come coloro che vi formano una casta sui generis distinta da tutte quante le altre.*)

“This caste or class – which would be better described - real pandemonium of the times, personification of the carelessness and of the madness, reservoir of disorder, of free spiritedness and of opposition to ordered stability, this class, I repeat, that in Milan has more than any other a reason and excuse for existing, I, with a beautiful and pure Italian word, have baptized it: the *Milanese Scapigliatura*. (*Questa casta o classe – che sarà meglio detto – vero pandemonio del secolo, personificazione della storditaggine e della follia, serbatoio del disordine, dello spirito d'indipendenza e di opposizione agli ordini stabiliti, questa classe, ripeto, che a Milano ha più che altrove una ragione e una scusa di esistere, io, con una bella e preta parola italiana, l'ho battezzata appunto: la Scapigliatura Milanese....*)

“The Milanese Scapigliatura is composed of individuals of every class, of every condition, of every level possible on the social scale.... (*La Scapigliatura Milanese è composto da individui di ogni ceto, di ogni condizione, di ogni grado possibile della scala sociale....*)

“Hope in the future is its religion; poverty is its essential characteristic. (*La speranza nell'avvenire è la sua religione; la povertà è il suo carattere essenziale.*)

‘La Scapigliatura Milanese, frammenti per Cletto Arrighi,’ in *Almanacco del Pungolo* (1858), pp. 59-64.

bohemians were “dedicated to the overthrow of traditional values, not the least the liberal Christianity of Verdi’s idol, Manzoni.”<sup>653</sup> Members of the *Scapigliatura* denigrated just about everything for which Manzoni stood.<sup>654</sup> They did not attack

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Much of Righetti’s depiction of the *Scapigliatura* is derived from the Bohemian scene in Paris that had been recorded by Honoré de Balzac in “Un prince de la Bohême” (1840) and Henry Murger in *Scènes de la vie Bohème* (1851). Gaetano Mariani, *Storia della Scapigliatura* (Roma: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 1967); Jerrold Siegel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930* (New York: Viking, 1986). The literary critic Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883) omits mention of the *Scapigliatura* in his monumental *Storia della letteratura italiana* published in two volumes in 1870 and 1871. The iconoclasm of the Milanese *Scapigliatura* calls to mind the Viennese cultural upheaval examined in Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981). In the case of late nineteenth-century Vienna, “the young were revolting... against the authority of the paternal culture that was their inheritance. What they assaulted on a broad front was the value system of classical liberalism-in-ascendency within which they had been reared” (p. xxvi). By contrast, Jerrold Siegel argues that Bohemians were a non-threatening manifestation of the Parisian liberal bourgeoisie. The Milanese *Scapigliatura* may have intended to bite, but it seems they mostly just barked. Schorske notes that what took the better part of a century to happen in Paris occurred in a couple of decades in Vienna: “In France, the post-liberal question of “modernity” in culture arose in the wake of the Revolution of 1848 as a kind of avant-garde self-criticism of the bourgeoisie, and slowly spread, with many advances and retreats, from the era of the Second Empire to the eve of World War I. In Austria, however, the modern movements appeared in most fields in the 1890’s and were fully matured two decades later” (p. xxvii). The greater contemporaneity of cultural transformations in Paris and Milan during the nineteenth century suggests the limited extent to which Vienna served as the *metropole* for Lombardy during the period of Austrian rule.

<sup>653</sup> Budden, *Verdi*, p. 89.

<sup>654</sup> The short-lived review *Figaro*, edited by Emilio Praga (1839-1875) and Arrigo Boito (1842-1918), became the leading voice of the *Scapigliatura*. These two authored the ‘*Polemica letteraria*’ that appeared in their journal on February 4, 1864. It attacks Manzonian Romanticism by casting the worst aspersions on the basic tenets of Catholicism as found in the Nicene Creed: “*La nostra generazione, quella dei capelli biondi, ne va gridando ogni giorno che il Cattolicesimo crolla, che il feticismo ruina, e che una inquieta verità... s’innalza. Ne va gridando che un Dio s’è putrefatto, e che un Uomo s’è divinizzato, che il Teandro non esiste più, che il Genio solo è figlio di Dio, che l’eresia eutichiana di diciotto secoli fa divenne vero sublime, che lo Spirito Santo, l’Eone, il Peracklit non è più fra noi, che la Pentecosta non è, che la Vergine non è..., che la risurrezione non è, e che vagando ne’ tempi futuri intorno alle pendici del Golgota e frugando religiosamente quella terra di sangue, un poeta od un bifolco troveranno*

Manzoni directly – they might have lost credibility by doing so, given his secure position at the apex of nineteenth-century Italian culture – but they were merciless toward those who in the post-1848 period carried on the sort of Romanticism that Manzoni had established.<sup>655</sup> There is a certain irony in the fact that one of the *Scapigliatura* leaders, Arrigo Boito (1842-1918) was the librettist of some of the great operas that were composed late in his career by Verdi, who was deeply rooted in a Romantic tradition.<sup>656</sup>

Verdi had idolized Manzoni ever since reading *I Promessi sposi* at the age of sixteen; four decades later he praised Manzoni's novel as "one of the greatest books that ever came out of a human brain" and "a consolation to humanity."<sup>657</sup> Verdi seems to have valued this novel for its humanist values, but he would have had to abstract these from the Catholic theme of divine providence that runs throughout the work. Indeed, providence, as a meta-historical vision rather than a mere concept, is a deep vein of Milanese Catholicism, as seen in Gemelli and his circle during the Fascist period as well

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*forse il cranio santissimo di Cristo.*" Gaetano Mariani, *Storia della Scapigliatura* (Roma: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 1967), p. 93.

<sup>655</sup> "Dopo Dante e la Bibbia il suo fu il libro che forse rileggeremo di più, e questa confessione ci basti, per poter contraporre al gigante, senza goffi livori nell'anima, un piccolo nostro ideale che non è al tutto il suo... Se un uomo benedetto e privilegiato dalla natura, nacque col mistero della fede nell'anima, e cantò soavemente i più placidi canti, una torma di bertucce dev'essa forse corregli dietro, e scimmieggiare ogni giorno colle zanche vellose il suo segno di croce?" "Polemica letteraria," in *Figaro* (February 4, 1864). Mariani, p. 93.

<sup>656</sup> Emerico Giachery, 'Boito, Arrigo,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 11 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1969), pp. 230-237. See fn. 20.

<sup>657</sup> Martin, *Verdi. His Music, Life and Times* p. 22. No less admiring of Manzoni's novel was Giuseppe Giusti. In a letter to the author, Giusti told him that his romance *I Promessi sposi* "has been everywhere with me." Giuseppe Giusti to Alessandro Manzoni (summer 1845), in Horner, p. 176. In another letter, Giusti wrote him: "...when led astray by youthful follies, I was led back to your book." Giusti to Alessandro Manzoni (September 1, 1845), in Horner, p. 178.

as in Manzoni and his circle during the Risorgimento. This might explain why Verdi, whose agnosticism never stopped him from incorporating religious themes in his operas (his criterion of artistic success was the popularity of a work), played upon divine providence in the two most rousing parts of *Nabucco* (Act 3, Scene 2: ‘*Va pensiero*’) and *I lombardi* (Act 4, Scene 2: ‘*O Signore, dal tetto natio!*’).<sup>658</sup> It was not a view of reality that he shared, especially as he grew older. Late in life Verdi believed in “fate,” such that “misfortune rules the world.”<sup>659</sup>

Verdi made no secret of his anti-clericalism, but he kept a public silence about the precise nature of his religious beliefs.<sup>660</sup> An indication of them is glimpsed in a letter of September 1872, in which Verdi’s wife, Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897), a practicing Catholic, compares her husband and the aged Manzoni, whose long life at that time was approaching its end. “There are some virtuous natures that need to believe in God; others, equally perfect, that are happy not believing in anything, and simply observing rigorously every precept of strict morality. Manzoni and Verdi! These two men give me cause for thought – are for me a true subject for meditation.”<sup>661</sup> Verdi was moved by the content of

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<sup>658</sup> Both operas premiered during the carnival-Lent season of the opera, during which sacred dramas were by custom performed (although it seems that the custom could not have been very old; until the late eighteenth-century all theaters in Milan were shuttered during Lent).

<sup>659</sup> Giuseppe Verdi, *I coppialettere di Giuseppe Verdi*, ed. Gaetano Cesari and Alessandro Luzio (Milano: Stucchi Ceretti, 1913), pp. 530-532.

<sup>660</sup> Budden, *Verdi*, p. 147.

<sup>661</sup> Quoted in Frank Walker, *The Man Verdi* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 282. The letter was written to Countess Clara Maffei (1814-1886). Born into a family of Lombard provincial nobility, Elena Chiara Maria Antonia Carrara Spinelli was married, from 1832 to 1846, to the literary figure Andrea Maffei (1798-1885), whose family had been ennobled by the Holy Roman Empire. Settled in Milan, Clara and her husband

Manzoni's writing, (i.e., the narrative of a disappointing world in which good men and women do not despair), not by the religious principle from which Manzoni's writing flowed (i.e., the commandment to trust in divine providence). The enduring influence of Manzoni upon Verdi motivated the composer to score the *Messa da Requiem* (1874).<sup>662</sup> Verdi's *Requiem* not only honors Manzoni with a monument of Italian music, but also, as George Martin argues, immortalizes the contrast between Manzoni's Christian faith and Verdi's own stoic agnosticism.<sup>663</sup>

The fact that two of the most notable images of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio generated by nineteenth-century Italian culture date from the Risorgimento era (1815-1870), rather than the later period in which Edoardo Geminelli was born and grew to adulthood, deserves explanation. According to the historical approach that the influential Neapolitan literary critic Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883) formulated to analyze the development of Italian

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began in 1834 to host what "has passed into history as the most famous and cosmopolitan cultural salon in nineteenth century Italy." As the primary gathering place for major figures in the cultural Risorgimento, its guests included Verdi and Manzoni. After separating from her husband, Clara continued to host the salon until her death. Marta Marri Tonelli, 'Maffei, Andrea,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 67 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2006), pp. 215-220. See also: Daniella Pizzagalli, *L'Amica. Clara Maffei e il suo salotto nel Risorgimento Italiano* (Milano: Mondadori, 1997).

<sup>662</sup> Laura Basini, 'Verdi and Sacred Revivalism in Post-Unification Italy,' *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 133-159.

<sup>663</sup> George Martin, 'Verdi, Manzoni, and the *Requiem*,' in George Martin, *Aspects of Verdi* (London: Robson Books, 1989), p. 38. Martin also makes the observation that prior to Manzoni's development of a modern Italian language, "music had as good a claim as any to be the common language around which Italians rallied. Indeed, the fact partially explains how Verdi, with *Nabucco* in 1842 and *I Lombardi* in 1843, could become a national figure in little more than a year." (p. 38) See also: Gustavo Marchesi, "Verdi e Manzoni," *Atti del III° Congresso Internazionale di Studi Verdiani, 1972* (Parma: Istituto di Studi Verdiani, 1974), pp. 274-284.



culture, content (i.e., the temporal subject matter found in the artist's outer world) becomes synthesized with form (i.e., the eternal spirit found in the artist's inner world), which in the best of cases produces works that mark a new period of history.<sup>664</sup> Whether Verdi, Giusti and other artists escaped, in some metaphysical sense, the temporal and spatial limits of their environment to produce new art that further developed Italian culture, or whether their art was entirely determined by material factors within that environment, it stands to reason that their creative work, established in the canon of nineteenth-century Italian culture, is indeed a reflection of Risorgimento era opinions and tastes. The timing of the appearance of works by Verdi and Giusti in which Basilica Sant' Ambrogio is a subject suggests that this sacred site was more meaningful to leading figures in Italian culture during the Risorgimento period than afterward. Nevertheless, one must acknowledge the possibility that Basilica Sant' Ambrogio retained a powerful meaning among the ordinary people who are consumers, rather than producers, of cultural products. Indeed, the Romantic works of Verdi and Giusti retained their fame, even their popularity, after the Risorgimento had come to an end.

The dominant trend in Italian art during the Risorgimento was Romanticism, above all in literature<sup>665</sup> and opera,<sup>666</sup> the two great art forms of nineteenth-century Italy. This rising

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<sup>664</sup> According to this theory, historical periods are thus determined, above all, by spiritual or intellectual factors. Francesco De Sanctis, 'La nuova letteratura,' in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 2 (Napoli: D. Morano, 1870). For English translation, see: 'The New Literature,' in *History of Italian Literature*, vol. 2, trans. Joan Redfern (1931: reprinted New York: Basic Books, 1968).

<sup>665</sup> Despite strong opposition between Romanticism and the former dominant style Classicism, the latter continued as a secondary but important influence within Romanticism. See: Mario Fubini, *Romanticismo italiano* (Bari: Laterza, 1971); Luigi

tide, precipitated in Italy by Mme. De Stäel (1766-1817),<sup>667</sup> quickly swept up Manzoni, who did more than anyone else to shape and lead it there. Putting aside specifically literary issues and analyzing this movement (which was more like a general climate than a particular school) in the broad cultural terms which Manzoni gave it, Romanticism represented the reconciliation of his liberal political views, inherited from the Enlightenment, and his conservative religious views, received from Jansenism.<sup>668</sup> Under Manzoni, Italian Romanticism combined consciousness of liberty, nation and God, along with a sense of providential history, in a way that was inspired by Catholic culture. What

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Derla, *Letteratura e politica tra la restaurazione e l'Unità* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1977); Michele Dell'Aquila, *Foscolo e il romanticismo* (Bari: Adriatica, 1992). On Italian Romanticism in general, see: Sergio Givone, *La questione romantica* (Roma e Bari: Laterza, 1992); Alberto Cadioli, *Romanticismo italiano* (Milano: Editrice Bibliografica, 1995); Joseph Luzzi, "Did Italian Romanticism Exist?" *Comparative Literature*, 56:2 (2004), 168-191; Luigi Reina, *Romanticismo e dintorni* (Salerno, Edisud, 2005). For contextualizing Luzzi's argument, see: Gina Martegiani, *Il romanticismo italiano non esiste* (Firenze: Seeber, 1908).

<sup>666</sup> Classicism continued less successfully as an operatic influence in Italy during the Romantic period. See: David R. B. Kimbell, "Neo-Classical Counter-currents in Italian Romantic Opera," *Italian Studies*, Vol. 39 (1984), pp. 67-78. On the relationship between music and politics within Italian Romanticism, see: Walter H. Rubsamen, 'Music and Politics in the 'Risorgimento,' *Italian Quarterly*, vol. 5, nos. 17-18 (1961), pp. 100-120; John Rosselli, *Music & Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1991). On Italian Romantic opera, see: see David R. B. Kimbell, *Italian Opera*, Pt. V: 'Romantic Opera' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 391-534. The Italian case is also treated in general works on Romantic opera. See: Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, Ch. 16 'Universalism within the National – II. Neo-Romantic Opera' (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.), pp. 226-293; Peter Conrad, *Romantic Opera and Literary Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977);

<sup>667</sup> Daughter of Jacques Necker (1732-1804), who served as finance minister to Louis XVI (1754-1793), Mme. De Stäel was also maternal grandmother of Victor, 4<sup>th</sup> duc de Broglie (1821-1901), the nineteenth-century critical historian of St. Ambrose.

<sup>668</sup> See: S. Bernard Chandler, *Alessandro Manzoni: The Story of a Spiritual Quest* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974); Ernesto G. Caserta, *Manzoni's Christian Realism* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1977); Alexander Colquhoun, *Manzoni and His Times: A Biography of the Author of "The Betrothed"* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1954).

Manzoni says at length in his extended letter *Sul romanticismo* (1823),<sup>669</sup> Silvio Pellico states concisely in his memoir *Le miei prigionie* (1832): “I renewed my resolution to bring into accord with religion all my ideas concerning human affairs, all my opinions on the progress of civilization, my philanthropy, my patriotism, all the feelings of my soul.”<sup>670</sup>

It should be noted, however, that there is also a broader definition of Italian Romanticism, one which includes religiously unorthodox figures such as Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), neither of whom seems to have been influenced much, if at all, by Manzoni’s form of Catholic-inspired

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<sup>669</sup> Recognizing that Romanticism had different meanings in France, Germany and England, Manzoni explained what it meant in his homeland: “In Milan, where it has been talked about longer than elsewhere, the word ‘romanticism’ has, more than in any other place, been used, if I am not mistaken, to represent a more reasonable, ordered and general complex of ideas.” (*In Milano, dove se n’è parlato più a lungo che altrove, la parola romanticismo, è stata, se anche qui non m’inganno, adoperata a rappresentare un complesso d’idee più ragionevole, più ordinato, più generale, che in nessun altro luogo.*) Manzoni goes to say: “Now, the romantic system, emancipating literature from pagan traditions, disobliging it, in a manner of speaking, from a morality that is sensuous, proud, circumscribed by time, and improvident even in that sphere; antisocial, where it is patriotic, and selfish, even when it is not hostile; [the romantic system] certainly aims to make it less difficult to introduce into literature the ideas, and the feelings, that ought to inform every discourse. On the other hand, putting forward even in the most general terms the true, the useful, the good, the reasonable, it contributes, if anything, with words, toward the purpose of Christianity; it does not, at least in terms, contradict it.” (*Ora, il sistema romantico, emancipando la letteratura dalle tradizioni pagani, disobbligandola, per dir così, da una morale voluttuosa, superba, feroce, circoscritta al tempo, e improvvida anche in questa sfera; antisociale, dov’è patriottica, e egoista, anche quando non è ostile; tende certamente a render meno difficile l’introdurre nella letteratura le idee, e i sentimenti, che dovrebbero informare ogni discorso. E dall’altra parte, propendo anche in termini generalissimi il vero, l’utile, il bono, il ragionevole, concorre, se non altro, con le parole, allo scopo del cristianesimo; non lo contraddice almeno nei termini.*) Alessandro Manzoni, *Sul romanticismo: lettera al marchese Cesare D’Azeglio*, ed. Massimo Castoldi (Milano: Centro nazionale studi manzoniani, 2008), pp. 6-7; 46-47.

<sup>670</sup> Silvio Pellico, *Le miei prigionie* (Milano: Longanesi & C., 1983), p. 43.

Romanticism. Manzoni was, however, held in utmost esteem by Giusti<sup>671</sup> and Verdi,<sup>672</sup> the former of whom shared Manzoni's Catholicism while the latter was at least respectful towards it in public. Like Manzoni, or for that matter all Italian Romantics, Giusti and Verdi were supporters of the Risorgimento. As will be seen, both Giusti and Verdi drew upon the image of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio in works inspired by a religious and patriotic Romanticism. Furthermore, these works remained vital in the popular memory long after Romanticism had ceased to be the *avant-garde*.

With the achievement of liberty and unification, the ardently desired goals toward which Romantic art had longingly served, Italy faced a multitude of problems related to self-governance, problems more concrete than ideological. Romanticism was no longer best suited to inspire the nation's further cultural and political development.

Francesco De Sanctis, whose literary genius, unlike that of Manzoni, was overlooked by his nineteenth century contemporaries,<sup>673</sup> was quick to understand the new situation, as

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<sup>671</sup> Giusti had the "greatest esteem" (*grandissima stima*) for the novel *I Promessi Sposi*, and for its author he had "veneration, love and all the consideration that comes along with love" (*venerazione, amore e tutte le premure che vanno dietro l'amore*). Giuseppe Giusti, *Vita di Giuseppe Giusti, scritta da lui medesimo*, ed. Guido Biagi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1886), p. 73.

<sup>672</sup> Verdi venerated Manzoni like a saint: "I would have knelt in front of him, if one could adore a man." (*Io mi gli sarei posto in ginocchio dinnanzi, se si potessero adorare gli uomini.*) Quoted in Arturo di Ascoli, ed., *Quartetto milanese ottocentesco: lettere di Giuseppe Verdi, Giuseppina Strepponi, Clara Maffei, Carlo Tenca e di altri personaggi del mondo politico e artistico dell'epoca* (Roma: Archivi edizioni, 1974), p. 186.

<sup>673</sup> "De Sanctis had to wait for any real recognition until [Benedetto] Croce [(1866-1952)] effectively excommunicated the positivists and elevated De Sanctis into the canon many years after his death." Denis Mack Smith, 'Francesco De Sanctis: the politics of a literary

he wrote in 1870: “Italy, compelled to struggle for a whole century to win independence and liberal institutions, and kept by that struggle in a circle of ideas too general, too uniform, subordinated to political ends, is witnessing the falling to pieces of that whole theological-metaphysical-political system, which has nothing left to give her.”<sup>674</sup> One might also say that the decline of Romanticism among leading Italian cultural figures reflected their disillusionment with the results of Italy’s unification and the “narrow middle-class interests”<sup>675</sup> which then set in. De Sanctis, wielding influence as the Minister of Public Instruction,<sup>676</sup> recognized science as the new inspiration that would revitalize the culture.<sup>677</sup> He admired naturalism,<sup>678</sup> the French literary movement that

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critic,’ in John A. David and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 270.

<sup>674</sup> Francesco De Sanctis, ‘The New Literature’ in *History of Italian Literature*, Vol. 2, trans. Joan Redfern (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 945.

<sup>675</sup> Susan A. Ashley, *Making Liberalism Work: The Italian Experience, 1860-1914* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>676</sup> “He was in parliament for over twenty years and five times minister of education.... He felt obliged to be a critic of society as well as literature, believing that the two things could not be divorced from each other and were perhaps equally important. It was a real worry to him that there continued to be too great a division between culture and society.” Mack Smith, ‘Francesco De Sanctis: the politics of a literary critic,’ p. 252.

<sup>677</sup> Francesco De Sanctis, *La scienza e la vita. Inaugural address delivered in the University of Naples, November 16, 1872*, trans. from German by Edith Wright (Philadelphia, 1884). De Sanctis believed that a scientific education would reinforce ethical and political education; he felt that Italians’ “affection for rhetoric and rhetorical exaggeration” was “a main reason why Italy remained in the second rank among nations.” “He concluded that there was little hope of releasing the economic and intellectual potential of the country unless some way could be found of introducing more clarity into political programmes, as well as more courage in taking a stand on principle and more honesty in communicating with the electorate.” “Education, he used to say, would one day redeem the country after three centuries of intellectual decadence. Education was not just instruction but must also be the moulding of character. Italians had to be changed ‘physically and morally’. They had to be cured of what he called the disease of having too much of Machiavelli and too much of St Ignatius Loyola in their intellectual inheritance.” Mack Smith, ‘Francesco De Sanctis: the politics of a literary critic,’ pp. 263, 269.

was begun by Émile Zola and which took inspiration from the newly ascendent culture of positivism.<sup>679</sup> A comparable Italian literary movement was *verismo*, whose leading figures included two Sicilians, Luigi Capuana (1839-1915) and Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), both of whom resided in Milan for a few years during the post-Risorgimento era. The man considered the greatest literary figure in Italy during this later period was, however, Giosuè Carducci (1835-1907),<sup>680</sup> a Tuscan whose work was inspired by pagan classicism. This, he argued, was native to Italy, as opposed to Romanticism, which he viewed as a foreign import. Not having been part of the Romantic movement that was

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<sup>678</sup> Francesco De Sanctis, 'Studio sopra Emilio Zola' in Francesco De Sanctis, *Nuovi saggi critici*, 18<sup>th</sup> ed. (Napoli: A. Morano & figlio, 1901). The essay first appeared as a series published in the Neapolitan newspaper *Roma* in 1878.

<sup>679</sup> "The coordinates of De Sanctis' branch of realism go from Manzoni to Zola: from the advent of truth visiting the heart of man, to the acknowledgement of immediate material needs calling to be uplifted and become objects of narrative interest. Realism, naturalism, materialism on the one hand, idealism on the other, coexist in De Sanctis with the ever-renewed temptation of undoing all abstract formulas in order to obey a deeply felt need for concreteness, to listen only to the demanding voice of the work of art." Dante Della Terza, 'On Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883) and Realism,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (April-June, 1980), p. 338.

<sup>680</sup> Giosuè Carducci graduated in 1856 from the Faculty of Letters at the *Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, established during the Napoleonic era on the model of the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris. He battled against Romanticism, particularly in its Manzonian form, arguing instead for a Classical literary style. A Garibaldian and a Freemason during the Risorgimento period, he increasingly became an establishment figure after Italian unification. In 1860, shortly after Bologna voted for annexation to the Kingdom of Sardinia (the nucleus of what would become the Kingdom of Italy in 1861), Carducci was appointed by the Piedmontese government to the chair in Italian Rhetoric (*Eloquenza Italiana*), soon to be called Italian Literature, at University of Bologna. He kept this chair until poor health forced his resignation in 1904. A friend of the Historic Left political figure Francesco Crispi, Carducci was named a Senator of the Kingdom of Italy in 1890 during his friend Francesco Crispi's first term as prime minister. In 1907 he became the first Italian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was recognized in his own time as a great poet, but not a popular one. Mario Scotti, 'Carducci, Giosuè,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 20 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1977), pp. 16-40.

disintegrating around him, he continued undeterred on his own largely self-carved classical path.

Edoardo Gemelli, coming of age during this post-Risorgimento period, may have been required to read Giusti poems and Verdi libretti in school. By choice he favored the poetry of Leopardi and Carducci,<sup>681</sup> both of whom operated far outside of Manzoni's sphere of influence. One can only speculate on why Gemelli favored these two poets during his youth, even though the Romantic literature of the Manzonian school continued to be published in popular editions throughout the late nineteenth century. An obvious guess is that Carducci and Leopardi appealed to those with classical educations who also appreciated their pagan or even their anti-Christian content. Beyond this, perhaps the work of these poets touched Gemelli in a more personal way. If their work can be characterized by a dominant quality, then Carducci's is irritable and Leopardi's is melancholic, two traits that also characterized the young Edoardo Gemelli. Carducci often begins a line of poetry with "*Odio*" ("I hate"); Leopardi despairs of ever achieving happiness in life. Both poets also seem to have seen themselves as outsiders battling against the world as it is, another characteristic with which Edoardo Gemelli might have identified. One can imagine young Edoardo taking delight in Carducci's famous poem '*Inno a Santana*' (which title might have been slyly inspired by that of Manzoni's earliest

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<sup>681</sup> "His favorite poet was Leopardi, and immediately following, Carducci, whose perfectly crafted verses he admired and whose pugnacious character he shared." Maria Sticco, *Father Gemelli. Notes for the biography of a great man*, trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), pp. 4-5.

published poetry, ‘*Inni*’). One can similarly imagine the inwardly drawn young Edoardo finding some sort of affirmation, if not consolation, in the Leopardi’s *Pensieri*.

This brief glimpse at some developments in nineteenth century Italian literature indicates how much the cultural dynamism had shifted from Manzonian Romantic works toward bohemian works by *Scapigliatura* writers and Neo-Classical works by Carducci. Italian literary culture, generally perceived as flowering during the Risorgimento period, became described as decadent by the end of the century. Works by Verdi and Giusti that include depictions of Basilica Sant’Ambrogio were more than a half-century old by the time Edoardo Gemelli reverted to Catholicism in that ancient church. Yet these decades-old works by Verdi and Giusti seem to have been among the most recent depictions of the basilica that the higher culture had generated. If such Romantic depictions of the basilica were still part of the popular culture of *fin-de-siècle* Milan, then it is necessary to ask how they may have been received in that later time and place. Carducci, for one, lavished praise upon Giusti’s poem titled ‘*Sant’Ambrogio*.’ An anti-clerical Radical, Carducci glosses over Giusti’s political and religious moderation. “In *Sant’Ambrogio*, taking hold once again of the concept of national independence, he sanctioned the principle of brotherhood of peoples in such verses that are among the most beautiful of recent times, almost prophesizing the simultaneous uprising of the Latin, Slav and Germanic races against the common oppressor.”<sup>682</sup> Carducci was able to abstract purely humanist values

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<sup>682</sup> Giosuè Carducci, ed., *Le Poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Firenze: G. Barbèra, editore, 1862), p. LXXVI.



from Giusti's Christian imagery, similar to the way in which Amati and Romussi made a secular hero of St. Ambrose.

