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Disciplining the School of Athens:
Censorship, Politics and Philosophy,
Italy 1450-1600

Neil James Tarrant

D.Phil. Intellectual History

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Neil Tarrant

University of Sussex

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Summary of Thesis

This thesis examines the censorship of philosophy in Italy in the period 1450-1600, seeking to establish how the scrutiny of ideas was affected by the religious crisis of the sixteenth century. One of the primary aims of this thesis is to revise older accounts of censorship, dominant in the literature of both the history of science and Italian intellectual history traditions. These historiographies suggest that the Counter-Reformation triggered the emergence of a new and repressive attitude towards the censorship of philosophy, which grievously affected Italian intellectual and scientific culture in the seventeenth century. My thesis challenges this received view by drawing upon the insights produced by historians working in other disciplines, especially institutional historians of the Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books, and historians of the Church who have challenged the older monolithic view of the 'Counter-Reformation Church'. It seeks to show that while there were indeed significant changes to the apparatus of censorship during the sixteenth century, notably the re-organisation of the Inquisition and creation of the Index, they did not signal an entirely new approach towards the censorship of philosophy, nor did it have the cataclysmic impact suggested by earlier historians. I argue that the attitudes towards philosophy maintained within these institutions represent a specific formulation of the relationship between philosophy and revealed faith, which was in fact consistent with ideas elaborated within the mendicant orders during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. I argue that the implementation of these ideas as the basis for censorship can only be understood by understanding complex power struggles within the Church.

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

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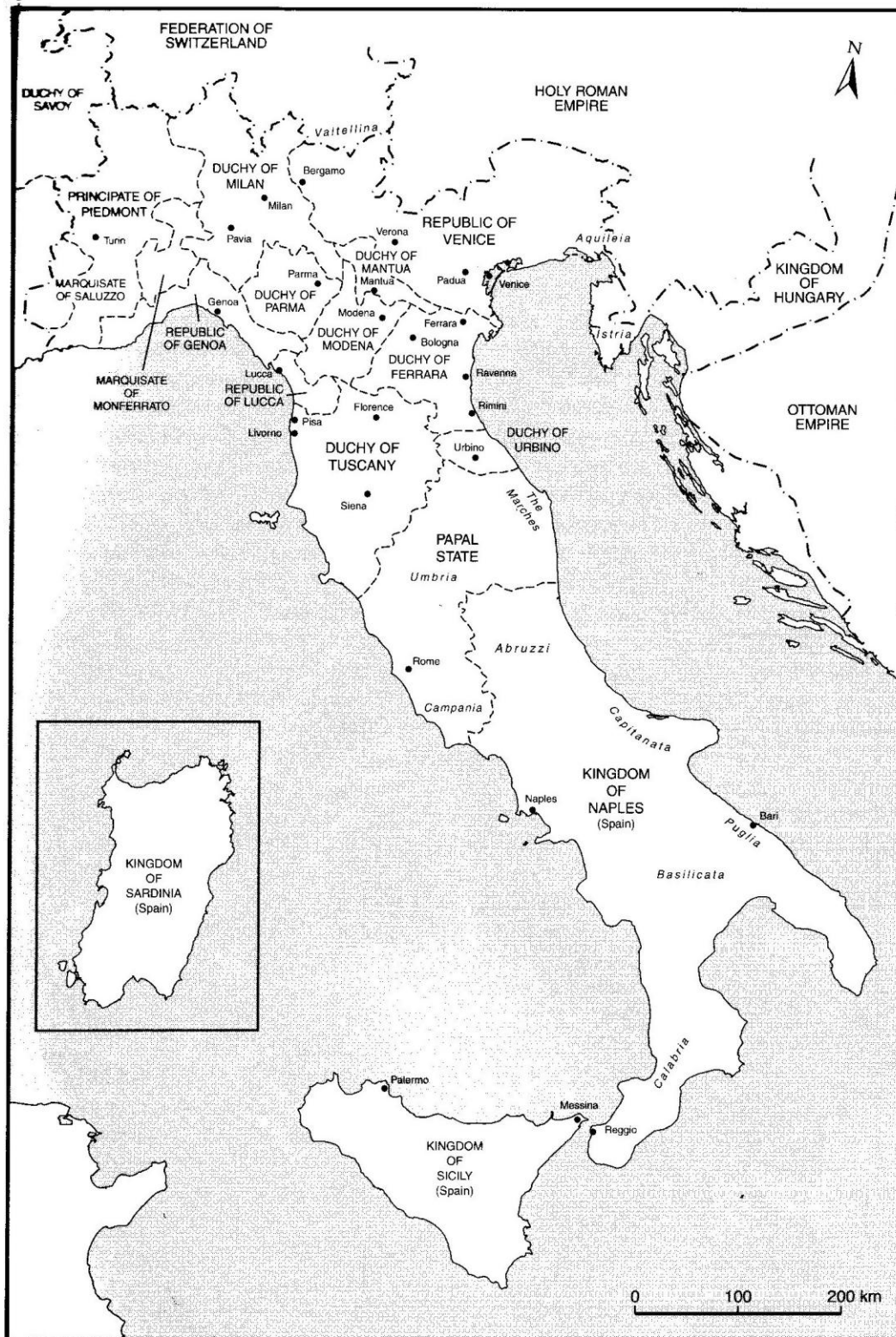
Abbreviations

Archival and Manuscript

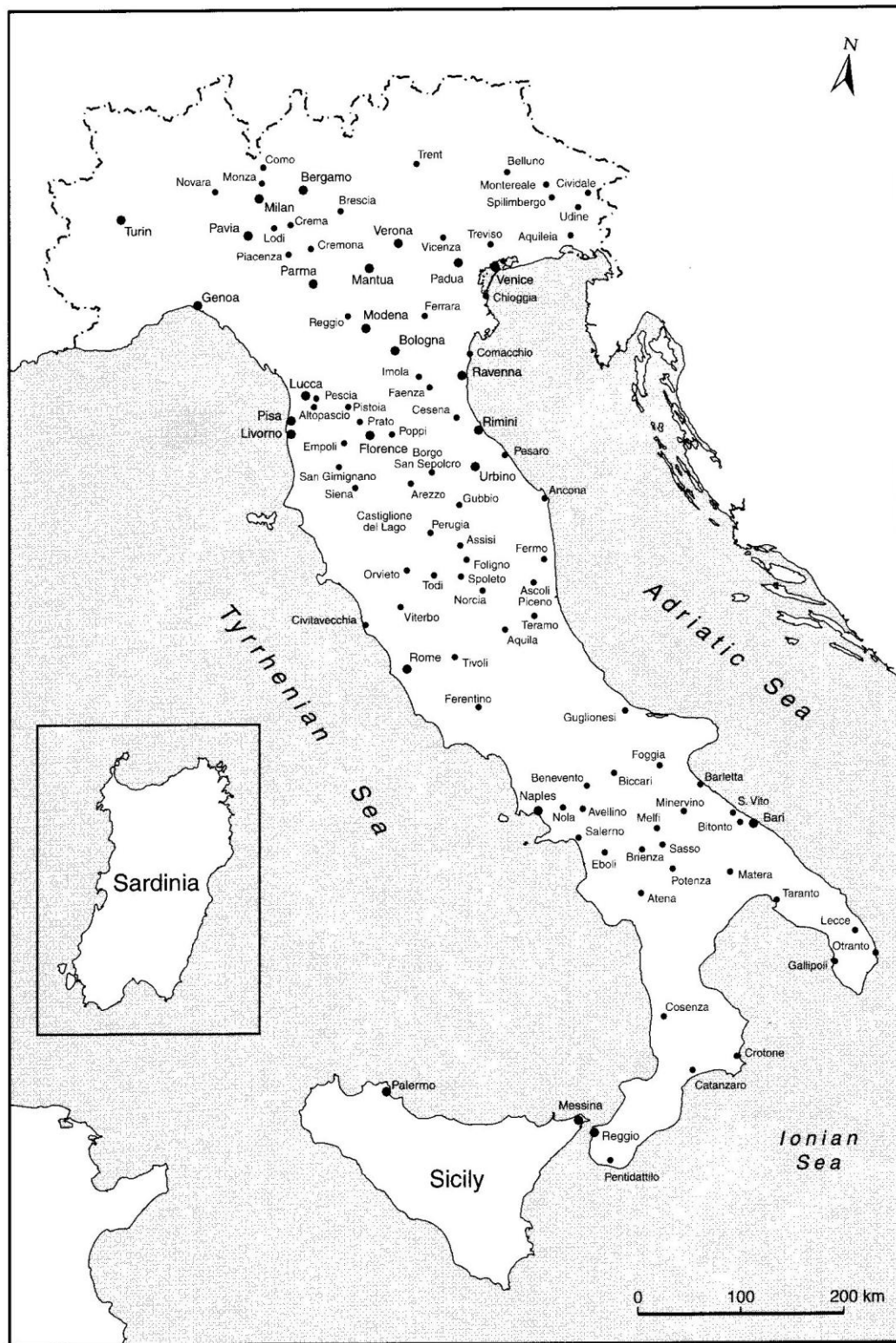
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City
ISG	Istituto Storico Germanico, Rome

Printed Works

<i>DBI</i>	<i>Dizionario biografico degli italiani</i> , (Rome: 1960-)
<i>DSB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Scientific Biography</i> , Charles C. Gilispie et al eds, 18 Vols, (New York: 1970-80)
<i>ILI</i>	<i>Index des Livres Interdit</i> , 10 Vols, Jesús Martínez de Bujanda ed., (Sherbrooke: 1985-1996)
<i>REP</i>	<i>Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , 10 Vols, Edward Craig ed., (New York and London: 1998)



Map 1: The Italian States, 1559



Map 2: The Cities of Italy

Introduction: Censorship and Philosophy in Catholic Italy¹

In 1508 Pope Julius II commissioned Raphael Sanzio to paint a series of frescoes in the room that he intended to use as his library in the Vatican Palace. The programme that Raphael executed was divided into four sections: Theology, Poetry, Jurisprudence and Philosophy. On the room's ceiling, the painter depicted a personification of each of these activities, and on the corresponding section of wall beneath he created a scene showing these activities in progress. Below the figure of philosophy, he painted the work *School of Athens*, which depicted some of the most eminent philosophers of the Hellenic World apparently gathered in conversation. Completed at the height of the Italian Renaissance, this painting reflected the enthusiasm for philosophy amongst many of the leading clerics of the early sixteenth century.

Although these pagan philosophers were openly depicted in the heart of the Vatican, in many respects their ideas had been, and remained, highly troublesome within the Catholic Church. The earliest Christians held pagan philosophy in contempt. Famously, it was dismissed by St Paul, who asserted that God in his wisdom had “made foolish the wisdom of the world”. In spite of Paul's reservations, in the centuries that immediately followed Jesus' death numerous Church Fathers began to find ways to make use of pagan learning. Importantly, they also developed strategies to govern the use of this knowledge, with the aim of preventing it from coming into conflict with the faith. Henceforth, the carefully circumscribed use of philosophy became broadly accepted within the Catholic Church. Many Christians continued to study and utilise philosophy throughout the Middle Ages, and into the early modern period. Nevertheless, the potential for its conclusions to come into conflict with the faith always remained latent. Periodically this potential was realised; this thesis is primarily concerned with a cluster of instances when this occurred. During the 1590s a number of Italian philosophers were either placed on trial by the Roman Inquisition, or

¹ All translations are my own unless otherwise stated; I have only cited the original untranslated passage in the footnote when the source is taken from an archive.

had some or all of their writings placed on the Index of Forbidden Books. The list of condemned thinkers included some of sixteenth century Italy's most important philosophers, namely Giordano Bruno, Tommaso Campanella, Francesco Patrizi, Bernardino Telesio, and Giambattista Della Porta.²

The most influential histories of these trials and condemnations were written during the period 1850-1950, by successive generations of politically active historians and philosophers, whose work, I argue, constitutes an Italian liberal historiographical tradition. While some of these histories provided analyses of individual trials, all of them tied these episodes into a more general narrative about the development of modern Italy. This version of events posited a significant break in the development of Italy between the late Renaissance and the Risorgimento, which was caused by the actions of the Catholic Church during the so-called Counter-Reformation. At the heart of this account lies the contention that at this time the Church used new structures of censorship, namely the Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books, to restrict the activities of philosophers. While the condemned were cast as the casualties of this new regime, they were rarely seen as entirely passive victims. They were instead portrayed as martyrs whose bold thought had defied the repressive order established by the Church. The condemnation of these 'martyrs' was held to have had a detrimental impact upon the intellectual development of Italy, which in turn stunted her development as a modern nation. This 'liberal historiographical tradition' has proved remarkably resilient, and it has continued to serve as the basis for understanding these trials today. While compelling at first glance, this general approach remains freighted with ideology and it is ripe for revision. Notably, it is necessary to reconsider the depiction of ecclesiastical censorship as a repressive enterprise that sought to silence philosophers by prohibiting their works and ideas. Michel Foucault's critique of earlier analyses of power revealed the limitations of understanding it as a purely repressive

² For Paul's dismissal of pagan knowledge, see 1 *Corinthians* 1.20.

force. His insights into the productive nature of power provide a framework to begin constructing an alternative account of censorship in practice.³

In this thesis I do not intend to re-consider all of the trials and condemnations discussed within the liberal tradition, for these writers tended to trace the history of intellectual culture as a whole and so their analyses embraced not only art, literature but also a diverse range of philosophical writings that could be classified as political theory, moral philosophy, and natural philosophy. In this study I focus upon the censorship of philosophy, but I will not be considering works of political theory or moral philosophy. I will instead concern myself with the trials and condemnations of philosophers whose works have been considered by scholars working within the history of science. Focussing on this subject matter also creates another incentive to revise our understanding of these trials. For despite the fame, indeed notoriety, of these trials and condemnations, they have not been extensively researched or well understood by Anglophone historians of science. This is a regrettable situation, not least because they have provided an important, if largely misunderstood, context for the Galileo Affair. When these trials have been considered by historians of science they have tended to view them teleologically, as ‘precursors’ of the trial of Galileo rather than as important events in their own right. Furthermore, in the absence of any integrated study of the Church’s attitude towards science in the sixteenth century, Anglophone historians of science have fallen back upon the research and conclusions of the Italian liberal historians. Although the wider story about the political development of Italy has been cut away, many features of the narrative established in this tradition have been incorporated into the history of science. Notably, many Anglophone historians of science continue to argue that there was a recognisable movement known as the ‘Counter-Reformation’, which led the Church to conduct increased and often unwarranted surveillance of the field of science. These developments in turn created an atmosphere in which it was virtually impossible to carry out innovative research and

³ For a discussion of these issues, see Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power” in *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-77* (Brighton: 1980), pp.109-133.

make discoveries about the natural world, without the constant fear of ecclesiastical censure.⁴

Although Anglophone historians of science have largely neglected these trials, over the last ten years Italian historians of science have begun to work on them in more detail. Ugo Baldini is currently co-ordinating a Vatican-sponsored project to trace the relationship between science and the Catholic Church in the early modern period. As we shall see, although this project is important, it has certain drawbacks. The formulation of the project as an investigation into the Church's attitude towards *science* highlights a problem which is common across Anglophone and Italian language history of science: arriving at a satisfactory definition of 'science' in the pre-modern era. Over the past twenty years, Anglophone historians of science have drawn a sharp distinction between modern science and early modern knowledge-making practices. This has led some historians to stress the importance of using contemporary categories, such as natural philosophy, to describe the early modern knowledge-making practices that we might today classify as 'science'. This emphasis on using actors' categories does not entirely resolve the problem of using the word 'science' to define the object of investigation. In certain circumstances it is possible to argue that this category can be used as shorthand for a group of contemporary disciplines and activities, but there is no consensus over which of them should be included under this rubric. While some historians might choose to restrict their definition of 'science' to natural philosophy,

⁴ There are very few English language accounts of these trials, but see for example William B. Ashworth, "Catholicism and early modern science" in David Lindberg and Ronald Numbers, (eds) *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (Los Angeles and London: 1986), pp.19-48. More attention has been directed to the trial of Bruno than any other philosopher, yet English language studies are nonetheless extremely rare. However, see Dorothea Singer, *Giordano Bruno: his Life and Thought* (New York: 1950); Lawrence Lerner and Edward Goesselin, "Galileo and the long shadow of Bruno", *Archives internationales d'histoire des sciences*, XXV (1975), pp.223-246 and more recently Maurice Finocchiaro, "Philosophy versus religion and science versus religion: the trials of Bruno and Galileo" in Hilary Gatti (ed.), *Giordano Bruno: Philosopher of the Renaissance* (Aldershot: 2002) pp.51-96. There have been numerous studies of the Galileo Affair in English in recent years; see for example Richard Blackwell, *Galileo, Bellarmine and the Bible* (Notre Dame: 1991); Rivka Feldhay, *Galileo and the Church: Political Inquisition or Critical Dialogue?* (Cambridge: 1995); Ernan McMullin (ed.), *The Church and Galileo*, (Notre Dame: 2005). Although not specifically concerned with the Galileo Affair, see too Mario Biagioli's *Galileo Courtier: the Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: 1993) chapter 6, which contains a discussion of certain elements of the trial.

mathematical disciplines such as mechanics, and mixed mathematical disciplines such as astronomy and optics, others have extended the category to include ‘occult’ activities such as magic, cabbala, alchemy and astrology.⁵

Perhaps more importantly, the use of the term ‘science’ to group together contemporaries’ knowledge-making practices can create new interpretative difficulties. Although there may be a cluster of disciplines and activities that we might today choose to group together under the heading ‘science’, this remains a modern category which has been used by historians to impose order upon the past. When we come to consider the issue of early modern censorship it only serves to obscure our comprehension of what is a complex issue. This is because ‘science’ conceived as a distinctive activity simply did not exist in the pre-modern period, and it is therefore futile to attempt to examine how either ‘science’ or its practitioners were censored by contemporaries. Furthermore, as we shall see, Baldini has used his definition of ‘science’ to distinguish between the censorship of work that he considered to be ‘genuine science’, notably the writings of Galileo, and that of other condemned thinkers such as Telesio and Patrizi. I suggest that Baldini’s categorisation not only makes it more difficult to understand the events of the Galileo Affair, but also obscures potential connections between the censorship of ideas in 1615-16 and these earlier trials. If we seek to understand the motivation underlying the censorship of early modern knowledge-making practices, we must instead endeavour to understand how individual disciplines and activities were understood by contemporaries. Only then can we begin to understand the intellectual and institutional structures that were erected to manage the apparent risks associated with them.

⁵ See for example Andrew Cunningham, “Getting the game right: some plain words on the invention of science”, *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, XIX (1988), pp.365-389; Andrew Cunningham, and Perry Williams, “De-centering the ‘big picture’: the origins of modern science and the modern origins of science”, *British Journal for the History of Science*, XXIV (1993), pp.407-432. See too the dispute between Cunningham and Edward Grant in *Early Science and Medicine*, V (2000) and Grant’s *A History of Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge: 2007). For a discussion of these issues in relation to science and religion, see for example Margaret Osler, “Mixing metaphors: science and religion or theology and natural philosophy in early modern Europe”, *History of Science*, XXXV (1997), pp.91-113.

Although I have rejected the label ‘science’, I nonetheless want to focus my analysis primarily on the constellation of disciplines and activities that were concerned with discussing the structure, causes, and purpose of the created order. In medieval and early modern Europe this was primarily carried out through the practice of various forms of philosophy, most obviously through the interpretation of various canonical texts written by Aristotle, Ptolemy, Euclid and Archimedes along with a series of medieval commentaries. Nevertheless, from the mid-fifteenth century anti-Aristotelian philosophers were seeking to expand the range of acceptable texts and traditions to include Neoplatonic texts, as well as various magical, astrological and divinatory writings. Some of these writers, notably Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and their followers, established an alternative source of authority for their work by arraying themselves within an ancient tradition of wisdom, the *prisca sapientia*. In this thesis, I will discuss the impact of these intellectual innovations upon the censorship of philosophy. However, in order to understand the impact of these changes, it is first necessary to examine contemporary attitudes towards philosophy.

The legacy of the Apostle Paul ensured that the practice of philosophy always held a contested place within Christian thought. In his various letters Paul made a radical division between faith and reason, which became one of the central tenets of the Christian religion. In his writings Paul called into doubt not only Man’s capacity to create knowledge of any true importance, but he also specifically condemned pagan wisdom. For example, in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul insisted that Man’s wisdom was trivial and irrelevant in comparison to the true wisdom that could be gained only through foolish faith in Christ. Furthermore, Paul explicitly warned of the dangers of studying pagan philosophy, which he argued had no relevance to salvation. In his letter to the Colossians, he in fact argued that by studying pagan philosophy the Christian distracted himself from attaining true wisdom. Paul’s juxtaposition of faith and reason established a problem with which generations of Christian thinkers would wrestle.⁶

⁶ 1 *Corinthians*, 1.20; *Colossians*, 2.8.

There were diverse estimations of the importance of pagan knowledge in the early Church, but although some Church Fathers did reject pagan wisdom outright, many sought to appropriate it for Christianity. The most influential opinions on pagan philosophy and the potential of Man's reason were expressed by Augustine (354-430), who believed that reason was a God-given capacity that set Man apart from the beasts, and that it should therefore play an essential role in Christian life. Nevertheless, he believed that reason needed to be carefully controlled, for he understood that erroneous reasoning could lead to heresy, and so he developed techniques to ensure that it was subordinated to faith. As we shall see, Augustine's ideas retained a profound influence over Christian thought that allowed the faithful to make use of pagan wisdom within carefully circumscribed boundaries. By the fifteenth century his approach had become the predominant principle underpinning the practice of censorship in Christian Europe.⁷

In this thesis I intend to integrate this analysis of intellectual developments with modern scholarship describing the mechanics of censorship. To do this, I intend to draw upon a body of recent research that has transformed our understanding of the censorial organs of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy. While this work is hugely significant, it remains largely unknown to historians of science, and in this thesis I intend to bring this literature to their attention. Although integrating the insights derived from this work into our understanding of the censorship of philosophy is important, it does not entirely resolve another crucial problem. Many of the writers who first wrote about the history of censorship were vehemently anti-clerical, and they believed that the Church sought to prohibit the production of novel ideas and prevent their circulation in society. The existing historiography in both the Italian liberal tradition and the history of science has not substantially revised this view, and writers working in these traditions continue to conceive of censorship as a repressive enterprise. This perspective has also meant that historians working in these traditions

⁷ For a nuanced account of the opinions of the Church Fathers towards human reason and pagan philosophy, see David Lindberg "Science and the early Church", in Lindberg and Numbers, *op. cit.*, (1986), pp.22-29.

who have studied censorship have tended to focus their attention on the Inquisition and the Index, for these are the two institutions that they have most closely associated with the exercise of restrictive power. In order to remedy this situation, I will consider how far it is possible to revise the picture of these institutions as solely repressive, and I will examine how they functioned within a broader of system of control.

Although the Inquisition and the Index have played central roles in earlier accounts of the censorship of science and/ or philosophy, other facets to the story of censorship have been explored in a number of different historical disciplines. In this thesis I intend to draw upon this secondary literature in order to bring new perspectives to bear on the control of philosophy in sixteenth century Italy. The literature is diverse. Some historians, such as Gigliola Fragnito, have pointed to the importance of ecclesiastical structures such as the episcopate in the process of book censorship and licensing. Others, such as William Courtenay and J.M.M.H Thijssen, have highlighted the existence of ongoing mechanisms of control and censure constructed during the thirteenth century, which continued to operate within institutions such as the universities, or organisations such as religious orders. These techniques included not only formal disciplinary hearings, but also subtle forms of control such as the management of disciplinary boundaries. While academic disciplines facilitated the production of knowledge, they also served to define the limits of possible expression. Although these forms of control were less obvious than those that governed celebrated trials such as that of Giordano Bruno, they were nonetheless potent and did serve to shape and inform the content of philosophy. Defining censorship in this wider sense allows us to better contextualise dramatic incidences of censorship, such as Inquisitorial trials, or the inclusion of works into the various Indices of Forbidden Books, thereby allowing these events to be situated as particularly visible examples of continuing censorship within a broader disciplinary system. Viewing censorship in this broad manner, and over a longer period, also makes it possible to re-assess the impact of new

censorial structures erected during the sixteenth century, such as book licensing and the control of the printing press.⁸

The Italian Liberal Historiographical Tradition, c.1850-c.1950

As early as the 1720s, the Neapolitan lawyer Pietro Giannone (1676-1748) began to express his view that secular governments should seek to limit the influence of the Church in the affairs of sovereign states. In his *Storia Civile del Regno di Napoli* (1723), he drew upon the writings of authors such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Paolo Sarpi to construct an account of Naples's history, in which he suggested that over the course of several centuries the Church had effectively destroyed civil government in southern Italy. Both Giannone and his ideas would soon experience the full force of ecclesiastical power. Soon after its publication, the *Storia Civile* was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books, and in 1738 Giannone was tried by the Torinese Inquisition. Despite recanting his views, he remained incarcerated until his death. Nevertheless, his work encouraged successive generations of 'enlightened' thinkers, including the Modenese Ludovico Muratori (1672-1750) and the Veronese Scipio Maffei, to seek to discover the cause of Italy's perceived 'decadence', and a key part of their analysis was the detrimental impact of the Church upon Italian society. In the second half of the century, various enlightened reformers collaborated with statesmen to effect reforms, and notably many sought to reduce the power of the Inquisition, which was banished from Milan in 1775, and Tuscany in 1782. Following Napoleon's invasion of Italy in the 1790s, it also was also finally eradicated from Venice, Genoa and Piedmont.⁹

⁸ For a discussion of the structures of censorship in early modern Italy, see Gigliola Fragnito, "The central and peripheral organisation of censorship", in idem, (ed.), *Church Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: 2001), pp.13-49. On censorship in the universities, see William J. Courtenay, "Inquiry and Inquisition: academic freedom in medieval universities", *Church History*, LVIII (1989), pp.168-181; J.M.M.H. Thijssen, *Censure and Heresy at the University of Paris, 1200-1400* (Philadelphia: 1998). On the importance of the disciplines, see for example Donald R. Kelly, "The problem of knowledge and the concept of discipline", in idem, (ed.), *History and the Disciplines: the Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Rochester and Woodbridge: 1997), pp.13-28.

⁹ Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Religion, spirituality and the post-Tridentine Church", in John A. Marino (ed.), *Early Modern Italy 1550-1776* (Oxford: 2002), pp.125-142: 139-42.

Although the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815 led to the re-establishment of the *ancien régime* across Europe and the establishment of Habsburg hegemony in Italy, these years of revolutionary tumult had planted a seed in the minds of many intellectuals. Throughout Europe, there continued to be agitation for reform, and in some cases revolution, and Italy was no exception. During the 1840s, a group of Neapolitan scholars and political activists began to gather around the brothers Silvio (1822-1893), and Bertrando Spaventa (1817-1883). These men were frustrated by Italy's position among the European nations. They saw that while countries such as Britain and France had developed into unified, modern nation states, the Italian peninsula was occupied by foreign nations, divided into small states, and resolutely un-modernised. The members of the Spaventa circle, like many of their contemporaries, believed that this situation could be resolved by means of a revolution. This revolutionary ferment was nourished by the philosophical culture of Northern Europe, and the Spaventa circle was especially fascinated by the philosophy of G. W. F Hegel (1770-1830).¹⁰

In his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), Hegel had set out the concept of Spirit's progress towards self-consciousness that lay at the heart of his ideas. This central notion underpinned the theories set out in his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (1837), which suggested that human history progressed towards a telos, which was the human Spirit's recognition of its own freedom. Spirit, Hegel argued, gradually struggled to attain consciousness of freedom during successive epochs of human history through the exercise of critical thought and reflection. The Christian faith played an important role in this scheme, for this religion had first made Man aware of his spiritual nature. Yet crucially for Hegel, this discovery alone did not

¹⁰ On the cultivation of Hegel's thought in Naples, and the inspiration for political action it provided for these circles in the years leading up to the 1848 revolution, see Saverio Ricci "La penetrazione dell' Hegelianismo nella cultura Napoletana e la rivoluzione del 1848", in Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (ed.), *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli e la Costruzione dello Stato Unitario*, (Naples: 1987) pp.119-223; see too Marcel Grilli, "The nationality of philosophy and Bertrando Spaventa", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, II (1941), pp.339-371. On the wider background to the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century, see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, Europe 1789-1848* (London: 2006) and for an introduction to the Risorgimento see Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society and National Unification* (London: 1994). For an overview of Italy in the nineteenth century see, Andrew Davis (ed.), *Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: 2000).

amount to freedom. It was not enough for the Christian to recognise his spiritual nature; in order to be free, Man also needed to transform the external world so that it became a suitable environment in which he could live as a spiritual creature. While Christianity had helped Man to recognise his true nature, according to Hegel, the Church of the Middle-Ages actually acted as an impediment to further progress. This was because its insistence on blind obedience from its adherents prevented the critical reflection necessary for Spirit to advance to higher levels of consciousness.¹¹

Under the Church's sway, Spirit's journey remained stalled throughout the long years of the Middle Ages until it once again began to make significant advances towards self-recognition during the Renaissance. Although Hegel considered the Renaissance to be important, he believed that the truly significant turning point in human history was the Reformation inaugurated by Martin Luther. He believed that this event allowed Man to realise that He no longer needed priests to interpret Scripture for him or to perform rituals, and that the individual could judge for himself what was true and good. He was thus able to free himself from the control of the Church, and to rediscover his true spiritual nature. From this age forth, Spirit gained a clearer sense of Itself and began to re-create the world in accordance with rational principles making it a suitable environment in which It could exist. This process of reconstruction continued through historical events such as the French Revolution, and culminated in the philosopher's own age. In an audacious final flourish, Hegel concluded that Spirit had come to fully recognise itself in his own philosophy, and that it had successfully created the most appropriate rational environment for its existence in the enlightened despotism of contemporary Prussia. The journey of Spirit, and hence history, had come to an end.¹²

For the members of the Spaventa circle, Hegel's ideas provided a key to interpreting Italy's history. They argued that her current dilapidated state could be explained by the stalled progress of Spirit, which in turn could be traced by reconstructing the history of the nation's philosophers. During the era of the

¹¹ On Hegel's ideas, see Peter Singer, *Hegel* (Oxford: 1983), esp. chapters 5 and 11 and Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (New York and Abingdon: 2005), esp. chapters 2-4.

¹² Singer, op. cit., (1983), chapter 2; Beiser, op. cit., (2005), Chapter 11.

Renaissance, they argued, Italian philosophers had enjoyed the freedom to develop new modes of thought that pointed to the ideas of the Enlightenment, and ultimately helped to shape the modern world. Although Italy was then the font of modernity, the nation's philosophers were silenced by the Church during the Counter-Reformation. Notably, from the late sixteenth century the Inquisition carried out a sequence of trials and condemnations, which had the effect of silencing Italy's most important thinkers including Bruno, Campanella and Galileo. This development effectively shut down the motor of history, plunging Italy into a prolonged period of decadence. While Italy festered, the other European nations benefited from the modern age that her finest thinkers had inaugurated.¹³

This idealist liberal tradition retained a potent influence on Italian intellectual life until roughly the 1870s, when it gradually began to drop out of fashion. However, it was revived at the beginning of the twentieth century by two men, the Spaventa brothers' nephew Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), and Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944). Together these philosophers breathed new life into the moribund liberal tradition, not only resurrecting the methods of their intellectual forebears, but also taking over much of their subject matter. Consequently, a great deal of their research was directed towards developing a philosophical critique of the history of Italy's intellectual culture, which emphasised a profound rupture in its development that had occurred during the Counter-Reformation. The relationship between Croce and Gentile was initially productive, and together they edited the journal *La Critica* that promoted their idealist philosophy. In subsequent years, however, their relationship became increasingly strained. By the middle of the 1920s, their partnership finally broke down over the issue of Mussolini's Fascist regime. While both men had initially supported the dictator's rise, Croce rapidly became disillusioned; Gentile meanwhile viewed Fascism as the fulfilment of liberal ideals. He served as the minister for school reform between October 1922 and July 1924, and was arguably the pre-eminent intellectual in the Fascist movement until his death in 1944. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the two

¹³ Grilli op. cit., (1941); Ricci, op. cit., (1987).

men retained powerful influences over intellectual life, but it was Gentile who played the most important part, encouraging younger scholars and publishing their work in his *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*. Under his influence there emerged a new generation of historians, including Giuseppe Saitta and Delio Cantimori (1904-1966), who were once more fascinated by the role of philosophy and free thought in Italy's history.¹⁴

This broader picture formed the intellectual backdrop to the thought of Luigi Firpo (1915-1989), the most important historian of the ecclesiastical censorship of philosophy in early modern Italy. Educated in Turin under the tutelage of Gioele Solari, Firpo made the first of many contributions to the understanding of late Renaissance philosophy in 1939 with a study of the early trials of Tommaso Campanella, which was published in Gentile's *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*. During the late 1940s, he expanded this research with important studies on the trials of Giordano Bruno and Francesco Pucci. He added to this growing body of work in the early 1950s, when he published a series of articles entitled, "Filosofia italiana e contrariforma" parts I-IV. Although these articles were primarily concerned with relating the fate of Telesio, Patrizi and Campanella, they also contained a clear summary of his general vision of the intellectual and cultural decline of the late sixteenth century.¹⁵

¹⁴ For an overview of the history of Italy in this period, see Adrian Lyttelton (ed.), *Liberal and Fascist Italy* (Oxford: 2002). See too R.J.B. Bosworth's recent biography *Mussolini* (London: 2002), which places the dictator's rise in its social and political contexts. For a brief biography of Croce and Gentile, see Richard Bellamy, "Croce, Benedetto (1866-1952)" and "Gentile, Giovanni (1875-1944)", in *REP*, Vol. II. On Gentile's reputation see Gabriele Turi, "Giovanni Gentile: oblivion, remembrance, and criticism", *The Journal of Modern History*, LXX (1998), pp.913-933. For a succinct expression of Croce's views of Italy's history, see Benedetto Croce, "A working hypothesis: the crisis of Italy in the Cinquecento and the bond between the Renaissance and the Risorgimento" in Eric Cochrane (ed.), *The Late Italian Renaissance, 1525-1630* (London: 1970), pp.23-42. For a discussion of Cantimori's intellectual and political development, see Roberto Pertici, "Mazzinianesimo, Fascismo, Comunismo: l'itinerario politico di Delio Cantimori (1919-1943)", *Chromobis*, II (1997), pp.1-128.

¹⁵ On Firpo and Solari, see Angelo d' Orsi, "One hundred years of political thought in Italy", in Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk (eds), *The History of Political Thought in National Context* (Cambridge: 2001), pp.80-106: 84-86. See also Luigi Firpo, "I primi processi campanelliani in una ricostruzione unitaria", *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, XX, (1939) pp.7-43; idem, "Il processo di Giordano Bruno" *Rivista storica italiana*, XL (1948), pp.542-97, and LXI (1949), pp.5-59, republished with a series of documents as *Il processo di Giordano Bruno*, (Rome: 1993), idem, "Processo e morte di

According to Firpo, from the 1560s the Church's attitude became "implacably severe" towards all forms of supposedly heterodox behaviour. This was because, following a successful campaign to exclude Protestantism from Italy,

The Church came out of [the struggle] with renewed vigour; and it could now adopt an attitude of intransigence that was a consequence, not an instrument of its success. It continued to keep its eye on theologians, as it did in the case of Baius and Carranza. But it now extended its vigilance to all manifestations of social and spiritual life – not only to religion, but also to ethics, to politics, to philosophy to art, and even to the manners and customs of the people.

The impact of this extension was "well known": "Religion, first of all, degenerated into artificial devotional practices often tainted with an unctuous hypocrisy. Morality, secondly withered into exterior show and cavilling casuistry." This was the moment at which philosophy "entered its most dramatic moment".¹⁶ Firpo continued that:

Free Philosophical speculation in Italy fought its decisive battle during the pontificate of Clement VIII, in the last decade of the [sixteenth] century. It suffered the condemnation of Patrizi's *Nova philosophia*, of Telesio's *De rerum natura*, and of all the works of Bruno and Campanella. It was crippled by the investigations opened against Giambattista Della Porta, Col Antonio Stigliola, and Cesare Cremonini, by the beginning of Campanella's long imprisonment, by the execution of Francesco Pucci, and by the burning of Bruno. And finally, it was completely destroyed, in spite of the heroism of its martyrs. Its last, posthumous act was played out thirty years later, in the silence of Arcetri.¹⁷

For Firpo, the trials of the 1590s and their epilogue, the Galileo Affair, marked the end of all free philosophical speculation in Italy. As a consequence of these trials the motor

Francesco Pucci", *Rivista di filosofia*, XL (1949), pp.371-405, idem, "Filosofia italiana e contrariforma I. La condanna dei politici. II. La condanna di Patrizi", *Rivista di filosofia*, XLI (1950), pp.150-73; idem, "Filosofia italiana e controriforma III. La proibizione delle opere del Campanella", *Rivista di filosofia*, 41 (1950), pp.390-401; idem, "Filosofia italiana e controriforma IV. La proibizione di Telesio", *Rivista di filosofia*, XLII (1951), pp.30-47. The introduction and part II of "Filosofia italiana e contrariforma" have been translated into English and published as "The flowering and withering of speculative philosophy – Italian philosophy and the Counter-Reformation: the condemnation of Francesco Patrizi", in Cochrane, op. cit., (1970), pp.266-84.

¹⁶ Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.270.

¹⁷ Arcetri was the name of the villa where Galileo was imprisoned after the conclusion of his trial in 1633, until his death in 1642. See Firpo, op. cit., (1970), pp.270-71.

of progress had been shut down, and Italy was condemned to enter a protracted period of decadence.

Beyond Firpo

It is hard to overstate the significance of Firpo's work: he remains the single most important historian of these trials, and his writings are frequently cited as the main reference works when considering these events. Despite his importance, Firpo's work requires revision, but for a variety of reasons his work has not been subjected to extensive criticism. First, he presented his work in a definitive fashion, a stance that was partly justified by the fact that he was granted unprecedented access to the Church's archives, which allowed him to discover a wealth of new documentation. Consequently, many Italian intellectual historians continue to broadly accept the version of events that Firpo presented. Secondly, virtually all historians working in the Italian intellectual history tradition have moved away from exploring the allegedly detrimental impact of the suppression of philosophy on Italian intellectual culture, and have instead turned to offer more detailed analyses of the actual writings of philosophers such as Bruno and Campanella. While there is still work being carried out today on the general effects of the Church's censorship, historians writing on this theme have come to concentrate on the impact that it had upon specific groups within Italian society, for instance on the humanists who were engaged in debates over the direction that religious reform should take. This is in accord with a general shift in the Italian historiography, which since the 1960s, and following the lead of historians such as Delio Cantimori, has explored the distinctive Italian contribution to reformist debates of the sixteenth century.¹⁸

In order to revise Firpo's account, it is necessary to rethink the overarching narrative of the development and decline of Italian philosophy which provided the core

¹⁸ Delio Cantimori, *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento e Prospettive di Storia Ereticale del Cinquecento* (Einaudi edition Torino: 2002). For a discussion of Cantimori's role in the historiography of the Italian Reformation, see Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Periodisation of sixteenth-century Italian religious history: the post-Cantimori paradigm shift", *The Journal of Modern History*, LXI (1989), pp.269-284.

of his explanation of these trials and condemnations. To a substantial degree, this hinged on the assertion that prior to the late sixteenth century Italian philosophers had enjoyed intellectual liberty, but that this was destroyed by the Church during the Counter-Reformation. This argument is problematic for two reasons. First, the idea that there was intellectual freedom in Italy prior to the sixteenth century is, I suggest, misplaced. Intellectual liberty is a fundamentally modern notion that would have been unrecognisable to contemporaries. Although some did indeed invoke the idea of ‘philosophical liberty’, as the work of Robert Sutton has shown, this phrase had specific localised meanings which did not reflect modern usage. Its application in this context reveals more about the concerns of the liberal historians, than it does about the ideas of contemporaries. For these writers, it served a polemical purpose, underlining the central liberal contention that while intellectual freedom precipitated the cultural and philosophical flowering of the Renaissance that ultimately pointed to the formation of the modern world, ecclesiastical censure and control led only to decadence.¹⁹

Secondly, Firpo’s analysis suggested that the censorship and control of ideas were an unexpected consequence of the Counter-Reformation, which he explicitly conceived as the Church’s reaction against Protestantism. The re-foundation of the Inquisition and the creation of the Index, he argued, were intended to combat this threat, but having served this purpose, they were re-directed to achieve radically new ends. This emphasis on the importance of the establishment of the Roman Inquisition and the Index during the mid-sixteenth century also served to emphasise the novelty of the decision to censor philosophy, for it suggested that prior to this period there had been no significant impulse towards the censorship of philosophy from within the Church. This has the effect of magnifying the changes wrought by the Counter-Reformation, for it suggests that the Roman Inquisition and the Index were not only new instruments of control, but that they also embodied a totally new attitude towards censorship. In order to be sustained, this argument depends on proving the absence of theological control over philosophy in the period prior to mid-sixteenth century.

¹⁹ Robert Sutton, “The phrase *libertas philosophandi*”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XIV, (1953), pp.310-316.

However, there is abundant evidence to show that philosophy was in fact subject to systematic monitoring and control prior to this era. One need only consider the famous Parisian condemnations of 1270 and 1277, to understand that the teachings of philosophers were the source of profound unease for the ecclesiastical authorities at this time and throughout the Middle Ages. The list of banned propositions produced by the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, condemned a wide range of ideas defended by the university's arts masters. These included propositions which appeared to restrict God's ability to do whatever he chose, short of a logical contradiction, and a ban on defending ideas in philosophy that contradicted the truth of faith.²⁰

There were also tensions about the correct use of philosophy, and the practice of activities predicated on its principles within medieval and Renaissance Italy. The Inquisitorial trials, and subsequent execution, of the mathematician and physician Cecco d'Ascoli made evident deep-set anxiety about astrological theorisation. There were also concerns about the philosophical innovations of some of the Florentine Neoplatonists. At the height of the Renaissance, Pope Innocent VIII ordered an investigation into a number of the claims made by the Neoplatonist philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in his famous 900 hundred theses of 1486, which resulted in the philosopher's exile.²¹

Finally, as we shall see later see, during the fifteenth century there began a protracted dispute between members of the mendicant orders and the masters of the Italian universities, over the manner in which the latter presented philosophical ideas. The friars contested the masters' contention that they could defend as merely philosophically necessary conclusions which appeared to contradict the faith. For example, during the 1490s a number of Franciscan friars teaching at the University of

²⁰ On the condemnations of 1277, see inter alia, John F. Wippel, "The condemnation of 1270 and 1277 at Paris", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, VIII (1977), pp.169-201; Edward Grant, "The condemnation of 1277, God's absolute power and physical thought in the late middle ages", *Viator*, X (1979), pp.211-244.

²¹ On the trials of Cecco d'Ascoli, see for example Giuseppe, *La Vita e le Opera di Cecco d'Ascoli (Francesco Stabili) 1269-1327*, (Bologna: 1892), chapter 2 especially pp.29-44. On the condemnation of Pico della Mirandola, see Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: 1964), pp.120-21 and Charles Lohr, "Metaphysics" in Charles Schmitt et al (eds), *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: 1988a), pp.537-638: 581.

Padua persuaded the local bishop and inquisitor of the necessity to attempt to restrict teaching in this manner. The Franciscans made a more significant, albeit no more successful, attempt to control this distinction during the Fifth Lateran Council (1511-17). These examples demonstrate that there were indeed attempts to control the claims that could be made on the basis of philosophical knowledge, and that there were structures of censorship that were used to discipline philosophers and, where necessary, censure their work.²²

While these existing structures of censorship were ignored in Firpo's account, his narrative exaggerated the detrimental impact that innovations such as the re-establishment of the Roman Inquisition and the creation of the Index had upon intellectual culture. In recent years a number of historians have revised the picture of the Church's impact on many aspects of intellectual culture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, art historians have revised the picture of cultural decline provided by the historian of the liberal tradition by offering fresh evaluations of the art produced during this period, whilst other historians have drawn new attention to previously overlooked areas of cultural vitality such as innovations in the field of music. Some intellectual historians have also specifically challenged the traditional account of the detrimental impact of ecclesiastical censorship. They have questioned the effectiveness and impact of censorship, and shown that many controversial texts, for example the works of Erasmus, continued to circulate during the sixteenth century. However, this work of revision has not been systematically extended to philosophy. Virtually without exception, the existing studies of the censorship of philosophy have suggested that where previously there had been freedom to philosophise freely, this freedom was curtailed by the re-establishment of the Inquisition and creation of the Index which in turn led to intellectual stagnation. In order to challenge this account it is necessary to reconsider how these institutions affected the censorship of philosophy

²² On the disputes over philosophy in the schools, see Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: 2002), especially chapter 8, on the attempt to control the teaching of philosophy within the University of Padua during the 1490s, see pp.283-85. See too, John Monfasani, "Aristotelians, Platonists and the missing Ockhamists: philosophical liberty in pre-Reformation Italy", *Renaissance Quarterly*, XLVI, (1993), pp.247-276.

within Italy. Drawing upon a recent body of research on the Inquisition, I will consider whether or not the institution of these structures fundamentally changed, or reflected a fundamental change in, the Church's attitude towards philosophy. Secondly, I will consider the manner in which these innovations affected the ongoing practice of censorship.²³

The final crucial problem with Firpo's narrative is the manner in which he chose to categorise his subjects. His analysis brought together the condemnations of a number of individuals, whom he broadly considered as philosophers. However, Firpo constructed this analytical category by identifying in each thinker certain putative traits which he held to be common to all, most notably a shared desire to place the exercise of reason above the dogma of faith. This meant that he could group together thinkers with often radically different social and intellectual identities; schoolmasters such as Cremonini, were considered to fall into the same category as independent noble philosophers such as Telesio and Della Porta, renegade friars such as Campanella and Bruno and independent thinkers such as Pucci. However, these men had constructed new identities which differentiated them from the university philosophers. They often worked in different contexts such as the princely courts and noble salons, and they drew upon existing models of philosophical practice to produce often radically new ways of doing philosophy. Importantly, considering the disciplining of university masters alongside these independent philosophers obscures an important element of the trials of the 1590s. The vast majority of these proceedings were conducted against philosophers operating outside the universities. In order to throw light on the events of the 1590s, we must therefore be sensitive to the novel challenges that the Church perceived these philosophers to pose.²⁴

²³ For a concise discussion of recent revisions to the historiography of Italian artistic and intellectual culture during the seicento, see Domenico Sella, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century* (London and New York: 1997). For a nuanced discussion of the impact of censorship within sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy, see Fragnito (ed.), op. cit., (2001). On the circulation of Erasmus's ideas, see for example Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia, 1520-1580*, (Turin: 1987).

²⁴ I have drawn the concept of the identity from work in the history of science and more recently intellectual history. See for example: Robert Westman, "The astronomer's role in the sixteenth century: a preliminary study," *History of Science*, XVIII (1980), pp.105-47; Steven Shapin, "Who was Robert

Finally, Firpo's use of the broad category 'philosopher' led him to conflate the offences caused to the Church by these philosophers, for he suggested that we should understand the impulse driving the censorship of the work of Telesio to be broadly similar to the one driving the censure of the writings of Della Porta. However, these thinkers posed very different challenges to the censors, and the explanation of their trials cannot plausibly be reduced to a struggle between advocates of free thought and a Church demanding obedience. In order to give a less monolithic account of these trials each thinker's individual intellectual output must be understood in both its own context, and in relation to the ideas of the ecclesiastical authorities by whom it was censored.

Reformation and Counter-Reformation

The label Counter-Reformation was originally coined in the late eighteenth century by the Göttingen jurist Johann Stephan Pütter as a concept in legal history. It was later used by Protestant historians such as Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) to describe the Catholic Church's efforts to combat the spread of Protestantism. As such, it is often bound up with confessional biases. Its use was not, however, restricted to Protestant historians. By the early twentieth century it had been adopted by anti-clerical Italian authors, and, as we have seen, it played a central role in the work of liberal historians and philosophers such as Benedetto Croce. There are, however, compelling reasons to reject its continued use. As the work of Firpo demonstrated, when viewed through this prism, the Church can appear as a monolith whose actions are to be interpreted solely as a reaction to those of the Protestants. This strips the Catholic Church of any agency, as it is shown to be reacting to external events rather than pursuing its own agenda. Importantly, this has distracted attention away from attempts to understand the theological and philosophical motivations driving

Hooke?" in Michael Hunter and Steven Shapin (eds), *Robert Hooke: New Studies* (Woodbridge: 1989), pp.253-85; Ian Hunter, "The history of philosophy and the persona of the philosopher", *Modern Intellectual History*, IV (2007), pp.1-30.

ensorship. They are instead dismissed as the product of the Counter-Reformation. Although this label is highly charged, it is also still frequently employed today by historians of science. As we shall see, although it is possible to make a case for the limited application of this label in specific situations, its continued use more often than not betrays a failure on the part of both Italian and Anglophone historians of science to engage with recent historiography on the early modern Catholic Church.²⁵

As early as 1870, German Catholic scholars rejected the reactionary and passive connotations of the label Counter-Reformation and proposed in its stead alternatives such as ‘Catholic Reformation’, ‘Catholic Reform’ or ‘Catholic Restoration’, which emphasised continuity of reform within the Catholic Church. They argued that developments in the Catholic world were not confined to a reaction to the Protestant challenge, but instead formed part of a long process of internal reform that antedated the Protestant Reformation. These early complaints did not prevent many historians associating Protestantism with progress and modernity, and Catholicism with reaction and social, economic and political stultification. However, over a century later, the German historian Wolfgang Reinhard published a significant article “‘Gegenreformation als Modernisierung?’ Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters”, rejecting the dichotomy that had been established between a supposedly progressive Reformation and a reactionary Counter-Reformation. Seeking to re-conceptualise the Catholic Church’s contribution to the development of modernity, he emphasised its similarities with the Protestant Church, developing the theory of confession building or “confessionalisation”. This concept suggests that Churches on both sides of the confessional divide were trying to draw the people of Europe onto a disciplinary grid, using similar techniques of encouragement and coercion. Debate continues today over the correct label to apply to the Catholic Church in this period, and some historians retain the use of the label Counter-

²⁵ For a discussion of the changing names allotted to, and the historiographical problems inherent in labelling the early modern Church, see John William O’Malley, *Trent and all That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge Mass.: 2001). Two recent synthetic accounts of the Catholic Church with useful bibliographies are Robert Birely, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700* (Washington D.C.: 1999) and R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* 2nd edition (Cambridge: 2005).

Reformation while being sensitive to its drawbacks. As John William O'Malley has suggested, the label which perhaps best captures the full complexity of this period is the relatively neutral 'early modern Catholicism'.²⁶

These historiographical developments have been paralleled by research into the debates within the Italian Church during the sixteenth century. Although Italian historians have tended to retain the label Counter-Reformation, they have created a far more subtle and complex picture of Italy's religious history during the sixteenth century. However, this work still retains an underlying narrative that is underpinned by a dichotomy between progress and reaction. Drawing upon the research of historians such as Delio Cantimori, who set out to trace the roots of modern thought in the writings of Italian heretics, this work has focused on the suppression of putatively progressive reformist movements within the Church in sixteenth century Italy. Historians of these movements have shown that by drawing inspiration from humanists such as Desiderius Erasmus, these reformers demanded that greater freedom and responsibility should be given to the individual to play a role in their spiritual life. The reformers believed that this could be achieved by such radical methods as educating every person so that they could read Scripture for themselves in the vernacular. Others went further, and in the years leading up to the 1540s a number of leading Catholic clerics and laymen known as the *spirituali*, notably Gasparo Contarini and Cardinal Morone, who were sympathetic to Luther's ideas, attempted to re-calibrate the relationship between works and faith within the Catholic Church.²⁷

More recent research has shown that these views were vigorously contested by other reforming movements within the Church, who have often dubbed *intransigenti* or *zelanti* by historians. Led by powerful clerics such as Gian Pietro Carafa (later Pope

²⁶ Hsia, op. cit., (2005), Introduction; O'Malley, op. cit., (2001).

²⁷ Cantimori, op. cit., (1939). See also inter alia, Eva-Maria Jung, "On the nature of evangelism in sixteenth century Italy", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XIV (1953) pp.511-527; Philip McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy: an Anatomy of Apostasy* (Oxford: 1967); Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge: 1972). For a later critique of this literature and a broader picture of reformist movements, see Elisabeth Gleason, "On the nature of sixteenth-century Italian evangelism: scholarship, 1953-1978", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, IX (1978), pp.3-26 and John Jefferies Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Baltimore and London: 2003), introduction.

Paul IV), they believed that the clergy should offer instruction in the tenets of the faith necessary for salvation, whilst restricting access to the sacred texts. The research of Massimo Firpo (Luigi's son) and Dario Marcatto has shown that the *zelanti* used the Inquisition as a power base from which to eradicate the views of their opponents, and to impose their vision of Catholicism within society. This involved the active suppression of not only the *spirituali*, but also the humanists. Although useful, this work does little more than modify the earlier liberal story which posited the suppression of a number of progressive philosophers by a monolithic Church. While these repressive values, taken to be characteristic of the Counter-Reformation, were once projected onto the Church as a whole, they are now seen to be upheld by the *zelanti* faction within the Church. Consequently the older model of a struggle between progress and reaction has been reincorporated into a more nuanced account of Italian ecclesiastical history.²⁸

These reservations notwithstanding, the work of Firpo and Marcatto presents a far more complex picture of Catholic history in the sixteenth century than that provided in either the earlier liberal tradition or in more recent history of science. It has highlighted the existence of an intense struggle within the Church to define the parameters of Catholic orthodoxy, which makes it possible to tell a far more complex story about the history of censorship. It suggests that the views expressed through the Inquisition's actions were not those of a monolithic 'Church', but those of a 'party' within its structure. It has also shown that the Church was not solely concerned with facing the 'external' challenge of Protestantism, but was facing a massive struggle to define orthodoxy within its own ranks. This in turn opens up the problem of establishing how orthodoxy was defined within the Catholic Church, and its relationship to power.

²⁸ The documents have been published in Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto (eds), *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinale Giovanni Morone, edizione critica*, 6 Vols (Rome: 1981-1995), and *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi (1557-1567), edizione critica*, 2 Vols (Rome: 1998-2000). For a summary of Firpo's research see Dermot Fenlon, "Pietro Carnesecchi and Cardinal Pole: new perspectives", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, LVI (2005), p.529-33.

Orthodoxy, Heresy and Philosophy in Christian Europe

Over the last thirty years historians such as Edward Peters and R.I Moore have investigated the meaning of heresy in medieval and early modern Europe. Offering a sociological definition, Peters observed that: “Heresy did and does not exist in and of itself, but only in relation to orthodoxy. Orthodoxy cannot exist in turn without authority, and it is the quality of authority in orthodoxy that defines and denounces heresy.” This view was echoed by Moore who also noted that heterodoxy and heresy are two related but distinct ideas. While heterodoxy is defined in relation to a particular conception of orthodoxy “heresy exists only in so far as authority chooses to declare its existence. Heretics are those who refuse to subscribe to the doctrines and acknowledge the disciplines which the Church requires: no requirement, no heresy.” According to Moore, heresy could only exist when an authority asserted its vision of orthodoxy, and an individual chose to resist this authority.²⁹

In a more historical sense Peters and Moore have identified two key periods for the development of the idea of heresy in Christian Europe, the first was the Patristic period c.100-500, and the second the great age of European growth c.1000-1300. This work has shown that from the earliest days of the Christian religion, its adherents were intensely pre-occupied with the need to demarcate the boundaries of their faith from apostasies. Initially this required orthodox Christians to define their beliefs in relation to Judaism, but also increasingly against supporters of pagan religion and philosophy, and eventually against Christians who held heterodox beliefs. Heretics were exclusively defined from this third group. In the letters of the Apostle Paul, the writings of early Church Fathers and the language of the first councils, these deviant Christians were variously described as factious, sectarian, and schismatic. These labels pointed to the

²⁹ Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe; Documents in Translation* (London: 1980) introduction, quotation p 14; R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, paperback edition (Oxford: 1990) pp.68-69. Moore’s thesis has been developed and challenged in the series of essays edited by John Christian Laursen and Cary J. Nederman, (eds) *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration Before the Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: 1998); see too Ian Hunter, John Christian Laursen, Cary J. Nederman (eds), *Heresy in Transition: Transforming Ideas of Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: 2005).

contention that the deviants possessed beliefs that threatened to split the indivisible Church community. The use of the description heretic emerged during the second century C.E., and it was derived from the Greek word *hairesein*, which meant ‘choice’. It denoted the heterodox Christian’s decision to deliberately maintain a belief that ‘orthodox’ Christians had denounced, and it therefore acquired the connotation of an unreasonable adherence to an unorthodox opinion.³⁰

Although pagans could not be heretics, Christians recognised that their ideas could lead the faithful into error. This problem was especially acute in late Antiquity when a significant proportion of the early members of the Church were drawn from the Greco-Roman elites, and thus brought with them knowledge of pagan philosophical culture, which many were unwilling to entirely reject. Even Tertullian (155-230), a Church Father who has often been presented by modern scholars as resolutely opposed to pagan learning, possessed a nuanced attitude towards Man’s capacity for rational thought. In his *On Prescription Against Heretics*, Tertullian vehemently denounced pagan learning, but he was not so much opposed to philosophy *per se*, but rather the fact that the practice of philosophy often seemed to lead to the creation of heresy. Furthermore, although suspicious of pagan learning, Tertullian elsewhere displayed a positive evaluation of human capacity for rational thought, and even suggested that it could be used to obtain some knowledge about God.³¹

In Latin Christianity, the most influential ideas on the role of pagan philosophy were formulated by Augustine. He regarded Man’s rational capacities as a divine gift which distinguished him from the beasts. Unlike Tertullian, however, Augustine believed that philosophy should be developed and set to work in support of the faith, helping the Christian to comprehend his beliefs and, where necessary, to defend them against opponents. In a letter to Cosentius, he argued that reason could help the

³⁰ Peters op. cit., (1980), p.1 and p.14.

³¹ Lindberg, op. cit., (1986), pp.22-26. See too the relevant chapters in: Michael Haren, *The Western Intellectual Tradition from Antiquity to the Thirteenth Century* (Basingstoke and London: 1992); David Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: the European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450* (Chicago: 1992); Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition 400-1400* (New Haven and London: 1997), Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity 1210-1685* (New York: 2006).

Christian to understand the things that he already accepted through faith. This meant that while faith would always be prior to reason, the latter could be used to help the individual Christian comprehend that which he already held to be true through faith. Nevertheless, Augustine continued to recognise that reasoning could lead the faithful into error. He noted that some Christians had used their reason to draw false conclusions about the Trinity. Importantly however, he argued that such heretical reasoning was “to be shunned and detested, not because it is reasoning, but because it is false reasoning; for if it were true reasoning, it would surely not err.” True reasoning, would always be in accordance with the things that were known through faith. For Augustine then, reason was to play an essential role in Christian life, but he nevertheless believed that it should always remain subordinated to faith.³²

Heresy also acquired a civic dimension during the fourth century, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Consequently, from this period onwards, the heretic found himself in conflict not only with other Christians but also with the Empire. In other words, the heretic was now no longer conceived as a threat to the Christian community in which he lived, but to the very fabric of civil society itself. These legal definitions were incorporated into the legislation of the successor states that emerged out of the Western Empire. As Peters has noted, these developments meant that from this point forward “religious affairs acquired a civil, juridical dimension which they did not begin to lose until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”³³

Although heresy remained clearly defined in the states that emerged following the collapse of the Western Empire in the late fifth century, these definitions were gradually lost during the ninth and tenth centuries, when the states were destabilised by a wave of invasions from Northern Europe, which led to the erosion of authority. The collapse of civic government was paralleled by a decline of centralised ecclesiastical authority, which gave far greater power to local bishops, which in turn encouraged the

³² Lindberg, *op. cit.*, (1986), pp.26-29; the quotation from Augustine is cited by Lindberg p.27, translated A. Goldbacher.