In addition to having an affinity for Carducci's pungent literary expression, it is possible that Gemelli also felt a more personal connection to this poet. Carducci's political views and social networks overlapped with those of Edoardo's great-uncle, Agostino Bertani (1812-1886). Both Bertani and Carducci were members of the *Lega della democrazia* established by Garibaldi in 1879.<sup>683</sup> Bertani enjoyed friendships with some of the same politically active men as did Carducci; these included Francesco Crispi (1819-1901), Felice Cavallotti (1842-1898) and Adriano Lemmi (1822-1906).<sup>684</sup> In 1898 Carducci composed and delivered a passionate funeral discourse for Felice Cavallotti, the popular literary and political figure who had inherited the Radical leadership in parliament from Bertani when the latter died in office. Carducci was also well acquainted with Jessie White Mario (1832-1906), whose biography of Bertani was published in 1888;<sup>685</sup> the Italian poet and the English biographer jointly edited the works of her late husband, the Garibaldian journalist Alberto Mario (1825-1883),<sup>686</sup> also a member of the *Lega della*

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<sup>683</sup> Alfonso Scirocco, 'Garibaldi e la lega della democrazia', in Gaetano Cingari, ed. *Garibaldi e il socialismo* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 1984).

<sup>684</sup> Bertani died before Cavallotti turned on Crispi for his harsh and anti-democratic suppression of dissent during the latter's second term as prime minister (December 1893-March 1896). Carducci supported Cavallotti's protest. Felice Cavallotti, *Per la storia. La questione morale su Francesco Crispi nel 1894-1895* (Milano: Aliprandi, 1895).

<sup>685</sup> Jessie White Mario, *Agostino Bertani e i suoi tempi*, 2 vols. (Firenze: G. Barbèra, 1888).

<sup>686</sup> Alberto Mario, with Giosuè Carducci and Jessie White Mario, *Scritti letterari e artistici di Alberto Mario, a cura di Giosuè Carducci, con biografia di J. vedova Mario*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bologna: Ditta Nicola Zanichelli, 1901). Carducci alone edited another

*democrazia*.<sup>687</sup> After Gemelli converted to a militant form of Catholicism in 1903, he is unlikely to have maintained much affinity for the neo-pagan aspect of Carducci's poetry. Nevertheless, he is almost certain to have felt a patriotic pride when Carducci won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1906, the same year in which Gemelli's teacher and mentor Camillo Golgi was awarded a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.<sup>688</sup>

The tracing of these connections indicates the likelihood that Gemelli was familiar with certain representations of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio in the late nineteenth century and further suggests what those representations may have meant for him. As mentioned above, the cultural Risorgimento served as an important inspiration for the political Risorgimento. Milan, as home of Manzoni and his circle, could rightfully claim to be the center of Italy's cultural Risorgimento, although its contributions to the political Risorgimento were rivaled by other cities such as Turin or Genoa. Gemelli's family seems to have been more interested in Risorgimento politics than in Risorgimento culture, especially as represented by the Manzoni's Catholic-inspired circle. Although Mazzini's synthesis of politics and culture may have appealed to the democratic

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collection of writings by Alberto Mario. Giosuè Carducci, ed., *Scritti politici di Alberto Mario* (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1901).

<sup>687</sup> Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 356.

<sup>688</sup> Edoardo would soon know one more Nobel Prize winner. Ernesto Teodoro Moneta (1833-1918), the father of one of Edoardo's classmates at *Parini*, Luigi Moneta Caglio (1875-1945), was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1907. Thus, Gemelli, not yet thirty years old, would enjoy only one or two degrees of separation from three men of internationally esteemed greatness.

sympathies of Gemelli's family, they were ultimately more Garibaldian than Mazzinian.<sup>689</sup>

The apparent lack of any strong interest in literary culture among Edoardo's father and mother, Innocente Gemelli (1851-1923) and Caterina Bertani (1853-1942), as well as his maternal grandfather, Francesco Bertani, may be explained in part by their inferior education and shopkeeping status. Moreover, as Freemasons, they seem unlikely to have had any special appreciation for the Christian imagery, as such, found in works of Risorgimento culture. The only member of Edoardo's family known to have received a superior education that would have allowed him a greater appreciation of literary culture was Agostino Bertani. But he was more likely to have been an appreciative reader of Carducci's humanist themes than of Manzoni's Catholic ones, given the stronger set of links that connected him to the Classical poet than to the Romantic writer.

Romanticism had not altogether disappeared as a creative force in the post-Risorgimento period (Verdi, for one, continued composing popular and critically acclaimed operas in the Romantic tradition into the 1890s), but it no longer represented the cutting edge of artistic expression. The post-Risorgimento *avant-garde* favored instead the sort of pagan classicism in Carducci's work or the anti-bourgeois irrationalism in the works of the

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<sup>689</sup> For distinctions on between the Mazzini and Garibaldi camps before and after unification, see: Giuseppe Monsagrati, 'The General's labyrinths and the knotty problems of Italian politics after Italy's unification,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 13, Issue 4 (2008), pp. 512-519.

*scapigliati*.<sup>690</sup> Both of these new directions were hostile to Christian imagery as well as bourgeois tastes. Neither, however, achieved the popularity of Romanticism. Giusti and Verdi, like Manzoni, had lost their revolutionary appeal long before the century's end, but they continued to draw a popular following. Insofar as Innocente and Caterina were rather conventional characters (which all evidence suggests), they may very well have had conventional tastes. If popular works appealed to them more than those of the *avant-garde*, then Edoardo, while in his parents' home, is likely to have gained some familiarity with the operas of Verdi and poems of Giusti.

Piazza Sant' Ambrogio is the setting of the opening scene of Verdi's opera '*I Lombardi alla prima crociata*,' which premiered at La Scala in February 1843. As the title suggests, the story revolves around Lombard participation in the First Crusade, launched in 1095. Temistocle Solera (1817-1878)<sup>691</sup> adapted the libretto from the epic poem of the same title<sup>692</sup> by Alessandro Manzoni's close friend Tommaso Grossi (1790-1853)<sup>693</sup>.

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<sup>690</sup> Giovanna Rosa, *La narrativa degli scapigliati* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1997); Shirley W. Vinall and Tom O'Neill, 'Searching for new languages: modern Italian poetry,' in Zygmunt G. Baranski and Rebecca J. West, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 173-196.

<sup>691</sup> Temistocle Solera was the resident librettist at La Scala who supplied the libretto for '*Nabucco*,' the opera that established Verdi's career when it premiered in March 1842. Six decades later its rousing chorus, '*Va, pensiero*,' was sung by the thousands who lined the streets of Milan for Verdi's funeral after he died in January 1901. Besides '*Nabucco*,' Solera also wrote the libretto for '*I Lombardi alla prima crociata*,' as well as those for '*Giovanna d'Arco*,' (1845) and '*Attila*' (1846). Budden, *Verdi*.

<sup>692</sup> Tommaso Grossi, *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (Milano: Presso Vincenzo Ferrario, 1826).

<sup>693</sup> Tommaso Grossi was born into modest circumstances in Bellano, on Lake Como, and educated first at the seminary in Lecco and later at the University of Pavia, where he earned a degree in law. While practicing his profession in Milan, he met some of the city's leading literary figures, including Alessandro Manzoni, with whom he shared

Piazza Sant' Ambrogio appears nowhere in Grossi's poem, which is set entirely in the Holy Land. Verdi's opera, on the other hand, begins in Milan in order to reveal the complex background of the lead characters. A spirited crowd emerges from Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, where one brother's vow of penance has just been graciously accepted by another brother against whom he has sinned. The latter brother is then chosen by the crowd, as representative of the *Comune di Milano*, to lead a contingent of them on the crusade. Night falls on the piazza. A chorus of nuns is heard gently singing within the basilica as the penitent brother returns to the piazza and indicates that, despite what had just passed between him and his magnanimous brother, his own heart remains wracked with jealousy.

In Verdi's opera the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio is the setting for an apparent reconciliation. It is invested with a sense of peace, first by the harmonious crowd emerging from it and then by the nuns heard singing prayers within it, even as the men gathered before it pledge themselves to a violent crusade and the wrongdoing brother returns to the scene and reveals an unresolved vendetta. The ancient church is in fact a silent witness to what is best and worst in human beings. Given that Solera felt it necessary to begin the story in Milan, he obviously sought a setting that could serve several purposes; the basilica, in

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interests in freeing Italy from Austrian domination, as well as in using historical fact as a basis for creative writing. He lived in Manzoni's home as the writer's secretary from 1822 to 1836 (he moved out when Manzoni remarried that year; Manzoni's first wife, whom he had married in 1808, died in 1833). It was during the period he lived with Manzoni that he did most of his own writing, including the epic poem *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (1826) and the historical novel *Marco Visconti* (1834). Giuseppe Zaccaria, 'Grossi, Tommaso, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 59 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), pp. 814-818; Gaetana Marrone, *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, Vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2007).

this case, was historically credible, easily recognizable, meaningfully located in the lives of the characters and dramatically invested with a sense contrary to the foreshadowed turmoil. Although nineteenth-century Milan was sprinkled with 800 year-old churches, none met Solera's criteria as well as Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, by far the best known among them. All nineteenth-century performances of '*I lombardi*' at La Scala were in front of Risorgimento era audiences. '*I Lombardi*' was staged seven times at La Scala between 1843 and 1864, after which it was not staged again until 1931.<sup>694</sup> Milanese audiences of this era seem to have loved "any subject where Italians were shown united against a common enemy."<sup>695</sup> They were roused by the chorus, '*O Signore dal tetto natio*,' in which the Lombard crusaders, being far from home, battling an enemy and dying of thirst, reflect longingly upon the sweet waters and rich land of their birth, in the form of a prayer – "O Lord, from the land of our birth you called us here with a holy promise" (*O Signore, dal tetto natio chi chiamasti con santa promessa*). Given its enormous popularity, '*I Lombardi*' probably depicts the basilica as it was perceived and understood by the audience. Although Gemelli could not possibly have attended any performance of this opera at La Scala before his conversion, '*I Lombardi*' remained a well-known work at the end of the century.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> Francesco Degrada, *Verdi e la Scala* (Milano: Edizioni del Teatro alla Scala: Rizzoli, 2001), pp. 433-434.

<sup>695</sup> Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 115.

<sup>696</sup> In an essay of 1896, Achille Ratti notes the popularity of Verdi's opera *I Lombardi alla prima crociata*: "Towards August of the year 1100, our Archbishop with the Provosts of S. Nazaro and S. Ambrogio, set out on a crusade to the Holy Land with an army of about 50,000 Lombards – those Lombards of the First Crusade who were to have so little success in the verses of Grossi but became so popular and dear to all Italy in the music of Verdi." Achille Ratti, 'The Ambrosian Church of Milan,' in *Essays in History* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1934), p. 84. This is the English translation of

As in Verdi's opera '*I Lombardi*,' the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio in Giusti's poem *Sant' Ambrogio* (1846)<sup>697</sup> is the setting rather than the subject. In fact, Giusti's poem plays upon Verdi's opera. The poem recounts an autobiographical incident (indeed, a conversion) that Giusti experienced inside the basilica while visiting Milan during the month he spent as Manzoni's guest in 1845. He sets the scene by stating that he happened upon the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, "that venerable fabric, off the beaten track" (*quello vecchio, là fuori di mano*), while out for a walk one morning "in the company of the young son... of the author of a book called *Promessi sposi*." Entering, he finds it full of thickly whiskered and mustached Bohemian and Croatian soldiers in the service of the Austrian Empire. He hangs back, repulsed by their appearance and smell (a possible allusion to barbarian conquerors of Milan in centuries long past). Just as the priest prepares to consecrate the bread and wine, trumpets near the altar begin to play a recent popular piece by Verdi, "That *O Signore dal tetto natio*... And here I began to be no longer myself." The poet is transformed by fraternal feelings toward the imperial conscripts, but his change of heart lasts only as long as Verdi's music (the poem thus provides a contrast between the transformational miracle of the eucharist and the limited transformative power of art). But then a "German canticle" (*cantico tedesco*) begins to rise from the mouths of these coarse men, "a sound so grave, mournful and solemn, such as is always heard in the soul." It is "a longing for peace and love, a heartbreak of distant exile." The poet comes to the realization that these imperial conscripts have been "torn

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the original Italian version published in *Conferenze di storia Milanese* (Milano: Fratelli Bocca, 1897).

<sup>697</sup> Carducci, ed., *Le Poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, pp. 293-297.

from their homes” and have been “sent here as slaves to keep us down as slaves.” Any hatred between *lombardi* and *tedeschi* serves only the purpose of the emperor who divides them. The poet’s transformation is now complete and he quickly departs the basilica; should he stay any longer, he shall be impelled to embrace an Austrian corporal (that is, an officer who is probably better groomed than his conscripts; all men are brothers, but not all brothers are equally embraceable).

Giusti’s image of Basilica Sant’Ambrogio differs little from that presented by Verdi. It is a recognizable landmark, located more or less precisely in time. Despite its proximity to the geographic center of Milan, the basilica is tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the city. One happens upon it suddenly, unlike the Duomo, which can be seen from great distances. Giusti expresses affection for the basilica as “*quello vecchio*.” He further endears it through references to both Manzoni and Verdi, certainly two of the most beloved citizens of Milan. (The fact that these two figures, both political and religious moderates, retained extreme popularity throughout the nineteenth century raises questions about the degree to which most Milanese shared their opinions before and after 1848, regardless of shifts in the *avant-garde* culture.) Neither Giusti nor Verdi explicitly links the basilica to Ambrose. For both it serves as a witness to what is best and worst in people and as a site of reconciliation among them. Here, love and peace replace repulsion and hatred. Giusti’s poem suggests that we are truly transformed not by art, not even by the most beautifully wrought music that evokes a deep strain in the heart, but rather by the power of authentic prayer. Such a message reflects the influence of Manzoni. On the other hand, the theme of a brotherhood of nations reflects the ideals of



Mazzini. The heartfelt *cantico Tedesco* works upon the Italian soul of Giusti, who leaves the basilica a changed man.

If Gemelli had missed the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio of Verdi's opera, he is likely to have come across a comparable representation of it in Giusti's poem. Although Giusti died in 1850, his poetry enjoyed an extended literary life through the rest of the century in numerous editions put out by several publishers, virtually all in Florence and Milan. Given that *Sant' Ambrogio* was one of the most popular poems of the Risorgimento period, it is almost certainly included in the nearly 40 editions of Giusti's poetry that appeared between 1878 (when Gemelli was born) and 1903 (when he was reborn, so to speak, in the basilica). At least 40 other editions of Giusti's poetry were published earlier, between 1850 and 1878. One of the earliest editors of Giusti's poetry was Carducci, whose curated work on Giusti went through more than a dozen editions between 1860 and 1902.<sup>698</sup> Carducci offers his own representation of Basilica Sant' Ambrogio in one of his most acclaimed poems, '*Il parlamento*,' which he began to compose in 1876 to commemorate the seven hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Legnano.<sup>699</sup> Carducci depicts the plight of the citizens of Milan, who as part of the

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<sup>698</sup> Carducci prefaced this work with a lengthy essay on his subject written in 1859, 'Della vita e delle opere di Giuseppe Giusti'. Carducci, ed., *Le Poesie di Giuseppe Giusti*, pp. v-xciv.

<sup>699</sup> It was originally published under the title '*Della canzone di Legnano, parte prima*' in *La Rassegna settimanale* (March 20, 1879). Reale Università di Bologna, *Catalogo dei lavori pubblicato dai professori, dai dottori collegate e dagli assistenti* (Bologna: Monti, 1886), p. 15. A weekly (later daily) newspaper *La Rassegna settimanale* was based in Rome and dedicated to politics, science, letters and arts. Its founder in 1878 was Sidney Sonnino (1847-1922), who would twice serve brief terms as prime minister of Italy during the first decade of the twentieth century.

defiant Lombard League, were forced by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1122-1190) to abandon their city in 1176:

Upon the tenth day came the Ban: 'Forth with ye, o wretches, forth, with women, sons, belongings! The Emperor doth but eight days' grace allow ye.' And we ran shrieking unto St. Ambrogio, embracing there the sepulchers and altars. Out from the church with women and with children, out from the church like scurvy dogs, they chased us.<sup>700</sup>

Realizing the woeful fate about to fall upon them, the Milanese instinctively run to the Basilica Sant' Ambrogio and cling to tangible symbols of their history and culture, if not of their sainted protector. Although Carducci was certainly motivated by a democratic and republican image of medieval Milanese rather than any Christian image of the same, he nevertheless indicates the historical role of this church as the source of moral succor, if not physical protection, of the Milanese. A reader of Carducci's poem in the late nineteenth century would have found that it underscores the rich attachment of Milanese to this site as already suggested by Verdi and Giusti.

One might judge whether the *fin-de-siècle* representation of the piazza and basilica of St. Ambrose had retained the meaning given to them in the Romantic works of the 1840s by

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<sup>700</sup> (*Venne al decimo il bando – Uscite, or tristi, / Con le donne co i figli e con le robe: / Otto giorni vi dà l'imperatore. – / E noi corremmo urlando a Sant' Ambrogio, / Ci abbracciammo a gli altari ed a i sepolcri. / Via da la chiesa, con le donne ed i figli, / Via ci cacciaron come can tignosi.*) Giosuè Carducci, 'Il Parlamento,' in Giosuè Carducci, *Carducci. A Selection of his Poems, with Verse Translations, Notes, and Three Introductory Essays*, ed., G. L. Bickersteth (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), pp. 296-297.

comparing these earlier images with one drawn by Carlo Romussi in 1897. For Romussi, the Radical comrade of Bertani and Cavallotti, this place is central to nearly everything of importance in the history of Milan:

How much calm there is in the silence that surrounds this temple! As soon as the noisy thoroughfares are abandoned and one enters the lonely streets that lead into the piazza, between the leafy acacia trees, and up to the basilica, it seems that even pressing cares and thoughts are abandoned, and other times and other peoples arise, evoked, to populate the deserted place. Here are the men of faith, superstition and heroism, here are the psalmodic processions and stake burnings, coronations, family treacheries, mournings and reconquests that had this piazza as their stage. We see ancient men wandering about here wrapped in the white Roman togas and the Christian pallium; following them are barbarian marauders with helmets surmounted by ravenous dragons and frightful horns; here are the people in dark tunics who drill with arms to win freedom and rights as citizens; here are the knights dressed in armor and the emperors eternally in struggle with the *Comune*, demanding, by divine grace, the Iron Crown of Lombardy<sup>701</sup> that would give them nominal dominion of Italy; here is a devoted nephew who imprisons his uncle in order to poison him;<sup>702</sup> here are the dukes dressed in brocades and gold; here, finally, are the foreign

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<sup>701</sup> Known in Italian as the *Corona ferrea*, it is the ancient diadem with which Napoleon crowned himself King of Italy in the Duomo in 1805.

<sup>702</sup> Romussi refers to Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402), who imprisoned and reportedly poisoned his uncle, Bernabò Visconti (1323-1385), the single most powerful man in Northern Italy at the time of his capture in 1385. Taking control of his uncle's dominions, Gian Galeazzo "pulled off the most spectacular *coup d'état* in Italian medieval history." Jane Black, *Absolutism in Renaissance Milan. Plenitude of Power under the Visconti and the Sforza 1329-1535* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 53. See also: Marco Fossati and Alessandro Ceresatto, 'La Lombardia alla ricerca d'uno Stato,' in Giancarlo Andenna, Renato Bordone, Francesco Somaini and Massimo Vallerani, eds., *Comuni e signorie nell'Italia settentrionale: la Lombardia* (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torninese, 1998), pp. 483-572.

troops that shut the splendid era of freedom and plunged us into the servitude that, in turn, conceived the new era.

Enter the atrium: here were penitents and pilgrims crowded together; here on solemn feast days was distributed the wine, kept in a container of porphyry that had once been the sepulcher of an emperor; we pass among sarcophagi, among stone tombs of abbots, among sculptured coats of arms of knights, among the funereal inscriptions of Pagans, Jews, Christians, of the oppressed and the oppressors, all equally illuminated in the radiant serenity of our ancestors, as the dead buried here are commingled in a single peace. In order to have such peace is it necessary to be tidied up in the grave? And inside the temple full of shadows, you feel the impression of somber greatness, animated by memories, which calms the passions and nurtures good thoughts. The basilica of St. Ambrose has the fascination of ancient and time-honored things that recount the ecstasies and the agonies of a past seen with its own eyes.<sup>703</sup>

The perception of Sant' Ambrogio seems to have changed little between the 1840s and 1890s. The place was still portrayed as a witness to human virtue and vice, a haven of reconciliation and a harborer of mixed classes and religions. Verdi and Giusti both depicted Sant' Ambrogio in this way, but each shows the place at only one particular point in time: Verdi, on a day in 1096 A.D.; Giusti, on an autumn morning eight and a half centuries later. Romussi, on the other hand, offers a diachronic view of this place through the centuries. He suggests that Sant' Ambrogio has perpetually retained its character since the time of Ambrose. Achille Ratti, then a librarian at the *Biblioteca*

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<sup>703</sup> Carlo Romussi, *Sant' Ambrogio. I Tempi – L' Uomo – La Basilica* (Milano: Arturo Demarchi, 1897), pp. 61-62.

*Ambrosiana*, gave a similar description of the sacred space of the basilica, if not the civic space of the piazza, in 1896:

Often rebuilt and ceaselessly restored, the Basilica stands, as the first monument of a clearly defined Lombard architecture, with its tombs of saints and emperors, archbishops and kings, its treasures, its ancient remains and restorations: real pages of history, gathered and superimposed on each other to recall the glorious days of St. Ambrose, the massacres of the barbarians, the coronations of the Kings of Italy and the royal weddings, the investiture of knights, the truces, the judgments of God, the Councils and Diets, the solemn processions and incessant pilgrimages to that sacred tomb from which, a quarter of a century ago,<sup>704</sup> the great Bishop of Milan seemed again to smile down upon and bless his Church, still Ambrosian after 1500 years.<sup>705</sup>

Here again the basilica symbolizes the breadth of Milanese history. In Ratti's passage that history is more aristocratic and ecclesiastic than democratic, as it is in Romussi's description. Nevertheless, Ratti's essay as a whole emphasizes the crucial connection between the Ambrosian church and the *Comune di Milano*. According to Ratti's narrative, the Milanese people assumed political power in the twelfth century, as that power slipped from their archbishop, who had been, under the Frankish feudal order, one of the most powerful lords in the Kingdom of Italy. It has been good for Italy, Ratti suggests, that the episcopal heirs of Ambrose lost political power and that the *Comune* gained it; but, Ratti claims, it has also been good for Italy that the archbishops of Milan

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<sup>704</sup> Ratti refers to the rediscovery of relics below the altar of the basilica in 1864 and the examination and confirmation of those relics as belonging to Ambrose in 1871.

<sup>705</sup> Achille Ratti, 'The Ambrosian Church in Milan,' in *Essays in History* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1934), p. 40.

once held such civic authority. Milanese ought “remember that under their rule [i.e., the rule of the archbishops of Milan] men were formed who with them and under their guidance proved able to defend so successfully the first *Carroccio*”<sup>706</sup> that joined battle against imperial German armies.<sup>707</sup> Ratti subtly argues that the Ambrosian church, in the tradition of Ambrose, prepared the conditions that later made possible the self-governing *comune*. This might be seen as an implicit effort by Ratti to make the church, if not clericalism, more benign in the eyes of late nineteenth-century anti-clericals who rallied around the symbol of the *comune*, if not that of Ambrose. The main point is that Ratti, who 25 years later would become pope, shared with Romussi a largely similar image of Sant’Ambrogio.

In his 1897 volume on St. Ambrose, subtitled “the Times, the Man, the Basilica” (*I Tempi – L’Uomo – La Basilica*), Romussi catalogues the long history of the church built on this site, very little of which bears mention here insofar as it merely fills in his initial sketch of the place (as discussed above). A few of Romussi’s details, however, shed light on how Gemelli may have perceived the place in 1903. These particulars include the original deposit of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius under the altar of the newly

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<sup>706</sup> “*Carroccio* means a large cart. It was a heavy vehicle, decorated with city colours and drawn by oxen, carrying on a mast the city-banner [i.e., the *gonfalone*]. Sometimes also an altar was set up on it. It accompanied the army in its wars and formed its rallying-point in battle.” Ratti, ‘The Ambrosian Church in Milan,’ Translator’s note, p. 111. Ratti claims the *carroccio* was invented by Ariberto da Intimiano, archbishop of Milan (1018-1045) when the power of that office reached its highest point. Ratti, p. 65. The *carroccio* played a great part in the wars of the Lombard League against emperor Frederick Barbarossa, which form the subject of Carducci’s poem ‘*Il Parlamento*.’ See: Ernst Votmer, *Il carroccio*, trans. Giuseppe Albertoni (Torino: Einaudi, 1994).

<sup>707</sup> Ratti, ‘The Ambrosian Church in Milan,’ p. 88.

constructed church in 386; the entombment of Ambrose's body beside them in 397; the exhumation and reburial of Ambrose, Gervasius and Protasius by one of Ambrose's ablest successors, Angilberto II (824-859),<sup>708</sup> and legends about a secret reburial of Ambrose's relics. Romussi narrates as follows:

We heard many times, when we were children, that Ambrose did not want to be disturbed in the tomb, in fact that he had ordered his sepulcher to remain hidden and inviolate: trouble lay in store for anyone who disobeyed his wish!... The origin of this tradition must be sought in those times, when it was believed that the bodies of saints protected the cities that housed them: wars were started and crimes were committed in order to possess them.<sup>709</sup> Many facts demonstrate that the precise location of the tomb of Ambrose was kept secret....<sup>710</sup>

The rediscovery of relics believed to be those of Ambrose in 1864, and the scientific examination of such in 1871, concluding with a declaration of their authenticity, in the years shortly before Gemelli was born would have, in the minds of some, ended the ancient mystery of the whereabouts of Ambrose's remains. On the other hand, an unscientific belief in the saint as the protector of Milan endured through the centuries even when his relics had been lost and in some sense continued afterward. It is not

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<sup>708</sup> In 835 Angilberto II commissioned the basilica's golden altar with its depictions of the life of Ambrose, thus providing a visual basis for perpetuating legends about him. Cynthia Hahn, 'Narrative on the Golden Altar of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan: Presentation and Reception,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 53 (1999), pp. 167-187.

<sup>709</sup> On relics and thefts of relics, see: Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981); Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>710</sup> Romussi, p. 85.

known, however, whether family members in the Gemelli home perceived Ambrose as the protector of their city. What can be reasonably inferred is that the views to which Edoardo was exposed at home are unlikely to have been more positivist or anti-clerical than those of Amato and Romussi, both of whom deny Ambrose any supernatural powers, but deign him a worthy role model and symbol of the city.