³³ Peters, *op. cit.*, (1980), p.3.

development of localised religious practices. This general decline resulted in the loss of many educational structures. During this period some notable centres of learning for example the Carolingian court, to which certain clerics such as Alcuin of York made significant contributions, continued to exist. Nevertheless, education became increasingly confined to the monasteries. While some individuals within the cloisters studied some pagan texts, most monks had little need for this knowledge. For the most part, they required only sufficient levels of literacy to allow them to imbibe Scripture and the works of the Church Fathers. This series of developments meant that although never entirely lost, knowledge of pagan philosophy and learning diminished markedly in the Latin West.³⁴

This situation began to alter from around 1000, when Western Europe began to enjoy a period of relative peace and stability. The subsequent three centuries were characterised by population growth, economic expansion and cultural development. During these years, scholars in the Latin West began to rediscover the rich intellectual inheritance of the Greco-Roman world. This intellectual ferment was nourished by the availability of pagan texts, which had been preserved in Arabic translations, in the frontiers of Europe in regions such as Spain. These rediscovered works included medical and astrological texts, and also the logical works of Aristotle. As well as providing a source for previously lost writings, Islamic culture also conditioned Latin scholars' reception of these ideas. The commentaries of Islamic scholars such as Avicenna and Averroës often provided the basis for Latin scholars to interpret pagan philosophy. From the eleventh century, a massive translation programme made both pagan knowledge and Arabic commentaries more widely available to Latin scholars. The resulting body of knowledge was first adopted in the burgeoning Cathedral schools of Europe, and it was subsequently incorporated into the curricula of the newly created universities, where it was re-fashioned into scholastic disciplines, such as mathematics, natural philosophy, and medicine. Whilst reaping the benefits of a renewed understanding of logic, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and astrology,

³⁴ On monastic learning, see for example Roger French and Andrew Cunningham, *Before Science: the Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot: 1996), chapter 3.

Christians were also forced to face up to the immense challenges that such knowledge created for their faith.³⁵

Contemporaries recognised that this re-discovery of pagan knowledge presented a number of dangers to the faith. Some objected that the use of pagan wisdom could lead Christians to assign unwarranted importance to their own powers of reason. For example, members of monastic orders, such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), objected in forceful terms to the Victorine canon Peter Abelard's (1079-1142) use of logical tools to analyse sacred text, arguing that his work led to heresy. Others were concerned by specific pagan teachings about the manner in which the world functioned, and how this knowledge could be used by Man. Drawing on the authority of Church Fathers such as Augustine, some Christians, such as the Victorine canon Hugh of St Victor (1096-1141), expressed their fear that certain recently recovered pagan arts such as judicial astrology, and some forms of magic and divination were impossible without the connivance of demons. Hugh believed that, whether they were conscious of this fact or not, by practising these arts many Christians were making heretical compacts with demons. Finally, some Christians perceived there to be a danger that the practice of philosophy could lead a scholar to maintain a belief about the natural world, or about Man, that contradicted the truth of faith.³⁶

The intellectual and institutional developments taking place in the educational sphere were paralleled by the emergence of a reforming papacy determined to assert its authority within the Christian community, and to unify and purify the faith. Consequently, at the same moment that pagan works that presented a series of new threats to Christianity were being re-discovered, there also emerged a new concern to distinguish orthodox from heterodox opinions, and to attempt to remove the latter

³⁵ For a history of the early universities, see Olaf Pederson, *The First Universities: Studium Generale and the Origins of University Education in Europe* (Cambridge: 1997). On the translation programme, see Lindberg, op. cit., (1992), pp.203-06.

³⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, "St. Bernard to Pope Innocent III: Against Abelard, 1140", in Peters, op. cit., (1980), p.89. On the magical and divinatory arts, see for example Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (Hassocks: 1978) and Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: 1989). On medieval classifications of knowledge, see James A. Weisheipl, "The nature, scope and classification of the sciences" in David Lindberg (ed.), *Science in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: 1978), pp.461-83.

from Christian society. Drawing on the writings of Jerome and Augustine, the twelfth century canonist Gratian offered a new legal definition for heretics in his *Decretum* (c.1140), re-establishing the threat that they posed to both the faith and society. He identified four characteristics of heretics: they possessed views that were “chosen by human perception, contrary to Holy Scripture, publicly avowed and obstinately defended.” The first part of the definition indicated ideas that were developed by human faculties. Secondly the heretic needed to have expressed an opinion that contradicted Scripture. Third, he had to make his views public. Finally, the heretic obstinately defended his opinion, that is to say, he refused to change his mind even when he had been made aware of his error.³⁷

Gratian’s work identified a number of passages from Scripture and the Church Fathers that became the starting point for these later discussions of heresy. His definition of heresy also meant that it was possible for a person practising philosophy to fall into a potentially heretical error. This problem became even more significant from the middle of the twelfth century when Aristotle’s writings on the natural world, such as his *Physics* and *On the heavens*, were rediscovered. Contemporaries who wanted to teach and discuss the contents of these texts, for example the arts masters of the University of Paris, had to find some way to reconcile a number of Aristotle’s propositions, such as the eternity of the world, with passages of Scripture that suggested the opposite. By asserting the eternity of the world as the truth, or by maintaining as true philosophical propositions that presupposed this idea to be true, a philosopher would have exposed himself to the charge of heresy. Since the philosopher had publicly expressed an opinion that contradicted Scripture, then according to Gratian’s definition he had committed an error which required correction. Crucially, this remained a ‘religious crime’, and the fact that he had expressed this opinion during the course of philosophical debate was irrelevant. This error did not, however, constitute heresy; in order to cross this threshold, the philosopher would be required to persist in his opinion. These discussions of heresy were not merely

³⁷ Peters, op. cit., (1980), introduction, and idem, op. cit., (1988), pp.45-62. Gratian translated and cited in Peters.

theoretical, for the Church went to major efforts to enforce these boundaries. In the following sections we will begin to consider how philosophy was controlled in Christian society, by examining the various structures that were constructed to scrutinise the writings and utterances of Christians.³⁸

Disciplines, and Institutional Contexts, c.1200-1600

Outside of the universities, the other most significant settings for academic discourse in the early thirteenth century were the schools of the mendicant orders. In both institutions, students were taught natural philosophy, metaphysics, astronomy, astrology and theology. These disciplines had been created out of ancient pagan knowledge, and after the extensive translation of his writings into Latin from the eleventh century, mainly from the works of Aristotle, or those attributed to him, and commentaries, paraphrases and other works drawing on Aristotelian ideas. As we have seen, contemporaries were all too well aware of the fact that the incorporation of this wealth of knowledge into Christian society raised significant dangers. It was feared that within the universities the masters teaching this material, or the students listening to their classes, could fall into error and potentially heresy. Conscious of this fact, Christians knew that both human reason and pagan knowledge needed to be carefully managed and diligently circumscribed. Recent research has transformed our understanding of the mechanisms constructed to control knowledge-making within the universities. These can be divided into two main types, which I will designate as implicit and explicit censorship.³⁹

By implicit censorship I am referring to the unspoken structures that governed and controlled the possibilities of academic expression. These have been illuminated by recent research within the history of science, which has pointed above all to the importance of the academic disciplines within medieval and early modern culture. This work has highlighted the fact that while disciplines facilitated the production of

³⁸ Peters, *op. cit.*, (1980), chapter 7. On the 1277 condemnations, see n.20 above.

³⁹ For a survey of the early universities, see Pederson, *op. cit.*, (1997).

knowledge, they also served to control, define and enforce its boundaries. This was a subtle form of control, which was enforced both intellectually and socially. It required that members of the university only treated subject matter which they possessed the authority to discuss, and that they discussed it in a manner appropriate to their discipline. For example, a natural philosopher could not discuss an issue such as the nature of the Trinity, for virtually all Christian scholars believed that the doctrine of the Trinity was only made known to Man through divine revelation. Discussion of this issue was therefore reserved to theologians, who alone had the authority to expound Scripture. Contemporaries working within the universities would have been only too well aware of these boundaries, and most would have observed them during the course of their teaching or study. Although these forms of control are less easy to observe in operation than, for example, a trial, they did directly influence the manner in which knowledge was produced, and often served to keep it within defined parameters.⁴⁰

The influence of the disciplines can be contrasted with explicit forms of censorship, by which I mean mechanisms of control and censure that came into play when a member of the university community was alleged to have transgressed the boundaries of orthodoxy. Institutional historians have begun to piece together the complex structures of censorship that were employed to scrutinise the teachings of university teachers and students. In a pioneering article, William Courtenay drew attention to the importance of academic censure in the universities. As he noted, historians know of more than fifty cases of academic censure during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and there are numerous examples of accusations of false teaching. He pointed to the development of a corporate group of masters of theology in the universities of northern Europe, who operated as a synod that judged alleged breaches of orthodoxy during academic discourse and teaching. These ‘courts’ were involved in the investigations into the teachings of various arts masters and students of theology, for example the disciplining of Amaury de Bène in 1204, the investigation of Scotus Erigena’s *De divisione naturae* c.1225, and the propositions famously condemned at Paris

⁴⁰ Robert Westman “The Melanchthon circle, Reticus, and the Wittenberg Interpretation of the Copernican theory”, *Isis*, Vol. LXVI, (1975), pp.164-193; idem, op. cit., (1980).

in 1277 by Stephen Tempier. Importantly, Courtenay stressed that being the subject of such censure did not necessarily signal the end of a university teacher or student's academic career. Once he had been corrected and admonished, and had admitted his error, the accused was free to resume his place within the university. Censure and scrutiny were, therefore, an ever present part of medieval academic life.⁴¹

Courtenay's work has been greatly expanded by J.M.M.H Thijssen, who has produced a comprehensive study of the structures of academic censure operating within the University of Paris during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He has stressed above all the plurality of censorial structures controlling academic expression. Like Courtenay, he has demonstrated the importance of the role played by a court composed of a corporate body of regent theology masters. This was convoked to investigate accusations of false teaching made about university teachers and members of the religious orders teaching in the universities. While Thijssen often focussed on the censure of theologians, like Courtenay, he highlighted the part that the court of regent masters played in preparing the Parisian condemnations of 1277. As we have seen, the list of condemned theses included a number of philosophical ideas.⁴²

Thijssen has also drawn upon the writings of the early fourteenth century Franciscan theologian and philosopher William of Ockham to further illuminate the nature of the offences investigated by the courts of the university. Ockham, he noted, identified three types of heresy: the first was an outright denial of faith; the second were statements in which it was easy to understand how Scripture was contradicted, and could be recognised as heresy even by the illiterate; the third was a subtle type of heresy which could only be discerned by the learned after extensive discussion. This was the type of heresy that the censorial structures of the university were concerned to restrict. It was designed to reprimand highly trained scholastic theologians and philosophers who, in the course of teaching or debate, had made a statement of uncertain orthodoxy. Often it was not immediately obvious that the idea they expressed contained heretical

⁴¹ Courtenay, *op. cit.*, (1989).

⁴² Thijssen, *op. cit.*, (1998), on the Parisian condemnations see chapter 2.

implications, and the work of the censorial authorities was to assess and discern whether or not the idea fell within the bounds of orthodoxy.⁴³

These definitions also afforded some protection to the philosopher. As Thijssen has shown, the requirement that a heretic needed to obstinately defend his views set up a clear distinction between expressing a heretical opinion and being a heretic. Thijssen has again used Ockham's discussion of heresy to illuminate this point. Ockham, he wrote, "pointed out that a conviction for heresy required that (heretical) depravity be present not only in the error but also in the person himself who erred. The depravity in the erring consisted of pertinacity or obstinacy." Reiterating Gratian's opinion regarding the defence of heretical ideas, Ockham concluded that a philosopher would not be considered a heretic if he only expressed heretical views; in order to be a heretic he would instead need to obstinately maintain an opinion in the full knowledge that it was heretical. This distinction had important implications for the censorship of philosophy, for as Thijssen observed, "The idea of pertinacity was used to set apart the heretic from the innocent blunderer, who committed his errors not out of obstinacy, but out of theological ignorance." Although Thijssen does not develop this point, this principle also allowed the ecclesiastical authorities to determine the true views of a philosopher who wrote, whether deliberately or unintentionally, in a vague manner. This meant that although an author might deliberately present heterodox ideas but couch them in such a manner as to be deniable, the principle of pertinacity could be used to establish his true intentions. The principle of pertinacity was enshrined in the legislation of the University of Paris. If a doctrine was judged heretical by the court of the masters of theology, they employed a test, the revocation, to determine whether or not the person by whom it was uttered was a heretic. If the master recanted his errors he was not considered pertinacious, and so could not be convicted of heresy. If he refused to recant he was considered to be guilty of the far more serious charge.⁴⁴

In an important departure from the earlier historiography, Thijssen also set out to establish the relationship between the court of the regent masters and the other

⁴³ Thijssen, *op. cit.*, (1998), chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Thijssen, *op. cit.*, (1998), p.3.

courts that could try cases of false teaching. As he has stressed, these courts possessed specific jurisdictions, and there were clear rules governing the court in which a university teacher or student would be tried. In cases of allegations of false teaching, the master would, as a matter of course, be subject to the oversight of the court of the regent masters. There were, however, certain circumstances in which an allegation of false teaching might be investigated outside the universities, for instance in papal courts. While papal courts could try cases arising from academic discussion, they rarely acted as courts of first instance. For the most part they performed an appellate function, reviewing decisions made in lower courts such as that of the regent masters. Thijssen does not consider in detail the circumstances in which the Inquisition became involved in investigating errors stemming from academic discussion. It is, however, implicit in his account that the Inquisition's intervention was simply not necessary in the universities that possessed these disciplinary structures.⁴⁵

Authorial Strategy and the Problem of 'Double Truth'

Aware of both the extreme danger posed by human reason and pagan learning, and the fact that there existed potent disciplinary structures within the universities, a number of Christian scholars began to develop novel tactics to present their ideas without falling into a potentially heretical error. During the 1260s, a number of arts masters at the University of Paris, most famously Siger of Brabant (c.1240-c.1280), formulated a novel means of discussing philosophical ideas, which they believed would allow them to completely separate their claims from the faith. Their solution has been misrepresented by both contemporaries and historians as the doctrine of 'double truth'. Most notably, in his famous decrees of 1277 the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, accused the arts masters of the University of Paris of maintaining that there were two truths, one philosophical and the other theological that could reach opposing conclusions. This charge was subsequently reiterated by the historian Ernest Renan,

⁴⁵ Thijssen, *op. cit.*, (1998), chapter 1.

and he referred to philosophers who invoked this idea as ‘Averroists’. Following Renan’s lead, a number of historians continued to use this term to describe philosophers who made use of the doctrine of ‘double truth’.⁴⁶

However, modern scholars have shown that both Tempier and Renan misrepresented the views of medieval philosophers, and that the overwhelming majority of these thinkers cannot be accurately described as ‘Averroist’, and, more significantly, that none of them actually subscribed to a notion of ‘double truth’. These philosophers in fact argued that when engaged in philosophical discourse, they could defend conclusions that as Christians they held to be absolutely false. Crucially, they argued that the conclusions that they reached during the course of their work were *only philosophically necessary but not actually true*. The arts masters therefore maintained that they could therefore discuss philosophical ideas which appeared to contradict the faith, without making themselves liable to charges of heresy. This was because, as we have seen, in order for a person to be convicted of this charge, they needed to maintain and obstinately defend an heretical error as true. If questioned about their beliefs, these philosophers were able to denounce the ideas that they held as philosophically necessary, and to affirm their belief in orthodox Christian doctrines. This tactic for presenting *prima facie* heretical philosophical ideas gradually spread to Italy during the thirteenth century, where it became immensely important in the Universities of Bologna and Padua.⁴⁷ Although expressing philosophical ideas in this manner was not heretical, a number of powerful groups within the Church objected to this tactic in the strongest possible terms. The most influential criticisms were launched by the orders of mendicant friars, and especially by those of the Dominican and Franciscan orders. These orders of friars directly encountered the arts masters’ teachings, because by the mid-thirteenth century, the friars were deeply embedded within the universities of

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the historiography of Averroism and the influence of Renan’s interpretation, see Craig Martin, “Rethinking Averroism”, *Intellectual History Review*, XVII (2007), pp.3-19.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of modern interpretations of the arts masters’ ideas, see Martin Pine, “Pomponazzi and the problem of ‘double truth’”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXIX, (1968), pp.164-165. For a discussion of ‘Averroist’ doctrines in Bologna, see Bruno Nardi, “L’ Averroismo Bolognese nel secolo XIII e Taddeo Aldeorotto”, *Rivista Critica della Filosofia*, IV (1949), pp.11-22; Charles J. Ermatinger, “Averroism in early fourteenth century Bologna”, *Mediaeval Studies*, XVI (1954), pp.35-56.

northern Europe, both as students and as teachers. In contrast to earlier monastic thinkers, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, the friars advocated the use of logical analysis in discussions of divine matters, and they had also developed uses for Aristotle's writings on the natural world. Like the schoolmasters, the friars were aware of the dangers inherent in making use of pagan philosophy. Nevertheless they strongly rejected the solution to the problem adopted by some of the schoolmasters, distinguishing between truth and philosophical necessity. The friars instead developed a series of strategies to prevent the use of philosophy from drawing the faithful into error, without making this distinction.⁴⁸

One of the most important of these systems was developed by the Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Aquinas believed that it was possible for Man whilst working within the disciplines of theology, natural philosophy and metaphysics to create what Aristotle referred to as *scientia* or demonstrated knowledge. Aquinas wanted to ensure that not only the *scientia* created in theology, but also that created in the philosophical disciplines, was in accordance with Christian truth. This ambition directly contradicted the assertion made by some schoolmasters that it was possible to hold as necessary in philosophy conclusions that contradicted the truth of faith. Importantly, Aquinas did not seek to curtail philosophy's independence entirely. Instead he endeavoured to create a synthesis of knowledge that simultaneously assigned to those who practised disciplines such as natural philosophy a significant degree of autonomy, whilst at the same ensuring that all of the conclusions that they reached were in accordance with revealed faith. Guiding his project was Augustine's principles that faith should always be prior to reason, and that when it was correctly exercised, reason would always reach conclusions that were in accordance with faith.⁴⁹

⁴⁸On philosophy within the Religious orders, see M. Michele Mulchaney and Timothy B. Noone "Religious Orders" in Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (eds) *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (Malden MA, Oxford, Melbourne, Berlin: 2003). On the friars' natural philosophy see, French and Cunningham, op. cit., (1996).

⁴⁹ For Aquinas's discussions of the nature of theology and its relationship to the other disciplines see Thomas Aquinas, "Commentary on *Sentences* I (1252-54)", especially Prologue Question 1 and "On Beothius's *On the Trinity* (1257)", both in *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, edited and translated by Ralph McInerney (London: 1998), pp.50-84 and pp.141.

In order to ensure that Man did not use his reason to create *scientia* that contradicted the faith, Aquinas invoked and built upon the ancient principle of subalternation, which he used to delineate a hierarchy within the medieval disciplines of knowledge. For Aquinas, theology stood at the apex of this hierarchy. He argued this on the basis that, theology, Man's divine knowledge, was directly subalternated to God's divine knowledge. God, he argued, had revealed to Man, for instance through Scripture or prophecy, a portion of the complete knowledge that He possessed eternally. These truths furnished Man with the first principles about which he could rationally discourse in order to create *scientia* about God. Through these means, Man could use his faculty of reason to better understand the truth that had been revealed to him. Aquinas believed that the discipline of theology possessed a higher degree of certainty than any other discipline because theologians created *scientia* by rationally discoursing about principles directly revealed by God. Although the practitioners of metaphysics and natural philosophy also strived to create *scientia*, the knowledge created in these disciplines was created by rational discourse about human sensory experience of the natural world. Since these disciplines created *scientia* that depended on first principles gathered from purely human faculties, they enjoyed a lower degree of certainty than, and they were therefore subalternated to, theology.⁵⁰

The principle of subalternation had several important implications. According to Aquinas, the superiority of theology gave theologians the right to establish the parameters of knowledge in lower disciplines, for "lower sciences, which are subalternated to the higher, do not proceed from self-evident principles, but presuppose conclusions proved in the higher sciences and use them as principles though in truth they are not self-evident, but are proved in the higher science from self-evident principles."⁵¹ Aquinas hoped that by providing the first principles for

⁵⁰ See especially Aquinas's remarks in "The nature of theology. *Commentary on Sentences*", especially Prologue Question 1; and "Theology, Faith and Reason. On Beothius's *On The Trinity*", in McNerny, op. cit., (1998), especially Question 2.

⁵¹ See Aquinas's comments on subalternation in "The nature of theology. *Commentary on Sentences*", Prologue Question 1; see especially Article 1 Solution and Article 2 Sub-question 2, solution 2 in McNerny, op. cit., (1998), quotation p.61.

philosophical discourse, theologians would be able to ensure that the conclusions drawn by philosophers would always be in agreement with the faith. The principle of subalternation also implied that philosophy was to be brought into agreement with conclusions already drawn in theology. In this manner, subalternation gave theologians the right to determine when a philosopher's conclusions had contradicted the faith, and the philosopher was obliged to accept the theologian's judgement. This was not simply the rejection of specific philosophical doctrines on theological grounds. On the contrary, Aquinas believed that any errors that arose during the course of philosophical debate could also be refuted philosophically. He argued that when a philosopher reached conclusions that appeared to contradict the faith, "this is not philosophy but rather an abuse of philosophy because of defective reasoning". It was therefore possible to use philosophy to dispute a philosophical idea that had been shown to be contrary to the faith by demonstrating that it was "in every way impossible or by showing that it is not necessary." Although they would become hugely influential, even within his own order, Aquinas's ideas were not initially widely accepted.⁵²

By the 1270s, tensions were beginning to mount in the University of Paris. A group within the university, which was made up primarily of Franciscan friars and their supporters, convinced the Bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, to issue a list of heterodox philosophical propositions. This list was diverse and struck at a number of the teachings including some views that have been attributed to Aquinas, notably his discussions of the nature of the celestial intelligences. It was, however, primarily concerned with the teachings of the arts masters, and particularly those that appeared to limit the power of God, those that implied astrological determinism, and some specific teachings, including the idea that the world was eternal. Importantly, however, although the bishop threatened to excommunicate anyone who "taught some or all of the said errors", he neither declared that the activities of the arts masters, nor their teachings were *heretical*. He was unable to do this because, as we have seen, the arts

⁵² Aquinas, "On Beothius's *On The Trinity*", Question 2; quotation p.136, in McNerny, op. cit., (1998). On the initial reception of Aquinas's work within the Dominican order, see for example Elizabeth A. Lowe, *The Dominican Order and the Theological Authority of Thomas Aquinas: The Controversies Between Hervaeus Natalis and Durandus of St.Pourvain, 1307-1323* (New York: 2003).

masters presented their claims as being merely necessary in philosophy but not actually true. Tempier was unimpressed by this distinction, and observed that philosophers argued as though they believed that there were two truths, one in philosophy and one in theology. In spite of his disdain for the distinction between philosophical necessity and truth, its use nevertheless meant that he was unable to ban the schoolmasters' teachings on the grounds that they were heretical. Instead, Tempier declared that he sought to prevent discussion of these matters in the manner favoured by the schoolmasters "lest dangerous discourse should draw the innocent into error."⁵³

In the years following the condemnations of the 1270s, the arts masters' view that theology and philosophy could be separated became gradually untenable in the northern universities. It is, however, unclear the extent to which the Parisian condemnations contributed to this development, but it is fair to argue that the mendicant orders played a significant role. Although some of his views had been criticised in the condemnation of 1277, Aquinas's authority grew rapidly within his order, and by c.1325 his synthesis was adopted by the Dominicans and formed the basis for their teachings in their schools and the universities. A similar synthesis was developed by a Franciscan friar, John Duns Scotus (1266-1308). Like Aquinas, he made a clear distinction between the respective capacities of theology and philosophy, and underlined the latter's subordination to the former. The friars' syntheses became hugely influential in the universities of northern Europe, and their ideas came to govern the manner in which philosophy was practised within these institutions. Their influence made it gradually more difficult for arts masters teaching in northern universities to defend as philosophically necessary ideas that contradicted the faith. As a consequence, this conception of the relations between philosophy and the faith was gradually eradicated from the universities of northern Europe, but, as we shall see, it nonetheless continued to be used in Italy.⁵⁴

⁵³ Wippel, op. cit., (1977), for the condemnation of Aquinas's ideas see p.188 and for a more detailed discussion see idem, "Thomas Aquinas and the condemnations of 1277", *The Modern Schoolman*, LXXII (1995), pp.233-272. For citations from Tempier's letter, I have used Edward Grant's translation printed in his *A Source Book in Medieval Science*, (Cambridge Mass.: 1974), p.47.

⁵⁴ On Scotus, see for example, Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford and New York: 1999).

The Practice of Philosophy in Italy

Below the Alps, the situation was markedly different from above. The masters of the Italian universities continued to discuss doctrines that appeared to contradict the faith. These included ideas such as the eternity of the world, and, with increasing intensity from the fourteenth century, the idea of the mortality of the individual human soul. As Paul Grendler and John Monfasani have argued, the most significant reason why this situation was allowed to develop is the fact that the Italian universities lacked the institutional structures to support rigorous theological oversight of the schoolmasters' teachings and discussions. In fact, when they were initially founded, the first universities of Italy, such as Bologna and Padua, did not possess faculties of theology. Theology was instead taught by the mendicant orders within their *studia generalia*, the schools that stood at the apex of their educational systems. These institutions lacked the authority to issue degrees, and were not integrated into the structures of, and did not have any official links with, the universities. Consequently, there was no corporate body of theologians working within the Italian universities. This meant that, unlike in the dominant University of Paris, it was not possible to have a system of discipline and censure co-ordinated by the regent masters of theology.⁵⁵

This situation began to change from the mid fourteenth century, when the papacy began to grant the older universities of Italy the right to establish faculties of theology and to issue degrees in this discipline. Furthermore, from this point forward, the foundational charters of new universities gave them the right to grant theology degrees. Nevertheless, the discipline of theology occupied a peculiar position within the universities. Although theology degrees were issued under the authority of the university, these institutions tended to appoint few, if any, professors of theology. Instead, the teaching of theology continued to take place primarily within the mendicant *studia* located in university towns, which also provided the majority of the staff that made up the faculty of theology. As Grendler observed, "the faculty of

⁵⁵ Grendler *op. cit.*, (2002), on the growing debate on the nature of the soul, see pp.281-83; on the teaching of theology, see pp.353-57. See too Monfasani, *op. cit.*, (1993), pp.252-56.

theology was a kind of confederation of the *studia monastica* under the name of the civic university but with limited participation by the latter.” Consequently, the friars lacked any real influence over the governance and curriculum of the university as a whole.⁵⁶

This situation had two important implications. First, the universities continued to function without the structures of censure and control organised elsewhere by the faculty of theology. Secondly, the friars had relatively little influence over teaching and discussion within the Italian universities, and they were unable to introduce the scholastic syntheses of knowledge that governed knowledge-production in the northern universities into the arts curricula of their Italian counterparts. Consequently, the Italian schoolmasters could continue to make a distinction between philosophically necessary conclusions and the true conclusions required by the faith. This formulation of the relationship between philosophy and the faith allowed the Italian schoolmasters to continue teaching apparently heterodox ideas, such as the eternity of the world, without regard for their theological implications.

Although Grendler and Monfasani have correctly emphasised the fact that there was no formal theological oversight within the universities, this did not mean that the masters of the Italian universities were totally exempt from scrutiny. I suggest that on the contrary, the absence of these structures meant they were in the unusual position of being liable to the jurisdiction of the Inquisition. If a schoolmaster teaching natural philosophy were to have taught as *true* philosophical doctrines that contradicted the faith, the Inquisition had the authority to intervene and discipline them. However, this rarely, if ever, happened in practice. As long as the schoolmasters continued to express their ideas as being merely philosophically necessary they could not be charged with heresy, and the Inquisition therefore had no authority to censure their ideas. Nevertheless, while students and teachers of the universities were rarely tried by the Inquisition, this could occur on occasion and it is necessary to consider the reasons why this could happen.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Grendler, op. cit., (2002), pp.357-60.

⁵⁷ Grendler, op. cit., (2002), pp.353-58; Monfasani, op. cit., (1993), pp.253-56.

This situation can be explained by the fact that the tactic of defending ideas as merely philosophically necessary was not always available to masters teaching in disciplines that derived their principles from philosophy. The situation was especially complex in the case of astronomy, which also embraced astrology, for an astronomer's work involved both practical and theoretical elements. If an astrologer made a prediction about the future using a particular theory, he explicitly showed that he held that theory to be true, and so he could not claim to defend that theory as merely philosophically necessary. In order to protect himself from a charge of heresy, he therefore had to ensure that any prediction he offered was underpinned by theologically orthodox astrological theories. This was no simple matter for astrological theories and techniques held a contested place in Christian intellectual life. However, from the thirteenth century a limited amount of astrological knowledge was incorporated in to university curricula. While it was generally considered heretical to maintain the truth of any astrological theory that implied that the human will was not free, some astrological theories were considered entirely orthodox. For example, many Christians, including Thomas Aquinas, believed that it was legitimate for a Christian to discuss and make predictions about the influence of the stars on the body, for instance, for use in the practice of medicine. However, Aquinas also believed that the stars' influence on the body could indirectly affect the human intellect, and thus human decision making. Consequently, according to Aquinas, it was possible for Christians to make limited predictions about future events, especially concerning large populations. Importantly, however, he argued that the individual human will could always overrule the influence that the stars wielded over the intellect. In this manner he showed how the stars could affect human behaviour, whilst safe-guarding the freedom of the will.⁵⁸

In some circumstances, however, it was possible for the astronomer to invoke the philosophers' distinction between philosophical necessity and truth. He could, for example, use this distinction in order to teach an ancient theory that suggested that the

⁵⁸ On astrology and medicine, see Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: an Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: 1990), pp.67-9. For a discussion of astrology in medieval Europe and in particular Thomas Aquinas's views on astrology, see Laura Ackerman Smoller, *History, Prophecy and the Stars: the Christian Astrology of Pierre d'Ailly, 1350-1420* (Princeton: 1994), chapter 1.

stars could be used to predict specific future contingent events, even if this theory compromised the freedom of the will. If he were to present this theory as merely philosophically necessary but absolutely false, then he could not be prosecuted for heresy. However, if he did not make these distinctions, he was liable to face a charge of heresy, and, since there were no internal bodies of control within the university, he could be investigated and disciplined by the Inquisition. For example, in 1324 the schoolmaster Cecco d'Ascoli was summoned to appear in front of the Bolognese inquisitor. During the course of his interrogations Cecco confessed that he had taught the doctrine that if God did nothing to change the order of the universe, then the stars could be used to predict whether an individual would be rich or poor. After abjuring his errors Cecco was released. He was, however, later tried and executed in Florence on similar charges.⁵⁹

While the case of Cecco demonstrates that the Inquisition could intervene in the universities of Italy, it must be noted that trials of this nature were extremely unusual. For the most part, the masters of the Italian universities had found a way to teach and discuss philosophical and astrological ideas without provoking theological censure. Although the schoolmasters' use of this tactic, and the ideas that they used it to defend, remained repugnant to members of the mendicant orders, there was little that the friars could do to eradicate the distinction between philosophically necessary conclusion and the truth of faith from the Italian universities. However, from the middle of the fifteenth century, the friars began in earnest to combat the schoolmasters' tactic for presenting philosophical ideas. In 1441, the Dominicans were given a chair of Thomist metaphysics in the arts faculty of Padua, which was joined by a chair of Scotist metaphysics granted to the Franciscans. It is highly likely that their intention was to introduce the Scotist and Thomist syntheses that held sway in the northern universities into their Italian counterparts. The schoolmasters, however, continued to present their ideas in their traditional manner, virtually unaffected by ecclesiastical censorship. In fact, despite repeated efforts on the part of the mendicants, and later the Jesuits, the

⁵⁹ On Cecco d'Ascoli's encounters with the Inquisition, see Castelli, *op. cit.*, (1892), pp.29-44.

schoolmasters continued to teach and present their original ideas in this manner throughout the sixteenth, and into the seventeenth century.⁶⁰

However, as the trials of the 1590s demonstrate there was an increase in the number of philosophers being placed on trial or condemned by ecclesiastical authorities in the sixteenth century. Accordingly, we must turn to consider a series of developments that took place outside of the universities. During the fifteenth century the noble and princely elites of Italy became increasingly interested in esoteric traditions of knowledge, and concerned with natural wonders, technological marvels and the knowledge of how they operated. As a result of these developments they began to develop an interest in novel types of philosophy that could discuss these secrets of nature. The researches of historians of science such as Bruce Moran, Robert Westman, Paula Findlen, William Eamon and Mario Biagioli have shown that elite patronage created new opportunities for philosophers to create alternative socio-professional identities outside the universities, which in turn allowed them to circumvent the disciplinary and censorial structures of the universities for the first time. This did not mean, however, that the philosophers who stepped outside the universities, enjoyed intellectual ‘freedom’. It is true that philosophers such as Giambattista Della Porta and Bernardino Telesio could abide by alternatives to the disciplinary conventions operating within the universities. However, these philosophers no longer couched their work as merely philosophically necessary, but as real accounts of the manner in which the world was structured and functioned. Unlike the schoolmasters, the claims made by independent philosophers were not insulated from the charge of heresy, and so they had to ensure that their ideas were in conformity with the orthodoxy defined by the censors. In the absence of many other bodies to scrutinise their ideas for heretical implications, the philosophers were constantly vulnerable to Inquisitorial investigation.

⁶⁰ On the teaching requirements of secular natural philosophers, see Martin Pine, *Pietro Pomponazzi: Radical Philosopher of the Renaissance*, (Padua: 1986) pp.39-43. On the continuity of teaching, see Grendler, op. cit., (2002), pp.293-97. On the Jesuits’ attempts to counter these ideas, see for example Maurizzio Sangalli, “Cesare Cremonini, la Compagnia di Gesù e la Repubblica di Venezia: eterodossia e protezione politica” in Ezio Riondato and Antonino Poppi (eds) *Cesare Cremonini. Aspetti del pensiero e scritti*, (Padua: 2000), pp.207-218.

Furthermore, following the invention of the printing press, and the subsequent development of the printing industry, many of these philosophers chose to publish their work. In order to publish their work legitimately within Italy, they were obliged to pass their work through ecclesiastical censorial organs, which grew up alongside the new industry.⁶¹

The intellectual ferment of the Renaissance also gave rise to a renewed interest in Platonism, and one of the most significant figures in this revival was Marsilio Ficino (1433-99). He was deeply troubled about the manner in which philosophy, and in particular Aristotelian philosophy, was then practised within the schools of Italy. He was especially concerned about the teachings of the secular arts masters, whom he famously divided into two broad camps: the Averroists and the Alexandrians. According to Ficino these art masters posed a major danger to Christianity, not only because of specific doctrines that they proposed, for instance the mortality of the individual soul, but because their teachings threatened to separate philosophy from theology.⁶²

As a consequence of these concerns, he was well disposed towards the friars' attempts to promote Thomist and Scotist syntheses within the universities, which he believed could help to moderate the teaching of the arts masters. Although for these reasons he was favourable towards the friars' syntheses, Ficino nonetheless found a great deal to criticise in them. As James Hankins has observed, ultimately Ficino believed that "the great medieval project to integrate philosophy and Aristotle had ended in intellectual disaster." For Ficino, Aristotle's work was not the most suitable philosophy for integration with Christianity. Instead, he wanted to promote the study of Plato, whose work he believed to be better aligned with the faith. As we shall see,

⁶¹ For a discussion of the importance of the creation of new institutional contexts for the practice of philosophy, see for example, Westman, op. cit., (1980); Bruce Moran (ed.), *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology and Medicine at the European Court* (Bury St Edmunds: 1991), and especially the essays by Biagioli and Eamon. See too Biagioli, op. cit., (1993). On the noble culture of collecting natural marvels, see Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: 1996). On the impact of print, see for example Paul Grendler, "Printing and Censorship", in Schmitt (ed), op. cit., (1988), pp.25-53.

⁶² James Hankins, *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome: 1994), pp.431-33, 459-469. On Ficino, see too idem, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, (New York: 1990), part IV.

although directed towards pious ends, Ficino's work had implications that some within the Church regarded with suspicion. Nevertheless, his project would be influential at various points in the sixteenth century, ultimately informing the views of philosophers such as Francesco Patrizi.⁶³

The Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books

Although the Inquisition is known to most historians of science by name, if not reputation, there is a surprising lack of knowledge about what it was and how it functioned. The same is true of the Index of Forbidden Books, which is often treated unproblematically as a single evolving list of banned works. These observations would be unremarkable, were it not for the fact that the Inquisition played a pivotal role in one of the most notorious events in the history of science: the trial of Galileo Galilei. Historians working on this, the most famous Inquisitorial trial of a philosopher, have remained largely ignorant of the nature and operations of this institution. This situation is rendered all the more extraordinary by the existence of a formidable bibliography covering many aspects of the Inquisition, and the problem is further compounded by a general ignorance on behalf of Anglophone historians of science about recent literature in French and Italian. These works have provided detailed accounts of the institutional history of both the Inquisition and the Index; accounts of how the Inquisition functioned as a judicial tribunal; and accounts of the impact of Inquisitorial prosecutions and the imposition of the Index on a vast array of groups within society including heretics, witches, and Jews. Although it is fair to concede that not all of this literature is germane to the Galileo Affair, it is remarkable that this vast resource of secondary literature has not been previously tapped by any but a handful of historians of science working on this issue.⁶⁴

⁶³ Quotation from Hankins op. cit., (1994), p.433; and for a discussion of Ficino's attitudes towards scholasticism, chapter 17.

⁶⁴ The bibliography on the Inquisition is extremely large, but for an overview of its history, see Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (1989); Andrea del Col, *L'inquisizione in Italia dal XII al XXI secolo* (Milan: 2006). See too: Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton University Press:

This failure to engage with the secondary literature on the Inquisition has given rise to a number of misunderstandings about its nature and function. Notably, it is often presented by historians of science as a novel institution created during the sixteenth century. While it is true that the Roman Inquisition was established in 1543, largely in response to the threat posed by Protestant heresy, it was in fact a reorganised version of a pre-existing institution, which had a long history. The Inquisition was originally established in 1184 as an Episcopal institution, and it was intended to be used primarily for rooting out the Cathar heresy. By the 1230s it had been re-established as a tool of papal power, and it was staffed predominantly by members of the two most important orders of mendicant friars, the Franciscans and above all the Dominicans. The papal Inquisition was in continuous existence between its establishment in the thirteenth century and its re-founding in the middle of the sixteenth, and it played a significant part in Italian society during these years.⁶⁵

Over the last forty years our understanding of the Roman Inquisition has been greatly enhanced by investigations into the manner in which it functioned as an institution. The foundations for this type of study were laid by John Tedeschi, who produced groundbreaking work on these matters during the 1970s. In his work he established many of the procedures of the Inquisition, and offered a detailed account of how the network of Inquisitorial courts functioned within Italian society. He particularly emphasised the fact that in order to grasp how the Inquisition functioned, it was essential to understand the canonistic and legal aspects of the Inquisition. Studies of the Inquisition were later taken in a new direction by the work of Paul Grendler, who pioneered studies of the role played by the Inquisition in the censorship of books. His work was prompted by an observation made by a number of historians, notably

Princeton, 1977); Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice* (Oxford: 1983); Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550-1650* (Oxford: 1989); John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Essays on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (New York: 1991); Andrea Errera, *Processus in causa fidei: l'evoluzione dei manuali inquisitoriali nei secoli XVI-XVII e il manuale inedito di un inquisitore perugino* (Bologna: 2000). For some of the recent works on the Galileo Affair, see above n.4. The literature on the Inquisition is notable by its almost total absence from the bibliographies of these works, with exception of the work of Francesco Beretta. For a further discussion of his work, see below, pp.58-63.

⁶⁵ On the medieval Inquisition, see Peters, op. cit., (1989), chapter 2; del Col, op. cit., (2006), Prima Parte.

Antonio Rotondò, that little was known about the internal history of the Index. Consciously building on the writings of earlier historians such as Luigi Firpo and Tedeschi, Grendler set out to establish both the mechanism and the effectiveness of censorship in one city, Venice. To this end, he set out to assess the extent to which decrees of the Inquisition, and the various Indices were enforced, and the impact that they had upon the book trade. Although Grendler's work represented a major step forward, he did not fully capture the complexity of the relationship between the Index and the Inquisition, for he tended to see them as products of a uniform attempt by the Catholic Church to carry out censorship, both of which were working towards a single coherent end.⁶⁶

This work on the Inquisition has been complemented by renewed interest in the history of censorship. Historians including Vittorio Frajese and Gigliola Fragnito have drawn a more sophisticated picture of the structures of book censorship, giving a far more detailed account of the production of the various Indices of Forbidden Books, and showing that the Inquisition's power over censorship was not uncontested during the sixteenth century. Notably, this research has incorporated the insights of historians such as Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto who, as we have seen, presented a picture of a Church riven by factional dispute. Fragnito and Frajese have used these insights to show that over this period the episcopate and the Inquisition were engaged in a protracted and often bitter struggle for influence. At stake was the power to carry out the work of censorship, and to establish the criteria by which these bodies should operate. Fragnito and Frajese's work has shown that, in contrast to the Inquisition, many bishops were sympathetic to humanist ideas, such as expanding the circulation of vernacular Bibles, and accepting a more tolerant attitude towards the Talmud. This research has demonstrated how the struggle to define orthodoxy was conducted within the hierarchy of the Church, and they have elucidated the manner in which these conflicts directly impacted upon the practice of censorship.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ A collection of Tedeschi's articles can be found in op. cit., (1991); see too Grendler, op. cit., (1977).

⁶⁷ Vittorio Frajese, "La revoca dell' index sistino e la curia romana, (1588-1596)", *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*, (1986), pp.15-49; idem, "La politica dell' indice dal tridentino al clementino (1571-1596)",

These studies of the structures of censorship have also expanded the definition of the term, so that it now includes issues such as the licensing and control of works prior to publication. This means that we are not only dealing with a picture of retrospective censorship of works in circulation, but also of a dynamic interchange between author and censor which shaped and altered the content of the censored work. This allows us to create a new picture of the manner in which censorship functioned. It is no longer necessary to perceive the exercise of censorial power as purely restrictive, but also in some senses as productive. Ideas were shaped and moderated as the result of this interchange between censor and author, giving rise to new perspectives and understandings. As I show later in this thesis, this process can be traced in exchanges between philosophers and the various censorial authorities at work in Italy, for example in the course of Bernardino Telesio efforts to publish a second edition of his *De rerum natura* during the early 1570s.⁶⁸

Although these recent Italian-language histories of ecclesiastical censorship have transformed the picture of censorship in early modern Italy provided by the earlier liberal tradition, they continue to reiterate the older historiographical dichotomy between progressives and reactionaries within the Church. As we have seen, while the earlier tradition was largely concerned with the tracing the history of the suppression of philosophy, the more recent accounts are concerned with the repression of the ideas of 'Christian' humanists such as Desiderius Erasmus, and evangelical reformers such as Gasparo Contarini and Cardinal Giovanni Morone. While in the earlier liberal tradition philosophers were portrayed as the bearers of putatively modern values such as toleration and intellectual freedom, these have now been projected onto the Christian humanists and reformers of the sixteenth century. This situation has also tended to militate against any detailed study of the philosophical commitments motivating the

Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà, XI (1998), pp.304-354. See also Gigliola Fragnito, *La bibbia al rogo: la censura ecclesiastica e i volgarizzamenti della scrittura* (Bologna: 1997a); idem, "La censura libraria tra congregazione dell' indice, congregazione dell' inquisizione e maestro del sacro palazzo, (1570-1596)" in Ugo Rozzo (ed.), *La censura libraria nell' Europa del secolo XVI*, (Udine: 1997b), pp.163-75. On Massimo Firpo and Marcatto's work, see above pp.22-23.

⁶⁸ The discussion of the productive, and not merely repressive, nature of power was pioneered in the writings of Michel Foucault, see above all *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, (London: 1977).

Inquisition. It is generally portrayed as the bearer of qualities such as intransigence, repressiveness, and defensiveness, which had been previously ascribed to the Counter-Reformation Church as a whole. The Inquisition's successful crushing of the humanist and reform movements at the end of the sixteenth century is seen to mark the ultimate triumph of the spirit of the *Contra Riforma*, and the suppression of these modern values. This means that although the ostensible subject matter of these modern histories is different, the underlying narrative nevertheless continues to relate a story about the suppression of liberal values by an increasingly repressive and dogmatic Church.⁶⁹

There is also a notable omission from these recent studies of censorship in the Catholic Church, and that is an account of the censorship of philosophy. This extraordinary lacuna in the historiography presents a remarkable opportunity. Integrating the history of the censorship of philosophy into this new historiographical framework allows us to rethink the trials of philosophers such as Patrizi, Telesio, and Della Porta. Secondly, it presents a chance to criticise the narrative established in the modern secondary literature, which posits a conflict between progressive bishops and a retrogressive Inquisition. Furthermore, the majority of research has been directed towards the ideas of the 'progressive' humanists and reformers. Many of the Bishops are presented as supporters of humanism, sympathetic to the ideas promoted by reformers such as Desiderius Erasmus. For this reason they are placed on the side of modern values. Although it is possible to suggest ways in which the humanists were 'progressive' or 'modern', humanism was not a homogeneous movement and cannot be portrayed in such straightforward terms. For instance, although Erasmus's support for literacy and the vernacular Bible can be used to portray him as a champion of apparently modern values, his Christian beliefs were underpinned by a strict interpretation of Pauline Christian Folly. This position made him sceptical about the value not only of scholastic natural philosophy and theology, but also of the views of

⁶⁹ On the early history of the friars, see for example Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Coming of the Friars* (Oxford: 1975). On the Dominicans, see William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order*, 2 Vols. (New York: 1965-1973).

philosophers such as Ficino and Pico, who were fêted in the earlier liberal tradition, and all astrological and magical knowledge. Similar views to those maintained by Erasmus were incorporated into several bishops' practice of censorship, creating a consensus between the bishops and the Inquisition about the need to restrict certain intellectual practices. The dichotomies between progressive and retrogressive, modernising and traditional therefore break down when the story of the censorship of philosophy and Christian humanism and evangelical reform are considered together. Integrating these perspectives into a more nuanced account of censorship reveals a far more complex story than has been previously presented.⁷⁰

Science and the Inquisition: the Work of Ugo Baldini

Over the last ten years, interest in the theme of censorship has expanded greatly for two main reasons. First, in 1996 Jesús Martínez de Bujanda completed his critical edition of the various Indices of Forbidden Books published in early modern Europe, which has facilitated detailed analyses of their contents. Secondly, in 1998 the archives of the Holy Office and the Index of Forbidden Books were opened to scholars for the first time. This has presented a unique opportunity to re-examine the Church's attitude towards science and/ or philosophy in the early modern period. For example, the Italian historian of science Ugo Baldini is currently co-ordinating a major project for the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (Pontifica Accademia delle Scienze). Taking advantage of the newly opened archives of the Inquisition, the project aims to collate all the available source material contained in the Vatican archives pertaining to the trial or investigations of scientific figures between the foundation of the Roman Inquisition in 1543 and the Napoleonic period. Those working on the project believe that these documents can form the basis of a detailed analysis of the relationship between the Catholic Church and modern science in this period. A significant number of the trials

⁷⁰ On Erasmus, see for example James McConica, *Erasmus* (Oxford and New York: 1991); Léon-E. Halkin, *Erasmus: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: 1993); A.G. Dickens and Whitney R. D. Jones, *Erasmus the Reformer* (London: 1994).

and condemnations made famous by the liberal tradition, for instance those of Francesco Patrizi and Bernardino Telesio, have been included in the scope of Baldini's study. Other cases, for instance that of Francesco Pucci, have been excluded, presumably on the grounds that while his work could be construed as philosophy, it can certainly not be viewed as 'science'.⁷¹

In a recent article, Baldini set out a framework for interpreting the history of the Roman Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books in relation to science, from its foundation in 1543 until the first phase of the Galileo Affair. His central contention was that prior to the condemnation of some aspects of the Copernican opinion in 1616, the Church had not condemned any ideas purely on the basis of their scientific content. This condemnation therefore signalled the first occasion that either the Inquisition or the Index intervened to censure a purely 'scientific' idea for the challenge that it posed to the faith. Baldini observed that prior to this date a number of works that could be considered to be 'scientific', or authors who produced works of 'science', were either censored by the Inquisition or had works placed on the Index of Forbidden Books. However, he argued that when the Church struck against either these texts or their authors, it was not directly seeking to censor their 'scientific' content. His subsequent analysis of these trials and condemnations was framed by these insights. Principally, he sought to trace the developments that led the Inquisition to take an

⁷¹ For the Indices of Forbidden Books, see *ILLI* Vols. 1-10. See too de Bujanda, "Squadro panoramico sugli indici dei libri proibiti del XVI secolo", in Rozzo, op. cit., (1997), pp.1-14. There has been a recent collection of essays on censorship that has drawn upon the material found in the archives of the Inquisition and the Index; see Gigliola Fragnito, (ed.), *Church Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, (Cambridge: 2001). For a brief account of the Vatican project see Leen Spruit, "Due documenti noti e due documenti sconosciuti sul processo di Bruno nell' archivio del Sant' Uffizio", *Bruniana e campanelliana*, IV (1998), p.469. Over the course of the last ten years a selection of these documents has been made public in a series of articles, and Baldini plans to publish several volumes of these documents in the near future. The published articles do not offer detailed analyses of these trials, but instead restrict themselves to presenting the documents with some contextual information. See for example Michaela Valente, "Della Porta e l' inquisizione. Nouvi documenti dell' archivio del Sant Uffizio." *Bruniana e campanelliana*, V (1999), pp.415-434; Leen Spruit, "I processi campanelliani tra Padova e Calabria: documenti inediti dall' archive dell' inquisizione romana", *Bruniana and campanelliana*, VI (2000), pp.165-177; idem, "Cremonini nelle carte del Sant' Uffizio romano," in Ezio Riondato e Antonino Poppi (eds) op. cit., (2000), pp.193-204. Although generally there have been few new stories, see Christoph Lüthy and Leen Spruit, "The doctrine, life and Roman trial of the Frisian philosopher Henricus de Veno (1574-1613)", *Renaissance Quarterly*, LVI (2003), pp.1112-51.

interest in what he described as “scientific activity (ideas, authors, works) [attività scientifica (idée. autori, opere)]”. He set out to describe the doctrinal, normative and procedural developments that brought the Inquisition, “an apparatus of control conceived for eminently religious ends to assail a field that, *prima facie*, was foreign or at least neutral to these ends.” In order to resolve this apparent dilemma, he stated that he intended to offer some considerations on the initial phase of the Inquisition’s scrutiny of scientific activity. To do this he would, he wrote, seek to establish the legal and doctrinal bases which justified the Inquisition’s scrutiny of scientific activities.⁷²

Baldini noted, however, that he had not been able to find any mention of the word ‘science’, nor any reference to what he considered its contemporary equivalents ‘scholastics’ or ‘moderns’, nor to any specific disciplines, in the documentation of the Inquisition. On this basis he concluded that when it was initially founded, the Inquisition was not intended to exercise control over ‘science’. Baldini took this to indicate that when the Inquisition did begin to censor ‘scientific activities’, it did so on an indirect basis. Expanding this argument, Baldini identified four bases under which the Inquisition could investigate and censure genuinely ‘scientific’ works, or the individuals producing them. First, he observed that following the creation of the Index of Forbidden Books in 1559, the Catholic Church acquired the capacity to ban all of the works written by heretics and heresiarchs, by virtue of their authorship, not their content. This development led to the prohibition of all of the writings of Protestant authors such as Conrad Gesner and Michael Maestlin, who happened to write ‘scientific’ works. Secondly, he argued that the second papal Index of 1564 introduced an injunction against any works which contradicted Christian ethics, which was used to condemn, for example, anatomical works that treated of, or illustrated, the human reproductive system.⁷³

Third, Baldini noted that during this period the Inquisition was deeply preoccupied with limiting the circulation of works on magic and divination. The

⁷² Ugo Baldini, 'Le congregazioni romane dell' inquisizione e dell' indice e le scienze, dal 1542 al 1615', in *L' inquisizione e gli storici: un cantiere aperto*, (Rome: 2000), pp.329-64: 329.

⁷³ Baldini, op. cit., (2000), pp.336-351.

Inquisition's drive to eradicate these magical and divinatory activities, accounted for the vast majority of the censorship of works and authors who could be classified as 'scientific'. Crucially, these arts did not fall within Baldini's definition of science, and so he concluded that when the Church set out to restrict these arts they were not censoring 'science'. For instance, he observed that although philosophers such as Bruno, Patrizi and Telesio had fallen foul of the Inquisition or the Index, and they had all produced works of genuine scientific merit, the trials and censures to which they were subjected were not the product of any antagonism on the part of the Inquisition towards the 'scientific' elements of their work. Instead, they were censured either because some of their works primarily treated of the magical and/ or divinatory arts, or because they had produced works in which genuine 'science' nestled alongside magical or divinatory pseudo-science. In this latter case, the Inquisition censured these texts not for their 'scientific', but for their 'superstitious' content.⁷⁴

The final criterion that Baldini identified was the principle of the verity of Scripture and the unicity of its interpretation, which, he argued, did allow the Inquisition to censure a text or an idea purely on the basis of its scientific content. According to this principle, Scripture was the ultimate source of truth and the Church alone had the authority to establish that truth. When an author made a scientific claim which appeared to contradict the truth of Scripture as defined by the Church, he was liable to censure. According to Baldini, this principle was invoked during the now notorious condemnations of 1616, when certain texts which contained passages that suggested the reality of the motion of the Earth, notably Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus*, were censored by the Church. Consequently, the promulgation of the decree making the judgement known marked the first occasion when the Church actually offered a judgement on a genuinely scientific issue.⁷⁵

Although in many ways useful, Baldini's observations require certain qualifications. As we have seen, the thrust of his article was intended to explain why

⁷⁴ Baldini has written in greater detail on the condemnation of astrology elsewhere; see idem, "The Roman Inquisition's condemnation of astrology: antecedents, reasons and consequences", in Fragnito, op. cit., (2001), pp.79-110.

⁷⁵ Baldini, op. cit., (2000), p.337.

the Inquisition came to investigate ‘science’. It is possible to suggest that Baldini reached his conclusion because his definition of ‘science’ allowed him to ignore all previous Inquisitorial trials and condemnations on the grounds that they were not directly targeting accounts about the natural world. In a sense, the conclusion of Baldini’s work was predetermined by his definition of ‘science’. For example, his narrow definition of ‘science’ allowed him to disregard large swathes of early-modern knowledge-making activities, such as magic and divination, from his analysis on the basis that they were ‘non-scientific’. This narrow perspective therefore had the effect of making the condemnation of 1616 appear as though it were unprecedented.

Secondly, Baldini conceived of ‘science’ as a secular undertaking that operated in a separate domain to religion. He argued that since the Inquisition was created to root out heresy, which was a religious crime, it was not originally intended to deal with the censorship of science *qua* science. He therefore believed that it was necessary to establish the grounds that allowed the Inquisition to scrutinise science. While it is clearly true that heresy is by definition a religious crime, as recent debates within the history of science have shown, it is misleading to suggest that during the medieval or early modern periods there was a distinctive activity, or even a cluster of activities, that we can identify as secular ‘science’. Unlike modern science, the cluster of early modern activities that can be defined as ‘science’ cannot be uniformly described as ‘secular’. While it is possible to suggest that there are some activities which could be defined as ‘science’, for example mechanics, which did not have religious implications, this was not always the case in other disciplines, notably natural philosophy. Although it is not necessary to follow the thesis of Roger French and Andrew Cunningham, who have described this discipline as a totally ‘God-centred activity’, it is essential to acknowledge that there were parts of this discipline which impinged upon the domain of theology. This meant that there existed an ever-present danger that a natural philosopher might draw conclusions that contradicted the faith.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ On the problem of using the term ‘science’ to describe early modern knowledge-making practices early modern period see the literature cited in n.5; see too, French and Cunningham, *op. cit.*, (1996).

Baldini's final conclusion, that the condemnations of 1616 marked the first occasion on which a scientific idea was censored by the Church, is therefore misleading for several reasons. In the first instance, he suggested that this was the first time that the principle that the conclusions of philosophy could not contradict Scripture was invoked to censor a scientific idea. The problem of reconciling conclusions reached in philosophy with the truth of Scripture was a problem that had exercised Christians since the age of the Church Fathers, and would be a major problem throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Notably, it provided the basis for Stephen Tempier to condemn a number of articles in Paris in 1277, for example the ban on the discussion of the eternity of the Earth. It also provided a justification for the condemnation of certain philosophical ideas during the Fifth Lateran Council in 1516, notably the injunction against presenting as philosophically true the doctrine that the soul was mortal. Furthermore, in 1584 a Spanish theologian, Diego de Zuñiga discussed Copernicus's ideas, and argued that the motion of the Earth was in fact easier to reconcile with a literal interpretation of Job chapter 9 verse 6, than the proposition that it was stationary. Zuñiga's exegesis of Job was criticised by a number of scholars, including the Jesuit Christopher Clavius and Juan de Pineda, and was condemned alongside Copernicus's work in 1616. Even though these criticisms did not result in a formal theological censure before this date, it is clear that the problem of reconciling Copernicus's ideas with Scripture had already emerged as a significant issue within the Church. It is therefore unhelpful to suggest that the condemnations of 1616 marked any significant change in the Church's attitudes towards philosophy and/ or science.⁷⁷

It is also inaccurate to suggest that the Inquisition primarily conceived of the Copernican opinion as a 'scientific' idea, or that they censored it on this basis. On one level, it was immaterial to the Inquisition that this was a 'scientific' book, or perhaps less anachronistically, a work of astronomy and cosmology; its members were only concerned with restricting heresy wherever it could be found. *De revolutionibus* was a

⁷⁷ On de Zuñiga, see Robert Westman, "The Copernicans and the Churches", in Lindberg and Numbers op. cit., (1986), pp.76-113; Victor Navarro Brotóns, "The reception of Copernicus in sixteenth-century Spain: the case of Diego de Zúñiga", *Istos* LXXXVI (1995), pp.52-78.

complex text that could be read in numerous different ways, notably as both a work of technical astronomy, and as a work of cosmology. As contemporaries quickly realised, the cosmological aspects of this text posed many problems for orthodox Aristotelian natural philosophy, and also for theology. However, the Inquisition did not seek to ban the work's technical astronomical content, nor even the working hypothesis that the Sun was at the centre of the cosmos. The Inquisition instead only sought to restrict realist interpretations of Copernican cosmology, which its members held to contradict certain passages of scripture. Consequently, the condemnation of 1616 did not lead to an outright ban on the circulation of *De revolutionibus*, or a total ban on Zuñiga's exegesis of the book of Job, which was also named in the decree. Instead, the decree of the Congregation of the Index announcing the censorship called only the emendation of certain passages that directly asserted the truth of the heliocentric theory or challenged the argument put forward to support geo-centricism.⁷⁸

Baldini's definition of science has also influenced the manner in which he has treated the magical and divinatory arts. By systematically differentiating between these arts and 'genuine science, Baldini has once again introduced modern assumptions about the nature of science. While magic and divination may today be regarded as 'pseudo-scientific', or superstitious, they were regarded by many contemporaries as highly sophisticated and effective techniques, which were rooted in a deep and true philosophical understanding of the natural world. It is also important to note that these views were sustained and advocated by many individuals, including senior figures within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, who would have regarded themselves as entirely orthodox Christians. This point is crucial because Baldini seems to suggest that magic and divination were uniformly regarded as heterodox, and that there was no need to explain the Inquisition's decision to censure these works. This is also evident in a further article in which he discussed the censorship of astrology, and listed the reasons

⁷⁸ Text of the decree of the Congregation of the Index 5th March 1616, cited in Annibale Fantoli, *Galileo: For Copernicanism and for the Church* (Vatican City: 2003), p.183. For the specific points censored by this decree, see Blackwell, op. cit., (1991), pp.123-24. For a discussion of the Churches' various reactions to Copernicus's ideas and the manner in which they were subsequently interpreted, see Westman, op. cit., (1986).