Two other historical events attached to the basilica, both mentioned by Romussi, were likely of some interest to Gemelli. The first is the founding of its monastery in 789 by Archbishop Pietro,<sup>711</sup> who invited Benedictines to look after the basilica.<sup>712</sup> They did so for six centuries until Cardinal Ascanio Sforza (1455-1505) replaced them with Cistercians in 1498; with his brother Ludovico Il Moro, Duke of Milan (1452-1508),<sup>713</sup> Ascanio laid the cornerstone for the construction of new monastery complex to replace the old one in 1498.<sup>714</sup> This is the structure that stands today. The other historical event of significance to Gemelli is the suppression of this monastery by the Napoleonic forces of the Cisalpine Republic in 1796, after which it became state property and housed the *Ospedale militare di Sant’Ambrogio*, first under Napoleonic rule, then, after 1815, under

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<sup>711</sup> Pietro, who governed the see of Milan from 783 to 805, was the first in that position to sign himself as “Archbishop.” Ratti, ‘The Ambrosian Church in Milan,’ p. 40.

<sup>712</sup> Romussi, p. 76.

<sup>713</sup> Ludovico Il Moro was the patron of both Leonardo of Da Vinci and Donato Bramante; he commissioned the latter to design new cloisters for the Sant’Ambrogio monastery. Bramante went on to become chief architect for St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

<sup>714</sup> Romussi, p. 118.



restored Austrian rule, and finally, after 1859, under Italian rule (briefly that of the Kingdom of Sardinia followed by that of the Kingdom of Italy).<sup>715</sup>

In 1903, while conscripted as a medical orderly and assigned to this hospital, Gemelli would undergo the trying final steps of his religious conversion. Having joined the church, he soon took up the cause of a Catholic university for Italy, where virtually all existing universities were arms of the state that by and large served the state. Gemelli became closely associated with its early promoters, of whom Ratti was one. Their activity was interrupted by the First World War, during which Gemelli served as a medical officer and assisted the military chaplain to the Italian Supreme Command. At war's end, Gemelli would spearhead the resumed effort. In 1921 the Liberal state, unable to deny Catholic patriotism during the recent war and challenged by anti-Liberal groups more threatening than the Catholics, issued the decrees Gemelli needed to found the first Catholic university in post-Risorgimento Italy. He would locate it as near as possible to the basilica and former monastery, the site forever tied to St. Ambrose in the Milanese memory and to Gemelli's conversion in (at least for now) his own memory.<sup>716</sup> The initial seat of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore was just around the corner from the

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<sup>715</sup> The complex relationship between throne and altar during the Restoration is suggested by the fact that the Austrian rulers did not restore such a historic property to the church or to the Cistercian religious order from which it had been originally taken.

<sup>716</sup> It seems highly unlikely that Gemelli would have been as persistent in locating his university near the site of his own conversion had that event taken place somewhere else, such as the *Ospedale maggiore* in Milan, where he did notable research in physiology in 1902 before being conscripted later that year.

piazza, in a set of rooms within a former convent in Via Sant' Agnese.<sup>717</sup> In 1926 Gemelli deftly maneuvered among military and civilian officials to secure the grounds of the *Ospedale militare* itself, the locus of his conversion, as the new and permanent home for his university. It is a mystery how this Franciscan priest was able to secure this valuable property in the city center, which many high ranking officers were loathe to abandon, but it seems likely that Gemelli called upon favors from men such as Field Marshal Luigi Cadorna (1851-1928),<sup>718</sup> whom he had loyally served during the war. Another factor

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<sup>717</sup> Josephine reform laws during Austrian rule had already secularized this convent and placed it under the military; it continued thus during Napoleonic rule until it was acquired by Luigi Canonica (1762-1844), who renovated it in the neo-classical style for which he was noted and turned it into a private school of design and architecture. Pio Bondioli, *L'Università Cattolica in Italia dale origini al 1929* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1929), p. 104. Canonica, the leading architect in Milan during the entire Napoleonic period, designed major public spaces such as the Foro Buonaparte and Arena Civica (both completed in 1807). His teacher was Giuseppe Piermarini (1734-1808), who had been the leading architect in Milan prior to the Napoleonic invasion of the Austrian-ruled Duchy of Milan. Piermarini designed the Palazzo Reale (1771-1778) and the Teatro alla Scala (1776-1778), as discussed above in the chapter on Piazza del Duomo. Gianni Mezzanotte, *Architettura neoclassica in Lombardia* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1966), pp. 281-316; Giuliana Ricci, 'Canonica, Luigi,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 18 (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1975), pp. 159-161; Terry Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), pp. 91-98.

<sup>718</sup> Cadorna, a Piedmontese aristocrat, served as chief of general staff during the First World War until being relieved of this post after the disastrous Battle of Caporetto in the fall of 1917. While commanding a regiment in Cremona in the 1890s, Cadorna was led back into the church by the local bishop, Geremia Bonomelli (1831-1941). Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 155. "In April 1915 Cadorna was already suggesting that a chaplain should accompany each regiment." R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy, Life under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), p. 89. With support from Cadorna, Gemelli had the entire Italian military consecrated to the Sacred Heart in January 1917. Cosmacini, p. 156. Cadorna was the subject of polemical argument after the First World War. The conservative *nazionalisti* who formed the readership of the *Corriere della Sera* took up the cause of his rehabilitation, while more democratic voices, including those belonging to two new political parties, the Catholic *popolari* and the radical *fascisti*, objected to any measure that seemed to glorify the old-fashioned dynastic form of war that ignored the concept of

might have been that Achille Ratti, now Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) and the university's most important patron, had recently begun secret negotiations for a Concordat with the Italian State. Certainly Gemelli's ability to manage this coup suggests the clever manner in which he could negotiate his way through a maze of tricky politicking, a fact that should be taken into consideration by any historian who attempts to evaluate his ambiguous behavior during the Fascist period.

Gemelli thus gave concrete expression to the spiritual relationship between himself and St. Ambrose. The walls of the former monastery within which he would carry out his life's labor and be laid to final rest were linked both historically and physically to those of Ambrose's basilica. Gemelli planned his tomb for the chapel of the university he had founded, just as Ambrose chose to be to be buried in the basilica he had built.<sup>719</sup>

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a nation in arms formed by citizen-soldiers. During these years Cadorna wrote histories of the recent war and a biography of his father, General Raffaele Cadorna (1815-1897), the military officer who captured Papal Rome on September 20, 1870, thus completing the unification of Italy. Mussolini, who had served under Cadorna on the front during the First World War, named him a Field Marshal in 1924. A senator since 1913, Cadorna resumed public activity in that role in 1925. Giorgio Rochat, 'Cadorna, Luigi,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 16 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1973), pp. 104-109; Mark Thompson, *The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Front, 1915-1919* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Di Colleredo, Pierluigi Romeo, *Il generalissimo. Luigi Cadorna, prima e dopo Caporetto* (Genova: Associazione culturale Italia, 2010).

<sup>719</sup> "Ambrose's basilica was to remain... his own: he intended to be buried beneath the altar.... No previous bishop is known deliberately to have arrogated to himself so liturgically potent a resting place." Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan. Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 209. "That Ambrose would have arranged to have his body placed beneath the altar of his own basilica (the first bishop that we know of to have done so) has been seen as an intentional rebuke of the Emperor Constantine, by then dead for nearly fifty years, who was originally buried either beneath or near the altar of the Church of the Holy Apostles in

Moreover, Gemelli's plans for his eventual burial allude to the early Christian culture of relics, of which Ambrose had been an innovator.<sup>720</sup> Just as Ambrose sought to enhance his status in the collective memory of Christians by having his mortal remains entombed beside the saintly relics of Gervasius and Protasius,<sup>721</sup> so did Gemelli attempt something similar for himself by designating that his body should be interred in the chapel that lies in such close proximity to the crypt of Ambrose.<sup>722</sup> The connection Gemelli drew between himself and Ambrose in both life and death seems to have been intended to transcend time and space.

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Constantinople." Boniface Ramsey, *Ambrose* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 22.

<sup>720</sup> Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 218-223.

<sup>721</sup> The author of the classic English language biography of Ambrose has the bishop announce his intention of depositing the relics underneath the altar: "Let us bring these victorious victims to the spot where Christ is the Sacrifice. But He, who suffered for all, upon the altar; they, who have been redeemed by His Passion, under the altar. It is the place which I had destined for myself; since it is fitting that the priest should rest where he has been wont to offer. But I yield the right-hand side to the sacred victims; that place is due to the martyrs. Let us, then, inter the hallowed relics, placing them in a worthy house, and let us observe the whole day with faithful devotion." F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), pp. 302-303.

<sup>722</sup> Gemelli would eventually seek holy relics for his own chapel. He had translated to the chapel of the Università Cattolica the remains three exemplary Catholics who had played important roles in preparing the way for the university and founding it. The remains of Ludovico Necchi (1876-1930) were moved to the chapel in 1934, after his cause for sainthood was taken up by the archdiocese. Contardo Ferrini (1859-1902), who had worked closely with Ratti to organize Italian Catholic intellectuals in the late nineteenth century, was declared venerable after Ratti had become pope. After Ferrini was beatified by Ratti's successor, Pius XII, in 1947, Gemelli had his remains reburied into the chapel. Gemelli would also arrange for the body of his longtime collaborator (and a leader of Catholic women in her own right) Armida Barelli (1882-1952) to be interred in the chapel after her death, though Barelli's case for sainthood was not officially taken up until 1970.

## Chapter 6: A CATHOLIC NATION, STATE AND POLITICS

Gemelli's religious conversion in 1903 not only reshaped his worldview, but also redirected his life's work. A proper understanding of everything Gemelli did during the four and a half decades after his conversion, at least until the 1948 elections that brought the Christian Democrats to power under the new postwar constitution, cannot be gained by analyzing him through the political ideology or political culture of the state, whether Liberal or Fascist, and assuming his religion as accidental characteristic of his behavior. He should instead be recognized as substantially and integrally Catholic and studied as an operator who tried to work out the social doctrines and political theology of his church.

All Gemelli's activity after his religious conversion can be understood as promoting, in some way, a so-called Catholic reconquest of Italy from the Liberal victors of the Risorgimento. The term *riconquista*, often found in works by postwar historians writing on this subject, evokes the medieval crusades, the Christian reconquest of the Holy Land. This desired "Catholic reconquest of Italy" was the impulse behind "Italian Catholic resistance and organization between 1870 and 1900."<sup>723</sup> The *Opera dei congressi*, which served as the main organizational structure of the Catholic lay movement from 1874 until its dissolution in 1904 and reconstitution under stricter clerical and hierarchical control in 1904, sought "a reconquest of society on Christian foundations by means of more intense social activity, more profound religious activity, more energetic defense of religion in

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<sup>723</sup> A. C. Jemolo, *Church and State in Italy, 1850-1950*, trans. David Moore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), p. 58.

schools and in public administrations.”<sup>724</sup> Even the Spanish term *reconquista* has been used to describe this Italian Catholic movement, further evoking the expulsion of Muslim rulers from the Iberian Peninsula (and so implying an inquisition that imposed religious uniformity).<sup>725</sup> “The laity were to be the front-line troops in the Catholic *reconquista* of civil society.”<sup>726</sup> Although I have not yet located this use of “*reconquista*” in late nineteenth-century primary sources,<sup>727</sup> papal language during that period could indeed sound like a call for crusade. The Jesuit journal *Civiltà Cattolica*, reporting on the first meeting of the *Opera dei congressi* in 1874, defined the newly established Catholic organization as the “auxiliary troops of the army of the Church.”<sup>728</sup> Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), in his encyclical on Christians as citizens, wrote, “Christians are... born for combat, whereof the greater the vehemence, the more assured, God aiding, the triumph,” and concluded, “To refrain from doing battle for Jesus Christ amounts to fighting against

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<sup>724</sup> Angelo Gambasin, *Il movimento sociale nell’Opera dei congressi (1874-1904)* (Roma: Editrice Università Gregoriana, 1958), p. 61, fn. 64.

<sup>725</sup> A recent study on the role of religious conversion in nineteenth-century Italy concludes, “Vatican supporters advocated conversion because they wished to ensure that the newly emerging nation-state remained culturally and religiously Catholic.” Angela Lang, *Converting a Nation. A Modern Inquisition and the Unification of Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 3.

<sup>726</sup> Martin Clark, *Modern Italy. 1871 to the present*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Harlow, Essex: Pearson Longman, 2008), p. 105.

<sup>727</sup> I have found a late nineteenth-century call to “remake Italy [as] Catholic” (*rifar cattolica l’Italia*). Romolo Murri, ‘Proposti di parte cattolica’ (1899), in Giuseppe Are, ed., *I cattolici e la questione sociale in Italia, 1894-1904* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1963), p. 301.

<sup>728</sup> ‘Il primo Congresso cattolico,’ *Civiltà cattolica*, June 22, 1874, p. 10.

him.<sup>729</sup> This Catholic reconquest of Italy was intended to establish Italy either as a Catholic nation or a Catholic state.

For Gemelli the concept of Italy as a Catholic nation and the goal of establishing Italy as a Catholic state took precedence over any strictly political concepts of Italy espoused by secular philosophers or historians. An integrally Catholic vision of Italy formed during the papacy of Leo XIII motivated much of the Catholic movement that Gemelli joined upon his conversion. It is important to bear in mind that the church of which Gemelli became a part in 1903 had been shaped by Leo XIII during his exceptionally political pontificate, which happened to coincide precisely with the period from Gemelli's birth to his adult conversion. Moreover, this was the same quarter century during which the state had been governed by the more anti-clerical leftwing of Italian Liberalism. Catholics whom Gemelli knew prior to his conversion were men who reflected the trends of the Leonine church during this political period. Insofar as Gemelli began soon after his conversion to campaign for a Catholic university that would train a future class of Catholic lay leaders for the Italian state, it is important to grasp some notion of the sort of state sought by integralist Catholics.

### **A Catholic Nation**

The concept of Italy as a Catholic nation, as Gemelli would later come to understand it, can be traced to the nineteenth-century Neo-Guelph movement.<sup>730</sup> Its foremost

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<sup>729</sup> Pope Leo XIII, 'Sapientiae christianae' (1890), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 214, 222.

proponent was the Piedmontese priest Don Vincenzo Gioberti (1801-1855),<sup>731</sup> who elaborated its ideas and outlined its program during his exile in Belgium.<sup>732</sup> All this appeared in a book that met with immediate success upon its first publication in 1843 and numerous subsequent editions.<sup>733</sup> Neo-Guelphism stood for unification of the existing Restoration states on the Italian peninsula within a confederation led by the pope.<sup>734</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Ettore Passerin d'Entrèves, 'Il cattolicesimo liberale in Europa e il movimento neoguelfo in Italia,' in Luigi Bulferetti et al., *Nuove questioni di storia del Risorgimento e dell'unità d'Italia* (Milano: Marzorati, 1961), Vol. I, pp. 565-606; Claudio Vasale, 'Riforma e rivoluzione nel Gioberti postumo,' *Storia e politica*, Vol. XVIII (1979), pp. 395-441, 621-665; Agostino Giovagnoli, 'Il neoguelfismo,' in Gabriele De Rosa, ed., *Storia dell'Italia religiosa, Vol. III, L'Età contemporanea* (Bari: Editore Laterza, 1995), pp. 39-59; Guido Formigoni, 'Un cattolicesimo al plurale e una pluralità di 'guelfismi',' in Antonio Acerbi, ed., *La Chiesa e l'Italia. Per una storia dei loro rapporti negli ultimi due secoli* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2003), pp. 209-233; Claudio Vasale, 'Tradizione e progresso in Vincenzo Gioberti,' in Cesara Mozzarelli, ed., *Identità italiana e cattolicesimo* (Roma: Carocci, 2003), pp. 333-356.

<sup>731</sup> Mario Sancipriano, *Vincenzo Gioberti. Progetti etico-politici nel Risorgimento* (Roma: Studium, 1997); Giorgio Rumi, *Gioberti* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999); Francesco Traniello, 'Gioberti, Vincenzo,' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), pp. 94-107.

<sup>732</sup> In early May 1833 Gioberti resigned his position as chaplain in court of the Carlo Alberto (1798-1849), the king of Piedmont-Sardinia since 1831. Carlo Alberto was a Catholic who sympathized with some liberal ideas despite the strong influence of anti-liberal Jesuits in his court. Gioberti's opposition to the Jesuits would have made it difficult for him to remain there. A police informer reported his association with underground patriotic activity. He was arrested during a crackdown on conspirators carried out in late May 1833. Briefly imprisoned, Gioberti was then suddenly banished from Piedmont without trial in September of the same year. He settled, under straitened circumstances, in Brussels, capital of a Catholic nation with a new Liberal government. Francesco Traniello, 'Gioberti, Vincenzo,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), pp. 94-107.

<sup>733</sup> Vincenzo Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani*, 2 vols. (Brusselle: Meline, Cans, et cie., 1843). At least nine editions were published in Italian between 1843 and 1848. This work "enjoys the dubious distinction of instant acclaim from contemporaries but ultimate neglect by historians of ideas and political theorists." Bruce Haddock, 'Political Union without Social Revolution: Vincenzo Gioberti's *Primato*,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 41. No. 3 (1998), pp. 705-723.

<sup>734</sup> Agostino Giovagnoli, 'Il neoguelfismo,' in Gabriele De Rosa, ed., *Storia dell'Italia religiosa, Vol. III, L'Età contemporanea* (Bari: Editore Laterza, 1995), p. 39.



Gioberti's distant inspiration was medieval Guelphism, which would have resonated among his readers by evoking a past bond between Italian *comuni* and pope in opposition to the German emperor.<sup>735</sup> His recent inspiration, on the other hand, seems to have been Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), the Savoyard theorist of papal sovereignty as central to civilization and the welfare of nations.<sup>736</sup> The success of Gioberti's work may be attributed in large part to his flattering concept of Italy, which lay at the heart of his Neo-Guelphist scheme. Gioberti theorized "the genetic relationship between Catholic religion and Italian civilization, assumed as the irradiating center of European civilization" and "the definition of the nation as hypostatic manifestation of that relationship."<sup>737</sup> Defining Italy as dual-natured, universal in its spiritual mission but particular in its temporal form, Gioberti drew upon the analogical concept of the "hypostatic union" of Jesus Christ as one person with two natures, human and divine.<sup>738</sup> His argument is syllogistic:

Catholicism is the fountainhead of civilization. Italians are Catholic *par excellence*.  
Therefore, Italian civilization is the fountainhead of European civilization. Although Gioberti, like de Maistre, posited the necessity of the pope and presented an essentially hierocratic program, he appealed to Italian laity by highlighting its central role in the

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<sup>735</sup> Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), pp. 200-220.

<sup>736</sup> Joseph Marie de Maistre, *Du pape*, 2 vols. (Lyon: Rusand, 1819). English translation: *The Pope. Considered in his relations with the church, temporal sovereignties, separated churches, and the cause of civilization*, trans. Aeneas McD. Dawson (London: C. Dolman, 1850).

<sup>737</sup> Francesco Traniello, 'La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,' in Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e Stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), p. 18.

<sup>738</sup> E. A. Weis, 'hypostatic union,' in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2003), p. 264; A. Michel, 'Hypostatique (Union),' in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Vol. 7. Pt. 1 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1927), pp. 438-567.

salvation of the world. The hypostatic concept is further elaborated in Gioberti's explicit comparison between the providential roles of Israel and Italy. He describes Italians as the "levite" class of Catholicism, a people who are at once particular and universal.<sup>739</sup> He expressed this idea succinctly in another work that soon followed. "In Italy as in Israel... God allies himself with a special people in order to enable it to be mediator and link of universal bonding."<sup>740</sup>

The Neo-Guelphist concept of a Christian nation assumed two modalities from the start.<sup>741</sup> The first took medieval Christendom as its ideal and saw a historical breach created by the Reformation that led to modern civilization and its inevitable catastrophes. The second placed Christian civilization on a progressive historical continuum in which the mark of Christianity is recognized, however selectively, in the values and orders of the modern world. Both modalities were clearly responses to enlightenment and revolutionary culture.<sup>742</sup> Neo-Guelphism, in both modes, was an especially important

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<sup>739</sup> Vincenzo Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani* (Capolago: Tipografia Helvetica, 1846), p. 63. Quoted in Giovagnoli, 'Il neoguelfismo,' p. 58. An analogy is implied between the Italian nation in civil terms and the Catholic church in religious terms. Just as the Catholic church claims to be divinely instituted as a universal body that is manifested in historically contingent forms, so does Gioberti pronounce Italy to be providentially charged with a universal mission to be conducted from within its temporally evolved borders.

<sup>740</sup> Vincenzo Gioberti, *Il Gesuita moderno* (Capolago: Tipografia Helvetica, 1847), Vol. VII, p. 433. Quoted in Agostino Giovagnoli, 'Il neoguelfismo,' p. 58.

<sup>741</sup> Francesco Traniello, 'La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,' in Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e Stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), pp. 18-19.

<sup>742</sup> A different view holds that liberal Catholics, especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century, effectively accepted the medieval model of church and society. Giovanni Miccoli argues that the liberal Catholic standpoint was still that of "a 'Christian society,' which, as such, could hardly avoid some form of prevalence or dominion by the

strand of Risorgimento cultural and political thought before the uprisings that erupted all over the Italian peninsula, as well as elsewhere in Europe, in 1848.<sup>743</sup> The revolt against Austrian rule in the northern part of the peninsula that year raised hopes for realizing the Neo-Guelphist program. Such hopes were dashed when Pope Pius IX (1846-1878)<sup>744</sup> declared the neutrality of the Papal States in the conflict with Austria. “The pope, who had shown support for national unification at the beginning of his pontificate, explained in his allocution that he was unable, as head of the universal Church, to declare war on another nation, especially a Catholic nation, without neglecting his responsibilities toward others.”<sup>745</sup> Failure of the Neo-Guelphist program must also be attributed to Piedmont-Sardinia, which kingdom failed to convince Pius IX that it did not prefer its own aggrandizement to a confederation, and that it did not seek to limit the freedom of the church.<sup>746</sup>

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hierarchy and the church *magisterium* over the political structure of society... It thus seems that one might assert that liberal Catholics were unable to present an alternative strategy to that of intransigent Catholics, to whom they remained, despite all the diversity of their everyday political pursuits, substantially subordinated.” Miccoli does not clearly distinguish the conciliatorist concept of ecclesiastical influence within a regime of separation of church and state from the intransigent concept of that same influence within a regime of an established church. Giovanni Miccoli, *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione. Studi sul rapporto chiesa-società nell'età contemporanea* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1985), p. 64.

<sup>743</sup> Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1951*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>744</sup> E. E. Y. Hales, *Pio Nono, a study in European politics and religion in the nineteenth century* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1954); Giacomo Martina, *Pio IX*, 3 vols. (Roma: Università Gregoriana, 1974, 1986, 1990).

<sup>745</sup> Marco Invernizzi, *I cattolici contro l'unità d'Italia? L'Opera dei congressi (1874-1904). Con i profili biografici dei principali protagonisti* (Roma: Piemme, 2002), p. 15.

<sup>746</sup> Claude Leatham, *Rosmini. Priest and Philosopher* (New York: New City Press, 1982), pp. 377-380.

The Neo-Guelphist program of Italian unification, which perhaps drew its strongest popular and unofficial support in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and the Austrian-ruled Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, thus gave way to the various anticlerical schemes of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour.<sup>747</sup> Indeed, the popularity of anticlerical secret societies, such as Freemasonry and the *Carbonari*,<sup>748</sup> in the two northern kingdoms, as

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<sup>747</sup> Massimo de Leonardis, 'Il Risorgimento e la Chiesa Cattolica,' in Massimo Viglione, ed., *La rivoluzione italiana. Storica critica del Risorgimento* (Roma: Il Minatauro, 2001), pp. 231-252. In addition to the practical failure of Neo-Guelphism in 1848-49 must be added its failure to find even theoretical acceptance by the Roman curia. Despite the friendship and sympathy extended to Rosmini by Pius IX, who sought his counsel on political matters, all of Gioberti's works were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1852. The failure of Neo-Guelphism to become the ideology under which Italy was unified did not, however, lead to the total abandonment of its concept of a Catholic nation. On the contrary, following the collapse of the state during the Second World War, Italy witnessed "the unexpected realization of a Guelph State a century after the collapse of neo-Guelph hopes." A. C. Jemolo, *Church and State in Italy, 1850-1950*, trans. David Moore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), p. 339. It is worth noting that Guelphism, as a cultural and political ideology, remains influential among present-day natives of Lombardy. "Being Guelphs, in Lombardy, is not a vague reminiscence, but a quality that is substantiated by instinctive democracy, in forms historically possible, of lively autonomy of the social body, of respect for the person in ambits of liberty not ideologically understood, but substantiated by work and by trade." Giorgio Rumi, *Lombardia guelfa, 1780-1980* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1988), p. 7. Although some historians take the view that Neo-Guelphism *per se* was defeated in 1848, others see it as having an ongoing life. See: Guido Formigoni, 'Un cattolicesimo al plurale e una pluralità di 'guelfismi,' in Antonio Acerbi, ed., *La Chiesa e l'Italia. Per una storia dei loro rapporti negli ultimi due secoli* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2003), pp. 209-232; Francesco Traniello, 'La sconfitta del neoguelfismo,' in Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), pp. 157-177.

<sup>748</sup> Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria Italiana. Dal Risorgimento al fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003); Giampietro Berti and Franco Della Peruta, eds., *La nascita della nazione. La carboneria. Intrecci veneti, nazionali e internazionali. Atti del 26. Convegno di studi storici, Rovigno, Crespino, Fratta Polesine, 8-9-10 novembre 2002* (Rovigo: Minelliana, 2004); Vincenzo Ferrone and Gerardo Tocchini, 'La massoneria nel Regno di Sardegna,' in Gian Mario Cazzaniga, ed., *Storia d'Italia. Annali 21. La Massoneria* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2006), pp. 333-355.

well as elsewhere on the peninsula, suggests the limits of the Neo-Guelphist appeal.<sup>749</sup>

Nevertheless, as Martin Papeenheim observes, “the Catholic elements of the *Risorgimento* should not be underestimated.”<sup>750</sup> Only after mid-century did the *Risorgimento* become predominantly anticlerical in tone. The monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia that succeeded in unifying Italy under a Liberal state in 1860 sparked much Catholic hostility from the start by rejecting the pope’s sovereignty, both temporal (as evidenced by the state’s appropriation of papal domains) and spiritual (as shown by the state’s unilateral legislation of church matters). Count Cavour (1810-1861), as prime minister of

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<sup>749</sup> These secret societies were filled with Italian patriots who were Jacobin in their extreme opposition toward, even hatred of, the Catholic church and Catholicism itself, both as an institution and as a way of life virtually inseparable from Italian culture. At the heart of their motivation lies, it seems, either a contradiction (that one can love his country and hate its culture) or a false belief (that culture can be erased at will and rewritten). The violence of their passion raises the question of what exactly motivated it. I suspect it was, in many, if not most cases, hatred of a dogma that was viewed as a denial of liberty. The irony, of course, is the dogmatic mode of their reaction to it. Only in some cases was Liberalism interpreted pluralistically. Massimo Viglione, “*Libero Chiesa in libero Stato?*” *il Risorgimento e i cattolici: uno scontro epocale* (Roma: Città Nuova, 2005).

<sup>750</sup> Martin Papeenheim, ‘*Roma o morte: culture wars in Italy*,’ in Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 211. Papeenheim’s point raises questions about *Risorgimento* Catholics such as Gioberti, who sought to strengthen the church and the papacy as a whole, yet despised and attempted to weaken particular elements within it, such as the Jesuit order. Gioberti castigated Jesuits in *Il Gesuita moderno*, 5 vols. (1846-47). His condemnation of this religious order is so sweeping as to seem irrational; it is hard to discern a particular motivation. It was probably due to Jesuit hostility toward certain things Gioberti held dear: new philosophical methods, political nationalism, and church renewal from below. Indeed, the Jesuits in Piedmont-Sardinia had a reputation for being suspicious of “every person inclined toward novelty,” as even a leading member of their order, Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio (1793-1862) lamented to the general of his order, Johann Philipp Roothaan (1785-1853) in a letter of 1847. Quoted in Miccoli, *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione*, p. 55. See also: Luciano Malusa and Letterio Mauro, *Cristianesimo e modernità nel pensiero di Vincenzo Gioberti. Il Gesuita Moderno al vaglio delle Congregazioni romane (1848-1852)* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2005).