Christians had given for many centuries to reject these activities. As Baldini correctly suggested, the Inquisition drew upon this repertoire of arguments, and endorsed a position that was strongly opposed to the magical and divinatory arts, including judicial astrology. However, its attitude towards these activities represented only one out of a number of possible ways of arranging and understanding knowledge about the natural world. During the early modern period there were a significant number of alternative epistemological frameworks, which posited various accounts of the manner in which the natural world operated, and the knowledge that Man could establish. Baldini did not discuss why other Christians considered at least some of these divinatory activities to be licit, and his analysis therefore obscured not only these differences, but also contemporary debates over the correct boundaries of knowledge.⁷⁹

The Mechanics of Censorship: The Work of Francesco Beretta

In a separate project, the Swiss historian Francesco Beretta has also drawn attention to the manner in which the Inquisition investigated philosophy. Unlike Baldini, who is a historian of science, Beretta is primarily interested in the institutional history of the Inquisition. Building upon the pioneering studies of historians such as Tedeschi, Beretta introduced the concept of the “style of the Inquisition”, to describe the manner in which the Inquisition functioned as a court. This phrase was used in contemporary documentation, and Beretta has preserved much of its original meaning, using it to describe the doctrinal, juridical and institutional aspects of the tribunal. These studies have provided a basis for Beretta to demonstrate how the Inquisition set about assessing works of philosophy, by establishing the procedures that the

⁷⁹ Baldini, op. cit., (2001), p.332. On astrology, see inter alia Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: the Zodiac of Life* (London: 1983); Patrick Curry, (ed.) *Astrology, Science and Society: Historical Essays* (Woodbridge and Wolfeboro: 1987); Jim Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Woodbridge: 1987); Antonio Poppi, “Fate, fortune, providence and human freedom”, in Schmitt (ed) op. cit., (1988), pp.641-667; Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, (Princeton: 1990); Ackerman Smoller, op. cit. (1994).

Inquisition adopted in order to determine whether a work of philosophy contained heretical propositions.⁸⁰

Beretta has shown that once a person had fallen under suspicion of heresy and had become engaged in the Inquisitorial machinery, it was the Tribunal of the Holy Office's task to determine whether there was in fact a case to be answered. Consequently, the first stage of any investigation was to determine whether the propositions adhered to by the accused were *effectively heretical*. This job was given to *theologian qualifiers* of the Tribunal who were charged with the task of pronouncing upon the theological status of the proposition. This judgement was crucial because the decision to take a trial forward was made at this stage, for Inquisitorial legislation and the punishments for heresy were only applicable if the assertions of the defendant contradicted the faith in a direct or indirect manner. If the defendant's propositions were a matter of theological debate, or if they only contradicted common doctrine but not the faith, the penalties reserved for heretics were not applicable. If these requirements had not been met, the accused could not be forced to abjure nor could they be subject to any physical punishment. Once it had been established that the suspect had expressed opinions that were formally contrary to the faith, it was necessary to establish the extent to which the accused adhered to these principles. In order for a suspect to be judged to be guilty of a crime of formal heresy the Tribunal had to establish that the accused genuinely maintained their heretical propositions to be true.⁸¹

Once these stages of assessment had been fulfilled, the findings were drawn together in official form by the Notary of the Tribunal in the *Incartamento Processuale*. This information was then summarised in a single document called the *summarium*, the function of which Beretta explained "was to set out all of the judicial and doctrinal

⁸⁰ Beretta has presented the fullest account of his notion of the style of the Inquisition in his *Galilée Devant le Tribunal de l'Inquisition* (Fribourg: 1998); see too idem, "Giordano Bruno e l' inquisizione romana. Considerazione sul processo." *Bruniana e campanelliana*, VII (2001), pp.15-49; idem, "La congrégation de l' inquisition et la censure doctrinale au XVIIe siècle. Affermissement du pouvoir d'une institution de régulation intellectuelle", in Gabriel Audisio (ed.), *Inquisition et Pouvoir* (Aix-en-Provence: 2004), pp.41-54.

⁸¹ Beretta, op. cit., (2001), pp.17-20.

elements of the case in a succinct but precise manner, before the court.” This document was then sent to the actual court of the Holy Office, which would judge the accused. The summary was especially important since the court of the Tribunal of the Holy Office, composed of the pope and the Cardinals of the Inquisition, did not participate directly in the interrogation of the accused. Instead they pronounced on the case on the basis of the information which they received in the summary. The summary was also distributed to the legal and theological consultants of the Inquisition so that they could offer their opinion to the court.⁸²

In a later article Beretta has stressed that these insights could be used to better understand how the Inquisition investigated philosophy. As he has shown, the staff of Inquisition, specifically the *theologian qualifiers*, played a crucial role in determining whether or not a philosophical idea should be considered formally heretical. This draws particular attention to the manner in which these men understood the relationship between philosophy and the Catholic faith. As Beretta noted, while heresy was defined in relation to orthodoxy, there was no universally recognised standard of orthodoxy within the Catholic Church. Different standards of orthodoxy may have led to differing conclusions about the status of a suspect proposition. For this reason, Beretta stressed that it is essential to trace the precise conception of orthodoxy deployed by members of the Inquisition, who were primarily members of the mendicant orders. Beretta argued that the mendicants imported into the Inquisition a precise understanding of the relations between philosophy and the faith that was developed within their own orders. He has defined this framework as the “scholastic orthodoxy”, which he suggested was mapped out by leading friars, notably Thomas Aquinas, during the high scholastic era at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century. According to Beretta, the essential feature of this orthodoxy was the Augustinian idea that there was a unity of truth, which as we have seen suggested that theology and philosophy could never reach contradictory conclusions. If the two disciplines seemed to disagree this was because the philosopher had erred in his

⁸² Beretta, op. cit., (2001), pp.17-20.

reasoning. Furthermore, according to Aquinas's principle of subalternation, theology possessed a higher degree of certainty than philosophy, and for this reason theologians had the right to correct philosophers' errors.⁸³

Like Baldini, Beretta argued that the inquisition began to prosecute philosophers in ever greater numbers during the sixteenth century. Unlike Baldini, Beretta argued that this development could be best understood by investigating the legal justification for the Inquisition's scrutiny of philosophy. He argued that prior to the sixteenth century the Inquisition did not possess the power to investigate whether the claims of philosophers contained heretical implications. Beretta's thesis suggests that prior to the fifteenth century there had been a variety of philosophical orthodoxies, in Europe. These included not only the ideas the scholastic orthodoxy of the friars, but also the orthodoxy of the secular Aristotelians of the universities, and finally an alternative philosophical orthodoxy developed by independent humanist philosophers during the fifteenth century, who drew deeply upon Neoplatonic themes. Beretta continued that the mendicant orders disapproved of each of these alternative orthodoxies, and wanted instead to enforce their own conception of philosophical orthodoxy within Italian society. Drawing on the work of Grendler and Monfasani, he suggested that one of the friars' most important aims was to moderate the manner in which the masters of the Italian universities taught and presented philosophical ideas.⁸⁴

As we have seen, although the friars disapproved of the mode in which philosophical ideas were discussed in the schools, it had proved difficult to eradicate. According to Beretta, the friars were unable to use the Inquisition to intervene in the universities, because it did not have the legal authority to investigate philosophy. The friars were therefore forced to find alternative means to prevent the university masters presenting philosophical ideas in this fashion. From the middle of the fifteenth century, they began to take chairs in the faculty of arts and medicine of the Italian universities. Then, in a dramatic development at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1516 the

⁸³ Francesco Beretta, "Orthodoxie philosophique et inquisition romaine au 16^e-17^e siècles. Un essai d'interprétation", *Historia philosophica* III, (2005), pp.67-96.

⁸⁴ Beretta, op. cit., (2005), pp.71-75.

Council Fathers issued the decree *Apostolici regiminis*. This decree declared that since truth could not contradict truth, philosophers should refrain from teaching as philosophically true any doctrine which contradicted theology. According to Beretta, this decree enshrined the friars' Augustinian belief that there was a unity of truth within canon law. In turn this development provided the Inquisition with a legal justification to investigate the claims of philosophers for the first time. From this point forward, the Inquisition was able to scrutinise philosophers' ideas at will.⁸⁵

Beretta continued that during the religious crisis of the mid-sixteenth century the mendicant orders were given renewed power to enforce their vision of orthodoxy when the papacy re-founded the Inquisition in 1543. Using the power of the Roman Inquisition, the mendicant orders began to impose their vision of philosophical orthodoxy on the philosophers of the schools and on the independent humanist philosophers. The legal basis for this new wave of censorship of philosophy was provided by the decree *Apostolici regiminis*, which had stressed the importance of the unity of philosophical truth. According to Beretta, the establishment of this principle therefore paved the way for the prosecution of such famous trials as those of Giordano Bruno, and Galileo Galilei, and the condemnation of the work of Francesco Patrizi and Bernardino Telesio.⁸⁶

Beretta is certainly correct to draw attention to the importance of understanding standards employed by the Inquisition when assessing philosophy, and that the best way to do this is by tracing the ideas of the mendicant orders. However, it is possible to suggest that he has over-estimated the importance of the decree *Apostolici regiminis* in the history of the Inquisition's censorship of philosophy. It was directed against the specific problem posed by the teachings of the secular arts masters of the Italian universities. As I shall argue in this thesis, this decree did little more than reiterate, a long-standing belief in the Church that philosophical conclusions could not contradict those reached in theology. Since this decree did not significantly alter the existing

⁸⁵ Beretta, op. cit., (2005), for his reading of the novelty of *Apostolici regiminis*, see especially p.75.

⁸⁶ Beretta, op. cit., (2005), pp.71-76.

situation, it is misleading to suggest that it gave the Inquisition a new legal authority to investigate the claims made by philosophers.⁸⁷

Furthermore, Beretta sought to identify the precise point at which the Inquisition gained the authority to investigate the claims made by philosophers. His thesis therefore shares one key assumption with Baldini, and that is the idea that the Inquisition required a particular justification to interfere in the field of philosophy and/or science. As we have seen, this argument implies that philosophy and/or science are in some way separate from any religious elements. In contrast to Beretta, I argue that no further justification was needed for ecclesiastical authorities to intrude into the philosophical field other than the fact that the philosopher was believed to have expressed a heretical opinion. As we have already seen, such allegations could be handled by a number of authorities. The problem that requires resolution is, therefore, establishing the reasons why increasing numbers of philosophers became liable to the jurisdiction of *Inquisitorial* courts rather than any other during the sixteenth century. I suggest that the reason for this development is not only to be explained by tracing the expansion of the Inquisition's legal power. Instead it can be established by tracing the important changes, described earlier in this introduction, which fundamentally altered both the manner in which philosophy was practised during this century, and the means by which philosophical works were circulated.

Magic and Divination

As Baldini noted, the Indices of Forbidden Books were indeed deeply pre-occupied with restricting magic and divination. It is, however, notable that Baldini did not directly integrate magic and divination into his account of the censorship of science, and Beretta did not include it in his description of the censorship of philosophy. While it is true that it is necessary to distinguish these practical arts from

⁸⁷ For a detailed exposition of the meaning of this bull, see Eric A. Constant, "A reinterpretation of the Fifth Lateran Council Decree *Apostolici regiminis* (1513)", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXXIII (2002), pp.353-379.

philosophy, they were nevertheless underpinned by philosophical principles. Furthermore, these arts were often described in works prepared by philosophers who laid claim to a superior knowledge of the manner in which the world was structured and functioned. In order to gain a clearer picture of the censorship of philosophy it is therefore necessary to consider both philosophy and the arts that relied on principles supplied by philosophy.

Up until the middle of the twentieth century, learned magic and divination was considered ‘pseudo-scientific’ by most historians of science. It was, therefore, defined out of their analyses as being ‘non-scientific’ and thus irrelevant, and this opinion is still maintained today by some historians of science. However, this view has been robustly challenged over the course of the last eighty years, and as a result these activities have been integrated into many modern histories of science. The work of revision was pioneered by historians such as Lynn Thorndike (1885-1965), whose magisterial eight volume *Magic and Experimental Science* (1923-58) provided a compelling picture of the close relationship between the practise of magic and the development of modern science. His work was complemented by the writings of a number of scholars working at the Warburg Institute in the mid to late twentieth century. In a series of innovative works, Frances Yates (1899-1981) and Daniel Pickering Walker (1914-85) provided a powerful and persuasive picture of the importance of learned magic to early modern debates about the natural world, and ultimately to the development of modern science. These authors provided much information about the ideas of Renaissance magi and details of the magical systems which they advocated, and they laid the groundwork for subsequent studies. However, while these works provided information about the ideas of magicians and diviners and, to a lesser extent, the views of other Christian thinkers who opposed these views, there has been little work on the manner in which the Catholic Church sought to censor and control these ideas.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science* 8 Vols, (New York: 1923-58); D.P Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London: 1958); idem, *The Ancient Theology* (London: 1972); Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: 1964); idem, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: 1979). For more recent works on divination and magic in the early modern period, see inter alia Keith Hutchison, “What happened to occult qualities in the Scientific

There is, however, another body of literature that has dealt more extensively with the theme of censorship and control of magic and that is the substantial historiography on witchcraft. Although this literature provides a model to understand patterns of control and censorship of magic and divination, the existing historiography on witchcraft has distorted contemporary debates about the censorship and control of magic and divination in two ways. First, it tends to focus on a particular idea of witchcraft, namely the notion of demonic apostasy and associated ideas such as the witches' sabbath. This stereotype was, however, far more prevalent in northern rather than southern Europe, and so the majority of the literature is directed towards the discussion of a characteristically northern phenomenon. Secondly, the victims of the witch-craze were overwhelmingly drawn from the lower social orders, and so the literature says relatively little about the censorship and control of learned magical culture. When the Florentine Neoplatonists are discussed by historians of the witch-craze, they are often presented as 'witchcraft sceptics'. In other words they are depicted as critics of the idea of witchcraft who were attempting to prevent the persecution of innocents, rather than as committed proponents of a magical world view who had a vested interest in stressing their own orthodoxy.⁸⁹

Despite these reservations, this body of literature can provide a basis for us to sketch out a picture of the reaction of ecclesiastical authorities to the challenges created by learned magical culture. This is because the literature on witchcraft has also shown that between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, the mendicant friars played an instrumental role in establishing a picture of magic and divination as heretical activities.

Revolution?", *Isis*, LXXIII (1982), pp.233-253; Brian Vickers (ed.) *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: 1984); Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the Controversies over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany: 1999).

⁸⁹ On the formation of the stereotype of the witch, see Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (1976). For a detailed discussion of the legal and intellectual framework in which witchcraft and witches were conceived, see Edward Peters, op. cit., (1978) and Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500* (London: 1976). On the phenomenon of the witch-craze, see for example Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays* (New York: 1969); Brian P Levack, *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow: 1987). For a discussion of the relationship between intellectual culture and witchcraft, see Stewart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: 1997), especially Part II, Science.

While the further development of the stereotype of the witch was rooted in these ideas, the friars retained a relatively consistent view of magic and divination. Crucially, they did not embrace beliefs such as the witches' sabbath that came to characterise the concerns of the northern witch-hunters. This meant that southern Europe, whose orthodoxy was policed by the Inquisition, was largely unaffected by the waves of persecution seen in the north. This literature therefore points to continuity between the attitudes of the mendicant friars towards magic and divination that can be traced from the thirteenth century through to the late sixteenth. By combining this literature with Francesco Beretta's insights into the style of the Inquisition, we can begin to reconstruct the basis of the Roman Inquisition's response to the magical and divinatory arts during the latter half of the sixteenth century. This will provide a basis for understanding the reasons why inquisitors considered it necessary to eradicate these activities from society.⁹⁰

Political Contexts

In recent years historians have begun to emphasise how political events can be used as part of the explanation for trials and condemnations. For example, this strategy was employed by Pietro Redondi who framed his account of the Galileo Affair around the political crisis that engulfed Pope Urban VIII during the early 1630s. By situating these well known events in the context of the papacy's complex role as spiritual leader of the Catholic World, and his position as secular prince vulnerable to diplomatic and military pressure, Redondi was able to shed new light on the specific circumstances surrounding the trial of Galileo. Specifically, he argued that during these years, the wisdom of the pontiff's carefully nurtured political alliance with the king of France was called into question by the monarch's willingness to ally himself with the Protestant

⁹⁰ See above all Martin, op. cit., (1989), who demonstrated the absence of the stereotype of the witch in the Venetian Inquisition's prosecution of witchcraft, and continuities with the practices of the medieval Inquisition; see especially pp.38-43, 192-97, and 204-13. On witchcraft, popular culture and the Inquisition in Italy, see Carlo Ginzburg, *The Nightbattles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Baltimore: 1983).

king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus. Characterised by his enemies as a supporter of heresy, Urban VIII was forced to make a dramatic display of his orthodoxy with disastrous consequences for Galileo. Although controversial in many respects, this aspect of Redondi's thesis suggested a new way to interpret the Galileo Affair, which has often been presented primarily in the form of de-contextualised clashes between scientific and religious discourses.⁹¹

Redondi's emphasis on the importance of historical contingency in which intellectual events are seen, to some extent, to be the result of geo-political episodes provides a means of explaining one of the outstanding features of the history of censorship identified by the historians of the liberal tradition. It is clear that there was a cluster of trials and condemnations in the 1590s. Although the long term developments that I have discussed in this literature review can explain the factors that motivated individuals and groups within the Church to call for the censorship of certain texts or the trial of specific individuals, they cannot be used to explain the timing of this highly unusual group of trials and condemnations. However, in separate studies, Saverio Ricci and Artemio Enzo Baldini have suggested ways in which the political context of the pontificate of Clement VIII (1592-1605) can shed light on the events of the 1590s. They have respectively located the trials of Giordano Bruno and Col Antonio Stegliola, and the condemnation of Francesco Patrizi, within the context of negotiations to secure the absolution and eventual conversion of the Calvinist king of France, Henry of Navarre, so that he could secure his claim to the throne.⁹²

On one level emphasising such a geo-political explanation for these trials can run the risk of superficiality, for it threatens to reduce often complex and highly localised episodes of censorship to the epiphenomena of grand politics. However,

⁹¹ Pietro Redondi, *Galileo Heretic* (Penguin: 1988); see too David Marshall Miller "The Thirty Years War and the Galileo Affair", *History of Science*, XLVI (2008), pp.49-74.

⁹² Artemio Enzo Baldini, "Aristotelismo e platonismo nelle dispute romane sulla ragione di stato di fine cinquecento", in idem, (ed.), *Aristotelismo politico e ragione di stato. Atti del convegno internazionale di Torino 11-13 Febbraio 1993* (Florence: 1995), pp.201-26; Saverio Ricci, "Nicola Antonio Stigliola enciclopedista e linceo. Con l'edizione del trattato *Delle apparenze celesti*, a cura e con un saggio di Andrea Cuna", *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie delle classe di scienze morale, storiche e filologiche*, VIII (1996b), pp.7-133; idem, "Da Santori a Bellarmino. La politica romana e il processo di Giordano Bruno", in Pasquale Giustiniani et al (eds), *Giordano Bruno oltre il mito e le opposte passioni* (Naples: 2002), pp.235-66.

integrating the impact of political influences and contingent events into our account of censorship need not have this reductive effect. Recent historiographical innovations have provided new ways to connect politics to the practice of censorship. In his *Galileo Courtier*, Mario Biagioli placed the role of patronage at the heart of an account of Galileo's life and career, and he used it to frame the story of the Tuscan philosopher's trial for heresy. His account of Galileo's 'fall' demonstrated how intellectual developments, including trials for heresy, could be connected to the arcane and highly localised world of early modern courtly politics. The trials and condemnations of the 1590s share a number of characteristics with the Galileo Affair, and they can therefore be analysed in a similar fashion. First, virtually all of these trials and condemnations were conducted predominantly in Rome. Secondly, many of the key participants in these events, including not only the accused and their associates and sponsors, but also the inquisitors who oversaw their processes, were deeply enmeshed within the patronage structures that underpinned Roman Courtly life.⁹³

It is at this level of patronage connections that it is possible to forge links between the geo-political events of the absolution crisis and the specific episodes of censorship with which I am concerned in this thesis. These connections can be made by drawing upon an existing body of literature that has emphasised the influence of secular monarchs in Rome. In his *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, the German historian Ludwig Pastor (1854-1928) highlighted how the political struggles between the Spanish and French kings were played out in the papal court, and the impact that they had upon both the political and the spiritual decisions made by incumbent popes. Although these themes were relatively neglected for many years, recently they have been examined again by historians, such as Thomas Dandeleit, who has shown how deeply the Holy See was infiltrated by patronage networks operated by the most powerful monarchs of Catholic Europe, the kings of France and Spain. Through these networks, the seemingly endless series of wars that characterised Franco-Spanish relations throughout the sixteenth century were also fought out in the

⁹³ Biagioli, op. cit., (1993), chapter 6.

streets of Rome, within the papal court, and I suggest within the machinery of censorship. By combining these perspectives with the researches of Baldini and Ricci, I demonstrate how an account of the control and censure of intellectual culture can be integrated within a richer and more complex account of contemporary Rome. This in turn allows us to observe how contingent events, such as the absolution crisis, shaped the scrutiny of philosophy.⁹⁴

Censorship, Politics and Philosophy, Italy 1450-1600

The primary aim of this thesis is to offer fresh perspectives on the cluster of trials and condemnations that occurred during the 1590s. In order to achieve this, I will offer for the first time in any language a synthetic account of these trials. By drawing together these various trials and condemnations into a single integrated account, I will establish previously unnoticed patterns in the history of censorship. As is suggested in this introduction, university masters were seldom placed on trial by the Inquisition, or had works examined by the Index. Consequently, in this thesis I will primarily concentrate on these innovative thinkers who worked outside the universities, but, where necessary, I will refer to novel developments within the universities. I will also build upon the literature discussed in this introduction, and will construct an alternative, inter-disciplinary framework to analyse these trials and condemnations. These fresh perspectives will provide the essential components to trace the gradual development of the Church's attitude towards, and the institutional structures it constructed to control, the practice of philosophy between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This approach will be complemented by emphasising the importance of politics, whether they are the struggles within the hierarchy of the Church, or the effects of conflict between the great secular powers of Europe. Introducing this dimension to the analysis of censorship will introduce elements of historical

⁹⁴ I have used the Italian version of Ludwig Von Pastor's work, *Storia dei papi*, 17 Vols (1958-64). See too the more recent work by Thomas Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700* (New Haven and London: 2001); and the collection of essays Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge: 2002).

contingency, which will make it possible to explain the specific timing of the cluster of condemnation that occurred in the 1590s.

In the first chapter I trace the momentous changes to philosophy which occurred during the Renaissance, for I argue that understanding these developments forms the basis for understanding the increased levels of ecclesiastical surveillance of philosophy that can be observed in the sixteenth century. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, a series of individuals such as Marsilio Ficino who operated outside the universities began to transform philosophy, by constructing new identities, and promoting often controversial ideas. I will also argue that the concurrent development of new means to disseminate the ideas of these thinkers, notably the printing press, combined with these intellectual changes to create a situation in which the Inquisition increasingly intervened in the censorship of philosophy.

In chapters 2 and 3 I trace these long-term developments into the age of Reform (c.1520-c.1590), and examine the impact of Luther's protest upon censorship in Italy. It is well known that the sixteenth century religious crisis directly led to the re-establishment of a more powerful Inquisition, and the creation of the Index of Forbidden Books which radically altered the structure of censorship in Italy. While these were indeed momentous changes, this chapter also contains a story of continuity. As Francesco Beretta has argued, from the thirteenth century the Inquisition had consistently advanced a specific conception of philosophical orthodoxy based primarily on the Thomist synthesis of knowledge. These standards continued to be deployed within the Inquisition after its re-foundation, and by following them inquisitors were unable to accept many of the novel ideas being proposed by the philosophers working outside the universities. The most significant change wrought by the re-establishment of the Inquisition, was to give inquisitors new powers to censor these ideas, and they responded with enthusiasm.

I suggest, however, that while these developments were an essential precondition for the trials and condemnations of the 1590s, they did not make them inevitable. For much of the century, the Inquisition was unable to extirpate the ideas of

philosophers working outside the universities, for, although consistently powerful, its authority waxed and waned during the course of the sixteenth century. Its fluctuating fortunes can be mapped onto the history of a power struggle between competing factions within the Church. These chapters demonstrate that the Inquisition's power to eradicate philosophical ideas that it deemed heterodox, greatly expanded during periods in which the incumbent pope was sympathetic to its members' views, notoriously during the pontificates of Paul IV (1555-59) and Pius V (1566-72). Conversely, the Inquisition's power contracted during the regimes of popes hostile to the Inquisition and especially those sympathetic to philosophical schemes deemed heterodox by inquisitors. In these two chapters I therefore trace the fluctuating fortunes of the Inquisition and its opponents within the Church, and examine the impact of these struggles on the censorship of philosophy. I examine their results by analysing the contents of the various Indices of Forbidden Books published during this period, and I identify several clusters of persecution. For example, during the early 1570s the ideas of a number of philosophers, including Bernardino Telesio, Girolamo Cardano and Giambattista Della Porta, were examined for heresy.

Building upon the arguments of the preceding chapters, the final two chapters examine the cluster of trials and condemnations that occurred during the 1590s in greater detail. I argue that the long-term developments discussed in the preceding chapters provide a basis for interpreting these events. For example, the increased number of trials and condemnations can be explained by attributing them to a rapid expansion of the Inquisition's power at the end of the sixteenth century. This in turn provided them with the authority to censor the work of philosophers of whose work they did not approve in ever greater numbers. On one level, this explanation is compelling; on another, it is, I suggest, incomplete for the timing of the Inquisition's triumph, and some specific peculiarities of the events of the 1590s require further explanation.

Crucially, these trials and condemnations occurred during the pontificate of Clement VIII (1592-1605). This was surprising for two reasons. From the start of his

pontificate, Clement showed himself to be hostile to many of the Inquisition's aims. It therefore appeared unlikely that under his regime its members would be able to expand their power in the manner they had done under popes such as Paul IV or Pius V. Furthermore, as both a cardinal and subsequently as pontiff, Clement was renowned for his sympathy to alternative philosophical systems. He had even directly offered patronage to the Platonist philosopher Francesco Patrizi, and had gone so far as to help secure him a position in the University of Rome. Despite these well known sympathies, Clement presided over a series of trials and condemnations of philosophers, including the removal of Patrizi's *Nova philosophia* from circulation. I suggest that this peculiar situation can only be explained by contingent political events, namely the crisis engendered by the proposed absolution of Henry of Navarre which unfolded during the same years as the years as these trials. In the face of fierce opposition, not least from powerful members of the Inquisition, Clement successfully managed to secure Navarre's absolution. This success came at a price, for the pope, politically weakened by his efforts to secure Navarre's absolution, was unable to resist the Inquisition's agenda to restrict, amongst other things, philosophical ideas that it deemed heterodox. This development held disastrous consequences for philosophers such as Patrizi.

Chapter 1: Philosophy, Magic and the Renaissance, 1450-1517

As outlined in the Introduction, historians have rejected many aspects of the repressive view of the Church presented by the Italian liberal historiographical tradition. Modern historians have replaced this monolithic account of the Church, with a picture of a heterogeneous institution, and they have shown that during the sixteenth century its history was shaped by a conflict between the supporters of liberal humanist ideas, and the members of the Inquisition. Although this modern literature has greatly advanced our understanding of this period of ecclesiastical history, it has introduced a new distortion. In this chapter I suggest that the dichotomy that this literature has established between the humanists and the Inquisition cannot adequately capture the complexity of the situation in Italy. The category ‘humanism’ embraces a number of often divergent intellectual positions, which brings together often radically different conceptions of the role that philosophy could play within a Christian society.

Humanism and Florentine Neoplatonism

During the thirteenth century, a number of Italian thinkers began to develop a novel attitude towards the legacy of pagan antiquity. This form of classicism was the seed of the movement that has subsequently been labelled humanism. Unlike the scholastics, the early humanists were relatively uninterested in pagan philosophy, but were instead concerned with recapturing the eloquence and style of classical literature. For example, Lovato dei Lovati (1240-1309) and Geri d’ Arezzo (b. mid-thirteenth century) both lamented the functional nature of contemporary Latin. They complained that while children were educated to be able to use the language competently, they were not encouraged to study the elegance and style of the ancient authors.¹

Although the origins of the ‘humanist’ movement can be traced back to the thirteenth century, perhaps the most important of the early humanists was Francesco

¹ On early humanism, see for example Carol Everhart Quillen, “Humanism and the lure of antiquity”, in John M. Najemy, (ed.), *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance* (Oxford: 2004), pp.37-58.

Petrarch (1304-74), who played a significant role in encouraging his contemporaries to study pagan literature. Although a vigorous promoter of ancient letters, he had a highly ambivalent attitude towards pagan philosophy. While he argued that the study of moral philosophy could play an important part in Christian life, he made scathing attacks on the scholastic Aristotelian philosophy practised by the friars and the schoolmasters. According to Petrarch, the study of philosophy had distracted both groups from the true task of the Christian, which was seeking true wisdom through biblical study. Despite his criticism of the friars' attitude towards philosophy, he did share their disgust for the schoolmasters' belief that it was possible to teach an idea that was contrary to the faith if it were presented as merely philosophically necessary but not true.²

Although Petrarch did not found a movement or a school, during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries his ideas were taken on and developed by a new generation of Florentine humanists, including Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75) and Luigi Marsili (1342-94). From the last quarter of the fourteenth century, Florentine humanism began to take a new direction. Under the influence of men such as Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444), Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) and Niccolò Niccoli (1364-1437), many of whom were deeply involved in the administration of the state, the movement in this city became closely associated with civic politics. Like Petrarch, these authors rejected the physical and metaphysical speculation of the schools, and chose instead to study the writings of Plato, Roman stoic philosophers such as Cicero and Seneca and Church Fathers such as Augustine. They believed that these authors could provide the basis for a superior moral education to that supplied by scholastic philosophy. They used them to develop a kind of Christian moral citizenship, which they believed could be used to form a cornerstone of

² Petrarch's opinions can be best understood by reading his "On his own ignorance", in Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller and John Herman Randall Jr. (eds), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago and London: 1948), pp.223-54.

civic life. The movement subsequently spread to other Italian states such as Naples and Venice.³

While Petrarch continued to exert a powerful hold over some areas of Italian intellectual life, a radically different strain of humanist thought emerged in Florence during the middle of the fifteenth century. It was influenced by the ideas of a group of Byzantine scholars who were attending the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-39, and particularly those of Georgius Gemistus Pletho (c.1360-1452). These ideas particularly captivated the *de facto* leader of the Florentine Republic, Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464). In the years that followed, Cosimo became an enthusiastic patron of philosophy, and his support allowed scholars to publish old learning and to produce new knowledge, and as a result, to carve out new social roles. Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), was perhaps the most important of these scholars.⁴

Originally born in Figline, Ficino received a medical education in Florence. Whilst there, he benefited from the patronage of the Medici. He subsequently took on a role as tutor to Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo (Il Magnifico) (1449-92), who would assume power in Florence five years after his grandfather's death. In this respect Ficino was typical of a new generation of humanists. While earlier humanists had tended to be actively engaged in public life and were interested in the study of moral philosophy for the role that it could play in civic life, men such as Ficino, were teachers and professional philosophers, in large part dependent on the largesse of their patron. Whilst the patronage of a noble such as Cosimo placed certain requirements on philosophers, it nevertheless freed them from the disciplinary and institutional constraints of the universities, thus allowing them to forge alternative ways to practise philosophy.⁵

A significant part of Ficino's work was a process of re-discovery. By the early 1460s Ficino had translated a corpus of Hermetic treatises that Cosimo had located,

³ See for example, Quillen op. cit., pp.42-52, and in the same volume, David S. Peterson, "Religion and the Church", pp59-81: 68-69.

⁴ Lohr, op. cit., (1988a), p.569 and pp.576-77. On the changes in Florentine humanism, the so-called 'return to metaphysics', see for example Holmes, op. cit., (1969), especially chapter 8.

⁵ On Ficino's life and for an overview of his ideas see Hankins, op. cit., (1994), Chapter 15.

which became known as the *Pimander*. He also began the task of translating Plato's extant writings into Latin with the aim of completing the task before his patron's death. Following the completion of these translations, Ficino went on to produce a series of original works, including *De religione christiana* (1474), and *Theologica platonica de immortalitate animorum* (1476), which drew upon his deep knowledge of Plato's writings, and the Hermetic texts. In these and other writings he began to lay out his ideas about the most appropriate manner to practise philosophy in a Christian society.⁶

Central to Ficino's project, was a critique of philosophy as then practised within the universities. According to Ficino, the manner in which philosophy was taught in the schools of Italy propagated two problems. Like the friars and Petrarch, he viewed the manner in which the university masters attempted to separate philosophical conclusions from the faith with disgust. He believed that this practice led them to discuss dangerous interpretations of Aristotle that directly contradicted the faith. During the later fifteenth century Ficino weighed into the dispute over the manner in which philosophy was taught in the universities of Italy, and he was especially critical of the teaching that philosophy demonstrated the mortality of the individual soul. He vehemently believed that the teachings of the secular masters should be moderated, in order to prevent the discussion of these dangerous ideas. Consequently, he was in many ways sympathetic to the mendicants' efforts to promote systems such as the Thomist and Scotist syntheses of knowledge within the universities, for they aimed to bring the conclusions reached in philosophy and theology into harmony.⁷

Ficino's criticism of the practice of philosophy in the schools ran deeper still. He maintained that philosophy was a means of preparing the soul to receive divine wisdom. However, he argued that the schools of Italy were failing in this basic task. This was because in these institutions philosophy tended to be propaedeutic to the study of medicine; consequently, their curricula placed great emphasis on the study of natural philosophy. For Ficino, this focus on *naturalia* had the effect of directing students' attention away from philosophy's true role as a means to prepare the human

⁶ Lohr, op. cit., (1988a), pp568-89.

⁷ For Ficino's criticism of scholasticism, see Hankins, op. cit., (1994), chapter 17, especially p.462.

intellect to attain the highest wisdom of all, knowledge of Christian revelation. Studied in this manner, he believed, philosophy would always have a corrupting influence on Christian society. Ficino believed that the promotion of the mendicants' Christianised Aristotelianism within the schools could ameliorate the worst effects of the present system. However, he regarded Aristotelianism as being inadequate for the role of preparing Christians to receive divine wisdom. Following his late ancient and Byzantine sources, he argued that Platonism was the philosophy most suited to this task.⁸

These beliefs did not lead Ficino to the conclusion that the teaching of Aristotle should end entirely in the schools. On the contrary, he believed that, when properly taught, the Stagirite's philosophy could play a vital role as a means to prepare students for the further study of Platonism. Furthermore, it is by no means certain that Ficino wanted instruction in Platonism to be included in the university curriculum. In fact, he believed that different levels of philosophy should be taught in the most appropriate location, to the most suitable individuals. The schools were the most appropriate place for a rudimentary training in philosophy, based in the teachings of Aristotle. By contrast the Platonic works were, he suggested, to be reserved for more mature and sophisticated readers. Despite pitching his work towards men of maturity, in practice Ficino tended to target his teachings towards a small group of individuals, primarily drawn from the aristocratic youth of Florence.⁹

Ficino gradually developed an increasingly sophisticated explanation for his preference for the philosophy of Plato over that of Aristotle. Possibly influenced by the ideas of Pletho, he began to elaborate his conception of the 'ancient theology'. This was a re-fashioning of an idea that had existed in humanist circles since the fourteenth century. It held that the best of the ancient pagans had created and maintained a system of esoteric religio-philosophical wisdom. This body of wisdom was constituted by the writings of a series of pagan sages, notably Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus and

⁸ Hankins, *op. cit.*, (1994), pp.461-62.

⁹ Hankins, *op. cit.*, (1994), pp.461-62; on his attempts to reach Florentine youth, see *idem*, *op. cit.*, (1990), p.290.

Zoroaster who were roughly contemporaneous with Moses, which culminated with Plato. Ficino regarded this tradition to have divine origins, and he maintained that it had prepared the pagans for the advent of Christianity in the same manner as the Old Testament had prepared the Jews. Again like the Old Testament, the true meaning of the pagans' wisdom did not become fully clear until after the incarnation of Christ. Although superseded by Christian wisdom, Ficino believed that these texts could play an important part in contemporary religious life. They provided a model for a *pia philosophia*, which combined philosophical and religious wisdom. Used in this manner, the writings of authors such as Plato could help to prepare philosophically minded individuals to receive the ultimate truth of Christianity.¹⁰

Although his work was conceived with pious ends in mind, Ficino's project had a number of serious implications for the faith. As Hankins has noted, if Ficino's attitudes towards religion were not heterodox, his orthodoxy "by no means sprang from a willing identification with ecclesiastical tradition or an uncritical acceptance of established scholastic definitions." Throughout his life he remained critical of external expressions of religion, such as rituals and ceremonies. This was a position that "could easily undercut the role of the institutional church in the maintenance of discipline and the dispensing of grace." However, perhaps the most subversive aspect of Ficino's thought was his promotion of the *pia philosophia*. For Ficino, Platonism could provide an intellectual support for Christianity, which amongst other things, could be used to draw sceptical youths back to true religion. However, he warned that without this support the educated elite would not be attracted to the faith. As Hankins has noted: "In this version, Platonic philosophy becomes something more than the hand-maid of theology; it threatens, indeed, to become a special esoteric form of Christianity for an intellectual élite."¹¹

¹⁰ The classic study of the ancient theology remains Walker, op. cit., (1972); see too Hankins, op. cit., (1990), pp.283-87.

¹¹ Hankins, op. cit., (1990), pp.280-81 and p.287.

Divination, Magic and Cabbala

The Italian humanists' work also created a further challenge for the ecclesiastical authorities. Their re-discovery of previously lost Neoplatonic and Hermetic texts, and the relative freedom afforded by princely courts and noble patronage led to a renewed interest in learned magic. Whereas the philosophers of the Italian universities had claimed that their conclusions were merely philosophically necessary, allowing them to operate without Inquisitorial oversight, philosophers working outside these institutions tended to present their work as true descriptions of the created order. Consequently, I suggest, there was a new onus on philosophers working outside the universities to ensure that their work was in conformity with the faith. Renaissance magi wanted to give magic a new intellectual credibility by carving out a new space for the practice of a purified learned magic, and, in some instances, for divinatory techniques. By situating themselves in an abstruse, but long-standing tradition they hoped to distance their activities from those whom they considered necromancers and workers of popular magic, and to put themselves beyond suspicion of working demonic magic. They viewed magic as the apex of Man's knowledge, and regarded themselves as highly skilled manipulators of nature, whose feats were made possible by their sophisticated philosophical knowledge of the world. This reformed magic came to be highly prized by the princes and nobility of Europe, many of whom developed a seemingly unquenchable thirst for the secrets of nature. As a consequence the court became a leading centre for the creation of natural knowledge, and a supportive environment for non-Aristotelian philosophies of nature.¹²

¹² For a discussion of natural magic and the ambitions of Renaissance magi, see Clark op. cit., (1997), chapter 14. For Ficino's efforts to distance his activities from demonic magic, see for example his comments in "The apology of Marsilio Ficino", in translated and edited by Charles Boer, in *Marsilio Ficino's Book of Life* (Woodstock: 1994), pp.184-89: especially pp.186-87; for Pico's views, see his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* in Cassirer et al (eds), op. cit., (1948), pp.223-254: 246-49. For more detailed descriptions of the Ficino and Pico's magic, see Walker op. cit., (1958), part I; Yates op. cit., (1964), especially chapters 4 and 5. On the nobility and the secrets of nature, see for example William

Although encouraged and fostered by the nobility, the burgeoning interest in magic and astrology in European society was paralleled by an equally fervent desire within some parts of the Church to purge these activities. Since the mid-thirteenth century, the mendicant friars, and by extension the Inquisition, had attempted to define the acceptable parameters of magic and divination, by distinguishing licit magical and divinatory activities from the heretical, and rooting out those elements they did not accept. These efforts continued throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and were reflected in the now notorious work of two Dominican inquisitors Heinrich Kremer and Jakob Sprenger. Together they had mounted a particularly enthusiastic campaign against superstition and heresy in Germany, targeting magic and divination, which they folded together into the single category of witchcraft. Angered at what they believed to be a failure on the part of the local bishop to fully co-operate in the fight against this menace, in the early 1480s they wrote to Pope Innocent VIII detailing the superstitions that they had discovered, and seeking his support for their activities. Although like many of the recent incumbents of the papal throne, Innocent was more concerned with shoring up the secular power of the papacy than co-ordinating widespread reform, he was nevertheless sympathetic to the friars' entreaties. In 1484 he published the bull *Summis desiderantes*, in which he expressed his alarm at their findings and his desire that "all heretical pravity be put far from the territories of the faithful". The bull also expressed the pope's disappointment that the two inquisitors had not received more support from local clergy in their pursuit of heresy and urged that in future they be given all the assistance they required.¹³

Kremer and Sprenger subsequently published their ideas on witch-hunting in their manual the *Malleus Maleficarum*, in which they reiterated a picture of magic and divination that had been developed and sustained with the Dominican Order from the thirteenth century. In this sense their views were typical both of their order, and of so of the standards deployed within the Inquisition. Crucially, the text reveals that its

Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature* (Chichester: 1994). On court culture, see for example Westman op. cit., (1980), esp. pp.121-27 and Biagioli, op. cit., (1993).

¹³ *Summis desiderantes* in Alan Charles Kor and Edward Peters (eds), *Witchcraft in Europe 400-1700, A Documentary History* (Philadelphia: 2001), pp.177-78.

authors were not simply interested in rooting out popular superstitions, but were instead also concerned with eradicating learned activities that they regarded as illicit. For example, the *Malleus* contains lengthy passages that demarcate the boundaries between acceptable and illicit activities in areas such as astronomy and astrology. They concluded that: “The stars have no inherent influence over free will, or, consequently over the malice and character of men”, but they nonetheless argued that it was still possible for astronomers to make some predictions about the future. Following Aquinas, they suggested that, by acting upon the body, the stars could indirectly influence Man’s intellect and thus his actions. Aquinas’s theory had also suggested that, since the astral influences were indirect, they could be most easily detected in large populations. Drawing upon this argument, Kremer and Sprenger concluded that: “It is to be noted also that Astronomers often foretell the truth, and that their judgements are for the most part effective on one province or nation.” This was because they take their judgements from the stars, which “according to the more probable view”, had a greater, though not inevitable, influence over “mankind in general” than they did over individuals. This was because “the greater part of one nation obeys the natural disposition of the body than does one single man.” This meant that although Kremer and Sprenger deemed judicial astrology heterodox, following Aquinas, they maintained the principle that astrologers could make general prognostications about the future of large populations without compromising the exercise of free-will.¹⁴

Kremer and Sprenger also rejected divination, which they explicitly equated with witchcraft. However, they refined this category noting that “witchcraft is not merely any divination, but it is that divination, the operations of which are performed by express and explicit invocations of the devil; and this may be done in very many ways, as by Necromancy, Geomancy, Hydromancy, etc.” They continued that some have

¹⁴ Heinrich Kremer and Jakob Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum*, trans. Montague Summers (1928) available at the Website “The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kremer and James Sprenger”, <http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org> accessed 14/5/08 Part I questions II and 5, p 1/3. See also the definition offered in Part I question V, p2/3. On the composition of the *Malleus*, see for example Hans Peter Broedel, *The "Malleus maleficarum" and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: 2003).

attempted to regard [divination] from another point of view. And they argue thus, that as we do not know the hidden powers of nature, it may be that the witches are merely employing or seeking to employ these hidden powers: assuredly if they are employing the natural power of natural things to bring about a natural effect, this must be perfectly lawful as indeed is obvious enough.¹⁵

Although clearly aware of the arguments of some diviners that their activities were natural, Kremer and Sprenger nevertheless rejected any attempts to find natural means to predict specific future events. Although they acknowledged that, if these forms of prediction were natural, they would of course be entirely licit, they followed Aquinas in arguing that all known divinatory activities required making compacts with demons.

Finally, Kremer and Sprenger forcefully rejected physicians' claims to be able to enhance health by capturing the influences of the stars. Their remarks on these matters open up the broader area of the Dominicans' attitude towards magic. Their work was shaped by the writings of Aquinas, who had explicitly considered the boundaries between natural effects, and magic. Crucially, Aquinas did not appear to recognise the category 'natural magic'. While Albertus Magnus was prepared to accept the possibility of at least some forms of natural magic, Aquinas did not accept any such distinctions. For Aquinas, in every instance "The magic art is both unlawful and futile. It is unlawful, because the means it employs for acquiring knowledge have not in themselves the power to cause science, consisting as they do in gazing certain shapes, and muttering certain strange words, and so forth." He reached this conclusion by arguing, in accordance with Augustine, that the use of words appealed to an intelligent creature, a demon, whose powers made the technique appear effective.¹⁶

Although hostile to activities that he regarded as magic, Aquinas's view was, however, highly nuanced. Although he did not use the term 'natural magic', he was prepared to recognise the existence of natural, albeit occult, forces that could be

¹⁵ Kremer and Sprenger, op. cit., (1928) Part I Question II, page 3/3.

¹⁶ On Albertus and magic, see Thorndike, op. cit., (1923) vol. 2, pp.548-60. For Aquinas's views, see Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, Secunda, Secundae Partis, Question 96, Article 1.

harnessed by Man. This attitude can be seen in his discussion of whether Man could legitimately make use of observances directed towards the alteration of the body. He began by citing the opinion that: “It is lawful to make use of the natural forces of bodies in order to produce their proper effects. Now in the physical order things have certain occult forces, the reason of which man is unable to assign; for instance that the magnet attracts iron.” Having commented on this opinion, Aquinas concluded that such occult qualities could be employed legitimately by Man for “there is nothing superstitious or unlawful in employing natural things simply for the purpose of causing certain effects such as they are thought to have the natural power of producing.” However, he added that: “if in addition there be employed certain characters, words, or any other vain observances which clearly have no efficacy by nature, it will be superstitious and unlawful.” Although consistent with his stated attitude towards magic, Aquinas’s opinion created an important area of ambiguity. Christian intellectuals could debate whether a healing technique, or a particular wondrous effect had been worked through occult albeit natural means, or whether it had in fact depended on the assistance of demons.¹⁷

Aquinas’s conception of magic did offer some guidance for resolving this apparent confusion. For instance, he conceded that Man could legitimately make use of the occult properties of certain gems or herbs, which were derived from their astrological affinities. Nevertheless, he explicitly ruled out making incantations over these substances, or inscribing them with words or images. Such practices could not produce any physical effects; consequently they must instead appeal to an intelligent being, which in fact worked the effect. Elsewhere, Aquinas also specifically condemned the use of amulets and charms, which according to certain Neoplatonic theories allowed the bearer to manipulate entirely natural occult forces in order to

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae Partis Question 96, Article 2, reply to objection 1 and 2.

promote health. Citing opinions that Augustine had expressed in *On the Christian Doctrine*, he concluded these practices were a species of superstition.¹⁸

Like Aquinas, Kremer and Sprenger invoked the authority of Augustine, whom they wrote, “in his second book *On the Christian Doctrine*, condemns amulets and certain other things of which he writes much, attributing their virtue to magic art, since they have no virtue of their own.” This observation set out a clear vision of Kremer and Sprenger’s understanding of magic as effects achieved through demonic causation. Regardless of the claims made by proponents of amulets, these objects could not be legitimately used by Christians. If any effects were to be derived through employing such items, they were not the result of skilful manipulation of the natural order, but were instead the result of demonic agency.¹⁹

In their work, Kremer and Sprenger had clearly re-stated the boundaries of orthodoxy observed by practising inquisitors. However, these ideas would be increasingly tested by the magical ideas being developed by the Florentine Neoplatonists. As we have seen, by the 1480s Ficino had written a number of important texts extolling the importance of magic. Ficino always insisted that his magic was not demonic. On the contrary, he insisted that he manipulated an impersonal world spirit, which could influence Man’s spirit and body. Drawing upon the writings of Plotinus and Arnald of Villanova, he began to investigate how talismans and other magical practices could be used to condition the magician’s body, soul and imagination to receive celestial influences. As Kremer and Sprenger’s work showed, Augustine, Aquinas and subsequent generations of inquisitors had argued that activities of this nature required the assistance of demons. As we shall later see, it is clear from the manner in which Ficino presented his ideas that he was only too well aware of the inquisitorial interpretation of magic, and for the need to protect himself from the charge of heresy.²⁰

¹⁸ For his discussion of the use of amulets, see *Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae Partis Question 95. On the legitimate use of natural substances, see too Walker, op. cit., (1958), p.43.

¹⁹ Ibid., Part I Question II, page 1/3.

²⁰ See Walker, op. cit., (1958), chapter II parts 2 and 3.

Initially at least, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) was less circumspect than Ficino in his attitude towards magic. In 1486 he circulated a famous list of 900 propositions that he intended to defend in Rome. The *Conclusiones* were prefaced by a short treatise, his *Oratio de dignitate hominis* (1486), in which he celebrated the power of human reason and justified the practice of learned magic. While he condemned demonic magic as “a thing to be abhorred”, he maintained that natural magic “when it is rightly pursued, is nothing else than the utter perfection of natural philosophy.” This was an attempt to reintegrate magic into philosophical knowledge, from where it had been banished by Hugh of St Victor, Aquinas and later Dominicans. Pico not only practised the natural magic that Ficino described, but also drew from the tradition of practical cabbala. This was a higher form of magic which involved contacting higher spiritual powers such as the angels, archangels, and the ten sephiroth which were powers of God, and God himself. This was achieved either through magical practices, or more usually by gematria, that is through the power of the Hebrew language. The magic he proposed was, he argued, licit since it involved contacting good spirits rather than evil demons. Magic of the type advocated by Pico, was far more dangerous than Ficino’s natural magic, for its explicit invocation of spirits carried the danger that the magus could be accused of communicating not with angels but with demons.²¹

Pico acquired his knowledge of cabbala from Spanish Jews, a significant number of whom had entered in Italy as a consequence of increasingly severe persecution within their homeland. This exodus culminated in 1492, when Spain’s remaining Jews were faced with a choice between conversion and exile. Like Ramon Lull’s art, cabbala operated by manipulating Hebrew letters, as a technique for revealing the hidden meaning of Scripture. These techniques were predicated on the belief that God had given Moses not only the text of the Law, but also a means to penetrate its hidden meaning. Pico saw these similarities between the idea of cabbala and those of Lull, and also between the ideas of Pythagoras and Plato. Like Lull, he implied that his

²¹ Pico, *Oratio* translated by Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in Cassirer, Kristeller and Herman Randall Jr., op. cit., (1948) pp.246-7. On Pico, see for example Walker op. cit., (1958), pp.54-59; Yates, op. cit., (1964), chapter 5.

philosophical techniques could be used to demonstrate the truth of articles of faith. For example, in his *Oration* he further argued that through the proper use of cabbala one could see revealed proofs of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the divinity of Christ, and in one of his famous 900 theses, he contended that it was impossible for anyone to deny the cabbalistic proof of the incarnation of Christ.²²

Although he enjoyed the patronage of the powerful Medici family, Pico's ideas were not well received in Rome. Innocent VIII, the same pope who had endorsed the anti-magical stance of Kremer and Sprenger, remained on the papal throne. Before Pico could conduct a defence of his ideas the pope convened a commission to assess their orthodoxy. Several of Pico's theses were condemned outright, leading him to pen an *Apology* defending the censured propositions, which he published alongside his *Oration* in 1487. In response a commission of bishops with inquisitorial powers were appointed to examine Pico. They condemned a number of his doctrines, notably the idea that no science was better able to prove the divinity of Christ than cabbala and magic. As one of his examiners made clear, such an idea seemed to make faith dependent upon reason. In July 1487 Pico retracted his ideas, and in August of the same year, Innocent VIII promulgated a bull which condemned all of his theses, and forbade their publication. Pico fled to France but was arrested in Vincennes in 1488; following the mediation of Lorenzo Medici he was released and allowed to return to Florence. Seeking to fully exonerate his client, Lorenzo again interceded on his behalf with the pope, but Innocent refused to grant Pico absolution.²³

Following the publication of his *De vita triplica* (1489), which he dedicated to Lorenzo Medici, Ficino too was suspected of practising dangerous magic. In the third book of this work, entitled *On Making Your Life Agree With the Heavens*, which he presented as a commentary on Plotinus's writings, he described "how one draws down

²² Lohr, op. cit., (1988a), pp.580-81.

²³ On Pico's condemnation, see Yates, op. cit., (1964), pp.120-21, and Lohr, op. cit., (1988a), p.581. On the power of the papacy to conduct judicial proceeding against philosophers accused of false teaching, see Thijssen, op. cit., (1998), pp.12-19.

the favours of the heavens”.²⁴ Doubtless conscious of the controversial nature of this work, he cautioned his reader: “If you do not approve of astronomical images, even those that have been found to be good for the health of mortals, remember that I, myself, do not so much approve of them as describe them.”²⁵ The work was denounced to Innocent VIII as a work of demonic magic and necromancy, a charge Ficino vigorously refuted in an *Apology* he wrote in September of that same year. In the *Apology*, he advised his friends how to defend his work from his detractors, who included some who were “ignorant and not a few who are downright evil.” After again stressing that he simply described rather than advocated such magic, he advised his friends to tell his critics that he did not describe “the profane kind of magic which uses the cult of demons – assert this strongly – but the natural kind of magic which seizes, from the heavenly bodies through natural things, benefits for helping one’s health.”²⁶

The Dispute on the Immortality of the Soul

As we have seen, there were long-standing anxieties amongst the friars, the early humanists and the Florentine Neoplatonists about the manner in which philosophy was taught by the masters of the universities. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the issue of the mortality of the soul became the focus of the dispute. At this point, possibly influenced by the writings of Ficino, some members of the Franciscan order began to be increasingly concerned by the secular masters’ claims that, according to philosophy, the soul was mortal. One of the most significant figures in this movement was Antonio Trombetta (1431-1517), a Franciscan friar who taught Scotist metaphysics at the University of Padua between 1476 and 1511.²⁷

Although the Franciscans may have opposed the teachings of the secular masters, their ability to challenge them was limited. They could not claim that their

²⁴ Dedication to *On Making Your Life Agree With The Heavens*, in Marsilio Ficino, *Book of Life*, trans Charles Boer, fourth edition (Woodstock: 1994), p.83.

²⁵ Ibid., *Exhortation to the Reader*, pp.85-86.

²⁶ Ibid., *Apology*, p.186.

²⁷ Monfasani, op. cit., (1993), pp.267-70.

teachings were heretical, for the university Aristotelians maintained that their conclusions were only philosophically necessary and not true. Nevertheless, the friars did attempt to use all the resources available to them to make it difficult for the schoolmasters to teach these ideas. In this respect, the Franciscans had a major advantage, for the inquisitor of Padua, Martinus de Lendinara, was a member of their order. In 1489, acting in conjunction with the local bishop Pietro Barozzi, the inquisitor issued an edict banning public disputations on the Averroist doctrine of the unity of the intellect which implied the mortality of the soul, under pain of excommunication.²⁸

The effects of this decree were, however, limited, for it only banned public disputation on this issue. It therefore remained entirely possible for a schoolmaster to continue teaching Averroës's ideas regarding the immortality of the soul to groups of students within the context of a lecture. Nevertheless, the groups who objected to the teaching of this specific doctrine continued to gain strength. For example, the Neoplatonists and their ideas became even more influential in 1492, when Innocent VIII died and he was succeeded by the notorious Rodrigo Borgia. Taking the name Alexander VI, Borgia was one of the most worldly of the Renaissance popes. Unlike his predecessor, Alexander was favourable to the ideas of the philosophers such as Ficino and Pico, and also to magic and astrology. A year after his accession to the papal throne he issued bulls of absolution for Pico, which exonerated both the man and his works from any taint of heresy.²⁹

The French Invasion and the Rise of Savonarola

No doubt relieved by Alexander's pardon, during the intervening years Pico had in any case been moderating his position substantially. He was subsequently drawn to the orbit of the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498). Savonarola had

²⁸ Monfasani, *op. cit.*, (1993), pp.259-70. On the decree of 1489, see Grendler, *op. cit.*, (2002), pp.283-286.

²⁹ Grendler *op. cit.*, (2002), pp.288-89. On the continued discussion of the mortality of the soul, see Pine, *op. cit.*, (1986), chapter 1.

been invited into Florence in 1491 by Lorenzo Medici, where he participated in the circles of the city's literary elite, sharing ideas with Pico and Ficino. Following Lorenzo's death in 1492, Savonarola's preaching took an increasingly apocalyptic turn and he became a vociferous critic of the Medici, now led by Lorenzo's son Piero. In these same years Pico issued a devastating criticism of astrology, posthumously published as *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, in which he attacked astrologers who believed that they could make specific predictions about the future through their art. Although Pico's *Disputationes* has sometimes been read as a rebuttal of his earlier position, as Walker and Yates have stressed, this work remained suffused with Ficinian natural magic, and that Pico still believed that the movements of the celestial bodies exerted significant influence over the sub-lunary realm. The focus of his attack was therefore not directed against the possibility that celestial bodies could in principle influence earthly bodies, but against the idea that Man was able to observe and predict the movements of the stars with sufficient accuracy to enable astrological predictions. Astrologers, Pico noted, were unable to reach any consensus about the mathematical principles that governed the astronomical aspects of their art, and so they could not be relied upon to make accurate forecasts.³⁰

Savonarola, who had encouraged Pico's criticisms of astrology, popularised the arguments of the *Disputationes* in his *Trattato contra gli astrologi*, using it to reinforce the idea of God's prophecy as the only means by which man could know future contingent events. In spite of Pico and Savonarola's efforts, astrology and divination remained highly prized by all social orders within fifteenth century Italy. The appetite for prognostication on all social levels was heightened in Italy by the damaging wars triggered by the descent of the armies of the French king, Charles VIII, into the peninsula. The French King had initially been invited to pursue a longstanding claim to the throne of Naples by Pope Innocent VIII. En-route to Naples, the French army entered Florence on 17th November (the very day of Pico's death), deposing the ruling

³⁰ On Savonarola and the Florentine Neoplatonists, see Walker op. cit., (1972), chapter 2. On his discussion of astrology see Walker, op. cit., (1958), pp.54-55. On Pico's return to Florence, see Yates, op. cit., (1964), pp.120-23. On Pico's critique of astrology see Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: the Zodiac of Life* (London: 1983).

Medici and sending Lorenzo's sons Piero, and Cardinal Giovanni into exile. In the years that followed the expulsion of the Medici, Savonarola emerged as the city's leader and sought to create a "New Jerusalem" by reforming the Church and restoring the Florentine republic.³¹

Church and Society in the Early Sixteenth Century

Savonarola's attempt to purify Florence reflected a deeper yearning for reform, and by the start of the sixteenth century, concerns about the state of the Church were becoming ever more widespread. In 1506 the Dutch humanist and Augustinian canon, Desiderius Erasmus, (c.1466-1536) travelled to Italy. Having been greatly inspired by the writings of Ficino and Pico, and passionate about classical studies, he had longed for this visit. Although he was sent to supervise two sons of Henry VII's physician, Erasmus found the time to study manuscripts and forge friendships with important Italian literary figures. For instance, he made a number of acquaintances amongst the humanist circle that gathered around the Venetian publisher Aldus Manutius, including the Hellenic scholar Girolamo Aleandro (1480-1542). Erasmus's enthusiasm for his visit was, however, soon tempered by a sense of profound disappointment. Arriving in the aftermath of Charles VIII's invasion of Italy, he found the peninsular "disturbed by the turmoil of war".³² He was also deeply shocked by the practices of some of the highest ranking clergy, and above all by the popes. After leaving Italy in 1509 he returned to England, where he vented his frustrations with the corrupted state of the Church and Christian society in his satire *Praise of Folly*. The sardonic observations of the work's principle character, Folly, provides a window into contemporary perceptions

³¹ On Savonarola, see David S. Peterson, "Religion and the Church", in John M. Najemy (ed.), *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, (Oxford: 2004), pp.59-81: 77-78.

³² Erasmus to Servatius, Florence, November 1506, *Epistles of Erasmus from his Earliest Letters to his Fifty-First Year Arranged in Order of Time*, edited and translated by Francis Morgan Nichols, (New York: 1962), p.419.

of the failings of the Catholic Church and highlights a range of concerns that Erasmus shared with many of his contemporaries.³³

Few were spared the derision of Folly. The Christian nobility, she charged, while away their time with “dice, draughts, fortune telling, clowns, fools, whores, idles games, and dirty jokes, interspersed with a few snacks”.³⁴ The leading ecclesiastics, she added, were little better, having adopted all these practices themselves. Though Folly does not make this point explicitly, one reason for the close resemblance between the nobility and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Italy was the fact that the latter were largely drawn from the former, and the interests of the two groups were thoroughly intertwined. The ecclesiastical hierarchy had become an important means to gain power and influence and had developed into lucrative careers for the younger sons of the nobility. Advancement in these ecclesiastical structures also depended more on administrative capabilities than personal piety or theological insight. Consequently, many of these leading ecclesiastics were not professional theologians, but were instead far more likely to have had a training in either civil or canon law. Folly lamented that many of them also neglected their pastoral roles. Instead of leading and instructing the people of their dioceses, they used them as a means to fund their lavish lifestyles. As Folly remarked: “They don’t even remember that the name ‘bishop’, which means ‘overseer’, indicates work, care, and concern. Yet when it comes to netting their revenues into the bag they can play the overseer well enough.”³⁵

Although appalled by the actions of the bishops and nobility, Erasmus reserved particular scorn for the popes, who by the late fifteenth century had increasingly come to resemble secular princes. Like the other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, they were primarily drawn from the Italian nobility, and they too tended to maintain the

³³ On Erasmus, see James McConica, *Erasmus* (Oxford and New York: 1991); Léon-E. Halkin, *Erasmus: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: 1993); A.G. Dickens and Whitney R. D. Jones, *Erasmus the Reformer* (London: 1994). Erasmus reputedly wrote the original text of *Praise of Folly* in a week in the house of Thomas More. It was first published in 1511, but substantially revised. All quotation are from Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, translated by Betty Radice, (London: 1993), who used the 1515 edition.

³⁴ Erasmus, op. cit., (1993), p.106.

³⁵ Erasmus op. cit., (1993), p.107. For an overview of the Italian Church during the Renaissance, see for example Peterson, op. cit., pp.59-81.

values and concerns of the nobility rather than those of devout ecclesiastics. The Renaissance popes had also allowed the curia to develop into a kind of ‘court’, in which they rivalled the princes with their ostentatious display of wealth and lavish patronage of the arts and learning. Folly contrasted their opulent lives with the simple life of Christ, noting that following his example would be hugely detrimental to the current incumbents of Peter’s throne: “Think of all the advantages they would lose if they ever showed a sign of wisdom!”³⁶

Another grave concern for many Christians was the amount of time the popes lavished on building and maintaining their temporal state. Many contemporaries expressed distaste for these tendencies and especially for papal campaigns of territorial aggrandisement in central Italy. These concerns were shared by Erasmus, who was present in Italy during the military campaign of Julius II (Guiliano della Rovere 1503-1513), by which means the pope aimed to gain control of Bologna. He was also present in the city to witness the pope’s triumphant entry in 1506, and he expressed his disgust for what he had witnessed in a letter to Jerome Busdellian. In an allusion to the pope’s famous namesake, he observed, “Pope Julius fights, conquers, triumphs, and in fact plays the part of Julius to perfection.”³⁷ Erasmus also expressed his disdain for the pope’s secular ambitions through Folly, who ridiculed the manner in which they abused their ecclesiastical power to pursue unholy ends. The popes, she scoffed, applied the ecclesiastical sanctions of interdicts and excommunication “against none so savagely as those who at the devil’s prompting seek to nibble away and reduce the patrimony of Peter [i.e. the Papal States].”³⁸

Through Folly, Erasmus also poured scorn upon the pretensions of philosophers, who although “cloaked and bearded to command respect” were nonetheless victims of “a pleasant form of madness”. While absorbed in their work,

³⁶ Erasmus, op. cit., (1993), p.108.

³⁷ Erasmus to Jerome Busdellian, Bologna 16th November 1506, in Erasmus op. cit., (1962), p.421.

³⁸ On the dual nature of the role of the pope as ruler of a secular state and as the spiritual head of the Catholic Church, see Hsia op. cit., (2005), Chapter 6; Paolo Prodi, *The Papal Prince: One Body Two Souls; the Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe*, (1987). See too Dandele, op. cit., (2001) which describes the political dealings of the papacy and its relationship with Spain and France.

she mocked, “nature has a fine laugh at them and their conjectures, for their total lack of certainty is obvious enough from the endless contention among themselves on every point. They know nothing at all, yet they claim to know everything.” Behind Folly’s amusement at the futility of the knowledge of philosophers lay Erasmus’s personal beliefs in the value of pagan learning. In his youthful work, the *Antibarbari*, he had vehemently defended the study of ancient letters, but, like Petrarch, he wanted to ensure that it was used for the correct ends. Erasmus believed that pagan literature should be studied for the help that it could provide in the study and interpretation of Scripture, but he had argued that these studies should not become an end in themselves, distracting from the real task of studying the Bible. Philosophy could never replace reading sacred text as the means by which the Christian could gain wisdom. Erasmus also made sharp criticism of scholastic theologians, and their dependence upon this pagan knowledge. For she noted, “fortified with schoolmen’s’ definitions, conclusions and corollaries” they spend their days debating abstruse concepts. As Folly observed, “Who *could* understand all this unless he has frittered away thirty-six whole years over the physics and metaphysics of Aristotle and Scotus?”³⁹

While the vast majority of friars would have rejected Erasmus’s criticism of scholastic theology or philosophy, many would have shared his disdain for certain aspects of Neoplatonic thought. Although he had been attracted to parts of Ficino and Pico’s work, Erasmus remained uninterested, in, and in many ways opposed to, their forays into metaphysical speculation. Yates has noted that in his letters Erasmus expressed a negative view of cabbala, and that he was unconvinced about the idea of a Christian Magus. As Yates concluded, “in the vicinity of Erasmus’ critical...mind, the whole set-up of the Renaissance magus, as so impressively formulated by Ficino and Pico, would dwindle into vain dreaming based on doubtful scholarship.” Although Erasmus rarely offered comment on magic and cabbala, it seems he was substantially in agreement with the friars’ critique. Indeed, despite the protestation of philosophers such as Ficino, Erasmus suspected that some of the activities they described involved

³⁹ Erasmus, op. cit., (1993) pp.84-91. On the *Antibarbari*, see McConica op. cit., (1991) Chapter 1.

consorting with demons. In a late work, he remarked that “all curious artes and craftes, of divyning and sothesayeng, or juglyng, of doing cures by charmes or witchcraft in whiche althoughe there be none expresse conspiracy with dyvelles or wyked spirits, yet nevertheless is ther some secrete dealing with them, and so therefore a secrete demeaning of god.”⁴⁰

In a similar fashion, Erasmus lampooned those who claimed to be able to know the future. Folly observed that, “some [philosophers] too will also foretell the future by consulting the stars, promising further marvels, and they are lucky enough to find people believe them in this too.”⁴¹ As Folly indicated, philosophers did indeed make these claims, and their predictions were consumed at all levels of society, and since the late fifteenth century, demand for predictions of future events had grown rapidly throughout Europe. Within Italy the increasingly unstable conditions, continued to stimulate demand for this type of knowledge during the early sixteenth century. Demand for such knowledge was particularly widespread amongst the nobility and by extension, much of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Italy. The astrological predictions consumed by the elites were usually prepared by prognosticators working in the universities, and the predictions they made acted as a form of consolation and reassurance in these turbulent times. However, as we shall see, there was also a rising demand for forms of divination, proffered by the new philosophers of nature.⁴²

Proposals for Reform

Many would-be reformers would have agreed with Erasmus’s indictment of the Church’s institutional failures and the problems of society. However, there was neither

⁴⁰ On Erasmus’s aversion to Neoplatonism, see McConica op. cit., (1991) p.55; Yates, op. cit., (1964), pp.184-5. Erasmus’s comments on magic and divination cited in Clark, op. cit., (1997), p.500.

⁴¹ Erasmus, op. cit., (1993), p.85.

⁴² On the growing noble and royal demand for astronomical and astrological knowledge, see Westman, op. cit., (1980), pp.120-21; on the demand for astrological and divinatory techniques in the highest circles of the Church see Thorndike, op cit., Vol V (1941), esp. pp.252-74. On popular divination see Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, English edition, translation by Lydia G. Cochrane, (Princeton: 1990).

agreement amongst them about how these problems could be rectified, nor about the type of society that Christians should seek to create. Furthermore, they all faced resistance from an ecclesiastical hierarchy drawn primarily from the nobility of Italy who were more concerned with protecting their own interests than reforming the Church. In order to better understand their various concerns, I shall divide these reformers into four groups. The first of these groups was the friars, who continued to exercise significant influence within the Church and Italian society. They provided a degree of continuity with earlier reforming movements, for since their foundation in the thirteenth century they had set out to remould Christian society, and their efforts had continued unabated into the sixteenth century. Their ongoing programme for reform was based on preaching against sin and heresy, and attempting to eradicate, or at least to contain, contaminating influences such as the Jews and sorcerers, and they were seeking to engage the population through ritual observances.⁴³

By the sixteenth century a second group of reformers had come to reject the vision of Catholicism promoted by the friars. Erasmus, for one, was a particularly vehement critic of their ideas. As two of his recent biographers observed, “Whether with the [friars and monks] or among the laity, [Erasmus] has no respect whatever for what he calls ‘Judaic’ religiosity of outward observances and gestures.”⁴⁴ These included religious practices that Erasmus regarded as requiring only mindless repetition, and empty rituals including fasting, pilgrimages and indulgences and the worship of saints. He instead sought to renew the spiritual life of the Church by allowing Christians to engage with the texts of Scripture, and emulate the life of Christ. Erasmus’s emphasis on internal spiritual development was shared by members of the Italian nobility, who would later constitute a third group of reformers. These included, for example, a group of Venetian Patricians, which included Tommaso Giustiniani (1476-1528), Vincenzo Quirini (1479-1514) and Gasparo Contarini (1483-1542), who

⁴³ For an indication of the friars’ concerns, see for example Franco Mormando, *The Preacher’s Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: 1999); on the friars’ attitudes towards the Jews, see Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: 1984).

⁴⁴ Dickens and Jones, op. cit., (1994), p.51.

forged a close friendship whilst studying at the University of Padua during the late fifteenth century. Like Erasmus, they had become disillusioned with a religion that they believed valued ritual works over faith. Although they shared this opinion with the Dutch humanist, they wanted to reform Catholicism in a radically different manner. Contarini, in particular, yearned for some form of doctrinal reform which would place faith, rather than works, at the heart of Catholic soteriology. Although Contarini's proposals seemed to foreshadow those of Luther, they were initially developed in isolation from those of the future leader of the Reformation.⁴⁵

Finally, the intellectual descendents of the Florentine Neoplatonists also outlined their own programme of reform. Despite the criticism of some of the friars, and other humanists such as Erasmus, their ideas were becoming increasingly influential. Many of these Platonists had an important patron in Cardinal Giovanni Medici, who in his youth had been educated by both Ficino and Pico. Under the tutelage of these renowned philosophers, the future cardinal had been exposed to their ideas about the superiority of Platonic over Aristotelian philosophy. Cardinal Medici maintained his interest in Neoplatonic philosophy into manhood and retained close personal contact with Jacopo Diacetto, Ficino's intellectual heir in Florence. He also enjoyed a warm relationship with Giles of Viterbo (1465-1532), a trusted advisor of the incumbent Pope Julius II, who had been made Prior General of the Augustinian Order under his patronage. Giles was also the most important contemporary Platonist, a great admirer of Ficino and a vocal critic of the Aristotelianism practised within the universities of Italy. Although he was by inclination an ascetic reformer, he was also a staunch advocate of the lavish cultural and artistic schemes favoured by the Renaissance Popes. He was able to resolve the apparent conflict between his reformist ideals and the wealth of the Church by integrating his cabbalistic and philosophical studies into an apocalyptic scheme of history. For Giles, Ficino's earlier achievement

⁴⁵ For a brief biography of Contarini see Gigliola Fragnito, "Contarini, Gasparo", *DBI*, Vol. XXVIII, pp.172-92. On his early intellectual development and relationship with Giustiniani and Quirini, see J.B. Ross, "Gasparo Contarini and his friends", *Studies in the Renaissance*, XVII (1970), pp.192-232.

and the current cultural splendour of Rome reflected the dawning of a golden age, which would precede the last days.⁴⁶

Calls for Reform and the Fifth Lateran Council

Despite the growing clamour for reform from within the Church, the papacy generally remained unwilling to provide leadership to bring it about. Although Pope Julius II did convoke the Fifth Lateran Council in 1511, reform was far from his mind. Julius was instead motivated by the need to neutralise the threat posed by a rival council being held in Pisa, which had been called by the French King Louis XII who was at that stage at war with the papacy. The orthodox council eventually assembled on 19th April 1512, and it opened with a sermon given by Giles of Viterbo. Less than a year later its future was thrown into doubt by Julius's death, and Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici's subsequent election as Pope Leo X on 11th March 1513. The change of pontiff improved Papal relations with the French monarchy. This development in turn led to the dissolution of the rival Pisan council, thus removing the Lateran Council reason for existing. Although the Lateran Council had outlived its original purpose, it was recalled by Leo, and many now hoped it could be used to address the problem of reform. In 1513, Gasparo Contarini's now estranged friends, Giustiniani and Quirini, sent the pope a memorandum lambasting the failings of the Church, and offering numerous proposals for reform. These efforts had little effect. Although the council did issue some reforming decrees they did little to tackle the most glaring abuses within the Church, notably the accumulation of benefices and the neglect of the Church by senior ecclesiastics.⁴⁷

However, in spite of the failure of the Guistiniani and Quirini's reformist ambitions, the election of Leo X significantly bolstered the role of the Neoplatonists in Rome, with significant implications for the work of the council. Under their influence,

⁴⁶ Monfasani, op. cit., (1993), pp.247-276; see too John William O'Malley "Giles of Viterbo: a reformer's thought on Renaissance Rome", *Renaissance Quarterly*, XX (1967), pp.1-11.

⁴⁷ On the Fifth Lateran Council, see Hubert Jedin, *Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church: An Historical Outline* (Edinburgh and London: 1960), pp.138-41.

the council pass a decree that had significant implications for Italian intellectual life. As we have seen, since the mid-fifteenth century Florentine humanists such as Ficino, and a significant number of Franciscan friars, had been attempting to change the manner in which philosophy was taught in the universities of Italy. The new pope was persuaded of the need to tackle these teachings, particularly in regard to the mortality of the soul. To do this he created a commission, to which he appointed one of the leaders of the earlier campaign to restrict the teachings of the arts masters, the Franciscan Antonio Trombetta, his confrère Georgius Benignus, and the General of the Dominican Order Thomas da Vio Cajetan (1469-1534).

Following its deliberations the commission produced the decree *Apostolici regiminis* on 19th December 1513. It read:

since truth cannot contradict truth, we define that every statement contrary to the enlightened truth of the faith is totally false and we strictly forbid teaching otherwise to be permitted. We decree that all those who cling to erroneous statements of this kind, thus sowing heresies which are wholly condemned, should be avoided in every way and punished as detestable and odious heretics and infidels who are undermining the catholic faith.

The decree continued by laying out provisions which were intended to curb the problem of arts masters in the Italian universities teaching doctrines which contradicted the faith.

Moreover we strictly enjoin on each and every philosopher who teaches publicly in the universities or elsewhere, that when they explain or address to their audience the principles or conclusions of philosophers, where these are known to deviate from the true faith - as in the assertion of the soul's mortality or of there being only one soul or of the eternity of the world and other topics of this kind - they are obliged to devote their every effort to clarify for their listeners the truth of the Christian religion, to teach it by convincing arguments, so far as this is possible, and to apply themselves to the full extent of their energies to

refuting and disposing of the philosophers' opposing arguments, since all the solutions are available.⁴⁸

While, this bull was indeed significant, frequently it has been misinterpreted. Notably, often it has been argued that this bull made the idea of the immortality of the soul an article of faith. Others have suggested that it fundamentally altered the Church's attitude to philosophy. As Eric Constant has recently argued, this interpretation is erroneous. As he has shown, the immortality of the soul was already an accepted Church dogma before the passage of this bull. Perhaps more importantly, in the context of this thesis the bull did not fundamentally alter the Church's official attitude towards philosophy. In its dogmatic sections, the bull did no more than reiterate the standard position adopted by the Church Fathers and subsequent generations of theologians, that the truths of philosophy could not contradict the truths of theology.⁴⁹

In many respects the decree itself was a failure. Although it was intended to moderate the effects of the teachings of the university masters, it did not substantially alter the *status quo*. Its provisions allowed them to carry on teaching in their traditional manner, because the arts masters had never actually argued that the doctrines they taught were true, but had instead always maintained that their conclusions were only philosophically necessary. They could continue to teach in this manner as long as they fulfilled the Lateran decree's requirements. If they were, for example, to teach that the soul's mortality was philosophically necessary, they were also required to teach the philosophical arguments that proved its immortality. Furthermore, the decree was restricted to dealing with teaching, and so it did not affect the content of original philosophical texts produced by university teachers. In subsequent years university philosophers, such as Pietro Pomponazzi, would continue to exploit the distinction

⁴⁸ Decree of the eighth session of the Fifth Lateran Council, 19 December 1513, translated and edited by Norman P Tanner, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Available at the Website "Daily Catholic" <http://www.dailycatholic.org/history/18ecume3.htm>, accessed 18/1/06.

⁴⁹ Eric A. Constant, "A reinterpretation of the Fifth Lateran Council Decree *Apostolici regiminis* (1513)", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33 (2002), pp.353-379. For a review of the older secondary literature see pp.353-57, and for a close reading of the text that rebuts the idea that it made the issue of the soul's immortality an article of faith, see pp.360-63. On the dogmatic sections of this decree, see especially pp.363-65.

between philosophical necessity and truth to defend the mortality of the soul without fear of ecclesiastical censure.⁵⁰

The council also tackled another issue that held even more significant implications for the practice of philosophy. In the decrees of the tenth session of the council, the delegates noted that “some printers have the boldness to print and sell to the public, in different parts of the world, books -- some translated into Latin from Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean as well as some issued directly in Latin or a vernacular language -- containing errors opposed to the faith as well as pernicious views contrary to the Christian religion”. The problem touched upon in this decree was not entirely new, but it reflected the increasing importance of the printing industry. More than half of the works printed were of a religious nature, and this meant that potentially erroneous or heretical works were reaching an ever wider audience. The dangers inherent in this development had been clear to the ecclesiastical authorities for some time, and this was in fact the third in a series of papal initiatives designed to create a co-ordinated system for the censorship of printed books. The first had taken place in 1487, when Innocent VIII issued the bull *Inter multiplices* which gave the bishops, and in Rome the Master of the Sacred Palace, responsibility for both licensing texts prior to printing, and censoring unlicensed works that were circulating in their dioceses. These powers were subsequently reiterated by Alexander VI in 1501. The decree of 1515 again restated these powers, with one important change. It stated that, from this point forth, the bishops would be joined in the censorial process by the local inquisitor. This meant that all books, including works of philosophy, now needed to be passed by both

⁵⁰ Paul Grendler, “Intellectual freedom in Italian Universities: the controversy over the immortality of the soul”, in J.M. de Bujanda *Le Contrôle des idées à la renaissance*, (Geneva: 1996), pp.31-48: 38; and idem, op. cit., (2002), pp.281-297, on the development of Cajetan’s beliefs regarding philosophical proofs about the mortality of the soul, see p.289 n.68; cf: Monfasani op. cit., (1993) p.270 n.133. On Pomponazzi and the immortality of the soul, see Martin Pine, “Pomponazzi and the problem of ‘double truth’”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXIX, (1968), pp163-176 and idem, op. cit., (1986), chapters 1-2.

of these figures, and anyone who wanted to legitimately publish any such text was now subject to the scrutiny of the Church.⁵¹

⁵¹ Gigliola Fragnito, “The central and peripheral organisation of censorship”, in idem (ed.), *op. cit.*, (Cambridge: 2001), p.15. Decree of the tenth session of the Fifth Lateran Council (1515), accessed online see n.48 above.

Chapter 2: The Censorship of Philosophy in the Age of Reform, 1517-64

Following the close of the Fifth Lateran Council on March 16th 1517, there were increasingly intensive debates within the Church about the need for, and the means to effect reform. These debates were given new urgency by the crisis engendered by the protest of Martin Luther. By this stage a number of broadly distinguishable parties had begun to coalesce and demand reform. These included a scholastic party substantially composed of the mendicant friars and their supporters. There were also various groups of humanists, the first of which were evangelical reformers who drew deeply upon the ideas of writers such as Desiderius Erasmus. During the course of the Reformation, a second group of reformers emerged from the evangelicals. Known as the *spirituali*, they drew upon the writings of not only the evangelicals, but also the work of the Northern Reformers. Finally, there remained a number of Neoplatonists who had risen to prominence under the patronage of the Medici family. The efforts of these Catholic reformers were largely directed against the entrenched interests of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church which was dominated by members of the Italian nobility. Notably all of these parties, including the members of the Church hierarchy, possessed distinctive attitudes towards the practice of philosophy, magic, cabbala and divination. In this Chapter, I will examine the fluctuating fortunes of these various parties during the middle years of the sixteenth century, and trace the impact of these developments on the censorship of philosophy.

Luther's Protest

On 31st October 1517, just seven months after the closure of the Fifth Lateran Council, an Augustinian monk from Wittenberg, Martin Luther (1483-1546) formulated a list ninety five theses for debate. Luther's initial, relatively limited complaints, centred on the practice of selling indulgences, which had become particularly widespread in Germany at this time. His protest, nevertheless, created a significant controversy,

drawing the attention of senior clerics. The unfolding crisis over Luther's protest took place against an increasingly tense political backdrop. Since the French invasion of Italy in 1492, the two most powerful Catholic monarchs of Europe, the kings of France and Spain, had been locked in a mutually ruinous struggle for dominance within both Italy and Europe as a whole. This conflict intensified in 1519 when Charles I (1500-58), the Habsburg king of Spain, was elected as the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The emperor now ruled such a vast swathe of territory that the lands under his control effectively encircled France. The inexperienced Charles was faced with attempting to govern his unwieldy kingdom, and contending with the challenges posed by the wily French king, Francis I, and the increasing threat posed by Luther.¹

The Reformation crisis continued throughout 1519, until it was brought to a head on 15th June 1520 when Leo X issued the Papal Bull *Exsurge Domine*, which demanded that Luther retract forty-one errors within sixty days or be condemned as a heretic. In response, Luther and his supporters rejected the authority of the papacy, and began to call for a new reforming council which they hoped would address a number of specific criticisms that they had formulated. At the end of that year, Luther cemented his break with Rome by burning the papal bull of excommunication. Having split from Rome, Luther's main hope for reform now lay with the emperor, Charles V. He was aided by his protector, Frederick of Saxony, who urged that the monk should not be condemned until he had been heard at an Imperial Diet. However, the papal nuncio, Erasmus's Venetian acquaintance Girolamo Aleandro, opposed this idea on the grounds that Luther was already a convicted heretic. In spite of Aleandro's objections, Charles agreed to listen to Luther, and granted him safe passage to the Diet of Worms. Luther arrived in the city on 16th April 1520, where he vigorously defended his position. The emperor remained unmoved by Luther's complaints, and together with

¹ For a brief overview of the development of Luther's protest, see for example Andrew Johnston, *The Protestant Reformation in Europe* (Harlow: 1991). On the Italian Wars, see for example Maria J. Rodriguez-Salgado, "The Habsburg-Valois wars", in G. R. Elton (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History Vol. II: The Reformation 1520-1559* (Cambridge University Press: 1990), pp.377-400.

Aleandro he drew up the edict of Worms confirming the monk's status as a heretic and outlaw within the empire.²

Despite, or perhaps because of, the hostile response of the emperor and the Church in Rome, Luther's criticisms found a receptive audience across Europe, including within Italy. To a large extent the ground had been prepared by the criticisms voiced by various humanists and intellectuals, who had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the ritualised nature of contemporary Catholicism. Desiderius Erasmus, for example, had advocated a new approach to the faith which involved developing the internal spiritual life of the faithful. Luther's ideas were, however, more radical. Abandoning any belief in the efficacy of works, he placed faith in Christ at the heart of his soteriology. His thought found a number of early supporters, notably the Venetian diplomat Gasparo Contarini. Since August 1520, Contarini had served as the Venetian Ambassador to the newly elected Charles V, and he had attended the Diet of Worms. Although he never met Luther, he was sympathetic to his ideas. Many of which that chimed with his own. He was particularly struck by Luther's affirmation of the importance of grace over works.³

Although it drew the admiration of Contarini, Luther's insistence on the unique importance of faith to salvation was to cause a major division within the reformist movement. In 1524, Erasmus criticised Luther's views, arguing that Man could exert a limited influence over his salvation through his own efforts. Luther responded with a trenchant rejection of Erasmus's position, and elaborated his own belief in the human will's bondage to sin. This dispute finally divided the two reformers. Although Erasmus continued to advocate evangelical reform, he subsequently attempted to distance himself from the German monk. Luther's ideas nevertheless continued to resonate deeply with Contarini. Unlike Luther, however, Contarini continued to

² On the idea of a Council, see Jedin, *op. cit.*, (1960), pp.42-49.

³On the development of Contarini's ideas, see J.B. Ross, *op. cit.*, (1970), pp.192-232.

respect Papal authority, and wanted to effect doctrinal reform from within, rather than in opposition to, the Church.⁴

The Decline of Medici Power and the Waning of Neoplatonism

Despite the burgeoning crisis in Germany, the Medici pope, Leo X, continued to neglect reform, and he also resisted a number of calls for the convocation of a universal council. They were, however, becoming increasingly difficult to ignore. Charles V had gradually become convinced that a council was the only way to bring an end to the growing Lutheran crisis, and he began to lobby the pope to make the necessary preparations. Although Leo enjoyed good relations with the emperor, and had even entered into a military alliance with him, he had been reluctant to accede to his demands. This reticence continued during the pontificate of Leo's cousin, Giulio de Medici, who ascended to the Papal throne in 1523 taking the name Clement VII. Mindful of the fifteenth century conciliar crisis, Clement was wary of creating an institution that could undermine his own authority. His position was supported by the French king, Francis I, who was also opposed to a council. Francis had calculated that if such a meeting were successful, and it brought the Lutheran crisis to a swift conclusion, then his great rival Charles V would be able to devote more time and energy to their struggle for dominance in Europe. In an effort to resist Charles's will, Clement repudiated the earlier military alliance that his predecessor Leo X had made with the emperor, and instead concluded a treaty with the Francis I in 1526.⁵

In spite of Clement's reluctance to instigate reform, within Italy several groups of would-be reformers began to develop new ways to re-energise the Church. Many of these movements were inspired by humanist ideas, but these were not the only reforming schemes proposed during this period. Other groups wanted to reinvigorate the Church by drawing upon alternative aspect of the Catholic tradition. For example,

⁴ For Luther and Erasmus's dispute, see Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther, *Discourse on Free Will*, translated and edited by Ernst F. Winter, (London and New York: 2005). Dickens and Jones, op. cit., (1994), chapters 6-8, and McConica, op. cit., (1991), chapter 5.

⁵ On the diplomatic negotiations of the papacy in this period, see Dandeleit, op. cit., (2001), chapter 2.

a group of between fifty and sixty clerics and laymen led by Giovanni Pietro Carafa and Count Gaetano da Thiene, Paolo Consiglieri, Bonifacio da Colle formed themselves into a group which they named the Oratory of Divine Love. The Oratory began to meet in the early 1520s in the Church of SS. Silvestro and Dorotea in Rome, and Philip McNair has noted that, “Its object was the reformation of the Church from within, to be effected by inward renewal through prayer, meditation and charity.” The Theatine Order, (founded on 14th September 1524) grew out of this movement, and its aim was to train new priests who could inject a new sense of purity and enthusiasm into the Church. Carafa and his associates have often been dubbed *zelanti* or *intransigenti*, by historians.⁶

These diverse reforming efforts were, however, all hampered by significant political developments. On 6th May 1527, Rome was captured by Charles V’s army. The emperor, angered by the Clement’s earlier decision to ally himself with France, held the pope a virtual prisoner in the Castel Sant’ Angelo, where he remained until 7th December, when he was able to flee the city and take refuge in Orvieto. Meanwhile, for ten long months the unpaid Imperial troops sacked the city, with devastating consequences for the people of Rome. These events also held calamitous implications for the Medici family. Once news of the Sack of Rome spread to Florence, the people of the city rose up and once more expelled the recently restored Medici from the city, depriving Clement of his main source of personal revenue and power.⁷

Clement’s delicate situation also highlighted the problems inherent in the Pope’s dual roles as secular prince and spiritual leader. His position as ruler of a secular state had left him vulnerable to diplomatic and military pressure, which could be used to alter his actions as a spiritual leader. For example, this turn of events had serious consequences for the English king Henry VIII, who was at this time attempting to divorce the emperor’s aunt Catherine of Aragon. Under pressure from Charles, Clement rejected Henry’s request. The collapse of Medici power had another significant consequence. Since the mid-fifteenth century, this family had been the main

⁶ On the Oratory of Divine Love, see McNair, op. cit., (1967), p.11.

⁷ On the Sack of 1527, see Eric Cochrane, *Italy 1530-1630*, (Harlow: 1988), chapter 2.

promoters of Neoplatonism within the Church, but in his weakened state Clement VII was simply not in a position to offer patronage to philosophers. The situation was compounded by the fact that Platonist studies had only a small toe-hold within the universities of Italy. Although these ideas were sometimes defended by individuals such as Andreas Camuzio (1512-87), who taught logic and natural philosophy in Pavia, there were no official chairs of Platonist philosophy in any of the universities. Deprived of their major sponsors, and lacking the support of universities, the Neoplatonists' influence, which had reached such heights during the Fifth Lateran Council, waned markedly.⁸

By the summer of 1528, Clement was able to return to Rome. However, the ecclesiastical hierarchy remained in disarray. The situation was exacerbated by Clement's conflicting priorities, and he remained pre-occupied with attempting to rebuild Medici power in Italy. His focus on his family's political affairs led him to court Imperial favour and in 1529 he concluded the Treaty of Barcelona, in which the pope undertook to crown Charles as emperor, and in return Charles pledged his support for restoring Medici power in Florence. By 1531, both parties had achieved their aims. Seeking to further reinforce his family's power, Clement later successfully concluded a dynastic alliance with France, by marrying his relative Catherine de' Medici (1519-89) to the King's eldest son Henry (1519-59). Whilst tied up with these dynastic concerns, Clement neglected the calls for reform within his Church, and the growing religious crisis in Germany. This meant that the Church was unable to offer a co-ordinated response to the spread of the idea of the Northern Reformers. Since the mid-1520s Luther's books were becoming widely available in the Italian peninsula, creating new currents of reformist thought. Many of Luther's works had entered Italy through Venice, which was at this time the centre of the book trade, both in terms of printing, and trading works imported from other countries. The Venetian government had done virtually nothing to stop the flow of heretical works, a point that was wasted on neither Luther's critics nor his sympathisers. His ideas found a receptive audience amongst the

⁸ On Platonism within the universities, see Grendler, *op. cit.*, (2002), pp.297-309.

intellectual elites of the peninsula and in particular with those already predisposed toward evangelical reform, and in subsequent years these ideas began to circulate amongst other social orders.⁹

Meanwhile, other independent reform movements continued to develop their ideas. Notably, the Oratory of Divine Love, which, had moved to Venice in the wake of the Sack continued to be active. Whilst the Oratory was resident in Venice, the evangelical reformer Gasparo Contarini began to join in some of its meetings. Contarini shared with Carafa and his associates a concern for the worldly Renaissance papacy, embodied in pontiffs such as Alexander VI and Julius II, and a desire to reinvigorate the faith at a local level. He had made no secret of these aspirations, and whilst serving as Venetian Ambassador to Rome in 1529 he had pleaded with Clement VII to make greater efforts to “obtain the good of the true Church, which consists of the peace and tranquillity of Christians, and postpone for now everything in connection with the temporal state.” Although both men were committed to reform of some sort, Contarini and Carafa became increasingly divided over the issue of doctrinal reform. Contarini was representative of a group of reformers who became known as the *spirituali*, who believed that Luther’s ideas could be accommodated within Catholicism. Pursuing this belief, he took the opportunity given by his access to Venice’s book stores to acquaint himself more fully with Luther’s writings. By contrast, Carafa despised Luther’s views, but in 1532 he could do little more than lament the fact that clergy and laymen could openly purchase his heretical texts. Carafa’s was not a lone voice, and Girolamo Aleandro, now the Papal Nuncio to Venice, wrote to the Venetian authorities to complain that Luther’s works were in open circulation. Though they promised to prevent this occurring, the titles were soon openly available once more, and the Venetian authorities ignored Aleandro’s subsequent complaints.¹⁰

⁹ On Clement’s political dealings, see Dandeleit, op. cit., (2001), pp.35-43. For an overview of printing and censorship, see Paul Grendler, “Printing and Censorship”, in Schmitt et al (eds) op. cit., (1988), pp.25-53; on the Venetian Printing industry, see idem, op. cit., (1977), chapter 1. On the spread of heresy in Venice, see Martin, op. cit., (2003), who emphasised that heterodox religious ideas appealed to many social orders, rather than restricted to a social elite.

¹⁰ English translation of Contarini’s speech to Clement VII (1529) cited in Hsia, op. cit., (2005), p.96.

The evangelical groups and the Oratorians were equally divided over how they should seek to deal with the schism. For leading *spirituali* such as Reginald Pole, compromise was possible and indeed desirable, for as he observed “heretykys be not in al thyngys heretykys”. Throughout the 1530s the evangelical reformers remained hopeful that the schism with the northern Protestants could be resolved, and these ambitions were kept alive by a series of meetings sponsored by the emperor during the course of the decade. However, other reformer, such as Carafa and Aleandro, remained resolutely opposed to such ideas. In 1532 Carafa had stated that the pope should avoid entering into discussions with Luther, arguing that “a heretic must be treated as such; the pope lowers himself if he writes to him and flatters him”. He noted that, although some good might result from these contacts “as a rule the recipient of such favours are only made more obdurate and gain fresh adherents.” For these men heretics simply required identification and extirpation.¹¹

The reformers were not only concerned with the Protestant heresies, but also with purging Catholic society of activities they regarded as superstitious, notably magic and divination. Following the decline in the Neoplatonists’ influence, a powerful reformist group within the Church that specifically advocating the practice of reformed and purified magic had been effectively silenced. This meant, despite their other significant differences in outlook, by the 1530s, reformers of virtually all persuasions shared a desire to purge society of the attachments to divinatory arts and magical practices. Magic and divination, nevertheless continued to have powerful supporters within Italian society, for large sections of the nobility remained enthusiastic consumers of this type of knowledge. Their interest in these activities continued to provide patronage opportunities for ambitious scholars. For example, in 1525 Patritio Tricasso (b.1491-c.1550) dedicated his “Exposition” of the work of the noted theorist of the divinatory arts, Bartolomeo della Rocca Cocles, to Federico II Gonzaga, the Duke of Mantua. Tricasso had also produced his own work on the “scientia” of Chiromancy.

¹¹ On Pole’s views, see Thomas F. Mayer, “Heretics be not in all things heretics: Cardinal Pole, his circle and the potential for toleration”, in Laursen and Nederman (eds), *op. cit.*, (1998), pp.107-24. Carafa’s comments translated by and cited in Fenlon, *op. cit.*, (1972), p.43.

In this work he stated that, “this science and doctrine, is a means to prognosticate, and discover future things, granted only amongst knowledgeable men, through the sign lines, which are found in our hands.” Tricasso stressed the fact that he viewed chiromancy as a legitimate means to gain knowledge of the future, which was governed by natural principles that could be discovered by the knowledgeable enquirer.¹²

The enthusiastic support of the nobility for these arts also had another important consequence. The ecclesiastical elite of Italy were primarily drawn from the nobility, and shared many of their values and assumptions. This meant that few were pre-disposed to the reformers’ calls to purge these practices completely from society. On the contrary, many of these clerics in fact made extensive use of such knowledge themselves. Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, for example, frequently consulted prognosticators. At the suggestion of Luca Gaurico, Farnese went to have his palm read by Fra Serafino of Mantua, the prior to the convent of San Francesco, in order to determine whether he would eventually secure the Papal throne. Fra Serafino was, according to Gaurico, “An old man and doctor of theology, not ignorant of astrology but remarkable as a chiromancer.” The prediction was favourable to Farnese, and it assured him that he would soon assume leadership of the Catholic Church. In 1529 and again in 1532, Gaurico predicted the future accession of Farnese to the papal throne. These predictions came true in 1534 when Farnese became Paul III, and Gaurico was summoned to Rome and continued in his service. In 1546, he was rewarded with a bishopric.¹³

¹² Patritio Tricasso, *Expositione del Tricasso Mantuano sopra il Cocle al Illustrissimo signore S. Federico Gonzaga Marchese Mantua*, (1525), idem, *Epitoma chyromantico di Patritio Tricasso da Cerasari Mantouano*. (Venice: 1538). Although this edition was printed in 1538, his writings on chiromancy had certainly been circulating in manuscripts prior to 1525, for he mentions them in the preface dedicating the work on Cocles to Federico II, p.Aii recto.

¹³ Thorndike, op. cit., Vol. V (New York: 1953), p.256.

Paul III and the Hope for Reform

Paul's election brought to a close Clement VII's eleven year pontificate. In spite of certain blemishes in his private life, including an illegitimate child, and his interest in dubious divinatory techniques, Paul III was nonetheless the first pontiff to acknowledge the need to radically reform the Church. To help achieve this end, he appointed a group of distinguished prelates and cardinals to prepare a report on ecclesiastical reform. This group drew upon the talents of both evangelically minded reformers such as the *spirituali* Contarini and Reginald Pole, and also the more traditional Carafa and Aleandro. The evangelicals, who constituted the majority of the commission, favoured some sort of doctrinal reform which would emphasise grace over works, and many of them believed that it should be possible to reach a compromise with the Lutherans. These aspirations were, however, opposed by Carafa and Aleandro. Despite their differences the two factions cooperated in the preparation of the eventual report *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* (1537). This report did not deal with any doctrinal reform (which in any case would have been the task of a universal council) but was instead limited to outlining proposals designed to curb the most flagrant abuses such as pluralism, and simony.¹⁴

Although the commission did not tackle doctrinal reform, the issue was broached five years later, when the series of meetings co-ordinated by Charles V, which brought together delegates from the Catholic Church and Northern Reformers, culminated in the Colloquy of Regensburg (1542). Hopes for a successful resolution to the meeting were high, not least because Gasparo Contarini, who sympathised with many Lutheran ideas, was the leader of the Catholic delegation. Seeking a compromise, he proposed a two-fold theory of grace, which he hoped could bridge the gap between the Catholic and Protestant soteriologies. Although the two sides managed to agree to Contarini's compromise, the talks subsequently foundered on the question of the Eucharist, and the Colloquy collapsed in failure. This was to be the start of a difficult

¹⁴ On the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, see Martin, op. cit., (2003), p.38.

period for the *spirituali*. In the following months they were further weakened by the defection of some of their leading figures, notably Bernardino Ochino, who fled Italy and joined Protestant Churches in Switzerland. The movement was further weakened by the death of Contarini in August 1542. Despite these setbacks, the *spirituali* continued to exert influence within Rome, where the movement was now lead by cardinals Pole and Morone. In 1543 the cardinals oversaw the preparation of the most complete expression of their beliefs, the *Beneficio di Christo*, for publication in Pole's residence in Viterbo. The work drew upon the ideas of a range of reformers, including Erasmus, Luther and John Calvin.¹⁵

By the early 1540s the ideas of Northern Reformers were becoming increasingly prominent in Italy, and they were starting to gain adherents. With the towns of Lucca and Modena thought to be on the brink of being overwhelmed by the rising tide of heresy, Cardinals Carafa and Aleandro urged the pope to re-organise the Inquisition, in order uproot dissent wherever it was found. Paul agreed, and he appointed the cardinals to co-ordinate the activities of inquisitors in the whole of Christendom. Following Aleandro's death in July 1542, Carafa became the sole head of the Inquisition but was joined by five extra cardinals: Pietro Paolo Parisio (1473-1545), Bartolomeo Guidiccioni (1470-1549), Dionisio Laurerio, O.S.M. (1497-1542), and Tommaso Badia, O.P. (1483-1547), and Morone. The latter two were associated with the *spirituali*, and they were probably appointed to counter-balance Carafa's growing power. Several weeks later, on the 21st July 1542, Paul III officially created the Roman Inquisition with the bull *Licet ab initio*, offering the Cardinals greater powers to co-ordinate a centrally organised response to the Reform movements. Significantly, at this point Morone was excluded from the Inquisition, and he was replaced by Juan Álvarez de Toledo, O.P. (1488-1557) a cardinal more in step with Carafa's views.¹⁶

¹⁵ On the events at Regensburg, see Fenlon, op. cit., (1972), chapter 3. On the *Beneficio de Christo* see Massimo Firpo "The Italian Reformation and Juan de Valdés", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXVII (1996), pp.353-64.

¹⁶ On the foundation of the Roman Inquisition, see Peters, op. cit., (1989), chapter 4, and del Col, op. cit., (2006), esp. pp.291-293. For more bibliography on the Inquisition see above Introduction, pp.46-51.

The re-establishment of the Inquisition gave Carafa tremendous power within the Church, and a platform to consolidate his own vision of reform. While on the one hand he genuinely wanted to regenerate the Church, he was also deeply concerned with rooting out contaminating influences from Christian society. This would involve eliminating all of the groups that he believed posed a threat to the integrity of Christendom. For Carafa, these contaminants included not only Protestants, but also the evangelical movement as a whole, and above all the *spirituali* whom he had come to consider an enemy within the Church. By 1544 he had begun to use the Inquisition to marginalise their influence within the curia, and he set out to prevent the Church from ever having a pope who shared their views. As Massimo Firpo has shown, his strategy was to discredit Pole and Morone by preparing a body of evidence that would explicitly associate their beliefs with the Protestant heresy. The creation of the Roman Inquisition also greatly increased the power of the mendicant friars, and in particular that of the Dominican order who continued to provide many of the staff for the Inquisition.¹⁷

The Inquisition's power was greatly enhanced in 1543 when Paul III made it the sole authority responsible for censoring books within Italy. This was in stark contrast to the decrees of the Fifth Lateran Council, which had given the role of censorship to both the bishops and the Inquisition. The Inquisition now had the authority to bypass the ordinaries and send local inquisitors to inspect libraries, printing works, private houses and monasteries in order to seize and burn any heretical works that they found. This was a major expansion of the authority and power of the Inquisition, and it seriously impinged upon the role of the bishops. This was the start of a protracted conflict between the bishops and the Inquisition over their respective spheres of competence, which would continue into the early seventeenth century. In the short-term, however, the Inquisition was unable carry out the task it had set itself, for as Gigliola Fragnito has noted, "it had neither well-established local organs nor official lists of prohibited works." These problems were exacerbated by the fact that the

¹⁷ For a summary of Firpo's research, see Fenlon, op. cit., (2005), pp.529-33.

Inquisition could only operate with the permission of the secular ruler of the host state. While a number of the central Italian duchies such as Florence rapidly submitted themselves to Roman jurisdiction, other rulers were not prepared to admit this tentacle of Papal authority into their territory. Furthermore, the Spanish dependencies of Sicily and Sardinia were policed by the Spanish Inquisition, but the two mainland territories, the Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Milan, resisted the imposition of both Spanish and Roman Inquisitions. These territories instead created their own inquisitorial courts, administered in Naples by the bishop of Naples, and in Milan by the Dominicans. Other states, such as Venice and Genoa, were prepared to accommodate the Inquisition, but their governments demanded that lay officials were included in its administration, thus diluting papal authority.¹⁸

Although many secular leaders had been reluctant to admit the Inquisition into their territories, many were beginning to recognise the need for enhanced control over the circulation of printed works. Prompted by the fear of political disruption and disunity that Protestantism could bring in its wake, these rulers began to take action. In 1539, the Senate of Milan published the first Italian catalogue of prohibited books, which was compiled by the local inquisitor, a Dominican Friar, whose name is now lost. Made up of forty-three titles, it was primarily designed to stem the flow of Protestant titles from abroad. In 1543 the Holy Office, which administered the Roman Inquisition, issued an edict of censure in territories directly controlled or influenced by the papacy including Rome, Bologna, Ferrara and Modena. The governments of Lucca and Sienna issued lists of banned works, which primarily targeted the works of Northern reformers, in 1545 and 1548 respectively. By 1549, even the secular authorities of Venice had instructed the local inquisitor (a Franciscan Friar), the papal nuncio and the three lay deputies who constituted the Venetian Inquisition to prepare a catalogue of forbidden books. It was made up of 149 separate entries, including the works of 47 authors and 102 titles, and once again the banned titles were

¹⁸ On the developing structures of censorship, see del Col, *op. cit.*, (2006), p.315; Gigliola Fragnito "The central and peripheral organisation of censorship" in *idem*, (ed.) *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.13-49, quote p.14; John Jeffries Martin, "Religion, renewal, and reform in the sixteenth century", in Marino (ed.), *op. cit.*, (2002), pp.42-43.

predominantly the writings of northern reformers. Although this Index was printed, it was never promulgated by the Venetian authorities.¹⁹

Reform and the Council of Trent

As well as re-founding the Inquisition to combat heresy, Paul III also began the work of convening a universal council to discuss ways to reform the Church. Assembling this council was, however, no easy task, not least because many of the key players had radically different agendas. Charles V was a strong supporter of the council, for he believed that it could be used to resolve the religious crisis in his territory, and that he would afford him greater freedom to deal with his external enemies, namely Francis I of France and the Ottoman Turks. After the failure of the colloquy of Regensburg, Charles believed that the only way to draw the Protestants back into the Catholic Church was by effecting major reform. In pursuit of this end, he insisted that a council should be held within the Empire. Despite Charles's optimism, Paul III and many within the curia had decided that the schism could not be healed; to his mind Germany was lost. For the pope the task of a council was, therefore, to safeguard the rump of Catholic southern Europe by defining Catholicism in relation to the beliefs of the heretics. The pope viewed his second priority to be the protection of the authority of the papacy, which had once more been called into question by Luther's protest. Reform could not come at the cost of papal leadership within Christian Europe, and so Paul demanded that the council should take place in Italy. The Imperial city of Trent was eventually chosen as a compromise location, for although it was within the Empire, it lay on the Italian side of the Alps. It finally opened on December 13th 1545.²⁰

¹⁹ For an overview of the Indices of the sixteenth century, see Jesús Martínez de Bujanda, "Squadro panoramico sugli indici dei libri proibiti del XVI secolo", in Ugo Rozzo (ed.), *La censura libraria nel Europa del secolo XVI*, (Udine: 1997), pp.1-14. For the Italian Indices, see Grendler, op. cit., (1977) see chapter 3, and on the Venetian catalogue see pp.85-89. The Venetian catalogue of 1549 is also reproduced in this volume in *ILI* Vol. III.

²⁰ Hsia, op. cit., (2005), chapter 1, esp. pp.10-13.

Regardless of Carafa's concerns about his orthodoxy, Cardinal Pole was appointed as Papal legate to the council, alongside Cardinals Del Monte and Cervini. The legates were faced with the complex task of attempting to balance calls for often radically differing visions of reform. On the one hand the Spanish and French delegates, supported by the Italian humanists, argued for radical institutional reform, which would emphasise the role of the bishops. Taking the examples of the Apostle Paul and Church Fathers such as Ambrose and Augustine, they sought to create an office that was as concerned with preaching and spiritual guidance as with diocesan administration. Drawing on evangelical reforming ideas, the Italian humanists were also scornful of scholastic theology, and wanted Catholics to return instead to the source of faith: Scripture. This position was in accord with Erasmus's earlier critique of scholasticism, and it entailed not only the abandonment of scholastic theology but also the philosophical disciplines on which it relied. The humanists also wanted to inculcate a direct knowledge of the Bible within all levels of society, and they hoped that by allowing the bishops to oversee private reading of Scripture in the vernacular, they could foster a new form of spiritual engagement amongst all Christians. These moves would be bolstered by developing catechisms, and allowing bishops to control preaching in their dioceses.²¹

These efforts to effect institutional reform were opposed by two powerful groups within the Church. Many members of the curia and most of the Italian bishops were reluctant to countenance a radical overhaul of the office of the bishop. Amongst other issues, they feared that reforms which forced them to be resident in their bishoprics would affect their chances of promotion within Rome. The mendicant order also feared these reforms, but for radically different reasons. They believed that the proposed changes posed a grave threat to their prestige and authority. Since the thirteenth century the friars had undertaken the bulk of preaching to the masses, and they wanted to retain control over their spiritual education. They also feared the humanists' efforts to allow the lower orders greater access to Scripture. Rather than

²¹ On the conciliar movement, including the Council of Trent, see Jedin, *op. cit.*, (1960). On Trent, see also Birely, *op. cit.*, (1999), chapter 3; Hsia, *op. cit.*, (2005) chapter 1; Feldhay, *op. cit.*, (1995), pp.83-87.

allowing free access to the word of God, they believed that it should be interpreted and explained to the people through preaching. Underlying this attitude was the mendicants' preference for engaging the masses through public ritual, rather than private devotion. Finally, the friars disdained the humanists' rejection of scholasticism, arguing that it was the most effective defence against the Lutheran threat. Although the mendicant orders retained tremendous power and prestige within the Church, during the first session of Trent the humanists carried the day with their programme of evangelical reform.²²

Although the humanist evangelical reformers within the Church had made major progress at Trent, the more radical elements within the movement, the *spirituali*, continued to press for significant doctrinal reform. Their efforts were supported by the emperor, who believed that this held the key to reaching compromise with the Protestants. The movement for doctrinal reform was led by Cardinals Pole and Morone who remained sympathetic to the Lutheran idea of justification by faith alone, and hoped that they could introduce it into Catholic doctrine. Pursuing this aim, they proposed a two-fold theory of justification (similar to that suggested by Contarini at Regensburg), which they hoped could bridge the divide with Luther, but it was rejected by the majority of delegates. In spite of the efforts of the *spirituali*, on 13th January 1547 the delegates of Trent overwhelmingly voted for a decree on justification which affirmed the importance of both works and grace in the Catholic doctrine of salvation. This decree marked a major turning point. While it effectively closed down the possibility for debate on this issue within the Catholic Church, it also laid down a clear division between Lutheran and Catholic theology. Although the council was making some progress, over the course of 1547 relations between the emperor and the pope became increasingly strained. Seeking to avoid Charles gaining too much power over the Church, Paul III attempted to move the council to Bologna. Charles had recently secured a military victory over the Protestant Schmalkaldic League. He wanted the council to remain within the Empire so that he could force Protestant delegates to

²² Feldhay, op. cit., (1995), pp.83-87

attend with the aim of brokering some sort of compromise between the two religions. Charles was to be disappointed, for the council was transferred to Bologna, where its sessions continued until June 1548.²³

Paul III died on 10th November 1549. The conclave called to appoint his successor was convened on the 29th of the same month and lasted until February 7th 1550. Cardinal Pole was widely expected to take the papal tiara, but failed to gain election by a single vote. This turn of events has been widely attributed to the intrigues of Carafa, who fiercely denounced Pole as a Lutheran during the conclave. Eventually Cardinal Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte was elected as Pope Julius III (1549-55). From the start of his pontificate the new pope came under severe pressure from several directions. The emperor, who still harboured hopes for reconciliation with the Protestants, successfully demanded that the pope reconvene the council in the city of Trent. Once the council was in session, Charles did manage to convince some Protestants to attend. However, they arrived after the Council Fathers had discussed the theology of the mass, and had issued a decree affirming the doctrine of transubstantiation. The passage of the decrees meant that although the meeting between the Lutherans and Catholic delegates was cordial, all hope for compromise had already been pushed out of reach. After failing to agree upon any further decrees regarding institutional reform, the council was once more suspended on 28th April 1552.²⁴

Julius's authority was also gravely compromised by Carafa, the head of the Inquisition. In contrast to the views of many within the curia and a large proportion of the Italian bishops, Carafa was committed to a radical programme of reform within the Church. He was, nevertheless, opposed to any idea of compromise with the Lutherans and to the programme of reform promoted by the evangelical humanists. Carafa's vision of reform had many affinities with the programme favoured by the mendicant friars. It had two broad aims: the first, to regenerate the Church by reinvigorating the

²³ Feldhay, *op. cit.*, (1995), pp.83-87; Hsia, *op. cit.*, (2005), pp.13-17.

²⁴ Dandele, *op. cit.*, (2001), p51. Fausto Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office, the condemnation of the Talmud and publication of Clement VIII's Index", in Fragnito, *op. cit.*, (2001), p.166. On the second session of Trent, see Hsia, *op. cit.*, (2005), p.16.

secular clergy and engaging the population through preaching and ritual observance; the second, to cleanse society, removing, by force if necessary, heresy and superstition and by ameliorating what he perceived to be the pernicious influence of the Jews. During Julius's pontificate, Carafa continued to consolidate his power by bringing into the Inquisition clerics favourable to his austere vision of reform. In 1551 he suggested to the pope that he should appoint Michele Ghislieri (1504-72), a Dominican inquisitor, as commissary general of the Inquisition, and in 1553 he recommended that bishop Scipione Rebiba (1504-77) should be appointed to the commission of the Holy Office.²⁵

The cleansing aspect of Carafa's reformist agenda began during the early 1550s, when work commenced on the first papal Index. This task was given to the Inquisition, and the work was co-ordinated by Ghislieri. In an effort to reduce the amount of time and labour required to produce an entirely new Index, Ghislieri initially planned to print the most recent editions of the Indices compiled at Louvain (1546) and Paris (1547). However, he eventually decided that this approach would not be sufficient, and so he appointed two Dominican friars to the task of compiling an entirely new list. The first, Egidio Foscari, was the Master of the Sacred Palace, and the second, Pietro Bertano, was bishop (and subsequently cardinal) of Fano. Although the resulting list was not officially promulgated, it was circulated to some local inquisitors at their request, and the Milanese authorities printed an edition in 1553, and the following year they printed a second version. The Venetian inquisitor had two separate editions printed in 1554, and another imprint was published in Florence that same year.²⁶

The list published in Venice was made up of 596 individual entries. The works it condemned included not only the writings of Northern Reformers such as Luther and Calvin, but also the writings of the evangelical humanists and the *spirituali*. For example, the list banned outright ten works by Erasmus, and the work that epitomised the beliefs of the *spirituali*, the *Beneficio de Christo*. Importantly, the Index was not solely concerned with eliminating rival visions of reform, but it also aimed to implement the

²⁵ On Carafa, see for example Cochrane, op. cit., (1988), pp.144-45.

²⁶ Grendler, op. cit., (1977), pp.94-95; see too Parente op. cit., (2001), p.164.

Inquisition's reforming vision. Consequently, the compilers of the Inquisitorial Index banned a series of works which described activities that their order had been attempting to eradicate from society for the previous three centuries. For example, the Index included a ban on the Talmud, and it made major strides towards restricting writings on magic and divination. Pursuing this latter aim, it included injunctions against all "notoriae artes", and condemnations of all works of Geomancy, Hydromancy, Pyromancy, and Necromancy. Although the list made no reference to judicial astrology, this was nonetheless a major departure: none of the previous Indices, neither those of Louvain nor Paris nor the Catalogue prepared by the Venetian Inquisition, had made any mention of the divinatory arts.²⁷

This was not, however, a surprising development. As we have already seen, the Dominican order had a long-standing hostility to the magical and divinatory arts, because the members of this order generally followed the opinion laid down by Aquinas that these activities necessarily required the assistance of demons. As the Nicholas Eymerich's *Directorium Inquisitorum* and the witch-hunting manual the *Malleus Maleficarum* demonstrate, these views were subsequently incorporated into Inquisitorial practice. Although magic and divination had always been badly regarded by many authoritative figures within the Church, clamping down on these activities had become a far more pressing issue since the mid-fifteenth century when the nobility of Italy started to become increasingly interested in philosophy, and activities which probed the boundaries of nature. This had led to a demand for divinatory and magical activities. By and large the nobility were not offering patronage to people who genuinely believed that they were manipulating demons, and the rhetoric of Renaissance magi, had suggested that many apparently wondrous effects could be achieved through the skilled manipulation of nature. For the Inquisition, the proponents of such activities were simply deluded; whether consciously or not their activities invoked demons. Although the papal Index was prepared by the Inquisition, many of the evangelical humanists would have been sympathetic to the attempt to restrict these superstitious practices.

²⁷ On the aborted Index of 1557, see Grendler, op. cit., (1977). For the Indices of Louvain and Paris, see *ILL* Vol. I and II respectively; for the Venetian Index see *ILL* Vol. III.

This was because many of their number also regarded these practices as being dependent upon demonic agency.²⁸

The Inquisition also attempted to address another target: the legacy of the Neoplatonists. Although the popularity of Neoplatonism had sharply declined since the 1520s, a number of texts treating the themes outlined by Ficino and Pico continued to circulate within Italy. Although the Inquisition did not strike directly at either the writings of Ficino or Pico, the papal Index did condemn two works by Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), namely his *De vanitate scientiarum* (1526) and his *De occulta philosophia* (1531). The latter text had been completed some years earlier, and it was deeply imbued with both Ficinian and Piconian magic. Nevertheless, Agrippa clearly wanted to harness this magic for the improvement of the Church. In 1510, he wrote to his mentor, the Abbott Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516), recalling how they had spoken of their desire to restore magic to its rightful place in Christian life, and asked for the latter's comments on his completed work, *De occulta philosophia*.²⁹

In this work Agrippa described magic as “the most perfect, and chief science, that sacred and sublimer kind of philosophy, and lastly the most absolute perfection of all most excellent philosophy.” He divided the world into three realms, the Elementary, the Celestial and the Intellectual, and he continued by identifying three modes of human understanding which corresponded to these realms. According to Agrippa, it was possible for Man to possess knowledge of each of these realms, for “wise men conceive it in no way irrational that it should be possible for us to ascend by the same degrees through each World, to the same very original World itself, the Maker of all things, and first Cause, from whence all things are, and proceed.” Agrippa argued that it was possible to comprehend and seek the virtues of the Elementary realm

²⁸ Nicholas Eymerich, *Manuale dell' Inquisitore*, ed. Rino Cammilleri, Fourth edition (2000); Heinrich Kremer and Jakob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, translated by Montague Summers (1928) available from the website “The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kremer and James Sprenger” <http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/index.html> accessed 14/5/08. For a discussion of the *Malleus*, and see chapter 1 above, pp.79-84 and on Erasmus's attitudes towards magic and divination pp.93-94.

²⁹ Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy, or of Magick; Written by that Famous Man Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Knight, and Doctor of Both Laws, Counsellor to Caesars Sacred Majesty, and Judge of the Prerogative Court*, English translation John French (1651). See too Yates, op. cit., (1964), chapter 7. On Trithemius, see Brann, op. cit., (1999).

through natural philosophy and physics, the Celestial realm could be understood through astrology and mathematics and the final ascent to the Intellectual realm, and thus direct knowledge of God could be achieved by ceremonial magic. This was the final stage of his system, which utilised Piconian cabbalistic theories.³⁰

The Pontificate of Paul IV and the Ascendancy of the Inquisition

The 1554 Index was never officially promulgated, but was instead withdrawn by the Inquisition. It is unclear why this happened, but it may have been connected with the protracted illness and subsequent death of Julius III. In a significant development, he was succeeded on 23rd May 1555 by Cardinal Carafa, who adopted the name Paul IV. As we have seen, the new pope's earlier career had been characterised by a vehement hatred for those that he considered heretics, and he exhibited disdain for the idea of reconciliation with the Protestants. Furthermore, he was drawn from the Inquisition, and his elevation promised to enhance the authority of this institution within Catholic Italy. Carafa rapidly consolidated his power and that of the Inquisition by promoting Ghislieri to the role of Inquisitor General in 1556, and by elevating Rebiba and Ghislieri to cardinals in 1555 and 1557, respectively. He was now in a position to enforce his own austere reforming vision.

Although Paul IV was forced to deal with many of the problems previously faced by his predecessors, the political situation in Europe made his task more complex. Supported by local princes, many of whom wanted greater autonomy from both the emperor and the pope, the Protestantism had been impossible to suppress. Recognising this fact, Charles V had granted Lutheranism legal recognition within the Holy Roman Empire in 1555. Following his abdication in 1556, the Habsburg Empire was once more divided into its two principle parts: the Spanish monarchy ruled by Philip II (1527-98) and the Holy Roman Empire ruled by Charles's brother Ferdinand (1503-64). Both Philip and Ferdinand had witnessed the political instability that

³⁰ Agrippa, *op. cit.*, (1651). For his discussion of magic, see especially Book I chapter 2; quotations p.3 and p.2 respectively.