Piedmont-Sardinia, was “the inflexible guardian of the political sovereignty of the state.... Indeed, he would have preferred to resign rather than to permit the state to abdicate in favor of the authoritarian claims of the church.”<sup>751</sup> Bettino Ricasoli (1809-1880), who succeeded Cavour as prime minister in 1861, declared it “hopeful, even providential” that the Catholic church, for the sake of religious reform along democratic lines, should suffer a schism; toward that end he attempted to weaken papal authority by supporting the formation of national Catholicism (*cattolicesimo nazionale*) in Italy.<sup>752</sup> Neither Cavour nor Ricasoli was an irreligious man; both, however, believed that the church became corrupted by its involvement in the civil and political realms and thus should restrict itself entirely to the spiritual realm – as if these spheres, although conceptually distinguishable, were actually separable.

In 1864 the governments of Italy and France signed the September Convention, an exclusive agreement to determine the fate of the rump Papal State that survived in Rome. This act provoked a fierce rhetorical counter-attack from Pope Pius IX. In December he issued the *Syllabus of Errors*, much of which repeated his previous condemnations of anticlerical legislation enacted before 1860 by the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia or after 1860 by the new Kingdom of Italy. Historians tend to highlight Pius XI’s condemnation of Error No. 80 – that “the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile and harmonize

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<sup>751</sup> S. William Halperin, *The Separation of Church and State in Italian Thought from Cavour to Mussolini* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 13.

<sup>752</sup> Entrèves, ‘Il cattolicesimo liberale in Europa ed il movimento neoguelfo in Italia,’ p. 600.

himself with progress, with liberalism and with modern civilization”<sup>753</sup> – as emblematic of the pope’s attack on modernity itself.<sup>754</sup> Indeed, this was the one condemnation on the *Syllabus* that caused the greatest controversy at that time.<sup>755</sup> Less noted was the pope’s condemnation of Error No. 39 – that “the State, as being the origin and fountain of all rights, possesses a certain right of its own, circumscribed by no limits.”<sup>756</sup> If one of these condemnations is backward-looking, the other seems prescient.

The pope’s caustic manifesto was issued three years after the Kingdom of Italy had adopted as its constitution the *Statuto Albertino*, that is, the Liberal charter of state for Piedmont-Sardinia signed by Carlo Alberto during the revolutions of 1848.<sup>757</sup> The first article of the *Statuto* reads, “The Catholic religion, Apostolic and Roman, is the sole Religion of the State.” (*La Religione Cattolica, Apostolica e Romana è la sola Religione dello Stato.*)<sup>758</sup> This provision was, however, only *pro forma* and “devoid of any real significance.”<sup>759</sup> The new Italian state was, if anything, antagonistic toward the church’s

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<sup>753</sup> J. F. Maclear, ed., *Church and State in the Modern Age. A Documentary History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 167.

<sup>754</sup> Christopher Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967), p. 11; Denis Mack Smith, *Italy. A Modern History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 91; Martin Clark, *Modern Italy. 1871 to the present*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Harlow, Essex: Pearson Longman, 2008), p. 99.

<sup>755</sup> Frank Coppa, ‘Italy: the Church and the Risorgimento,’ in Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, eds., *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. 8, World Christianities, c.1815-c.1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 246.

<sup>756</sup> Maclear, p. 165.

<sup>757</sup> Giorgio Rebuffa, *Lo Statuto albertino* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003).

<sup>758</sup> Luigi Ciaurro, ed., *Lo Statuto albertino. Illustrato dai lavori preparatori* (Roma: Dipartimento per l’informazione e l’editoria, 1996), p. 177. See: A. C. Jemolo, ‘La natura e la portata dell’art. 1 dello Statuto,’ *Rivista di diritto pubblico e della pubblica amministrazione in Italia*, 1913, I.

<sup>759</sup> Halperin, p. 22.

traditional rights and authority.<sup>760</sup> Although the founders of unified Italy differed over fundamental political and social principles, all of them agreed that secularizing the state was necessary for achieving every sort of progress, intellectual as well as moral.<sup>761</sup> This played out especially in the field of education. The Casati laws,<sup>762</sup> passed in Piedmont-Sardinia in 1859 and extended to the new Kingdom of Italy in 1861, stipulated that *all* schools, even Catholic seminaries, be placed under state supervision, in order to develop and propagate a “non-confessional culture.”<sup>763</sup> This law was generally upheld by the ministers of public instruction, who included two celebrated Neapolitan men of letters

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<sup>760</sup> Massimo Viglione, “*Libera Chiesa in libero Stato?*” *il Risorgimento e i cattolici: un scontro epocale* (Roma: Città Nuova, 2005).

<sup>761</sup> This did not necessarily mean an eradication of Catholicism from society, but rather an attempted separation of religious and civil functions, exemplified above all by the Liberal state’s control of education. Alberto Asor Rosa notes that Italian intellectuals who served as the *avant garde* of the Risorgimento took up different positions along the spectrum of national politics, “from liberal Catholics to moderate liberal secularists to anticlerical and democratic ghibellines.... Anyway, some essential points of convergence exist that above all establish a clear line of demarcation between reactionary intellectuals, supporters of throne, of altar and perhaps of foreign domination in Italy, and progressive intellectuals. These are, as well noted, the concepts of unity, of liberty, of independence; not assumed in the abstract, but put concretely into the service of a complex political movement, centered, of course, on the nascent hegemony of a new class, namely, the bourgeoisie, but capable of contradictorily embracing, precisely because of their very indeterminateness, some strata of the old aristocratic-feudal class and some higher strata of the subordinate and common classes. And thus often oriented differently and destined to produce different outcomes, although they remain operant, as we have said, and thus not forgotten are elements that in the scheme of oppositions and antitheses allow convergences, overlappings and sometimes confused identities.” Alberto Asor Rosa, *Storia d’Italia. Volume quarto. Dall’Unità a oggi*, 2. (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1975), pp. 822-823.

<sup>762</sup> Maria Gabriella De Santis, *La riforma scolastica nell’Italia dell’Ottocento. La legge Casati* (Cassino (Lazio): Editrice Gargliano, 1988).

<sup>763</sup> Coppa, ‘Italy: the Church and the Risorgimento,’ p. 245. The Historic Left in particular argued for state control of seminaries out of fear that they “were being transformed into centers of treasonable propaganda.” Halperin, p. 47.



who held that portfolio: Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883),<sup>764</sup> four times minister between 1861 and 1881, and Pasquale Villari (1827-1917),<sup>765</sup> minister during 1891-1892.<sup>766</sup> Another Neapolitan who held this office during 1874-1875, Ruggiero Bonghi (1826-1895), had strong ties to Milan, where for the previous eight years he had been editor of *La Perseveranza*, the newspaper of the *Storica Destra*, or rightwing Liberals. Bonghi declared in parliament that the moral restoration of Italy would not be complete until the clergy had lost all influence upon the education of youth.<sup>767</sup> Bonghi was not

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<sup>764</sup> Francesco De Sanctis, *La scienza e la vita. Inaugural address delivered in the University of Naples, November 16, 1872*, trans. from German by Edith Wright (Philadelphia, 1884).

<sup>765</sup> Pasquale Villari, *Nuovi scritti pedagogici* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1891).

<sup>766</sup> Bruno Tobia, 'Una cultura per la nuova Italia,' in Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia d'Italia. Vol. 2. Il nuovo Stato e la società civile, 1861-1887* (Bari: Laterza, 1995), pp. 427-531.

<sup>767</sup> Giovanni Spadolini, *L'Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98* (Firenze: Vallecchi editore, 1954), p. 104. Bonghi, involved in reform and constitutional activity in Naples during 1846-48, was, despite his alienation from Catholicism, a Neo-Guelphist, insofar he looked to the new pope, Pius IX, for leadership of an Italian confederation. In 1848 he went to Rome to discuss this plan with Pius IX, meeting the pope both before and after his declaration of neutrality in the war against Austria. Bonghi also met frequently with Vincenzo Gioberti, who happened to be in Rome at this time. Unable to return to Naples after the Bourbons were restored to power that same year, Bonghi sought exile in Piedmont-Sardinia throughout the 1850s. During this period he became personally attached to and deeply influenced by Don Antonio Rosmini and Alessandro Manzoni, both leading conciliatorist Catholics whose ethical-religious thought Bonghi admired greatly, even if he did not share their Catholic faith. "Belief in unification, matured after the disillusionment of 1848, appeared in him closely tied to faith in new constitutional orders and to the firm conviction that any political upheaval was useless if neither accompanied nor followed by moral and religious renewal, a conviction that is the premise of his lifelong interest in problems of education, instruction and ecclesiastical politics in the following decades." Bonghi, a member of the Liberal rightwing in parliament, opposed the 1872 law suppressing theology faculties in all state universities, "seeing it as a renunciation by the State of its prerogative over a part of culture that would otherwise backslide under exclusive control of the Church." On the other hand, he opposed the crude anticlericalism of radicals and freemasons. Pietro Scoppola, 'Bonghi, Ruggiero,' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Vol. 12, 1970), pp. 43, 46-47.

anti-Catholic *per se*; indeed, he maintained a cordial dialogue on ecclesiastical politics with Catholic leaders who were willing to compromise, but his goal was a secular culture and a church under state control. By comparison, Alberto Mario (1825-1883), as representative of the *Storica Sinistra*, or leftwing Liberalism, held the extreme position that Catholicism, as a “perversion of the human spirit,”<sup>768</sup> was utterly unredeemable.

By secularizing the culture Italian Liberals could cripple their main domestic competitor. The Catholic church, with parishes organized at the diocesan level throughout the peninsula and islands, was the only body capable of issuing a widespread internal challenge to the nascent liberal state. The Italian church’s degree of organization at the national level in 1860 or 1870 should not, however, be overestimated. The church in Italy at that time remained structured largely on the basis of the old states; its organization across regions varied in kind, as well as degree.<sup>769</sup> A national hierarchy conforming to the political map of unified Italy could not, of course, have existed before 1860 or, if Rome is included, 1870.<sup>770</sup> Although Leo XIII, unlike his predecessor,

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<sup>768</sup> Ettore Passerin d’Entrèves, ‘L’eredità della tradizione cattolica risorgimentale,’ in Bartolo Gariglio and Ettore Passerin d’Entrèves, eds., *Introduzione alla storia del Movimento cattolico in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979), p. 150.

<sup>769</sup> Luigi Mezzardi and Franco Molinari, ‘Catholicism in Italy,’ in Hubert Jedin, ed., *The Church in the Modern World. An Abridgement of ‘History of the Church,’ Volumes 7 to 10*, trans. John Dolan, abr. D. Larrimore Holland (New York: Crossroad, 1993), p. 999.

<sup>770</sup> Although bishops from newly unified Italy gathered in Rome for the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), about half of them held titular sees in the rump Papal State that had not yet been annexed to Italy. Italian bishops did not meet as a national hierarchy until the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), a full century after Italian unification. See: John O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 121.

encouraged national episcopal conferences,<sup>771</sup> the bishops of Italy still had not formed one as late as 1914.<sup>772</sup> Although encyclicals issued to the bishops communicated papal concerns and even offered guidelines for action, there was no formal organization of Italian bishops for coordinating episcopal activity across dioceses. The state, at least during the first two decades after unification, probably did not fear the church's potential for organized opposition as much its actual disaggregated influence. "The Catholic church, its rites, its culture had been and still was... the only basis of identity, strong and defined, of the Italian nation."<sup>773</sup>

Catholics stood no apparent chance of reversing the anticlerical course of the state and securing passage of legislation favorable to the church through the Liberal dominated parliament.<sup>774</sup> Its deputies were elected on a narrow franchise of voters who were, like the deputies themselves, male, educated, and financially secure.<sup>775</sup> Many, if not most, of these Liberal parliamentarians were trained in the "liberal" professions (law, medicine,

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<sup>771</sup> Roger Aubert, *The Church in a Secularised Society (The Christian Centuries, Vol. 5)*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 67; Giuseppe Alberigo, 'The Local Church in the West (1500-1945),' *Heythrop Journal*, XXXVIII (1987) p. 138. Despite its claims of sovereignty over its own matters, the church has, since the time of the Roman Empire, always demonstrated a remarkable flexibility in conforming its own administrative regions to changing political boundaries.

<sup>772</sup> Mezzardi and Molinari, 'Catholicism in Italy,' p. 999.

<sup>773</sup> Franco Cardini, 'Postfazione,' in Angela Pellicciari, *Risorgimento da riscrivere. Liberali e massoni contro la Chiesa* (Milano: Ares, 1998), p. 219.

<sup>774</sup> Fulvio Cammarano, 'La costruzione dello Stato e la classe dirigente,' in Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia d'Italia, Vol. II. Il nuovo Stato e al società civile, 1861-1887* (Bari: Laterza, 1995). On the relationship between Italian Catholics and Liberals, see: Ornella Confessore, *Cultura, religione e società. Cattolici e liberali tra Otto e Novecento. Percorsi di ricerca*, ed. Anna Lucia Denitto (Galatina, Lecce: Congedo, 2001).

<sup>775</sup> Bolton King and Thomas Okey, *Italy To-Day*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (James Nisbet & Co. Limited, 1904), p. 19;

engineering), thus almost by definition middle class.<sup>776</sup> This class of people was, in general, not religious.<sup>777</sup> Even when the voting age was lowered by four years and the tax-paying requirement halved in 1882, the franchise expanded from less than two percent to less than seven percent of the total population.<sup>778</sup> The Italian church, on the other hand, had its greatest support among those excluded from the ballot box (namely, the masses and women).<sup>779</sup> Legislation became more stridently anticlerical after the radical leftwing of Italian Liberalism replaced the conservative rightwing as the

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<sup>776</sup> The percentage of professionally trained deputies rose from about 46% in 1861 to nearly 70% by the First World War. Fulvio Cammarano, 'The Professions in Parliament,' in Maria Malatesta, ed., *Society and the Professions in Italy, 1860-1914*, trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 281.

<sup>777</sup> "The public services, the bar, the medical profession, the universities, the business world, literature and art, are filled with persons who believe in no religious principles. They do not all profess themselves atheists, but they know nothing and care nothing about religion." Luigi Villari, *Italian Life in Town and Country* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 152. The author, Luigi Villari (1876-1959), was the son of Pasquale Villari (1827-1917), the Neapolitan parliamentarian who, as mentioned above, served as minister of public instruction in 1891-1892.

<sup>778</sup> Fulvio Cammarano, 'La costruzione dello Stato e la classe dirigente,' pp. 5, 94.

<sup>779</sup> A thoughtful account written at the turn of the twentieth century, defining Italian Catholics as both those who practice the faith and those, forming a subset of the first group, who always obey the pope, noted, "It is extremely difficult to estimate the strength of Catholics with any approach to accuracy." Bolton King and Thomas Okey, *Italy Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (James Nisbet & Co. Limited, 1904), p. 19. Perhaps this accounts in part for the scarcity of published research on the social history of Catholics in Italy during the late nineteenth-century Italy compared with that which has been done on Catholics in France, Germany, England or even Spain during the same period. A recent study of new models of feminine and family behavior introduced in Italy after the French Revolution concludes, "The Italian Catholic church had, in fact, succeeded in the strenuous effort to maintain control of the family, especially the masses (*popolo*), as the site of devotion and obedience and as the organized cell of a civil society opposed to the *paese legale* represented by the national State. The moral conditioning (*disciplinamento morale*) of the masses in Italy not only was, obviously and inevitably, slower and longer than that of the leadership classes, but was realized in a different political and cultural context." Roberto Bizzocchi, 'Una nuova morale per la donna e la famiglia,' in Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Storia d'Italia. Annali 22. Il Risorgimento* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2007), p. 96.

parliamentary majority in 1876.<sup>780</sup> Participating in national elections would imply a legitimization of the anticlerical state that the pope had anathematized. Moreover, there was little chance that Catholic representation in parliament would make any effective difference. “Is there any basis for hoping,” asked the *Civiltà cattolica*, “that [Catholics] will perform great good and impede much evil, when they gain a more or less considerable minority there?”<sup>781</sup> Rather than expending themselves in what they believed would be a vain attempt to defend, let alone expand, Catholic interests from within the state, many Catholics chose instead to withdraw.

The withdrawal of Catholics from the Italian state might be traced to the Piedmontese priest Don Giacomo Margotti (1823-1887),<sup>782</sup> who, in the Turin newspaper *Armonia* on January 8, 1861, called upon them to abstain from participating in national elections, proclaiming, “*né eletti né elettori*” (“neither as candidates, nor as voters”).<sup>783</sup> One might similarly trace this strategy to its endorsement by Pope Pius IX in his “*non expedit*”

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<sup>780</sup> The Coppino Laws of 1877 abolished compulsory religious instruction in elementary schools, making it voluntary on the basis of express request. Religious instruction had already been abolished in secondary schools earlier that same year, and theology faculties in all state universities had been suppressed in 1873. Luciano Pazzaglia, ‘Cultura religiosa e libertà d’insegnamento nella riflessione di Tommaso Gallarati Scotti,’ in Fulvio di Giorgio, Nicola Raponi, eds., *Rinnovamento religioso e impegno civile in Tommaso Gallarati Scotti* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1994), p. 94.

<sup>781</sup> ‘I cattolici e le urne politiche,’ *Civiltà cattolica*, July 4, 1874, p. 132.

<sup>782</sup> Angela Pellicciari, *Risorgimento anticattolico. La persecuzione della Chiesa nelle Memorie di Giacomo Margotti* (Roma: Piemme, 2004).

<sup>783</sup> Gabriele De Rosa and Francesco Malgeri, ‘L’Impegno politico dei cattolici,’ in *Storia dell’Italia religiosa, Vol. III: L’età contemporanea*, ed. Gabriele De Rosa (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1995), p. 227.

statement of October 11, 1874.<sup>784</sup> Catholics were free, however, and moreover encouraged to vote in provincial and municipal elections; many decisions about religious instruction in elementary schools, in particular, were made at the local level. “It was from the conquest of local authorities that Catholicism hoped to drive toward the conquest and the transformation of the State.”<sup>785</sup> The goal of transforming unified Italy into an integrally Catholic nation might be discerned in the first meeting in Venice on June 2, 1874 of the various Catholic social and economic associations (many formed in parishes and dioceses) that would soon become loosely confederated as the *Opera dei congressi*. Members of the *Opera* became known as “intransigents” because of their uncompromising attitude toward the state, the anticlericalism and economic liberalism of which compelled them to organize, on a national scale, associations for promoting the spiritual and material welfare of Catholics.<sup>786</sup> Giovanni Spadolini suggests an aggressive approach on their part when he writes of “that Catholic reconquest that was planned by the *Opera dei congressi*.”<sup>787</sup> This aggressiveness was not, however, apparent at the start. Indeed, the Catholic associations comprising the *Opera* initially seem to have been entirely defensive. Reporting on their first meeting in 1874 the *Civiltà cattolica* noted, “The separation of the Church from the State deprived the Church of temporal subsidies, of social means of operation, of any government protection.... It was thus necessary for the people to band together and defend it.”<sup>788</sup> The defensive strategy taken under Pius

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<sup>784</sup> Fausto Fonzi, *I cattolici e la società italiana dopo l'unità*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Roma: Edizioni Studium, 1977), p. 45.

<sup>785</sup> Spadolini, *L'Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98*, p. 95.

<sup>786</sup> Invernizzi, pp. 31-32.

<sup>787</sup> Spadolini, *L'Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98*, p. 639.

<sup>788</sup> ‘Il primo Congresso cattolico in Italia,’ *Civiltà cattolica*, June 22, 1874, p. 7.

IX shifted to an offensive one under his successor, Leo XIII (1878-1903), who became pope four years after the *Opera*'s first meeting. The new pope's approach toward the state was immediately more assertive than that of his predecessor. "[Leo XIII] felt that it was not enough for the Church to continue to assert itself merely by rejection."<sup>789</sup>

Very few Liberals took heed of the *Opera* when it was formed in 1874; those who did were certain that it would never be able to carry out the enormous cross-sector project it envisioned.<sup>790</sup> Until it was dissolved in 1904 by Pope Pius X (1903-1914), the *Opera dei congressi* was, however, the foremost organization of the Catholic movement in Italy. Indeed, before its dissolution the *Opera* was practically synonymous with the so-called Catholic movement. The term "*Movimento cattolico*," which first appeared in print in 1871,<sup>791</sup> was never the formal name of an official organization. Rather, it was used loosely to refer to the "response of Catholic laity to the Liberal secularization of the State and society" (*la risposta laicale del cattolicesimo alla laicizzazione liberale dello Stato e della società*).<sup>792</sup> Although the associations within the *Opera* tended to accept general directives from clergy and hierarchy, they were created and administered largely through lay initiative and leadership. Their goal was "to construct a social order autonomous and self-sufficient with respect to existing Liberal institutions, regulated by the teaching of

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<sup>789</sup> Philippe Levillain, 'Leo XIII,' in Philippe Levillain, ed., *The Papacy. An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2 (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 934.

<sup>790</sup> Spadolini, *L'Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98*, p. 100.

<sup>791</sup> Mario Belardinelli, 'Per una storia della definizione di Movimento cattolico,' in Francesco Traniello e Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia*, Vol. I/1 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1981), p. 3.

<sup>792</sup> Francesco Traniello e Giorgio Campanini, 'Presentazione dell'opera,' in Francesco Traniello e Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia*, Vol. I/1 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1981), p. ix.

the church and inspired by systematic doctrine concerning, precisely, the general principles and institutions of a society that is ‘integrally Christian’.<sup>793</sup> Guido Formigoni describes this program as manifesting a type of Catholic patriotism in opposition to the Italian state. Catholic withdrawal from the state was a necessary prerequisite in “the quest for and the claim of a different *italianità* that conceived the idea of nation on a different basis than that of the Risorgimento, and in this way respected the integrity of the ‘true doctrine’ and the needs of ecclesial institutions.”<sup>794</sup>

Not all Catholics joined this movement in denouncing the Liberal state. Those known as “conciliatorists” – whose ranks included many better educated Catholics, priests and prelates, as well as laity – were, on the contrary, quite willing to participate in it.<sup>795</sup>

Consequently, the Italian concept of a Catholic nation diverged more substantially in two different directions.<sup>796</sup> Conciliatorists conceived a Catholic nation as one in which the people could attempt, within an institutionalized separation of church and state, to

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<sup>793</sup> Francesco Traniello, ‘La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,’ in Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e Stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), p. 21.

<sup>794</sup> Guido Formigoni, *L’Italia dei cattolici. Fede e nazione dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), p. 32.

<sup>795</sup> Francesco Traniello, *Cattolicesimo conciliarista. Religione e cultura nella tradizione rosminiana lombardo-piemontese (1825-1870)* (Milano: Marzorati, 1970); Ornella Confessore, *Conservatorismo politico e riformismo religioso. La «Rassegna nazionale» dal 1898 al 1908* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1971).

<sup>796</sup> Francesco Traniello, ‘La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,’ p. 19. Traniello argues that both conciliarists and intransigents may trace their origins to the Neo-Guelph movement. Some other historians identify only liberal Catholics or conciliarists as the heirs of the Neo-Guelph movement. Raymond Grew, ‘Catholicism and the Risorgimento,’ in Frank J. Coppa, ed., *Studies in Modern Italian History* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), p. 44. Yet other historians identify only intransigents as heirs of that movement. Still others claim that the Neo-Guelph movement ended with the pope’s refusal to lead the Italian states against Austria imperialism during the uprisings of 1848.



reconcile freedom of conscience with a state that was neither indifferent nor neutral toward religious matters.<sup>797</sup> The idea of a Catholic nation was, especially for conciliatorists, something intermediate, “not fully identified with either [the idea] of the Church or that of the State, but interacting by varying degrees with both sides.”<sup>798</sup> The concept of a Catholic nation in Italy thus depended upon how the social and political role of Catholicism was defined.

The conciliatorist view attracted Catholics with a more optimistic view of modern history, such as two leading citizens of Milan, Stefano Jacini (1826-1891),<sup>799</sup> a rich Lombard landowner who was an important minister of public works in the first and later governments of the Kingdom of Italy,<sup>800</sup> and Luigi Nazari di Calabiana (1808-1893), an

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<sup>797</sup> Traniello, ‘La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,’ p. 24.

<sup>798</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>799</sup> Jacini adopted from the France of Louis-Philippe, the Liberal monarch who ruled with his supporters from 1830 to 1848, the rigid distinction between the *pays legal* and the *pays réel*, thus introducing to Italy the division between “*paese legale*” and “*paese reale*” in his work, *Sulle condizioni della cosa pubblica in Italia dopo il 1866. Lettera agli elettori di Terni del loro deputato dimissionario* (Firenze: G. Civelli, 1870). “The formula did not have an anti-Risorgimental meaning, as it seemed to *Civiltà cattolica* and to the intransigents, nor was it a denunciation of the failure of the post-Cavour political class, rather it was a pressing invitation to consider closed the period of the ‘dictatorship of direct politics’ exercised by the class ‘most cultivated and most revolutionary’ that had carried out unification of Italy; one could not to live forever according to the rules of transitional governments, [but] needed to establish a regular rhythm in the national and local government of the State.” Nicola Raponi, ‘Jacini, Stefano,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 62 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2003), p. 771.

<sup>800</sup> Jacini went head to head with Agostino Bertani over a major parliamentary inquiry into agriculture and the condition of agricultural workers in Italy that began shortly after the Historic Left took control of the government in 1876 and was eventually published in 15 volumes in 1885. Jacini, a recognized expert in agricultural issues, wanted the investigation to be carried out on a regional basis, whereas Bertani proposed that it be organized by subject matter and insisted that it privilege the specific condition of workers over the general conditions of agriculture. Nicola Raponi, ‘Jacini, Stefano,’ in *Dizionario*

aristocratic Piedmontese prelate who was a senator in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia from 1848, and thus also in the Kingdom of Italy from 1861, and archbishop of Milan from 1867.<sup>801</sup> Also to be considered in this regard is the Bolognese aristocrat Marco Minghetti (1818-1886), who began his political career as a Neo-Guelphist, always considered himself Catholic, yet turned to Cavour after 1848 and ended up as the prime minister who, in 1864, negotiated the September Convention with Napoleon III.<sup>802</sup> The main difference between the two Catholic Liberals Minghetti and Jacini rests not in their views of the church, but of the state. Minghetti was happy to engage in *trasformismo* with the Historic Left and to support a strong centralized state. Jacini, on the other hand, attempted to create, in opposition to the Historic Left, a National Conservative party that would decentralize greater power to the regions (although no such party could be formed without first achieving an official reconciliation between Italy and the papacy). These men might be described as having undivided loyalties to both the Liberal state and the Catholic church. Neither the state nor the church existed as they would have liked them to be. Both believed in a liberal church in a liberal state, in which case the church would have the same freedoms granted to any civic organization, and church members would

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*biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 62 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2003), p. 772.

<sup>801</sup> Nazari di Calabiana resigned his seat in the Italian senate when that body moved to Rome, which the state remade into the new national capital after its capture from the pope in 1870. Alfredo Canavero, 'Nazari di Calabiana, Luigi,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. III/2 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), p. 592. It is probably because of Nazari di Calabiana's friendship with the House of Savoy that he was never made a cardinal, a rank that usually accompanies that of being archbishop of Milan, the largest diocese in Italy.