Protestantism had unleashed during Charles's reign and wanted to ensure that this did not recur. However, Philip was in far a stronger position than his uncle, for he had inherited a territory that had largely been secured against the Protestant threat, whereas Ferdinand ruled over an Empire formed of a patchwork of states now practising different religions.³¹

The complexity of the task facing Paul IV was further compounded by his antipathy towards the Habsburgs, which was born of the Spanish occupation of his homeland Naples. His hatred of Spain led him to conclude an alliance with Henry II of France, in which he promised to offer the Kingdom of Naples to France if they drove the Spanish out. These political decisions meant that Paul began his programme to reform and purify Christian society without support from either the emperor, or the Spanish king. Nevertheless, Paul began to pursue his agenda with vigour. He struck first against Catholic clerics whom he considered an enemy within the Church, notably Cardinals Pole and Morone. Since Pole had already returned to England after the accession of Mary I in 1553, Paul's wrath was now directed solely at Cardinal Morone, and after publicly accusing the cardinal of being a Lutheran, on 31st May 1557 he had him imprisoned in Castel di Sant' Angelo. He also increased the pressure on Jews living within the Catholic states, by passing the bull *Cum nimis absurdum* in 1556, which encouraged secular leaders to either expel Jews from Catholic states, or to implement measures to segregate them from Christians. In accordance with his own bull, he banned Jews from the Papal States, except in Rome where they were confined to a newly created ghetto.³²

The new pontiff's drive to cleanse Christendom was also implemented in his plans for a new Index. In 1556, he appointed a commission to prepare a new list,

³¹ On Spain under Charles V and its relationship to the Empire, see Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict*, (Harlow: 1991), chapter 2. For a more detailed discussion of Charles and Philip's effort to exclude Protestantism from Spain, see idem, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, (London: 1997), chapter 5. On Paul IV and Spain see Dandeleit op. cit., (2001), p.53. On France under Francis I and Henry II, see Robert J. Knecht, *French Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I and Henry II*, (Harlow: 1984). On the spread of the Protestant Reformation through the Empire, see for example Andrew Johnston, *The Protestant Reformation in Europe*, (Harlow: 1991).

³² On Paul IV and the Jews, see Christopher Black, *Early Modern Italy: A Social History*, (London: 2001), p.155.

which was printed in 1557. The choice of banned works reveals many of the preoccupations of both the incumbent pope and the Inquisition. As would be expected, the writings of Northern Reformers featured prominently within this list, as were the works of Catholic authors who proposed reforms unpalatable to Carafa and the Inquisition. The complete works of Erasmus, for instance, were prohibited. Furthermore, the new list once again struck against other works and activities that the Inquisition had long considered to be pernicious influences in society, notably banning the Talmud and also any works dealing with a series of divinatory arts. For many of the friars it was precisely these types of texts and activities that needed to be expunged from Catholic society if it was ever to be reformed. However, once again this list was never promulgated, possibly because of the objections of booksellers and partly because of the outbreak of warfare between the papacy and Spain. This conflict, the so-called “Carafa war” (1556-57), quickly concluded with the rapid defeat of the Papal armies, which in turn opened a new period of Spanish political dominance in Rome.³³

In 1558 the committee charged with the task of preparing the Index began to draw up yet another list, which was completed on 30th December of that year, and promulgated the following January. Made up of 202 individual entries, it was by far the shortest of the three Papal Indices promulgated during the sixteenth century. It is, however, widely regarded as the harshest. It also marked a new stage in the Paul IV’s efforts to enhance the power of the Inquisition. The new Index was to be implemented solely by inquisitors, thus completely by-passing the bishops. The Inquisition’s power was augmented by a papal bull that denied confessors the authority to absolve those who possessed banned works, but instead compelled them to send the penitent to the local inquisitor. The compilers of the new list also attacked the reforming programme of the evangelical humanists, by arrogating to themselves control over the licensing of Bibles, thus cutting the bishops out of this process.³⁴

³³ On the 1557 Index, see Parente op. cit., (2001), pp.165-66. On the prohibition of the divinatory arts in this Index, see Baldini, op. cit., (2001), pp.89-90. On the Carafa War, see Dandeleit op. cit., (2001), pp.53-57.

³⁴ Roman Index of 1559 *ILI* Vol. VIII. For the production of the 1559 Index and its rules, see Grendler op. cit., (1977), p.115-16. On the expanding power of the Inquisition, see Fragnito, op. cit.,

The contents of the 1559 Index can be broken down into several categories. Of the 202 entries, thirty-one were complete editions of the Bible, and another twelve were versions of the New Testament. Uniquely, this Index also included the names of sixty printers who were held responsible for the publication of heretical material. This means that there were just ninety-nine further entries. A number of these were injunctions against specific classes of books, these included for instance, a ban on all works previously condemned by either popes or councils prior to 1515, and a further prohibition on all books published in the preceding forty years which lacked titles, and on all books lacking an imprimatur from either an inquisitor or bishop. There were also a series of bans on specific books and authors. These including the writings of leading Protestant Reformers, such as Luther and Melanchthon and Calvin, and evangelical reformers, for instance this list banned all of the writings of Erasmus. The Index also again targeted the Jews, by prohibiting the reading of the Talmud and any associated writings. The list also included a number of writings that its compilers believed to be either anticlerical or obscene. This led to the prohibition of the poetry of Francesco Berni and Giovanni Della Casa, and the expurgation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*.³⁵

This Index also had important implications for philosophy. In terms of practical philosophy (politics and moral philosophy) the list saw bans on the works of thinkers such as Niccolò Machiavelli and William of Ockham's writings on the powers of the papacy. However, the Index did not specifically name any works of natural philosophy, cosmology or any similar texts. Some works, however, may have been indirectly banned. For instance, the complete works of Georgius Agricola (1494-1555), including several important works on mining and metallurgy, were placed on the Index. The reason for Agricola's inclusion on this list was probably an attempt to restrict the circulation of commentaries he had written on Scripture, which had earlier been placed

(2001), p.16. For a fuller discussion of the struggle between the bishops and the Inquisition, see Fragnito, op. cit., (1997).

³⁵ On the works condemned in 1559, see Firpo, op. cit., (1970), pp.266-67. See too Grendler, op. cit., (1977), pp.266-84. On the censorship of literature, see Ugo Rozzo, "Italian literature on the Index" in Fragnito, op. cit., (2001), pp.194-222.

on the Indices issued at Louvain and Paris. Almost certainly the compilers of the Roman Index sought to restrict these religious writings, but in order to do so they banned his *opera omnia*. While this indiscriminate ban did restrict the circulation of his texts on Scripture, it also included his non-theological writings. Removing works such as Agricola's metallurgical texts from circulation in the Catholic world was therefore an unintended consequence of the desire to prevent the spread of heterodox religious ideas. Nonetheless, it would be extremely useful to assess the rigour with which the Inquisition sought to enforce a ban on the circulation of non-theological texts penned by banned authors, and the degree of success that they enjoyed.³⁶

The 1559 Index did, however, represent a significant move on the part of the Inquisition to control works which described magic and the divinatory arts. It contained four general injunctions directed against specific types of divinatory and magical activities, namely geomancy, hydromancy, pyromancy and necromancy. There were also two further general prohibitions, the first directed against all books and writings on the magical arts, and as second one that banned all books and writings on chiromancy, physiognomy, aeromancy, geomancy, hydromancy, onomancy, pyromancy or necromancy, or books about soothsaying, sorcery, omens, haruscopy, incantations, and any form of divination which used the magical arts. This latter prohibition also proscribed judicial astrology, which sought to predict future contingent events, though it specifically allowed books and writings which used natural observations to make predictions for use in navigation, farming or for use in medicine. As we saw in chapter 1, the Inquisition wanted to ban these activities, because they believed that they involved making compacts with demons.³⁷

Although the Index had banned all writings on magic and divination, the definition of these terms was not stable during the sixteenth century. As we have already seen, for many members of the Dominican order, the magical arts were any

³⁶ For the prohibition of Agricola, see Roman Index of 1559 *ILLI* Vol. VIII. Although no specific works by Agricola are mentioned in this Index, he was entered into the 1546 and 1555 Indices produced in Louvain, and the 1556 Index issued in Paris; see *ILLI* Vol. I. For a brief description of Agricola's 'scientific' writings, see Helmut M. Wilsdorf, "Agricola, Georgius", in *DSB* Vol. I, pp.77-78.

³⁷ See the 1559 Index *ILLI* Vol. VIII, for the injunction on the divinatory art, see pp.291-92.

activity that they believed involved making a compact with a demon in order to work effects in the world. In a similar fashion, they believed that the divinatory arts could only function with the assistance of demons. While this category obviously included explicitly necromantic works, for example the *Clavicula Salomonis* (which was also specifically named in this Index), the 1559 Index also specifically banned works of divination and magic that had been presented by their authors as being entirely natural. These included the writings of Pope Paul III's client Luca Gaurico, and Patricio Tricasso's work on Chiromancy. The banning of these works indicated that the Inquisition was attempting to impose a single, coherent definition of magic and divination. This resulted in the prohibition of works whose orthodoxy had previously been subject to debate. Although many independent philosophers and their noble supporters may have disagreed with the boundaries drawn by the Inquisition, these definitions had nevertheless been established as the working standards for censorship. According to these new definitions, the work of philosophers and diviners such as Tricasso or Gaurico were demonic, regardless of the authors' claims to the contrary.³⁸

Following the removal of the bishops from the censorial process, the work of assessing specific works fell solely to the local inquisitor. By using these powers, the Inquisition was given a new mandate to eradicate works that they had long considered to be dangerous from society. While there may still have been debate over whether a technique was natural or required the preternatural assistance of demons, the ultimate power to determine the truth now lay exclusively with the Inquisition. When local inquisitors were required to exercise their own judgement, for example, when examining a suspicious text that was not specifically named in the Index, or when assessing a new book prior to issuing an imprimatur, he did so in accordance with the standards established by inquisitorial handbooks. As we have seen, these works left little room for the practice of works of divination or magic, and as a consequence, the range of possible philosophical accounts of the natural world had been, in principle at least, severely curtailed.

³⁸ 1559 Index, *III* Vol. VIII.

The Return to Trent

On April 2nd 1559, the French and Spanish monarchs concluded peace with the treaty of Cateau Cambresis, which brought to a conclusion the series of wars that had scarred Catholic Europe, and in particular Italy during the sixteenth century. Although this treaty seemed to offer a new period of stability for Europe, on 10th July that same year the French king, Henry II, was killed in a jousting accident, forcing his son Francis to assume the throne at the age of 15. Francis's reign came at a delicate time for the French monarchy, which in recent years had been forced to address the challenges posed by Protestantism. Although Lutheranism had never taken hold in France in the manner it had done in the Empire, the ideas of John Calvin (1509-64) were becoming increasingly influential amongst the nobility of the kingdom. Although old enough to rule in his own right, the complexity of the situation and the young king's inexperience meant that he required guidance. The governance of the kingdom effectively fell to his mother Catherine de' Medici (1519-89), who relied upon the advice of François and Charles de Guise, members of the staunchly Catholic Guise family.³⁹

Catholic Europe was again shaken that year by the death of Pope Paul IV on August 18th. When the College of Cardinals gathered in Rome to elect his successor, they chose the Milanese cardinal, Giovanni Angelo Medici (who was no relation to the Medici of Florence), who assumed the name Pius IV (1559-66). He was a markedly different character to his austere predecessor. Originally trained in law, Pius had profited from the patronage of Clement VII, for whom he had dispensed a number of administrative roles. He was subsequently appointed Cardinal Priest by Paul III, and his career continued to flourish under Julius III. His progress through the curia came to an abrupt end when Carafa was elected as Pope Paul IV. As Paul's pontificate developed, Cardinal Medici became so disgusted with his regime that he left Rome in protest. It therefore came as no surprise that upon his election as pope he began to

³⁹ On the French Reformation and the growth of Calvinism and the subsequent wars of religion, see Robert J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion, 1559-1598* (Harlow: 1996); idem, *The French Civil Wars* (Harlow: 2000); Mack P Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge: 2005).

dismantle many elements of his predecessor's legacy, for example releasing Cardinal Morone from prison and placing on trial a number of Paul's corrupt relatives who had prospered under his pontificate. Yet perhaps the most significant departure from the previous pontificate was Pius's concerted effort to curtail the power and influence of the Inquisition, which had grown to unprecedented heights under his predecessor.⁴⁰

As well as the religious disputes within the hierarchy of the Church, the new pontiff had to be sensitive towards the power struggle between the most important Catholic states France, Spain and the Empire. During this period all of these states exercised major influence in Rome, but one state, Spain, was growing especially powerful. Although Pius had not been the Philip II's preferred candidate for the role of pope, his election marked the start of a new era of close papal relations with the Spanish monarchy, which would be characteristic of the subsequent sixty years of Roman history. These cordial relations were fostered by Pius's displays of goodwill towards the Catholic King, which had been partly precipitated by pragmatic concerns. By 1560, reports that the Ottoman Turks were amassing a significant fleet had forced the papacy to reassess the defences for their coastline. Militarily weak, Pius was forced to rely on the Spanish monarch for protection, and he was prepared to grant papal favours to secure the assistance he required. As Thomas Dandeleet has observed, Pius's precarious situation offered Philip II the opportunity to cast himself as the protector of the papacy, and by extension, Christendom. For his part, Philip wanted to see a strong papacy that would lead the fight against heresy, ensuring the religious and political stability of the Catholic heartlands of Spain and Italy.⁴¹

While Spain was drawing closer to the papacy, France, by contrast, was growing more distant. As we have seen, the French Monarchy was faced with a burgeoning religious crisis that threatened to undermine the nation's political stability. Both Pius IV and Philip II feared that, in an attempt to resolve the religious differences in France, the French monarchy would call a national council which might draw up a settlement

⁴⁰ See Dandeleet, *op. cit.*, (2001), p.60, and Gigliola Fragnito *op. cit.*, (1997b), p.164.

⁴¹ Dandeleet, *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.58-60. On the relations between France and the papacy and the growing problem of Gallicanism, see Holt, *op. cit.*, (2005), chapter 1.

granting concessions to the Calvinists. Both the pope and the Spanish monarch alike feared that such a development could seriously compromise the spiritual health of Catholic Christendom. They viewed heresy as a contagion, and believed that the presence of legally acknowledged heretics in Catholic states would be vectors for its spread. In order to pre-empt the convocation of a Gallic Council, on December 2nd 1560 Pius announced that he intended to re-convene the Council of Trent. His announcement came only three days before the death of the French king, who was succeeded by his ten year old brother Charles IX. The succession of the new king had serious implications for all of Christendom. Since the new king was a minor, it was necessary to appoint a regent, a position given to his mother Catherine de' Medici. The new regent's primary aim was to preserve the independence of the French monarchy from the leading noble families. Controversially, she sought to balance the immense power of the Guise by promoting the interests of the predominantly Calvinist Bourbon family.⁴²

In 1561 the new regime in France realised the fears of both Spain and the papacy, when in an effort to bring an end to the religious divisions of the realm, Catherine called a national council at Poissy, which first met on July 31st. During the colloquy Catherine's chosen chancellor, Michel de L'Hôpital, attempted to promote precisely the type of political solution feared by Pius and Philip. The French bishops, however, would not accede to the monarchy's demands for a series of national reforms which could allow compromise with the Calvinists. Their resistance meant that while the colloquy did formulate a programme for reforming the Gallican church, the delegates could not establish concord between the Calvinists and the Catholics, and the meeting was dissolved on 13th October 1561.⁴³

The failure at Poissy notwithstanding, under L'Hôpital's guidance, the crown had come to favour the idea of allowing the religions to co-exist within France, a principle that was enshrined in the Edict of January (1562). The Edict was rejected by most Catholics, and the tensions between the rival factions in France escalated into

⁴² Hsia, *op. cit.*, (2005), p.18; Knecht, *op. cit.*, (2000), chapter 5.

⁴³ Knecht, *op. cit.*, (1996), chapter 4.

open civil war in the summer of 1562. After an aborted attempt to quell the tensions by convoking a second national council, Catherine de' Medici was forced to conclude that the religious divisions could not be resolved in this manner and that any hope for peace lay with the Council of Trent. She therefore authorised the French Church to send a delegation of bishops to the council, and the French bishops arrived in Trent in November 1562. However, their appearance also allowed the Spanish monarch to flaunt his own close relations with the papacy. For several centuries France had taken precedence in the papal court, and the kingdom's clerics had ritually displayed their status by assuming the highest place of honour during the processions and functions of the council's earlier sessions. The Spanish delegates now objected to the French being afforded these honours, and threatened to leave the council if they did not receive them instead. In 1563 Pius IV relented and gave the Spanish precedence, which according to Dandeleit gave them "recognition as Christendom's most loyal son of the papacy and a privileged position in Rome."⁴⁴

During the course of the council Pius continued his efforts to dismantle the legacy of Paul IV. One of his primary aims was to reform the Pauline Index, which he considered too rigid. Although the initial plans to revise the list were drawn up by the Inquisitor General, Ghislieri, the work of preparing a new version was given over to a group of bishops attending the Council of Trent, which was created on 26th February 1562. The members of the commission chosen to prepare this Index were, in conformity with the wishes of the Council, drawn from different religious orders and they were of different nationalities. The Index that the bishops prepared reflected their desire to claw back the power that had been usurped by the Inquisition. They introduced a series of rules which granted the bishops greater authority in the process of censorship. For example, Rule X of the Index reasserted the bishops' authority to license printed works, restating that that they should have equal standing alongside the inquisitors, thus bringing the structure of censorship back into line with the decrees of the Fifth Lateran Council. The fourth rule of the Index also decreed that both bishops

⁴⁴ Dandeleit, *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.62-63.

and inquisitors possessed the authority to issue permits for reading vernacular Bibles. In principle, this allowed the bishops to restart their humanist-inspired movement to engage with their flocks by allowing them to read Scripture directly. Both bishop and inquisitor could also issue permits to read works of religious controversy at their discretion. In a further attempt to define the respective powers of the Inquisition and the bishops, rules VII and IX gave the bishops exclusive control over the works which were understood to be lewd or obscene, and over works of magic and judicial astrology.⁴⁵

Although it did restore the power of the bishops, the Tridentine Index, nevertheless, did prohibit large numbers of books. It was substantially larger than its predecessor, running to one thousand and twelve entries. The first rule of the Tridentine Index also reiterated the 1559 prohibition on any books prohibited by either a pope or a Church council prior to 1515. However, this Index did reflect a considerably less rigid attitude towards censorship, which was manifested in two ways. First, while the 1559 Index had banned all the texts it named outright, the Tridentine Index introduced a more nuanced approach to censorship. Though it retained a class of censorship which signified total prohibitions of the works of the named author, this came to be reserved for the writings of heresiarchs (a category which remained undefined) such as Luther. Furthermore, Rule II of the Index allowed bishops and Inquisitors to permit the circulation of non-religious works of other heretics. The Tridentine Index also introduced a second class of condemnation, which referred to specific books. Some works entered into this category were removed permanently from circulation. However, Rule VIII of the Index introduced the concept of expurgation, which meant that works that were viewed to contain errors but were not deemed heretical could, after approved emendation, be returned to circulation. The

⁴⁵ For a list of the committee members, see *ILI* Vol. VIII, pp74-76. See Fragnito op. cit., (2001), pp.17-18; idem, op. cit., (1997b), pp.164-65. For a more detailed discussion of the respective powers of bishops and inquisitor during the sixteenth century, see Fragnito, op. cit., (1997a), pp.75-198. Parente, op. cit., (2001), p.167. On the attempts to impose the 1559 Index, see Grendler, op. cit., (1977), pp.115-127.

third category of censorship was reserved for books whose author was unknown or uncertain.⁴⁶

The compilers of the Tridentine Index were also less restrictive about the type of works that they chose to censor. Once more, the list was primarily directed towards restricting works with explicitly theological themes, and large numbers of northern Protestants were entered into the list of totally condemned authors. There was, however, a considerably more moderate attitude towards works of evangelical humanism. Whereas all of Erasmus's works had been banned in the 1559 Index, only five works (including *Praise of Folly*) were entered into the second class in 1564. The French humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples's writings on the New Testament, banned in 1554, were also now permitted. The Tridentine commission also softened the Inquisition's rigid attitude towards Jewish texts, for in principle at least, they permitted the Talmud to be published in an expurgated form.⁴⁷

Although the principles of censorship embodied in the Tridentine committee's Index did reflect the more moderate attitudes of the humanists within the Church, there was a remarkable degree of consistency in the approach taken to the censorship of philosophy. Like the earlier Inquisitorial Index, the Tridentine Index did not specifically ban any works of natural philosophy, or mathematics. It did, however, ban outright the works of a number of Protestant authors including Joachim Rheticus, Leonard Fuchs and Otho Brunfels, who had written on not only philosophical or astronomical themes, but also works of theology. As with the condemnation of Agricola in the 1559 Index, these men were not entered into the Index because of their philosophical writings, but because of their theological writings. Although this may seem to imply that their philosophical or astronomical writings were made unavailable to Catholic scholars, Rule II of the Index did allow the reading of non-religious texts by

⁴⁶ On the 1564 Index, see Grendler op. cit., (1977), pp.144-49.

⁴⁷ It must be noted that Erasmus was entered into the Tridentine Index twice, once in the first class of authors who were totally prohibited, and again in the second class. See Frajese op. cit., (1998), p.273.

heretics. It is presently unclear what impact banning the *opera omnia* of Protestant authors had upon Catholic scholarship.⁴⁸

More significantly, the Tridentine Index maintained the vigorous attempts made in the Inquisition's Index of 1559 to separate licit from illicit philosophical knowledge. As we have seen, like the mendicants, many evangelical humanists such as Erasmus believed that all types of magic and divination required the assistance of demons. Many of the humanist bishops attending Trent would have been just as appalled by the divinatory arts and magical practices as the inquisitors. Broadly, they agreed that magic, including even the well-intentioned and supposedly purified magic described by Agrippa, had no place in a Catholic society. For this reason, the compilers of the Tridentine Index were as concerned as the Inquisition to distinguish licit from illicit knowledge. Consequently, Agrippa was entered in the first class of this Index. In marked contrast to the previous Index, there was only one specific reference to any work on divinatory practices, (which was Merlin's work on prediction), the ninth rule of the Tridentine Index, nevertheless, substantially repeated the condemnation of 1559 on the divinatory arts, including the ban on the practice of judicial astrology. The 1564 Index also substantially repeated the prohibitions on magic and divination contained in the earlier Index. Once more this broad condemnation left the local authorities to define precisely which works fell within the boundaries of orthodoxy.

⁴⁸ The inclusion of the *Opera Omnia* of Protestant authors who penned philosophical or astrological texts in the Index has been made by Thorndike, op. cit., Vol. VI, (1941), p.147 and Baldini, op. cit., (2000), pp.336-37. It would be useful to establish whether in practice local Inquisitors and bishops allowed the circulation of the non-theological writings of these authors. If they did ban not allow their circulation it would then be useful to understand the imperative behind the restriction of these works. This would make it possible to establish whether it really was an unfortunate side effect of banning the writings of all Protestants or whether there was concern about the confessionalisation of the philosophy. On the idea of a distinctively Protestant philosophy, see Maija Kallinen, "Natural philosophy 'Melanchthonised', or How to create a Lutheran discipline", *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, XXVII (1996), pp.381-386; Christoph Lüthy, "The confessionalisation of physics: heresies facts and the travails of the republic of letters", in John Headley Brooke and Ian MacLean (eds), *Heterodoxy in Early Modern Science and Religion* (Oxford and New York: 2005), pp.81-114.

Chapter 3: Philosophy and Magic in Post-Tridentine Italy, 1565-90

Philosophy and Magic in the Kingdom of Naples

Since the middle of the sixteenth century, the theological authorities of Catholic Italy had been tightening their control over certain aspects of philosophical activity, notably those parts concerned with magic and divination. In spite of these developments, the nobility of Italy continued to foster and cultivate the production of these sorts of ideas. For example, in 1558 the Neapolitan nobleman, Giambattista Della Porta published the first edition of his *Magia naturalis* in Naples with the permission of the local bishop. He described his natural magic as the “most perfect, and most noble part of philosophy”, and depicted a world permeated with occult qualities, which could be manipulated by the knowledgeable magus. His magic consisted of a series of recipes and techniques for working wonders in the natural world that were far removed from Ficino’s Plotinian magic, and had nothing in common with cabbalistic writings of either Pico or Agrippa. At some point during the early 1560s, Della Porta established the Accademia Secretorum Naturae. Although we do not know the precise date of the academy’s inauguration, it was probably founded before he left for a tour of Italy, Spain and France which began in 1563. Its members may have included Domenico Pizzimenti, a classicist, alchemist and one of Della Porta’s early teachers, Giovan Antonio Pisano, Professor of Medicine and Anatomy at the Studio of Naples, and Donato Antonio Altomare. A local physician and friend of Della Porta, Altomare, had previously founded an academy which investigated medicine. As the name suggests, Della Porta’s academy was dedicated to investigating the secrets of nature, the form of natural magic that he had advocated in his *Magia naturalis*. Investigating occult qualities in the manner proposed by Della Porta remained a controversial undertaking. Although he favoured a limited form of magic, exploiting occult qualities present in naturally occurring things, his activities and recipes opened the possibility that he could be suspected of demonic activity. Although these dangers

were inherent within his work, Della Porta does not appear to have attracted ecclesiastical censure during the 1560s, but as we shall see, this situation would later radically change in the following decade.¹

Elsewhere in the kingdom of Naples, another independent scholar, Bernardino Telesio (1509-1588), was developing a very different philosophical project. Born in the town of Cosenza, Telesio, like Della Porta, was a member of the Neapolitan nobility. His education began under the tutelage of his paternal uncle Antonio Telesio, a distinguished humanist scholar. In 1517 Bernardino accompanied his uncle to Milan where he began to study Latin and Greek, and he developed a proficiency in both of these languages. The pair then spent a brief period of time in Rome, before witnessing the sack of 1527. After these calamitous events, the two men moved to Padua where Bernardino studied at the university. Whilst there he became deeply immersed in the study of philosophy; aided by his excellent knowledge of Greek he acquired a deep understanding of the works of Aristotle and contemporary Aristotelian philosophy. After completing his studies in 1535, Bernardino returned to Calabria, where, after spending a period of time in a Benedictine monastery, he married Diana Sersale with whom he had four children. Although a nobleman, Telesio was relatively impoverished and he lived off the patronage of the Carafa family, and with their support he began to develop a new philosophical system.²

In 1563 Telesio travelled to Brescia to meet the illustrious Aristotelian philosopher Vincenzo Maggi, with whom he discussed the ideas that he would present the following year in his master work *De rerum natura*. Since Telesio's work criticised many aspects of scholastic philosophy, his decision to discuss it with a committed Aristotelian may at first seem surprising. However, although Telesio was a critic of

¹ Quotation from Giambattista Della Porta, *Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti*, Italian translation of four books of the 1558 edition of the *Magia naturalis* (Venice: 1560), p.2r. For a biography of Della Porta, see Louise Clubb, *Giambattista Della Porta Dramatist*, (New Jersey: 1965). See also Eamon, op. cit., (1994), pp.197-200. For a discussion of the intellectual milieu in Naples during the Della Porta brothers' youth, see Nicola Badaloni "I fratelli Della Porta e la cultura magica e astrologica a Napoli nel '500", *Studi storici*, I (1959), pp.677-715. Giovanni Aquilecchia dates Della Porta's journey as 1561-66, see "Appunti su G. B. Della Porta e l' inquisizione", *Studi secenteschi*, IX (1968), pp.3-31: 5.

² See "Maggi, Vincenzo" in *DBI* Vol. LXVIII, pp.365-69 and on Telesio, see Neal W. Gilbert, "Telesio, Bernardino", *DSB* Vol. XIII, pp.277-80.

many aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, the project that he conceived bore close similarities to the brand of Aristotelianism practised within the University of Padua where he had earlier studied. As Paul Blum has observed, Telesio's critique of Aristotelianism in fact attempted to resolve questions posed within a framework erected by the Paduan philosophers. Perhaps more importantly, Telesio, like generations of Aristotelian thinkers before him, conceived of a natural world which functioned independently of its creator. As an heir to this form of naturalism, he believed that the cosmos operated and could be understood according to its own principles.³

At the heart of Telesio's work lay a critique of Aristotle's philosophical system, and in particular the hylomorphic explanation of the physical world sustained by successive generations of his followers. According to this theory, all things on the Earth and in the sub-lunary sphere are composed of a union of form and matter. Telesio disputed this theory, arguing that it was incapable of delivering a satisfactory explanation of generation and corruption. While he was not alone in criticising Aristotle, unlike a number of his contemporaries, Telesio did not seek an alternative in Platonism. He had already dismissed Plato's work because he held his theory of Ideas to be "so obscure, that it must not be sustained at all by a natural philosopher, whose knowledge depends on the sense." In order to supply an alternative explanation for becoming and generation, Telesio created what he considered to be an entirely new philosophical system. He argued that all things in the world were formed by the action of two contrary principles, hot and cold, which were locked in a constant struggle for dominance over corporeal mass. These two contrary principles had their respective seats in the heavens and in the Earth.⁴

In *De rerum natura* Telesio not only laid out the basis of his philosophical system but also addressed a number of specific philosophical problems. Almost certainly drawing on his experiences as a student in Padua, he tackled the question of the eternity

³ Paul Blum, "Principles and powers: how to interpret Renaissance philosophy of nature philosophically?", *Minerva*, V (2001), pp166-81: 172.

⁴ Telesio, *De Rerum Natura*, 1.26 cited in Bondi, *Introduzione a Telesio*, (Rome and Bari: 1997), p.27.

of the world, which had been a matter of controversy since the thirteenth century. No doubt all too aware of the great sensitivity of this subject matter, Telesio offered a precise explanation of what he meant by ‘eternity’, arguing that it implied neither the incorporeality nor the infinity of the cosmos. This was because, he argued: “In order for something to be eternal and infinite in time, and for it to work according to its true nature in infinite time, it does not need to be incorporeal or infinite, nor does it need another thing of this (sort), but only that, no matter how small it is, it is not afflicted by its contrary and it is not changed.”⁵ It therefore followed that although the hot heavens were not finite, if they were not destroyed by the cold principle whose seat was the Earth, they would continue to move themselves for eternity. The cold Earth too would remain unchanged for eternity so long as it was not destroyed by the heat of the heavens. In other words, although in principle both the heavens and Earth are finite, as long as they do not destroy one another they will continue unchanged for eternity. Hot and cold will continue to struggle for dominance over physical mass, and their eternal conflict will give rise to air and water, metals, and things made of salt and nitrate, and all of the plants and animals.⁶

Telesio’s work also touched upon another highly sensitive problem brought to the fore by the Aristotelians of the Italian schools: the nature of the soul, and the question of its mortality. Telesio had first tackled this issue in an earlier work *Quod animal universum*, in which he rejected the opinions of Hippocrates, Plato and Galen. These authors had all sustained the view that there were three principles at the base of Man’s actions: the brain that was the seat of sensation, the heart that governed the circulation of the blood and the warmth of the body and the liver that governed the production of blood. Telesio instead argued that the body was governed by a soul, which he identified with a substance called *spiritus*, to be found in the ventricles of the brains of both Man and animals. This was a dangerous suggestion, for it not only suggested that Man was no different from animals, but it also implied that the soul was material and consequently mortal. Although potentially controversial, Telesio again

⁵ Telesio, *De rerum natura*, cited in Italian by Bondi, English translation mine, op. cit., (1997), p.27.

⁶ Bondi, op. cit., (1997), pp.23-36.

presented these ideas in his *De rerum natura*, and once more identified the soul with the *spiritus* that he located in the brain.⁷

In 1564, when Telesio had reached the age of 56, he published the first edition of his *De rerum natura* which was formed of two books. The preface had an autobiographical nature, in which he related his trip to Maggi, and hinted that he was only publishing two books at this juncture in order to gauge its reception, but might later publish more. The work appears to have caused no major concerns to the censors, which is particularly significant because he chose not to have the work published in Cosenza. Telesio instead published the first edition of his work in Rome, which meant that in order for it to have gained an imprimatur it was inspected by the Master of the Sacred Palace, a Dominican friar. Like Della Porta, Telesio had published his work in accordance with the censorial rules established by the Church. Furthermore, during the pontificate of Pius IV, when the Inquisition was temporarily weakened, neither man had been investigated for heresy. This situation would, however, change dramatically with the election of a new pope determined to assert a more rigorous concept of orthodoxy.⁸

The Pontificate of Pius V

Following the death of Pius IV in December 1565, the Cardinals of the Church once again gathered to choose a new pope. Although this conclave has often been regarded by historians as being relatively unaffected by external influences, the Spanish monarch, Philip II, in fact played a key role in determining its outcome. Prior to the election, he wrote to his ambassador in Rome, Luís de Requeséns, asking him to maintain close relations with the Spanish supporters in the city and to ensure that the eventual election would be decided in Spanish interests. He was looking, he informed the ambassador, for a pope who could “remove the errors and dissension that had

⁷ On Telesio and the soul, see Bondi op. cit., (1997), pp.5-11, and pp.36-39, see too idem, “‘Spiritus’ e ‘anima’ in Bernardino Telesio”, *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, LXXII (1993), pp.405-17.

⁸ Bondi, op. cit., (1997), pp.20-22.

arisen in religion” and keep “Christendom in peace, unity and conformity, and especially Italy, where there was always war...which has harmed us and harms us greatly.”⁹

The candidate that emerged, Michele Ghislieri, elected as Pope Pius V (1566-72), was eminently suited to Philip’s purposes. Ghislieri was a Dominican friar, and the Inquisitor General. Although he had been a close associate of Paul IV, he did not share the latter’s antipathy for Spain. On the contrary, like his immediate predecessor, Pius was a close supporter of the Spanish king. His attitude to Spain was partly pragmatic; the new pontiff was convinced that stability within the both the Papal States and the Mediterranean region as a whole depended upon Spanish military force. Pius was, however, determined to reassert the austere reformist programme initiated by Paul IV, and to restore the power of the Inquisition that had been eroded during the pontificate of Pius IV. In order to do this, he returned the intransigent Cardinal Rebiba (who had previously been dismissed by Pius IV) to his position within the Inquisition. Pius V also personally remained deeply immersed in the work of the Inquisition. The Venetian ambassador to Rome, Paolo Tiepolo, noted that “one can say that he spends half his time in [the Inquisition’s] affairs; in it he uses the greatest rigor one can imagine; and he is not satisfied with the punishment of new crimes but he busies himself with diligent investigation of old ones as well.” The Ambassador’s remarks were extremely prescient, for during Pius’s pontificate the number of executions for heresy in Rome increased dramatically, and the Inquisition increased its activities in cities such as Venice.¹⁰

Since it was re-founded 1543, the thrust of the Roman Inquisition’s efforts had been directed towards combating the Protestant threat, but by the late 1560s the northern heresies had been largely excluded from Italy. From this period onwards the Inquisition began to exhibit an increased concern for other activities, such as magic, and divination. While many historians have noted this trend, most have suggested that this was a new departure for the Inquisition. However, as we have seen in the

⁹ Philip II to Luís de Requeséns (undated), translated by and cited in Dandele, op. cit., (2001), p.65.

¹⁰ Tiepolo’s remark is translated by and cited in Martin, op. cit., (2003), p.183.

preceding two chapters, the mendicant orders and the Inquisition had sought to root out magic, sorcery and divination from Catholic society. While it is true that for the first two decades of its existence the Roman Inquisition had been focussed on dealing with the immediate challenge of the Protestant heresies, a concern to tackle other heretical practices had remained a constant feature of the activities of the mendicants and the Inquisition. However, the effective extirpation of Protestantism within Italy allowed inquisitors to return their attention to these older concerns. Notably, the Inquisition began to take an interest in ideas and books which had appeared legitimate only a few years earlier.¹¹

The mendicant orders had also been concerned to regulate the claims made by philosophers, and now they were no longer pre-occupied by their efforts to stem the tide of heresy flowing from the North, they began to take a keen interest in ensuring that all teachings were in accordance with their understanding of the faith. One of the most powerful tools at their disposal was the Inquisition, which increasingly turned its attention to philosophy. As we have seen in the Introduction, although in principle the Inquisition could intervene in the universities, it rarely did so. This was because the university arts masters normally presented their ideas as philosophically necessary rather than true, which insulated them from any possible charge of heresy. From the fifteenth century, however, noble patronage had allowed individuals to practise philosophy outside the universities. While this development freed individual philosophers from the disciplinary and institutional constraints of these institutions, the majority of philosophers working outside the universities now presented their ideas as true. Consequently, they were liable to Inquisitorial oversight. Furthermore, following the creation of elaborate structures of press censorship during the sixteenth century, any philosopher choosing to publish his works through legitimate channels would be subject to increasingly centralised theological scrutiny.

¹¹ See for example the framework sketched in Firpo, *op. cit.*, (1950), pp.150-73 and note, Ashworth, *op. cit.*, (1986), pp.19-48, who suggested that the interest in these activities was a new feature of the sixteenth century.

We catch a glimpse of these disciplinary mechanisms in action in a letter penned by Bernardino Telesio to Cardinal Flavio Orsini, the Archbishop of Cosenza (1569-1573) on the 28th April 1570. At this time, Telesio was bringing to completion a second revised edition of his *De rerum natura*, but he informed Orsini that an unknown individual or individuals had made various complaints about the first edition of his work. Telesio began by noting incredulously:

I also used to believe that in Cosenza there were not eyes so acute, that these my errors which have not been seen in Rome, nor in the rest of Italy, were seen in Cosenza. But I see that I have been mistaken, that the R.do Monsignor Gio(van) Battista di Benedetti tells me that it has been made known in Cosenza, that in my work printed five years ago in Rome with the license of the Father Lucatello there are some propositions contrary to the religion. And from which one can deduce, that I made the soul mortal, and that I deny that the Heavens are moved by the intelligences.¹²

Although the second charge was ambiguous, but the allegations concerning his views on the soul were extremely dangerous. If it were true that Telesio's teachings did contradict this doctrine he could be liable to charges of heresy.¹³

In many of the Italian states the investigation of these allegations would have been carried out by the Inquisition. However, neither the Spanish nor Roman Inquisition had been established in Naples. In their absence, Cardinal Orsini, the senior ecclesiastical authority in the Archbishopric in which Telesio lived, would have been responsible for conducting any investigations into Telesio's orthodoxy. This explains why Telesio addressed this pre-emptive letter to Orsini. He began his defence by asserting the orthodoxy of the first edition of *De rerum natura*, and stressed the fact

¹² Telesio's letter to Orsini has been published by Girolamo De Miranda, "Una lettera inedita di Telesio al Cardinale Flavio Orsini", *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, LXXII (1993), pp.361-375. On this letter see also Bondi, op. cit., (1997), pp.39-42.

¹³ The reference to the heavenly spheres being moved by intelligences must be understood against the backdrop of an increasingly intensive debate about the structure of the universe. See W.H. Donahue, *The Dissolution of the Celestial Spheres, 1595-1650* (New York: 1981); Nicholas Jardine, *The Birth of History and Philosophy of Science: Kepler's A Defence of Tycho against Ursus with Essays on its Provenance and Significance* (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: 1984); James M. Lattis, *Between Copernicus and Galileo: Christopher Clavius and the Collapse of Ptolemaic Cosmology* (Chicago and London: 1994).

that it work had undergone rigorous investigation in Rome. Although he did not make this point, as a work published in Rome the first edition of the *De rerum natura* would have been inspected under the authority of the Master of the Sacred Palace, a Dominican friar. However, Telesio did stress the fact that his work had been inspected by a theologian (possibly a reference to the Master of the Sacred Palace) who had certified that it did not contain anything contrary to the faith, and that it had subsequently been seen by Father Lucatello, who had also approved the work. Here Telesio demonstrated knowledge of the workings of the curia, for Lucatello was held in high regard by Pope Pius V and served as his personal theologian. Given his position, Lucatello's opinion must have carried much weight within Rome. Telesio then added that the work had been read by "infinite theologians and philosophers" and amongst them another Dominican father Tommaso da Vio, who had told Telesio that he not only approved the work, but had added that "if he were to have had the authority, he would have had it read in all the convents of his religion."¹⁴

Having finished defending the work he had already published, Telesio went on to explain his present plans to have a new edition of his work printed: "Having re-polished [the book] somewhat and expanded it a great deal, and wanting to have it printed anew in Naples by order of Monsignor Archbishop, Father Mastro Baldassarre Crispo, the famous Theologian amongst the Conventuals, has seen it, as has the Reverend Father Rector of the Jesuits. [Gasparo Hernandez]". These authorities, Telesio added, had all approved his work. Now, he continued, "I hope that not only will [my writings] not appear to be contrary to religion, but very much in conformity." Father Salmarone and the father Rector Hernandez, he added, had assured him that

my other things are in conformity with the Scripture, and above all the number of the heavens, and in the material, and nature of the heavens. They have also certified to me that in Scripture one does not find that the heavens are moved by the intelligences, as Aristotle wants, but on the contrary the Father Rector, holds this [pro]position to be absurd, and ridiculous.

¹⁴ Telesio to Orsini, in De Miranda, op. cit., (1993), p.374. On Eustachio Lucatello, Locatello or Locatelli, see Firpo and Marcatto (eds), *Il Processo Inquisitoriale del Cardinale Giovanni Morone*, (Rome: 1984), Vol. II, p348, n.1.

In his concluding comments, Telesio voiced his concern that his work was being judged from the standards of Aristotelian philosophers, rather than that of Christian theologians. He also voiced his suspicion that his accuser had acted through “envy, malignity...rather than zeal for religion”, before adding that, “I only beseech V.S. Ill.ma that you deign to have my book re-read by a discrete person, who is not too exposed to the doctrine of Aristotle, and finding things which appear to need corrected he makes it known to me between now and October”.¹⁵

Telesio’s correspondence with Cardinal Orsini demonstrated his intense desire to ensure that his work was in conformity with the Christian faith, and that it would be acknowledged as such by the censors of the Church. Telesio also displayed the lengths to which he was willing to go in order to clarify any ambiguities in his work. As his anonymous critic had suggested, his theory of the soul could be taken to imply the mortality of the soul. Anxious to remove any uncertainty, Telesio subsequently altered the manner in which he dealt with the soul in the second edition of his work, which was published in 1570. While in the first edition of *De rerum natura* Telesio had not hesitated to identify the soul with *spiritus*, he was far more cautious in the second edition of his work in which he argued that there were two souls in Man: the first was a material soul that could be identified with the *spiritus*, while the second was an immaterial and immortal soul created by God that functioned as the form of the body and of the spirit.¹⁶

There is also evidence to suggest that during the pontificate of Pius V the Inquisition began to assert its limited rights to moderate the ideas of some of the university masters. On 7th May 1570, the Inquisitor of Como, Gaspare Sacco, wrote to Cardinal Rebiba of the Holy Office, informing him that a few months earlier “a book composed by a Girolamo Cardano a Milanese who reads medicine in Bologna was

¹⁵ Telesio to Orsini, in De Miranda, op. cit., (1993), p.374.

¹⁶ For the 1570 edition of *De rerum natura*, see Bernardino Telesio, *La Natura Secondo I Soui Principi, a Cura di Roberto Bondi Con Testo Originale Afronte Secondo L’Edizione del 1570* (Florence: 1999). For a discussion of the changes between the two editions, see Bondi, op. cit., (1997), pp.5-11, pp.36-39, and pp.42-44.

brought to me.” Cardano was born in 1501, in the city of Pavia, where he commenced his studies in 1520, and he subsequently completed them at the University of Padua, from where he graduated with a doctorate in medicine in 1526. Upon leaving university he began to practise medicine, but soon also began to teach mathematics in Milan. In 1543 he was appointed to the chair of medicine in Pavia, where he completed a number of his most celebrated writings. These included an important work on mathematics, the *Ars magna* (1545), and two philosophical treatises, *De subtilitate* (1550), and *De varietate rerum* (1557). Both of the latter two treatises were published outside Italy, in Nuremburg and Basel respectively. The decision to have his works published outside Italy meant that prior to printing neither text had been exposed to the oversight of the Roman Inquisition or an Italian bishop. It is highly likely that this was a deliberate move on the part of Cardano who wanted to circumvent the existing censorial structures of Italy. Since these works were printed prior to the development of the idea of creating a papal Index, it may have appeared to Cardano that this measure would be sufficient to protect his writings from the censors’ pens. In the short-term, Cardano was proved correct, his works were published without adversely affecting his career, and in 1562 Cardano gained a chair of medicine at Bologna. However, under the strict regime of Pius V, the situation had radically altered. While Cardano was carrying out his teaching duties in Bologna, the Inquisition started to take an interest in the work that he had published some thirteen years earlier.¹⁷

In his letter the inquisitor complained that: “In this book entitled *Varietate rerum* this Cardano showed himself to be a bad believer or rather an unbeliever and in my judgement he teaches errors, heresies and many superstitions.” The letter continued that in the second book, where he spoke of the influences of the stars “he increases them so much that he denies that God works in these inferior things. He denies the

¹⁷ See Mario Gliozzi, “Cardano, Girolamo” in *DSB*, Vol. III, pp.64-67. For Cardano’s own account of his colourful life, see Girolamo Cardano, *The Book of my Life* translated by Anthony Grafton (New York: 2002). See too for instance Nancy Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror: Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton: 1997); Grafton, *Cardano’s Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (London: 1999).

power of demons and he calls the martyr saints crazy and agitated by the celestial influences”. Furthermore, he called the judges of witches and Apostates “impious unjust and rapacious wolves”. He also allegedly said that miracles are fictions that are mostly found in the testimonies of mendacious priests. The Inquisitor added that, he also teaches “chiromancy. Hydromancy and other superstitions damned by the sacred Council of Trent.” He concluded: “I thought to give notice of this to S.S. Ill.^{ma} this book should be prohibited as pernicious, and that one should punish its capricious composer who whilst lecturing in Bologna teaches the abovementioned and more grave errors.” Sacco’s letter concluded by informing Cardinal Rebiba that he had also written to the Inquisitor of Bologna regarding these matters.¹⁸

That autumn, the Inquisitor of Bologna, Antonio Balducci, began the process against Cardano. The philosopher later recalled that “on the sixth of October of that year (1570) I was imprisoned. There, beyond the fact that I had lost my liberty, I was civilly treated.” On 22nd December he was transferred to house arrest for a further eighty six days.¹⁹ During this period Balducci and the Holy Office exchanged a number of letters discussing Cardano’s case, considering, amongst other issues, the mode of his eventual abjuration, and the possibility that if he were condemned as a heretic or found to be vehemently suspected of heresy, he might seek refuge amongst the Protestants. On 18th February 1571 Rebiba wrote to Balducci advising him that “in our opinion, you should send to make him abjure *de vehementi*, and with the prohibition of the said books of his, in which the errors are found.” On 10th March Rebiba again wrote to Balducci this time stating that “you must make him abjure privately in front of the congregation and you will also tell him, that Nostro Signore does not want him to lecture any more,

¹⁸ Frate Gaspare Sacco to Cardinal Rebiba 7th May 1570 in Ugo Baldini and Leen Spruit, “Cardano e Aldrovandi nelle lettere del Sant’ Uffizio romano all’ inquisitore di Bologna (1571-73) *Bruniana e campanelliana*, V (2000), pp.145-63: document I, pp.152-53.

¹⁹ Cardano, op. cit., (2002), p.61, though Baldini and Spruit state that he was imprisoned prior to 27th September 1570, see op. cit., (2000), p.152.

nor that he should have any of his works printed. It will be enough, that he is made aware of this, without otherwise inserting it into the sentence.”²⁰

Sacco’s complaints highlight a number of issues that had been the source of dispute between university philosophers and members of the religious orders since the thirteenth century. These included the question of God’s role in the universe and the influence of the stars on the human body. Importantly, Cardano was not being investigated for practising astrology, but for theorising about the principles of astrology. His trial therefore raises a number of questions. As we have already seen, schoolmasters usually insulated the claims they made about the natural world from theological censure by claiming that their ideas were not true but only philosophically necessary. Did Cardano’s work go too far and overstep widely acknowledged boundaries or did he choose not to maintain adequately the separation between the philosophically necessary and the truth? Alternatively, did this reflect a change in the manner in which his work was assessed? Was it the case that the Inquisition was no longer prepared to simply accept the defence offered by philosophers, when they considered their work especially dangerous? Although we cannot tell from the available documents exactly how the inquisitors assessed Cardano’s work, it is fair to conclude that this did not represent a major departure from past practice. The Inquisition had always had the power to scrutinise Italian university masters if they suspected that they were teaching or promoting heretical doctrines. Cardano was forced to abjure his heresies and abandon teaching, before eventually retiring to Rome where he died five years later.²¹

The fact that Cardano’s trial centred on a work that he had written as early as 1557, suggests that under Pius V the ecclesiastical authorities were taking a closer interest in controlling the circulation of texts that had been previously published. This conclusion is supported by the fact that in late 1570 Pius V radically overhauled the structures of book censorship, reasserting the role of the Inquisition and the Master of

²⁰ For the correspondence between Rebiba and Balducci concerning Cardano’s case, see Baldini and Spruit, *op. cit.*, (2000), p.152 and p.154, n.25; for Rebiba’s letters to Balducci on 18th February and 10th March 1571, see documents 4 and 5.

²¹ On the last years of Cardano’s life, see his biography in *DSB*, for details see n.17 above.

the Sacred Palace. On 19th November 1570, Pius V established that the work of expurgating books was to be the sole responsibility of the Master of the Sacred Palace. Pius also set out to reform the 1564 Index of Forbidden books, and he created a new Congregation for Reform of the Index to undertake this work. The congregation held its first meeting on 21st March 1571, and it was made up of three clerics who had recently been made cardinals by Pius, including the Franciscan inquisitor Felice Peretti (1521-90), and the Dominicans Vincenzo Giustiniani (1519-82) and Arcangelo de' Bianchi (1516-80) who had previously been a Commissary of the Holy Office. The members of the Congregation of the Index rapidly signalled their intentions to restore the full rigour of the Pauline Index of 1559. On 5th September 1571 the Cardinals of the Index suspended all vernacular bibles which did not have the authorisation of the Holy Office, and then on 20th April 1572 they prohibited all of the works that had been entered into the 1559 Index, but which had subsequently been left off the Tridentine Index.²²

Patrizi and Telesio

The increased tensions of the 1570s did not prevent independent philosophers from developing innovative philosophical systems, as the case of Francesco Patrizi (1529-97) will demonstrate. He was born in Cherso on the Dalmatian coast, which was then part of the Venetian land empire. As a young man he had studied at the Universities of Ingolstadt and Padua, and he had initially planned to train as a physician, but he abandoned this idea in 1551 following the death of his father. While at the University of Padua, Patrizi first forged the connections that would shape his future life and career, befriending Niccolò Sfondrati, later Pope Gregory XIV, and the future Cardinals Valier and Girolamo Della Rovere. At Padua Patrizi also met one of the future political leaders of Venice, Leonardo Donà. After completing his studies, Patrizi enjoyed a varied career: for several years he acted as Secretary to Filippo Mocenigo the

²² On the first two papal Indices, see chapter 2 above. On the development of the Congregation of the Index, see Parente, *op. cit.*, (2001), p.169, and Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1998), p.272.

Bishop of Cyprus; after this post he travelled to Spain where he may have served for a time as the Viceroy of Catalonia and also as the Venetian ambassador to Genoa and Madrid.²³

Throughout this period Patrizi was also deeply engaged in the intellectual life of the Veneto, for instance participating in the short lived Accademia Veneziana from 1559, and producing a number of literary and historical works. However, in the early 1550s he became captivated by the Neoplatonism developed by Marsilio Ficino. Following the collapse of Medici power during the late 1520s Florentine Neoplatonism had received little support. It nevertheless appears that a number of Franciscan friars remained favourable to Ficino's ideas. In a letter to his friend Baccio Valori of 1587, Patrizi (writing in the third person) recalled that he had first become interested in Plato and his ideas encountered during an encounter with a Franciscan friar. After enquiring how he might begin to study this work, "[the Friar] suggested as the best road the *Theology* of Ficino, to which he [Patrizi] gave himself eagerly; and this was the start of the study that he has then followed." Pursuing these studies, Patrizi became fascinated with the *prisca sapientia*, the belief that the work of ancient pagan philosophers contained a hidden wisdom that pre-figured the ultimate truth of Christianity. Guided by these interests, he began to collect together and study a series of fragments of philosophical writings that predated Plato and Aristotle. In 1571 he wrote to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli expressing his intention to collect these fragments together and publish in a single volume.²⁴

Patrizi was not, however, attracted to every aspect of Neoplatonism: he did not explore the magical aspects of this knowledge in the manner of Pico, Trithemius or Agrippa. Like Ficino, the author whom he cited in his letter to Valori, Patrizi refrained

²³ For Patrizi's biography, see Benjamin Brickman, *An Introduction to Francesco Patrizi's Nova de Universis Philosophia*, (New York: 1941) chapter 1. See too Charles Schmitt "Patrizi, Francesco", in *DSB* Vol. X, pp.416-17.

²⁴ Francesco Patrizi to Baccio Valori (1587) in *Pagine Scelte*, Sergio Cella (ed.), (Padova: 1965), p.39. On the Accademia Venetia, see Paul Lawrence Rose, "The Accademia Venetia science and culture in Renaissance Venice", *Studi veneziani*, 11 (1969), pp.191-242. On Patrizi and the *prisca sapientia*, and his plans to publish his work see Frederick Purnell Jr., "An addition to Francesco Patrizi's correspondence", *Rinascimento*, XVIII (1978), pp.155-78: 138-39.

from endorsing the more radical forms of magic found in some of the ancient Neoplatonic texts. It may be possible to explain Patrizi's decision by suggesting that he was more attracted to Ficino's ideas than those of the later Neoplatonists. It is more likely, however, that Patrizi's reluctance to discuss these ideas was due to the prevailing theological climate. As we saw in the previous chapter, although the delegates of Council of Trent had relaxed many of the rules of censorship, they had reiterated the Inquisition's concerns to restrict works of magic, divination and judicial astrology. Pursuing these ideas was now broadly recognised as heterodox, or at least highly dubious.

Although Patrizi's projected volume of pre-Socratic fragments would not be completed for some years, he made extensive use of the material that he had collated when writing his *Discussiones peripateticae*, which he published in Venice in 1571. This work amounted to an all out assault on both Aristotle the man and his philosophy. The first book was a critical biography of Aristotle, in which Patrizi cast aspersions on the Stagirite's character, suggesting that he had led a dissolute life and that his rejection of Plato was driven by a desire for recognition rather than for genuine philosophical disagreement. In the second book, he set out to undermine Aristotle's place in the Western intellectual tradition. Using his extensive knowledge of pre-Socratic writings Patrizi described the development of the *prisca theologia*. He argued that the texts that truly belonged in this tradition were characterised by common subject matter and methods, and that the work of authors such as Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus and Plato contained a secret doctrine about the divinity. According to Patrizi, Aristotle had no place in the *prisca sapientia*, because he was a merely a "physical" philosopher, who had not elaborated a valid theology, and did not possess a secret doctrine. This meant that unlike the thought of sages of the *prisca theologia*, Aristotle's work simply could not be brought into accord with Christianity.²⁵

²⁵ Purnell, op. cit., (1978); Maria Muccillo, "La vita e le opere di Aristotele nelle *Discussiones Peripateticae* di Francesco Patrizi", *Rinascimento*, XXI, (1981), pp.53-119, on Patrizi's discussion of the life of Aristotle, see pp.58-65; for the discussion of Aristotle's place in the *prisca sapientia* see esp. pp.93-94.

In the early 1570s Patrizi entered into a close friendship with one of Telesio's pupils, Antonio Persio. Persio soon asked Patrizi to comment on the recently published second version of *De rerum natura*, and in 1572 Patrizi obliged, raising a series of doubts about the work in his *Obiectiones* in which he again exploited his detailed knowledge of Pre-Socratic texts. His comments opened with the observation that Telesio's work was very close to that of Parmenides. Furthermore, he observed that Telesio favoured sense over reason, a faculty that Patrizi considered insufficient and equivocal. Patrizi's objections were soon answered: Telesio responded in the manuscript *Solutiones Thylesii* (now lost but an incomplete version was included with the 1586 edition of *De rerum natura*), and Persio wrote an *Apologia pro Telesio Adversus F. Patritium*. Notably, both men offered a robust rebuttal of Patrizi's central accusation, that Telesio's work was not original. They argued that although Telesio's system had affinities with that of Parmenides, the former differed radically from the latter because the ancient philosopher had not conceived earth and fire as contrary principles. Although the philosophers disagreed with one another, the dispute was generally conducted cordially and Patrizi and Persio remained friends. These personal connections, and the exchanges conducted within them, were to become characteristic of a network of a loosely affiliated network of independent scholars that would traverse Italy by the end of the century. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, these networks would also become important channels for the discussion of political ideas.²⁶

Continuity and Confusion: the Pontificate of Gregory XIII

By the time of Pius V's death on 1st May 1572, Spain had largely consolidated its grip over Rome, and as a consequence the Spanish king, Philip II was able to dominate the decisions made in the subsequent conclave. For example, when Cardinal Alessandro Farnese expressed an interest in becoming pope he was informed by Philip's envoy, Cardinal Granvelle, that he should abandon these designs. Farnese,

²⁶ On the dispute between Patrizi and Telesio, see Bondi, op. cit., (1997), pp.52-57.

who drew much of his income from Spanish benefices, quickly complied. This left the field open for candidates approved by the king, and on May 13th Ugo Boncompagni, was elected as Pope Gregory XIII.²⁷

The new pope was faced with a rapidly deteriorating situation in France, and the threat of increasing Protestant power. By the early 1570s the Guise family had been forced out of power in France, and the young king, Charles X, was increasingly coming under the influence of the Calvinist Admiral Coligny. Coligny not only encouraged Charles to broker peace with the Huguenots, but he also urged war against Spain. In 1571, the idea of a French invasion in the Spanish controlled Netherlands in support of Calvinist rebels was being openly promoted at the French court. The papal legate in France, Cardinal Salviati, meanwhile expressed his fear that, if France were to go to war with Spain, it could result in the Huguenots taking power. At this tense time a group of French Catholics plotted to wipe out the Huguenot leadership, and they executed their plans on Saint Bartholomew's Day, the 24th August 1572, by massacring a number of leading Protestants in Paris. The violence initiated a new round of blood-letting across the country. In 1574, Charles X died and was succeeded to the throne by his brother Henry III, who inherited the problems begun under his brother's rule. In an effort to keep power in their own hands and restrict the influence of the Guise family, the Royal Family appointed Henry's mother Catherine de Medici as his regent. These changes notwithstanding, the new king was unable to prevent the continued warfare.²⁸

In spite of concerns for the fate of the France, the new Pope pressed ahead with plans that he hoped would aid the reform of the Church. He rapidly transformed the *ad hoc* Congregation for the Reform of the Index created by his predecessor into a permanent Congregation of the Index. When it was first established, the Congregation of the Index was led by Cardinal Guiglielmo Sirleto, and its members included the three members of the earlier congregation, Cardinals Peretti, de' Bianchi, and Giustiniani. They were joined by Pius V's grand-nephew, the Dominican friar, Michele Bonelli (1541-98), and cardinals Gabriele Paletotti (1522-97), and Nicholas de' Pellevé. This

²⁷ Dandele, op. cit., (2001), p.72.

²⁸ Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion, 1559-1598* (Harlow: 1996), chapter 7.

new congregation was given the task of re-writing the rules that would be adhered to when the Index was compiled. The cardinals were also charged with the task of arranging for the expurgation of works which had not been banned outright. Under Sirleto's stewardship, the new congregation began to adopt an extremely severe attitude towards censorship. A draft of an unpublished Index compiled on his orders contained three categories of censorship. The first was reserved for openly heretical books or those suspected of heresy, the second was for books that were contrary to good morals and a chaste life, and the final category was for works of classical and Christian authors edited by Protestants. Sirleto also pushed for more severe approach to the Talmud. Whereas during the Council of Trent the prevailing opinion, for both practical and theological reasons, was that the Jews should be allowed to expurgate their own writings, Sirleto wanted the work to be carried out by Christians.²⁹

Although the restrictive attitude to censorship held by the new Congregation would have no doubt chimed with the views of the Inquisition, the very existence of this rival body was a cause for tension. This was because neither the powers of this new institution, nor its areas of competence, were ever fully defined, leading to a number of disputes with the Inquisition. This confused situation also created many ambiguities in the practice of censorship, which would remain unresolved during the remainder of the sixteenth century. Although the 1559 Index had been effectively reinstated by the Inquisition during the pontificate of Pius IV, there was major confusion regarding which books could be read by Catholics. Following the formal establishment of the Congregation of the Index, responsibility for censorship was now shared between three authorities, the Inquisition, the Master of the Sacred Palace and now the Congregation of the Index, each of which issued differing sets of instructions. Nevertheless, the Master of the Sacred Palace was an *ex officio* member of both the Index and the Inquisition, and he did facilitate some communication between these authorities. In the years that followed, Sirleto, sometimes meeting with a few of the Cardinals of the Index, and sometimes with the Master of the Sacred Palace alone,

²⁹ Parente, *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.170-71.

banned a succession of works and authors. For example, on 29th October 1572, the congregation banned all of Cardano's non-medical writings. These subsequent bans were transmitted to the dioceses of Italy in lists. The cardinals of the Holy Office, however, also continued to expurgate works, and to issue lists of suspended works to provincial inquisitors for them to implement.³⁰

To add to the confusion, on 22nd May 1574, the Master of the Sacred Palace, Paolo Constabili, sent out an *Avviso alli librai*, a list of prohibited works to be observed by booksellers. In many ways the list reflected longstanding intentions of the mendicant orders, for instance in a reversal of the decision taken during the compilation of the 1564 Index, the list prohibited the complete works of Erasmus, and those of the Venetian reformer Gasparo Contarini. Also banned were the complete works of Girolamo Cardano. Notably, the list also included several works by Pietro Pomponazzi (1462-1525), the Paduan university philosopher. In the customary fashion of the university philosophers, Pomponazzi had always asserted that he argued only for the philosophical necessity of the ideas that he defended, and this had protected him from theological censure during his own lifetime. Nevertheless, his inclusion on this list suggests that by the 1570s this was not always an adequate defence in the eyes of the censorial authorities. They were no longer prepared to allow the circulation of works that they believed contained pernicious doctrines.³¹

The mid-1570s were also a difficult period for Giambattista Della Porta. In 1574 Cardinal Scipio Rebiba wrote to the Archbishop of Naples Mario Carafa, stating that "one writes the enclosed to Monsignor Illustrissimo Greanvela Vicerè so that he imprison and send here to the same Holy Office Gio. Battista della Porta for things concerning the faith".³² Although the date of Della Porta's arrest is uncertain, his

³⁰ Frajese, op. cit., (1998), pp.273.