<sup>802</sup> Nino Del Bianco, *Marco Minghetti. La difficile unità italiana da Cavour a Crispi* (Milano: FranoAngeli, 2008).

also have the same freedoms within the church as they enjoyed outside of it. They were realists who worked with the existing conditions of church and state, but as Catholics they did not deny a role to divine providence in the historical contingencies of the church and state relationship. “They were to delve into the new realities and work from the inside out, in order to bring to bear the motives and forces of the Christian tradition and thus to shape these realities in the Christian spirit.”<sup>803</sup>

Conciliatorists are generally considered as heirs to the cultural Risorgimento and liberal Catholicism of Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873)<sup>804</sup> and his close friend Don Antonio Rosmini (1797-1855).<sup>805</sup> “Manzoni’s ideological project... was to bring the

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<sup>803</sup> Mario Bendiscioli, ‘Italian Catholics between the Vatican and the Quirinal. The *Non expedit* at the Time of Leo XIII,’ in Hubert Jedin, ed., *The Church in the Modern World*, pp. 438.

<sup>804</sup> Carlo Dionisotti, *Manzoni and the Catholic Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>805</sup> There is an interesting personal connection between Rosmini and Gioberti, whom Lord Acton called “the two greatest thinkers among the Italian clergy.” John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, ‘Ultramontanism,’ in Lord Acton, *Essays on Church and State*, ed. Douglas Woodruff (London: Hollis and Carter, 1952), p. 65. The revolutionary situation in April 1848 allowed Gioberti to return triumphantly from exile and to make a political tour through various states in the northern part of the peninsula. This tour included three audiences with Pius IX after the pope’s Allocution in late April contributed toward extinguishing hopes for a realization of Gioberti’s Neo-Guelph scheme. Nevertheless, when Gioberti assumed a ministerial position in Piedmont-Sardinia in late July, shortly after that kingdom’s military defeat by Austria at Custoza (in Lombardy-Venetia), he promoted Rosmini to undertake, at the formal request of Gabrio Casati (1798-1873), the prime minister of Piedmont-Sardinia, a mission to Rome to negotiate both an Italian confederation and a concordat with the Holy See. When the revolution broke out in Rome in November of that year and the pope fled to Gaeta, Pius IX, invited Rosmini, whose political counsel he valued, even if he did not act upon it, to join him there, which Rosmini did until his enemies in the papal court, as well as among the Neapolitan authorities who hosted the pope’s entourage in Gaeta, forced him out in June 1849. Despite the personal esteem in which Rosmini was held by the pope (whose intention to make him a cardinal was blocked by his curia), two of Rosmini’s works,

revolutionary stimulus within the moderate limits of Christian right reason.”<sup>806</sup> Similarly, Rosmini “tried to assimilate the best elements of political and economic liberalism and combine them critically with the tradition of Christian philosophy.”<sup>807</sup> It should be noted, however, that the conciliatorist position was not always interchangeable with liberal Catholicism, nor was liberal Catholicism always interchangeable with Neo-Guelphism. While Rosmini was a Neo-Guelphist, Manzoni was not. For Manzoni “the ideal Italy would have no Papal States.”<sup>808</sup> Another exception was Geremia Bonomelli (1831-1914), a moderate intransigent when named bishop of Cremona in 1871, but a conciliatorist by the time Leo XIII was pope. Bonomelli acted more by necessity than principle, as he sought above all to avoid a situation in which Catholics would be forced

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*Cinque piaghe della chiesa* (1848), a call for religious renewal that influenced many Catholics, and *Costituzione secondo la giustizia sociale* (1849), a political tract that sets up a constitution based on historical factors rather than abstract principles, were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1849. Both were removed in 1854, the year before Rosmini died. Antonio Rosmini, *Della missione a Roma di Antonio Rosmini-Serbati negli anni 1848-49. Commentario* (Torino: G. B. Paravia, 1881); Kenelm Foster, O.P., ‘Rosmini and Pius IX, 1848-49,’ *Blackfriars*, Vol. XXXVI, Nos. 424-425 (July-August 1955), pp. 264-271; Claude Leatham, *Rosmini, Priest and Philosopher*, rev. ed. (New York: New City Press, 1982). See also: Antonio Rosmini, *The Five Wounds of the Church*, trans. Denis Cleary (Leominster: Fowler Wright, 1987); Antonio Rosmini, *The Constitution under Social Justice*, trans. Alberto Mingardi (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007). On the friendship of Manzoni and Rosmini, see: Paolo De Lucia, ed., *Carteggio Alessandro Manzoni – Antonio Rosmini* (Milano: Centro Nazionale Studi Manzoni, 2003). The inability of Pius IX to protect his friend Rosmini from hostile forces within the church suggests the limits of ecclesial power held by this most ultramontane of popes, who declared the dogma of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870.

<sup>806</sup> Robert S. Dombrowski, ‘The Ideological Question in Manzoni,’ *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter 1981), p. 499.

<sup>807</sup> Carlos Hoevel, ‘Forward: Beyond Democratism and Conservatism,’ in Antonio Rosmini, *The Constitution under Social Justice*, trans. Alberto Mingardi (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), p. xxiii.

<sup>808</sup> Claude Leatham, *Rosmini. Priest and Philosopher* (New York: New City Press, 1982), p. 454.

to choose between their religion and their country.<sup>809</sup> Although Bonomelli did not contradict the papal claim of temporal sovereignty as a necessary condition of spiritual independence, he understood that modern developments and new conditions could probably guarantee it better.<sup>810</sup> Bonomelli's diocese was the only one in Lombardy in which the *Opera dei congressi* did not develop.<sup>811</sup> The tendency of historians to identify the Catholic movement in Italy with intransigents overlooks the organizational contributions of conciliatorists such as Bonomelli, who attended notably to the concerns of the rural poor in his diocese, as well as to those of Italian emigrants abroad.<sup>812</sup> Many conciliatorists were aristocratic and rich; virtually all were conservative liberal monarchists (Bonomelli was unusual among them for his democratic sympathies). They intended to use the protected political space under the Liberal constitution to impede radicalization of anti-clerical attitudes and to prevent hostility between church and state

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<sup>809</sup> Giuseppe Gallina, 'Bonomelli, Geremia,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storiografico del Movimento cattolico in Italia*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), pp. 47-52. The logic underlying this "either-or" choice is explained by Ernesto Galli della Loggia: "Italy is the only country in Europe (including its non-Catholic regions) whose national unification and whose liberation from foreign rule occurred in an open, fierce clash with its own national Church. . . . The incompatibility between country and religion, between State and Christianity, is in a certain sense a fundamental part of our collective national identity as a national State." Quoted in Viglione, "*Libero Chiesa in libero Stato?*", p. 11.

<sup>810</sup> In a letter written to Stefano Jacini in 1887, Bonomelli sums up a recent conversation with Pope Leo XIII: "I spoke frankly to the pope: with the diplomatic corps at [your] side, with the telegraph, with countless means of communication, with the moral power [you] possess, with the eyes of the world always upon [you], with ears constantly pricked to hear your words, with unstoppable and unbeatable publicity that accompanies your every act, you are the freest of sovereigns. If, today, any power whatsoever injured you or wronged you, it would be known within two hours from one end of the earth to the other and a cry would rise everywhere. This is true freedom." Quoted in Entrèves, 'L'eredità della tradizione cattolica risorgimentale,' p. 157.

<sup>811</sup> Angelo Gambasin, *Il movimento sociale nell'Opera dei congressi (1874-1904)* (Roma: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1958), fn. 249, p. 331.

<sup>812</sup> Entrèves, 'L'eredità della tradizione cattolica risorgimentale,' p. 164.

from developing into a permanent condition.<sup>813</sup> In addition to those whose conciliatory attitude toward the state was the result of a well-considered political doctrine, there were other Catholics, less reflective, whose conciliatory attitude toward the state was a matter of mere practical conformity. These latter were typically found among men with vested interests in the secular order of things (certain aristocrats, middle-class professionals, intellectuals and even priests), rather than among the masses (who were largely disenfranchised).<sup>814</sup>

The concept of a Catholic nation developed differently among intransigent Catholics. They thought of a Catholic nation as one in which the people submitted entirely to papal authority and delineated exclusive confessional spaces as tangible signs of their membership in a nation that was more authentically Italian than the Liberal state.<sup>815</sup> Above all, they defended the pope's temporal sovereignty against the Kingdom of Italy, which annexed first the Papal States in 1860 and then the papal capital of Rome in 1870. Massimo Viglione argues that the Risorgimento was nothing less than a revolution that attempted to overturn the traditional religious, political, socio-economic and moral orders, thus provoking counter-revolutions.<sup>816</sup> In this sense, the intransigents may be

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<sup>813</sup> Traniello, 'La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,' p. 25.

<sup>814</sup> Spadolini, *L'Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>815</sup> Traniello, 'La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,' p. 20.

<sup>816</sup> Massimo Viglione, 'Introduzione,' in Massimo Viglione, ed., *La rivoluzione italiana. Storia critica del Risorgimento* (Roma: Il Minatauro, 2001), pp. 22-23. In her survey of new writing on the Risorgimento, Lucy Riall admits that the Liberal state was locked in "a struggle against the realities of Italy itself" and needed to mend "the immensely damaging rift with the Church which was the direct result of national unification," but she avoids describing the state's activity as revolutionary. She seeks instead a history that is able to account for "the passionate support for Italian unification by Italians, and

considered as counter-revolutionaries for whom constitutions, parliaments and a free press were threats to European society as it had developed during its Christian apogee. They tended to take medieval Christendom as their ideal, seeking an integralist society and theocratic state. French Catholics of the restoration period, such as Joseph De Maistre<sup>817</sup> and François-René de Chateaubriand (1764-1848),<sup>818</sup> had already laid some of the theoretical and cultural groundwork for them.<sup>819</sup> Indeed, many intransigents in post-Risorgimento Italy held views much in common with the sort of ultramontane Catholicism that developed, under the influence of de Maistre, in France during the restoration period. It should be noted, however, that ultramontanism, defined as the “doctrine which, especially in France in the nineteenth century, privileged the rights and prerogatives of the Holy See in relations between Church and State,”<sup>820</sup> took various forms.<sup>821</sup> At least in the case of France, “devotion to Rome could lead to either liberal or” – as in the case of those influenced by de Maistre - “to authoritarian conclusions.”<sup>822</sup> These two different styles developed also outside France. Lord Acton, whose multilingual circles, both social and intellectual, gave him an exceptional familiarity with

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its growing legitimacy as a political solution to Italy’s problems at this time.” Lucy Riall, *Risorgimento. The History of Italy from Napoleon to the Nation State* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 71, 116.

<sup>817</sup> See fn. 14.

<sup>818</sup> François-René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du christianisme, ou Beautés de la religion chrétienne*, 5 vols. (Paris: Migneret, 1802).

<sup>819</sup> The notion of Catholic Christianity as the basis of European culture and politics, upholding a medieval ideal, was also expressed in Protestant Germany by Novalis (1772-1801) in his essay, *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, written in 1799 and published in 1826.

<sup>820</sup> *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique. Tables générales*, eds., Bernard Loth and Albert Michel (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1971), p. 4257.

<sup>821</sup> Jeffrey von Arx, ed., *Varieties of Ultramontanism* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

<sup>822</sup> Austin Gough, *Paris and Rome. The Gallican Church and the Ultramontane Campaign, 1848-1853* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 63.

continental Catholic thinkers, defended a liberal theory of Ultramontanism in which the supreme authority of the church is maintained through free inquiry,<sup>823</sup> in which the “scientific spirit” is the “safeguard of religious truth.”<sup>824</sup> He opposed this to the “spurious Ultramontanism that ramified from de Maistre,”<sup>825</sup> for whom “the security of civil rights was to be sought in the completeness of hierarchical despotism.”<sup>826</sup> This latter degenerated in to an illiberal system in which “all facts and all opinions are worthless except to minister to the salvation of men and the promotion of religion.”<sup>827</sup>

Unlike conciliatorists, who valued constitutional liberties as potentially good, intransigents placed a much more limited value upon modern freedom of the press, of assembly and of education, understanding them rather as mere instruments by which to destroy the Liberal order that upheld them. Intransigents understood “modern freedom” as “enslavement to sin” with which “there is no compromise.”<sup>828</sup> Leo XIII expressed this

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<sup>823</sup> “It signifies a habit of intellect carrying forward the inquiries and supplementing the work of authority. It implies the legitimate union of religion with science, and the conscious intelligible harmony of Catholicism with the system of secular truth.” John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, ‘Ultramontanism,’ in Lord Acton, *Essays on Church and State*, ed. Douglas Woodruff (London: Hollis and Carter, 1952), p. 40.

<sup>824</sup> Acton, ‘Ultramontanism,’ p. 69.

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>826</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>828</sup> Spadolini, *L’Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al ’98*, p. 106. Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio (1793-1862), the Piedmontese Jesuit, had proposed clerical support for Catholic laity in favor of political reform prior to 1848; the anticlerical legislation enacted in Piedmont-Sardinia in the 1850s made him turn in the opposite direction. In a letter of 1860 to the Catholic historian Cesare Cantù (1804-1895), a conservative Liberal, Taparelli wrote, “Having become free, we are reduced to longing for the liberty of absolutism. It is no wonder to me, having known for a long time that freedom of thought and conscience is they tyranny of true liberty.” Quoted in Miccoli, *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione*, p. 57.



extreme wariness of liberties guaranteed by the Liberal state. “Whatever, therefore, is opposed to virtue and truth may not rightly be brought temptingly before the eye of man, much less sanctioned by the favor and protection of law.”<sup>829</sup> Intransigents preferred the clear and total opposition they faced from the Radical leftwing of Liberalism to the ambiguous position of the Conservative rightwing of Liberalism with which conciliatorists made informal alliances. Intransigents reserved their greatest contempt, however, for unreflective Catholics who merely “because of fear, or private interest, or social conformity, think of themselves, in their hearts, as Catholics and function in private as Catholics, while in public they speak and function as Liberals.”<sup>830</sup> Despite some blurring of actual positions, intransigents viewed Italy as essentially locked in a battle between two irreconcilable sides only one of which would triumph.

Unlike conciliatorists, who were, with few exceptions, conservative liberal monarchists, intransigents assumed a variety of political positions. They have been described as reactionaries who longed for a return to the *ancien régime*,<sup>831</sup> but also as radicals who

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<sup>829</sup> Leo XIII, ‘Immortale Dei’ (1885), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p. 114.

<sup>830</sup> ‘Il primo Congresso cattolico in Italia,’ *Civiltà cattolica*, June 22, 1874, p. 27.

<sup>831</sup> Their “ideal” was an “integral restoration of the old political institutions.” Gabriele De Rosa, *Storia politica dell’Azione cattolica in Italia. Vol. II. Dall’enciclica ‘Il fermo proposito’ alla fondazione del Partito popolare (1905-1919)* (Bari: Laterza, 1954), p. 7. Their “original sympathies” were “legitimist.” Ornella Confessore Pellegrino, ‘Tranisgenti e intransigenti,’ in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1980*, Vol. I/1 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1981), p. 21. Indeed, the initial Catholic movement in Naples, with ties to the Bourbons, had a legitimist orientation. Silvio Tramontin, *Società, religiosità e movimento cattolico in Italia meridionale* (Roma: La Goliardica editrice, 1977).

sought a new type of state beyond the Liberal one.<sup>832</sup> The confused way in which many historians have categorized intransigents suggests a need for further study. The most helpful element in Raymond Grew's analysis of Catholic attitudes during the Risorgimento is his conclusion that "the categories of political left and right, of liberals and intransigents, do not really fit Catholic attitudes very well."<sup>833</sup> Fausto Fonzi attempts to go further in breaking down intransigent political and social attitudes, which "went from the most obstinate reactionaries to the most audacious reformers, from legitimists to republicans, from conservatives to Christian democrats and sympathizers of socialism."<sup>834</sup> Despite the political variation among the rank and file membership of the *Opera dei congressi*, its first generation of lay leaders were mostly men of aristocratic and conservative backgrounds, such as Giambattista Paganuzzi (1841-1923), the Venetian nobleman who organized the first meeting of the *Opera* in Venice in 1874 and served as its president of the *Opera* from 1889 to 1902. "They were supporters of a social movement that, starting from the parish, aspired to protect morally and materially the rural world, which *laissez faire* economics had abandoned to itself."<sup>835</sup> These older intransigents paternalistically carried out social work among the Catholic masses without

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<sup>832</sup> "From the outset [the Catholic movement] denied any link with legitimism and threw over the Bourbon cause." Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925*, p. 60. From its first meeting in 1874 the *Opera dei congressi* had a "national and non-legitimist character." Marco Invernizzi, *I cattolici contro l'unità d'Italia?*, p. 31.

<sup>833</sup> Grew, 'Catholicism and the *Risorgimento*,' p. 45.

<sup>834</sup> Fausto Fonzi, 'Per una storia del movimento cattolico italiano (1861-1919), in Bartolo Gargilio and Ettore Passerin d'Entrèves, eds., *Introduzione alla storia del movimento cattolico in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979), p. 82.

<sup>835</sup> Gabriele De Rosa, *Il Movimento cattolico in Italia. Dalla Restaurazione all'età giolittiana* (Bari: Laterza, 1970), p. 90.

mobilizing them.<sup>836</sup> They did not seek to transform society, but rather to subject it to their politics. They expected the Liberal regime to weaken and collapse from within as its overly narrow electoral base failed to represent most Italians, or else they hoped for the regime to be overthrown from without by either France or Austria. The diplomatic schemes of Leo XIII were aimed at this last outcome until he abandoned them in despair in 1887, by which time the Kingdom of Italy had established a secure position among European states.<sup>837</sup>

The hostility between church and state fomented during the papacy of Pius IX continued under Leo XIII. Although the new pope had a refreshingly more open attitude toward the world – “in all his long pontificate there was no aspect, problem or question about modern life that was not touched, illuminated, explained or elaborated upon by him”<sup>838</sup> – he was as unyielding as his predecessor had been on the Roman Question, that is, the demand for official recognition of the pope’s temporal sovereignty.<sup>839</sup> Leo XIII, like Pius IX, rejected the Law of Guarantees.<sup>840</sup> This legislation, unilaterally composed by the state in 1871, sought to impose a settlement upon the papacy after the annexation of Rome.<sup>841</sup> On the other hand, Leo XIII was deeply concerned with the Social Question,

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<sup>836</sup> Gabriele De Rose, *Storia politica dell’Azione cattolica in Italia. Vol. II*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>837</sup> David I. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican. The Pope’s Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

<sup>838</sup> Spadolini, *L’Opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al ’98*, p. 630.

<sup>839</sup> Philippe Levillain and Jean-Marc Ticchi, eds., *Le pontificat de Léon XIII. Renaissances du Saint-Siège?* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2006).

<sup>840</sup> Maclear, *Church and State in the Modern Age. A Documentary History*, pp. 256-259.

<sup>841</sup> “The main motive behind Pius IX’s intransigence was the need to prove his independence to the outside world. If he had accepted even part of the Laws of Guarantees, his acceptance could have been interpreted abroad as an admission of

that is, the deteriorating condition of workers, both agricultural and urban, and the growing appeal of Socialism. This new ideology presented the church with a challenge very different from that of Liberalism. Whereas Liberalism was espoused by a privileged and powerful minority, Socialism appealed to the masses with a gospel of justice and salvation that competed with the Christian evangel. It was one thing for Liberals to impose state authority upon the church. It was another thing for Socialists to lure the masses away from the church. Leo XIII understood the need for the church to address the Social Question. This concern was most forcefully expressed in his 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum*, which outlined the rights and duties of capital and labor.<sup>842</sup> Leo XIII also sought to confront the deeply ingrained prejudice that Catholicism was intellectually backward and opposed to progress. This reputation was not wholly undeserved, given that those whom Acton called spurious Ultramontanists, in the process of expediently defending the church, claimed “that even the things of the Church cannot be objects of scientific knowledge.”<sup>843</sup> Leo XIII’s papacy was a sort of “reconciliation of Catholicism with the age, without the abandonment of Catholic teachings.”<sup>844</sup> This certainly did not mean a reconciliation of Catholicism with either Liberalism or, for that matter, Positivism, both worldviews based on premises that the church deemed false. In

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dependence on the Italian government, and used as a pretext for obstructing the exercise of his spiritual authority over non-Italian Catholics.” Seton-Watson, p. 56.

<sup>842</sup> Leo XIII, ‘*Rerum novarum*’ (1891), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 241-261; «*Rerum novarum*» *Écriture, contenu et réception d’une encyclique. Actes du colloque international organisé par l’École française de Rome et le Greco no. 2 du CNRS (Rome, 18-20 avril 1991)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1997).

<sup>843</sup> Acton, ‘Ultramontanism,’ p. 62.

<sup>844</sup> Oskar Köhler, ‘The World Plan of Leo XIII: Goals and Methods,’ in Hubert Jedin, ed., *The Church in the Modern World*, p. 394.

intellectual terms such reconciliation meant harmonizing the truths of the ancient faith with the truths of the new sciences. In social terms it meant adopting modern methods to organize and catechize the Catholic masses for the purpose of achieving a harmonious “new type of theocratic state.”<sup>845</sup> In the struggle between Liberal Italy and Catholic Italy, “the great prize in the ideological struggle was control of government, with all that this control meant in the way of legal power to establish the desired institutions and ideas and to repress the repugnant ones.”<sup>846</sup>

Although the openly subversive character of this goal was eliminated during the succeeding papacy of Pius X, who sought a more conciliatory arrangement with the state, the radical attempt at a Catholic conquest of society begun during the pontificate of Leo XIII continued apace during that of his successor.<sup>847</sup> Nevertheless, the intellectual rigidity that Pius X would enforce upon the church clashed with the more supple mentality of Leo XIII. Gemelli’s religious conversion occurred within the socially and culturally sensitive church of Leo XIII, whose long papacy spanned the entire quarter-century from the year of Gemelli’s birth to the year of his conversion, but the first decade of his religious life was formed under the rigor of Pius X.

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<sup>845</sup> Gabriele De Rosa, *Storia politica dell’Azione cattolica in Italia. Vol. II*, p. 10.

<sup>846</sup> John Courtney Murray, ‘Leo XIII and Pius XII: Government and the Order of Religion,’ in John Courtney Murray, *Religious Liberty. Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*, ed. J. Leon Hooper, S.J. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 94.

<sup>847</sup> “*Léon XIII et Pie X ont eu la même préoccupation de sauvegarder les valeurs évangéliques, le contenu de la foi avec le but avoué d’une restauration chrétienne dans le cadre de ce qu’on a qualifié de catholicisme «intégral».*” Marcel Launay, *La papauté à l’aube du XX siècle. Léon XIII et Pie X (1878-1914)* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1997), p. 8.

### A Catholic State

It is not easy to interpret Leo XIII's teachings on the relationship between church and state. The historical contingencies of the late nineteenth century drove him to fall back on polemical argument, yet the principles he upholds are abstract ones. Certainly, this scholarly pope did not develop his political teachings in intellectual isolation. He was, in fact, the last pope to have experience as a civil governor in a fully functioning state.

Born in a province of Rome<sup>848</sup> and educated in the papal capital, Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci (1810-1903) served as the Apostolic Delegate first to Benevento (1838-1841) and then to Perugia (1841-1843), two territories then under the temporal sovereignty of the Pope Gregory XVI. Apostolic Delegates in the Papal States "were almost exclusively civil functionaries, similar in many respects to the prefects in the later Italian Kingdom."<sup>849</sup> In both Benevento and Perugia, Pecci justly administered the civilian population and prudently deployed police and army to suppress secret societies and brigands. "He had shown himself an able if uninspired administrator, who excelled more particularly in policing the populations entrusted to his care."<sup>850</sup> Intended for a diplomatic career, he was appointed Nuncio to Belgium (1843-1846), a traditionally Catholic country with a Liberal constitution stipulating separation of church and state.

Pecci was given the difficult task of moderating the Belgian bishops, whose support for

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<sup>848</sup> The Pecci family belonged to the patrician bourgeoisie in the *comune* of Carpineto, located in the province of Rome. Vincent Viaene, *Belgium and the Holy See from Gregory XVI to Pius X (1831-1859). Catholic Revival, Society and Politics in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), p. 391.

<sup>849</sup> Frank J. Coppa, *Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli and Papal Politics in European Affairs* (Albany: State University of New York, 1990), p. 23.

<sup>850</sup> Viaene, p. 391.

the official separation of church and state did not lessen their zeal for upholding Catholic principles. His diplomatic career ended prematurely when he earned the mistrust of both Prince von Metternich (1773-1859), the conservative Catholic architect of the balance of power in Restoration Europe, and the displeasure of the Leopold I (1790-1865), the Liberal and Protestant monarch of Belgium.<sup>851</sup> In autumn 1845 Pecci was offered the see of Perugia, which signaled his effective recall from diplomatic service. He occupied his see from 1846 until the conclave that elected him pope in 1878, his episcopacy thus coinciding almost exactly with Pius IX's pontificate. Now holding an ecclesiastical post in the Papal States, Pecci deplored the ineptitude of the clergy who succeeded to his former civil post, "a series of Pontifical Delegates each more wooden-headed than the one before, suspicious of everything and everybody, utterly regardless of the Bishop and his counsels."<sup>852</sup> Even within the clerical-ruled papal state, he jealously guarded the activity of parish priests under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction against involvement in strictly civil matters, expressing concern "that the figure of the priest could become

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<sup>851</sup> Metternich was upset at Pecci's failure to restrain the Belgian bishops from issuing a controversial pastoral letter on "bad books," fearing that such a message would drive moderate Catholics into the Liberal camp. Leopold I was angered by Pecci's failure to prevent dissension between the bishops and the government over a minor education bill. Eduardo Soderini, *The Pontificate of Leo XIII*, Vol. 1, trans. Barbara Barclay Carter (London: Burns Oates & Washburne Ltd., 1934), pp. 33-45. While posted in Brussels, Pecci risked criticism from the Jesuits (who had educated him) by having contact with Vincenzo Gioberti, the anti-Jesuit Piedmontese priest living there in exile. Gioberti's *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani*, the manifesto of Neo-Guelphism, had recently been published in Brussels. Oskar Köhler, 'The World Plan of Leo XIII: Goals and Methods,' in Hubert Jedin, ed., *The Church in the Modern World. An Abridgement of 'History of the Church,' Volumes 7 to 10* trans. John Dolan, abr. D. Larrimore Holland (New York: Crossroad, 1993), p. 392. Pecci had less tolerance for Mazzinians. "As nuncio in Brussels, he would in fact demonstrate an uncommon zeal to track down Mazzinians and have them expelled from Belgium." Viaene, p. 391.

<sup>852</sup> Soderini, *The Pontificate of Leo XIII*, Vol. 1, p. 73.

confused with that of a civil servant, or worse, of an informer who reports to the state.<sup>853</sup> On the other hand, he upheld the “traditional role of guiding and controlling social opinions and customs” that was part a parish priest’s “strictly spiritual” mission.<sup>854</sup> This, however, involved his pastors in policing moral behavior and censoring reading material.<sup>855</sup> This sort of activity came to an abrupt end in 1860 when Bishop Pecci, now a cardinal, experienced the transfer of civil rule in his diocese from the Papal States to the new Kingdom of Italy. In Perugia, as elsewhere, this involved the suppression of religious orders, the confiscation of church property, the loss of juridical status on the part of the clergy and the elimination of the church’s official control over social life, above all, in the field of education. The new state attempted to place the church under its supervision and appropriate its traditional influence over society.<sup>856</sup>

As pope, taking the name Leo XIII, Pecci provided an outline of a Catholic state in his 1885 encyclical *Immortale Dei*.<sup>857</sup> It is his fullest statement on the relationship between church and state.<sup>858</sup> Despite his experience in government, he curiously uses the terms “state,” “civil society,” and “civil authority” interchangeably, thus seeming to confuse the

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<sup>853</sup> Maria Lupi, *Il clero a Perugia durante l'episcopato di Gioacchino Pecci (1846-1878) tra Stato pontificio e Stato unitario* (Roma: Herder editrice e libreria, 1998), pp. 182-183.