³¹ This list is reproduced in *ILL* Vol. IX. On Pomponazzi, see Pine, op. cit., (1986).

³² The cause of Della Porta's earlier trial has been the cause of much scholarly dispute. It has been commonly argued that it was caused by Della Porta's description of the witches' unguent. This had drawn the criticism of Jean Bodin in 1580, which Della Porta vigorously rejected in the 1589 edition of his work. For a review of the historiography, see Valente, op. cit., (1999), pp.418-431. On the date of the closure of Della Porta's academy, see William Eamon, "Natural magic and utopia in the

academy was closed by the Neapolitan authorities in 1574. His trial opened in October 1577, and concluded the following November. The initial cause of the trial was persistent rumours of necromancy stemming from the Kingdom of Naples, which had reached the ears of the Holy Office. Della Porta's poor condition of health meant that the Holy Office had allowed him to be transferred to the House of Cardinal Orsini, and it also led the consultor of the Inquisition, Pietro Santi Umano, to issue an opinion that argued against the use of torture. This opinion notwithstanding, on the 16th October 1578 the Cardinals of the Holy Office met with the Pope to discuss the case of Della Porta, and decided that he should undergo torture *de levi*. However, Della Porta was never actually tortured, and a week later his trial concluded with the sentence of *purgazione canonica*.³³

The *purgazione canonica* was one of thirteen possible outcomes to trials identified by the fourteenth century inquisitor, Nicholas Eymerich, in his *Directorium Inquisitorum*. This sentence was issued when the Inquisition encountered someone who “in his city or region has a reputation as a heretic, but of whom one could not sufficiently prove the crime neither with confessions, nor the materiality of the facts, nor with the depositions of witnesses”, and as a result it was impossible to arrive at either a verdict of absolution, nor of condemnation. In these situations the inquisitor and bishop would read out a sentence of *purgazione canonica*, which would be in expiation for the unproven crime. On a fixed day the defendant would swear on the gospels that he had never adhered to the heresies with which he had been charged. If the defendant did not want to submit to the expiation he would be excommunicated, and if he remained in this state for a year he would be condemned as a heretic. Those who had been through this process found themselves in a similar position to repentant heretics: if they fell into heresy again at later date they would be treated as relapsed heretics and consigned to the secular arm for execution.³⁴

Cinquecento: Campanella, the Della Porta Circle and the revolt of Calabria”, *Memorie domenicane*, XXVI (1995), pp.369-402: 374.

³³ Valente, op. cit., (1999), pp.420-22.

³⁴ Eymerich, op. cit., (2000), pp.193-196.

Della Porta's trial therefore left him in a dangerous position. Unable to exonerate himself from the charges of necromancy, were he to be again investigated for heresy he would have found himself in serious trouble. This situation was compounded by the nature of his research and his writings into the secrets of nature. As we have already seen, investigating such matters frequently raised the suspicion that the magician worked his wonders through a compact with a demon. Establishing the boundaries between natural and preternatural effects was extremely difficult, not least in the context of a court. We can gain an insight into the manner in which the Inquisition approached these issues in the 1570s from a new edition of Eymerich's handbook for inquisitors, which was being prepared by the jurist Francisco Pena in the 1570s. The new edition, complete with commentaries prepared by Pena, was available for use by 1578. The work, widely used by practising inquisitors, makes several important points concerning the acceptable boundaries of natural magic.³⁵

In a commentary on a section of Eymerich's handbook, entitled "by which signs a necromancer can be recognised", Pena makes some significant distinctions in the category of magic. In his original work Eymerich had claimed that "heretical magi, or necromancers, or invocators of the devil – which is the same – have common external signs." Pena seized on the fact that Eymerich had spoken of "heretical magi", and not of magi in general". This was, he added, a good name for them, because it distinguished practitioners of these arts from those engaged in two other types of magic: mathematical magic and natural magic. According to Pena, both of these categories of magic were natural, and "they can be practised without recourse to the devil." For Pena, natural magic "consists in the production of marvellous effects with the composition or union of certain things. Some examples: through natural magic one can produce a mixture which can burn under the water or sets its self ablaze from the rays of the sun". He went on to describe mathematical magic, as that through which, "via the application of the principles of geometry and arithmetic, marvellous objects

³⁵ Eymerich, *op. cit.*, (2000), this edition of the handbook includes Pena's commentaries.

can be made. It is enough to recall the case of Archita, who in this manner constructed a dove that flew through the air”.³⁶

Although Pena concluded that there was, “nothing reprehensible in the exercise of these two types of magic”, he cautioned that from these two types of magic a third could be born. This was “the magic of witchcraft or maleficient magic, which uses abundantly spells and invocations of impure spirits.” For Pena then, interest in licit magic could easily lead to illicit interests. This, he argued, was because of a perverse curiosity on the part of the natural magician who, whilst admiring the wonders of automata etc, but lacking the capacity to make them, might be tempted to invoke a devil to help him achieve these wondrous effects. These, Pena argued, were the type of people whom Eymerich with good reason considered heretical magicians. Eymerich’s damning assessment of alchemists, he continued, was also just. “The examples of collusion between heresy and invocation of devils and alchemy are too numerous.....It is enough to recall the case of Arnald of Villanova, of whom one knows with great certainty that he was an alchemist, but also, other than a great doctor, a great heretic and demonolater.” Although some might attempt to defend alchemy “it is much wiser, far more prudent, to hold oneself to the opinion of those that consider it useless and, moreover, fateful for society.”³⁷

Pena’s remarks shed much light on the situation facing a magus such as Della Porta at the end of the sixteenth century. In the first instance, unlike Eymerich, Pena recognised the validity of the category of natural magic. Nevertheless, his definition of what constituted licit activities followed Eymerich’s broad definitions, for his ideas of legitimate natural magic included manipulating naturally occurring things, or the skilled use of mathematics, to work naturally occurring wonders. Activities of these sorts would not have been considered heretical by either man, but Pena was prepared to call these activities ‘magic’ while Eymerich was not. The danger for the would-be natural magician lay in being seen to overstep the mark either in their activities or in their claims. Either way, they had to ensure that they were not perceived to be working their

³⁶ Pena’s commentary is published in Eymerich, *op. cit.*, (2000), pp.171-172.

³⁷ *Ibid*, pp.172-3. On Automata and magic, see Kieckhefer, *op. cit.*, (1989), pp.100-02.

effects through the agency of demons. Nevertheless, Pena did not advocate the kind of magic described by Ficino, which required the use of talismans, amulets or incantations, and he certainly did not allow for the cabbalistic magic promoted by Pico or Agrippa.

Although Neoplatonic magic was increasingly being pushed into the realm of heterodoxy, there was a resurgent interest in many of the ideas of Ficino amongst the nobility of Italy. In 1578, Duke Alfonso II appointed Francesco Patrizi to the newly created Chair of Platonic Philosophy at the University of Ferrara. The d'Este family ruled over a small territory, but their court had been transformed into one of the most splendid in Renaissance Italy. They were closely related to the French Royal House, for René, the mother of Alfonso and his brother Cardinal Luigi d'Este, was the sister of the former French King Francis I. This meant that they were cousins to his son King Henry II, the father of the present King Henry III. The d'Este's enthusiasm for philosophy was not limited to the ideas of the Florentine Neoplatonists. The following year, 1579, the famous magus Giam Battista Della Porta joined Luigi d'Este's court in Rome, lodging in the Palazzo d'Este.³⁸

Patrizi's ideas were not, however, universally accepted. In 1584 a humanist grammarian, Teodoro Angelucci, published a work bearing the title *Quod metaphysica sint eadem quae physica* (1584). In this work Angelucci discussed a range of issues, but most notably, he attacked Patrizi's critique of Aristotle's metaphysics contained in his *Disputationes peripateticae*. Patrizi responded in an *Apologia contra calumnias* (1584) dedicated to Cremonini. Having learned that his critic had studied philosophy and theology at the University of Paris, under teachers such as Gilbert Genebrand and Jaques Charpentier, Patrizi was quick to brand him as a defender of a moribund philosophical tradition. Angelucci in turn responded with his *Exercitationes cum F. Patritio* (1585), in which he unleashed a devastating critique of the *Discussiones peripateticae*. At the heart of his attack was an attempt to discredit the authority of authors whom Patrizi hoped would replace Aristotle, and a particular focus for

³⁸ On the history of the University of Ferrara, see Grendler, op. cit., (2002), pp.99-106; on the creation of the chair in Platonic philosophy, see p.98. On Della Porta's time in Ferrara, see Clubb, op. cit., (1965), chapter 1. On Cremonini, see Charles Schmitt, "Cremonini, Cesare" in *DBI*, Vol. XXX, pp.618-22.

Angelucci's attack were the writings of Hermes Trismegistus. Drawing on the ideas of his teacher Genebrand, Angelucci set out a series of arguments which showed that Hermes had lived later than previously supposed. Instead of living before or being a contemporary of Moses, Hermes had, he suggested, in fact lived in the late fourth century B.C in Ptolemaic Egypt. This argument therefore threatened to undermine the vision of the *prisca sapientia* outlined by Patrizi, which in turn underpinned his entire philosophical project. Patrizi turned over the task of preparing a response to Francesco Muti, a follower of Telesio, who launched a vociferous attack on Angelucci while defending the antiquity of Hermes. However, not all of the members of Telesio's circle were convinced by Patrizi's arguments. Persio, for one, broadly accepted Angelucci's arguments and adopted a more moderate conception of the *prisca sapientia*. As we shall see, despite the reservations voiced by a number of contemporaries about the validity of this ancient lineage, Patrizi and his ideas would soon be feted in the heart of Catholic Europe.³⁹

The Spanish Hegemony and Henry of Navarre

By the early 1580s, three distinct factions had emerged in France: the Royalist party, the Guise Family and their supporters, and the Huguenots led by Henry of Navarre. The Guise family combined antipathy towards the Protestants, with a desire to restore their political influence within France. Their rivals, the Huguenots, also possessed powerful political support from several noble families, principally the Bourbons who also aimed to safeguard their political influence in France. Aware that the royal army was weak, Henry III knew that if he was to protect the independence of the monarchy, he needed to balance the strength of both the Huguenots and the Guise.

³⁹ On Patrizi's disputes with Angelucci, see Firpo, op. cit., (1970), pp.273-74. For a more detailed discussion of the sources of Angelucci's criticisms, see Frederick Purnell, Jr., "Francesco Patrizi and the critics of Hermes Trismegistus," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, VI (1976), pp.155-78. On the doubts created by Angelucci's criticisms in the circles around Telesio, see Martin Mulsow, "Ambiguities in the *prisca sapientia* in late Renaissance humanism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, LXVI (2004), pp.1-13.

He was therefore forced to support the Huguenot faction's right to exist, as their presence in the country balanced the military power of the Guise. The situation in France was made more complicated because Henry III and his wife Louise of Lorraine had been unable to produce an heir, leaving Henry's brother Alençon as the next in line to the throne. After Alençon the two rival claimants to the throne were drawn from the Bourbon family. The first was the Calvinist Henry of Navarre, and the other was his uncle Cardinal Charles Bourbon.⁴⁰

In 1584 the political situation in France deteriorated for Henry III, when his brother and heir Alençon died. Horrified at the prospect of seeing a Calvinist king on the throne, three brothers from the Guise family, alongside two other Catholic nobles founded a league that aimed to prevent Navarre's accession. At this point the wider political implications of the disputed French succession came to the fore. Philip II of Spain was deeply opposed to the accession of Navarre, viewing him as a heretic, and potent threat to Spain. He also knew that if a single monarch could pacify his realm, France could once again emerge as a serious rival to Spanish power. The Spanish king was receptive to overtures from the Guise to support their activities. On the 31st December 1584, representatives of Philip II met with Henry Duke of Guise, and a representative of the Cardinal of Bourbon in the French town of Joinville. During the course of this meeting, the participants concluded a treaty in which Philip II offered financial aid to the Guise faction and the Catholic league, to support their efforts to secure the throne for Cardinal Bourbon. In return, Guise and the representative of Bourbon pledged that upon the Cardinal's eventual accession he would repudiate any of Henry III's policies that conflicted with Spanish interests. However, the pope, Gregory XIII, rejected the Guise's activities, fearing they could undermine not only Navarre but also the legitimate king, Henry III.⁴¹

The situation changed on 10th April 1585, when Gregory XIII died and was succeeded two weeks later by Felice Peretti, who took the name Sixtus V. The new

⁴⁰ See Knecht, op. cit., (1996), chapter 8; idem, *The French Civil Wars*, (Harlow: 2000), chapter 11; Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*, (2005), chapter 5.

⁴¹ See Knecht, op. cit., (1996), chapter 8 and idem. op. cit., (2000), chapter 11, esp. pp.218-19; Holt, op. cit., (2005), chapter 5.

pope was a Franciscan Friar and like Paul IV and Pius V before him, he had also been a member of the Inquisition, serving as the local inquisitor to Venice. He was later made a member of the new Congregation on the Index of Forbidden Books, but following the death of Sirleto in October of that year, the Congregation of the Index's meetings had ceased. Sixtus shared with many of the inquisitors and members of the mendicant orders a desire to reform society by rooting out what he considered to be pernicious elements. It therefore seemed as though his pontificate would resume the struggle against heresy, and reinvigorate the process of reform taking it in the direction of his hard-line predecessors Paul IV and Pius V. His pontificate also began with good relations with the Spanish king. Although not Philip's preferred candidate, Sixtus was a known supporter of Spain and was among the candidates acceptable to its king. On his election Philip had arranged a series of gifts to be sent to the pope, and in return Sixtus had pledged a million scudi for a Spanish-led campaign against Protestant England. Initially the monarch and pontiff also shared the belief that it was essential to support Henry III, the duke of Guise and the Catholic league against the Huguenots in France. Sixtus was also prepared to use his ecclesiastical power to influence events in France, and on 2nd September 1585 he published a bull which declared that, as relapsed heretics, the Bourbon princes, Henry of Navarre and his brother the Prince of Condé, were excommunicate. The bull continued that as a consequence of their excommunication, they had no legitimate right to succeed to the throne of France. The excommunication of Navarre left Cardinal Bourbon as the last legitimate heir to the throne.⁴²

Like Philip II, the governors of the Venetian state had become increasingly interested in the internal affairs of France. However, they had a very different agenda. Since the early 1580s the city's governing patrician elite had been divided between two competing factions, the *vecchi* and the *giovani*. The former favoured abandoning Venice's traditional mercantile economy and creating a land empire, which they argued

⁴² Parente, op. cit., (2001), p.175. On the reception of this bull at the French Court, see Frances Yates, "Giordano Bruno: some new documents", *Revue internationale de philosophie*, XVI (1951), pp.174-99: 185-88.

could be secured by promoting strong connections with the Spanish monarchy and the papacy. The *giovani*, however, favoured the expansion of Venice's traditional mercantile economy, and wanted to restrict Spanish influence in their affairs. They had observed how following the conclusion of the Peace treaty of Cateau Cambresis (1559), the Spanish monarchy had gradually consolidated its power in Italy, exercising political hegemony through its territorial possessions the Kingdom of Naples, and the Duchy of Milan. From the middle of the decade, the *giovani* became the predominant power within Venice, and they believed that the most effective means to secure the state's independence was to challenge Spanish power within Italy. They recognised that this could only be achieved by the re-emergence of France as a rival to Spain, and for this to occur the damaging Wars of Religion needed to be resolved, and a new powerful monarch installed. The Venetians therefore launched a diplomatic offensive designed to improve the affairs of France. In 1585, the French ambassador to Venice sent reports to the French court detailing Venetian proposals for radical solutions to the country's problems. These suggestions included the idea that Henry III should accept a religious division within his kingdom so that France could present a united political front, and that a national French synod fully independent of the papacy should be convoked in order to settle the situation in France.⁴³

Meanwhile in France, the three-way conflict between the League, the Royalists and the Huguenots began to intensify. In 1586, the King's mother Catherine de Medici, still a powerful figure in the French political landscape, travelled to meet Henry of Navarre. Although he was excommunicate he remained the Royal Family's preferred candidate to succeed Henry III, and the Queen hoped that during this meeting she could negotiate terms for him to accept the throne. In the same year the Spanish-backed Catholic League began to openly resist the French King. These events were being closely monitored in Italy, particularly in Venice. Many of the *giovani* also supported Navarre, for they believed that Cardinal Bourbon's accession to the French

⁴³ On the factions within Venice, see Gaetano Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa* (Turin: 1971), pp.139-41. On the Venetian proposals, see Bouwsma, op. cit., (1968), p.246, and Gaetano Cozzi, "Leonardo Donà" in *DBI*, Vol. XL, p.762.

throne would confirm Spanish power in Italy. Under their influence, the Venetian government was the first to offer formal recognition to Navarre's claim to the French throne. The Venetians also instructed their ambassador to Rome, Paolo Paruta, to lobby for the absolution of Navarre. According to William Bouwsma, Paruta attempted to persuade the pope that he should set aside issues of doctrine and Canon law, and to instead consider the problem from a political perspective. They argued that the Papal States, like Venice, were trapped by Spanish military and political power. Consequently the Spanish monarch wielded unparalleled influence over papal decisions, including those of a spiritual nature. Only French military power could guarantee the independence of the Papal States and with it the independence of the Papacy as the spiritual leader of Catholic Christendom.⁴⁴

By 1586, these Venetian diplomatic efforts began to find a more receptive audience in Rome, for after their initial close cooperation, relations between the Spanish king and Sixtus V had begun to deteriorate. The pope was increasingly concerned that the Spanish monarch was exerting too much control over his pontificate and over the Church at large. Philip had also earlier provoked an open confrontation with Sixtus by demanding the right to bestow ecclesiastical titles in Spain. Sixtus responded by threatening the king with excommunication. The situation was made more complicated for Sixtus by the fact that the Catholic King exerted tremendous influence within Rome, through a patronage network that ran through the College of Cardinals and the Papal Curia. One particularly delicate problem facing the new pope was the fact that the extremely powerful Congregation of the Inquisition, a notable powerbase for both Paul IV and Pius V, was dominated by cardinals such as Giulio Antonio Santori (1532-1602), who owed their loyalty to the Spanish king. As Sixtus's relationship with Philip II deteriorated, the support given to the Spanish crown by the Cardinals of the Inquisition would become a source of increasing tension.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Bouwsma, op. cit., (1968), p.247. On Venetian support for Navarre, see Yates op. cit., (1964), chapter 16, esp. pp.322-23.

⁴⁵ Other members of this congregation included Cardinals Pinelli, and Deza, all of whom are identified by Dandelelet as members of the Spanish faction; see Dandelelet, op. cit., (2001), p.249, n.108. See too Saverio Ricci, "Giulio Antonio Santori e le 'cose' di Francia", *Nouvelles de la republiques des lettres*, II

Although this was the case, in many respects Sixtus shared a broadly similar reforming agenda with these cardinals. As an inquisitor he had pursued a hard-line policy, and his actions as pope reflected his desire to create a Christian society purged of many of the elements considered dangerous by the mendicant orders and the Inquisition. For example, on 5th January 1586 he issued the bull *Coeli et Terrae*, “Against those who employ the art of judicial astrology and any other kinds of divination, and read or possess books on that subject.” The bull went on to explicitly declare that, “There are no true arts or branches of study which seek foreknowledge of future events and chance happenings. Future events, with some exceptions, come about necessarily or at least frequently from natural causes which owe nothing to divination. Such arts are deceptive and false, established by human cunning and demonic fraud.” Consequently, “We decree and declare against astrologers, ‘mathematici’, and any others who practise the art of what is called ‘judicial astrology’ (with the exception of those who make predictions in relation to agriculture, the art of sailing, and medicine).”⁴⁶

The Bull also stated that “there are certain men – either mad and meddlesome or impious and irreligious – who take such pains to know future and other hidden things that they offend, many times, against the law of God.” The Bull continued that, “Some of them are not afraid to employ geomancy, hydromancy, aeromancy, pyromancy, onomancy, chiromancy or necromancy, and do so by means of a secret partnership with evil spirits, or a tacit pact between them.”⁴⁷ The ban on divinatory arts and judicial astrology was entirely consistent with what had gone before, reiterating the formulations of the earlier Indices of 1559 and 1564. Furthermore, it is clear that the compilers of this bull rejected these arts because they believed that any knowledge

(1996a), pp.116-50, who notes Santori’s allegiances to Spain and his intense dislike for Navarre, but demonstrates the nuances in Santori’s attitudes towards the French civil wars, for instance, his disagreement with Sixtus over the excommunication of Navarre.

⁴⁶ *Coeli et terrae* translated PG. Maxwell-Stuart, in idem, *The Occult in Early Modern Europe. A Documentary History* (Basingstoke: 1999), pp.59-60. Although Sixtus retained the Inquisition’s rigorous attitude towards judicial astrology and divination, he was more accommodating towards the Jews than his predecessors Paul IV and Pius V, and current Cardinal Inquisitors such as Santori. See Parente, op. cit., (2001), p.175.

⁴⁷ *Coeli et terrae* in Maxwell-Stuart, op. cit., (1999), p.59.

derived from them was achieved by making compacts with demons. Although this bull did not substantially alter the grounds for condemning judicial astrology and the divinatory arts, significantly it reversed the position of the 1564 Index which assigned the authority to scrutinise these texts to the bishops, and instead officially gave this power to Inquisition.

The provisions of these bulls would soon be tested by the work of philosophers. In 1586 Della Porta published a work entitled the *Physiognomonica del huomo*, which he dedicated to Cardinal Luigi d' Este. Physiognomy was an art that functioned by examining the external signs on the human body. It was often associated with forms of divination, and it was one of the forms of prediction proscribed in the 1559 Index of Forbidden books (though not by Sixtus's bull). Although physiognomy might suggest some form of divination, as the heading of the first chapter "that many divinatory sciences are vain, false and pernicious, and so great is the excellence of physiognomy, as born of natural principles" suggests, Della Porta went to great lengths to distance himself from these prohibited arts. He explicitly rejected other forms of divination; for example, citing the authority of Augustine and Pico della Mirandola, he dismissed astrology as ineffective and refuted divination through the elements (hydromancy, pyromancy etc). He then moved on to consider the various methods for predicting the future through interpreting signs on the body including chiromancy, podomantia, (study of feet), and umbilicomantia dal bellico (study of the navel). The practitioners of these activities, he related, examine the lines on these parts of the body from which they "judge the length, and brevity of life, and the quality of death, that they have produce." However, he concluded that these activities "are the fates among the species of divination, with which they foresee the things to come, and they were called spells (or witchcraft)".⁴⁸

As well as dismissing virtually all forms of divination as false, Della Porta offered a much more limited scheme for his interpretation of the human body. Instead of seeking to predict the future, he believed that the examination of physical

⁴⁸ Giam Battista Della Porta, *Della fisonomia del huomo*, Italian translation from the Latin by Pietro Paolo Tozzi, (Padua: 1623), pp.1-2.

characteristics could reveal character traits. Della Porta invoked the authority of ancient authors such as Plato and Aristotle, and more modern authorities such as Aquinas in support of his ideas. This allowed him to conclude (for example) that those with a very small head “have little sense, and less brain”, and that “in sum the small head, is necessarily bad”. He also offered the opinion that a person with a long beard will be “more loquacious than they will admit”. Although Della Porta’s claims for his work were indeed limited, and he had gone to great lengths to stress his orthodoxy, as we shall see in the following chapter, this did not prevent the Inquisition harbouring intense concerns about his ideas. The book was dedicated to his patron Cardinal d’Este; following the latter’s death in 1587, Della Porta returned to Naples, and to the circle of scholars he had left in the city.⁴⁹

Although Sixtus’s actions, and the overall climate of his pontificate, may indicate that he shared a reforming agenda with the aims of the Inquisition, it was marked by a significant anomaly. In 1587 he reinstituted the Congregation of the Index that had fallen into disuse since the death of Cardinal Sirleto two years previously. While on the one hand it is to be expected that a pope with Sixtus’s background should want to reactivate such an important censorial organ, his choice of members for this Congregation was in many ways extremely surprising. The cardinals he selected included Marcantonio and Ascanio Colonna, Vincenzo Lauro, Agostino Valier, Girolamo della Rovere, Gabriele Paleotti, Ferderico Borromeo, William Allen and Costanzo Boccafuoco (the only member of a religious order). Four of them, Della Rovere, Ascanio Colonna, Allen and Borromeo, had been given their cardinal’s hat by Sixtus himself between November 1586 and December 1587. These were remarkable choices, because many of these cardinals promoted a programme of reform far removed from that of Sixtus. Notably, many of them favoured the more moderate approach to censorship outlined at Trent, a vision of reform that the members of the

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.38 and p.81.

Inquisition, including Sixtus himself, had fought so hard to banish from Italy over the preceding forty years.⁵⁰

Why would Sixtus promote these cardinals and present them with a power base within his regime? The answer appears to lie in his struggles with the Spanish monarchy. As we have seen, the Inquisition was dominated by cardinals who belonged to the Spanish faction in Rome, and Sixtus required some means of balancing their immense power and influence. At least three of cardinals chosen by Sixtus, Gabriele Paleotti, Agostino Valier and Federico Borromeo, were also well known for their efforts to protect the rights of the Church, and ensure ecclesiastical independence from secular rulers. Borromeo and Valier had established reputations for resisting Spanish interference in their dioceses, and, as Anthony Wright has argued, they believed that the Church would not be able to fully assert its own independence until a restored France could balance the power of the Spanish monarchy, which was encroaching so heavily on papal independence. Such views must have resonated deeply with Sixtus as he fought to maintain the independence of his pontificate from Spanish domination.⁵¹

In order to balance the power of the Spanish faction, Sixtus used the new congregation to dilute the power of the Inquisition. However, this strategy presented a threat to his vision of reform. Although the Cardinals of the Congregation of the Index may have been sympathetic to the Pope's attempts to free himself from the influence of the Spanish king, they wanted to allow a range of works to circulate that had previously been banned by the Inquisition. At first it appeared as though their effort might meet with success. Vittorio Frajese has described the first few months of their work in the revived Congregation of the Index as "a little spring". The cardinals wanted to allow the reading of the Bible in the vernacular and to place the writings of Erasmus in the second class of the Index rather than the first, allowing them to be

⁵⁰ For a complete list of the dates of the appointments of Cardinals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see the website 'The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church', created and maintained by Salvador Miranda. Urls: <http://www.fiu.edu/~mirandas/consistories-xvi.htm> and <http://www.fiu.edu/~mirandas/consistories-xvii.htm>.

⁵¹ On Borromeo, Paleotti, and Valier's attitudes to Spain and ecclesiastical rights, see Anthony Wright, "Federico Borromeo and Baronius" in Romeo de Maio et al (eds), *Baronio storico e la contra riforma* (Sora: 1982), pp.169-82.

expurgated and returned into circulation, and they also favoured the expurgation of the Talmud. This spring was short-lived, for Sixtus refused to allow either Erasmus's writings to be expurgated or for vernacular Bibles to circulate. However, unusually for a former member of the Inquisition, Sixtus was in favour of allowing the amendment, rather than the complete suppression of the Talmud. The pope proceeded to enforce his own will on the Congregation, even going so far as to exclude Valier from its meetings. Although the cardinals of the reformed Congregation of the Index had initially set out to produce a more open Index, under the influence of Sixtus they began to prepare the most severe version yet. These events, Frajese noted, demonstrated "the extreme weakness of the Congregation of the Index, incapable of resistance to an aggressive pontiff determined to assert his will."⁵²

Despite his success in both creating and controlling a new Congregation that could balance the power of the Inquisition, there remained tension with the cardinals of the Inquisition. During a consistory, Sixtus reprimanded Santori for referring to the Spanish King as "Dominus". As Santori recorded in his diary "The pope in the presence of the entire college reprimanded me saying that the cardinals must not say "dominus" in front of the pope, because they have no other lord than him".⁵³ In 1558 in a further effort to secure his position, Sixtus initiated wide scale reform of the Papal Curia, reorganising it into sixteen congregations. His reforms were not only prompted by a desire for greater efficiency, he recognised that by dividing the papal administration in this way, it was more difficult for the cardinals to form organised opposition to his administration.⁵⁴

Meanwhile the political situation in Europe was growing still more complex. In 1588, the Spanish king laid plans to send a huge armada to invade England. The fleet was due to stop en route in the Netherlands to pick up troops, and fearing that their absence might encourage the French king Henry III to intervene in the Netherlands, the Spanish monarch supported a campaign led by the Guises to take Paris by military

⁵² On the 'little spring', see Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1998) p.310; see too Fragnito, *op. cit.*, (1997b), pp.163-75, which describes the disputes between the two congregations and also the Master of the Sacred Palace.

⁵³ Santori cited in Ricci, *op. cit.*, (1996a), p.129, n.34, translation mine.

⁵⁴ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, (1988), p.194.

force. The plot was successful and Henry III was held a virtual prisoner. However, events rapidly changed to favour Henry, for the eventual failure of the Armada encouraged him to order the assassination of the Duke and Cardinal of Guise. Henry then laid siege to his capital, but during the course of this siege he was himself assassinated. The situation in France had reached a new crisis point, as both Cardinal Bourbon and Henry of Navarre laid claim to the vacant throne. The outcome of the struggle for the throne had momentous implications for Catholic Europe, a fact not wasted on Philip II, who wrote to Farnese in the Netherlands that “The affairs of France are at this moment the principle thing”. The overwhelming opinion in Madrid was that a Protestant king would assist the Dutch, and that the most effective means of securing the Netherlands was therefore invading France.⁵⁵

Warfare continued in France as Navarre sought to secure his throne from the Catholic League which was now openly fighting to install Cardinal Bourbon on the throne. Nevertheless, even if Navarre were able to secure his throne militarily, there remained the question of his Calvinist faith. In order to be fully accepted by the Catholics of France and Europe, Henry would be required to convert. As a relapsed heretic, who had been excommunicated by the Catholic Church, this was virtually impossible. Catholic Europe was divided in its response to this situation. Unsurprisingly, the leaders of Venice chose to ignore Navarre’s status as an excommunicate, and became the first and only Catholic power to officially acknowledge him as the legitimate king. Philip II reacted in the opposite manner, and once more attempted to influence events in France by exerting diplomatic pressure on the papacy. The king’s efforts were hampered by his deteriorating relations with the pope, who following the failure of the Armada had refused to pay the king the million scudi that he had earlier pledged to the English campaign. The Spanish ambassador in Rome, the Count of Olivares, nevertheless relentlessly pressed Sixtus to improve the

⁵⁵ Philip II translated by and cited in Kamen, *op. cit.*, (1991), p.134.

Spanish position, demanding that he should undertake every possible action against Navarre, and issued formal protests about him even receiving the French emissary.⁵⁶

In spite of the Spanish pressure, Sixtus, increasingly frustrated by the Spanish domination of his pontificate, began to seriously contemplate absolving the new French King. In a letter to the scholar Gian Vincenzo Pinelli recalling these events, Pietro di Norres stated that Sixtus had been persuaded by the Duke of Luxemburg that the majority of Catholic princes already accepted Henry of Navarre as the legitimate king. Navarre, he added had also promised to declare himself a Catholic within six months: “Sixtus, persuaded that this would be perhaps the smoothest, and best route to restore peace in this Kingdom, which for many years had been afflicted by civil discord, began also to suspect the secret ends of those who sustained the arms of the League and eventually realised the national concerns that covered themselves under the cloak and name of religious concern.”⁵⁷ In response, Sixtus made the dramatic gesture of invalidating Henry’s earlier conversion to Catholicism in 1572, thereby removing his status as a relapsed heretic and opening the way for him to be received by the Church as a repentant heretic. He also laid plans bring peace to France. In the autumn of 1589 he appointed Cardinal Enrico Caetan as his legate, and sent him to France with instructions to broker a settlement between the belligerent factions. Caetan, however was reluctant to negotiate for peace on Navarre’s behalf, and refused to meet either the would-be king or his allies.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ On Venice’s support for Henry IV, see Bouwsma, op. cit., (1968), p.247, and Domenico Sella, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century* (London and New York: 1997), p.177. On the political reconfigurations within Venice during the 1580s, see Cozzi, op. cit., (1971), pp.139-41. See too Dandele, op. cit., (2001), pp.83-87.

⁵⁷ Pietro di Norres in Rome to Pinelli in Padua, 2 March 1593, BAV Barb Lat 5781, “Sisto persuaso, che questa forse sarebbe la piu agevole, e biene strada per rimettere la quiete in quel Regno per tant anni afflitto dalle civile discordie, entrate anche in sospetto de segreti fini di chi formentava l’arme della lega, et penetrate gl’interessi di stato, che si coprivano sotto ’l manto, et nome d’interesse d’Religione” ff.42v-43r.

⁵⁸ Knecht, op. cit., (2000), p.243. On the debates over the absolution of Henry of Navarre, see A. E. Baldini, op. cit., (1995), pp.201-26.

The Publication of Patrizi's *Nova philosophia*

As these dramatic events were unfolding in France, Francesco Patrizi was bringing to completion two important philosophical projects. In March 1590, he wrote to Johann Hartmann Beyer (1563-1625) seeking the latter's assistance in bringing two proposed works to press in Frankfurt. The first was a version of Patrizi's scheme to publish fragments of pre-Platonic philosophy, which he now referred to as the *Sapientiae thesaurus*, and the second was an early version of a large philosophical treatise that he was still preparing under the title of *Nova de universis philosophia*. Patrizi had not yet completed either of these texts, but he sent his correspondent a proposed plan of the latter work, which he hoped that he would pass on to his friends so that they could offer comments. At present, we do not know why Patrizi began to investigate the possibility of printing his work in Germany rather than within Italy. It is nonetheless highly likely that the rigid atmosphere of Sixtus V's regime inclined the philosopher to find a way to circumvent the censors of Italy.⁵⁹

This speculation is supported by the fact that, as we have seen, the Congregation of the Index was preparing the harshest papal Index yet. The new list was formed of three parts: a list of twenty two rules, more than twice the number formulated by bishops at Trent; a list of prohibited names and titles; and finally a list of heresiarchs. The new Index also banned reading the Bible in the vernacular, works with obscene content, and those which derided either prelates or princes. It also seriously restricted the role of local censors, by centralising the licensing and retrospective inspection of printed works. The actual list of banned authors was relatively short, consisting of only some 200 entries. While there are numerous entries seeking to restrict judicial astrology and divination, there was only one work which can be broadly classified as 'philosophical', namely the 1559 edition of Della Porta's *Magia naturalis*. This came at

⁵⁹ Purnell, op. cit., (1978), pp.135-36.

an inopportune moment for the Neapolitan philosopher, as he had published the second edition of this work only the previous year.⁶⁰

Meanwhile in France, the death of Cardinal Bourbon in May 1590 left the Catholic League without a figurehead, but still united in their desire to prevent Navarre's accession. However, Sixtus continued to allow the idea of Navarre's absolution to be discussed within Rome, and his attitude enraged the Spanish, who expected complete support from the pope. This situation led to a serious deterioration in the relationship between the papacy and the Spanish monarchy. Reports from Rome accused the Spanish of attempting to reduce the papacy to nothing more than a Spanish vassal, and complained that "Neither the Neros nor the Diocletians" had desired to "usurp papal authority in the way that the Spanish now tried". For their part, the Spanish began to threaten the Papal States with troops from Naples, and withheld vital grain supplies from Sicily. In return, Sixtus again threatened to excommunicate Philip. However, Sixtus's attempts to resist Philip's will were in vain: the king was simply too powerful. By July 1590, the pope had been so worn down by Spanish threats that he concluded a new treaty with Spain, pledging both men and money to fight the Huguenots in France. In August, the Spanish army entered France from the Netherlands and relieved Paris, then besieged by Navarre, whose absolution now seemed less likely than ever.⁶¹

Worn down by his conflict with the Spanish king, Sixtus V died on August 27th 1590. The pope's demise presented the Inquisition with an opportunity to suppress the Index that he had overseen. Although the Cardinals of the Inquisition were broadly in favour of Sixtus's Index, and approved of his attempts to restrict writings by humanist authors such as Erasmus and magical and astrological texts, they had disagreed with his relatively tolerant attitude towards the Talmud. The news was also welcome to the Spanish king, who, after the fractious years of Sixtus's pontificate, was keen to install a successor who would be more amenable to his influence. During the course of the

⁶⁰ For a discussion of this Index, see Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1986), especially pp.17-19. The Sistine Index is published in *ILI* Vol. IX, pp.353-446.

⁶¹ Report from Rome cited and translated in Dandele, *op. cit.*, (2001), p.87; Ricci, *op. cit.*, (1996), p.137, n.58.

following conclave, Philip sent troops and galleys from Naples towards Rome in an effort to influence the decision. It was no surprise when the cardinals elected Giovanni Battista Castagna, a strong supporter of Spain, as Urban VII on 15th September. Unfortunately for the king, the new pope died just twelve days after his election. Philip II was therefore forced to make another concerted attempt to secure the election of a suitable candidate. He issued a shortlist of seven cardinals whom he considered acceptable, and through his representatives in the city he made it clear that no other candidates should be considered. The king also let it be known to the cardinals that vital grain supplies from Sicily would be suspended until they had made a suitable decision. The king's efforts were a success, for on 5th December, the cardinals elected Niccolò Sfondrati, an old member of the Spanish faction, as Pope Gregory XIV. The implications of these machinations were not wasted on contemporaries. As Pietro di Norres would observe two years later in a letter to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, "Sixtus was succeeded (not including the thirteen days of Urban VII) by Gregory XIV. This one acceded to the pontificate through the work, and through the great efforts of the Spanish; obligated by this favour, [he was] their subject, and disposed to promote their reputation with every means."⁶²

Soon after the new pope's accession, Patrizi's *Nova philosophia* was printed in Ferrara. The work itself was divided into four sections: the *Panaugia*, the *Panarchia*, the *Pampsychia*, and the *Pancosmia*. The subject matter was diverse, taking in discussions of the nature of light, cosmology and the human soul. Although it is unclear why he abandoned his earlier plans to print the work in Frankfurt, the change of pope certainly created new opportunities for Patrizi. The philosopher had known Gregory XIV since they had studied together at the University of Padua, and Patrizi dedicated the work to his old friend. As well as the main dedication to Gregory, Patrizi dedicated each of the eleven individual parts of his treatise to members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of

⁶² "A Sisto successe (non computati i xiii giorni di Urbano VII) Gregorio xiiii. Questi acceso al Pontificato per opera, et per un estremo sforzo degli Spagnuoli, obbligato per questo beneficio, suddito loro, et disposto a procurare con ogni mezo la lor grandezza". Pietro di Norres in Rome to Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua, 2nd March 1593, BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, f.44v. On Philip II's actions, see Dandele, op. cit., (2001), pp.87-90.

Rome, including Cardinals Federico Borromeo, Ippolito Aldobrandini, Scipione Gonzaga, Agostino Valier, Girolamo Della Rovere, Paolo Camillo Sfondrati (the Papal nephew), Vincenzo Lauro, Gabriele Paleotti, Valerio Salviati, Scipione Lancilloto, and Caetan. Patrizi's dedications were readily accepted, and it is interesting to note that four of them, those to Borromeo, Della Rovere, Valier and Paleotti were made to serving members of the Congregation of the Index.⁶³

The *Nova philosophia* was a work on a grand scale. In the dedicatory letter to Pope Gregory, the Patrizi explained:

It is five philosophical systems that I submit to you in this book, Gregory, most blessed Father. They are all pious, and they all agree with the Catholic Faith: my own, which is of recent invention; the Chaldean philosophy of Zoroaster; the Egyptian philosophy of Hermes; another Egyptian philosophy which is a mystical one; and another still which is properly Plato's own. I have taken enormous pains to rescue them from the ruins under which they have been buried for so long, to collect and explain them and in one single volume, and to present them in one single volume.

The work he described differed from the scheme that he had outlined to Beyer earlier in the year. He had not only scaled down the original scope of the *Nova philosophia*, but had also presented with it part of the work that he had intended to publish separately as the *Sapientiae thesaurus*. In many ways, the work Patrizi now presented was the continuation of Ficino's attempts to rediscover a pious philosophy, and in this passage Patrizi makes it abundantly clear that he believed that his work should be considered as the fulfilment of this tradition. Summing up his contribution to the history of human thought, he concluded that, "With immense and unremitting effort I have, methinks, brought philosophy to completion."⁶⁴

⁶³Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.275, and Maria Muccillo "Il Platonismo all'universita di Roma: Francesco Patrizi" in *Roma e lo studium urbis: spazio urbano e cultura dal quattro al seicento* (Rome: 1992), pp.200-247: 208-209. For a summary of the content of the *Nova philosophia*, see Brickman, op. cit., (1941); on the changes between the proposed work of 1590 and the published edition, see Purnell, op. cit., (1978), p.145.

⁶⁴ Dedicatory letter to the *Nova philosophia*, translated by and cited in Luc Deitz, "Space, light and soul in Francesco Patrizi's *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591)", in Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi, (eds) *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*, (Cambridge Mass.: 1999) pp139-69: 139.

In an echo of Ficino's earlier position, Patrizi exalted the capacities of not only philosophy, but also Man's rational faculty. According to Patrizi, philosophy had a unique capacity to appeal to Man's rational nature. "Human reason", he wrote, "is guided by reason alone; reason follows reason willingly, and even if she does not like it, reason is carried along by reason. It is with the help of reason, that men should be lead to God. Accordingly, I have made every effort to devise this true and divine philosophy by relying on reason alone." For Patrizi, human beings, regardless of their confessional allegiance, were united by the fact that they all shared this rational faculty. Although dogma might divide them, Mankind was united by this shared capacity for rational thought which could bring them back to God. Patrizi therefore claimed that since his philosophy had been constructed solely through the use of reason, Man's rational faculty ensured that all who encountered it would be compelled to acknowledge its truth. More importantly, the truth to which Patrizi's philosophy would lead his fellow Man was the truth established within the Catholic faith.⁶⁵

This meant that, like Ficino, Patrizi believed that his philosophy could bring non-believers to accept the supreme truth of (Catholic) Christianity. In this manner philosophy had the power to transcend confessional divisions and draw all Christians to a shared truth:

I would have you then, Holy Father, and all future Popes, give orders that some of the books which I have named shall be continually taught everywhere, as I have taught them for the last fourteen years at Ferrara. You will thus make all able men in Italy, Spain and France friendly to the Church; and perhaps even the German Protestants will follow their example, and return to the Catholic faith. It is much easier to win them back this way than to compel them by ecclesiastical censures or by secular arms. You should cause them to be taught in the schools of the Jesuits, who are doing such good work. If you do this, great glory will await you among men of future times. And I beg you to accept me as your helper in this undertaking.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.139.

⁶⁶ Patrizi, dedication of the *Nova de universis philosophia*, translated by and cited in Yates, op. cit., (1964), p.203.

Patrizi believed that if all of the teaching institutions within the Catholic world were to adopt his metaphysical system as the foundation of their curricula, it could provide the impetus to regenerate the Christian faith in Europe. Not only would it reinforce the faith of Catholics, but it might also resolve the bitter divisions within Latin Christendom. Patrizi also noted that it was far more effective to try to persuade the heretics of the truth of the Catholic faith than to attempt to forcibly convert them, and purify the faith through repressive measures. Set against the backdrop of the military action against the heretics of France and Spain, which had been sponsored by the King of Spain and numerous popes, and the restless pursuit of dissidents by the Inquisition during the second half of the sixteenth century, these were indeed pointed remarks.

According to Firpo: “The initial reception of the work was encouragingly favourable. There was not a dissenting voice either among the Aristotelians or among prelates”. In fact in certain quarters the *Nova philosophia* was extremely well received. One of the dedicatees, a Florentine cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, had been particularly impressed by Patrizi’s work. On 3rd October 1591 he wrote to Patrizi praising his philosophy and commending the fact that in his opinion it “accords perfectly with Christian piety”. The cardinal went on to invite Patrizi to stay with him in Rome, and informed him that he was involved in discussions with the Pope and other cardinals with the aim of securing Patrizi a seat at the University of Rome. For a time it appeared as though the Neoplatonic vision of philosophy might once again have a future within the heart of the Catholic Church.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Cardinal Aldobrandini to Patrizi cited in Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.275, translated by Eric Cochrane.

Chapter 4: The Election of Clement VIII, 1590-92

In 1943, Frances Yates suggested that Giordano Bruno and Francesco Pucci shared a common desire to be involved in a reform of Christianity that was centred on the prospects of Henry of Navarre. In recent years, Yates's brief exploration of the connections between the ideas of these men and their hopes for Navarre has been taken in new directions by Saverio Ricci and Artemio Baldini. These historians have both drawn attention to the links between contemporary networks of philosophers within Italy, the efforts to secure the absolution of Henry IV, and the famous trials of the 1590s. According to Ricci, some members of the Inquisition, and in particular its leader, Cardinal Santori, harboured fears that Navarre maintained a network of supporters in Italy. He has suggested that Santori ordered Bruno's transfer to Rome, following his initial arrest in Venice, and Col Antonio Stegliola's arrest and interrogation in Naples, because he believed that they could provide information about these networks. In contrast to Ricci, Baldini focussed his discussion on Tommaso Campanella, Pucci and Francesco Patrizi, arguing that their ideas reflected a widespread yearning for philosophical reform in the heart of the Church. During the 1590s, he continued, these aspirations for reform became intertwined with a desire to secure the absolution of Henry IV. In this chapter I intend to both critique, and build upon this research. This will be achieved by establishing the social and political connections between the various philosophers placed on trial during the 1590s, and the evidence which suggests their support for Henry IV. I will then begin to map the events of these trials onto the developing crisis caused by the proposed absolution of Henry IV.¹

¹ Frances Yates, "The religious policy of Giordano Bruno", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, VI, (1943), pp.151-261; see too idem, op. cit., (1964), pp.375-79; A. E. Baldini, op. cit., (1995), pp.201-26; Artemio Enzo Baldini, "Pucci, Bruno e Campanella", *Bruniana e campanelliana*, V (1999), pp.232-234; Ricci, op. cit., (1996b); idem, op. cit., (2002).

Henry IV and the Philosophical Networks of Italy

Under Pope Gregory XIV, Spanish influence in Rome grew to unprecedented levels, a fact that was evident to contemporaries. The Venetian ambassador, for example, remarked that the pope's appointments were, "all devoted to the Spaniards, who want to dominate all this court and to create in their style the popes, cardinals, auditors of the Rota, and every other official of the Apostolic See." The Spanish influence also manifested itself in the new pope's attitudes to wards the French Wars of Religion. Notably, Gregory quickly showed himself to be a supporter of Philip's policies in France, and he shared the latter's hostility to Henry of Navarre's desire to convert to Catholicism.²

Although Navarre's conversion was opposed by the new pope, he enjoyed support in a number of Italian states, notably Venice and Florence. Since the 1580s, the Venetian government had been dominated by the *giovani* faction, who favoured the accession of Navarre to the French throne. These political sympathies had been nourished by close ties between the court of the deceased king, Henry III, and members of the political and intellectual elite in the Veneto. For example, the Neapolitan scholar Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, who had taken up residence in Padua, maintained personal contact with a number of Italians including Pietro Del Bene, and Jacopo Corbinelli. The latter two Italians continued to live in Paris, where they had been members of the Palace Academy, a group of scholars who gathered at the French Court. They had not only supported Henry III, but also his preferred heir Navarre, and they had openly disdained the Catholic League and its leaders, the Guise family. Pinelli was also closely associated with a series of interlocking networks of intellectuals from all across Italy. In Venice, he maintained close contacts with the literary academy of Andrea and Niccolò Morosini, two leading *giovani*. The Morosini academy brought together members of their political faction and prominent intellectuals, including

² On Spanish influence during Gregory's pontificate, see Dandele, *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.87-90, and note especially the Venetian ambassador's report, cited on p.89 (Dandele's translation).

Leonardo Donà, Nicolò Contarini, Antonio Querini, Paolo Sarpi, Fulgenzio Micanzio and, after his arrival in Padua in 1592, Galileo Galilei.³

Another notable participant in these networks was the renegade friar, turned itinerant scholar, Giordano Bruno. Bruno was born in 1548 into a relatively poor family in the town of Nola, close to the city of Naples. He entered the Dominican convent in Naples at the age of 15, and during his novitiate he was provided with a thorough grounding in Thomist thought and he graduated with a degree in theology. By 1576, Bruno had fallen under suspicion of heresy, and was charged among other offences with Arianism, and sympathy to the ideas of Erasmus. Under this cloud Bruno left the convent, and in the years that followed he carved out a role as a kind of itinerant scholar and teacher. Although he officially remained a member of the Dominican Order, Bruno appears to have shown little desire to return to the life of a friar. By 1578, he had left Italy, and by the early 1580s, he was resident in Paris where he became involved in the meetings of the Palace Academy, and even met the French king himself. Probably as a result of this connection, Bruno was able to take up residence with the French ambassador to England in 1583, where he wrote a number of his most celebrated works. In 1585, he returned to Paris where he became reacquainted with members of the Palace Academy including Jacopo Corbinelli.⁴

Bruno left France in June 1586, and travelled to Germany where he unsuccessfully attempted to attain teaching jobs in universities in the Catholic cities of Mainz and Wiesburg. Following these rejections, he applied for a position at the arts

³ Yates, op. cit., (1951), pp.174-99; idem, op. cit., (1964), pp.322-23. On the Morosini circle, see William Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of Counter-Reformation* (Los Angeles and London: 1968) p236. See too Gaetano Cozzi, "Leonardo Donà" in *DBI*, Vol. XL, pp.757-70; idem, "Nicolò Contarini", *DBI*, Vol. XXVIII, pp.247-55. On Pinelli, see Aldo Stella, "Galileo. Il circolo culturale di Gian Vincenzo Pinelli e la 'Patavina libertas'", Giovanni Santinello (ed.), *Galileo e la cultura padovana* (Milan: 1992), pp.307-25 and Marcella Grendler "A Greek Collection in Sixteenth Century Padua: the library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli", *Renaissance Quarterly*, XXXIII (1980), pp.386-416.

⁴ The bibliography on Bruno is extensive, but for a succinct overview of Bruno's life and writings, see Michele Ciliberto, *Introduzione a Bruno* (Rome, Bari: 2006), which also includes a useful guide to further reading. On Bruno's life in the Dominican convent, see Michele Miele, "La formazione di Giordano Bruno a S. Domenico Maggiore", in Pasquale Giustiniani et al (eds), *Giordano Bruno Oltre il Mito e le Opposte Passione*, (Naples: 2002), pp.63-79. On his time in England, see John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair*, (New Haven and London: 1991).

faculty of the Lutheran University Marburg. After matriculating he was rejected by the rector, on what John Bossy called “theological grounds”. Eventually he was accepted for a post at the University of Wittenberg, where he lectured on the ideas of Aristotle and Raymond Lull. Bruno did not remain in this post for long, and by 1591 he was living in Frankfurt. Whilst resident there, a Venetian bookseller, Giovanni Battista Ciotta, presented him with a letter from a Venetian patrician, Zuane Mocenigo, inviting him to return to Italy in order to teach him the art of memory for which he was famous. Bruno accepted the invitation. He soon began the long journey back to Italy, and entered Venice in August 1591, where he lived independently for several months before taking up his position teaching Mocenigo. While resident in Venice, Bruno visited the Villa Morosini sited on the banks of the Grand Canal, and participated in meetings of the academy. It seems likely that Bruno was accepted into this academy as a result of his connections the Corbinelli circle in France, and the most likely link to this group was Pinelli.⁵

These networks also maintained contacts with the circle of scholars that gathered around the Neapolitan nobleman, Giambattista Della Porta. The Neapolitan philosopher had first met members of Morosini’s academy in 1580, when he accompanied his patron Cardinal Luigi d’Este, the Cardinal Protector of the Kingdom of France, on a trip to the republic. In the years following this visit, he completed and printed an expanded version of his *Magia naturalis*, which he published in 1588. Although connected to *giovani* circles, and linked to the French supporting d’Este family, there is no direct evidence to suggest that Della Porta has expressed himself in favour of Navarre. However, as Ricci and Baldini have suggested, there is evidence to link some members of his Neapolitan circle to these aspirations.⁶

We can trace some of these connections through the life of the Calabrian Friar Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639). Born in Stilo Calabria, Campanella entered the

⁵ Bossy, op. cit., (1991), p.63. As Frances Yates has argued, Pinelli’s correspondence with Jacopo Corbinelli proves that he certainly knew of Bruno, but there is no evidence that Bruno actually met Pinelli. See Yates, op. cit., (1964), p.381.

⁶ On Della Porta and the Inquisition, see chapter 3 above, pp.153-55. For Della Porta’s links to members of the Venetian elite, see Clubb, op. cit., (1965), chapter 1.

Dominican Order at the age of 14. After completing his novitiate, he was assigned to the convent at Nicastro. In 1588, he was transferred to the convent at Cosenza, where he first encountered the philosophy of Bernardino Telesio. However, since the ageing philosopher died just weeks after Campanella's arrival in Cosenza, the young friar never had the opportunity to meet him. Nevertheless, Campanella struck up a strong and enduring association with Telesio's disciple, Antonio Persio, which would continue until the latter's death. During his stay in Cosenza, Campanella continued to develop his intellectual interests. While contact with Telesio's circle encouraged his growing hostility to Aristotelianism, he also established a friendship with a Rabbi who taught him about the cabbala, astrology and occult sciences. The friar's activities soon became a source of concern for his superiors, and they eventually moved him to a rural convent at Altomonte.⁷

In 1589, Campanella left this convent without permission, and fled to Naples where he came into contact with Della Porta's circle. These contacts were to have a profound influence on the young Campanella, as he recalled in 1599, "After reasoning with diverse astrologers, in particular with the Neapolitan Giulio Cortese, with the great mathematician Col' Antonio Stigliola, and with Gio Paulo Venalione...I learned from them that there was a need for a change of states." William Eamon has argued that this evidence suggests that it was probably Stigliola's influence that formed Campanella's later millennial beliefs regarding the year 1600. Although this suggestion is indeed plausible, the theme of change identified by Campanella in his description of Della Porta's circle was nevertheless both widespread within Italy and within these intellectual networks in the late sixteenth century. The precise meaning and implications of these aspirations are, however, subject to debate amongst historians. Notably, Baldini, Ricci and Frances Yates have all argued that these aspirations for change began to take the form of concrete plans for reform which were increasingly projected onto the figure of

⁷ On aspirations for reform in southern Italy, see Nicola Badaloni, "I fratelli Della Porta e la cultura magica e astrologica a Napoli nel '500", *Studi storici*, I (1959), pp.677-715. On Stigliola, see idem, "La programma scientifico di un bruniano Col Antonio Stelliola", *Studi storici*, XXVI (1985), pp.161-75 and Ricci, op. cit., (1996b), pp.7-133. On Campanella and the Della Porta circle, see Eamon, op. cit., (1995), pp.372-73.

Henry of Navarre. In the following sections I will evaluate the extent to which this suggestion can be sustained.⁸

Regardless of the possible political and religious sympathies of Della Porta's circle, this was a dangerous group for Campanella to associate with. Della Porta's interest in investigating the secrets of nature had led the inquisition to doubt his orthodoxy, notably he been placed on trial for necromancy in the 1570s, and the first version his *Magia naturalis* had been included in the, now suspended, Sistine Index. By the early 1590s, other members of Della Porta's circle were also attracting the Inquisition's attention. Stegliola was arrested by the Inquisition in 1591, interrogated and tried, before eventually being released in 1593. Ricci has suggested that at this early stage he harboured sympathies for Navarre and that this trial may have been connected to these beliefs. Although possible, there is no direct evidence to support this contention, for the extant documents relating to Stegliola's trial do not tell us what he was charged with. Nevertheless, Campanella's comments from 1599 (see above) clearly indicated that, prior to his arrest, Stegliola was interested in astrology and the occult. While these interests alone would have been sufficient grounds to make him appear dangerous to the Inquisition, it is plausible that Stegliola's astrological beliefs, and in particular his remarks about the need for a "change of states", may have referred to a reform led by Navarre.⁹

Following a denunciation from a fellow friar, Campanella too was arrested for the first time at the end of 1591. Among the accusations levelled against him was the charge that he possessed familiar spirits. Firpo argued that this accusation hid his denouncer's real motive, which was to silence Campanella's promotion of the writings

⁸ Campanella remarks about the Della Porta circle cited in Italian in Badaloni, op. cit., (1959), p.683. Again there is a vast bibliography on Campanella; for an English language introduction to his ideas, see for example Bernadino Bonnansea, *Tommaso Campanella, Renaissance Pioneer of Modern Thought* (Washington D.C.: 1969) or J. M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton: 1997).

⁹ On Stegliola's first imprisonment, see Ricci, op. cit., (1996b), p.16, and op. cit., (2002), p.255. The extant documentation regarding Stegliola and the Inquisition relates to his second trial, which took place between 1595-96; this is published in Luigi Amabile, *Il santo ufficio della inquisizione in Napoli. Narrazione con molti documenti inediti* 2 Vols (Città di Castello: 1892) reprinted 1987. For a discussion of this later trial, see chapter 5 below, pp.227-28.

of Telesio. Yet viewed in the context of the ecclesiastical authorities' suspicions about the Della Porta circle's activities, notably Della Porta's earlier trial for necromancy and the investigations into Stegliola's activities, the charge of possessing familiar spirits becomes more significant. Given Campanella's interest in natural magic and the occult, it is highly likely that the Inquisition genuinely suspected him of practising necromancy. As we have seen, for most members of Campanella's order, the category of natural magic simply did not exist. To many of his confrères his activities would have been considered to be, at best, superstitious, and at worst diabolic. He remained in the prison of the Papal Nuncio in Naples until 28th August 1592. There was, however, no suggestion that Campanella had expressed any interest in the affairs of Navarre.¹⁰

As we have seen, there is no direct evidence to suggest that in the early 1590s either Della Porta, Bruno, Stegliola, or Campanella personally supported Navarre's claim to the French monarchy. However, this was in marked contrast to the case of Francesco Pucci. Originally born in Florence, Pucci left Italy in 1571, and began a long period of exile in northern Europe. By 1572, he was living in Paris where he witnessed the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, and following these events he may have converted to Calvinism. That winter, seeking to escape the chaos that followed the massacre, he moved to England where he matriculated in the faculty of arts at the University of Oxford. After graduating, Pucci joined the French Calvinist congregation in London, which he managed to offend by intimating that he was a prophet. Increasingly disillusioned with all of the main confessions, Pucci left England in 1576 and travelled to Switzerland where he became embroiled in a debate with Fausto Sozzini (Socinus) over the mortality of Adam.¹¹

¹⁰ Firpo, op. cit., (1939) pp.7-12.

¹¹ On Pucci, see Firpo, op. cit., (1951), pp.158-173; idem, "Nouve recherche su Francesco Pucci", *Rivista storica italiana*, LXXIX (1967), pp.1053-1074; Miriam Eliav-Feldon, "Secret societies, utopias, and peace plans: the case of Francesco Pucci", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, XIV (1984), pp.139-158; Élie Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Le Périple de Francesco Pucci. Utopie, hérésie et vérité religieuse dans la renaissance tardive*, (Paris: 1988); Mario Biagione, "Prospetive di ricerche su Francesco Pucci", *Rivista storica italiana*, CVII (1995), pp.133-152, idem, "Incontri italo-svizzeri nell'europa del tardo cinquecento. Francesco Pucci e Samuele Huber" *Rivista storica italiana*, CXI, (1999), pp.364-422.