<sup>854</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>856</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 268-270.

<sup>857</sup> Leo XIII, ‘Immortale Dei’ (1885), in Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903*, pp. 107-119.

<sup>858</sup> The benefits of a Catholic state or Catholic society for Italy in particular are indicated in Leo XIII’s encyclicals *Etsi nos* (1882) and *Dall’alto dell’apostolico seggio* (1890).



state with the nation.<sup>859</sup> On the other hand, Leo XIII speaks of the church as both an authority and a society. The pope's apparent confusion of terms may be explained, at least in part, by recognizing Leo XIII as standing within the "later absolutist Continental tradition," in which Louis XIV declared, "L'état, c'est moi."<sup>860</sup> This tradition identifies the state with the nation, insofar as "the essence of the nation is its sovereignty, and this sovereignty is concentrated in the King."<sup>861</sup> Indeed, Leo XIII's predecessor, Pius IX, is said to have exclaimed in conversation with a cardinal at the First Vatican Council in 1870, "I am the tradition! I am the church!"<sup>862</sup> This must be borne in mind when considering the teaching of Leo XIII on the relationship between church and state. Nevertheless, Leo XIII was capable of distinguishing the state from society, of understanding that separation of church and state is one thing while separation of church and society is another.<sup>863</sup> His teaching, at any rate, provides a basis for the concept of a Catholic state.

Leo XIII does not endorse any particular form of government for the state. His openness to various forms of government should not, however, be confused with his position on the

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<sup>859</sup> Around this same time a future Italian prime minister was trying to establish theoretical distinctions between "the two notions of State and Society, which we have seen to coincide materially, however important their distinction is." Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, *Principii di diritto costituzionale*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Firenze: G. Barbèra, editore, 1890), p. 27.

<sup>860</sup> John Courtney Murray, 'Leo XIII on Church and State: The General Structure on the Controversy,' in *Theological Studies*, 14 (March 1953), p. 21

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21

<sup>862</sup> Giacomo Martina, *Pio IX*, Vol. III (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1990), p. 217.

<sup>863</sup> Soderini, p. 111.

relationship between church and state. Catholicism must have a unique relationship with the state, unlike that of any other religion.

No one of the several forms of government is in itself condemned, inasmuch as none of them contains anything contrary to Catholic doctrine, and all of them are capable, if wisely and just managed, to insure the welfare of the State.... The Church, indeed, deems it unlawful to place the various forms of divine worship on the same footing as the true religion, but does not, on that account, condemn those rulers who, for the sake of securing some great good or of hindering some great evil, allow patiently custom and usage to be a kind of sanction for each kind of religion having its place in the State.<sup>864</sup>

Much of the pope's teaching on church and state can be drawn from this passage. The only demands he places on the state are that it cause no damage to Catholicism, that it maintain social peace, and that it recognize Catholicism as inherently worthy of a privileged relationship with the state. By demanding that the state offer legal protection to Catholicism and no more than legal toleration to other religions for the sake of maintaining social peace, Leo stops short of demanding that the state make Catholicism the official religion and refuse toleration to other religions. Nevertheless, it is a small step from the first set of demands to the second:

Since, then, no one is allowed to be remiss in the service due to God, and since the chief duty of all men is to cling to religion in both its teaching and practice – not such religion as they may have a preference for, but the religion which God enjoins, and which certain and most clear marks show to be the only one true religion – it is a public crime to act as though there were no God. So, too, is it a sin for the State not to

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<sup>864</sup> Leo XIII, 'Immortale Dei' (sec. 36), in Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903*, p. 115.

have care for religion as a something beyond its scope, or as of no practical benefit; or out of many forms of religion to adopt that one which chimes in with the fancy; for we are bound absolutely to worship God in that way which He has shown to be His will.<sup>865</sup>

Leo XIII further demands that the state recognize the sovereignty of the church. He compares the supernatural ends of the church with the natural ends of the state, arguing that reason alone dictates the ultimate authority of the former and justifies its independence.<sup>866</sup> The “surest safeguard” for this independence, he argues, is the pope’s temporal sovereignty.<sup>867</sup> Responsibility for the “human race” is shared between church and state, the former having authority over what has to do with eternal life, the latter over what has to do with temporal life.

But, inasmuch as each of these two powers has authority over the same subjects, and as it might come to pass that one and the same thing – related differently, but still remaining one and the same thing – might belong to the jurisdiction and determination of both, therefore God, who foresees all things, and who is the author of these two powers, has marked out the course of each in right correlation to the other.<sup>868</sup>

In such mixed cases, church authority takes precedence. Leo XIII, true to scholastic method, argues by analogy, comparing the relationship between church and state to that between mind and body.<sup>869</sup> He thus invokes the Aristotelian categories of form and matter and the Aristotelian concept of hylomorphism, in which a soul, as form, is that

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<sup>865</sup> Leo XIII, ‘Immortale Dei’ (sec. 6), in Carlen, ed., pp. 108-109.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid., (sec. 10), in Carlen, ed., p. 109.

<sup>867</sup> Ibid., (sec. 12), in Carlen, ed., p. 110.

<sup>868</sup> Ibid., (sec. 13), in Carlen, ed., p. 110.

<sup>869</sup> Ibid., (sec. 14), in Carlen, ed., p. 110.

which gives actuality to the body, or matter, to which it is attached.<sup>870</sup> Furthermore, a body takes its particular shape because of its soul.<sup>871</sup> Leo XIII's analogy of the union between mind (or soul) and body implies a hierarchical relationship, also theorized by Aristotle. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), whose teachings were promoted with tremendous consequence by Leo XIII in the latter part of the nineteenth century, understood this Aristotelian principle. "In the individual man, the soul rules the body."<sup>872</sup> The Christianized Aristotelianism of Aquinas was introduced to the Roman College, against strong opposition from the existing faculty, by Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio (1793-1862),<sup>873</sup> who served as rector after the college was restored to the Jesuits in 1824.<sup>874</sup> One of the first students whom Taparelli converted to Thomism in the late 1820s was his teenage student Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci,<sup>875</sup> who, more than half a century later maintained the analogy as well as the principle in his encyclical *Immortale Dei*:

Whatever, therefore in things human is of a sacred character, whatever belongs either of its own nature or by reason of the end to which it is referred, to the salvation of souls, or to the worship of God, is subject to

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<sup>870</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul* (ii, 1, 412b10-413a10), trans. J. A. Smith, in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p. 659.

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*, (ii, 4, 415b10), p. 661.

<sup>872</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, quoted in Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 169

<sup>873</sup> He was an elder brother of Massimo Taparelli d'Azeglio (1798-1866), the Piedmonstese aristocrat who married a daughter of Alessandro Manzoni and who, as prime minister of Piedmont-Sardinia, invited Count Cavour to join the cabinet in 1850; two years later, Cavour would succeed him as prime minister. The aphorism "We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians" (*Fatta l'Italia, bisogna fare gli italiani*) is attributed to the younger Taparelli d'Azeglio.

<sup>874</sup> Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century. The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p. 84.

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

the power and judgment of the Church. Whatever is to be ranged under the civil and political order is rightly subject to the civil authority.<sup>876</sup>

This principle grants the church an enormous scope of authority over matters that are not strictly religious, but rather moral, insofar as they concern human thought and action that are, according to Catholic doctrine, concerned with salvation of the soul. The state would be wrong, Leo XIII teaches, to assign religious questions even to private judgment.

Doing so could lead to a sort of intellectual and spiritual, if not civil, anarchy in which “the judgment of each one’s conscience is independent of all law.”<sup>877</sup> Heresy and atheism could become openly expressed, and false opinions could become widespread through the press. “The defense of Catholicism,” the pope says, “necessarily demands that in the profession of doctrines taught by the Church *all shall be of one mind and all steadfast in believing*” (italics added).<sup>878</sup> On the other hand, Leo XIII also teaches that “the Church is wont to take earnest heed that no one shall be forced to embrace the Catholic faith against his will.”<sup>879</sup>

Given the extent to which the body of church doctrine touches upon fundamental aspects of human life, the scope of authority claimed for the church within a Catholic state or nation is extraordinarily large. This claim is not new, but rests entirely within the tradition of the church, as well as in the teaching of Aquinas. Here it is important to note that one of the earliest encyclicals Leo XIII issued after his election to the papacy was

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<sup>876</sup> Leo XIII, ‘Immortale Dei’ (sec. 14), in Carlen, ed., p. 110.

<sup>877</sup> Ibid., (sec. 26), in Carlen, ed., p. 113.

<sup>878</sup> Ibid., (sec. 46), in Carlen, ed., p. 117.

<sup>879</sup> Ibid., (sec. 36), in Carlen, ed., p. 115.

*Aeterni patris* (1879). This encyclical “proclaimed the Church’s official option for the Aristotelian method of St. Thomas in her philosophical and theological instruction.”<sup>880</sup> Leo XIII, who as bishop of Perugia had restored the teaching of Aquinas in the seminary, strongly endorsed this work “for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences.”<sup>881</sup> Although the main point of *Aeterni patris* may seem esoteric – that Thomist methods were able to handle the relations between faith and reason more successfully than any post-Cartesian methods – its impact was felt far outside of philosophical and theological circles. In this encyclical Leo XIII clearly stated his intention that Thomism also be taken up as a weapon to fight the Liberal state:

For, the teachings of Thomas on the true meaning of liberty, which at this time is running into license, on the divine origin of all authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the higher powers, on mutual charity one toward another – on all these and kindred subjects – have very great and invincible force to overturn those principles of the new order which are well known to be dangerous to the peaceful order of things and to public safety.<sup>882</sup>

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<sup>880</sup> Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*. p. 2. It should be noted that in the same year that Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni patris* (1879), which made the scholastic doctrines of Aquinas into the official theology of the church, he also raised to the cardinalate John Henry Newman, whose patristic methods were anything but scholastic. Newman’s teachings would become perhaps the strongest intellectual influence on Catholic theology during the Second Vatican Council, by which time the church, after the better part of a century, was opening up once more to other theological methods.

<sup>881</sup> Pope Leo XIII, ‘Aeterni Patris’ (1879), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p. 26.

<sup>882</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Leo XIII's formal endorsement of the teaching of Aquinas in the seminaries is more easily understandable than his informal encouragement of the reading of works by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), which previous seminary rectors had suppressed.<sup>883</sup> While Dante's *Divine Comedy* upholds the principles of Christianized Aristotelianism as taught by Aquinas, it also opposes the temporal power of the church in a way that was shared by the spirituality of Francis of Assisi (c. 1181-1226). Leo XIII seems not to have feared that this latter aspect of Dante might be misinterpreted amidst contemporary tensions between church and state, and rather to have trusted in the substance of Dante's primary theme, namely that of Christian unity among the temporal forces of the world. Leo XIII would also have approved of the providential sense of history implicit in the *Divine Comedy*, which "looked back to an idealized past when an all-powerful empire served the common good and a poor and fervent church imitated Christ" and looked forward to a restoration of those conditions and thus anticipated the defeat of "the temporarily triumphant forces of evil" and the foreshadowing of "the final victory of the heavenly emperor Christ."<sup>884</sup>

The importance of Thomist principles that Leo XIII stressed from the inception of his papacy suggests that all his encyclicals be read in light of them. These principles do not contradict fundamental Augustinian doctrine, but rather adopt elements of Aristotelianism that offer a more positive evaluation of nature after the biblical fall from grace. Leo XIII's teaching on church-state relations might also be considered in view of

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<sup>883</sup> Eduardo Soderini, *The Pontificate of Leo XIII*, Vol. 1, p. 133.

<sup>884</sup> Charles T. Davis, 'Dante's Vision of History,' in *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, Vol. 95 (1975), p. 158.

his experience in both the ecclesiastical and civil service of a hierocratic state, in which the church's moral teaching was backed up by the force of law.

Even before Leo XIII made polemical use of Aquinas to demand a Catholic state as a bulwark against the historical contingency of Liberalism, intransigent Catholics had already begun under Pius IX to organize themselves along integralist Catholic lines.

Perceiving the Catholic church to be engaged in an all or nothing war against the Liberal state, they insisted upon “a conception of unity that was monolithic and uniform, and a practice of unity that came to define any diversity and any divergence from the line of teaching indicated by the papal *magisterium* as disobedience and treason.”<sup>885</sup> During this same period intransigents had already envisioned a Catholic state and began to realize it, if only through partial test runs, by means of the mass organizations within the Catholic movement. The encyclical *Aeterni patris*, issued in August 1879, seems to have quickly elicited an explicit appeal for building a Catholic state. In the issue of the influential Jesuit journal *Civiltà cattolica* that appeared on October 7, 1879, Don Gaetano Zocchi (1846-1912), a Milanese Jesuit and a member of the permanent committee of the *Opera dei congressi*,<sup>886</sup> called for Catholics to prepare a “forthrightly Catholic government” to substitute for the “liberal government.”<sup>887</sup> The Thomist revival thus reinforced the intransigent and integralist position with intellectual underpinnings. Moreover,

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<sup>885</sup> Miccoli, *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione*, p. 71.

<sup>886</sup> Alfredo Canavero, ‘Zocchi, Gaetano,’ in *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. III/2 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), p. 912-193.

<sup>887</sup> Gaetano Zocchi, ‘Della vita pubblica dei cattolici in Italia,’ *Civiltà cattolica*, October 7, 1879, pp. 129-150. Cited in Francesco Traniello, *Città dell'uomo. Cattolici, partito e Stato nella storia d'Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), p. 71-71.



intransigents quickly recognized that this encyclical provided an opportunity to them, as Thomists, to claim official support in their militancy against not only Liberals, but also conciliatorists. This latter group tended to espouse Rosminianism, a new body of Catholic thought viewed with hostility by intransigents for a number of reasons, perhaps the least spurious of which was its innovative use of language. “Rosmini wrote in a style that was intended to be accessible to all.... This seemed not only a departure but a dangerous invitation to the use of terms that might somehow change the content of traditional philosophy and theology.”<sup>888</sup> What may have angered intransigents the most about Rosmini was his belief in the inevitable expansion of Liberal political forms – parliaments, constitutions, freedom of the press – and his consequent precept of Catholic duty to ensure the proper development of those forms.<sup>889</sup>

After the occupation of Rome, to make even wider the gap (not to say the abyss) which divided the accusers and defenders of Rosmini was added the fact that the ‘Rosminians’ were by and large in favour of an understanding between Church and State: were ‘conciliators’ (as they were called); whereas the ‘anti-Rosminians’ were drawn up on the other wing, that of the ‘intransigents’. For us, these things belong to the past century; for them, by contrast, they were enough to cause people almost to tear one another to pieces. In fact no quarter was given on either side in the exchange of blows.<sup>890</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> Leatham, *Rosmini, Priest and Philosopher*, p. 243.

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 306, 393.

<sup>890</sup> Remo Bessero Belti, *The ‘Rosminian Question’*, trans. John Morris (Loughborough: John Morris, 1992), p. 67.

On the other hand, Rosmini was “a relentless opponent of liberalism in religion and he never ceased to denounce it.”<sup>891</sup> Counter to accusations made against him, Rosmini did not advocate separation of church and state as a fixed principle.<sup>892</sup> Nevertheless, Rosmini had sought, among other things, a voice for the people in the election of bishops, which brought about his denunciation as a liberal Catholic, despite the historical evidence he provided in support of his argument.<sup>893</sup> This charge, among other things, opened up Rosminians to attack from intransigents during the rest of the nineteenth century and beyond.<sup>894</sup> Anti-Rosminians seem, on the other hand, to have refrained from criticizing Leo XIII’s effort to mend the defective education of the clergy and the disunion of bishops, two of the five points of church reform advocated in Rosmini’s *Le cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa* (1848), a work placed on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1849 (and discreetly removed in 1854).<sup>895</sup>

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<sup>891</sup> Leetham, p. 307.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>893</sup> Ibid., pp. 368-369.

<sup>894</sup> Antonio Rimoldi, ‘Le tensioni tomiste-rosminiane a Milano dalla «Aeterni Patris» alla restaurazione della Facoltà teologica (1879-1892), in M. Fois, V. Monachino and F. Litva, eds., *Dalla Chiesa antica alla Chiesa moderna. Miscellanea per il Cinquantesimo della Facoltà di Storia Ecclesiastica della Pontificia Università Gregoriana* (Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1983), pp. 427-450; Giorgio Campanini, ‘Profezie rosminiane e rinnovamento della Chiesa,’ in Peppino Pellegrino, ed., *Rosmini: tradizione e modernità (1888-1988). Atti del XXII Corso della “Cattedra Rosmini,” 24-28 agosto 1988* (Milazzo: Edizioni SPES, 1989), pp. 167-168; Francesco Traniello, ‘Rosmini e la tradizione dei cattolici liberali,’ in Peppino Pellegrino, ed., *Rosmini: tradizione e modernità (1888-1988). Atti del XXII Corso della “Cattedra Rosmini,” 24-28 agosto 1988* (Milazzo: Edizioni SPES, 1989), pp. 89-112; Francesco Traniello, ‘Cristianità e secolarizzazione nelle «Cinque piaghe» di Rosmini, in Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e Stato nazionale. Dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), pp. 113-124.

<sup>895</sup> Indeed, it was Rosmini’s call for healing the other three so-called wounds of the church that landed him in trouble: these were (1) the division of the people from the clergy in worship; (2) the nomination of bishops by the secular power; and (3) the

In this context, Leo XIII's toleration of the anti-Rosminian crusade might be interpreted through his ultimate political principle of maintaining social peace, which applied just as much to governing the church as to governing the state. This is suggested by one of Leo XIII's early biographers, Edoardo Soderini (1853-1934), a close friend of the pope and a lay expert of the Social Question.<sup>896</sup> "One can hardly believe how much Leo XIII suffered from the intemperance and arrogance of some Catholics, even ecclesiastics, who would have wished to see him condemn all those who did not think as they did.... He did not intend that his Encyclical should encourage certain men, from excess of zeal, and making unauthorised use of his name, to present themselves as the sole and semi-official interpreters of Thomist doctrines.... His aim was by no means reaction, but progress."<sup>897</sup> Invoking the supreme principle of maintaining peace within a community, when this meant tolerating a certain evil in the social order for the sake of avoiding the greater evil of social disorder, could make Catholic political theology appear machiavellian.

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enslavement of the church by riches. Antonio Rosmini, *Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa*, ed. Alfeo Valla (Roma: Città nuova, 1998); English translation: Antonio Rosmini, *The Five Wounds of the Church*, trans. Denis Cleary (Leominster: Fowler Wright, 1987).

<sup>896</sup> As he grew older, Soderini, a member of the Roman "black" aristocracy that sided with the papacy against the state after 1870, moved increasingly toward the political right. Elected to parliament in 1913, he was named a senator in 1923, siding with the so-called "clerico-fascists" in parliament. He continued as a senator after the forced dissolution in 1926 of the *Partito popolare italiano*, the Catholic-inspired political party of which he had been a founding member in 1919. Filippo Mazzonis, 'Soderini, Edoardo,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. I/2 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1981), pp. 808-809.

<sup>897</sup> Soderini, p. 129.

It is important to ask whether Leo XIII intended a confessionally Catholic state as a normative ideal or as a contingent response to historical circumstances. John Courtney Murray, a Jesuit theologian and a leading twentieth-century scholar of church-state relations, points out the clear distinction in traditional doctrine between the “moral and theological norms of law” that guide the church and the “juristic and political norms of law” that guide the state. The church, in making judgments on matters of doctrine, which are independent of historical contingencies, is governed by the single norm of what is true and just; the state, on the other hand, in making judgments on matters of the common good,<sup>898</sup> which are rooted in historical contingencies, must consider not only what is true and just, but also what is politically prudent. What Leo XIII elsewhere called “these particular rules of life, suggested by reason and prudence”<sup>899</sup> are, in the words of Murray:

truly mandatory on the action of the state, and at times they take precedence over what the abstract dictates of right and wrong might demand; they require that evil and error should be tolerated in the interests of the state’s highest purpose, which is to secure, by prudent use of the instrumentality of coercive law, the public welfare of the whole body politic.<sup>900</sup>

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<sup>898</sup> “The chief concern of the ruler of a multitude, therefore, is to insure the unity of peace.” Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship (De regno)*, Bk. I, Ch. 2, Sec. 17, trans. Gerald B. Phelan; rev. with introduction and notes, I. Th. Eschman (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1979), p. 11.

<sup>899</sup> Leo XIII, ‘Libertas’ (1888), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p. 172.

<sup>900</sup> Murray, ‘Leo XIII and Pius XII: Government and the Order of Religion,’ p. 92.

Murray admires this “nice balance which the tradition strikes between the moral and juristic norms of law,”<sup>901</sup> but acknowledges that Leo XIII’s polemical context did not allow him to consider “the exigencies of social unity and public peace as the concrete norm for governmental use or non-use of its police power in the field of religion and morals.”<sup>902</sup> In the case of Italy, traditional Catholics and revolutionary Liberals were irreconcilable. “Unity and peace – so said both sides in the conflict – would come only by the triumph of one over the other.”<sup>903</sup> According to Leo XIII, the church could not tolerate Liberalism’s denial of the objective origin of moral law, the sole norm that determined the church’s principles regarding human affairs. “The great prize in the ideological struggle was control of government, with all that this control meant in the way of legal power to establish the desired institutions and ideas and to repress the repugnant ones.”<sup>904</sup> The traditional doctrine, on the other hand, by calling for social peace as the highest good, indicates that legal establishment of Catholicism and legal intolerance of all other religions are not fixed principles, but applications of the supreme principle of social peace; they may or may not be invoked, in consideration of this principle.

Perhaps some intransigents understood the pope’s call for a confessionally Catholic state as a means to achieve social peace under current historical conditions, rather than as an unchanging end in itself, but they seem to have been few. Leo XIII did not advocate the

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<sup>901</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>902</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>903</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>904</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

hierocratic form of government as a matter of principle. He certainly understood that Aquinas allowed autonomy to the civil authority in the application of juristic norms of law. Unlike Augustine, who taught that “civil government existed only because men had fallen into sin,” and that the civil authority “was little more than... a divinely appointed executioner of criminals,”<sup>905</sup> Aquinas, following the Catholic tradition of making all truth its own, adopted the basic Aristotelian political principle that human nature is social<sup>906</sup> and interpreted it through a Christian perspective. He thus arrived at the idea that “civil society did not arise from a corruption of human nature but from the intrinsic quality of human beings as such.”<sup>907</sup> Justification for civil authority was thus rooted in nature, not in religion. “Since Thomas was a Christian he believed that all lawful authority was subject to God, and in a Christian society he expected church and state to support one

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<sup>905</sup> Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 165. In this sense, the political theory of Joseph de Maistre was essentially Augustinian. According to de Maistre, “All greatness, all power, all subordination rest on the executioner. He is the terror and the bond of human association. Remove this mysterious agent from the world, and in an instant order yields to chaos: thrones fall, society disappears. God, who has created sovereignty, has also made punishment; he has fixed the earth on these two poles.” Quoted in Isaiah Berlin, ‘Joseph de Maistre and the Origins of Fascism,’ in Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity. Chapters in the History of Ideas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), p. 117.

<sup>906</sup> “Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.... Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal” Aristotle, *Politics* (1252a1-5, 1253a2), trans. B. Jowett, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 1986-1987. Aquinas repeats this principle: “Yet it is natural for man, more than for any other animal, to be a social and political animal, to live in a group.” Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship (De regno)* Bk. I, Ch. 1, Sec. 4, trans. Gerald B. Phelan; rev. with introduction and notes, I. Th. Eschman (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1979), p. 4.

<sup>907</sup> Tierney, p. 165.

another, but he denied that the secular power was derived from ecclesiastical and maintained that each was supreme in its own proper sphere.”<sup>908</sup> Late nineteenth-century intransigents seem, however, to have been even more reluctant than Augustine to acknowledge any intrinsic good in the existing order of their state. They seem to have adhered, in effect, to the hierocratic principle that the church should rule the state, as expressed in the bull *Unam sanctum* issued by Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303).<sup>909</sup>

It is ironic that many intransigents, who used Thomism to suppress Rosminianism, seem to have been hierocratic as a matter of principle, whereas many Rosminians, insofar as they believed that Catholicism would benefit from a separation of church and state under the existing historical conditions, were closer to an authentic application of Thomist principles.<sup>910</sup> Indeed, Rosmini himself believed that there was no incompatibility between his teachings and those of Aquinas; he “considered the Angelic Doctor [i.e., Aquinas] the most important Christian philosopher and theologian as well as the noblest

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<sup>908</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>909</sup> “We are taught by the words of the Gospel that in this church and in her power there are two swords, a spiritual one and a temporal one.... Both then are in the power of the church, the material sword and the spiritual. But the one is exercised for the church, the other by the church, the once by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and soldiers, though at the will and sufferance of the priest.” Boniface VIII, *Unam sanctum*, in Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>910</sup> Similarly, the Thomist system promoted by Leo XIII to attack rationalism and positivism “was paradoxically both rationalist and positivist in its theological methods.” Its methods were rationalist, insofar as they did not admit “any experiential, affective, or intuitive mode of thought.” They were positivist, insofar as it treated its sources as “simple data whose givenness and transcendent meaning were there for all to see.” Gabriel Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence. A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 19.

fruit of the Patristics and Scholasticism.”<sup>911</sup> Indeed, intransigent refusal to accept any truth in Rosmini’s writings stood against the Catholic tradition of both Augustine and Aquinas, both of whom, teaching the unity of all truth, called for the adoption any particular truth regardless of its source. The polemic of these intransigents resembled the hierocratic position implied when Pope Gregory XVI, issuing the encyclical *Mirari vos* in 1832, seemed to have condemned separation of church and state as a matter of principle. “Nor can We predict happier times for religion and government from the plans of those who desire vehemently to separate the Church from the state, and to break the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood.”<sup>912</sup> Apparently, some intransigents read this encyclical too narrowly:

That which in reality the Catholic church did not succeed in renouncing, neither as a matter of contingency, much less as a matter of principle, was that institutions, as the political-social organization of society, were not, even imperfectly, a projection of the church’s doctrines and formulas, and that civil authorities, even through compromises, deals and reciprocal concessions, were not, at least formally, subservient to the teaching of the church, charged with sustaining it and supporting it, if not with imposing it upon the way society operated.<sup>913</sup>

In fact, *Mirari vos* refers to early Christians under pagan emperors who “proved splendidly by their fidelity in performing perfectly and promptly whatever they were

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<sup>911</sup> Juan F. Franck, *From the Nature of the Mind to Personal Dignity. The Significance of Rosmini’s Philosophy* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>912</sup> Gregory XVI, ‘*Mirari vos*’ (1832), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1740-1878* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p.239.