The dispute with Sozzini hinted at the highly idiosyncratic nature of Pucci's theological beliefs, which he further explicated in a letter to the Swiss Calvinist Niccolò Balbani in 1578. During the course of a discussion of the meaning of Paul's declaration in his *Letter to the Ephesians* that men were the children of wrath, and an analysis of the book of *Malachi*, Pucci rejected the Augustinian belief in original sin, the consequent need for its expiation through infant baptism, and his doctrine of predestination. Pucci instead argued that since Man was born unsullied, and that God would therefore only hold him to account for those actions for which he was responsible. For Pucci this notion of responsibility was inextricably tied to his belief that Man was a uniquely rational creature, who had been endowed by God with the capacity to choose between good and evil. It was this ability to choose between different courses of action that rendered all fully grown adults liable to God's judgement and, where necessary, to His wrath. This central insight was the cornerstone of much of Pucci's thinking, setting the basis for a number of his later writings. For example, his treatise *Forma di una repubblica catholica* (1581) described his plans to create a secret society that would allow like-minded individuals to practise his theological ideas within a state dominated by any of the main confessions. Although such works can be categorised as being works of philosophy, and they certainly echo the optimism displayed in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio de dignitate hominis* (1486), Pucci's primary concerns were theological rather than philosophical.¹²

Pucci then travelled to Cracow, where, in 1595, he had an encounter with two Englishmen that would change the course of his life. In a letter to his mother, he wrote that although he had travelled throughout Europe, he had hitherto failed to find anyone who could show him the true Church. Despite these earlier disappointments, he continued, God had now led him to meet "his remarkable English servants, called

¹² The letter to Balbani has been published in Luigi Firpo and Renato Piattoli (ed.), *Francesco Pucci lettere documenti e testimonianze* (Florence: 1955), pp.24-48. The *Forma di una repubblica catholica* is published in Delio Cantimori and Elisabeth Feist (eds), *Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa* (Rome: 1937) pp.169-209. There is only a limited bibliography on the *Forma*; see Eliav-Feldon, op. cit., (1984), pp.139-158. Pico's *Oration on the dignity of man* is published in Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller and John Herman Randall Jr. (eds), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, (Chicago and London: 1948), pp.47-133.

Giovanni Dee and Eduardo Kille [John Dee and Edward Kelly] in Poland”. His association with the two Englishmen gave Pucci new hope for the future, and together the three men moved to Prague where he began to participate in their “conversations with angels”. During one séance, Pucci received a message from the angel Uriel. In a letter to his brother describing these events, he recalled that “I heard from the angel most weighty propositions concerning the coming of Antichrist in a short space and received great confirmation of my hopes for an imminent renovation of all things, which God will accomplish through persons authorised by him and adequate to that task.” This revelation had a profound impact upon Pucci, for he believed that he had been chosen to play a key role in the forthcoming reform. In a dramatic change of heart, he declared his intention to return to the Catholic faith in order to carry out his mission from within the Church. Consequently, he abjured his former beliefs in front of the papal nuncio in Prague in 1587. Pucci also attempted to persuade Dee and Kelly to travel with him to Rome to perform their conversations with angels in front of the pope. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they were not keen to put Pucci’s plan into action.¹³

Whilst resident in Prague, Pucci also met his cousins Alessandro, Artemio and Emilio Pucci, who were travelling in the retinue of Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini who was on a diplomatic mission to Poland. Aldobrandini was a member of a noble Florentine family, who had been exiled from the city on account of the role played by Ippolito’s father, Silvestro, both in the expulsion of the Medici from Florence in 1527, and his subsequent role in the administration of the city. When the Medici were restored with Spanish support in 1531, the Aldobrandini were forced to flee. This was not the only controversial part of the Aldobrandini family history, for his mother was one of the so-called ‘weepers’, the name given to the followers of Girolamo Savonarola, and to those who continued to venerate his memory. Ippolito was to add another

¹³ Pucci to his mother 13th August 1585. English translation by R.J.W. Evans, cited in his *Rudolph II and his World: A Study in Intellectual History, 1576-1612* (Oxford: 1973), p.103. See too Firpo, op. cit., (1951), p.158. On Dee, see Richard Deacon, *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I* (London: 1968); Peter J. French, *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus* (New York: 1972); Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee’s Conversations with Angels: Cabbala, Alchemy and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: 1999).

dangerous connection to this list, when he allowed the Pucci brothers, who were travelling in his retinue, to introduce to him their cousin Francesco. Unfortunately, we know little of what transpired during this meeting.¹⁴

By the start of the 1590s, Pucci's millenarian beliefs had become increasingly intertwined with a critique of the papacy's handling of the affairs of France. He set out his views in two hand-written treatises that he sent to the papal nephew Paolo Camillo Sfondrato in the summer of 1591. The first text, was addressed to the Jews, and it is marked in another hand "Che Navarra ha da fare una riforma nouva del Cristianesimo et congregare tutti li Giudei, et gentili in Giudea". (That Navarre will make a new reform of Christianity and gather all of the Jews and, gentiles in Judea). In this work Pucci wrote that he had received a revelation from the Holy Spirit about the next radical renewal of Christianity and the Church, which would be preceded and determined by a new universal council convoked in France by the new king, Navarre. Pucci argued that a series of signs and astronomical revelations, confirmed by a correct reading of the books of Scripture (especially *Revelation*), had convinced him that in 1592, or soon after, the great change would take place. The Jews would be the symbol of this new religious and political reconciliation: their Diaspora would end, and they would be reconciled with Christians and Rome. In the second work, which was addressed directly to the pope, Pucci defended Navarre from charges of heresy, while vehemently denouncing the errors of the papacy, and its conduct of French affairs.¹⁵

¹⁴ On Aldobrandini and Pucci, see Firpo and Piattoli op. cit., (1955), p.140, n.1; Jan Władysław Woś, "La legazione diplomatica in Polonia del Card. I. Aldobrandini in una lettera di Emilio Pucci", *Rinascimento*, X (1970), pp.219-235. On Aldobrandini's mother, see Cochrane, op. cit., (1988), p.111.

¹⁵ For the documents and commentary on Pucci's letters to Gregory XIV, see Artemio Enzo Baldini, "Tre inediti di Francesco Pucci al cardinal nepote e a Gregorio XIV alla vigilia del suo 'rientro' a Roma", *Rinascimento*, XXXIX (1999), pp.157-173; and Giorgio Caravale, "Inediti di Francesco Pucci presso l'archivio del Sant' Uffizio", *Il pensiero politico. Rivista di storia di idee politiche e sociali*, XXII, (1999), pp.69-82.

The Election of Clement VIII

In the autumn of 1591 the government of Rome and the administration of the papacy were thrown into turmoil. The death of Gregory XIV on 16th October, and that of his elected successor, Innocent XI, only two months later, meant that for the fifth time in two years, the cardinals of the Catholic Church were required to elect a new pontiff. Cardinal Santori, the Bishop of Santa Severina was the early front runner to ascend to the papal throne. As the leading cardinal in the Congregation of the Inquisition he wielded considerable power, and crucially he was Philip II's preferred candidate. Philip's support for Santori was widely known to contemporaries, and many believed that it would secure the election for Santori. For example, in a letter written to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli some weeks after the conclave Pietro di Norres observed "The election was already established outside of the conclave because the Spanish had already won over Montalto, and told him to go to Santa Severina, and not to think about his allies for this time." As di Norres, suggested by winning the support of Cardinal Montalto (the nephew of Sixtus V), the Spanish had greatly enhanced their chances of success.¹⁶

Although the Spanish had expended a great deal of effort to secure the candidacy of Santori, he was a divisive choice that split the College of Cardinals. Out of the fifty-two cardinals who were due to enter the conclave, sixteen had already declared themselves to be opposed to his election. One major motive driving the opposition to Santori was serious concern about the direction in which such a figure would take the Church. Santori had been highly influenced by the austere popes, Paul IV and Pius V, and many feared that if he were to wear the papal tiara, he would initiate an equally severe regime. Among the cardinals opposed to his election were four members of the now dormant Congregation of the Index, Cardinals Marcantonio Colonna, Paleotti, Borromeo, and Lauro. During the course of the conclave they were

¹⁶ "L' elettione era gia stabilita fouri del Conclave perchioche havendo Spagnuoli guadagnato Montalto, et dispostolo, lasciate per questa la volta le sue creature, d' andare in Santa Severina." Pietro di Norres in Rome to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua, May 1592, BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, f.31r. For an account of the conclave of Clement VIII, see Ludwig Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, Vol. XI, (Rome: 1958), pp.1-16.

joined by another member of the congregation, Ascanio Colonna. These cardinals differed starkly from Santori. They possessed both a markedly different idea of how censorship should be practised, and the types of works that should be allowed to circulate within a Catholic society. Notably, they had been favourable to allowing the circulation of humanist texts, and to a less restrictive attitude towards the Talmud. As Santori later noted, the source of Marcantonio Colonna's opposition to his candidature, was an earlier dispute between them regarding the censorship of the Talmud.¹⁷

In spite of the widespread opposition to Santori's candidature, it appeared that that the Spanish machinations had been a success. After the first round of voting, Santori, confident that he had won the election, went away to prepare himself to accept the nomination. However, several cardinals began to express their dissatisfaction with his presumption. According to di Norres, Ascanio Colonna led the resistance to Santori, shouting that: "This election is not free, it does not come from God. I do not want him, I do not want him, he shouted to everyone." In the ensuing confusion it became clear to the assembled cardinals that Santori had not gathered the required number of votes to secure his election, and a second round of voting was therefore necessary.¹⁸ Recognising the futility of continuing to press for Santori's election, the Spanish faction attempted to secure the election of Ludovico Madruzzo. Again they were to be frustrated, for Cardinals Morosini, Benedetto Giustiniani, Francesco Sforza and Montalto, declared their opposition to the new candidate. According to di Norres, although all of the cardinals wanted to leave the "prison", the situation had become deadlocked. Santori's "fattione" knew that they lacked the votes to get him elected, and

¹⁷ For Santori's remarks on Marc Antonio Colonna's opposition, see Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1998), p.311.

¹⁸ For a description of these events, see the letter that Pietro di Norres sent to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, in May 1592, BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, ff.31r-39r. For Ascanio Colonna's protest, "Questa elettione non è libera, non viene da Dio, non lo voglio, non lo voglio annunciandosi tuttavia.", see f.32r. In this letter, he also listed the Cardinals who consented to the election of Santori: Gesualdo, Verona, Perugia, Giustiniano, Madruzzo, Spinola, Sannano, Cusano, Sans, Naliuil, Alano, Monti, Santa Serverina, Terranova, Gonzaga, Montalto, Rusticuccio, Caetano, Sauli, Mattsei, Simoncelli, Castruccio Cosenza, Pepoli, Bezla, Pinelli, Morosini, Farnese, Fiorenza, Aldobrandini, Camerino, Facchinetto, Salviati, Rouere, Montelbero. Cardinals who opposed his election: Aragona, Altemps, Sfondrato, Aquaviva, Colonna, Monreale, Paravicino, Piatti, Como, Lancillotto, Sforza, Paleotto, Canano, Ascanio Colonna, Alessandrino, Ascoli, Borromeo. See f.39r.

were unable to choose an alternative candidate acceptable to Santori's critics, and those opposed to Santori's election also saw two of their proposed candidates rejected.¹⁹

Faced with this impasse, the conclave began to consider alternative options, and at this stage Ippolito Aldobrandini emerged as a compromise candidate. Aldobrandini had not always been favoured by the Spanish faction, and they had rejected his candidature during the conclave in which Gregory XIV was elected. However, displaying his understanding of how power operated in Rome, Aldobrandini ensured that this would not happen again. According to di Norres: "Aldobrandini, after this exclusion, with singular prudence wrote to Spain and obtained the testimony of his devotion to that crown from the King and an order to the superiors of Italy to favour him at all times." Since Aldobrandini was acceptable to both the Spanish monarch and to the faction opposed to Santori, he was able to secure the required number of votes. "So on the day of the 29th January eighteen days after the entry into the Conclave they adorned Aldobrandini with universal approbation and applause."²⁰

From the start of his pontificate, the new pope, Clement VIII, signalled his intention to continue his predecessors' lead and pursue a close relationship with the Spanish King. One of his earliest actions was to appoint Cardinal Sega, then the commander of papal troops in France, as the legate to the realm. The bull declaring Sega's new status also observed that the most effective remedy for the troubles of France was to appoint a Catholic monarch, behind whom loyal Catholics could unite. Also, on the 15th February, Clement wrote to Alessandro Farnese, the Duke of Parma, who commanded the Spanish troops in France, pledging his support. He later sent 50,000 scudi to the Holy League, to help them to pursue their campaign against

¹⁹ Pastor, *op. cit.*, (1958), Vol. XI, p.14.

²⁰ Pietro di Norres in Rome to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua, May 1592, BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, "Aldobrandini con singular prudenza dopo quella esclusione haveva scritto in Spagna, e procurato testimonianza del Re della sua devotione verso quella corona, et ordine a Ministri d'Italia, che in ogni occasione lo favorissero." f.39v. "Così il giorno 29 di Gennaio dicidottesimo dopo l'entrata in Conclave adorarono Aldobrandino con universale approbatione, et applause". f.39r.

Navarre. In return, Philip sent warm letters pledging his support for the pontiff, and large shipments of grain from Sicily to the Papal States.²¹

The impression that Clement would prove supportive of the Spanish monarchy was reinforced when he installed his favoured nephew, Cinzio (1551-1610), as Secretary of State. Cinzio was widely recognised as being favourable of the Spanish monarchy, and he was supported by cardinals faithful to Philip II, such as Caetani and Madruzzo, and the Spanish ambassador to Rome, the Duke of Sessa. Clement's also appointed his younger nephew Pietro (1571-1621) as *avvocato concistoriale* and gave him the Prefecture of Castel St Angelo. Members of the Pucci family also continued to be closely associated with the Aldobrandini. After his return to Italy from Poland as part of Cardinal Aldobrandini's entourage, Emilio had initially entered into the service of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but, following the election of Clement VIII, he took up a position at the papal court.²²

Although like Cardinal Santori, Clement had shown himself to be amenable to Philip II's political ends, his pontificate began to move in directions that the austere cardinal vehemently opposed. Clement was favourable to the programme of censorship that had begun to be outlined by the cardinals of the Congregation of the Index during the "little spring" of 1587. This congregation had fallen into abeyance after the suppression of the Sistine Index in 1590, but it was reconvened by Clement on 23rd March 1592. In an indication of Clement's attitude towards censorship, the cardinals of the congregation were rejoined by Agostino Valier who had been excluded by Sixtus V. Initially, their work was concerned with the correction of the Vulgate Bible, but by the end of the month they began to discuss plans to prepare a new Index of Forbidden Books. This decision was favoured by Clement, for it reflected his desire to re-calibrate the machinery of censorship. However, it also threatened to reignite the

²¹ See Pastor, *op. cit.*, (1958), Vol. XI, Chapter 2; Romeo de Maio "La Curia Romana nella riconciliazione di Enrico IV", in *idem*, *Riforme e Miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (1973), pp.143-190; Dandele, *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.92-94. Cf: Ricci, *op. cit.*, (2002), p.256, who suggests that sympathy for Navarre rapidly manifested itself in Clement's pontificate.

²² E. Fasano Guarini, "Cinzio Aldobrandini" and "Pietro Aldobrandini" in *DBI* Vol. II, pp.102-07 and pp.107-12; on Emilio Pucci see, Woś, *op. cit.*, (1970), pp.226-227.

earlier struggles between the Congregation of the Index and the Inquisition, and set Clement on a collision course with the Inquisition, and in particular with its leader, Cardinal Santori.²³

In a further affront to the Inquisition, Clement openly offered support to Francesco Patrizi, who promoted a form of Platonic philosophy which had initially been cultivated by Marsilio Ficino. As we have seen, this style of philosophy had subsequently been promoted in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, above all by the Medici family, but, following the collapse of their power in the 1520s, it had lacked support from within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These ideas were opposed by numerous powerful groups within the Church, including many Dominicans. It was also opposed by the Inquisition, for many of the members of this institution drew heavily upon the mendicant's syntheses of knowledge, and especially that of Aquinas. However, Clement VIII's elevation to the papal throne now offered renewed hope to philosophers such as Patrizi, that Neoplatonism might once again play a significant role within the heart of the Catholic Church. These aspirations were nourished by the pope's decision to arrange for Patrizi to be offered a chair of Platonic philosophy at the University of Rome. On 18th April 1592, Patrizi entered Rome where he was warmly received by the pope, and was given rooms in the household of his nephew Cinzio. Patrizi soon settled into his new life, re-establishing contact with more of his old friends, including Cardinals Federico Borromeo, Agostino Valier and Scipione Gonzaga, all members of the Congregation of the Index. Patrizi also set about preparing his first lectures on Plato's *Timaeus* which were well received by their audience which included a number of cardinals.²⁴

²³ Frajese op. cit., (1998); idem, "La congregazione dell' indice negli anni della concorenza con il sant' uffizio (1593-1603)", *Archivio italiano per la storia della piet *, XIV (1999), pp.207-255. Parente, op. cit., (2001), pp.181-82.

²⁴ Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.276; Grendler, op. cit., (2002), pp.304-05.

The Challenge of the Inquisition

Clement's decision to attempt to alter the Church's attitudes towards censorship and philosophy faced a major challenge. The Inquisition remained massively powerful within the Church, and was determined to resist the changes that Clement's regime attempted to implement. It demonstrated its power in the early 1590s by continuing to pursue the reforming agenda favoured by its members, irrespective of the opinions of other authorities within the Church. These efforts included continuing with their attempt to define the boundaries of orthodox philosophical speculation, and to eradicate any practice that they associated with illicit demonic magic. These efforts had serious implications for Della Porta. At some point prior to April 1592, he had returned to Venice where he re-established contact with old acquaintances such as Paolo Sarpi, and other members of the intellectual and political networks associated with the *giovani* faction within Venice. On 9th April 1592, the Venetian Inquisition served him with an order from Santori, which forbade him to publish his "book of physiognomy in the vulgar language, nor any other books, without the express permission of the Holy Tribunal of Rome". Reflecting the Holy Office's desire to control these matters directly, the order explicitly stated that the prohibition still applied even if Della Porta had been granted permission to publish by any local inquisitor or ordinary.²⁵

Although there is no evidence to suggest that these events are related, just a few weeks later, the Inquisition was made aware of another figure connected to the *giovani* elite of Venice. On 23rd May, the Venetian patrician Giovanni Mocenigo filed the first of three complaints against Giordano Bruno.²⁶ During the course of his first deposition, Mocenigo alleged that Bruno had made a number of unacceptable

²⁵ On the prohibition of the Italian edition of the *Physionomia*, see Aquilecchia, op. cit., (1968), p.22. See too Valente, op. cit., (1999), pp.415-434, quotation from document 1, p.432.

²⁶ A great deal has been written on Bruno's trial but Luigi Firpo's reconstruction of these events remains unsurpassed, and it has been reprinted with the majority of the extant documentation as, *Il processo di Giordano Bruno*, (Rome: 1993). This should now be read in conjunction with Beretta, op. cit., (2001), and Leen Spruit, "Una rilettura del processo di Giordano Bruno: procedure e aspetti giuridico – formali", in Giustiniani, op. cit., (2002), pp.217-34.

utterances including challenging the truth of transubstantiation, suggesting that God could be imperfect, arguing that the world was eternal, and claiming that there was an infinite number of worlds. He concluded by informing them that he had sent them three books written by Bruno, in which he had marked certain passages “to which you will be able to apply your judgements.” Mocenigo continued that: “He has also frequented an academy of Signor Andrea Morosini of the clarissimo signor Giacomo, frequented by many gentlemen, who might by chance have listened to him say some of his things.” Unfortunately, we do not know which of Bruno’s books Mocenigo submitted to the Inquisition, and so it is not possible to trace the source of Mocenigo’s complaints with any certainty. It is however notable that in his initial complaint, Mocenigo directly mentioned Andrea Morosini by name, and drew attention to Bruno’s participation in his academy.²⁷

Two days later, on 25th May, Mocenigo filed a second deposition. The following day Bruno was arrested and imprisoned, and interrogated for the first time. That same day, the Venetian Inquisition summoned and interviewed two further witnesses, the booksellers Giovan Battista Ciotti and Giacomo Bricciani. On 29th May 1592 Mocenigo again approached the Venetian Inquisition stating that, as the Inquisitor had instructed, he had gone away and considered whether Bruno had said anything else contrary to the faith. He was now able to provide a series of new allegations. In his subsequent depositions, he told the inquisitors that Bruno spoke ill of the Catholic Faith, the Church and its officials and doctors; that he held erroneous views on the trinity, Christ’s divinity and incarnation; that he denied the Virginity of Mary. He continued that Bruno believed in metempsychosis and the transmigration of human souls into animals and that he approved of and practised the magical arts. Finally, he suggested that Bruno was previously known to the Inquisition.²⁸

During the course of this deposition, Mocenigo added an important extra element to his story. He alleged that Bruno had said that the Catholic faith was in need

²⁷ “Denuncia di Giovanni Mocenigo all inquisitore di Venezia Giovan Gabriele da Saluzzo”, (Venice 23rd May 1592), in Firpo, op. cit., (1993), p.145.

²⁸ Finocchiaro, op. cit., (2002), p.56.

of a great reform, and that he “hoped for great things from the King of Navarre, and that he wanted to hurry to bring his works into light and to bring himself credit by this means, because, when it was time, he wanted to be *capitano*.” If Mocenigo’s allegations were true, they could be taken to imply that Bruno believed that Navarre would initiate a universal reform, and that he would be appointed as one of its leaders. As we have seen, however, there is little direct evidence to suggest that Bruno was a supporter of Navarre. Mocenigo’s remarks nevertheless assume a new significance when they are viewed in the context of the circles in which Bruno had been moving both in the Veneto and in France prior to his return to Italy. Many members of the *giovani* of Venice were indeed strong supporters of Navarre, as were many of Bruno’s associates at the court of Henry III. Even if Mocenigo’s accusations were unfounded, to many within Italy they may have appeared entirely plausible.²⁹

Unaware of the nature of Mocenigo’s accusations, Bruno was given the opportunity to expand his account of his intentions during a second interrogation, which took place on 30th May 1592. He told them that prior to his arrest, he had intended to leave for Frankfurt to have some of his books printed, among them a treatise entitled *On the Seven Liberal Arts*. He continued that he had then intended to return to Italy, “and to go to present myself at the feet of His Beatitude, [Pope Clement VIII] whom I have heard loves *virtuosi*, and to explain my case to him, and to try to obtain absolution of my excesses.” In his deposition, Bruno alluded to Clement’s reputation for sponsoring *virtuosi*, that is to say, scholars and philosophers. Furthermore, he indicated his belief that the pope would listen to the ideas of a man such as himself. Although it is unlikely that Bruno would have achieved his aim, the Inquisition had already witnessed Clement install Patrizi as his favoured philosopher. If its members needed any further convincing that the new pope’s attitudes towards philosophy were a potential source of heresy, they needed only to listen to these remarks.³⁰

²⁹ “Terza denuncia di Giovanni Mocenigo”, (Venice, 29th May 1592), in Firpo, op. cit., (1993), p.158.

³⁰ “Secondo costituito del Bruno” (Venice, 30th May 1592), in Firpo, op. cit., (1993), p.163.

The inquisitor questioned Bruno about his connections with Navarre for the first time during his fifth interrogation, conducted on the 3rd June. However, Bruno responded unequivocally, by stating that: “I do not know either the King or his ministers, nor have I ever seen him.” The inquisitor then asked Bruno whether he had ever said that he hoped for great things from Navarre, if he believed that Catholicism was in need of reform, and if he had criticised the pope for allowing the spread of heresy. Bruno flatly denied making any of these comments. The Nolan’s denials, at least with regard to Navarre, may well have been genuine. Although he was associated with a number of prominent individuals who supported Navarre’s claim to the French throne, there is no indication in the transcripts of Bruno’s interrogations that the inquisitors had found any evidence of these ideas in his books.³¹

Almost certainly as a result of Mocenigo’s first deposition, Morosini was called in front of the tribunal to answer questions about Bruno on 23rd June. During the course of his deposition, Morosini confirmed both that he knew Bruno, and that he had indeed attended his academy. He nevertheless added that Bruno had never given him any reason to suppose that he held any opinions contrary to the faith. In fact, Morosini added, “I have always held him to be a good Catholic; and if I were to have had the slightest suspicion to the contrary, I would never have given permission for him to enter our house.” Although Morosini was only summoned before the Inquisition once, and his interrogation was relatively short, at the very least it must have been acutely embarrassing for Morosini to have his judgement called into question and the orthodoxy of his academy impugned in this way. Perhaps more importantly, the investigations had created a trail of documents that linked Bruno with members of the *giovani*, and tainted both parties with the stench of heresy and with support for Navarre.³²

³¹ “Quinto costituito del Bruno” (Venice, 3rd June 1592), in Firpo, op. cit., (1993), p.185.

³² “Deposizione di Andrea Morosini” (Venice 23rd June 1592), in Luigi Firpo, op. cit., (1993), pp.193-194.

The Developing Political Situation in France

In June and July 1592, Clement wrote to Cardinal Gondi, the bishop of Paris, and to the Duke of Epernon, expressing his intention to maintain the sentence of excommunication on Henry of Navarre. Clement also warned Epernon to withdraw his support from Navarre, and clearly stated his opinion that a Huguenot could never accede to the throne of France. Although the pope's position appeared to preclude any chance of Henry's conversion, his intransigence was increasingly out of step with opinion in France. The military campaigns had continued unabated, but they had been unable to reach any definite conclusions, and there was a growing desire for peace and stability on all sides of the conflict. More importantly, there was a gathering consensus that that this could be achieved only by Navarre's conversion. This belief transcended the confessional divisions within his coalition of supporters, for both his Protestant and Catholic followers argued that peace could only be established by Henry's embrace of Catholicism. Furthermore, the head of the Catholic League, Charles of Lorraine the Duke of Mayenne, began to distance himself from both his Spanish allies, and the more hard-line members of the League, by signalling that he too might be prepared to compromise with Navarre if he were to convert to Catholicism.³³

While the international political situation was becoming more complex for Clement, he was faced with the increasingly difficult task of co-ordinating censorship within the Church. On 18th July, the Congregation of the Index of Forbidden Books began to discuss the work that they would undertake. The Cardinals believed that they were faced with two choices: either they could revise the Sistine Index, or they could review the earlier Tridentine Index. The choice they faced was not simply between two alternative lists of prohibited works, but between contrasting visions of a Catholic society. The Tridentine Index, drawn up by the delegates attending the Council of Trent was more amenable to humanist theological ideas; for example, its rules of censorship allowed bishops and local inquisitors to issue licenses permitting the bearer

³³ Pastor, *op. cit.*, (1958), Vol. XI, pp.49-50

to read the Bible in the vernacular. The Sistine Index, by contrast, vigorously restricted both humanist texts and ideas, setting forth a vision of a Christian society favoured by many Dominican and Franciscan friars that was also propagated by the Inquisition. The Congregation made a pivotal decision to adopt the Tridentine Index as the template for their new Index, and although Clement favoured this choice, it placed him in a difficult situation. To many members of the Inquisition and the mendicant orders, the humanist principles embodied in the Tridentine Index were, if not actually heretical, they were certainly a means to propagate heresy.³⁴

During these same months, Clement also began to face open resistance to his favourable attitude towards Neoplatonic philosophy. This issue came to the fore during the summer of 1592, when a Spanish Dominican friar, Pedro de Saragoza, claimed that several of the theses in Patrizi's *Nova philosophia* were heretical. A copy of the work was soon sent to the Master of the Sacred Palace, Saragoza's associate and fellow Dominican, Bartolomaeus de Miranda, for him to begin an investigation. Later that summer, Patrizi responded to the investigation by submitting a short work to de Miranda entitled *Emendatio Francisci Patritii in libros suos novae philosophiae*, in which he outlined proposed corrections to his work. While this situation was personally extremely troubling for Patrizi, it placed increasing pressure on Clement. As we have seen, in his fifth deposition Bruno had made reference to the pope's reputation for sponsoring *virtuosi*, and with the investigation into Patrizi's work, it seemed that the new pope was in danger of acquiring a troublesome reputation for supporting people of questionable orthodoxy.³⁵

Clement's already difficult situation was not helped by the re-emergence of a dubious acquaintance from his past. In July 1592, Francesco Pucci wrote to Clement VIII, offering him the dedication to his work *De Christi servatoris efficacitate*. We do not know whether he ever received this letter or accepted the dedication, nor if he was even aware of its existence. Nevertheless, regardless of whether or not Clement received the letter, or how he may have responded, Pucci clearly believed that the pope would be

³⁴ Frajese, op. cit., (1998), p.314.

³⁵ Grendler, op. cit., (2002), pp.301-305; Luigi Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.278.

receptive to his ideas. It is interesting to consider why this unorthodox individual should think that he could write directly to the Clement VIII, and why he should expect his letter and book to be received. As we have seen, Pucci was personally known to Clement, having been introduced to him in Prague by his cousin Emilio, who had subsequently taken up a position in the papal court. It is possible that Pucci hoped that his cousin would provide a channel through which he could secure access to the pope.³⁶

On 5th August 1592, Pucci once again wrote directly to Clement VIII, this time from Holland, and his letter is filled with references to his desire for reform in Europe. Perhaps attempting to find common ground with Aldobrandini, Pucci made references to his reverence for their shared Florentine heritage. He had, he wrote, always followed the “advice and customs of my relatives, who have always had in their hand and mouth the Sacred Scripture, the writings of Savonarola and similar excellent teachers, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the more spiritual works of Petrarch, and they have encouraged me to imitate these grand lights of my language and fatherland.”³⁷ Pucci went on to recount a recurring vision that had returned to him every year since the 1570s, which had caused him to give “much thought to the judgement of God and to study the prophecies that treat of the coming of the highest Father, the return of the Signore (Christ).” Referring to *Revelation* 14, Pucci wrote that: “we are very close to the end when Our Divine Master is to come to hold court upon Mount Sion, with a consistory of the most pure and honest senators”. His arrival would initiate a period cleansing, which would ultimately result in the renewal of “the Church and Christianity in the manner that is desired by Him, so that it is done on Earth as it is in heaven.” Pucci concluded his letter by stating that he still had more things to tell the pope, and he requested to be allowed into his presence.³⁸

³⁶ The dedicatory letter is reproduced in Firpo and Piattoli, op. cit., (1955), pp.139-141.

³⁷ Pucci to Pope Clement VIII, from Amsterdam, 5th August 1592, in Firpo and Piattoli, op. cit., (1955), p.142.

³⁸ Pucci in Amsterdam to Pope Clement VIII in Rome, 5th August 1592, in Firpo and Piattoli, op. cit., (1955), p.144.

Against this backdrop, the Congregation of the Index began the task of revising the Index, and they liaised closely with both the Cardinals of the Congregation of the Holy Office and the pope. On the 8th August, the Cardinals of the Index of Forbidden Books submitted a series of doubts and questions to Clement VIII for his consideration. Amongst their concerns were whether or not the expurgated works of Catholics should be destroyed or marked as erroneous and whether the Bull of Sixtus V or the rule of the Tridentine Index of Forbidden Books should apply to astrological texts. One of their queries also touched upon the censorship of two philosophical texts and the Talmud; “Whether Raymond Lull and Francesco Patrizi are to be retained in the second class of the Index, and whether the Talmud of the Jews can be expurgated.” Clement’s response to these questions was not immediately forthcoming. His reticence was unsurprising, for these queries touched on a number of delicate issues. The issue of the censorship of the Talmud had divided the humanist within the Church from the friars and the Inquisition, and Clement needed to respond carefully. Furthermore, Clement was being asked to offer his opinion on the case of Patrizi, who advocated a philosophical system that was opposed not only by members of the Inquisition, but also by a number of evangelical humanists within the Church. The pope was faced with making a number of difficult decisions that risked agitating the belligerent factions within the Church.³⁹

Cardinal Gondi’s Mission to Rome

On 24th August 1592, Cardinal Gondi met with Navarre in Noyont. The cardinal’s actions were a major cause for concern in Rome, for it was widely believed that he would soon travel to the Holy See to negotiate on Navarre’s behalf. The Secretary of State, Cinzio Aldobrandini, made it abundantly clear that if he were to arrive in Rome, the papal authorities would not discuss these affairs with him. These sentiments were communicated directly to Gondi by Cardinal Sega in a letter dated 27th

³⁹ *Protocolli* of the Congregation of the Index cited in Frajese op. cit., (1998), p.316.

August 1592, which informed him that: “If you go in the name of God you will be well received and seen there, but if you go there to treat of the things of Navarre or the Navarristi, you waste your time and you should remain in France.”⁴⁰ Although the message to Gondi could hardly have been clearer, developments were taking place within Rome that would later have a serious impact on the negotiations regarding Navarre. In September 1592, Clement appointed his other nephew, Pietro Aldobrandini, to the position of Secretary of State alongside his cousin. While Cinzio was left with control over the affairs of Germany, Italy and Poland, Pietro received authority over France, Spain and Savoy. A fierce rivalry quickly grew up between the two cousins, and Pietro rapidly assumed control over the events in France. As we shall see, Pietro would soon prove himself to be more sympathetic to Navarre than his cousin.⁴¹

On 5th September Campanella, defying the instructions of his order, travelled to Florence via Rome. He had for a time been involved in an attempt to cultivate the patronage of the Medici Grand Dukes, with the ultimate aim of securing a chair at either the University of Pisa or Siena. It seems that the Medici were giving the idea of employing Campanella serious consideration, for the Grand Duke’s agents in Rome, Giovanni Niccolini and Lorenzo Usimbardi, began to seek out information about, and references for the friar. The Tuscan agent in Naples, Guilio Battaglino, was one of those who responded to their enquiries. He recommended the friar, and dismissed his earlier brush with the Inquisition, writing that “he has easily overcome this ordeal, which had no foundation other than the envy of another friar and the excessive credulity of the superiors.” However, although Campanella reached Florence at the end of September 1592, he failed to gain his desired position. By the 16th October he started journeying north to Venice.⁴²

⁴⁰ de Maio, op. cit., (1973), p.151.

⁴¹ E. Fasano Guarini, “Pietro Aldobrandini” in *DBI*, Vol. II, p.108. As early as 17th September Pietro Aldobrandini wrote to Cardinal Sega informing him that he had been made responsible for dealing with him. See Pietro Aldobrandini to Cardinal Sega Bishop of Piacenza, BAV, Barb. Lat. 5825, f.1v. (second set of pagination, starting after the letters of Sega to Aldobrandini).

⁴² See Firpo, op. cit., (1939), pp.9-17; and idem, op. cit., 1950, pp.390-391.

Some months earlier, the Holy Office in Rome had received from the Venetian inquisitor a transcript of Bruno's interrogations, and by September the Holy Office had a chance to digest the information. On 28th September, Cardinal Santori took the highly unusual step of writing to the Venetian Senate demanding that Bruno be sent to Rome to stand trial. This was no simple matter, for although Bruno was subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the process of transferring prisoners from the custody of the Venetian Inquisition to Rome was similar to an extradition between states. Consequently, any request to transfer a prisoner had to be approved by the Venetian Senate. Although not unprecedented, such transfers were extremely rare, and in fact only sixteen prisoners were transferred from Venice to Rome between the years 1544-1589. Underlying this statistic was the Venetians' reluctance to allow the papacy to intervene in the spiritual affairs of their state. Many members of the Venetian administration would have considered the Holy Office's demand for the transfer of prisoners arrested by the local Inquisition to be an unwarranted intrusion into their internal affairs.⁴³

Saverio Ricci, aware of these complications, has stressed that the Holy Office's interest in this case was highly unusual. He noted that, although the interrogations had revealed that Bruno's ideas were indeed heterodox, it was strange that Santori should take such an interest in him. For Ricci, this apparent problem can be explained by the fact that Santori viewed Bruno as a 'Navarristi', and possibly as a consequence, a crypto-Calvinist. He argued that while Santori was uninterested in Bruno's specific heresies, the cardinal nevertheless believed that the unfortunate friar could be a source of information about the networks of Navarre supporters that undoubtedly did exist within Italy. This is a plausible explanation, for, as we have seen, Bruno was associated with networks of individuals who did favour Navarre. There is however, little direct evidence that can be brought to bear in support of this argument. As we shall see presently, there is another equally plausible explanation, and that is that the Inquisition

⁴³ "Il Card. Giulio Antonio Santori a fra Giovan Gabriele da Saluzzo inquisitore a Venezia" (8th August 1592), in Firpo op. cit., (1993), p.200. On the transfer of prisoners from Venice to Rome see Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice*, (Oxford: 1983), pp.48-50.

was using their resources to pressurise the *giovani*, who were currently campaigning in support of Navarre.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the assessment of Patrizi's *Nova philosophia* was still in progress in Rome. The Master of the Sacred Palace had been unmoved by the amendments that the philosopher had proposed in his *Emendatio*, and he continued to press for the further investigation of his work. He gave the actual task of assessing the *Nova philosophia* to Pedro de Saragoza, the source of the original complaint, who produced a list of 100 items in the *Nova philosophia* that he judged to be unacceptable. Miranda approved this list, and at some point between September and October 1592 he sent the judgement to the pope, and it was subsequently forwarded to the Congregation of the Index. During the autumn of 1592, Patrizi also received a copy of the judgement, and a summons to appear before the Congregation of the Index. He responded swiftly in his *Apologia ad censuram*, in which he denied that his work contained any heretical ideas, and accused his censor of making grave errors through superficiality, ignorance and incomprehension. He further argued that Saragoza had created the condemned propositions by extracting them from their proper context. While stressing his respect for the Master of the Sacred Palace, Patrizi demanded that his work be examined by another theologian whom he hoped would be "more versed not only in the scholastic authors, but also in the sacred councils, and in the study of the Fathers and the sacred Scriptures themselves."⁴⁵

The timing of Patrizi's appeal was unfortunate, for during this same period Navarre had decided that he would indeed take the momentous step of converting to Catholicism. On 8th October, he wrote to Clement VIII informing him of his decision. He sent this letter to Rome with his ambassador, Giovanni de Vivonne, and at the same time he sent Cardinal Gondi to Florence, in an attempt to persuade the Grand Duke Ferdinand de' Medici to intercede on his behalf. Ferdinand was an astute choice, for prior to assuming leadership of the Grand Duchy he had been a cardinal, and he was

⁴⁴ Ricci, op. cit., (2002), esp. pp.251-63.

⁴⁵ The *Apologia* has been published by Tullio Gregory, in "L' 'Apologia' Ed Censuram di F. Patrizi", *Rinascimento*, IV (1953), pp.89-104. *Apologia* quoted in Silvano Cavazza, "Un lettre inedita di Francesco Patrizi da Cherso", *Atti del centro di ricerche storiche di rovigno*, IX (1978-79), pp378-96: 384.

well versed in the complex political affairs of Rome. He was also a relation of Navarre's wife, Marguerite Medici, the daughter of Catherine Medici. However, the situation was not promising for Navarre. As Pietro Aldobrandini wrote to Cardinal Segna, "Cardinal Gondi has not yet arrived, and I do not know when he will have permission to enter not just Rome but also the Papal States."⁴⁶ This impression is confirmed in Venetian diplomatic correspondence. The Venetians had recently sent a number of special ambassadors to Rome to welcome the new pope, and also to lobby on Navarre's behalf. Working alongside the Tuscan Ambassador and Paolo Paruta, Venice's ordinary Ambassador, they began to press Clement to receive Gondi. However, in a letter to the Doge dated 10th October 1592, Leonardo Dona, one of the Venetian special ambassadors and a member of the *giovani*, opined that the desired absolution was unlikely. He reported that prior to consenting to Clement's election, the ministers of Spain had received "intentions from His Holiness that at no time would he admit Navarre to the succession to the Kingdom of France"⁴⁷

Eager to avoid contact with Gondi, the pope sent his representative and close advisor, the Dominican fra Franceschi, to communicate his wishes to Gondi. The friar finally managed to make contact with the cardinal just outside Florence on 15th October, and he warned him that he should not attempt to journey into Rome or the Papal States. Gondi requested that Franceschi supply him with written clarification of the decision, and asked him to return later that evening to receive his response. Gondi, meanwhile, sent his secretary to Rome, alongside an ambassador from the Grand Duke, who successfully managed to deliver a letter to the pope requesting to be allowed to enter Rome. Clement turned over the task of responding to this letter to the Congregation of the Affairs of France, which was, like the Congregation of the Inquisition, dominated by the imposing presence of Cardinal Santori. It came then as

⁴⁶ Pietro Aldobrandini to Cardinal Segna, 10th October 1592, BAV Barb Lat 5825, f.3r "Il Cardinal Gondi non è ancora arrivato, ne' so quando sia per haver licenza di entrare non solo in Roma, ma nello stato ecclesiastico".

⁴⁷ Leonardo Dona to Doge Pasquale Cicogna, from Rome, quoted in de Maio, op. cit., (1973), p.160.

little surprise when Gondi's request to enter Rome was once again rejected on November 5th.⁴⁸

During these days of heightened tension, the Inquisition stepped up its scrutiny of the members of the philosophical networks. By the start of November, Campanella had arrived in Padua, where he entered the convent of St Augustine. On the day after his arrival, he was subjected to his 'second trial'. This was not actually a formal trial, but a disciplinary proceeding during which he was accused, alongside others friars, of having insulted the Father General of the Dominican Order. Following the conclusion of the hearing, he remained in Padua, and whilst there he resumed contact with his old acquaintance Della Porta, also meeting, amongst others, Sarpi and Galileo. As we have seen, these circles in which he moved were connected to the *giovani* of Venice, the Patrician faction who were now actively lobbying on the part of Henry of Navarre. On 7th November, Cardinal Santori wrote to the Florentine inquisitor acknowledging receipt of a letter that he had sent on the 3rd October, in which he had denounced Francesco Pucci and enclosed a copy one of his books. Unfortunately, we do not know which book this was, but from a relatively early stage the Holy Office in Rome had been alerted to the existence of Pucci. In his response, Santori's requested more information about the suspect, questioning whether the book was written by him and whether or not there were other acts or business proceeding against him which could be followed.⁴⁹

Also on 7th November 1592, Patrizi appeared for the first time before the Congregation of the Index to give an account of his work. The philosopher was probably relatively unconcerned by this turn of events, for he was personally acquainted with several of the members of this congregation. Although his old friend from the University of Padua, Girolamo Della Rovere, had died in February of that year, another

⁴⁸ See de Maio, op. cit., (1973), pp.170-183. See also Pietro di Norres's account of these events in his letter to Pinelli, (13th March 1593), BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, ff.59r-66v, which reproduces not only Franceschi's letter to Gondi ff.61v-62r, (published in De Maio) but also Gondi's response, ff.63v-66v.

⁴⁹ Firpo, op. cit., (1939), pp.17-21. On Campanella's contacts with Della Porta, see Clubb, op. cit., (1965), introduction. See also Cardinal Santa Serverina to the Inquisitor of Florence, November 1592, printed in Firpo, op. cit., (1949), p.26.

of his acquaintances, Agostino Valier, was still an active member of the congregation. Furthermore, Valier, as well as two other members of the congregation, Federico Borromeo and Gabriele Paleotti, had all accepted dedications to parts of the *Nova philosophia*. It must have seemed unlikely to Patrizi that these men would have accepted them if they had believed that it contained anything that was obviously heretical. Despite their earlier support for his work, the meeting did not go well for Patrizi. The cardinals of the Index appeared unable, or unwilling, to clear Patrizi's text for circulation in its present condition, and he was left with no choice but to offer to revise the problematic passages identified by Pietro Giovanni.⁵⁰

On the 4th December, Patrizi wrote to the Dominican Cardinal Girolamo Bernieri Bishop of Ascoli, who had joined the Congregation following the death of Cardinal Della Rovere. In this letter, Patrizi expressed his surprise that his work was set to be entered into the Index, even though he had offered to emend the whole work. He informed the cardinal that his changes would be ready by the following week and he begged to be spared the "perpetual infamy" of being listed in the Index. The following day, work began on preparing a new version of the Index, and Clement and the Cardinals of Index were also keen to restart the work of expurgation, thus allowing temporarily suspended books to be returned into circulation. On the 11th December, Patrizi presented his emended version of the *Nova philosophia* to the Congregation of the Index to be inspected. The next day, the cardinals of the Index gathered for one of their regular sittings, during the course of which, Pucci's name was entered into the first class of the Index, which meant that all his books were now prohibited. The cardinals of the Index also discussed Patrizi's work, and without telling him what they were doing, handed the revised text over to the Master of the Sacred Palace for him to examine.⁵¹

By the winter of 1592, the Venetian Senate had been debating for several months whether it should allow the deportation of Bruno to Rome. They had already

⁵⁰ Firpo op. cit., (1970), p.279.

⁵¹ Frajese, op. cit., (1998), p.318. Luigi Firpo, op. cit., (1970), pp.279-80. On the condemnation of Pucci, see *Decretal* of the Congregation of the Index printed in Firpo, op. cit., (1949), p.26.

rejected the Holy Office's first request for the transfer of the friar on 10th October almost unanimously, by 107 votes to 10. However, this decision had not put an end to debates over the transfer. During subsequent sittings the Senate continued to discuss the competing jurisdictional claims of Rome and the Venetian State. The case was also rapidly becoming enmeshed in domestic politics, for the pro-Roman *vecchi* tended to support the Holy Office's demands, while the *giovani*, notably Dona who had recently returned from Rome, rejected them. Matters came to a head in January, when the papal nuncio, Taverna, again strongly pressed the Holy Office's right to prosecute Bruno. The nuncio claimed that Bruno had been placed on trial previously in Naples, which meant that the accused should be tried within a Roman Court and not a Venetian one. However, as Ricci emphasised, from documents recently discovered by Leen Spruit, we now know this claim to be false. The Inquisition in fact had no prior knowledge of Bruno. Taverna had apparently manipulated the evidence he presented to the Republic, in order to strengthen the Holy Office's case. Furthermore, Taverna also claimed (again falsely) that the numbers of prisoners extradited between Venice and Rome was far higher than was in fact the case.⁵²

As Ricci has argued, Taverna's actions point to a real determination on the part of the Holy Office to secure the extradition of Bruno. Dona was unable to prevent the Senate voting in favour of his extradition, and in January it voted in favour of sending Bruno to Rome. The deportation of Bruno had local political significance as it marked a major victory for the *vecchi* over the *giovani*. It is also notable that this victory should take place against the backdrop of the efforts of the *giovani* to campaign for the absolution of Henry of Navarre. This was a critical phase in the negotiations, and it is plausible that the interests of the Holy Office and the *vecchi* coalesced at this point. For the cardinals of the Inquisition, the extradition of Bruno gave them an opportunity to weaken and embarrass the *giovani*, and it gave the *vecchi* the chance to score a significant victory over their political rivals. Bruno in effect became a pawn in a game beyond his

⁵² Ricci, op. cit., (2000), p.258. Leen Spruit, "Due documenti noti e due documenti sconosciuti sul processo di Bruno nell' archive del Sant'Uffizio", *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, IV (1998), p.469.

control. Regardless of the underlying motive, by 27th February Bruno was languishing in the prisons of Holy Office.⁵³

⁵³ On the local significance of Bruno's extradition, see Gaetano Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa*, (Turin: 1971), p.142.

Chapter 5: The Absolution of Henry IV, 1593-1600

As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is extremely difficult to make explicit links between the trials of Stegliola and Bruno and the absolution crisis. It is, however, possible to connect these events indirectly to some of the trials of the 1590s. In this chapter I examine the manner in which two, seemingly unconnected, sets of concerns combined during the pontificate of Clement VIII to create a situation in which the trials and condemnations of the 1590s were made possible. Since the start of his pontificate, Clement VIII had been locked in a power struggle with the Inquisition, and this contest was played out in a series of disputes about two significant issues. The first was Clement's defence of a more moderate model of censorship, originally advanced by the compilers of the Tridentine Index. The second was his support for Neoplatonic philosophy, and especially the work of Francesco Patrizi. The conflict between Clement and the Inquisition was deadlocked by the end of 1592, but during the course of the following year, the balance of power was radically altered by the absolution crisis. Although initially hostile to any movement towards the absolution of Navarre, Clement gradually became convinced of its necessity. In working towards this ambition, he was gradually forced to make a series of decisions that would gravely compromise his preferred vision of censorship.

The Disputed Succession

The disputed succession continued to destabilise France, not least because of the intervention of foreign powers. The Spanish monarch, Philip II, sought to convince the French nobility to allow his daughter, the Infanta Isabella, who was married to a French nobleman, to accede to the throne. In order to achieve his desired ends, Philip began to pressurise the leader of the Catholic League, the Duke of Mayenne, to call a meeting of the Estates General. Mayenne reluctantly acceded to Philip's demands. On 26th January, the Papal legate, Cardinal Sega, addressed the

assembled delegates, urging them to select a Catholic monarch to lead their country. Despite the Cardinal's entreaties, events began to move in Henry IV's favour as the forces ranged against him gradually fell into disarray during the opening months of 1592. Spanish power was compromised by the death of Philip's experienced general, Alessandro Farnese, the Duke of Parma. Meanwhile, although the League commanded by Mayenne had successfully captured the town of Noyon, a lack of provisions and divisions among the army's commanders meant that he was unable to lead his troops on to Paris. The papal troops who had taken part in these events were dispersed. Militarily weak, Mayenne and the other moderates within the League once more began to indicate that they would be prepared to compromise with Navarre, and by February they had reached an agreement.¹

Navarre still needed to win support in Rome, but by early March it was apparent that question of his proposed absolution was polarising opinion in the Holy City. In a letter to Vincenzo Pinelli describing the reactions in Rome to the situation developing in France, Pietro di Norres observed that

The difficulty is enhanced by the variety of opinions, the multiplicity of the discourses, and of the writings, that are being disseminated, the uncertainty of the opinions, the distance, the division of the court distracted in factions, and [those] of the Sacred College, or rather of the very house of the pope, it is said that S. Cinzio favours the part of the Spanish, S. Pietro that of the King of Navarre.²

Expanding on this theme, di Norres described how the pope was being met by representatives of all sides of the debate. At the papal court the Catholic League was represented by the secretary of the Duke of Dumena and the Bishop of Lisieux who, di

¹ On the impact of these events in Rome, see Pastor, *op. cit.*, Vol. XI, (Rome: 1958), pp.52-53. For a discussion of the developing situation in France, see Knecht (1996), p.78 and Mack P. Holt, *op. cit.*, (2005), p.162.

² Pietro di Norres in Rome to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua, (2nd March 1593), BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, "Accresse difficulta la varieta de pareri, la multiplicita' de discorsi, et delle scritture, che si vanno disseminando, l'incertezza degli avvisi, la lontananza, la divisione della Corte distratta in fattione, et del sacro Collegio, anzi della stessa casa del Papa, dicendosi, che il S. Cintio favorisse le parti degli Spagnuoli, il S Pietro quelle del Re di Navarra." f.56v.

Norres commented, “founds all the reasons of the League in the conscience, and in the interest of the Catholic religion. He holds the King of Navarre to be a heretic, relapsed, his conversion simulated. He always brings forth to the pope a long series of impieties and abominations that the king has either done himself, or tolerated in his party.” Also present was the Spanish ambassador, the Duke of Sessa. Although di Norres described him as “not a very vehement man”, he related how the Duke nevertheless warned the pope of the “manifest danger that this Kingdom should fall into the hands of a heretic king, and that he should infest the entire body of so great a province.”³ Di Norres also made it clear that Navarre too had supporters in the city lobbying on his behalf. “Taking the part of the king”, he wrote, “are the speakers from Venice and Florence” who argued that absolving Navarre would be a means to formalise the *de facto* situation in France. They argued that “the king is already in possession of the kingdom, he is powerful, without obstacle, the arms of the League are disunited and unable to resist him, the army of Flanders, without a leader since the death of the Duke of Parma, is in the greatest disorder, the king lacks nothing other than the assent of the pope.”⁴

As di Norres suggested, the issue of the absolution of Navarre was dividing the highest ranks of the Church and the pope was still undecided about how he should act. He was, however, growing increasingly close to the Oratorians. These were a community of secular priests founded and led by Filippo Neri (1515-95), whose members included the ecclesiastical historian Cesare Baronio (1538-1607). The Oratorians were broadly in favour of allowing the conversion of Navarre to take place, and they were gradually reaching positions of influence within the curia. Agostino Valier, a leading cardinal in the Congregation of the Index of Forbidden Books, was a

³ Ibid. “fonda tutte le ragioni della lega nella coscienza, e nell’ interesse della Religione Cattolica. Contende il Re di Navarra essere heretico, relapso, la sua conversione simulata, porta sempre avanti ’l Papa una lunga serie d’ impietà, et d’ abominatione, che il Re ha fatte, o’ tollerate nel suo partito”. f.56r. “non è houmo molto vehemente”, “manifesto pericolo che quel Regno cadesse in potere d’un Re heretico, et s’ infettasse tutto ’l corpo di cosi ampia Provincia.”, f.57v.

⁴ Ibid. “l Re è gia in possesso del Regno, è potente, senza ostacolo, l’arme della Lega disunite, non essere atte a reisterli, l’esercito di Fiandra, morto il Duca di Parma, ancor senza Capo, in grand.mo disordine, non mancare altro al Re che l’assento del Papa”, ff.58v-58r.

great admirer of Neri, and described him as a ‘Christian Socrates’. Another of their close associates, Silvio Antoniano, (described by one of the Oratorians as “our man, but not our co-habitant”), had been appointed Maestro di Camera in 1592, and by November 1593 Segretario ai Brevi. The papal nephew, Pietro Aldobrandini, was also associated with the Oratorians, and he was becoming an increasingly influential figure in Rome having been appointed as secretary of state alongside his cousin Cinzio. Although Pietro had not officially been given any more authority than his kinsman, he began to assume responsibility for affairs that fell within Cinzio’s sphere of influence.⁵

However, many of the leading members of the Congregation of the Holy Office were vehemently opposed to Navarre, for two main reasons. In the first place, many viewed him as an unrepentant heretic who should not be permitted to ascend to the throne of such an important Catholic kingdom. Secondly, many also owed their allegiance to Philip II, who loathed Navarre as a heretic, but also stood to gain politically if he were prevented from assuming the title of king. Even if Clement were willing at this stage to consider the absolution, the Inquisition would have proved a major obstacle. Its members had already shown themselves to be powerful, and determined to pursue the policies that they favoured, regardless of papal opinion. Their influence over Clement VIII’s is demonstrated by the pope’s decision to issue two bulls, *Caeca et obdurate Hebraeorum perfida* and *Quum Hebraeorum malitia* directed against the Jews in late February 1593. The first bull expelled all Jews from the Papal States, except Rome, Ancona and Avignon, while the second demanded that the owners of copies of the Talmud and other cabbalistic texts should surrender them either to the Holy Office or to local inquisitors. As Fausto Parente has argued, the drafting of the second bull was a contentious issue. He has shown that the bull was in fact published in two successive versions, the first of which allowed for the expurgation of the Talmud, and a second version that banned it outright. The final harsher version of this bull was, as Parente has shown, the work of the Holy Office, which had used its

⁵ E. Fasano Guarini, “Pietro Aldobrandini” in *DBI*, Vol. II, p.108. See too Vittorio Frajese, op. cit., (1998), pp.320-323.

power to overcome the will of the pope who had favoured allowing the Jews to retain the Talmud.⁶

The cardinals of the Inquisition and the Master of the Sacred Palace also continued to harbour deep misgivings about the type of philosophical activity that Clement favoured. As we have seen in the previous chapter, there had been significant efforts to censor Francesco Patrizi's *Nova philosophia*. Clement appeared unwilling to yield on this issue, and Patrizi remained optimistic that his work would be allowed to circulate once more. On 23rd March 1593, Patrizi again wrote to the cardinals of the Congregation of the Index about his case. He complained that although he had presented an emended version of the *Nova philosophia* to the Congregation for it to be assessed, and if necessary returned to him for further correction, this had not taken place. He was therefore writing to inform them that he now “petitions once again that it may be reviewed as soon as possible in order that it may be published and that copies presently in the hands of the booksellers can be properly altered.”⁷ Probably as a result of Patrizi's complaint, the scrutiny of his work began again in earnest. On 27th March, presumably in accordance with instructions issued by the Congregation of the Index, Patrizi sent a copy of his *Nova philosophia* to the General of the Jesuit Order, Claudio Aquaviva, so that he could arrange for it to be examined by a member of his order. Aquaviva assigned this task to a certain Benedetto Giustiniani.⁸

Patrizi seemed confident that his work would once again be returned into circulation, a feeling which must have been bolstered by his continued close relations with the Aldobrandini family. His optimism may have been further reinforced by the pope's evident determination to free his pontificate from the influence of the Holy Office. In a move which marked his independence from the cardinals who dominated this institution, Clement signed a brief on 17th April that made profound alterations to the meaning of the bull concerning the Talmud passed in February. Whereas the bull promoted by the Holy Office had required the Talmud's total suppression, this brief

⁶ Parente, op. cit., (2001), pp.163-94.

⁷ Francesco Patrizi, to the Congregation of the Index, 23 March 1593, cited in Firpo op. cit., (1970), p.280 translated by Eric Cochrane.

⁸ Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.280.

gave permission for the Jews to continue expurgating their works. This action demonstrated Clement's willingness to contest the authority of the Inquisition, and his desire to install the censorial regime that he favoured.⁹

Two months later, at the end of June 1593, Patrizi again wrote to the Cardinals of the Index in a further effort to push forward the assessment of his work. He requested that Father Giustiniani's corrections "be given to me in order that I might finish correcting my philosophy in its entirety and that the work might come out corrected and expurgated according to the decree of this holy tribunal."¹⁰ Evidently by this time Giustiniani had completed his assessment, and Patrizi was confident that his comments would allow him to prepare a final revision of the *Nova philosophia* that would not be included in the Index. Despite Patrizi's optimism, the work of preparing the Index had already been completed on 26th June 1593, and the Protocolli of the Congregation of the Index note that the *Nova philosophia* was entered into this list as suspended "until corrected by the author and printed at Rome with the approval of the Master of the Sacred Palace." Also included on the list were the writings of Tommaso Campanella, and the Talmud, but without the formula *si tamen*, which would have allowed for its revision. It appeared that despite Clement VIII's attempts to promote a more liberal censorial regime, the cardinals of the Index had prepared a list heavily influenced by the opinions of the Inquisition. Although the situation appeared grave, the Index still required the approval of the pope. It was brought to Clement for him to read on July 8th, but after reading it he ordered that its promulgation should be suspended pending revisions.¹¹

⁹ Parente, op. cit., (2001), pp.182-185.

¹⁰ Francesco Patrizi to the Congregation of the Index, cited in Luigi Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.281, translated by Eric Cochrane.

¹¹ Frajese, op. cit., (1998), p.319; Parente op. cit., (2001), pp.185-86, Luigi Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.279, Protocolli cited on p.279, translated by Eric Cochrane.