<sup>913</sup> Giovanni Miccoli, *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione*, p. 36.



commanded which was not opposed to their religion,” thus implying a sphere of civil activity outside church authority. This distinction was sharpened by Leo XIII, who “put an end to all curialism or hierocratism – or whatever one chooses to call the right-wing medieval theory. By the same token he put an end to regalism in all the forms it has assumed from Constantine to the last of the Bourbons and Hapsburgs.” In this way, as Murray indicates, Leo XIII did not see the state as an arm of the church (e.g., *Unam sanctum*), nor the church as an arm of the state (e.g., Gallicanism, Josephism).<sup>914</sup>

Although there is much apparent overlap between the Neo-Guelph concept of a Catholic nation and the Leonine concept of a Catholic state, distinctions can and should be made, especially insofar as the former tended to extol the ideal of Italy as a Catholic civilization and the latter provided a polemic for the sovereignty of the Catholic church. Both conciliatorists and intransigents sought to make Italy a Catholic nation in the sense of a historically shaped people whose lives are guided by Catholicism, but only intransigents, seeming to make a principle of what Leo XIII acknowledged as a contingent measure, sought to make Italy a confessionally Catholic state in which the civil authority is formally obliged to respect Catholic doctrine in its legislation and enforcement of the civil laws. Conciliatorists, on the other hand, tended to support separation of church and state, as long as the state guaranteed freedom of action to the church. Conciliatorists advocated that Catholicism guide lives through interior, rather than exterior, discipline. Francesco Traniello offers a helpful distinction pertaining to conciliatorists during the papacy of Leo XIII. “The conciliatorists tended not to define themselves through a

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<sup>914</sup> Murray, ‘Leo XIII and Pius XII: Government and the Order of Religion,’ pp. 83-84.

program or a plan, but through an attitude.”<sup>915</sup> This attitude was one of conciliation between religion and citizenship, “conciliation in the proper sense, for it sought to hold together two terms without overlapping them or confusing them, but rather distinguishing them in a balance always most delicate.”<sup>916</sup> As heirs of Manzoni and Rosmini, conciliatorists were liberal Catholics who, according to Traniello, opposed any “ideological reading or translation” of their religion; that is, they opposed:

the idea that doctrinal patrimony of Catholicism contained not only the foundations of faith and the principles of Christian belief, but also the interpretive canons of every historical reality and context as well as the basic and immutable laws (derivable in every case by doctrinaire means) of every political and social order: with the consequent extension of Church authority, proclaiming itself the indefectible depository of such things, to areas that, according to liberal Catholics, belong instead to the sphere of free pursuit and human activity.<sup>917</sup>

Moreover, conciliatorists did not believe that the pope’s temporal sovereignty was a necessary guarantee of his spiritual independence.<sup>918</sup> Unlike the intransigents, the conciliatorists did not support the pope on an issue that they considered political rather than religious.

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<sup>915</sup> Francesco Traniello, ‘Rapporti tra cattolicesimo liberale e conciliatorismo,’ in Umberto Gentiloni Silveri, ed., *Cattolici e Liberali. Manfredo Da Passano e «La Rassegna Nazionale»* (Soveria Mannelli, Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2004), p. 176.

<sup>916</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>917</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>918</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 9.

By the 1890s a younger generation of intransigents, born into unified Italy and with no memory of the pope's temporal power, had come of age. If the older generation of intransigents who formed the Catholic movement in the 1870s were representative of the spurious Ultramontanism described by Acton, with its misunderstanding of the correct relationship between authority and liberty, then the younger generation, having grown up in a more scientific climate of opinion, more eagerly grasped the proper relationship between authority and liberty as given by the theory of Ultramontanism that Acton calls authentic and admires. Nevertheless, the younger intransigents' belief that scientific truth actually protects religious doctrines did not stop them from seeking further protection for such doctrines through the state. These younger intransigents were as integralist and theocratic as their elders, but they also differed from them by adopting democratic principles in organizing the Catholic masses. Their methods were in line with the "customary and characteristic Leonine perspective," which works from the bottom up rather than, as in the "frequent canonical perspective," from the top down.<sup>919</sup> The state's duties toward religion are derived from the fact that human beings are intended by nature to be moral, so that it is the Catholic people who demand that society be organized in such a way as to allow them to perfect their moral nature, rather than the church hierarchy which demands such conditions from the state. This bottom-up movement is apparent in *Rerum novarum*, the encyclical on capital and labor issued by Leo XIII in 1891. This teaching calls upon the state to create and preserve economic and social conditions that allow Catholics the freedom "to live as Christians and citizens, to do the

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<sup>919</sup> Murray, 'Leo XIII and Pius XII: Government and the Order of Religion,' p. 77.

will of God within society without having obstacles put in their way.”<sup>920</sup> Inspired by *Rerum novarum*, younger intransigents chose means for building a Catholic society and state that differed not only from those of conciliatorists, but also from those of the older generation of intransigents. Derisively called “young sociologists” (*giovani sociologi*)<sup>921</sup> by the aristocratic elders in the intransigent camp, these younger men recognized the potential to overthrow the Liberal order and create a theocratic state by mobilizing the Catholic masses.

The great masses of workers... alone could furnish the appropriate and dependable base for a new social and political system, ‘Christianly inspired,’ in which (on the ruins of the bourgeois order, of which Socialist statalism was the concrete successor) the Church was given back its ancient role, loaded with splendors of the Middle Ages and the *comuni*, as supreme defender and regulator of the life in society (*convivenza civile*).<sup>922</sup>

This meant removing the Catholic masses from the allure of Socialism. This younger generation continued the sort of work begun by their elders – organizing cooperatives and collectives for both producers and consumers, setting up mutual aid societies and insurance providers, establishing credit unions and banks<sup>923</sup> – but they did so democratically rather than paternalistically. They married militant social activity to their

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<sup>920</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>921</sup> Gabriele De Rosa, *Storia politica dell’Azione cattolica in Italia. Vol. II.*, p. 8.

<sup>922</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>923</sup> Sergio Zaninelli, ‘Forme e strutture delle organizzazioni economiche cattoliche in Italia dal 1870 al 1914,’ in Bartolo Gariglio and Ettore Passerin d’Entrèves, eds., *Introduzione alla storia del movimento cattolico in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979), pp. 259-274.

religious principles.<sup>924</sup> While the older generation conceived the Catholic movement “above all as a defense of the religious patrimony and of the rights of the Church,” the younger generation thought of this movement “as continuous onslaught, struggle and battle for the reconquest of an Italy polluted by Socialism and dominated by hypocritical and overpowering Liberalism.”<sup>925</sup> If the older generation had sought a Catholic reconquest of society and state, the younger generation was now seeking a Catholic reordering of the same.

### **Catholic Politics**

Don Davide Albertario (1846-1902), the vigorous leading intransigent in northern Italy after the annexation of Rome by the Liberal state in 1870, is a pivotal figure in the development of a Catholic politics for Italy. The reputation of this priest, born into the agricultural middle class of Pavia province, educated at the Gregorian University in Rome and ordained into the Milan diocese,<sup>926</sup> was such that he drew the allegiance of three remarkable young men from three different parts of Italy – Don Romolo Murri (1870-1944), a priest from the Marche region, Don Luigi Sturzo (1871-1959), another priest from Sicily, and Filippo Meda (1869-1939), a young lawyer and journalist from Milan – each inspired by the new concept of Christian democracy to chart new forms of politics for Italian Catholics during the crucial final years of the pontificate of Leo XIII.

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<sup>924</sup> Traniello, ‘La nazione cattolica: lineamenti di una storia,’ p. 21.

<sup>925</sup> Pio Bondioli, *Vico Necchi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1944), p. 113.

<sup>926</sup> Alfredo Canavero, ‘Albertario, Davide,’ in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani, 1860-1960*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), pp. 9-16.

Don Albertario (1846-1902) was the incendiary editor since 1869 of *Osservatore cattolica*, the leading intransigent newspaper in Italy. This newspaper had been established in 1864 at the urging of Pope Pius IX, “with the purpose of combating opinions among the Lombard clergy leaning toward Liberalism and sympathetic to the Savoyard monarchy.”<sup>927</sup> The newspaper banner bore quotes from both St. Ambrose and St. Peter, thus signaling its Milanese tradition and its Roman fealty. This newspaper was founded at least in part to compensate for Milan’s lack of an archbishop at that time. Monsignore Paolo Angelo Ballerini (1814-1897), appointed to the see of Milan in 1860, had been denied the *placet* by the Italian state; consequently, the archdiocese was governed by a vicar general, the Milanese aristocrat and auxiliary bishop Carlo Ambrogio Caccia Dominioni (1802-1866), whose intransigent views were resented by many Milanese clergy, especially the better educated. When he refused to celebrate a *Te Deum* for the new Italian kingdom, Caccia Dominioni had to flee the wrath he incurred among the people.<sup>928</sup> It was in this atmosphere that Caccia Dominioni heeded the pope’s urging and founded the *Osservatore cattolico*.<sup>929</sup> Albertario, who made no distinctions among Liberals and vehemently opposed any conciliation with the Liberal state, feuded bitterly, publicly and personally with leading conciliatorists among the Lombard clergy and hierarchy, such as the archbishop of Milan, Luigi Nazari di Calabiana (1808-

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<sup>927</sup> Ibid., p. 9. Under the banner of the newspaper were placed two maxims, one each by St. Ambrose and Dante, authors certainly not selected at random. Angelo Majo, *La Stampa quotidiana cattolica milanese. 1860-1912 mezzo secolo di contrasti* (Milano: Archivio Ambrosiano, 1972), p. 29.

<sup>928</sup> Formigoni, *L’Italia dei cattolici*, p. 34.

<sup>929</sup> Alfredo Canavero, ‘Caccia Dominioni, Carlo Ambrogio,’ in *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. III/1 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1984), p. 150.

1893);<sup>930</sup> the bishop of Cremona, Geremia Bonomelli (1831-1914); and the priest-scientist-writer Don Antonio Stoppani (1824-1891), a veteran of the Milan uprising of 1848 and the preeminent defender of Rosminianism (indeed, these last two roles suggest that Stoppani was shaped more by liberal Catholicism than by mere conciliatorism). Conciliatorists, many of whom were sympathetic to Rosminian thought, held a strong hand within the institutional church and cultural circles of Lombardy during the second-half of the nineteenth century. Albertario, who narrowly, and opportunistically, interpreted all papal utterances with the utmost rigor, launched an anti-Rosminian campaign in the wake of *Aeterni patris* in 1879, thus setting off the worst of his feuds with conciliatorists. As a result of his inflammatory polemics, Albertario had to present himself during the next decade in ecclesial and (something new for a priest) in civil courts that issued decisions against him. In the midst of this antagonism Leo XIII stated, “No one has the right to judge the orthodoxy of the faithful, as that right belongs to the Church alone.”<sup>931</sup> The bold presumptuousness of Albertario’s attacks upon fellow Catholics is suggested by his targeting even the aged and beloved Alessandro Manzoni in 1873.<sup>932</sup> Although Albertario took the ultramontanist side, Leo XIII was obliged at times to discipline him. Among Albertario’s supporters during his clashes with conciliatorists

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<sup>930</sup> Nazari di Calabiana was named archbishop of Milan and given the *placet* by the state when Ballerini, prevented from residing in Milan since 1860, resigned his appointment in 1867, following the death of Caccia Dominioni in 1866. Nazari di Calabiana was shaped by the Neo-Guelphism of his seminary teacher, Vincenzo Gioberti. Angelo Majo, *La Stampa quotidiana cattolica milanese. 1860-1912 mezzo secolo di contrasti* (Milano: Archivio Ambrosiano, 1972), p. 31. See above Ch. 4, fn. 17.

<sup>931</sup> Quoted in Angelo Majo, *La Stampa quotidiana cattolica milanese. 1860-1912 mezzo secolo di contrasti* (Milano: Archivio Ambrosiano, 1972), p. 19.

<sup>932</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

was the bishop of Treviso, Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto (1835-1914),<sup>933</sup> who would become the Patriarch of Venice before ascending to the papacy when Leo XIII died in 1903. As Pope Pius X, Sarto would loosen (but not lift) the *non expedit* in 1904, thus marking a greater tolerance, if not acceptance, of the Liberal state. Yet Sarto, as pope, would also unleash the forces of the Anti-Modernist campaign with his encyclical *Pascendi Domenici gregis* in 1907, thus authorizing intolerance not only toward virtually any philosophical thought that was not strictly Thomist, but also toward any Catholic political or social activity that claimed autonomy from ecclesial authority.

Albertario drew relatively few followers in the 1880s. A report by the prefect of Milan in 1884 states, “The *Osservatore cattolico* remains, as always, a combatant and calumniator of the constitutional principle, but it has extremely little influence in the city.”<sup>934</sup>

Calabiana and Bonomelli nevertheless sought to challenge Albertario with a conservative newspaper, moderate in tone, respectful toward both ecclesial and civil authorities, and concerned with social and political problems tied to the rural economy. The *Lega Lombarda*, appearing in Milan in 1886, “aimed at restoring the harmony of the old rural world,” which had been upset by new forces of capitalism and industrialization.<sup>935</sup> Its Catholic readers tended to be wealthy and noble landowners, the traditional ruling class of Milan, whose political and social views were largely those of moderate liberal

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<sup>933</sup> Canavero, ‘Albertario, Davide,’ p. 13.

<sup>934</sup> Fausto Fonzi, *Crispi e lo “Stato di Milano”* (Milano: A. Giuffrè editore, 1965), p. 259.

<sup>935</sup> Antonio Lazzarini, ‘Sacchetti, Giuseppe,’ in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. II (Casale Monferatto: Marietti, 1982), p. 567.



monarchists.<sup>936</sup> By 1888 the *Lega lombarda* was controlled by Carlo Ottavio Cornaggia Medici (1851-1935), a Milanese aristocrat who, following in the footsteps of Stefano Jacini, was fundamentally interested in the prosperity of the rural economy and the stability of its traditional social structure. He shared Jacini's concern with closing the gap between the *paese reale* and the *paese legale* by bringing the Catholic masses into the state as "the base of a society both Christian and agricultural, led by an enlightened class of noble landowners."<sup>937</sup> Like Jacini, he sought the possibility of electoral alliances between conciliatorists like himself and moderate Liberals in defense of conservative causes in local elections. Cornaggia Medici used his newspaper to advance his foremost objective: "to overcome the resistance of the clerical circles [i.e., to convince intransigents to drop their opposition to the state] and to make Catholic forces the apparatus for bringing forth a society and a state, Catholic and conservative."<sup>938</sup>

The conservative cause was threatened not only by the Radical leftwing of Italian Liberalism and a nascent Socialism, but also by democratic forces within intransigent Catholicism. As Pope Leo XIII deliberately pointed out in his encyclicals, starting from *Diuturnum* in 1881, the church is not committed to any particular form of government "provided only it be just, and that it tend to the common advantage."<sup>939</sup> Cornaggia Medici scrupulously adhered to ecclesiastical orthodoxy, ignoring the currents of

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<sup>936</sup> Fonzi, *Crispi e lo "Stato di Milano"*, p. 266.

<sup>937</sup> Silvia Pizzetti, 'Cornaggia Medici Castiglioni, Carlo Ottavio,' in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 29 (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1983), p. 107.

<sup>938</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>939</sup> Leo XIII, 'Diuturnum' (1881), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p. 52.

Rosminian reform that still ran in Lombardy. He stuck closely to papal teachings not as a matter of strategy, but as one of principle. Bonomelli, whose piety was unimpeachable, described Cornaggia Medici as “a sincere Catholic, I would say even scrupulous.”<sup>940</sup> It would be wrong to explain his effort to preserve the traditional agricultural society and economy as merely self-serving; Cornaggia Medici valued this socio-economic order as the outcome of a European culture imbued with centuries of Christianity. Although this makes him appear to have been out of touch with nineteenth-century developments, he was in fact at the center of a highly cultured circle of Milanese Catholics who met regularly at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana and kept abreast of new directions taken by Catholic culture in the most dynamic parts of Europe.<sup>941</sup> These men may have upheld a traditional social paradigm and practiced a paternalistic form of politics, but their conception of the state was modern insofar as it was constitutional and juridical. Cornaggia Medici’s doctrinal opposition to Liberalism was not conducted like a medieval crusade.<sup>942</sup> The Liberal state was an established fact. The most important task of Catholics was to participate in this state in order to assure the “order, liberty, welfare and progress” of Italy.<sup>943</sup> Cornaggia Medici’s circle was unique among Italian Catholics. Unlike Liberal Catholics, its members were scrupulously obedient to the *non expedit*. Unlike most intransigent Catholics, they were born into extremely privileged families and inherited positions of leadership as a prerogative for which they had been groomed from

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<sup>940</sup> Quoted in Majo, *La Stampa quotidiana cattolica milanese.*, p. 49.

<sup>941</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>942</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>943</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

birth; in other words, unlike most intransigent Catholics, they were already prepared for civil administration and awaited nothing but repeal of the *non expedit*.

By 1893 Albertario had outlived two of his major opponents, Stoppani and Nazari di Calabiana. His other great antagonist, Bonomelli, was by this time somewhat diminished. The pragmatic conciliatory views expressed by Bonomelli in a widely circulated article in 1889 angered Leo XIII, who not only placed it on the Index of Forbidden Books, but also forced Bonomelli to publicly recant his views in his own cathedral at Easter that year (although Bonomelli's social work, especially on behalf of Italian immigrants, continued to grow from strength to strength).<sup>944</sup> Meanwhile, the ranks of the Lombard intransigent camp became swollen with younger men, educated members of the growing middle-class. Nearly all born after 1870 and thus without any memory of the pope's temporal power, they were less concerned about the Roman Question than were older intransigents. This new generation was impassioned by the Social Question and inspired by *Rerum novarum*. Moreover, the man appointed by Leo XIII to replace Calabiana di Nazari as archbishop, Andrea Carlo Ferrari (1850-1921), showed much deference to Albertario and the growing ranks of his young followers. Albertario may have been religiously conservative, but he was socially progressive long before the promulgation of *Rerum novarum*. As early as the 1877 meeting of the *Opera dei congressi* in Bergamo, Albertario declared, "Woe, if we render ministry as aristocratic, truth as aristocratic! We sanctify democracy, to which the future is reserved,

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<sup>944</sup> Guiseppa Gallina, 'Bonomelli, Geremia,' in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), pp. 47-52.

and we are not men of the past.”<sup>945</sup> Such a declaration was threatening to the conciliatorist readers of the *Lega lombarda*, who were understandably outraged at suggestions coming from Albertario’s circle that democracy was the “expression only of the popular classes” and that aristocracy was “without a clear function and fated for an imminent end.”<sup>946</sup> An article that appeared in the *Lega lombarda* in early 1898 counter-argued, “Democracy is government of the people... [The] people are all classes organically and hierarchically arranged to form society.... Democracy is not the antithesis of aristocracy.”<sup>947</sup> Also threatened by the democratic trend within Albertario’s circle were conservative members of the *Opera dei congressi*, such as Giambattista Paganuzzi (1841-1923). This Venetian aristocrat, who served as the president of the *Opera* from 1889 to 1902<sup>948</sup> (during which tenure he made an ultramontanesque effort to centralize authority over the vast network of Catholic associations), held the Roman Question as dogma and took up the Social Question with traditional paternalism. Albertario opposed the paternalistic practices of Catholic aristocrats. They did too little, in his estimation, to develop the reason and will (to put it in Thomist terms) of the lower orders so that these persons could shape their own destiny; his faith inspired him instead to help the masses achieve their human and Catholic potential, indeed, their rights.

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<sup>945</sup> Quoted in Canavero, ‘Albertario, Davide,’ p. 11.

<sup>946</sup> Majo, *La Stampa quotidiana cattolica Milanese.*, p. 54.

<sup>947</sup> Quoted in Majo, *La Stampa quotidiana cattolica milanese.*, p. 54.

<sup>948</sup> Albertario’s advocacy of social democracy did not, however, estrange him from Paganuzzi, a lawyer, who defended the editor of *Osservatore cattolica* against the defamation charges made in court by Stoppani in 1887. Silvio Tramontin, ‘Paganuzzi, Giambattista,’ in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico, 1860-1960*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), p. 441.

Among the younger and more militant followers that Albertario drew primarily from northern Italy were two from afar. They were the leading intransigent priests of their generation: Don Romolo Murri, the son of small landholding farmers in the Marche region, and Don Luigi Sturzo, a scion of Sicilian nobility. Murri, based in Rome, seemed to envy the favorable atmosphere of Milan at this time. He described the Lombard capital thus:

Milan – a wealthy and flourishing city, probably the furthest point in Italy into which the movement of contemporary thought and European literature reached not as the privilege of a separated class of persons for whom thinking is a profession or a pastime, but as the animator of popular and public life – Milan had to be precisely where the first Italian spring of a renewed Catholic thought arose.<sup>949</sup>

Like Murri, Sturzo also collaborated with Albertario's circle from a distance. Both young priests developed their political views in some fundamental sense through the Thomism taught to them at the Jesuit-run Gregorian University, which they both attended in the 1890s; Murri received a *laurea* in theology in 1893, Sturzo received the same degree in 1898 (Albertario had also received a *laurea* in theology from the same institution in 1868).<sup>950</sup> Recalling his experience at the Gregorian, Murri wrote, “the

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<sup>949</sup> Romolo Murri and Filippo Meda, ‘I cattolici e lo Stato borghese,’ in Giuseppe Are, ed., *I Cattolici e la questione sociale in Italia, 1894-1904* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1963), p. 307.

<sup>950</sup> Luigi Sturzo and Angeline Helen Lograsso, ‘The Roman Question before and after Fascism,’ *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (October, 1943), p. 489.

theology was little more than a pretext for discussing scholastic, or rather, Thomist philosophy.”<sup>951</sup>

These were the years, immediately following the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, during which Christian democracy took fervid hold of intransigent youth. This concept was formulated by Giuseppe Toniolo (1845-1918), professor (*docente*) of political economy at Pisa and advisor to Leo XIII on the drafting of *Rerum novarum*.<sup>952</sup> Toniolo intended Christian democracy as the basis of a program for fulfilling Christian precepts in modern society, thereby reducing the appeal of Socialism among the masses. In Toniolo’s word Catholics must “renew the awareness of ethical Christian duty, by which the use of private property, having satisfied the relative needs of the ownership class, must then turn to the common good, especially that of the poor and propertyless.”<sup>953</sup>

After studying philosophy of history with the Marxist theorist Antonio Labriola (1843-1904) at the state-run university *La Sapienza* in Rome, Murri developed Toniolo’s concept into a more explicitly political “Christian socialism” that called for a radical restructuring of social life and culture in which the central role of the papacy remained respected. Murri offered, in this sense, a new guise for Neo-Guelphism. “We elucidate

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<sup>951</sup> Maurillo Guasco, ‘Murri, Romolo,’ in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), p. 414.

<sup>952</sup> The primary author of *Rerum novarum* was Matteo Liberatore (1810-1892), the Jesuit who examined Achille Ratti in philosophy when the latter earned a *laurea* at the Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome in 1882.

<sup>953</sup> Giuseppe Toniolo, ‘Programma dei cattolici di fronte al socialismo’ (1894), in Giuseppe Toniolo, *Saggi politici*, ed., Serafino Majerotto (Roma: Cinque Luna, 1980), p. 38.

and develop the Guelphist tendency of Italy, we welcome all Guelphist forces into a party and around a program....”<sup>954</sup> In his call for young people to “remake the city of man”<sup>955</sup> in a religious sense Murri seemed unable to distinguish the city of man from the city of God, thus confusing church and state. Among other things, he thought it was an error to minister to the interior life of individuals without considering them as political beings.<sup>956</sup> Chafing at the papal prohibition upon Catholic political activity, Murri claimed autonomy for Catholics in that sphere even though his political activity was essentially religious. “It is necessary,” he argued, “that Catholics *are* [i.e. that Catholics are Catholic] not only religiously, but also economically, intellectually and civically.”<sup>957</sup> His program of Christian socialism privileged Catholic university students as a vanguard for organizing all young forces; toward this end he organized a national federation of the various circles of Catholic students that existed at different Italian universities.<sup>958</sup> Taking shape as the *Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana* (F.U.C.I.) in 1896, it was removed from Murri’s control by ecclesiastical authorities who placed it under the reliably obedient *Opera dei congressi*. Continuously suffering internal tensions between its religious and social directions, F.U.C.I. would play a crucial role in the Catholic movement for the next half-century.<sup>959</sup>

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<sup>954</sup> Romolo Murri, ‘Proposti di parte cattolica’ (1899), in Giuseppe Are, ed., *I cattolici e la questione sociale in Italia, 1894-1904* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1963), p. 302.

<sup>955</sup> Benedetto Marcucci, *Romolo Murri. La scelta radicale* (Venezia: Marsilio editore, 1994), p. 29.

<sup>956</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>957</sup> Murri, ‘Proposti di parte cattolica,’ p. 301.

<sup>958</sup> Marcucci, pp. 29-29.

<sup>959</sup> Maria Cristina Giuntella, ‘Federazione universitaria cattolica italiana (FUCI) e Laureati cattolici,’ in *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. I/2 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1986), pp. 295-301.

Sturzo's early political direction was indistinguishable from that of Murri. Indeed, Sturzo recognized Murri "as the principal inspiratory figure of his youth."<sup>960</sup> While a student at the Gregorian University, Sturzo met Murri and Toniolo, becoming an "affectionate disciple" of the latter.<sup>961</sup> During the years that straddled the old and new centuries, Sturzo, like Murri, shifted from a conservative hierocratic position of intransigence to a Thomist-inspired advocacy of lay autonomy and democratic forms in political matters. His new position was, however, no less integrally Catholic than his earlier one and still fit into a Neo-Guelphist framework. Sturzo's earlier position, which older members of the *Opera dei congressi* continued to hold, was more concerned with salvific activity and religious principles, thus tending to view reality *sub specie aeternitatis*, whereas his later position, like that developed by Murri, was concerned with applying religious principles to economic and political contingencies, thus tending to view reality more in historical terms. The uneasy tension between these two worldviews within the intransigent Catholic camp in the 1890s – possibly complementary, but seen by many at that time as necessarily contrary – foreshadowed the anti-Modernist campaign carried out in the following decade. In that episode the strictest and most reactionary intransigent Catholics, who refused to consider dogma as having any historical forms, deployed their doctrinal and institutional power against other intransigent Catholics of a progressive,

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<sup>960</sup> John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), fn. 18, p. 39.

<sup>961</sup> Gabriele De Rosa, 'Toniolo, Luigi,' in *Dizionario storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860-1960*, Vol. II (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1982), p. 615.



pragmatic and historical orientation, seeking to suppress them more than any other element within the vast Catholic camp.

Albertario's democratic young followers also included the Milanese layman Filippo Meda, eldest of the nine sons of a prosperous cloth merchant with a shop in Via Mercanti, near the Piazza del Duomo.<sup>962</sup> Meda grew to maturity as an intransigent Catholic despite being the product of elite institutions of the Liberal state, such as *Ginnasio-liceo Cesare Beccaria*, rivaled only by *Ginnasio-liceo Giuseppe Parini* where Gemelli and Necchi were students. Upon leaving *Beccaria* in 1887 Meda began an increasingly influential public life that would last until the onset of Fascism. From an early age he showed talent for leadership and journalism. Joining the youth section of the *Opera dei congressi* in Milan, he quickly became its president. His writing appeared in *Osservatore cattolico* and other Lombard Catholic newspapers while he was still a teenager. Meda received a *laurea* in languages and classical literature at the *Regia Accademia scientifico-letteraria* in Milan in 1891, followed by a second *laurea* in jurisprudence at the University of Genoa in 1893.<sup>963</sup> That same year Albertario made him an editor of *Osservatore cattolico*. Also in 1893 Meda was drawn into the circle of Toniolo, who invited him to collaborate on the *Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali e discipline ausiliarie*, a new journal devoted to social studies inspired by the recent papal encyclical *Rerum*

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<sup>962</sup> Alfredo Canavero, *Filippo Meda. L'intransigente che portò i cattolici nello Stato* (Milano: Centro Ambrosiano, 2003), p. 11.

<sup>963</sup> Gabrielle De Rosa, *Filippo Meda e l'età liberale* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1959), p. xv.

*novarum*.<sup>964</sup> Toniolo was as pacific as Albertario was belligerent, yet it was the lay professor, through the faithful interpretation of his ideas by Meda, who would ultimately conquer the old clerical combatant.