Navarre's Abjuration

On the 3rd July, di Norres wrote to Pinelli informing him of the Spanish faction's efforts to secure the throne of France for the Infanta Isabella, noting that with their efforts to promote her election "they have nauseated everyone." Di Norres also commented that "the goal of the Catholic King is to transfer the Kingdom of France into his house." This latter remark suggests that at least some contemporaries suspected that Philip II was attempting to gain control of France for himself, giving him dominion over an immense empire. While the circles in which Pinelli moved in the Veneto had previously hoped that a restored France would help to check the Spanish hegemony in Italy, the concern in early 1593 was that Philip II might in fact consolidate his power by effectively annexing France. This would finally secure his domination of not only France, but also Italy. These fears were, however, relatively short-lived, for by the summer of 1593, the plans to elect Isabella were defeated by moderate members of the League at the Estates General.¹²

The disputed election of Isabella also gave new the delegates a new impetus to resolve the ongoing constitutional crisis. Navarre made a decisive move on July 25th 1593, when standing at the main altar of the Church of Saint Dionysius in Paris, before a number of secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries, he abjured his Calvinist beliefs. He was absolved from his excommunication by the Archbishop of Bourges, pending confirmation by the pope. Following his abjuration, Henry sent circular letters to the provinces of France and the leaders of Europe, informing them of his actions. On 9th August he sent a messenger bearing a letter written in his own hand to Clement telling him of his abjuration, and his determination "to render obedience, and the respect required by Your Holiness and the Holy Seat, as my predecessors the Most Christian Kings have done." By the middle of the month, the news was widely known within Rome. While Henry's supporters believed that the opportunity they had long awaited

¹² di Norres in Rome to Pinelli in Padua, (3rd July 1593), BAV Barb. Lat. 5781, "hanno nauseato ogniuno", f.69v "l fine del Re Cattolico è di trasferire il Regno di Francia in casa sua", f.69r. On the failure of Philip II's plans at the Estates General, see Holt, *op. cit.*, (2005), p.162.

had arrived, the Spanish were enraged. Nevertheless on 15th August, Navarre's ambassador Luigi Gonzaga, the Duke of Nevers, wrote to inform Clement that he was to travel to Rome to discuss the possibility of his master's absolution.¹³

In spite of these momentous events, Clement was unsure whether he could trust Navarre. Once more foreign diplomats began to lobby on the latter's behalf. For example, on the 20th August, the Venetian ambassador, Paolo Paruta, cautioned the pope that if he did not agree to the absolution, he ran the risk of France becoming a Calvinist state, and that like his Medici namesake, Clement VII, he would be remembered for losing a major Catholic state to Protestantism. The Spanish meanwhile stepped up their opposition. On 11th September, Francesco Pena, the Auditor of the Rota and a staunch supporter of the Spanish monarch, challenged the opinion that peace could only be brought to France by allowing for Henry's conversion. More menacingly the Spanish threatened to break off relations with Rome and attack France directly.¹⁴

The situation was growing ever more strained in Rome, and at this moment Francesco Pucci again wrote to Clement, on this occasion from Salzburg. In his latest letter, Pucci reaffirmed his "desire to use the talent, which God has given me, for the benefit of the Christian republic, our holy and most dear fatherland." He continued that he wanted to tell the pope of the important information given to him by Christ and the heavenly father about the efficacy of the benefit of Christ for all men, and of the coming of his divine majesty to hold court and reform the Church. Once again we do not know whether Clement received these letters, and, if he did, how widely their content was circulated. Nevertheless, we do know that the Inquisition was aware of Pucci, and may have been monitoring him. Should they have become aware of this correspondence, it could have been potentially damaging to Clement.¹⁵

¹³ Henry IV's letter to Clement VIII, from copy preserved in BAV Barb. Lat. 5866, "di render l'obedienza, et il rispetto dovuto alla V'ra S'ta et alla santa sede, cosi come hanno fatto li Re Christianissimi miei predecessori.", f.161r. For the context of this letter, see Pastor, op. cit., (1958) Vol. XI, pp.55-60.

¹⁴ Pastor, op. cit., (1958) Vol. XI, pp.59-60.

¹⁵ Pucci to Clement VIII, 25th August 1593, in Firpo and Piattoli (1955), p.155. See too Firpo op. cit., (1949), pp.371-405.

Nevertheless, Pucci sent his letter at a difficult moment for Clement. Despite harbouring reservations about the veracity of Navarre's conversion, possibly influenced by his nephew Pietro, Clement took the view that he should at least attempt to negotiate with him. Given the opposition in Rome, this was, however, no easy matter. Clement deferred the decision as to whether or not he should receive the delegation led by the Duke of Nevers to the Congregation for the Affairs of France, and the Congregation of the Holy Office. It was a clever move, for by making these congregations pronounce on the acceptability of receiving this delegation, Clement boosted the authority of the decision. Yet the chance of these congregations finding in favour of Clement's preferred course of action were slim, for they were both dominated by the imposing presence of Cardinal Santori. When the Congregation of the Holy Office gathered to discuss these matters during a sitting held on 15th September in Santori's palazzo, Cardinals Deza, Pinelli, Ascolano, Sarano, Sfondrato, all declared themselves to be adamantly opposed to the idea of the Pope receiving Navarre's delegation.¹⁶

Clement's authority was now being openly challenged by the Inquisition and he needed to consolidate his position. On 17th September 1593, Clement received his first opportunity to do so by appointing new Cardinals to the College. In all he created four new Cardinals, Lucia Lassie, his two nephews Cinzio and Pietro Aldobrandini, and finally a Jesuit, Roberto Toledo, who had originally come to Rome in 1560 to teach at the Collegio Romano. Clement's decision to promote him was surprising for two reasons. First, like many members of his order Toledo worked within the synthesis of knowledge sketched by Thomas Aquinas. Consequently, his understanding of the relations between philosophy and theology were opposed to those embodied in the work of philosophers such as Patrizi, whom Clement had favoured. Secondly, Toledo was a recognised member of the Spanish faction. He had received a pension from the king and done much to bolster the reputation of Spanish theologians and Spanish leadership of the Catholic Church in Rome. Both of these apparent anomalies can be

¹⁶ Ricci, *op. cit.*, (1996a), pp.141-45.

resolved by the fact that, Toledo had recently become convinced that Navarre offered the best hope for bringing peace to France. His appointment provided Clement with authoritative support within the College of Cardinals for his efforts to conduct negotiations with the French king.¹⁷

The importance of Clement's decision rapidly came to the fore. In the face of continued opposition from the Spanish faction and the Holy Office, Clement continued to support the idea of receiving the Duke of Never's delegation, and he once again chose to refer the decision to the Congregations of the Affairs of France and the Inquisition. In an effort to influence the decision in his favour, the pope appointed Toledo as a member of the Congregation of the Inquisition on 27th September. He participated in his first sitting of the Congregation on the 24th October, and the subsequent session on the 6th November. It seems as though his influence had a significant impact upon the congregation, for during these sessions only three Cardinals (Deza, Ascalano and Sfondrato) continued to persist in their support for Santori's position. The remaining members of the Congregation (Aragona, Salviati, Lancellotti, Caetani, Pinelli, Sarnano, Mattei, Acquaviva and Toledo) all now judged that it would be acceptable for Clement to receive the delegation led by Nevers.¹⁸

Following this favourable decision, Nevers arrived in Rome in the late autumn and he was eventually received by Clement on a number of occasions between the 21st November and 5th December. During these meetings, the pope informed Nevers that he required evidence that his master genuinely wanted to convert, for he believed that the king's behaviour betrayed his insincerity. On December 8th, Nevers also had the opportunity to meet with the Oratorians, notably Filippo Neri, Cesare Baronio and Tommaso Bozio. Neri, for one, was convinced by the arguments presented by the French ambassador in favour of Navarre's absolution. He was not alone in his support for this course of action, for during the weeks that followed, the ambassadors of Venice, Florence and Mantua and Cardinal Toledo each warned that if he did not

¹⁷ Dandeleit, *op. cit.*, (2001), p.143.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the diplomatic background to Toledo's entrance into the Congregation of the Holy Office, see Ricci *op. cit.*, (1996a), pp.142-44. On the date of Toledo's admission into the Congregation of the Holy Office, see Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1998), p.338, n.234.

readmit Navarre, then the French Church might renounce its adherence to Rome. The opponents of Nevers were also active in Rome. The Spanish openly began to threaten Clement that they would create a schism if Navarre were absolved, and on 20th December Clement was forced to address complaints circulating amongst the College of Cardinals that they had not been consulted about Nevers's arrival. Clement rebutted these complaints, arguing that he had consulted both the Congregation for the Affairs of France and that of the Inquisition, and that he had in any case only received Nevers privately, and not as an official ambassador. Santori was unimpressed by this explanation, and during a meeting of the two congregations he denounced the behaviour of Navarre and stated his opinion that the French clerics who had absolved him should be excommunicated, and those that accompanied Nevers should be prosecuted under canon law.¹⁹

At this stage it is possible to expand Saverio Ricci's thesis, that Cardinal Santori became interested in Bruno because he believed that he possessed information about networks of Navarre supporters in Italy. Santori may well have been using his power to glean such information as he could about Navarre's political supporters in Italy, in order to weaken their influence. It is notable that at this delicate stage in the negotiations about Navarre's absolution, the Inquisition subjected Bruno to his first interrogation in Rome. However, we do not have any direct evidence that Bruno was interrogated about his connections to Navarre at this time, but only that he was questioned about Mocenigo's accusation that he had denied the unity and the trinity of the Godhead, among other things. Nevertheless, these interrogations took place at the same time as another member of the intellectual networks of Italy, Tommaso Campanella, was imprisoned by the Inquisition. He was arrested by the Venetian Inquisition alongside G.B. Clario (the doctor to the Archduke Carlo, the third son of Emperor Ferdinand), and Ottavio Longo. The three accused were transferred from Venice to Rome in January 1594. Once again an individual connected to the

¹⁹ Ricci, *op. cit.*, (1996a), p.146.

intellectual networks of Venice which were known to harbour supporters of Navarre had been transported to Rome to stand trial.²⁰

While there is no direct evidence to link him to Henry of Navarre, Campanella and his associates were accused of a number of significant heresies. The three men had begun to meet in the middle of 1593 to discuss theological matters. The Inquisition alleged that during these meetings they had disputed about the faith with a 'Judaizer', whom Firpo contended was a Capuchin friar Antonio who was burnt at the stake in Verona in 1599. The friar had apparently sustained that Christ had not taken human form. If this were the case, then the charge of 'Judaizing' amounted to the denial of the incarnation, which echoed some of the allegations previously levelled against Bruno. Campanella was also charged with having authored the (mythical) atheistic work *De tribus impostoribus*, and to have authored an impious sonnet about Christ. Finally, and importantly in light of the earlier investigations conducted into his intellectual activities in Naples, he was found to be in possession of a book of geomancy.²¹

The Condemnation of Patrizi

As 1593 drew to a close, Clement began to give greater consideration to absolution of the French King, and by the end of the year he had created a special congregation deal with this matter. Once more Clement turned to Toledo for assistance, appointing him as theologian to the special congregation. The absolution was, however, still far from assured. On the 10th January 1594, Clement and his nephews Pietro and Cinzio received Nevers on one final occasion. Although the meeting was amicable, Clement remained firm that he would not absolve Navarre until he offered some proof of the veracity of his conversion. Four days later, Nevers left Rome, without securing any solid undertakings from the pope. Many members of the

²⁰ On Bruno's first interrogation at the hands of the Roman Inquisition, see Firpo, op. cit., (1993), p.55. On Campanella's third trial, see Firpo, op. cit., (1939), pp.19-36. On Antitrinitarianism in the Veneto, see Martin, op. cit., (2003), chapter 4.

²¹ The identification of the friar, Antonio, was made by Luigi Amabile, and endorsed by Firpo, see op. cit., (1939), p.25.

Spanish faction in the city believed that the failure of his mission had put an end to all talk of the absolution. They ignored, however, the developing situation in France. In spite of the failure of Nevers's mission, and the continued efforts of Cardinal Sega to persuade Catholics to withhold their allegiance from Henry, the latter was gaining strength and supporters almost daily. On the 27th February he was crowned as King Henry IV in Chartres, and on 22nd March he made a triumphal entry into the city of Paris, the historic seat of the League, where he celebrated a mass of thanksgiving in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.²²

Clement VIII was once more faced with extremely difficult choices, either of which might result in him losing spiritual authority over a major Catholic state. On the one hand, if he refused to consider the absolution of Henry IV he risked France becoming a Calvinist state; on the other, if he were to agree to it, then there was a real danger that an enraged Spanish king might threaten to withdraw his allegiance from the papacy and possibly establish an independent Church. Furthermore, the pope knew that he could not be seen to surrender to the wishes of the French king too easily, as this could compromise the authority of the Holy See. Nonetheless, in February 1594 Clement summoned Cardinal Gondi to Rome, and informed him that he would be prepared to receive an ambassador from Henry IV to discuss his absolution. In return for granting the king's wishes, Clement demanded significant concessions from him, including an undertaking to publish the Tridentine decrees in France, and to restore Catholicism in Béarn, and finally securing his agreement that only Catholics would be appointed to the highest offices of state. The affairs of France seemed to be moving in Clement's favour, if he could overcome the opposition within Rome and secure the absolution, he would not only prevent a schism with France, but also potentially overturn generations of Gallicanism to bring the kingdom securely under the spiritual authority of the papacy.²³

²² See Dandele, *op. cit.*, (2001), pp.142-143. See too Pastor, *op. cit.*, (1958) Vol. XI, pp.71-73; Ricci, *op. cit.*, (1996a) pp.147-50.

²³ See Pastor *op. cit.*, (1958) Vol. XI, pp.78-79.

Although caught in the middle of a complex situation, Clement nevertheless believed that he was in the ascendant and he began to make major strides towards securing a more liberal model of censorship within the Church. On 12th February 1594, the Congregation of the Index met with him to discuss the objections that he had raised about the Index that they had drafted the previous summer. After discussing the situation with the cardinals, Clement subsequently prepared a written version of his objections. This document was delivered to the Congregation by his segretario ai Brevi, and associate of the Oratorians, Silvio Antoniano, who may also have drafted the document. Clement made two main complaints: first, that the Cardinals of the Index had returned to the harsh repressiveness of the Inquisition's Index of 1559; secondly, it appeared to Clement that the congregation had neglected the vital work of expurgation that would allow some currently prohibited books to circulate once more in Catholic lands. In over twenty years it had expurgated only a handful of titles designated for amendment in the Tridentine Index, and Clement wanted to see significantly more titles back in the hands of Catholic readers.²⁴

Against this backdrop, the Inquisition continued to pursue their interest in Giordano Bruno. The Holy Office instructed the Venetian Inquisition to re-examine the Venetian noble Zuane Mocenigo and all of the other significant witnesses in the case. Mocenigo reiterated his principal charges against Bruno, but he also made some significant elaborations, which underlined the connections between the accused, the pope, and his favoured philosopher, Patrizi. He told the Venetian inquisitor that, "When il Patritio went to Rome by our Lord, Giordano said 'This Pope is a gallant man because he favours philosophers and I can also hope to be favoured, and I know that il Patritio is a philosopher, and that he believes nothing', and I replied that Patrizi was a good Christian." Although the inquisitors already knew from Bruno that he intended to seek patronage from Clement, Mocenigo's new remarks, when viewed in the context of his earlier allegations, were highly damaging to Clement. In his depositions the Venetian noble had accused Bruno of promoting a range of heretical ideas and

²⁴ Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1998), pp.324-334; Parente, *op. cit.*, (2001), p.186-87. On the Pauline and Tridentine Indices see chapter 2 above.

practices, and he now explicitly stated that the Nolan believed that his ideas would appeal to the pope. Mocenigo's testimony therefore raised questions about Clement's judgement, by underlining his reputation for providing patronage to thinkers of questionable orthodoxy. A reputation for supporting heterodox thinkers and allowing the spread of heresy was highly damaging to Clement at a time when he was deeply engaged in negotiations to absolve the most famous heretic of the age, Henry IV. It is possible that the Inquisition was deliberately seeking to expose these connections in order to weaken Clement.²⁵

This suggestion is given further credence by the coincidence of Francesco Pucci's trial and the developing negotiations about the absolution. On 27th May, Pucci was brought to the prisons of the Holy Office in Rome. Firpo believes that he was probably arrested in Salzburg and transported to the Inquisition's prisons by the Archbishop of the city. As the extradition of Bruno has demonstrated, transferring prisoners between states was a complicated process. The negotiations to bring Pucci to trial must have taken several months and involved a large amount of diplomatic wrangling. It is interesting to consider why the Inquisition should have exerted so much time and expense to secure Pucci's extradition. It is possible that the Congregation of the Holy Office simply considered him to be far too dangerous to leave at large. As the work of Artemio Enzo Baldini has suggested, each of these men can, with varying degrees of confidence, be seen to have supported Henry IV and in the case of Pucci and Bruno they can also be linked to Clement VIII. When the actions of the Cardinals of the Holy Office are considered in the context of the earlier extradition of Campanella and Bruno, it becomes plausible that their actions were prompted by the desire to create another trial in Rome, which would once more expose Clement VIII's association with known heretics.²⁶

Baldini has also suggested ways in which Patrizi can be linked to this story, by stressing the importance of an academy sponsored by the Papal Nephew, Cinzio

²⁵ On this phase of the trial, see Firpo, op. cit., (1993), chapter 8; Mocenigo quoted in the *Sommario*, p.248. See too Finnochiato, op. cit., (2002), p.59.

²⁶ Firpo, op. cit., (1949), p.13. A. E. Baldini, op. cit., (1999), pp.232-234.

Aldobrandini, whose members gathered in his apartments to discuss political affairs. The first meeting of this academy took place on 30th May, and it was attended by amongst others Patrizi, and two of the most prominent supporters of Henry IV in Rome, Minuccio Minnuci and Goffredo Lomellini. Baldini has argued that this academy brought together supporters of Platonist philosophy such as Patrizi who sought to use their ideas to bring about reconciliation with the Protestants, with scholars who promoted Machiavellian ideas about the reason of state. He argued that during the summer of 1594 the ambitions of these two groups combined, and became focussed upon an effort to secure change within the Church, which they believed would begin with the absolution of Henry IV. Although Baldini's work suggests links between Platonist philosophy, aspirations for reform and concrete political designs centred on Henry IV, the extant evidence relating to this academy makes no direct reference to these ambitions. Notably, there is no evidence to link Patrizi's undoubted ambitions to reform and reunite Christianity through the use of his philosophy, with specific ambitions for the French king.²⁷

Although it may not be possible to establish the links suggested by Baldini, it is nevertheless possible to argue that the condemnation of Patrizi's work was related to the absolution crisis. In a letter written to the Congregation of the Index during the summer of 1594, Patrizi indicated he still enjoyed the pope's support. He reminded the cardinals that they had ordered the General of the Jesuits to appoint a member of his order to examine the work, who appointed Father Giustiniani to carry out this work. Patrizi continued that he showed the report to

His Holiness our Lord, who commanded that the Reverend Father Giustiniani should go to him. He ordered that he should look at my entire book, and if there were things repugnant to the Faith, he should report them to him. The Father obeyed, and having looked at the book he reported orally that he had not found anything problematic. And now His Beatitude commanded me to explain in writing my intentions in the named disputed places and other more

²⁷ A. E. Baldini, *op. cit.*, (1995), pp201-26. The only source recording what transpired during these meetings is a lecture by Minnuci, which makes no references to wider aspirations for change suggested by Baldini, see ISG, Fondo Minnuciano, Ms. 9, ff.r263-278r.

obscure passages. I have done so in my declarations which I took to Cardinal Ascoli, imploring him to show it to his theologian.²⁸

From this letter it is clear that the pope was personally intervening in Patrizi's case. Clement had made it his personal concern to understand the nature of the objections raised against Patrizi's work, and he had also suggested to Patrizi that the situation could be resolved satisfactorily if he wrote a "declaration" in which he clarified his intentions. This work was almost certainly the *Declarationes F. Patritii in quaedam suae philosophiae loca obscuriora*.²⁹ Patrizi continued his letter to the Congregation of the Index by describing how, having presented the *Declarations* to Ascoli, the cardinal had, "replied that he did not have a theologian in the house, and referred me to the Father Master of the Sacred Palace. I obeyed him. And the Reverend Father told me that I must take it to show to Father Azor in the College of the Jesuits." Patrizi continued that, in accordance with the instructions of the Master of the Sacred Palace, he had delivered his declaration to Azor. "[Azor has examined the Work] and he has made an attestation in writing that neither the Theology nor the Physics contain things repugnant to the Catholic Faith, nor to the decrees of the Holy Roman Church, nor *contra bonos mores*." In making this claim, Patrizi was not entirely honest, for Azor had not examined the *Nova philosophia* itself, but only the *Declarationes* that Patrizi had penned in its defence.³⁰

Patrizi nevertheless continued that the *Declarationes* could be published as an addendum to the *Nova philosophia* and expressed his hope that this extra clarification would be enough to ensure the publication of his work. This would, he added, ensure that "my innocence, neither in life, nor in death remains marked by the infamous mark

²⁸ This letter was published by Silvano Cavazza, see op. cit., (1978) pp.378-396. Cavazza was not able to date the letter, but from the internal evidence it is clear that it was written at some point between 22nd April and 2nd July 1594.

²⁹ The *Declarationes* were not actually dated, and Firpo argued that it was circulated in 1592 prior to Patrizi summons to the Congregation of the Index. From the evidence provided by the letter discovered by Cavazza, it seems that this dating is not correct, and that Patrizi in fact wrote the *Declarationes* in response to a request from Clement made in 1594. See Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.277.

³⁰ Frajese, op. cit., (1998), p.334-35. Patrizi to the Congregation of the Index, in Cavazza, op. cit., (1978), p.390.

of heresy and my name is removed from the Index, since I have always been a good and obedient son of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Roman Church.”³¹ While Patrizi had good reason to hope that the assessment of his work would result in a positive outcome, his spirits may also have been raised on 3rd June, when Cardinal Toledo was appointed to serve on the Congregation of the Index, just prior to the review of the *Nova philosophia*.³² The Jesuit theologian Benedetto Giustiniani presented his opinion on the work to the Congregation of the Index on 11th June, and as we have already seen, he had not identified any significant problems. Despite these favourable judgements, the Congregation still did not produce a definite decision, but instead passed the *Nova philosophia* to Cardinal Toledo for him to conduct a further examination.³³

Although Patrizi might still have hoped for a favourable resolution to his case, the absolution crisis was continuing to create problems for Clement. By the summer negotiations had reached a critical stage, and Henry IV was poised to send a new delegation led by Jacques Davy du Perron to Rome to meet the pope. Clement and his circle of supporters were subject to increasing pressure from members of the Spanish faction who were hostile to the French king. In a letter dated June 29th, Cesare Baronio wrote to a friend informing him of a rumour that his *Annales*, a history of the Church, was going to be placed on the Spanish Index by the Spanish Inquisition. Baronio also expressed his fears that his work could also be placed on the Index in Rome. It was perhaps no surprise that Baronio’s work was under attack during the summer of 1594. The most recent volume of his *Annales*, published in 1594 and dedicated to Clement VIII, dealt with the years 395-440A.D., and explicitly discussed the circumstances in which a heretic could be re-admitted into the Church. His central contention was that, as the Vicar of Christ, the pope had the right, and indeed the duty, to absolve penitent heretics, even those who had relapsed. Although Baronio did not draw any parallels

³¹ Ibid., p.390.

³² Frajese, op. cit., (1998), p.338, n.234.

³³ Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.282.

with contemporary events, the implications of his argument were immediately obvious to all.³⁴

Clement was now faced with attacks on to two of his clients, and their contrasting fates are instructive. While Baronio's *Annales* were in fact never placed on the Roman Index, the fate of Patrizi's *Nova philosophia* was about to be sealed. On the 2nd July 1594 Toledo's conclusions about the *Nova philosophia* were discussed before the Congregation. Although Toledo, like Patrizi, had benefited from the patronage of Clement, his judgement of the philosopher's work was damning. He concluded that, "the book was totally prohibited and the author, called in front of the Congregation, was repeatedly warned, by demonstrating to him many errors which his work contained, errors that a good Catholic, especially in Rome, never should have expressed or taught." This devastating condemnation finally crushed Patrizi's hope of avoiding the condemnation of the *Nova philosophia*. After discussing Toledo's comments, the cardinals ruled once more to retain the prohibition on Patrizi's work, pending revision.³⁵

How can we explain this outcome? It is highly likely that Toledo's opinion reflected his personal dislike of Patrizi's philosophy, for he was trained in Thomist philosophy, and he almost certainly disapproved of its implications. It nevertheless remains surprising that Toledo, a figure so close to Clement, should play a pivotal role in censuring the work of a philosopher that the pope had personally endorsed. The explanation for this curious turn of events lies, I suggest, in the absolution crisis. The price of Toledo's continued support for Clement's efforts to absolve Henry IV was the prohibition of Patrizi's work. Had the circumstances been different, and Clement's position stronger, then it is entirely possible that the pope might have been able to prevent his favoured philosopher from being entered into the Index. Clement, vulnerable through his efforts to absolve Henry IV, was able to protect Baronio, but

³⁴ Cyriac Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius Counter Reformation Historian* (London: 1975), p.66; Stefano Zen, *Baronio Storico controriforma e crisi del metodo umanistico* (Naples: 1994), pp.274-75.

³⁵ Toledo cited in Cavazza, op. cit., (1978-9), pp.387. Luigi Firpo, op. cit., (1970), p.282.

not Patrizi. The pope may also have had pragmatic motives, for as we shall see, while Patrizi had become a liability, Baronio remained highly useful.

The Absolution of Henry IV, the 1596 Index,
and the Conclusion of the Trials

As 1595 began, the absolution of Henry IV began to look as though it might be a real possibility. Nevertheless, Philip II and his supporters remained opposed to the idea, and the French monarchy learned through intercepted dispatches that the Spanish king was planning to attack France from Flanders with the hope of attracting any disaffected leader of the League to his cause. These intercepted dispatches were just one of a number of signs alerting Henry IV to the threat of invasion, prompting him to declare war on Spain. Although Philip remained opposed to Henry's rule, indications were arriving from Rome that the papal regime was preparing to grant the absolution. Navarre's supporters were taking increasingly prominent roles in Clement's regime. Notably, in February 1595 Baronio became confessor to Clement VIII.³⁶

As the negotiations regarding the absolution entered this final phase preparations for the latest version of the Index of Forbidden books were also reaching an advanced stage. The work had faltered over the previous summer, but at the suggestion of Agostino Valier on 8th September 1594 the congregation sent Cardinal Toledo to suggest to Clement that it should resume. After consultation the pope agreed, on the condition that the cardinals took into account the suggestions that he had made in his *Animadversio*. On 29th June 1595, Cardinal Toledo presented the revised version of the list to Clement VIII, and on 2nd July the Index was presented in the consistory. It was read by Clement VIII, who then gave the task of reviewing the work to three trusted officials, Baronio, Antoniano and Maffa. As Frajese observed, "I do not believe that there is any need to explain the reason for these names and for these procedures. One is considering the crucial days of the absolution of Henry IV."

³⁶ On the situation in France, see Holt, *op. cit.*, (2005), pp.164-65.

While Baronio, Antoniano and Cardinal Valier were in favour of the absolution, other cardinals within the Congregation of the Index, Federico Borromeo, Marc Antonio and Ascanio Colonna were united behind the Spanish efforts to defeat it. By giving the task of reviewing the Index to his supporters, he prevented the Spanish faction from taking another opportunity to pressurise him.³⁷

Also at this time, extant trial documents show that, from at least July 1595, the Roman Inquisition was gathering information on Col Antonio Stegliola, a member of Della Porta's Neapolitan circle and an acquaintance of Campanella. One witness, Josephus Sarrianus, reported that Stegliola had complained that the Northern Protestants had not been given the chance to come to an open council, and claimed that the Council of Trent had not been open. Another witness, a Jesuit named Claudius Migliarensis, delivered a deposition stating that although they had never met, he had nonetheless heard several rumours about Stegliola. Some of these rumours related to the strength of Stegliola's Catholic faith, for he had apparently claimed to eat meat on forbidden days. Other rumours suggested that he was a supporter of the French king, Migliarensis reported that he had heard from a certain Cesare Mirballo, that "he always defended the affairs of Navarre." As Ricci has noted, the references to Stegliola's alleged support for Henry IV do suggest tantalising hints of the Inquisitor's possible intentions. As we have seen in this, and the previous chapter, Stegliola, Bruno and Campanella were all connected to the same intellectual networks, and some of the members of these networks were indeed in favour of the absolution of Henry IV. This does lend credence to Ricci's contention that the head of the Inquisition, Cardinal Santori, believed that he was rooting out a network of Navarrist supporters within Italy. The timing of the investigations, at this delicate stage in the negotiations over the absolution, also hints that this trial might be related to the absolution crisis. However, as was the case with both Bruno, and Campanella, there is no evidence from Stegliola's own writings to support these claims.³⁸

³⁷ Frajese, *op. cit.*, (1998), p.336.

³⁸ Stegliola's trial documents are reprinted in Amabile, *op. cit.*, (1892). See too Ricci, *op. cit.*, (1996b), pp.17-27.

Regardless of the possible political motivation for Stegliola's trial, there was plenty of material in these allegations to warrant an investigation. The trial documents also suggest that the Inquisition may have investigated Stegliola as part of their ongoing effort to purge Catholic society of what they perceived to be superstitious practices. As we have already seen, as early as the 1570s the Della Portan circle, to which Stegliola belonged, had been a cause for concern for the ecclesiastical authorities. Furthermore, a later deposition, dated January 1596, shows that questions had been raised about Stegliola's intellectual pursuits. A certain Alessandro Pera reported that he and Stegliola had begun to discuss the story of Moses parting the Red Sea (Exodus 14), "he said to me that some historians had said that Moses was a highly skilled astrologer, and that he knew the accession and the recession of this sea." Stegliola had gone on to add that for this reason the people who had made these suggestions had argued that the parting of the Red Sea was not a miracle, but, Pera added "he told me that he did not say it himself". Although we cannot know whether the source was telling the truth, expressing such opinions was extremely dangerous, since they threatened to deny the reality of miracles. It is, however, entirely possible that a person moving within Della Porta's circle would be interested in such ideas, and the Inquisition may have felt that the allegations required investigating.³⁹

Although it is not possible to directly link the proceedings against Stegliola to the events of the absolution crisis, they began immediately prior to a concerted effort on the part of those opposed to Henry IV to prevent his return to the Catholic fold. On 31st July, the Spanish faction in Rome launched a last attempt to prevent the absolution by circulating a booklet entitled *De veris et falsis remediis Christianae Religionis instaurandae, et Catholicos Conservandi*, prepared by a number of Spanish theologians under the leadership of Franciscus Pena, the auditor of the Rota Romana. Pena presented this work directly to Clement in the Quirinal palace; the pope turned to Baronio for advice as to how he should proceed. Between 31st July and 10th August Baronio studied the work and issued a censure, which on 24th August was read in front of the

³⁹ Deposition of Alessandro Pera, in Amabile, op. cit., (1987), p.64, doc 8.

Cardinals of the Holy Office, including Santori, Deza, Pinelli, Sarnano and Toledo. The latter two Cardinals were charged with the task of drafting a judgement on the arguments of Baronio and Pena. Unsurprisingly, they found in favour of Baronio, and the censure of Pena's work was upheld.⁴⁰

Although Clement had successfully fended off the pressure applied by the Spanish faction, he had still to finally decide whether or not to absolve Henry IV. At this stage, Baronio made a decisive intervention. Acting as the pope's confessor, he threatened to withhold absolution from Clement if he did not grant the king's wish. He then consulted with a number of the cardinals persuading them of the need to absolve Henry. His efforts were a success and on September 17th 1595, the French ambassador knelt before Clement at the Portico di San Pietro and performed public penance in Henry's name. The absolution of Henry was now complete. The French king acknowledged a debt of gratitude to both Baronio and Toledo for the part they had played in securing his absolution. When Toledo died in September 1596 the event was marked with a funeral memorial in Paris. Henry continued to correspond regularly with Baronio, and in 1599 profusely thanked him for the work he had done; Baronio in turn dedicated the ninth volume of the *Annales* to the King.⁴¹

While the absolution was one of the greatest achievements of Clement's reign, in his efforts to secure it, the pope had expended large amounts of political capital. Although it was not immediately apparent to him, this had gravely weakened his pontificate. In fact, flushed with success, Clement now attempted to secure the other main aim of his pontificate; entrenching a less severe censorial regime within the Church. On October 17th 1595, apparently unknown to the Holy Office, the pope gave authorisation for the latest version of the Index of Forbidden Books to be printed. On April 7th the new list was presented to the pope and distributed to leading Churchmen in Rome. It was broadly in line with the provisions of the Tridentine Index; for example Rule IV, once more allowed local bishops and inquisitors to license individuals

⁴⁰ Pullapilly, op. cit., (1975), p.68, Frajese op. cit., (1998), pp.336-37.

⁴¹ On Toledo and Henry, see Dandele, op. cit., (2001), p.143; on Baronio, see Pullapilly, op. cit., (1975), pp.70-71.

to read the Bible in the vernacular, and the Talmud was entered into the Index with the formula *si tamen* which would allow for its expurgation. Rule IX of the Index, also echoed that of the Tridentine Index, for it assigned power to the bishops to assess texts dealing with judicial astrology and the divinatory arts.⁴²

While this appeared once more as a victory for Clement, his success was only short-lived. The Inquisition was neither prepared to tolerate this attempt to dilute their power, nor would they countenance a return to the Tridentine regime. Matters came to a head when Santori confronted the pope, forcing him to suspend the list. After a series of negotiations, a list of amendments was appended to the Index on 27th April. These stated that Rule IV did not give local bishops or inquisitors the right to issue licenses to read the Bible in the vernacular; it decreed that Rule IX regarding judicial astrology was to be based on Sixtus V's bull *Caeli and Terrae* of 1585 which made the Inquisition the sole authority responsible for assessing works of judicial astrology and the divinatory arts; it ordered that the Talmud was to be banned outright; and finally that it stated that it was the pope's desire that all books condemned in the future by the Holy Office were to be placed on the Index. Although defeated over the absolution, Santori had secured a significant victory over Clement, entrenching the Inquisition's vision of censorship within the Church.⁴³

The triumph of the Inquisition had significant implications for the practice of philosophy within Italy. In the first instance, it broadly upheld an attitude towards magic and divination that had been common to both the Tridentine and Inquisitorial Indices. In addition to Rule IX of the Index and the *Observatio*, referring the censor to Sixtus's bull, the Index also contained three general injunctions against the divinatory arts. The first was that "all books of Chryromancy and especially of Patritio Tricasso of Mantua, and the Exposition of the same Tricasso on Cocles" and all of the arts of Hydromancy and Pyromancy were prohibited. It also banned a number of divinatory texts, including Bartolomeo Della Rocco Cocles's work *Anastasis chyromantiae et*

⁴² Parente, op. cit., (2001), pp.187-88.

⁴³ Parente, op. cit., (2001), pp.188-89.

physiononimae and Antiochi Tiberti's *De chiromantia*. This Index also proscribed Pietro d'Abano's *Elementa magica*, and his work on geomancy and other types of divination. Although the Index reiterated the Inquisition's rejection of certain forms of magic and divination, it is notable that neither edition of Della Porta's *Magia naturalis*, which was inserted into the Sistine Index, was included on this list. Although many forms of magic and divination were no longer considered acceptable within the Church, certain forms of natural magic evidently could still be passed by the censors.⁴⁴

The 1596 Index also reflected a two-pronged attempt to bring the practice of philosophy into line with the scholastic syntheses of Aquinas, and Scotus. As we have seen, in their writings and lectures many Italian university masters had defended, as philosophically necessary, ideas that contradicted the faith. Traditionally, this distinction had protected them from the charge of heresy. However, for the previous one hundred years, the mendicant orders had been attempting to eradicate this formulation of the status of philosophical knowledge from the Italian universities, and the Index provided them with a new tool to carry out this work. For example, Pietro Pomponazzi's *De incantationibus* was included in the Index of 1596, even though he continued to present his work in the traditional manner of the schoolmasters. It is at present unclear why the compilers of the Index made this decision, but they clearly judged this text to be too dangerous to allow it to continue to circulate. However, although they were able to use their influence to ban the writings of such an illustrious schoolmaster, neither the Inquisition, nor the mendicant orders were able to totally uproot the distinction between philosophical necessity and truth from the universities. This continued to be the way in which schoolmasters such as Cesare Cremonini presented and discussed philosophy. It must be noted, however, that the struggle against the secular masters' teachings begun by the mendicants had not ended. If anything, it intensified during the 1590s when the Thomist Jesuits began to attack the

⁴⁴ The 1596 Index is published in *ILLI* Vol. IX pp.447-739.

masters' teachings, drawing them into an increasingly bitter dispute with the Venetian authorities and the teachers of Padua, including Cremonini.⁴⁵

The second aspect of the attempt to bring philosophy to order was represented by the suspension of Francesco Patrizi's *Nova philosophia*. With support from within the ecclesiastical hierarchy including Clement VIII, Patrizi's work had breathed new life into Ficino's philosophical project. At its heart lay an attempt to replace the philosophy of Aristotle with that of Plato as the intellectual support of Catholicism. The suspension of Patrizi's work was the latest instance of an ongoing attempt on the part of the Dominican order, and the Inquisition to prevent this from occurring. Although it was possible that the Neoplatonists' ideas might once again enjoy a resurgence of popularity, it was unlikely to do so while the Inquisition remained so powerful. The Inquisition's continued dominance also meant that, although the *Nova philosophia* could in principle have been expurgated, this never took place and it remained upon the Index.

While these were indeed significant developments, which laid down increasingly rigid boundaries for the practice of philosophy, the picture was not as bleak as the work of Luigi Firpo has implied. For example, not all of the works or authors he mentioned were completely banned. It is true that Bernardino Telesio's work *De rerum natura*, and three of his other texts were entered into the second class of the 1596 Index pending expurgation. Crucially, however, all of these texts contained references to Telesio's theory of the human soul. As we have already seen in chapter 3, during the 1570s Telesio had experienced problems with the ecclesiastical authorities, because in some of his texts, notably the first edition of *De rerum natura*, he had argued that the movements of the body were guided by a mortal *spiritus*. Telesio's critics had taken his arguments to indicate that the individual human soul was mortal. In order to circumvent these objections, in later editions of *De rerum natura* Telesio had gone to great lengths to distinguish between the mortal *spiritus* which moved the body, and the immortal human soul. These changes had ensured that later editions of his work were acceptable to the

⁴⁵ See Grendler, op. cit., (2002), chapter 8, esp. pp.293-97. See too Sangalli, op cit., (2000) and Spruit, op. cit., (2000).

censors. As Roberto Bondi has shown, the Congregation of the Index's intention in 1596 was to undertake a relatively limited expurgation of the early editions of Telesio's texts, in order to ensure that every copy of his work distinguished clearly between the mortal *spiritus* and the immortal soul.⁴⁶

It is also necessary to add that a number of those included in Firpo's list of condemned philosophers, should be discounted. For example, according to Firpo, Francesco Pucci should be included in any assessment of the impact of censorship on philosophy. However, although it is possible to argue that his ideas may betray the influence of Florentine Neoplatonism, his predominant concern was to explicate his own, highly esoteric, interpretation of Christian doctrines. This means that while a work such as the *De repubblica christiana* could be categorised as a work of "political philosophy", at its heart lay a series of problems inspired by the dilemmas of living according to the quasi-Pelagian doctrines that Pucci upheld. By the measure of the Catholic Church, and indeed any of the other main confessions, Pucci's books expressed theological views that were heretical and required suppression. It should then be no surprise, that they were included in the first class of the Index. Pucci's trial also concluded at the end of 1596, with the Holy Office judging him to be a relapsed heretic. Although the basis for Pucci's condemnation as a *relapsed* heretic must have been his earlier abjuration in Prague, from the extant documentation it is not possible to establish precisely which of Pucci's subsequent actions or writings created the basis for his eventual condemnation. The Congregation sentenced Pucci to death and, on 31st December 1596, and on 5th July 1597 he was beheaded in the Torre di Nona, and his corpse was burnt in the Campo de' Fiori in the heart of Rome.⁴⁷

It is also difficult to include Tommaso Campanella in this analysis of the censorship of philosophy. Although he was included in Firpo's list of condemned thinkers, his Roman inquisitorial trial appears to have been primarily driven by his alleged theological views, notably by the charge of Judaising rather than by his philosophical ideas. Although he did indeed write works of philosophy, and his interest

⁴⁶ Bondi, *op. cit.*, (1997), pp.124-28.

⁴⁷ For the extant documents, see the Appendices to Luigi Firpo, *op. cit.*, (1949), pp.3-37.

in natural magic may have lain behind his earlier Neapolitan trial, on this occasion, his philosophical ideas were not the cause of Inquisition's investigations. Campanella's Roman trial concluded at the end of December 1596, and he abjured his heresies. Although his trial appears to tell us little about the Church's attitude towards philosophy *per se*, during his imprisonment he had, for a time, shared his cell with Pucci. We do not know what they discussed, but the Florentine's millennial ideas are widely believed to have been a great influence on the young friar. Little more than two months after Campanella's release, he was once more arrested by the Inquisition though again the exact nature of the charges is unclear. He would remain in prison for much of the remainder of 1597, before being released once more. Only a few years later he would lead a failed revolt in Calabria, inspired by his millennial prophecies, which aimed to construct a new society.⁴⁸

Notoriously, it is impossible to determine the implications that Bruno's trial held for the practice of philosophy in Italy. In early 1597 the consultors finally presented their censures of Bruno's books to the cardinals of the Holy Office, some two years after they had begun their work. Unfortunately this document no longer exists so we cannot identify with any certainty the issues which the consultors drew to the cardinals' attention. During the course of the year, the Holy Office interrogated Bruno about the theses identified in his books, and in early 1599 it decided to bring his trial to a conclusion. The Jesuit Roberto Bellarmine, who had been recently appointed as a consultor to the Holy Office, prepared a list of eight charges for Bruno to abjure. Since this list has not been found in the archives, we cannot know the doctrines that he refused to recant; we do know, however, that the list was presented to him in January 1599. At first he accepted that he should abjure them, but he then changed his mind. In response, the Congregation of the Holy Office condemned Bruno as an unrepentant heretic and condemned him to death. He was burnt at the stake in the Campo de' Fiori on 17th February 1600.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Firpo, op. cit., (1939), pp.36-43

⁴⁹ Finocchiaro, op. cit., (2002), pp.60-65.

Conclusion: The Triumph of the Inquisition

The execution of Giordano Bruno in 1600 drew to a close the trials and condemnations of the 1590s. Accounts of these events have played a powerful part in the political and intellectual culture of modern Italy, and generations of historians and philosophers have contributed to our understanding of them. However, with the exception of the trial of Bruno, since the 1960s historians have tended not to study these trial and condemnations. This situation has begun to alter over the last fifteen years, with Ugo Baldini's project to locate new documents in the Inquisition archives, and some new studies of the trials of more peripheral figures such as Col Antonio Stegliola. Nevertheless, there has still not been a synthetic attempt to examine the significance of, and inter-connections between these trials and condemnations. This is, in fact, not a new problem. Remarkably, although Luigi Firpo reconstructed the course of almost all of the trials and condemnations of the 1590s, he did not integrate them into a single account. In Firpo's work, these episodes are presented as individual case studies that served to illustrate his thesis that, as a consequence of its struggle with the Protestant heresies, the Church as an institution became "implacably severe" in the latter half of the sixteenth century with disastrous consequences for Italian intellectual culture. In this thesis, I have sought to remedy this situation by offering, for the first time in any language, a synthetic account of the trials and condemnations along with the various contexts in which they arose.

My account has also been synthetic in a historiographical sense. Research on these trials and condemnations has been primarily conducted in either an intellectual history, or history of science tradition. Although the insights gleaned from these disciplinary perspectives have been, and continue to be, fruitful, the historians working in these traditions have tended to neglect ecclesiastical history. All too often, this has meant that they have fallen back upon inadequate and outmoded analytic categories. For example, many historians of science and intellectual historians continue to use the category 'Counter-Reformation'. The phrase does not simply refer to a period of

history, but also serves an analytical function, characterising the Church as monolithic and in many contexts repressive, defensive and reactionary. In the context of these trials and condemnations, the idea of a 'Counter-Reformation' has underpinned virtually all earlier accounts. The so-called 'Counter-Reformation Church' is conceived as homogeneous entity, which, as a whole, operated in a manner that made it all but impossible to practice innovative forms of philosophy. Furthermore, historians of science and intellectual historians have tended to ignore the literature on the 'mechanics of censorship', notably the detailed studies of the Inquisition and Index of Forbidden Books that have been produced over the past forty years.

In my work I have taken an inter-disciplinary approach to studying these trials and condemnations, which has allowed me to construct an alternative analytical framework. I have drawn upon several recent bodies of literature, recent French, and Anglo-American scholarship that have sought to revise the history of the early modern Catholic Church. Historians working in these traditions have largely abandoned the idea of a 'Counter-Reformation', which they have criticised as implying that the Church was essentially reactive. They have instead presented a picture of the Church that was deeply pre-occupied with the Protestant threat, but was nevertheless engaged in a long-standing programme of internal reform. This work has been complemented by an Italian tradition, which has its roots in the earlier liberal tradition, which studies the history of the Italian humanist reform movements. Although this modern Italian tradition continues to retain the category 'Counter-Reformation', it depicts a series of struggles within the ecclesiastical hierarchy that offers a more nuanced account of the Church during the sixteenth century. Furthermore both of these traditions have also produced innovative studies of the censorial structures of Italy, giving details of how they functioned and the contexts in which they operated.

By incorporating these new perspectives into my research, I have been able to free my analysis from the outdated concepts previously used to analyse the Church's attitude towards the censorship of philosophy and/ or science. Following the work of historians such as Massimo Firpo and Gigliola Fragnito, I have argued that the history

of ecclesiastical censorship in the sixteenth century should be understood as a story of intense conflict between factions within the Church, which possessed often sharply contrasting visions of the Catholic faith. In practice, this amounted to a conflict between the Inquisition and humanist bishops, who fought to control the structures and standards of censorship. I have argued that the incidences of censorship examined in this thesis, including the events of the 1590s, can be best understood as part of this conflictual account of the sixteenth century Italian Church. However, although I have broadly followed the framework established by Firpo and Fragnito, it is insufficient to fully account for all of the patterns of censorship that I have established in this thesis. Notably, their work erected a sharp dichotomy between putatively retrogressive scholastic elements, and the tactics and strategies of ‘progressive’ humanists within the Church. While it is true that the humanist elements in the Church were responsible for drafting a more moderate Index of Forbidden Books in 1564, which allowed for the freer circulation of evangelical texts and other texts such as the Talmud, they nevertheless sought to restrict intellectual activities such as magic and astrology in terms that were every bit as severe as those adopted by the creators of the 1559 Index. In this instance the supposedly ‘progressive’ elements within the Church showed themselves to be as opposed to ‘progressive’ ideas and practices as was the Inquisition. In order to account for this development it is necessary to dispose of anachronistic characterisations of the various factions within the Church, for censorship of any form in the early modern period cannot be analysed in these terms.

As the work of Francesco Beretta has shown, the only way to understand the motivations driving the censorship of texts and ideas is to analyse the theological positions of the censors. Drawing upon his insights, I have placed considerable emphasis on understanding the various attitudes towards philosophy current within the Church during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and in particular those deployed within its censorial organs. Following Beretta I have analysed the attitudes of the mendicant orders towards philosophical knowledge. However, I have also expanded his work in two important respects. First, I have presented for the first time a history

of the censorship of philosophy, *and* of magic and astrology, which I have integrated into the new picture of the Church revealed by Fragnito and Firpo. Secondly, I have argued that in order to understand the debates over censorship of knowledge-making activities in sixteenth century Italy, it is not sufficient to analyse only the views of the Inquisition. As the work of Fragnito has shown, the bishops of Italy also played a central role in censorship at a local level, and they drafted the Index of 1564. In these ways, the bishops became directly engaged with assessing knowledge-making activities. Since many of these bishops were inspired by the ideas of evangelical humanists, this can be achieved by studying the attitude of evangelical reformers, such as Desiderius Erasmus, to philosophy, magic and astrology. It is only by taking account of these perspectives, that it is possible to understand important developments within the history of censorship, most notably the creation of the Index of 1564.

I have also argued that in order to fully comprehend censorship in the sixteenth century, it is crucially important to take into account the significance of the momentous changes taking place within the practice of philosophy during these centuries. Previous accounts of the censorship of philosophy have tended to suggest that the increased levels of theological scrutiny that can be observed during the sixteenth century can be understood primarily in terms of developments taking place within the Church. Even Beretta, who has developed probably the most sophisticated account of ecclesiastical censorship of philosophy in sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy, has tended to do this. Although he did stress the importance of philosophical innovations, such as the ideas of the Neoplatonist philosophers, and Galileo's subversion of disciplinary boundaries, his work nevertheless foregrounds the importance of the growing power of the censors, most notably the Inquisition. Ultimately, Beretta's focus upon the processes of censorship has meant that he has not developed a detailed account of the importance of the challenges created by innovative forms of knowledge. In this sense, his work echoes the liberal tradition's depiction of philosophers as relatively passive victims of an increasingly dogmatic and powerful censorial regime.

In this thesis, I have sought to present the process of censorship as a dynamic interaction between the censors and the censored. In order to do this, I have drawn on recent historiographical innovations in the history of science that have emphasised the importance of understanding the identities of early modern philosophers. This body of literature has stressed the need to understand the manner in which contemporaries managed the production of knowledge. Notably they have drawn attention to the influence of social and intellectual structures such as academic disciplines, the boundaries of which were rigorously enforced in institutions such as the universities and the religious orders, and by authorities such as the Inquisition. Furthermore, this work has shown how these structures were profoundly disrupted from the fifteenth century by noble and princely patronage. These changes created new social spaces, and novel purposes for the production of knowledge, which in turn led to the creation of radically innovative forms of philosophy. By presenting both the developments within philosophy, and the institutional history of censorship, I have shown how the practice of censorship was affected by changes within philosophy and vice versa. This creates a picture of censorship that is based on a model of dialectical interchange rather than centralised repression.

I have also integrated a final central element into this account of the trials and condemnations of the 1590s, namely the influence of secular politics. It has been previously suggested that there may be some connection between the events of the 1590s and the crisis precipitated by the proposed absolution of Henry of Navarre. Parts of this story have been told by Frances Yates, Saverio Ricci and Artemio Enzo Baldini, who have posited connections between the trials of Bruno, Pucci, Stegliola, the condemnation of Patrizi and the absolution crisis. In this thesis I have both criticised this work, but also built upon it where the evidence allows. I have suggested that although it is possible to reconstruct parts of the networks of Navarre supporters within Italy, it is extremely difficult to establish any direct connections between these various trials and condemnations and the absolution. Nevertheless, I suggest that the events of the absolution did directly influence the nature of censorship in late-sixteenth

century Italy. Drawing on the work of historians such as Pietro Redondi, who argued that the trial of Galileo could be framed by the political struggles of the monarchs of Europe, I have argued that we must examine the events of the 1590s in the context of the virtually continuous warfare between France and Spain during the sixteenth century.

Although these trials and condemnations should not be viewed merely as the effects of grand geo-politics, I suggest that the influence of these factors must be integrated into our understanding of the practice of censorship. By building upon Mario Biagioli's observations about the practice of philosophy in early modern papal 'court', I have traced the complex mechanisms that connect religio-political power to individual instances of censorship. Most notably, I have considered how the Franco-Spanish conflict influenced the operation of the papacy's bureaucratic machinery, including its organs of censorship. By these means, it has been possible to make connections between the 'grand' politics of the secular monarchs and the 'local' political and religious struggles fought by leading clerics to control the direction of the Church. By inserting these factors into our account of the trials of the 1590s it is possible to introduce elements of historical contingency that would otherwise be missing from a history of censorship conceived purely as a conflict between factions within the Church.

I suggest that historical contingency is particularly significant factor for understanding some of the unique characteristics of the cluster of trials that occurred during the 1590s. Attempts to restrict the boundaries of philosophical discourse were not entirely unprecedented. Indeed, the capacity to do this was available to the Church, in various forms, from the thirteenth century. Following the re-establishment of the Inquisition in 1543 there were some notable episodes of censorship. As we have seen, in the early 1570s, during the pontificate of the austere inquisitor-pope, Pius V, there occurred a significant movement in favour of removing aspects of philosophical practice deemed heterodox by the Inquisition. Nevertheless, previous clamp-downs, such as that of the 1570s, always occurred during the pontificates of popes who were

pursuing an agenda that was broadly in agreement with the aims of the mendicant orders and the Inquisition. In contrast to these previous episodes, the events of the 1590s occurred during the pontificate of Clement VIII, a pope well noted for his sympathy towards forms of alternative philosophy. However, the most striking anomaly of these years is the fact that Clement presided over the condemnation of Francesco Patrizi, a philosopher to whom he had personally offered patronage. I suggest that this turn of events can only be explained by the fact that the pope was weakened by his efforts to secure the absolution of Navarre, and that, as a consequence of these actions, the cardinals of the Inquisition were able to impose a severe model of censorship, contrary to the will of the pontiff.

By drawing together these various factors, it is possible to conclude that the trials and condemnations of the 1590s were produced by the confluence of an extremely complex series of long and short-term factors. On the one hand, there were significant changes to the manner in which philosophy was practised within Catholic Italy. Prior to the fifteenth century, philosophy had been practised almost exclusively in the universities and schools of the religious orders, and therefore kept within relatively strict bounds. During the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, princely and noble patronage allowed philosophers the freedom to construct radically new identities and philosophical systems, which were beyond the control of older forms of censorship and control. This situation was further compounded by the creation of the printing press, which facilitated a much more extensive circulation of the texts that the philosophers produced. However, although these philosophers sometimes enjoyed the support of highly placed clerics, many of these ideas were contested by members of the mendicant orders. Importantly, these orders of friars staffed one of the most powerful organs of censorship and control within the Catholic world: the Inquisition. Following the invention of the printing press, the Church also developed new systems, such as book licensing, to monitor and control printed media. In the mid-sixteenth century it also created the Index of Forbidden Books to stem the tide of heresy flowing from northern Europe. After its re-establishment in 1543, the

Inquisition became increasingly powerful, and with the support of sympathetic popes it attempted to impose a particular vision of orthodoxy on Italian society. Amongst the tools at its disposal was the power to launch investigations against those it suspected of heresy, and it also attempted to gain control over book censorship. However, many aspects of the Inquisition's project were contested by the humanist bishops who proffered an alternative model of censorship. The conflict between the episcopate and the Inquisition continued throughout the second half of the century, but the 1590s represented the triumph of the Inquisition, when it was able to finally face down its opponents and assert its power. Unusually however, it did so in the face of papal opposition. This development, I argue, can only be explained by taking into account the effect of the absolution crisis on Clement VIII's authority.

While these conclusions offer an explanation for the events of the 1590s, we must now turn to consider their wider implications. As we saw at the beginning of this thesis, the historians of the Italian liberal tradition assigned these trials and condemnations great significance. They argued that they constituted a cataclysmic assault not only on philosophy, but also upon free-thought, which held terrible repercussions for Italian history that were still felt in their own age. As we have also seen, many historians of science continue to suggest that by the early seventeenth century the context for practising science and/ or philosophy in Italy had altered radically, and that it was now far more difficult to advance novel ideas. What then was the significance of these trials, and how did these trials and condemnations affect the practice of philosophy? In a sense, this is a question badly put. For, although it is possible to classify the various individuals placed on trial under the heading of 'philosophers', the philosophies that these thinkers produced differed significantly. Consequently, the offence that they caused to the censors varied in each case. In order to begin to offer some sort of analysis of the impact of the events of the 1590s it is therefore necessary to apply some broad categories to the works in question.

To a large extent, the 1590s marked the triumph of the Inquisition. To all intents and purposes, its members had displaced the alternative visions of Catholic

orthodoxy put forward both by the humanist bishops, and by senior clerics such as Clement VIII. This development had particularly important ramifications in the sphere of philosophy, for it allowed the Inquisition to secure the scholastic synthesis of knowledge, primarily the system constructed by Thomas Aquinas, as the standard for assessing philosophical orthodoxy in the Catholic Italy. According to Aquinas's system, philosophy was subalternated to theology, and the philosopher was expected to draw conclusions that agreed with the truth of faith. Theology's superiority to philosophy was again underlined by the fact that the philosopher could not use philosophy to contest the theologian's judgement. Furthermore, Aquinas's conceptions of the natural world, which had for a long time been utilised within the Inquisition, would now serve as the official basis for interpreting and determining the orthodoxy of magical and astrological ideas. This development had widely differing implications for the various types of philosophers active in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Italy.

The Aristotelian philosophers of the Italian universities were virtually unaffected by this series of trials and condemnations. The members of the mendicant orders had long been concerned by the teachings of these individuals, and especially by the fact that they continued to defend ideas that ostensibly contradicted the truth of faith as merely philosophically necessary. Throughout the sixteenth century the friars attempted to eradicate these teachings from the universities, for example, by taking chairs within the arts faculties in order to influence the teaching therein, and famously some Franciscan friars attempted to bring the conclusions of philosophy into line with those of theology with the decree *Apostolici regiminis*. However, the friars' efforts, like the Jesuits' later attempts to create rival schools which taught within a Thomist framework, failed to prevent the schoolmasters from presenting ideas that contradicted the faith as philosophically necessary. Sheltered by the fact that they were at least technically not teaching heresies, and in the case of the teachers of the University of Padua, being afforded ample protection by the Venetian state, the school masters continued to teach in their traditional manner. Nevertheless, as the case of Girolamo Cardano illustrated, these university masters needed to exercise extreme caution when

discussing problems such as astral influences. If they were to present these ideas as true, or if they were to use them as the basis for a practical technique, they needed to ensure that they were in conformity with the orthodox position established by Aquinas and subsequently enshrined in inquisitorial practice.

The second major group that we have met were the innovative philosophers of nature, such as Bernardino Telesio, who developed new systems for interpreting the created order. The rise of Inquisitorial power at the end of the sixteenth century had mixed implications for these philosophers. Perhaps most notably of all, towards the end of the century the Inquisition began to secure a grip over all of the structures of censorship within Italy. This meant that the standards of censorship deployed to assess works of these independent philosophers were those favoured by the Inquisition. Crucially, this development did not prevent philosophers such as Telesio from making philosophical innovations *per se*, but it did mean that their ideas were subject to inquisitorial scrutiny. Consequently, they had to ensure that their teachings were in accordance with orthodoxy as defined by Thomist theologians. For example, although some of Telesio's texts, including *De rerum natura*, were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books this did not represent an outright assault on his philosophy. On the contrary, as we have seen, specific propositions in his work had been identified as heterodox, and were ear-marked for amendment. Once this had been completed, his works could be freely read by Catholics.

The work of the natural magicians was affected in similar fashion. For example, throughout his life Giambattista Della Porta's natural magic remained at the fringes of orthodoxy, and consequently under intense theological scrutiny. However, as long as natural magicians did not claim to be able to work any effects that required, according to the Thomist framework used by the Inquisition, the assistance of demons, then their work could be considered legitimate. Nevertheless, there were many areas of natural magical theory that were ruled heterodox. These included the various attempts to establish natural bases for divinatory arts such as chiromancy, which had been propounded earlier in the century by authors such as Patricio Tricasso. Furthermore,

as in the case of Stegliola's second trial (1595-96), the Inquisition was extremely concerned when natural magicians proposed natural explanations for miracles. Nevertheless, as long as natural magicians ensured that their ideas and doctrines were in conformity with the faith, as defined by the Inquisition, they were free to discourse on the natural world in the manner they chose.

It is fair to conclude that each of the various categories of philosophers we have discussed so far were all subjected to the discipline of the Inquisition by the end of the sixteenth century. This meant that although they were forced to ensure that their work was in conformity with the standards of orthodoxy defined by the Inquisition, they were, nevertheless, able to continue producing the styles of philosophy that they chose. The situation was far more serious, however, for the Neoplatonic philosophers who expanded upon the ideas of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola. Although they presented themselves as entirely orthodox Catholics, and despite the fact that they were supported by a number of important clerics, their ideas were regarded with intense suspicion by some groups within the Church. Furthermore, several aspects of their work were sharply at odds with the vision of philosophical orthodoxy propounded by the mendicant orders, and, by extension, the Inquisition.

From the end of the fifteenth century various aspects of the work of the Florentine Neoplatonists had been challenged by the ecclesiastical authorities, notably during Pico's trial in 1489. However, for the majority of such writers in the sixteenth century, the focus of ecclesiastical concern was the magical aspects of their work. This included both the relatively limited forms of magic described by Ficino, such as the creation of talismans, and the use of amulets, which were designed to attract celestial influences. Originally shown to be reliant on demonic agency by Augustine, these techniques were condemned by Aquinas and later by inquisitors, and subsequently ridiculed by humanists such as Erasmus. Pico's more potent magic, which drew deeply upon the cabbala, was even less acceptable to these diverse groups within the Church. It therefore came as no surprise, when the Inquisition's Index of 1559, the Tridentine Index of 1564 and the Clementine Index struck against these forms of magic.

Although by the middle of the sixteenth century Neoplatonic magic had been broadly defined as heterodox within the Church, the metaphysical aspects of the Renaissance Platonism nevertheless continued to be influential until the end of the century. Perhaps most obviously, Francesco Patrizi's *Nova philosophia* seemed to offer a vehicle for the promotion of these ideas within the highest echelons of the Church. With the support of Clement VIII, the style of Christian Platonism promoted by Ficino and subsequently advocated by philosophers such as Patrizi might have posed a challenge to the Aristotelianism synthesis maintained within the mendicant orders, and within the Inquisition. When the *Nova philosophia* was placed on the Index, presumably against the wishes of the incumbent pope, the power of the Inquisition to determine the boundaries of orthodoxy was clearly demonstrated.

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