Meda should receive major recognition in any study of political Catholicism in post-Risorgimento Italy. He was one of the first to conceive and promote a mass political party of Italian Catholics (starting in 1890) and for having been the first Catholic to emerge from intransigent ranks and serve as a state minister (during the First World War).<sup>965</sup> Because of his early acceptance of existing constitutional forms and his visionary and optimistic effort to weld the followers of Cornaggia Medici and those of Albertario into a single electoral force, he has rightly been called “the intransigent who brought Catholics into the state.”<sup>966</sup> The calm, reasoned rhetoric he developed both in print and in person was unusual for an intransigent polemicist.<sup>967</sup> Nevertheless, his departure from the established anti-Liberal line of the *Opera dei congressi* stirred controversy within that camp. Meda offered the standard intransigent condemnation of the “*rivoluzione liberale*,” but he accepted the reality of its historical outcome, namely,

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<sup>964</sup> Alfredo Canavero, ‘Meda, Filippo,’ in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 73 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>965</sup> A number of conciliatorist Catholics had previously served at the top level of the Italian state, especially between 1860 and 1876 when the Historic Right formed the governments. Such Catholics included Marco Minghetti, who was twice prime minister in 1863-1864 and 1873-1876, and Stefano Jacini, who headed the ministry of public works under several governments between 1860 and 1867. But these men held their offices primarily as Liberals, rather than as Catholics.

<sup>966</sup> Alfredo Canavero, *Filippo Meda. L’intransigente che portò i cattolici nello Stato* (Milano: Centro Ambrosiano, 2003).

<sup>967</sup> “The polemic of the Catholic dailies,” at least until after the *Fatti di maggio* of 1898, “was often vile and furious.” Fonzi, *I cattolici a la società italiana dopo l’unità*, p. 73.

the unity of the country with Rome as its capital.<sup>968</sup> Instead of making temporal power and electoral abstention into fixed principles, as did many older intransigents in the *Opera*, Meda considered these issues to be contingencies that depended solely upon the reversible decision of the pope. He was always careful to back up his opinions with citations from papal encyclicals and writings by the most orthodox Catholic thinkers.<sup>969</sup>

Despite Meda's importance, he tends to be overlooked by English-language historians. This is certainly the case when comparing his case with the recognition given to Sturzo, who founded the *Partito popolare Italiano* in 1919, the same year in which the *non expedit* was finally lifted.<sup>970</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that Sturzo became an outspoken anti-Fascist exile in 1924 and for the next two decades operated in Britain and the United States. But Sturzo did not begin to organize Catholics in his Sicilian diocese of Caltagirone for local elections until 1902, a dozen years after Meda had begun to do so in Milan.

Murri, whose politics were rooted in the elaboration of a Catholic popular culture, was another early advocate of a Catholic party on a national scale. He outlined a program in 1899, many features of which would later be taken up politically by Sturzo and culturally

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<sup>968</sup> Alfredo Canavero, *Filippo Meda. L'intransigente che portò i cattolici nello Stato*, p. 14.

<sup>969</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>970</sup> For example, John Molony attributes the origins of political Catholicism in twentieth-century Italy primarily to Sturzo and secondarily to Murri; Meda barely figures in this history. John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977).

by Gemelli.<sup>971</sup> In 1905 Murri planted the seed of a mass-based, non-confessional political party of Catholic inspiration, the *Lega democratica nazionale* (L.D.N.). Its statutes called for an adherence to “the religiosity of living and acting, in accordance with the spirit of Christianity,” but also for recognition of “the distinction between religious and civil society, and their respective autonomy,” an apparent contradiction that immediately drew notice.<sup>972</sup> Pius X did not condemn the L.D.N., but he took aim at Murri and his clerical supporters in the 1906 encyclical *Pieni l’animo*, which stipulated that any priest who joined it would be automatically suspended.<sup>973</sup> (Murri was suspended in 1907 and, when he continued to defy papal authority, excommunicated in 1909.) Perhaps Pius X was motivated by Murri’s tendency to conjoin Christianity with a particular form of politics, moreover, a democratic one that, despite its claim of non-confessionality, did not welcome all Catholics. Murri severely criticized clerico-moderates such as Cornaggia Medici, defining their politics as principally “for wealth and for the wealthy.”<sup>974</sup> In the same encyclical Pius X remonstrated the rhetoric of class warfare such as that effected by Murri. “Language which might inspire aversion for the higher classes is, and can only be regarded as, altogether contrary to the true spirit of

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<sup>971</sup> “We want to bring awareness and application of our Catholic principles into all manifestations of our public activities, we want to seek, to strive for that which the Church and the pope seek and with those means that the Church and the pope indicate to us in civic associations, in economic relations, in art and popular literature, in higher level education, in municipalities, in parliaments.” Romolo Murri. ‘Proposti di parte cattolica,’ p. 302.

<sup>972</sup> Marcucci, p. 55.

<sup>973</sup> “In a very special manner, under penalty of exclusion from Sacred Orders for clerics and suspension *ipso facto a divinis* for priests, We forbid them to become members of the National Democratic League, whose program was issued from Roma-Torrette on October 20, 1905.” Pius X, ‘Pieni l’animo’ (1906), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p. 60.

<sup>974</sup> Marcucci, p. 57.

Christian charity.”<sup>975</sup> If Pius X stood for anything it was the unity of all Catholics under papal authority. Moreover, as long as the Roman Question remained unresolved the principle of papal sovereignty was still at stake – and Pius X would not have even a Catholic political party undercut his sovereignty by negotiating his rights with the Italian state. Meda, like Murri, was motivated by the principles of Christian democracy toward the goal of establishing an autonomous political party of Catholic inspiration. Unlike Murri, Meda would not defy papal authority. Meda’s unquestioned obedience allowed him to become the one who paved the way for organizing all Italian Catholics into a constitutional party with at least tacit approval from the Vatican.

Meda compares more interestingly with Cornaggia Medici, who had earlier begun his own effort to bring a small elite of papally-obedient Catholics into Italian politics. Cornaggia Medici founded the *Comitato elettorale conservatore* in Milan in 1889 to advance his causes by joining conciliatorist Catholic and moderate Liberal voters. Meda, on the other hand, was a key founder of the *Associazione degli elettori cattolici*, established in 1890 to mobilize the intransigent vote of the Catholic movement for local elections in Milan. Cornaggia Medici was, however, unable to move beyond the paternalistic politics of nineteenth century elites who formed *ad hoc* blocs. Meda, on the other hand, not only developed a program that was democratic and party-based, but he also reached out to Cornaggia Medici’s conservative followers to organize a coordinated voting effort aimed at defending Catholic interests or achieving Catholic goals. Meda is thus recognized as being the first to prepare a more representative Catholic exit from the

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<sup>975</sup> Pius X, ‘Pieni l’animo’, in Claudia Carlen, ed., p. 60.

*non expedit*. Indeed, Meda is often cited in connection with the strategy of *preparazione nell'astensione* (“preparation in abstention”),<sup>976</sup> a slogan that implied not only an acceptance of existing state institutions, but also a need to prepare Catholics to enter into those institutions at some future date after having, with varying degrees of alienation, remained outside of them for at least a generation. Meda adopted the term “party” (*partito*) for Catholics, in opposition to the older generation of the *Opera* who rejected this term for its implication that Catholics represented something less than the entire Italian nation.

This slogan *preparazione nell'astensione* was coined by in 1880 Giorgio Montini (1860-1943), then a young Catholic intransigent in provincial Lombardy who had recently founded the Catholic newspaper *Il Cittadino di Brescia*.<sup>977</sup> Albertario quickly attacked his strategy. Writing in 1940, Montini recalled Albertario’s own notion of *preparazione* as watered down out of fear “that it would encourage defections [to the Liberal state] among Catholics, that it would open an ever larger breach in discipline [imposed by the *non expedit*].” Montini remembered having upheld the voting abstention as dutifully

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<sup>976</sup> Fonzi, *Crispi e lo “Stato di Milano”*, p. 284; Alfredo Canavero, *Albertario e «L’Osservatore Cattolico»* (Roma: Studium, 1988), pp. 56-59.

<sup>977</sup> Murri and Sturzo, as young seminarians, and Meda, as a member of the laity who was not even old enough to vote, showed an extraordinary precocity in their political, social and religious sensibility, as well as in their organizational talent. It can be said with little exaggeration that these men, while still youths, indicated the direction that Italy would eventually take in the twentieth century. It is hard to imagine this degree of political, social and religious sophistication and leadership among today’s youth. By rough analogy with the present, the founders of Google and Facebook, two broadband mediums with a revolutionary impact that is likely to influence the global history of the next century, achieved their technological insights as young men who were barely twenty-one years of age. The cultural discernment that existed among the first group compares interestingly with the technological virtuosity among the latter.

incumbent upon all Catholics, but he also believed at that time that Catholics, on the whole, were not ready to assume full citizenship in the state. This move would require a substantive preparation – “intense, multiform and systematic, so that any possible decision of the pope [to abolish the *non expedit* at some point in the future] could be truly free.”<sup>978</sup> Writing at this later date, more than a decade after Catholicism had been established as the state religion in the Lateran Treaty of 1929, Montini understood that the late nineteenth-century polemic of which he had been a part might seem like “byzantine logomachy” to the current generation of Italian Catholics. For his own generation, however, this dispute within the intransigent camp was “the indication of profoundly different tendencies, of different intellectual perspectives regarding methods for reforming habits, dispelling prejudices, and hastening the moment in order to give Catholics, disorganized and unprepared for public life, an awareness of their strength and their rights for the defense, the propagation, and the triumph of Catholic principles.”<sup>979</sup>

It is hard to pinpoint when and why Albertario began to support Montini’s position, but his hostility toward it seems to have abated by 1894 when Meda publicly expressed his acclaim for the formula “*preparazione nell’astensione*” and his hope for the not too distant day when Albertario would be seated “as representative of the people in the legislative assemblies of the *patria*.”<sup>980</sup> Albertario’s newspaper gave Meda an important medium for spreading his ideas, but the crucial concept that informed them was borrowed

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<sup>978</sup> Quoted in Gambasin, *Il movimento sociale nell’Opera dei congressi (1874-1904)*, fn. 125, p. 83.

<sup>979</sup> Ibid.

<sup>980</sup> Quoted in Fausto Fonzi, *Crispi e lo “Stato di Milano”*, p. 284.

from Montini. Beyond his influence upon Meda, Montini is notable as father of Ludovico (1896-1990), who would be hired by Gemelli as an instructor in the faculty of social sciences at Università Cattolica in 1923, and Giovanni Battista (1897-1978), who would become the chaplain of F.U.C.I., the national organization of Catholic university students, from 1925 to 1933. Many years later Giovanni Battista would be elected pope, taking the name Paul VI (1967-1978).

It is a testimony to Meda's mind and character that he reached out to socially conservative Catholics, that he organized two politically antagonistic Catholic groups into a single voting block based on religious principles, and that he held his own ground and prevailed against a superior as fierce and intractable as Albertario. Nevertheless, Meda could not have organized intransigents and conciliatorists into a cohesive unit on a religious basis if Cornaggia Medici had not first rejected the Rosminian calls for church reform that had been a crucial factor in dividing the Catholic camp. The ecclesiastical conservatism shared by both groups helped open the way for their cooperation in local elections, for which the *non expedit* did not apply. Indeed, Leo XIII encouraged participation in local elections insofar as it might provide for the common good. "It is also of great moment to the public welfare to take a prudent part in the business of municipal administration, and to endeavor above all to introduce effectual measures, so that, as becomes a Christian people, public provision may be made for the instruction of youth in religion and true morality."<sup>981</sup> A Catholic politics was taking shape in Italy, but the spheres of authority for church and state remained contested. The experience of

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<sup>981</sup> Leo XIII, 'Immortale Dei,' in Carlen, ed., p. 116.



Murri, Sturzo and Meda during the years between *Rerum novarum* (1891) and *Pascendi* (1907) indicate the hold that democratic ideas had taken on the younger generation of Catholic leaders and the restraints placed upon them by papal authority.

Meda, who would master the balance of these forces, was a man of outstanding importance among the group of Catholics with whom Gemelli became most closely associated upon his conversion in 1903. Thus when Agostino Gemelli began his career as a priest, he did so not only under the fiercely anti-modernist papacy of Pius X but also as a protagonist of a new kind of Catholic politics, the politics of 'intransigence from below'. These political currents linked him to a group of Milanese intransigents whose rise to power would open the way for his remarkable career and for the foundation of a Catholic university.

## EPILOGUE

Gemelli's first decade in the Catholic church was a period of smoldering dissension over the rigid enforcement of a narrow orthodoxy which often rendered suspect the ideas and activities of even the most faithful members of the church. It was not a promising time for a well-educated man to enter the priesthood in Italy. During the papacy of Pius X (1903-1914) many clergy and prelates survived by keeping a low profile and conforming externally. Gemelli, it seems, could do no more than the latter. As an enthusiastic promoter of modern sciences among Catholic intellectuals, he was out of sympathy with the stifling intellectual climate of the anti-Modernist campaign. His sentiments were shared with others in the circle of influential Catholics to whom he was linked from the time of his conversion, many of whom became anti-Modernist targets. Through a combination of submission and ingratiation Gemelli was able to gain the trust and support of the anti-Modernist pope, with whose backing he steadily racked up credentials and raised his profile among Catholics not only in Italy, but also elsewhere in Europe. Gemelli thus defied the sort fate that any other young, recent Catholic convert inspired by the broadmindedness of Leo XIII might have encountered during the heavy-handed papacy of Pius X. While many other clerical careers came to a halt in the crisis atmosphere under Pius X, Gemelli carved a path for himself that led to remarkable openings. He emerged from the papacy of Pius X as someone of increasing rank. If he had been any other type of character, Gemelli almost certainly would not have been able to found and operate a Catholic university in Italy during the stormy years to come. And without the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, founded in Milan in 1922, the

historically crucial preparation of a *classe dirigente* for a future Catholic state would also have taken a different course.

This epilogue highlights Gemelli's historical importance by relating his activities and his institutions, especially his university, to papal principles and strategies for ensuring the authority and influence of the Catholic church during a period of drastic social and political developments. If the *Rettore magnifico* of the Università Cattolica is studied within the context of the relationship between church and state in Italy, then consideration should be given to how this set of relations during the given period was strongly marked by the Vatican's relations with the French church and state. The consequences for Gemelli's project were momentous. As Gemelli foresaw, his university would indeed form a group of lay leaders for a future Catholic Italy; what Gemelli did not foresee was the extent to which this group would ultimately be influenced by the development of political Catholicism in France.

The anti-Modernist crusade, at least in the form of a witch-hunt, ended with the death of Pius X in August 1914. Newly elected as pope, Giacomo Della Chiesa (1854-1922), taking the name Benedict XV (1914-1922), had no sympathy or patience for the slanderous press campaigns and informant networks that had operated under his predecessor. Della Chiesa, like Ferrari and Maffi, had been "regarded in Rome as being 'soft' on Modernism."<sup>982</sup> He condemned anti-modernist excesses in his first encyclical as

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<sup>982</sup> John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope. Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999), pp. 43-44.

pope, *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum*.<sup>983</sup> He rid the Vatican curia of the most fearful and narrow-minded officials. He clearly signaled a return to the liberality of Leo XIII. Indeed, Della Chiesa had been a protégé of Leo XIII's secretary of state Cardinal Rampolla, who in turn had been an important patron of Giuseppe Toniolo. Gemelli was able to get an audience with the new pope within 18 days of his election.<sup>984</sup> He received Benedict's blessing for his newest project, a journal of Catholic culture aimed at educated Italian laity. *Vita e pensiero* appeared at the end of 1914. Unlike the previous Milan-based, Catholic-inspired cultural journal, *Il Rinnovamento*, which had been condemned by the Vatican for its independent opinions, *Vita e pensiero* was a decidedly and safely confessional journal. Gemelli announced it as being "intolerant of error; in other words, not [making] any accommodation with doctrines or persons who do not recognize the divine origin and nature of Catholicism."<sup>985</sup> While Gemelli had never been an egregious anti-Modernist,<sup>986</sup> he was always conservatively orthodox when treading on any ground that might be claimed by faith or morals. This conservative behavior stands in contrast to his bold and groundbreaking work in the experimental sciences.

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<sup>983</sup> "The enemies of God and the Church are perfectly well aware that any internal quarrel amongst Catholics is a real victory for them.... Let no private individual whether in books or in the press, or in public speeches, take upon himself the position of an authoritative teacher in the church." Benedict XV, 'Ad beatissimi apostolorum' (1914), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal encyclicals, 1903-1939* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), Sec. 22, p. 148.

<sup>984</sup> Giorgio Cosmacini, *Gemelli* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 151.

<sup>985</sup> Agostino Gemelli, 'Medioevalismo,' *Vita e pensiero* (December 1, 1914).

<sup>986</sup> John Pollard refers to Gemelli, during the papacy of Benedict XV, an "integriste" (using the French term by which Émile Poulat denotes the most egregious enactors of anti-Modernist excesses). Pollard uses another unsavory term, "clerico-fascist," to refer to Gemelli during the papacy of Pius XI. Both labels are problematic.

Much of Gemelli's life during the pontificate of Benedict XV, like that of the pope himself, was by consumed activity related to the First World War, which broke out just before the death of Pius X in August 1914. During the early months of the war, while Italy remained neutral and Benedict called for peace, Gemelli seemed to foresee participation in the war as an opportunity for Italian Catholics to prove their patriotism. He drummed it up through his organization *Pro cultura* as soon as Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary in the spring of 1915. Gemelli spent most of the war years at the front, but in comfortable circumstances as a both medical officer and an assistant chaplain to the Supreme Command and the Chief of General Staff Luigi Cadorna. Gemelli seems to have subordinated himself and ingratiated himself to Cadorna, just as he did to popes. He worked hard and produced pleasing results. The psycho-physiological laboratory that Gemelli established for studying soldiers and aviators thus gained the general's favor. In 1917 with his commander's support Gemelli succeeded in having the entire Italian military consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus – "in all regiments, in all hospitals, on all ships... in Italy, in Albania, in Macedonia, in Libya, wherever Italian soldiers were found."<sup>987</sup> In doing so, Gemelli also gained favor with the Italian church hierarchy and showed, in a most public way, his devotion to a cause that had been close to Leo XIII.<sup>988</sup> The war had, in a sense, been good for Gemelli. From a catastrophe in which many Italian lives had been destroyed Gemelli emerged aggrandized.

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<sup>987</sup> Maria Sticco, *Padre Gemelli. Appunti per la biografia di un uomo difficile* (Milano: O.R., 1976), pp. 112-113.

<sup>988</sup> Leo XIII consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart on the occasion of the jubilee in 1900. Oskar Köhler, 'The World Plan of Leo XIII: Goals and Methods,' in Hubert Jedin, ed., *The Church in the Modern World. An Abridgement of 'History of the Church,' Volumes 7 to 10* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), p. 401.

In fact, the Italian church emerged from the war in a strengthened condition, at least regarding its relationship with the Italian state. The military sacrifices made by Catholics, especially the clergy who had been conscripted into the war effort, discredited any view of them as lacking patriotism. Under the leadership of Luigi Sturzo, Catholic political activity began in earnest. The Sicilian priest chose Milan as the place to unveil his vision of political democracy less than a week after the Armistice. Cardinal Ferrari advised Sturzo to seek Vatican views on the full participation of Catholics in the state. Sturzo, meeting with the papal Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, asserted “lay independence in temporal matters.”<sup>989</sup> The Vatican did not place any obstacles in the way of Sturzo to form a political party comprised of Catholics. The *Partito popolare italiano* was thus founded in Rome in January 1919. In November of that year, ahead of elections, the Vatican lifted the *non expedit* that had been in place for nearly half a century. Benedict is much lauded for his benevolent tolerance, even sympathy, for political democracy and Wilsonianism. But it is incorrect to see him as breaking with his predecessors and adopting new principles in the political sphere. Although Benedict was willing to take a wait-and-see attitude toward Sturzo’s party, he did not abandon any principle of papal authority. Perhaps Benedict’s actual political sympathies were better expressed by the Milanese Catholic lay leader Stefano Cavazzoni in November 1918, who called for “the formation of a political party based on Catholic Action,”<sup>990</sup> that is, a confessional party under the direction of the church hierarchy. Gemelli also expressed

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<sup>989</sup> John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy. Partito Popolare, 1919-1926* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), p. 48.

<sup>990</sup> Molony, p. 46.

this position when the PPI held its First Congress at Bologna in June 1919. Appealing for “a continuation of the ‘glorious guelf tradition’ that had made Italy foremost among the nations of Europe,” Gemelli argued “that if the PPI was not a catholic party with a catholic platform and catholic aims then it separated the religious principle from political activity and consequently differed little from other political parties.”<sup>991</sup> According to John Molony, the very act of forming an aconfessional party “meant the end of the theocratic dream.”<sup>992</sup> But as long as Benedict XV and his successor Pius XI (1922-1939) continued to cling to this dream, so would Gemelli, who made himself the sturdy and reliable workhorse of the popes.

The contribution of Italian Catholics to the war effort legitimated some of their other claims, including that of freedom of teaching and the founding of a privately funded and operated Catholic university. With this in mind Gemelli took leave from the war front in September 1918 to visit the dying Giuseppe Toniolo, who had long spearheaded the effort for a Catholic institution of higher learning in Italy. “Numerous witnesses attest that in the course of the visit they spoke about the opportunity, indeed the necessity of establishing a Catholic university and that Toniolo then entrusted Gemelli to hasten the realization of it.”<sup>993</sup> Bringing this dream to fruition would, however, require no small degree of political finesse with a Liberal government that still harbored anti-clerical elements. Gemelli recruited the Milanese Catholic lay leader, Filippo Meda, the PPI

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<sup>991</sup> Molony, p. 56.

<sup>992</sup> Molony, p. 48.

<sup>993</sup> Nicola Raponi, ‘Toniolo e il progetto di Università cattolica,’ in *Per una storia dell’Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Settantacinque anni di vita nella Chiesa e nella società italiana* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1997), p. 36

parliamentarian with whom he had a record of cooperation dating from at least 1903. Meda, who had been a strong supporter of the militant *Fascio democratico cristiano* founded in Milan by Gemelli's best friend Ludovico Necchi in 1899, had also served as Minister of Finance from 1916 to 1919, thus becoming the first intransigent Catholic to serve in a government since the 1874 *non expedit* statement of Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). Meda secured for Gemelli the needed governmental decrees during the final months of the Liberal regime. The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore was inaugurated on the Feast of St. Ambrose in 1921 with the intention of forming "an elite group, a cultural, social and religious elite whose task would be to bring about the Christian rebirth of society."<sup>994</sup> Prominent in attendance was Achille Ratti, the recent successor to Ferrari as archbishop of Milan and soon to be Pope Pius XI. Although Meda would continue to serve the university as legal counsel until his death in 1939, his anti-Fascism caused him to lose leverage with the new government formed by Mussolini in October 1922. Gemelli shrewdly turned to Stefano Cavazzoni, another Milanese Catholic lay leader who had been a young adherent of Toniolo's *Democrazia cristiana*, a founding member of the PPI in 1919, and then in 1923 a clerico-fascist in the splinter group of Catholic parliamentarians who formed the *Centro nazionale italiano*. Deeply inspired by Catholic corporatism, Cavazzoni, who served briefly as Minister of Labor in Mussolini's first cabinet, would be the liaison between the university and regime during the Fascist period.

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<sup>994</sup> Agostino Gemelli, 'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore,' *Vita e Pensiero*, Vol. XXI, No. 101 (December 1921), p. 714. He was perhaps, already in the 1920s, the most prolific Italian Catholic writer.



The principles that underlay Pius XI's relationship with Mussolini and the Concordat of 1929 are perhaps better understood in the context of that same pope's condemnation of the rightwing political movement *Action française* in 1926. One repercussion of that condemnation that would spread throughout the Catholic world, consequentially playing out within the Università Cattolica, was the development of Catholic social thought that – in general contrast to directives of Pius XI that Gemelli so assiduously adopted as his own – privileges democracy and pluralism. The key figure in this denouement was the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, whose writings, considered subversive by the Fascist state, circulated within the Università Cattolica during the 1930s. The great proponent of Maritain's ideas in Italy during this period was Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI (1963-1978). From 1925 to 1933 Montini served as chaplain to the *Federazione universitaria cattolica italiana*, the only non-Fascist university organization in Italy at the time. He had an important role in propagating Maritain's ideas among Catholic students. The consequences for Gemelli's project were momentous. As Gemelli foresaw, his university would indeed form a group of lay leaders for a future Catholic Italy; what he did not foresee was the shaping of this group by a more expansive Catholicism that emphasizes lay autonomy in the social and political spheres, like Sturzo had attempted before Pius XI forced the PPI to dissolve in 1926. Maria Bocci, the foremost scholar of Gemelli, notes the tendency of historians to mark an “epochal rupture” between the younger and older generations in the Università Cattolica during the late 1930s and early 1940s, “the first clandestine during the Fascist period and then actors in the democratic rebirth, the second blinded by the clerico-fascist illusion and

later inevitably marginalized.”<sup>995</sup> What interests Bocci are continuities between these two generations. “How much – it is a first question imposed upon someone who wants to reconstruct the role of Italian Catholicism in the delicate passage from Fascism to democracy – did the reflections of the Fascist period influence the Catholic support given to the foundation of the post-Fascist state?”<sup>996</sup> I am additionally interested in the continuities in Gemelli’s strategy for the Università Cattolica both before and after the Fascists gained control of the Italian state. This must be born in mind when studying his complex relationship with the regime.

The mere dependence of his university upon both the pope and the duce during the Fascist period helps explain, at least in part, Gemelli’s adherence to the authoritarian papal line and flattery of the totalitarian dictator. Given the Vatican’s perceived threat from Bolshevism in the 1930s and its lack of confidence in secular democracies (in which Catholicism was disestablished) to withstand that threat, Gemelli’s support for the Fascist state as defender of a society in which Catholicism was legally protected is also explainable. It can be argued that Gemelli behaved like the popes; he was prepared, when necessary, to deal with parties whose core values contradict Catholic principles, but he insisted on somehow keeping those principles intact. This strategy aimed at creating spaces in which Catholicism could remain socially vital. Although Gemelli is criticized for his general support of the Fascist state, especially after the Concordat of 1929, it is nevertheless a fact that his university provided a haven in which non-Fascist political

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<sup>995</sup> Maria Bocci, *Oltre lo Stato liberale. Ipotesi su politica e società nel dibattito cattolico tra fascismo e democrazia* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1999), pp. 18-19.

<sup>996</sup> Maria Bocci, *Oltre lo Stato liberale*, p. 19.

ideas could be cautiously explored during the darkest years of Italian Fascism. By this time Gemelli's longtime patron and protector, Pius XI, was dead. Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, who became papal Secretary of State after the Lateran Treaties, was elected as his successor, taking the name Pius XII (1939-1958). He would be the first pope with whom Gemelli did not have easy relations or immediate access; Gemelli's channel to Pius XII would be Montini, who had been Gemelli's rival for the leadership of Italian Catholic university youth during the 1930s.<sup>997</sup> It was during the early years of the pontificate of Pius XII, coinciding with the Second World War, that the Università Cattolica became the setting in which the future leftwing of Christian Democracy began to take shape under the leadership of Giuseppe Dossetti and other young professors at Gemelli's university, inspired by the ideas of Jacques Maritain.

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<sup>997</sup> Maria Bocci, 'Giovanni Battista Montini e padre Gemelli,' *Istituto Paolo VI, Notizaria* 58 (December 2009), pp. 81-102.

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